

**Meeting Notes for Joint Primaries Curriculum Meeting
10/18/2021**

Meeting included:

PTA and SEPTA Primary Curriculum Reps

Ms. Bellovin

Dr. Viscovich

Mrs. Vota

Mrs. Pignetti

Neha Bejaj, SEPTA Curriculum Coordinator

Anna Allsbrook, PTA Curriculum Committee Chair

Gillian Burns, Hemlock PTA Director

Ms. Cardella, District STEAM coordinator

1. Social Emotional Learning

i. What does it look like?

District now has a mental health partnership with Northwell Health. This partnership was discussed at the Oct. 13, 2021 BOE meeting. The links to presentations can be found here:

[PPS on Mental Health](#)

[Northwell Presentation](#)

There is a focus on increasing opportunities for both structured and unstructured play in order to foster the development of age-appropriate social skills. There is a combination of explicit instruction through literature and social emotion learning curriculum, as well as the use of structured/unstructured play centers, particularly in K, where those students may have missed opportunities for play in preschool due to the pandemic. We are noticing deficiencies in both grades. First grade teachers are addressing these needs, too, with direct instruction.

Recess allows for a variety of choice. In addition to the playground/blacktop/grass areas, students have access to oversized games such as checkers and “life size” Legos. The equipment may vary between schools. Principals asked us to follow up on the status of PTA grants related to more of this type of equipment to ensure equity of access to these experiences amongst the three primaries.

ii. How is it implemented in the classroom? A collaborative effort of school personnel, including classroom teacher, school psychologist, and social worker, and principals in many cases. The social worker is pushing in a minimum of 1/x per month to each class and is available for further consult with the teacher or classroom to target

class specific areas of need. The Second Steps program is being used in the classrooms by the classroom teacher in conjunction with teachers. There are broad topics as well as classroom-specific topics that might be generated dependent on specific class needs. In addition, teachers utilize parts of the Sanford Harmony program to generate “conversation starters” to facilitate discussion related to social-emotional topics.

- iii. Recess Equipment Grants: PTA/SEPTA to follow up on status of additional grants.

2. Math Update

Ms. Cardella, STEAM Coordinator, outlined the process for choosing a replacement for the Go Math! resource for primary and elementary students because Go Math! is being discontinued by the publisher. A good math curriculum must achieve Focus, Coherence, and Rigor; in essence, a balance between mathematical conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge. Garden City schools follow the NYS math standards for their curriculum but use additional resources such as Go Math!

6 Programs were considered:

Math in Focus

Eureka Math

Into Math (GoMath’s “rebranding”)

Math Expressions

i-Ready (options available for grades K-8)*

Illustrative Math (options available for K-12)*

*These two resources were selected for piloting in the primary and elementary schools. Although there are middle and high school options, the district is not bound to use the same resource at higher levels. Districts will often have different math curricula for lower levels and secondary levels dependent on the profile of their learners.

Some peer districts have opted to pilot resources as we are doing while others opted to select a resource and begin without piloting. Ms. Cardella is following up with what other high-achieving districts are doing.

What will Pilot look like?

Parents from pilot classes will be informed prior to the pilot via email or letter. One unit from each of the two math resources will be piloted between Oct. and Jan. so that the same classes can experience each of the two resources, and their strengths and limitations can be compared. Surveys of teachers and parents will be completed—and assessment and observation of students will be conducted—in order to ascertain the perceived strengths and limitations of each resource by all stakeholders.

3. Project-based learning

Currently, PBL learning occurs during specials such as art and music, where there is intersection with several different areas of curriculum. It also occurs at the classroom level. The K-12 Curriculum Coordinators and Directors will be involved in facilitating the development of meaningful project-based learning experiences at the primary level. The goal is for these experiences to achieve an interdisciplinary, cross-sectional curriculum experience and create opportunities for hands-on engagement across all classrooms.

4. Homework

The goal is for homework to be meaningful and additive to the child's experience. As a policy, HW is always a review and never new material. Parents should give the teachers feedback if homework is taking longer than 20 minutes. Teachers can make modifications that would address these concerns

5. Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

The new MTSS system provides for built-in supports and earlier identification. The full program details were presented at BOE meetings on September 14 & 21. The BOE presentation about MTSS link can be found [here](#). Please reference the [quick parent guide](#) for an overview. More specific details can be found in the [parent guide](#). SLPs have begun push-ins to primary schools for general and targeted Tier 1 supports. OT push-ins expected to begin once staffing is complete. If a parent is concerned, the teacher is first point of contact. The goal of an MTSS plan is to catch any minor issues early before they become bigger issues.