



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

Wednesday, January 12th, 2022 – 12:00 PM

This meeting will occur at the Lincoln Center (1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT. 59601) and via Microsoft Teams.

To participate remotely, please use this link on Microsoft Teams:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join>

Committee Purpose Statement: The Teaching and Learning Committee collectively works to operationalize the strategic priorities of the Helena Public Schools specifically in areas related to our goals and measures for teaching and learning.

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues, or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Review of 12.01.21 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes. (See Attached).

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. District-wide 6-12 Curriculum Review Process

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

VII. ADJOURNMENT



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Board of Trustees – Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 1st, 2021 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

<i>Trustees:</i>	<i>Others:</i>
Siobhan Hathorn, Committee Member	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
	Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director
	Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
	Christy Mock-Stutz, Instructional Coach
	Kayla Lunnon, Instructional Coach
	Meghan Schulte, Instructional Coach

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 pm by Committee Member, Siobhan Hathorn.

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 and approved the 11.03.21 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Process For Middle and High School Curriculum Review

Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director, commented. In the past we put committees together and we looked at standards, then we have textbook companies come in and do presentations and then we have all the teachers who've been to the presentations come together and make decisions about the resources we're going to purchase. Then we purchased the resources with the plan of implementing them the next year. I think it was an okay process. What we've come to find out as we move forward into PLCs and with the grant and having our instructional coaches, was the emphasis was more on the materials we were purchasing really, then a review of the standards.

What's happened with standards since then, is that they've evolved into more skills-based standards across the board. The new Social Studies standards that were just adopted and the science standards that have just been adopted have all shifted to skills-based more than content like Math and ELA. Math is the only one that has domains that are more content focused which in some ways makes it a lot easier to do. There must be a deeper dive into the standards to really understand them because the skills and what it looks like when a student is proficient at those skills is not dependent on taking a multiple-choice test all the time. Or just using the resource and rote memory and marching down the road with it on. There's a lot more that goes into it more than a pre-process and kind of tonal shift and instruction.

We have evolved in how we've managed curriculum review. I like to approach what we need for resources if possible, and we've been able to maintain it to some extent, with more of a yearly review of what curricular areas might need and what we can purchase at the time, as opposed to having a need in Math or Social Studies. We're not going to do the review and the adoption for those areas for another five or six years. So even though we know we have a need here we must wait for this event to occur before we can do anything about it. The last three or four years we did ELA, Math, Social Studies, World, and Modern Languages. Science had just been done before I came on board. We've updated all of those from about 2010 until about 2016. Since then, I have purchased when we see a need. We're constantly looking at what those needs are, and we have a much better handle on or idea of what holes there are that exist K-12, and what we can do to fill those holes.

With the grant we had our Instructional Coaches come on board. Christy, can you speak about your background.

Christy Mock-Stutz, Instructional Coach, commented. As a teacher I taught middle school Language Arts and Social Studies. Then I worked at the Office of Public Instruction in the Content Standards and Instruction Division for five years before coming here as an Instructional Coach in the District. I was part of the Social Studies standards adoption process at the state, so I had a close look at how those standards came to be, what decisions were made by the groups and how they integrated the Indian Education for All and the Social Studies standards. I've been happy to help with organizing the Social Studies curriculum work, because I have that background.

Kayla Lunnon, Instructional Coach, commented regarding her background. I have been a math teacher for the last 12 years because I still teach a class. I've been involved with a lot of the work we've done when we first went to PLCs and did the ICANN statements.

Meghan Schulte, Instructional Coach, commented regarding her background. I have been an English teacher for many years. I pushed a lot of our curriculum revisions and did some work revamping the units so that it was more cohesive and vertically aligned.

Ms. Davidson commented. We have Science, Social Studies, Math, and ELA represented on our coaching team. We have a well-rounded group which is more effective because we have people taking weight on different things.

Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA, commented. PLCs precipitated the change too because groups are meeting weekly, monthly, maybe on a larger scale, and they're looking at student data, and they're determining the gaps in the curriculum there. Then we've put up these living curriculum documents called year to glances and their scope and sequence and pacing guides for each curricular area. They're housed in SharePoint, and teachers can go in and look at those. There has been a shift in standards the last 10 to 20 years. We've gone from very content specific state standards to the Common Core. We're still content heavy, but very broad. Our state assessments are strictly aligned to standards. They're very explicit. The rigor that you must demonstrate to achieve those standards is much higher. And so, we need to be able to take a deeper dive into those standards. 75% of the jobs we're preparing our students for don't exist right now. So how do we prepare them-as 21st Century learners-for the world outside of K-12 education if we don't know what we're preparing them for? We must rely heavily on these standards. These standards have become a very robust set of learning targets that aren't so much about what the teachers are teaching but how they're teaching. We have the next generation Science standards, we have the new C three standards for Social Studies, and then our Math standards. They're really looking at the shift skills base, because if we're going to prepare these students for the world outside of K-12 education, they need skills that they can easily transfer into whatever they decide to do. And how we teach them those skills, transforms how we're teaching essentially.

Ms. Hathhorn commented. Can you please give an example of how the math numbers would be changing?

Ms. Hess replied. They haven't changed so much, it's more that we're taking our robust dive into them to see how they spiral and build on each other in that vertical alignment.

Ms. Mock-Stutz commented. Right now, we are looking at this K-12 vertical alignment and figuring out the best laid plans where we know our data is showing us that we're falling short. We look at how we first make that work within the time constraints that we have, and then create a plan.

Ms. Davidson commented. We have a Math consultant who has been helping us for a little over a year. She's been working with middle school and high school, but last spring was the first time we brought her in for elementary and the teachers loved it. We just did another round the first week in November with Elementary and evening virtual classes that they could take and get the manipulatives and get the training that way.

Ms. Hess commented. We've done these standards, Crosswalks, with Science and with Social Studies. We do an Excel spreadsheet and look at the old set of standards, we look at the Montana standards, and we look at the national standards. We then look at our current curriculum and what they're teaching and what standards they are hitting. Then you start to do this comparison of the state versus the national. The Montana State Standards are kind of the floor and so you now have an option to adopt the national standards in the content area. We've gone that way with Science and with Social Studies because our state assessments- Smarter Balanced, ACT, even iReady-are all aligned to these national standards. The standards are much more robust and all-encompassing of not only telling you what to teach, but how to teach it and that can really help guide teachers and what they're doing and what the curriculum will look like. The other thing is when we bring on these national consultants, they're working with these national standards. So, they can really help us to unpack that. Standards have taken a huge pendulum swing; they've gone from being very content specific to more skills based. And so, these consultants are helping us to braid together content standards and an assessment. So, we can see how all that works together, both vertically K-12, and then horizontally within grade levels.

Ms. Davidson commented. In the past, we've had the consultants at the grant schools specifically for literacy, but nevertheless, this is kind of what opened our eyes to the power of all of this. And we have brought subject area consultants on for several years during our June conference. We've had Kirk Robbins here to work with our science teachers. He's out of Washington and teaches methods classes at a college and is a former high school science teacher and very, very knowledgeable on national standards. We have Michele Douglass out of California, and her Math is just phenomenal. I think her strength is being able to talk to teachers about instructional practices, and why they're important. We just brought Ali Brown on for Social Studies. She's a consultant out of New York who understands the standards backwards and forwards. We decided to do a monthly meeting with a consultant after school in each of these areas. Not all teachers can make that kind of commitment after contract hours, so what we are doing is videotaping the after-school opportunity. We have about 11 to 15 teachers that participate, but it's not all the teachers from each content area. So, we tape it and we put it in TEAMS so anybody can come watch it at any time, but Ali took it a step further and did a lesson plan. Part of it is watching her taped, then it would stop, and it has some questions to answer with some interactive components. They can use it in PLC time with their whole department once a month to watch that engaging conversation and then can give us feedback. Then the next month we have another one and we debrief.

Ms. Hess commented. Right now, it's foundational work. They are working with the teachers on understanding the standards and getting them to realize what the shifts in the standards and the shift in teaching is. The real writing of curriculum won't come until the summer when we have time to sit down but even then, we want to be mindful of stakeholders and their time and getting enough stakeholders at the table to do the work and make sure that everyone feels like they have a voice. We've tried to be thoughtful with the process and including as many people as possible in different areas. We've designated people as PLC liaisons, so we have teacher leaders for each of the content areas so that they can help lead some of this work, and we've done a book study with them as well. The process of this takes much more time than it used to.

Ms. Lunnon discussed topics such as why we're teaching what we're teaching, how much time we probably should be spending on it, introduction versus mastery, and the process of working with the consultants.

Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent, commented. Before I leave, I would like to honor this group. They have strong content, expertise, and they're even stronger in instructional practices when they deliver the district effort. When they're in the meetings working with the consultant, they're talking bridging consultant language between the staff they know and how we are going to apply. That work is heavy, deep, interactive, and greatly appreciated. We've made a real strong commitment as a group to unfold these curriculum processes with the recipe that Jocelyn talked about. That dedication to help our staff understand the standards of the time and what their expectation is with the standards, then the skills that students must demonstrate from those standards. But if we just buy a resource, for example, without foundational work, then we won't help us. So now all that work that's going on in that is great, and our consultants have been strong with us in that recipe. So, it's really good work and I'm so excited.

Superintendent Rex Weltz commented. I am most satisfied and happy about the fact that we're doing this across the district. It's much more consistent now or district wide K-12 than it ever has been before because there are pockets of greatness going on.

The committee proceeded to discuss the curriculum budget, resources, teaching basic skills, providing a balanced curriculum, and the curriculum process. Ms. Davidson commented. When you look at our core areas, and when we talk about skills, for the most part, we're talking about a student's ability to pick up anything, read it, understand it, come to conclusions about it and communicate. Those are the big skills in the creativity piece and pulling all that together. That's what's going to get them through.

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair, commented. I've learned a lot today and the same goes for the discussion we had last month, so I really appreciate that. It's clear that you're committed to continuous improvement. Policy 2015 calls on the Board to approve changes to curriculum. It sounds like you're talking mostly about standards and revision of standards and alignment of standards. But what qualifies as a curriculum change significant enough that you are going to take it to the board for the board to review?

Ms. Davidson commented. When the state Board of Public Education adopts new standards, we as a school district, have I believe, five years to review those standards and build our curriculum documents to align to state standards. New to us last year, and as of this July, are Science and Social Studies. So, we're doing this work to put together those curriculum documents for the District, aligned to new standards to bring to the Board. Our hope is that we will have something in Social Studies and Science that we can come up with next fall. That's when we would come to the board with the newly aligned Science and Social Studies. I also have music teachers working on their curriculum review, they have new standards also. During COVID, Health and Music both had semi upgraded standards with the state. The Music group is trying to finalize their document and they would like to bring their document to the board as well in the fall.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m. by Ms. Hathhorn.