

Eastford Elementary School
Curriculum Committee Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2020

The Meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM

Purpose: to provide an overview for new committee members on a variety of curriculum related topics

Members present: Donna Leake, Carole McCombe, Lauren Skiff, Adam Minor, Megan Dill, Michelle Bibeault

I. Update on Summer and recent Professional Development

- Many staff members took advantage of learning from home/summer PD opportunities, most of which were free or at reduced rates due to the pandemic.
- Time worked in our favor as substitutes were not required since students/staff were learning/teaching remotely.
- Staff were required to update sexual harassment PD in the spring and due to new legislation, again this fall.
- Other mandated trainings were completed via a new virtual training module / platform to grant teachers flexibility to complete necessary and optional training.

II. Background and Development of *Profile of an Eastford Learner (POL)*

- POL is a means to connect SEL to academic goals and is based on the work of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It provides us with a tool to guide professional development, decisions regarding planning and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessments, and a vision for the skills and attributes necessary for student success after EES.
- This work / initiative was somewhat interrupted due to COVID pandemic last spring but will be revisited in the fall and further developed over the course of the school year.
- BOE may need to be involved as it evolves because it will likely require a revision to the mission statement.

III. Essential Standards

- No possible way to teach all the Common Core Standards, especially given the nature of remote learning from March through June 2020 and the onset of COVID.
- The Essential Standards work was an EASTCONN driven initiative to unite sending districts to area high schools. It was compiled by teachers representing various grade levels in area districts. Collaboratively, they evaluated the Common Core Standards to determine which standards are absolutely essential, which are supporting standards and which can be eliminated entirely.
- A copy of the completed document was shared with the committee to demonstrate how it shows the progression from grade to grade. Teachers should be utilizing the document to ensure mastery of the essential standards and to close gaps in learning.

IV. Update on Reading Workshop Units of Study

- Teachers overall feel it is going more smoothly this year, increased comfort level with the program.
- Virtual Units of Study (UOS) that were purchased this year to support remote learning have been helpful and they encourage student dialogue and provide teacher built in PD.
- Over time, we will need to continue to add “shelves” or book collections to classroom libraries and the school library, with books leveled to support student self-selection.
- COVID restrictions present challenges to visiting the library and selecting books.
- Like many curriculum programs, teachers need to supplement to cover the essential core standards and a significant amount of time is required to prepare for each lesson.
- At some grade levels, it seems that students have lost some enthusiasm for reading compared to last year.
- Considerations going forward:
 - continue to utilize paraprofessionals during remote learning times to assist with preparation of materials
 - look to revise library protocols for student access to more books
 - provide PD to support utilization and incorporation of Writing UOS

V. Remote learning and technology: what's working, what needs work, resources

Started the year in a good place with technology:

- We have grade appropriate platforms across grade levels (See Saw and Google Classroom), plus a number of online programs to for students to stay current with skills and mastery of standards such as IXL (reading, math, science and Spanish), Reflex Math, and Lexia.
- Professional Development last spring and over the summer supports increased student/family/teacher confidence in using these platforms.
- We have an increased (and varied) inventory of devices available for student use.

Some struggles at the beginning of the school year:

- Not all devices were set up and running at the start of the year due to new inventory just arriving and the release of some program updates
- Some devices that were out on loan to students were not returned at the time updates were installed.
- Software, apps, and websites still needed to be updated and bookmarked.
- Troubleshooting and diagnosing issues takes time with limited staff availability to address concerns.
- Document cameras would support remote teaching – some are included with our request through the state COVID funding.
- There is a stipend position for technology troubleshooter – many new demands on staff this year with COVID and remote teaching, as well as many new devices and platforms to work with. Our independent consultant is not immediately available so it is not always possible to address needs in a timely manner. Would a library-media specialist be able to assist with some of these struggles?

VI. Addressing SEL needs

- Changes in teacher evaluation plan (CSDE Flexibilities for 2020-21) to align with increased support for student and staff SEL and student and family engagement.
- Counselor scheduled to assist with formal lessons at all grade levels each week, with additional support as needed – in addition to classroom community building with regular classroom teacher.

VII. Assessments

- We are not using NWEA assessments this school year. Staff will utilize district and curriculum assessments along with Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks.

VIII. Planning for next year – review of math resources

- Four-year subscription to Envision 2.0 math (grades K-6) expires in June. McGraw Hill subscription (grades 7-8) has run out – we are renewing on a year-to-year basis. Math Committee will evaluate current programs and look at options for going forward.
- Committee will meet again in December to delve deeper into specific topics.

IX. Adjournment: 7:02 PM