



EDUCATION/TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING PUBLIC MINUTES

December 7, 2022

Virtual Meeting - 8:30 A.M.

Committee Members: Beth Fiore, Chair

Randall Peach, Carolyn Podgorski, Carol Hample (alt.)

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools

Staci Beegle, Director of Pupil Services

Jason Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary

Dr. Stacey Brown, Humanities Supervisor

Sherry Krial, PD/Tech Supervisor

Sarah Pauch, Math, Science, Tech Supervisor

Anthony Tumolo, SEL Supervisor

Jim Belske, Technology Coordinator

Guests: Tim Charleston, Principal RMS and Ellen Goodfellow, Counselor RMS

Agenda

1. Special Education Behavioral Disabilities (BD) Program - Mrs. Beegle proposed opening an elementary BD classroom. This new BD classroom would be offered at TBS, we would need to hire 1 new teacher along with 1 paraprofessional with a behavioral tech background. TBS already has a social worker, school counselor, and behaviorist, so this BD classroom would make the most sense to be located at TBS.
2. Therapy Dog Proposal - Mr. Charleston and Mrs. Goodfellow proposed piloting an AAT - Animal Assisted Therapy program at RMS. A therapy dog program fits with the district's SEL goals and curriculum. Mrs. Goodfellow reached out to peer districts about their experience: Flem-Raritan, Alexandria Twp, East Brunswick, Princeton and Absecon have therapy dogs in their schools. The scope of the program would be to have students read to the dog in the library and/or classroom, have classroom visits to ease stress/build confidence in students, have student volunteers walk the dog for therapeutic reasons and to build leadership. In order to move forward with the program, the board needs to adopt a new policy. Alexandria and Absecon townships have a sample policy that we can look at. The policy should address proper certifications, liability insurance, vaccinations, and a security plan. Once a policy is adopted, the program would begin slowly with the dog first getting acclimated this Spring in counseling sessions and building up to classroom visits by the end of the year. A survey was given to staff, students, and parents several weeks ago and there was overwhelming support for the program with most respondents selecting the program would help with improving motivation and self-esteem, promoting acceptance, building trust, respect, and sense of belonging. For those survey respondents not in favor of the program (which accounted for about 2% of respondents) their concerns were: allergies, potential distraction, waste cleanup, animal attack or bite, liability, and no clear plan of action. A survey will be distributed again at the end of the school year to determine plans for continuing and/or expanding the program next school year. Dr. Hart is researching any costs associated with the program.

3. Summer Enrichment Programs & Coordinator - Mrs. Krial discussed the Summer Enrichment Program. Colleen Ogden has agreed to be the coordinator again this Summer. The classes will take place at the end of July and early August. This year there will be a new session 'Welcome to HBS.' Recruiting staff is taking place now.
4. List of Interventions Follow-up- As a followup to NJSLA district assessment results that were reported out in the October meeting, administrators have been identifying all possible interventions and supports for students in Language Arts and Math. The district is currently utilizing universal screening tools, curriculum content review, additional targeted word study and phonics instruction, individualized learning paths in iReady, analysis of Evidence Statements from NJSLA to develop school "area of focus," development and use of district Data Conversation Guide and deeper data analysis, Literacy consultants at RMS (new this school year), Administrative goals based on data, and Tier 1 Intervention Services. The programs that are funded through Esser/ARP Accelerate Learning programs include: Virtual Homework Help open to all students, after school tutoring available as needed by teacher, Littera Literacy tutoring as recommended by intervention criteria, and Summer Accelerate Learning in Math and ELA recommended by intervention criteria. Administrators are exploring additional programs such as in-school and after-school tutoring (K-8) and after-school clubs in STEM (Math) and Reader's Theater (ELA) grades K-5. Administrators will work to communicate these interventions out to parents and community members to encourage participation.
5. Safe Return Plan- The district is required to submit a revised Safe Return Plan every 6 months in order to receive Esser/ARP funding. This is on the Board agenda for approval.
6. Book Challenge Process - The school district received a formal book challenge for a book in the library. A book review committee has been convened in accordance with Policy 9130 Public Complaints and Grievances, which states the committee, comprised of professional staff members and community representatives, will report its findings to the Board.
7. Agenda items: Safe Return Plan and additional field trips
8. Next Meeting: Jan 10 at 8:30am

Summaries of Curriculum Revisions

N/A