

Curriculum and Instruction Board Report

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The Curriculum and Instruction Office in the Junior and Senior High School continues its work to improve the educational experience of all students. Whether through curriculum initiatives, professional development experiences or ongoing projects, everything that we do aligns to the Strategic Plan, State and Federal expectations, and Best Practices in Education.

Curriculum Initiatives

Benchmark Testing

The Junior and Senior High School has increased its commitment to benchmarking. In grades six through ten, the MAP test including the math and reading sections of the test will each be given three times this year. The January administration will allow our teachers to evaluate the progress their students have made and enable them to plan using the rubrics that align to the test. We expect that this will allow teachers to focus directly to eliminate any deficiencies that the MAP test identifies and move students effectively towards proficiency and advanced proficiency.

In the Junior and Senior High School, teachers spent one more professional development half-day aligning and revising their assessments to current standards so that these tests can be administered during September, January/February and as final exams. In addition, these assessments serve as models that follow a practice of backwards design that show evidence that students have mastered essential questions found in curriculum maps. Adding these benchmarks in every class taught at the high school will enhance our continuously evolving program.

Benchmark Testing Analysis

Every teacher analyzed the benchmark testing results and created a plan to respond to the data that had been acquired through the process. Teachers are prepared to direct their curriculum in order to use the benchmark to demonstrate real growth. Many teachers were surprised by the evidence the tests revealed. For example, in some classes students displayed a large range of background information which teachers realized would necessitate differentiation. The teachers' own analyses immediately impacted many curriculum decisions.

AP Classes

We are continually working to enlarge the number of students who take one or more AP classes. More of our teachers have received CollegeBoard training and AVID Training.

Last year 93 juniors and seniors took one or more AP class. The number of passing scores remained high. According to the data that provided by the College Board, only Haddonfield, Moorestown and Cherry Hill in all of South Jersey outperformed our rate of passing! Last year we continued a trend of having fewer scores of a 1. In 2010, we had 48% of the tests received that score; in 2011, only 37% received that score. Additionally, in 2011 we had eight of our graduating seniors awarded AP scholar status (taking and scoring well on multiple AP tests) by the College Board.

This year, for the first time, we are offering Psychology AP. In addition, we continue to offer Biology, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Language and Composition, Literature and Composition, US Government, Music Theory, US History and Spanish for a total of 16 AP sections. Students will be taking Chinese AP and Probability and Statistics AP even though we do not offer these courses.

AP/ Honors Contract

More than two-thirds of our students in the high school have elected to challenge themselves by taking one or more Honors and/or AP courses. Letters and contracts were mailed to parents over the summer. The curriculum office monitored the return of the Honors/ AP contract, a document which we believe enhances the commitment of parents and students to the rigors of advanced course requirements.

The Core Plus Program

Last year we added the fourth and final section of the Core Plus math courses. This summer two of our high school teachers reviewed and revised the curriculum maps for the Core Plus courses. Besides filling some gaps that teachers had reported, the program now aligns to the Common Core State Standards that will be required for the 2012-13 school year.

Psychology AP

Last year we offered a semester psychology class. This year we are offering Psychology AP. Our teacher, Edward Maddison, attended AP training over the summer. The curriculum office ordered sufficient texts and arranged for submission of the syllabus to the College Board -- which was approved before school began and was added to our curriculum maps. The class has twenty-four enrolled students.

Juntos (Spanish for Native Spanish Speakers)

Last year, we offered a class in Spanish for those who have native or heritage speaking ability. These students in grades 9 through 11 are learning to use their speaking skills to enable them to read as well as write and speak grammatically. We have continued the program with a second year.

In this class, students work to enhance their literacy skills with the hope that as juniors or seniors they will be able to join the Spanish AP class and earn a passing score on the AP test and three college credits. We further believe that their academic success in Juntos will enable them to strengthen their skills in English class as well as inspire them to take other advanced, rigorous classes, especially AP classes. We anticipate a third year which will include advanced reading and writing assignments. We are certain that several of our upperclassmen are ready to succeed in AP next year.

Chinese IV

Seventeen students continue to develop their communication skills in speaking, reading, and writing. These students are working on complex grammar and are learning to exchange information and communicate their ideas. One student is studying additionally and planning to take the AP test this May. We hope to add Chinese AP next year.

AVID

Woodbury Junior and Senior High School became an AVID National Demonstration School, one of 120 in the world. In May, Joseph Jones, Denise Dunham, Donna Cohen, Maria Lario and some of our AVID students presented at the NJNCAG. Our students demonstrated and explained how AVID enabled Woodbury to offer AP opportunities to more of our students while enlarging the number who received a passing score on one or more AP class.

AVID evaluators have commented on several outstanding features evident in Woodbury: AVID teaching and learning strategies are evident in classrooms throughout the building; all students are encouraged to take rigorous classes; and all AVID students are enrolled in one or more Honors or AP class.

In December, Denise Dunham and I travel to Orlando to be featured National Presenters at the AVID National Conference. Our presentation entitled *Small School, Enormous AP Program* details all of the steps our district and school has taken to make us an environment that provides students with comprehensive opportunities for academic success.

New Summer Bridges Programs

This summer Woodbury Junior and Senior High School launched several additional summer Bridge courses. Bridge to AP Spanish enabled students who are interested in advanced Spanish classes to continue practicing over the summer. In addition, Bridges to AP US History and AP US Government separated from Bridge to AP English Literature and Composition and AP Language and Composition to offer each discipline separately. All of the Bridges courses ran successfully. Bridges to Enhanced Technology was also offered for the first time.

Professional Development

The Professional Development for New Jersey Teachers District Compliance Report

The state's five-year cycle for professional development began 2010-2011 school year. In order to document our teachers' compliance, our database records each staff member's attendance at professional development experiences. This enables the district to provide evidence that each teacher reaches the needed 100 hours within the five year cycle. We keep staff informed of the hours that they have completed each year so that they can steadily work to achieve the 100 hour goal.

The Battle of Red Bank Liberty Fellowship

This past summer, Red Bank Grant Participants experienced a tour of Gettysburg that was considered exceptional by all of the participants. The up-coming year, emphasis will be placed on the second half of the nineteenth century with topics to include the Gilded Age, industrialization, immigrant experiences, and the westward expansion. In the spring another field study will include a trip to the DuPont Hagely Factory Museum.

Core Plus Training

Over the summer, Eric Milou trained our Math department in in order to help them to update our maps to be in full compliance with the new Common Core State Standards. In addition he has six days of scheduled classroom visits. These visits allow him to coach individual teachers in the constructivist approach to mathematics that our school has adopted.

Inclusion Training

Once again, Kristin Corley led a summer workshop which was based on accommodations for special needs students in the general education classroom. This year Mrs. Corley focused on graphic organizers, time to work in teams and plan collaboratively and methods of modification. Sixteen staff members benefitted from this training. Kristin Corley and Eliza Cadorette are conducting weekly meetings to assist teachers in succeeding with special needs students.

New Teacher Training

This summer eleven new teachers joined our district staff and benefitted from an updated training schedule. Not only did they experience the traditional tour and guide to administration, technology and curriculum, but they also experienced an introduction to Differentiated Instruction, the district's use of data to drive instruction, AVID, the state's Professional Teaching Standards, and a view of Woodbury's School Culture.

Courageous Conversations

Through the use of PD360 and the leadership of Denise Dunham, the staff has engaged in the emotionally difficult conversations about race. The goal of these discussions was to enable the staff to enhance their approach to enable greater achievement for students of diverse backgrounds. A student panel shed light on the variety of student's attitudes. By using both the prepared video segments coupled with presentations, activities and discussions that occurred regularly throughout the year, this is one more step in the process to eliminate the achievement gap.

AVID Summer Institute

Eleven staff members, five of whom were new to AVID, attended Summer Institute in Chicago. These teachers attended morning classes for twenty hours in a particular area of concentration and spent the afternoons in site team meetings to plan to strengthen the AVID program throughout the next school year.

Three math teachers, John Travis, Marc Berg, and Natalie Barretta all attended a Math class to learn AVID Strategies for teaching math and taking notes in math classes. Trinna Savage, Donna Lacovara and Kathryn Bourquin each received training to lead the AVID elective class, while Colleen Fitzgerald enhanced her skills with an Advanced Tutorology session. Donna Cohen, Maria Lario, and Theresa Savage learned advanced strategies for critical reading to enable students to master the Common Core State Standards and AP classes. Marc Cannuli took a class to help students learn the essential skills for college readiness. In the afternoon we worked as a team to create plans to enhance the AVID program in the school and deeply understand the AVID mission.

AVID summer training is consistently among the most meaningful training programs for educators. Once again, teachers returned with a strong vision of how AVID Best Practices can help their students to achieve, and of how important they are to utilize.

Curriculum Writing

This summer several courses were mapped. Juntos 2, AVID for grades 8-12, and Chinese 4 were all completed. AVID was cascaded so that the classes would all build upon one another. In addition, they were aligned to the national expectations for AVID Elective Classes. Juntos allows our students to continue advanced study of Spanish for native and heritage speakers. Chinese 4 completed our fourth year and prepares our students to take AP Chinese.

AP Summer Training

This past summer several of our teachers attended a full week of training with the College Board, for AP Chemistry, AP Psychology, AP US History, AP Biology and trained for AP Art History (through a grant from the College Board), although we have not yet offered this class. All of their AP syllabi were accepted and approved by the College Board before school began.

Summer Smart Board Training

With additional Smart boards, more and more teachers want training and even teachers who have had training want to learn more about this extraordinary teaching tool. Sixteen teachers attended the Summer Intermediate or Beginner training which was taught by Sheldon Soper. Teachers experienced direct instruction as well as had the opportunity to create lessons using the tool. Teachers and students all love having this available in classrooms. As the district purchases more, we will need to repeat these trainings.

Teach like a Champion

Teachers throughout the building are reading and applying techniques of their choice to their pedagogy. This recent education best seller by Doug Lemov which features both a DVD and a summary of 49 excellent techniques has encouraged Woodbury teachers to add greater rigor to their classroom. This year, the book was featured in the New Teacher orientation and it continues to effect teaching styles throughout the building. As a result, techniques such as, "random cold calling (calling on students randomly without raised hands)," "right is right" (where a correct response is the only one accepted, not one that is close to right) and "100%" (where all students are expected to participate and complete every activity) are part of the vocabulary of the staff.

Critical Reading

AVID's Jonathan LeMaster and two additional critical reading experts trained all of our teachers in critical reading strategies. The Common Core State Standards requires that all of our teachers become reading teachers to teach students. We worked through processes using AVID Weekly articles so that teachers would learn about the web site as well as the Best Practices for critically accessing expository texts.

Mentoring

This year we have one provisionally certified teacher who is in need of mentoring. Kerri Crowley meets regularly with her Mentor, Cheryl Federline. Together they have worked to make Mrs. Crowley's transition to becoming a full-time staff member smooth. In addition, Ms. Crowley, Mrs. Federline and I meet once each month to discuss her teaching experience in order to fulfill the details of the District Mentoring Plan.

Program of Studies

Each year we update the Program of Studies in order to be certain that it reflects the current offerings and expectations for all high school students. Each year, changes in course descriptions, credit requirements, additions of new classes and the deletion of others require that the book be updated. Denise Dunham, Ed Murphy, the leadership team and department chairs all contribute to not only keep the book current but also to align the program.

Textbook Coordination

In order to be certain that our textbooks are regularly updated, the curriculum office maintains and updates a database of textbooks. In addition, new and replacement texts are ordered. This year we added a new vendor who is able to deliver quality discount textbooks when we need to add replacements for lost books. The curriculum office seeks to buy books that are requested by departments at the lowest possible price by checking and comparison shopping among our vendors.

Gloucester County Curriculum Consortium

Each month I attend the Gloucester County Curriculum consortium where I learn about New Jersey and County initiatives. Meetings feature speakers who tackle transitions that districts must make to align ourselves to new expectations. Recent topics include the Harassment Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) educational components, Common Core State Standards, and transitions to the new assessment, the NJ Smart new Student Growth Percentiles, Common Course Codes, New Science programs, and professional training opportunities.

Student Teacher Practicum Coordination

This year we had three requests from Rowan for Clinical Practice Placements. In each of these instances, candidates are interviewed to ensure that we have candidates that will be an asset to our program. This fall we have had one English Placement and in the Spring we expect two additional placements. We have also had requests for initial practicums in which students merely observe rather than actually teach.

LPDC and SPDC

The 2011-12 Professional Development Plan was written by the School Professional Development Committees and the Local Professional Development Committee. The plan was submitted to the county and evaluated to make sure that it contained all of the required elements to be in compliance with the standards set forth by the Professional Teaching Standards Board. As a result, this year we will use this plan as foundation on which we will be building subsequent plans. The committee meets on a monthly basis to evaluate and review the plan and to plan some of the professional development experiences. This year we will have a new survey which we will use to modify the plan.

Library

Due to the purchase of updated equipment, such as SmartBoards, the library had an overabundance of equipment that was no longer being used. The curriculum office coordinated the selling of all of the out-dated equipment. In addition, the curriculum office has begun to oversee the library budget and oversight in the collection and acquisitions. I attend the Library Board Meetings at the Public Library and act as a liaison between the school and the public library.

As part of our library renovation efforts, we have added a personal touch to our “Read” posters that adorn the walls. If you are in the building, please stop in and visit us.