

**MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, September 20, 2010
GAUNTLETT CENTER BOARD ROOM**

PRESENT: **Committee:** Mrs. Nancy Galbraith, Mrs. Dana Kauffman, Mr. Joseph Rufo

Board Members: Mr. Richard Sokorai

Administration: Dr. Merle Horowitz, Dr. Constance Bompadre, Mr. Chris Lee, Mrs. Toni Himes, Mrs. Sue Mecouch, Dr. Raymond McFall

I. Call to Order

Mrs. Galbraith called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Galbraith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Minutes of August, 2010

The minutes were approved by the committee.

IV. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved, along with one addendum item.

V. Discussion/Informational Items

1. What Works Curriculum Department Philosophy – Dr. Connie Bompadre

Dr. Bompadre stated that the Curriculum Department Philosophy summarizes work that was done last school year. Instruction, Standards and Curriculum and Assessment are interconnected processes that impact student success. The curriculum philosophy will be added to the website. Dr. Bompadre provided the committee with a handout.

2. Russell Study Group – Dr. Toni Himes

Dr. Bompadre is very impressed with the study group work and thought that the strategies learned and tried could benefit secondary teachers, too. Dr. Himes explained that the study group is part of the differentiated supervision model. Teachers can choose a text for an in-depth study. Last year the 5th grade team chose, When Kids Can't Read.

This year teachers chose the book, Summarization in Any Subject, which could be used at any grade level. Dr. Himes stated that summarization is one of the most powerful comprehension strategies there is. It helps with retention of material.

Two teachers presented their strategies. Charlene Garland used Bloom's Taxonomy which can be adapted to any grade level and any subject. Blooms Taxonomy consists of:

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Mrs. Garland said that Bloom's Taxonomy has an important tactile component for students with learning disabilities.

Mrs. Elaine Locher used cards with different categories to help students understand what they are learning. The cards were labeled character, setting, vocabulary, to just name a few. The students completely filled in a graphic organizer which helped to increase their comprehension level.

The second strategy used was Word Splash. Students read an article on Cloud Seeding. The students summarized the key components or key phrases and learned the key pieces of information. Mrs. Locher found the study group to be very successful.

3. Writing Plan – Dr. Toni Himes & Sue Mecouch

Dr. Himes stated that the teachers are focused on the importance of writing. Many of the shared strategies are integrated into science. Dr. Himes said that the more a student writes, the better writer he or she will become. The District Writing Plan is also on the website. In the Writing Plan, there is a Writing Across the Curriculum Content Piece that shows many examples for integrating writing in different content areas.

4. Science: Lab Reports – Mrs. Sue Mecouch

Mrs. Sue Mecouch worked with PHMS Reading specialist, Andrea Fiorentino, to develop a writing rubric for science lab reports. The lab report is a formal writing piece. Mrs. Mecouch put together a Professional Learning Group which consisted of high school and middle school teachers:

Fall of 2010 – PLC will collect exemplars, determine how to train teachers and students and determine what resources are needed.

Winter of 2010 – train all teachers using rubric and exemplars

Spring of 2010 – secondary science teachers will evaluate one written lab report using a rubric. Student work will be used for teacher reflection.

School Year 2011-2012 – students grades 6-12 will be required to write two formal lab reports per year. (Fall and Spring)

4a. Elementary Wiring – Chris Lee

This summer the tech department walked through the elementary buildings to identify what was wrong and to see if anything could be reused. Cable lengths were measured and existing network hardware was evaluated.

The current network is at capacity and barely supports the computer and security system; it will not support the phone system. When we have power outages, the security system goes down. The doors lock up, but the alarms don't work and the kiosks go down. In order to address this issue, the switching equipment needs to be upgraded and battery backup needs to be implemented. In order to reduce cost of the battery and number of switches, structured cabling should be used to consolidate the spread of network closets.

The next step is to approach Bonnett (who worked at the high school) to write a specification for bid. Work would begin in the summer.

5. Honor Level Courses – Dr. Connie Bompadre & Dr. Ray McFall

Last spring, some parents had questions about AP offerings and honors level offerings. The CIT committee said that there would be further discussion in the fall.

Dr. McFall presented to the committee a powerpoint on academic leveling at MNHS.

In summary:

2006/07 – consolidation of levels and redistribution of students for Social Studies

2007/08 – consolidation of levels and redistribution of students for English;

11th grade AP English was added

2007 – AP Language introduced (11th)

2009/10 – Honors level was eliminated for 12th grade English

Dr. McFall sees the AP as the Honors offering. At this point, AP and Honors courses are weighted the same. Dr. McFall stated that there used to be a much stricter entry into AP. Now it is an open enrollment. It is now in the hands of the parent and the student. Dr. McFall would also like to see the rigor raised in other levels, too.

Spokespersons, Ann Conca and Michele Montgomery, addressed the committee and made the following suggestions:

1. Reinststitute the Honors level classes so that there can be a middle ground for students who want to be challenged, but who do not wish to be burdened by college level coursework.
2. If “Honors” level cannot be reinstated or instituted where they previously did not exist for Fall of 2011, institute “soft tracking” or accelerated classes in 2011 for students to
 - a. Choose to be a little more challenged

- b. Be recommended for by teachers, or
 - c. Be selected based on their grades, performance in standardized tests, or other measures of academic performance. These accelerated classes could follow the same curriculum as the general academic level, but go into more depth and breadth of topics, and move through material at a faster pace.
3. Add more Honors math courses for 11th and 12th grade

Suggestions made by committee members:

- Discuss with content area supervisors
- Videoconferencing capabilities for purposes of closing gaps
- Weight only the highest level

One committee member felt that the district should be cautious about making too many changes too quickly.

Dr. Horowitz told the audience that she would like to dialogue, debrief and reflect with her administrative team and the committee. Budget implications would also have to be taken into consideration.

VI. Motions

The following motions were moved on the full Board.

- A. Motion to approve Ms. Vicki Teti's attendance to the Professional Learning Communities at Work Summit in Phoenix, AZ from February 23-25, 2011. The cost of the conference is \$689.00.
- B. Motion to approve the disposal of a textbook called, Write Source 2000, copyright 2000, that we no longer use. The Curriculum Office would like to give that book to students to use as a resource guide.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Paine