



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 2013**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Judith Houle, Superintendent of Schools (present); Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Ms. Christine Vigneux, Belchertown High School Principal (present)

VISITORS: Ms. Eliza Chappell

MINUTES

- I. Call Subcommittee meeting to order
Dr. Tsoumas called the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- II. Public comment regarding items on the agenda
None
- III. Subcommittee meeting minutes for approval
 - A. July 30, 2013
MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2013 Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting, as presented. Dr. Tsoumas seconded the motion.
VOTE: 2-0-0, approved unanimously
- IV. Reports and recommendations of the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
 - A. Virtual High School pilot: Spring 2014
Dr. Houle stated that as part of the Race to the Top grant, the high school is trying to increase students' access to the recommended MassCORE program of studies. A pilot of the Virtual High School was included in the grant for this fiscal year, and that pilot is set to begin during the spring semester. There will be a maximum of 30 seats available for students to take advantage of online courses with topics and content that they would not otherwise have access to as part of the current high school offerings. Dr. Houle noted that Ms. Vigneux and Mr. Brennan Murray, BHS Library/Media Specialist and VHS Coordinator, have put together procedures for student participation. It was decided that under the first requirement for eligibility, students in ninth grade will not be eligible to join the program, limiting it to 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. If accepted into the VHS program, students will be required to meet with the VHS Coordinator five times a week during his/her directed

study hall, or by other arrangement with the coordinator, in order to monitor progress and assignments. Students will be limited to taking one VHS course per semester and will earn 2.5 credits for the successful completion (a grade of 65% or higher) of the course. This grade will be recorded on the student's final official transcript whether the student receives credit or not, and Ms. Vigneux stated that these courses will count towards the student's GPA, as well as athletic eligibility and participation in extracurricular activities.

Dr. Knapp asked if this program will be open to School Choice and Home School students, and Dr. Houle stated that those students will not be eligible during this pilot program. She also noted that this program will be reassessed at the end of the school year with regard for plans to move forward with it.

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to recommend approval by the School Committee of the Virtual High School pilot in spring 2014, with procedures for eligibility amended to include students in grades 10 through 12, with ninth graders being ineligible to participate. Dr. Tsoumas seconded the motion.

VOTE: 2-0-0, approved unanimously

B. Update on professional development in reading instruction for elementary/middle school teachers

Mr. Cameron reported that he has been working with Lesley University in Cambridge, MA to offer two professional development activities for reading instruction in December. The first program, "When Readers Struggle", will be a 2-day workshop offered to K-3 teachers on December 5th and 6th, and will be available for up to 30 participants. The second reading workshop will be offered to teachers in grades 3-8 and will take place on December 16th and 17th, and will also be open to 30 participants. On December 18th, there will be a follow-up with the same presenter for teachers who took this workshop in the spring in order to share feedback from that session. Dr. Houle commented that Lesley University is a premier source for professional development in reading.

V. Unfinished business
None

VI. New business
None

VII. Subcommittee correspondence

- A. Agenda: Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee Meeting, November 12, 2013
- B. Minutes: Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee Meeting, July 30, 2013
- C. Virtual High School spring pilot proposal

VIII. Adjourn

MOTION: Dr. Knapp moved to adjourn the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee meeting at 6:50 p.m. Dr. Tsoumas seconded the motion.

VOTE: 2-0-0, approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathryn A. Petersen

Kathryn A. Petersen
Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

Michael Knapp, Michael Knapp, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

- Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.
- Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.
- Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee of the School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the Subcommittee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns.

