



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Kristin Fox  
BERNARDS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT  
101 PEACHTREE ROAD | BASKING RIDGE, NJ 07920

kfox@bernardsboe.com  
WWW.BERNARDSBOE.COM  
(908) 204-2600 ext 118

Curriculum Committee Agenda  
July 20, 2023 9:00 - 11:00 am  
BOE Conference Room

**BOE Members in Attendance:** Jennifer White, Larry Rascio, Keith Molinari, Timothy Salmon

**Administrators in Attendance:** Kristin Fox, Stephanie Smith, Sean Siet, Thomas Misiak, Kathy Stotler, John Terry, Nick Markarian

## 1. Board Agenda Items

### a. Action items to be placed on the next board agenda

#### i. Magruder's American Government Interactive

Staff recommended textbook proposed at May 5, 2023 Curriculum Committee meeting. Two community members came to the Board Office to review the book but did not ask any questions. No questions were received from Board members. One Board member said he didn't not like the book.

Approval will be an agenda item to be voted on at the July 24, 2023 meeting.

### b. Items to be listed under "Report on Progress":

#### i. New Text for AP Physics C

Link is to Textbook Recommendation Form and information about the book is posted on the Curriculum Department textbook webpage ([URL](#)). AP Physics C is a course for seniors that are high-achieving Physics students (annual enrollment is ~40 students). Students are eligible to sit for the AP test in Mechanics and the AP test in Electricity & Magnetism.

This book, Physics for Scientists and Engineers, 6th Edition by Tipler and Mosca, is the number one AP Physics textbook in the country. Although there is no digital access and no online resources, the teacher likes the in-depth treatment of calculus in the book and the step-by-step walk-through of problem solutions. The proposal is to have a class set and books for students to take home. A copy of the textbook will be in the Board office for public review.

## 2. Discussion Items

a. 2023-24 Meeting Dates

Committee meeting dates through January are: 7/20\*, 9/8\*, 10/6, 11/3, 12/1, 1/4\*

b. Post Secondary Planning Programming

The administration is exploring options to provide students with additional opportunities to explore post secondary pathways throughout their time at Ridge. Additionally, at the June 8, 2023 BREW from some students on the panel expressed a desire to have had more interaction with their school counselor and/or SAC throughout high school.

The current programming for students is as follows:

- 9th graders have the opportunity to meet with their counselors at a minimum 2x/year (once to check-in early in the year and once at the end of the year for scheduling);
- 10th graders participate in a lesson on Naviance during the school day delivered by a school counselor and a minimum of one meeting with their counselor for scheduling;
- 11th graders meet with their school counselor for a post-secondary planning assembly in the fall and in the spring they meet with the school counselor individually for a personalized post secondary planning session and scheduling;
- 12th graders meet with the school counselor for a post-secondary planning assembly, an individual meeting with their school counselor in the fall and the spring to finalize their plans.

Options for providing additional Post Secondary programming were discussed. This could be delivered a number of different ways; including optional workshops during opportunity period or potential graduation credit requirements. Ms. Fox and Ms. Smith shared that the staff are excited to begin offering workshops this fall on a variety of Post Secondary Planning topics to gauge interest and work through logistical challenges. The administration will continue to develop these options and review them with the Committee for approval as required.

c. Italian Program

Ms. Stotler notified the Committee that the AP Italian teacher at Ridge is resigning as of July 24, 2023. This teacher was also teaching Italian 1, Italian 2 and Honors Italian. This resignation was unexpected and some students may drop their choice of Italian as a result.

Finding a replacement Italian teacher is a significant challenge. There are currently 10 vacancies for Italian teachers in New Jersey, and many teaching colleges have eliminated their World Language programs. The District is part of the State's Emergency Pilot Program which allows districts to hire people without their teaching certificates to fill vacancies

(we have been doing this to help staff the Special Education program). Ms. Stotler also presented the World Language enrollment data going back to 2015-16 ([World Language Program Enrollments](#) – the left column is enrollment, the right column is percentage of students taking a language). Ms. Stotler also added that, for this past year, there were 2 sections of AP French, 2 sections of AP Spanish and 1 section of AP Italian.

Ms. Stotler does have a candidate to be interviewed. However, if this person does not work out and there is no viable candidate by August 1, the District needs a contingency plan. Unfortunately, given the lack of viable candidates to teach this course workload and the declining number of students choosing Italian, Ms. Stotler shared potential solutions the district is exploring in the event no viable candidate is found. One option would be to phase-out of the Italian program – telling the 45 incoming 6th graders and 17 students at Ridge that chose Italian 1 to choose another language. The students in the Italian program at WAMS and Ridge would be allowed to continue their Italian education as the program phases out over the next 4-5 years.

One Board Member asked whether the District will be in the same position with the French and Latin programs, given that these programs have similar enrollment numbers as Italian. Ms. Stotler said that this could happen with the French program, but the Latin program is extremely strong and one of a handful in the state – so candidates will likely be available.

One Board Member asked if the District could, instead of phasing out the entire Italian program, eliminate Italian at WAMS and just offer it at Ridge. Under this proposal, the District would allow WAMS students in 7th and 8th grade to continue Italian (there is a Spanish teacher at WAMS that is also certified in Italian), and Italian 1 at Ridge would not run this year but be restarted next year. Also, it could be possible to have AP Italian run every other year, like AP Latin.

Ms. Stotler, Ms. Fox and Mr. Siet will provide an update on the interview and about various options for phasing out or continuing the program at the August Committee meeting.

**Post-Meeting Update:**

Since the Curriculum Committee meeting, a viable candidate has been found and is on the 8-28-23 BOE meeting agenda for approval under Personnel.

Separately, one Board member asked whether there were any languages that were growing as Italian recedes. Ms. Stotler explained that funds could be available from third party organizations to start programs in Mandarin, Farsi and Hindi. While there has been some interest in offering these languages in the past, particularly Mandarin, when offered, the number of students who selected the course did not support implementation of the program.

- d. [RHS Alum Request to interview staff for college thesis](#)  
A Ridge alum requested to interview staff members for their college thesis. There were no objections from the Committee about this request.

e. Sociology Course/Textbook

The plan for the high school sociology book is to rebind the old textbooks and the summer curriculum project will focus on revising the scope and sequence of the course to reflect the rotating drop schedule.

Several concerns were raised by Board members at the June 22, 2023 Board meeting regarding the proposed Schaefer book. Mr. Terry presented responses to the concerns raised ([here](#)). Ms. Fox and Mr. Terry addressed each of these concerns. Citations from the book were provided to explain how it addressed topics around marriage/family trends, gender, gender-role socialization, resources for LGBTQ teens, and the coronavirus. Ms. Fox and Mr. Terry shared how the book offered data and research and opportunities to consider various perspectives on issues some BOE members had expressed concern about. Ms. Fox and Mr. Terry also noted that the course is an elective and while the textbook was contemplated with maximum student accessibility in mind, the course may still not be a good fit for all learners.

Ms. Fox also asked that Board members please bring their concerns to her or to the Committee so that they can be addressed and considered by the full Board prior to discussion and/or vote.

f. Health Curriculum - Board Resolution Follow Up

i. *Grade 2: Correction to May 5 Curriculum Committee Minutes*

Ms. Fox began with a correction to the Curriculum Committee report from the May 5, 2023 Committee meeting which was publicly reported at the May 22, 2023 Board Meeting which was a BT Connect meeting. In that report, it was incorrectly stated that for standard 2.1.2.PGD.5 - "List medically accurate names for body parts, including the genitals" - 2nd grade teachers would provide students with 8 medically accurate names for genitals, which are listed in the teacher's edition of The Great Body Shop; the student version of The Great Body Shop does not include any names for genitals. In fact, for the 2022-23 school year, the 2nd grade teachers only provided students with the medically accurate names for 4 body parts - buttocks, penis, vagina and breasts. This change was made during curriculum writing based upon both staff and parent feedback. I apologize for the mistake in reporting.

ii. *Survey Response Review*

1. [2023 Health Community & Parent Survey: Condensed Version](#)
2. 2023 Health Community Survey Analysis & Open ended responses
3. 2023 Health Education Parent Survey: Open ended responses

Ms. Fox provided a summary of the survey response data. There were 271 responses to the community survey; 534 total responses with 349 unique responses to the parent survey. Survey response totals are provided in the table below.

iii. Opt Out Process

1. Final numbers 2022-23

For the 2022-23 school year, 42 out of 4698 students opted out of at least one lesson in the Health Curriculum. Per-grade numbers provided in the table below.

2. Revised Process

a. Family Letter- [Kindergarten](#)

b. [Opt Out Form - Grade 5](#)

For the 2023-24 school year, Ms. Fox proposed that the letter (linked above) regarding the Health Curriculum and opt-out form (linked above) would be sent to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. The letter will include a link to Rubicon and Atlas where parents can review the curriculum and course materials for all Units and Lessons, a list of all learning outcomes for each unit and resources used in the lesson including reading materials, worksheets, videos and worksheets. The letter will also include the new Opt-Out form, which will identify Units and Lessons applicable to their child and give parents the option to select specific Units and/or Lessons to opt-out of. One Board member asked to include language in the letter reminding parents that they can opt their students out of instruction on any topic, instead of calling out the 12 standards. Parents will also be notified in advance of classroom instruction, providing parents with another opt-out reminder. For Grades K-5, this will occur at least one week prior to the beginning of each unit and for Grades 6-8 this will occur at the beginning of the marking period when the child begins their Health course.

If parents would like to opt their students out of any Unit and/or Lesson, the District asks that parents use the Google Form that will be linked in the letter. The form output is processed by principals and classroom teachers, and will allow the district to track responses (e.g., so that individual letters or emails do not get overlooked), follow up with parents where necessary and ensure that opt-outs are properly recognized and implemented.

- iv. [Review of 12 identified standards for Board discussion](#) 7-24-23
  - 1. [End of 2](#)
  - 2. [End of Grade 5](#)
  - 3. [Middle School -Revised Scope and Sequence](#)

Ms. Fox asked that the Board members review the survey response data for potential discussion at the August 28, 2023 Board meeting. For the July 24, 2023 Board meeting, Ms. Fox asked that Board members indicate whether the 12 standards identified as controversial by a majority of the Board be called out on the letter and opt-out form that will go out to parents. As shown in the linked document, the proposal is to re-sequence the middle school curriculum, which will be finalized and presented to the Committee at the August meeting.

### **3. FTGOTO**

## Opt Out Requests

Grade	# of individual students (actual opt outs)	Total # of opt out requests	# of requests who later changed their mind
K	0	0	1
1	4	6	1
2	8	13	1
3	6	17	5
4	1	2	1
5	4	7	2
6	2	2	0
7	9	11	0
8	3	17	0
9	2	2	0
10	0	0	0
11	2	2	0
12	1	1	0
	42	81	11
<i>11 submitted requests changed their minds after communicating with teacher and/or principal</i>			
<i>3 opted out of Suicide Prevention and 2 opted out of Becoming a Lifelong Learner</i>			

\*No change since the 6-2-23 Curriculum Committee meeting

## Final Survey Responses

Parent Survey		Community Survey	
Grade	# responses	Grade Band	# responses
K (257)	53 (21%)	K-2	96
1 (297)	42 (14%)		
2 (306)	39 (13%)		
3 (315)	36 (11%)	3-5	102
4 (345)	65 (19%)		
5 (359)	64 (18%)		
6 (380)	30 (8%)	6-8	99
7 (369)	48 (13%)		
8 (384)	55 (14%)		
9 (397)	20 (5%)	9-12	89
10 (416)	32 (8%)		
11 (434)	25 (6%)		
12 (439)	25 (6%)		
TOTALS* (4698)	534* (11%) These do not represent unique respondents		271*
25 responses do not have login information 349 unique respondents			

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Salmon