



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORT

October 12, 2023

Curriculum

The Curriculum Committee met on Oct. 2, 2023, to discuss books to be used in curriculum, a new literary magazine, ESL parent workshops, and more.

What Winners Won't Tell You: Lessons from a Legendary Defender - Malcolm Jenkins

Gwendolyn Jenkins introduced Malcolm Jenkins and his book to the committee. The book is about Malcolm's life growing up in Piscataway, going to Ohio State, playing in the NFL, and retiring on his own terms. The goal is to leave a blueprint for those that are navigating a similar situation. Members of the committee thanked Malcolm for giving back to our community. Ms. Cherry and Dr. Baskerville spoke about reading the book and what a great resource it would be for our high school students.

The Sentenia/Chieftain Creative Writing - Scott Hood and Sareena Naganand

Student Sareena Naganand approached Dr. Baskerville and Mr. Hood after being involved with the Teen Writers Guild. Sareena hopes to continue that work with a literary magazine launched through The Chieftain. It is called The Sentenia - Latin for sentiments - with the hope that the magazine will contain the feelings, thoughts, and overall voice of students at PHS. This would be linked to the Chieftain, however the digital issues will also stand alone. There will be an e-book compilation at the end of the year.

The Alphabet Books: The A-Z Series - Judy Medina

Ms. Medina grew up in Piscataway and wants to bring her book series here first. Each letter of the alphabet is fleshed out into a story, totaling 26 books. The same characters continue throughout the whole series and there are differentiated questions, art/activity resources, and digital resources that accompany the books. There are more series in the works.

Social Emotional Learning - Amritpal Bedi

Ms. Bedi presented on Social Emotional Learning and supports that we have for students. The committee commented on the need for support of students' social-emotional needs. Dr. Baskerville pointed out that this is a focus for our district with SEL incorporated throughout the curriculum.

Comprehensive Health & PE - Dr. Baskerville

The district will continue the same notification process used last year for comprehensive health and physical education. A letter will go out to the community detailing health curriculum. Last year we had less than 2 percent of students opt out. Families were happy with how it was handled.

Tutorial/Learning Acceleration Programs - Dr. Baskerville

Tutorial programs will be up and running by October 16 through April. Programs will be funded by grant funds and available for Grades PreK-12.

ESL Parent Workshops - Dr. Baskerville

Workshops were held for Grades PreK through 3 and Grades 4 and 5. A workshop for Grades 6 through 8 is upcoming. 120 families responded for Prek through Grade 3. The workshops include translators, teachers, counselors, and resources, as well as discussion of Social Emotional Learning.

Culture, Climate & Community Relations

The Culture, Climate and Community Relations Committee met on Oct. 3 to discuss positive messaging, wellness, and community partnerships.

Positive Messaging

- The monthly themes, quotes, and marquee images for September and October included Hispanic Heritage Month, Week of Respect, and School Violence Awareness Week, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. Discussions will continue about other messages that may be included.
- Student to Student mentoring messages will be shown in the Freshman Seminar classes, with discussions about showing them around the high school, at public events, and on the PHS website.
- High school students were made aware of the clubs and activities through a club fair that took place in the physical education classes on September 18 and 19.

Community Partnerships

- Dr. Gray shared that the PHS Business Academy will continue to collaborate with the Rutgers Business

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Culture, Climate and Community Relations (Continued)

School, and Dr. Gray, Supervisor of Special Projects Noel Aprile, and PHS Career and Technical Education Supervisor Robyn Kay will be meeting with representatives from Rutgers to plan for this year, including mentoring and guest speakers.

- The NSBE Jr. Club at PHS has resumed, and they had their first meeting on September 27, with Rutgers students from the National Society of Black Engineers/Minority Engineering Educational Task in attendance.
- Jersey Cares engaged in a service project at Schor on June 22, beautifying the teacher's lounge and around the building. On October 25, Jersey Cares will engage in full day of activities at King School, including beautifying the faculty room, engaging in outdoor projects, and workshops for fifth-grade students on water physics, water filtration, and water conservation.
- The lead researcher will be attending the October 12 board meeting to present specific details about the district's equity audit and results.

Wellness Services

- Surveys on delayed school start times were sent out to district families and staff on September 19, and there has been strong participation. The survey deadline is October 31.
- Dr. Connelly and the Haven staff are planning another series of family webinars for this school year with some possible in-person sessions. The sessions will be advertised in advance via email and social media. The webinars will also be recorded for those who cannot attend.

New Business

- The committee discussed ways to encourage and maintain a diverse teacher pipeline. Mr. Baldassano has identified two advisors to lead a Future Educates Club at PHS. Mrs. Salgado-Cowan shared ways to connect with her daughter in college who is involved in similar initiatives on her campus.

Fiscal Planning and Operations

The Fiscal Planning and Operations Committee met on Oct. 11, 2023, to discuss the 2022-2023 audit, capital projects, the Energy Savings Improvement Program, and more.

2022-2023 Audit

- The auditors completed their field work and the Business Office will continue to work with them on outstanding items and the completion of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The auditors plan to have the audit report completed by the end of November.

2024-2025 Budget Calendar

- The Committee approved the 2024-2025 Budget Calendar, which will be on the Board meeting agenda.

Facility Capital Projects

- HVAC Upgrades – The installation of the Siemens building management system (BMS) is ongoing, as are testing/balancing and punch-list work.
- Water Cooler upgrades – Punch-list work is being completed. The Contractor is removing some excess water fountains and re-blocking the wall for a clean look and more usable corridor space.

Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP)

- BMS control work is ongoing. Some mechanical work on the roof-top units (RTU) needs to be adjusted and the airflow balanced. A transformer upgrade was completed at King and the final two transformer upgrades at PHS are scheduled for the November break. Window installation at PHS-Patton was completed with positive feedback from staff. The District is waiting for delivery of the window blinds.

Food Services

- Free and Reduced Lunch applications – Reminder messages to complete this year's application were delivered to parents via email, phone call, and text on a staggered basis during the past five weeks. Applications have been received encompassing 3,516 students. The total Free and Reduce percentages appear to be similar to last school year.
- Food Service Account Balances – The Committee reviewed the policies and memos as well as the current negative balance in the food service account. Several suggestions from Committee members were discussed. The Committee agreed to continue discussions.

Business Office

- Investment Account – The Committee reviewed the September 2023 NJARM statement. The prior 90-day term investment matured on October 5, 2023. The Committee authorized the purchase of a new term investment.