



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees – Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 12th, 2022 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Trustees:

Jennifer McKee, Committee Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn, Committee Member
Jennifer Walsh, Committee Member

Others:

Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Erin Hunt, Instructional Coach
Melissa Romano-Lehman,
Instructional Coach
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum
Administrator
Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 pm by Committee Chair, Jennifer McKee.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed the minutes from the 12.01.21 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting and made an amendment on page three, paragraph one. The word "ICANN" was replaced with "I can...". The 12.01.21 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes were approved with this amendment.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. District-wide 6-12 Curriculum Review Process

The committee began the meeting by reviewing data from a Bryant kindergarten class. The committee reviewed the data that was obtained from the Acadience (K-1) Reading assessment from the beginning of the year and compared that score to the results of the Acadience assessment that was just given. The results showed that progress is being made, which is very exciting. Ms. Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator, commented. As part of the grant, our goal is to replicate this structure in all our schools. We have the school leadership team that meet monthly, and at the beginning of the year they set goals based on data and those goals are short-term and long-term goals. Their goal for kindergarten this year was to decrease the red by 32%. We are now at the winter benchmark, and they have met their goal by 15%, so they are on track to meet the 32% by the end of the year.

The committee moved on to discuss the District-wide 6-12 curriculum review process. Ms. Davidson commented. We've morphed, I think considerably in the last five to six years, in terms of how we go about the process of standards review, full adoption, or revision. In the past we had a seven-year cycle, and every year we reviewed an academic area. The thought was after seven years you would revisit it again. What we have morphed to as we've developed our PLC process in the District is more of a continuous review cycle for standards, curriculum, and intervention, and how we use data to drive those decisions. We have had questions about curriculum, and who makes those decisions and why those decisions might be made. So, I want to go backwards through this and start at the state level and move into how that translates into our Board policy, and how that translates into this process. So, to start at the state level, OPI puts together committees who look at national standards and determine how those national standards will translate into standards for the state of Montana. Then, the Board of Public Education adopts state standards. Montana is unique in that we have IEFA (Indian Education for All), and so we have national standards and to some extent, we can translate those into state standards, but we also must embed IEFA, so that that means we're adding to the national standards. At the District level, we look at national and state standards, and we are obligated to implement the state standards, but we can still bring components in from national standards if we want to when we're building our curriculum. Those state standard decisions are made at the state level, and once that decision is made, we have a window of time in which we are supposed to review those standards at the District level and implement curriculum so that we meet the standards and the learning goals for students. Standards are the learning targets and curriculum is the resources, scope sequence and pacing and how we go about the business of education and instruction at the District level to meet those standards.

The committee then discussed District policy for curriculum implementation and standards. Ms. Davidson commented. Ultimately, the decision regarding District curriculum is recommended by the Superintendent to the Board and the Board gives the green light, or there is discussion, and we go back and make some revisions, and we bring it back to the Board. Our obligation, again, is to meet state standards with District curriculum. The District curriculum is what the Superintendent brings to the Board. The state standards are non-negotiable, we don't get to change those. After that curriculum is approved by the District, we go about the process of looking at resources to help with the instructional side of the curriculum to meet state standards. The building principal is responsible for supervision and implementation of curriculum in a building and the teaching staff has the ultimate responsibility for not only developing that curriculum as we move through the process but implementing it in their classes. The committee then reviewed the Helena School District Curriculum Development, Content, and Assessment Policy (2015).

The committee then moved on to discuss resources. Ms. Davidson commented. In elementary, not a lot has changed. The reading series that we have still has books and workbooks, but there are more robust online components, online assessment components built in, and diagnostic assessments built in that we use. At the middle school, and at the high school there is a definite shift to robust online resources. Some of them are resources that we must purchase, and others are resources that are free.

The committee then discussed the draft for the process, and reviewed the Helena School District Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) document, which looks like a pyramid. Ms. Davidson commented. At the top of the process, you have the review of standards, which is an annual review. The standards review is the state level. Then you come down and it goes into two different categories, full adoption on the left and revision on the right. So, for instance, for Social Studies and Science, we're in full adoption on the left side. We have brand new state standards, and we need to align our curriculum to those standards in the District. The other side is revision, which is a continuous improvement cycle with our current curriculum. Math, 6-12, is in the middle of a revision right now. That will likely translate into some tweaking of course patterning as we move forward. We have ELA which we're continually reviewing, in part because we have a literacy grant and so they're on the right side right now. Once we move through looking at the state standards and a full adoption cycle and starting to determine what it's going to look like from a curriculum standpoint in the District, then we look at resources. We must define what we want to do first before we can look at how we're going to do it. The resources are the how. Then you move into the assessment components which can be built into the resources or purchased in addition to, depending on what we need, that should drive the rest of the decisions from there. Then you have the bottom tier that cycles through and then goes back up. We're constantly looking at assessment data and achievement data to try to determine what improvements we need to make in curriculum. The improvements in large part revolve around scope, sequence, and pacing. Our teachers sit down at the beginning of the year, and they look at curriculum and they do some revision. It means they're looking at the scope, sequence, and pacing which is-what we teach, in what order do we teach it, and for how long with each unit.

When we get into the assessment and instruction piece, we're also talking about multiple tiered systems of support (MTSS) which is the academic and social emotional side. So that's all part of the conversation. When you look at the left side of this triangle and it says District committee and building SLT, at no point does the District committee not consist of teachers and admin.

Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA, commented. It takes time to unpack these standards and we're really trying to work with the teachers on that as much as possible. These consultants work on it to, to unpack the standards, unfold them, really see what it is we're supposed to be teaching there and then make those decisions about what resources will help us with that. You have the standards, and you have the curriculum, but then you have the curricular resources, and you are choosing the resources that are going to best help you to teach the curriculum that's aligned to the standards.

Ms. Davidson commented. We have our K-5 Music and our Library Media, who pretty much completed their review process for curriculum and are ready to have conversations about that with the Board. On deck would be Social Studies and Science sometime next year when we get work completed. Our goal is fall but it could be winter or spring. It's just going to depend on how much work we can do between now and then.

The committee discussed the grant. We are in year three of a five-year grant, which will rollover into the 2023-2024 school year. The committee concluded the meeting by discussing test results and how that information would be given to parents once the test scores become available.

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no additional comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m. by Ms. McKee.