

MONTROSE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER
MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2010 6:00 P.M.

Mrs. Pam Staats
Chairman

Mr. Michael F. Ognosky
Superintendent of Schools

Curriculum Committee Meeting

I. February 4, 2010 Curriculum Committee meeting began at 6:00 PM in the Community Learning Center of the Junior-Senior High School.

II. Board Members Present: Chairperson Pam Staats, Doug Wilcox, Kathy Mordovancey and Mary Homan

Administrators Present: Mike Ognosky and Jim Tallarico

Teachers Present: Joe Festa, Janeen Miller, Bill Walker, Deb Lewis, John Koloski and Eric Powers

III. There were no items of Old Business discussed at this evening's meeting.

IV. The following items were discussed under New Business at this evening's meeting:

- **Review of proposed changes in the Advancement Placement Program:**

Mr. Tallarico and the teachers present reviewed the concerns that they currently have with the Advanced Placement program at the Junior-Senior High School. Those concerns included:

- The current method of student selection for the various Advanced Placement courses and the resultant class sizes. Currently, the criteria for selection into an Advanced Placement course are vague, and the process for selection is not delineated.
- There is a very small percentage of the students taking the Advanced Placement examinations and the reason for not taking the exam is not always financial.
- There are a number of students who take a multiple number of Advanced Placement classes in a given school year and their ability to handle that course load is not always at the level required to have success in those classes.
- The students who typically take Advanced Placement courses are "high motor" students who are involved in many other extracurricular and co-curricular activities. That sometimes results in excessive absences for school activities.
- There is a need for cross-curricular discussions among the Advanced Placement teachers. They have much in common with each other in regard to the concerns and issues they face and they have requested to have a Department Chairperson for the Advanced Placement Department with the same functions of the other Department Chairs.

Mr. Tallarico and the teachers present then offered their proposed remedies to address the concerns listed above:

- There is a need for an organized, structured selection process in order to develop the enrollments for the Advanced Placement classes and that process must involve the students, parents and teachers of the Advanced Placement courses. To that end, the teachers proposed an interview process of prospective candidates that have been nominated for consideration by their teachers from the previous year.
- During that interview process, the teachers would convey the Advanced Placement philosophy of the District as well as the classroom guidelines regarding attendance, grading, etc. that a student would have to abide by in order to enroll in the class. The students, in essence, would be “contracted” to be an Advanced Placement student and agree prior to enrollment to those stipulations. During the interview process, the teachers would gather information from the nominee and a determination would be made as to which of the Advanced Placement courses would best fit their future plans.
- At the mid point of the course a meeting would be held involving the student, teacher and parent to discuss the potential of taking the examination for that Advanced Placement course. Taking the exam would not be a requirement of the course – many of the teachers present have attended national seminars in their course area and there was a strong consensus that not all students should be required to take the examination and the interview process would “find” those students who should take the examination. Financial concerns will not be a hindrance for the scheduling of the examination.
- For those students who then schedule to take the examination, flexible options for additional tutoring time will be developed in order to assist the student in preparation for the examination.
- The process will be reviewed annually by the administration and Advanced Placement teachers and changed as recommended.

- **Review of items from the Graduates Meeting in December:**

Mrs. Staats led a discussion with the teachers, administration and board members present regarding the concerns brought up during the graduates’ forum in December. It was explained that everyone realizes that it is a very non-scientific survey of concerns, but each should be evaluated and discussed. Mrs. Staats then reviewed the following concerns:

- Thanked Mr. Festa for helping them in their preparation for making public presentations.
- Thanked Mr. Powers as they felt he did a great job preparing them for their Senior projects which assists with presentations and interviews.
- Include in the curriculum a review of how to conduct personal finances. Almost all of the students present knew nothing about balancing a checkbook, etc.
- Felt they could still have more practice with analytical skills – more articles to analyze and defend their own opinions.
- They requested more experience writing papers. They felt well educated about format, presentation, grammar, etc., but need practice at writing more extensive papers in preparation for what they face in college.
- Need more work on the preparation of power points and presentations based on those power points.
- We are very up to date in regard to technology equipment, but they do feel some teachers still need more assistance with teaching utilization of that equipment.
- They felt unprepared in making choices in regard to college selection and expressed a hesitancy in utilizing guidance due to lack of privacy.

- Suggested that we advise students to take four years of a language as many found their college choice looked for that.
- Those students going into the services request to speak to people from all branches of the service, not just recruiters representing those branches. They felt they would get a better idea of what they were getting into.
- When asked what they would change they suggested that students need more challenges – most felt they hardly studied, but were still able to get great grades.
- They also suggested that students have more autonomy and less coddling by the teachers. Juniors and Seniors should not be reminded of missed assignments, they should learn to get them done on their own in preparation for college.
- They suggested we need more work with preparation of resumes and interviews.
- Finally, they suggested that students be required to complete more reading on their own. The biggest adjustment that many experienced as they went to college was in the monitoring of the reading that was required for each of their classes.

D. Open Forum – Mr. Ognosky explained that there will be a change in the PSSA testing of 11th grade students. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has petitioned the United States Department of Education to consider the utilization of the “Keystone Examinations” as a replacement for the current PSSA 11th grade test.

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Mike Ognosky

Mike Ognosky, Superintendent