



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORT

April 11, 2024

Curriculum

The Curriculum Committee met on April 8, 2024, to discuss Comprehensive Health and PE, Standardized Testing, Gifted & Talented, and more.

Comprehensive Health and PE: Dr. Baskerville reported that two letters will go out April 26 to families outlining the upcoming Health and Physical Education lessons that will be given within a specific time frame. In Grade 5, the lesson will focus on puberty. In Grade 8, the lesson will be about making healthy decisions about life and sex. The letter will outline how to opt out in Genesis. Last year, less than 4% of students were opted out.

Visual and Performing Arts: Rebekah Sterlacci shared recent accomplishments and accolades for the arts program.

Standardized Testing: Dr. Baskerville gave information about NJSLA and how data will be used. It will be administered April 29 through May 24. A letter from Dr. Baskerville and the principals will be sent by the schools.

2022-2023 NJ School Performance Reports: Dr. Baskerville said information will be posted on the district website and a letter will be sent to families on April 18 about how to access it.

The Metlar-Bodine House Museum: Stephanie Dunlap reported that the museum is being prepared for elementary school tours, including installing a Ross Hall Wall, landscaping, and various other projects. High school and middle school students can volunteer by contacting the museum, which also offers summer internships for college students. Ms. Dunlap is in conversation with Chris Irovando about creating a short film about the museum.

Strengthening Gifted & Talented Act: Dr. Baskerville, Janine Albanese, Rebecca Dayton, and Frank Wrublewski offered updates on Gifted & Talented programs:

- Grades 2-3: Students are selected for LEAP Humanities or LEAP STEAM based on a Star Renaissance Screener. Teachers can recommend additional students with additional data points or anecdotal information. Students that meet requirements are given a performance-based task. These run for 6-8 weeks and students work in small groups on LEAP projects within their classrooms.
- Grades 4-5: Students are chosen with a Star Renaissance Screener/Performance Tasks. This is a separate period for students. Honors ELA and Honors Math take place during two marking periods. There is also enrichment pullout for ELA and Math. Students on the cusp are pulled for additional enrichment.

- Middle School Math: Student selection is based on marking period grades, unit assessments, standardized test data, and teacher recommendation. Placement is based on the next level of math and every student has a chance to advance based on their performance.
- Middle School English Language Arts: Selection is based on marking-period grades, writing samples, standardized test data, and teacher recommendation.
- High School Math and ELA: Selection is based on marking-period grades, unit assessments, standardized test data, writing samples, and teacher recommendations. In math, there are continued opportunities to support students who mature within a subject area later in school.

District In-Service: Dr. Baskerville and area supervisors discussed sessions for staff in-service on Wednesday, April 10. This is a great time in the year to have an in-service day because the District is looking toward next year with some time for preparation.

Summer Programs: Dr. Baskerville and area supervisors provided a list of our Summer Jump Ahead programming, Summer Camp, AP Institute, Credit Recovery, and Freshman Seminar camp.

Creole Club: The District is unable to start a formal course sequence on Creole, but could start a language and culture club for Creole. Dr. Lisa Gordon mentioned that we have a large population of Haitian Creole. Glennysa Jurado-Moran went over the process for starting a club.

Math videos: Dr. Melissa Lieberman suggested short videos to support parents with math. Dr. Baskerville says the District has some videos and will begin organizing them for release. Nancy Corradino suggested the possibility of a working PD to create resources.

Eighth-Grade Accelerated Art: Rebekah Sterlacci shared benefits of a pilot full-year accelerated art course at Schor, including more academy applicants, greater quality of work, more time to explore techniques and media. The Committee showed support to make this a full-year course in all three middle schools.

Fiscal Planning & Operations

The Fiscal Planning & Operations Committee met on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, to discuss the 2024-25 budget, facility capital projects, food services, and more.

Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting

- The District received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from ASBO International for the seventh consecutive year.

2024-2025 Budget

- The County approved the tentative budget. The budget will be advertised in advance of the Public Hearing on April 25. Work on the Budget Book is ongoing.

Facility Capital Projects

- HVAC Upgrades: The District continues to work with the architect to get the contractor to complete the job.
- PHS Wood Shop Dust Collection: Bid specifications were re-released and 8 contractors requested specifications. Bid opening will take place on April 17 with a bid award recommendation expected to be added to the April 25 Board meeting agenda.
- Paving Projects: Site assessments have been completed by the architect and engineer. Bid specifications will be released May 9 with a bid award recommendation expected for the June 13 Board meeting.
- PHS Media Center: Spiegle Architectural Group is working on design recommendations and will present some options to administration on April 25, 2024.
- Acoustical Upgrades: Acoustical engineers completed sound tests. A report should be available within 2 weeks with recommendations and cost estimates.

Energy Savings Improvement Program

- Siemens is making progress, but not all devices have been fully rewired, so we continue to await training and implementation of the new BMS software system.

Food Services

- Food Services Management Company RFP: Proposals were received from Aramark, Maschio's, Nutriserve, and Sodexo. The Evaluation Committee has begun its review of the proposals.

New Jersey School Business Legislative

- Dr. Connors and Mr. Oliveira discussed two Assembly bills approved by the Assembly Education Committee, A4059 and A4161, regarding the school funding formula.

Business Office

- Investment Account – The Committee reviewed the current balance on the March 2024 NJARM statement and current interest rates.
- New Jersey Schools Insurance Group Safety Grant – The District received notification of its eligibility to apply for safety grant funding from NJSIG. The District will use the funds to replace and add security cameras.
- A new scoreboard for the PHS Anthony Gym will be delivered and the contractor will begin installation.

Culture, Climate & Community Relations

The Climate, Culture, and Community Relations Committee met on March 19, 2024, to discuss positive message, community partnerships, and wellness services.

Positive Messaging

- The Committee discussed the monthly themes, quotes, and marquee images for February and March. The February theme was Black History Month, and March was Women's History Month. Gary Miller shared photos of school marquee quotes and images. The Committee continued to discuss posting the weekly marquee quotes on social media.

Community Partnerships

- The District's various partnerships with Rutgers continue to run smoothly, including a new partnership. Project Health Links provides hands-on programs and activities to provide middle school students with awareness and exposure to health-related career fields.
- On February 23, the PHS Future Business Leaders of America participated in High School Heroes day, as part of the recently formed partnership with Junior Achievement NJ. Students spent the day at King School teaching the 4th and 5th grade students about financial literacy. The FBLA will participate in HS Heroes Day at Arbor on May 24. An idea was proposed that our HS Future Educators Club partner with FBLA for HS Heroes.
- On March 15, 40 young women from PHS participated in a Women's Leadership Forum with students from other schools at Sanofi headquarters in Bridgewater. The event was sponsored by Junior Achievement New Jersey.
- On February 22, a group of fifth-grade students at Arbor School had the opportunity to participate in a Black History Month virtual trivia game. Jersey Cares coordinated this opportunity with corporate partner Fetch.
- The Committee is planning to reach out to Piscataway Boy Scout troops to see if they would be interested in building outdoor libraries at some of the schools.

Wellness Services

- The Haven is considering hosting another family night event in the spring. Information was shared about current Haven parent programming.

Other Business

- Mrs. Rashid opened discussion about the committee partnering with different organizations, and the possibility of celebrating cultural events at the district level.
- Details about the March 21st Muslim Student Association Iftar were shared.
- Mrs. Lane shared information about the Unsung Heroes initiative and proposed keeping in touch with those students to inspire current students.