



## Committee Report

Committee Name: Instruction & Program

Location	Date	Time
Virtual	1/16/2024	5:00 PM
<b>Board Members</b>		
Vereliz Santana	Crystal Williams	
<b>District Liaison &amp; Superintendent Representative</b>		
Roger León		
<b>Other District Staff</b>		
Havier Nazario	Anzella Nelms	
Kenneth Montalbano	Paula Perrone	
Jennifer Killeen	Timothy Nellegar	
Margaret El	Elizabeth Arango	
Dr. Julianne Bello	Matthew Brewster	
Michelina Thornton	Jazleen Othman	
<b>Guests</b>		
<b>Meeting Summary</b>		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The meeting opened at 5:02 PM.</p> <p>Superintendent León provided an update on the District’s collaboration with the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS). In collaboration with the bilingual department, the CGCS provided a 2-day professional development series for District &amp; School Leaders &amp; over 700 Bilingual &amp; ESL Teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wednesday 1/10/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Morning: Principals</li> <li>○ Afternoon: Bilingual &amp; ESL Teachers, Grades K-3</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Thursday 1/11/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Morning: Bilingual &amp; ESL Teachers, Grades 9-12</li> <li>○ Afternoon: Bilingual &amp; ESL Teachers, Grades 4-8</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Superintendent was proud to share that the feedback from leaders and teachers was very positive, highlighting this important work with the CGCS. There will be a presentation from the Bilingual Department to this committee in March.</p> <p>Director Nellegar began his presentation on the District’s Plan for Educational Technology at 5:08 PM. He expressed that in order to best support students, his office works in collaboration with the other academic departments in order to provide the most effective use of technology in all subjects. His agenda covered three main topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What areas does Educational Technology cover?</li> <li>2. What is the plan to improve Educational Technology?</li> <li>3. What is the future of Educational Technology?</li> </ol>		

Director Nellegar covered the 5 areas of Educational Technology:

- Educational Platforms
- Teacher, Administrator and Staff Professional Development in Technology
- Computer Science and Design Thinking
  - Including Digital Citizenship
- Library/Media Specialists
- Co-Curricular Areas
  - FIRST Robotics, Girls Who Code, eSports, Debate and Speech

Director Nellegar expressed that there are currently over 40 platforms in use by the District, and everyone will be prepared for remote instruction if needed. He described how professional development for teachers, administrators and staff focus on how the platforms are being utilized and using instructional strategies in conjunction with the platforms. New computer science and design thinking were introduced in 2020 and all curriculum guides were updated to include the new standards as well as basic engineering principles. He explained that Digital Citizenship teaches students how to thoughtfully use the material they discover online. Library and Media Specialists assist with this process by offering the digital and print materials students need to do research and how to correctly do academic research to aid in their classwork. Co-curricular programs like FIRST Robotics, Girls Who Code, ESports, and Debate and Speech allow students the opportunity to further use technology outside of the classroom. Director Nellegar stressed the importance of doing this work with his colleagues in the Office of Teaching and Learning, Career & Technical Education (CTE), School Leadership Teams (SLTs) and the schools themselves.

Director Nellegar spoke on what he and his team look for when implementing a new platform. They first look for the problem that the platform will solve, or if it provides a solution to a need of the District. They also look at how to implement PD for the new platform so as to not add too many new things that can become overwhelming for teachers. The team also reviews the usage of the platform to determine if it is being used, how it is being used, and if the right students and grade levels are utilizing the platform. Finally, they determine if students have the correct platform for their needs. For example, the SPED or Bilingual population might need a different area of a specific platform. There is currently a committee of teachers and administrators to vet each platform, and they are looking to bring in students and parents to provide their feedback.

In terms of professional development, the team offers as much PD as possible to teachers in the easiest way they can. There are small and large sessions that are both in-person and virtual, and recordings are available for viewing at any time. Technology leads in the schools are also pulled out 8 times a year for Digital Learning Institutes with Director Nellegar and his team. Curriculum is also reviewed every 18 months as Technology is a rapidly changing field and there are constant updates.

Director Nellegar spoke on the co-curricular activities offered that are linked to technology and how many of our students are some of the highest ranked students in Debate in the entire country. There are currently 40 FIRST Robotics programs in elementary and middle schools and the District has been invited to Houston to share with other districts what we are doing here in Newark. Out of all of the students participating in Robotics programs, 40% of them are female. There are also 15 schools running the Girls Who Code program, and it is open to students of all genders. ESports have been rising in popularity and Data Science has the first ESports team in the District. Director Nellegar is looking to expand this program to Malcolm X. Shabazz and Global Studies, and is seeking to add one more comprehensive High School to add to the list. They currently compete in two games- NBA2K, a basketball game, and Rocket League, a soccer game. He stressed that if a program is not available at a student's home school, they can go to another school to participate.

Director Nellegar concluded his presentation at 5:32PM, and welcomed questions and comments.

- Board Member Williams asked about the time when these programs begin, as students who don't have these programs at their home school would need to commute to another.
  - Director Nellegar explained that ESports matches do not typically begin until 4:30PM, giving students sufficient time to make it from one school to another. He also explained that there are many instances in which Robotics students stay until 8PM, so even if students are late, they still have enough time to participate. He also noted that the season for Robotics is about 4-5 months.
- Board Member Williams also expressed her satisfaction that the curriculum is updated every 18 months to stay consistent with current trends and practices. She also shared how exciting it was to hear that the District has so many girls involved in STEM programming.
- Board Member Williams asked about Professional Development for Bilingual teachers and what platforms those students use.
  - Director Nellegar used the platform Lexia as an example, and its different components are designed for different student populations. Teachers are trained based on what platforms they will be using with their students. The OTIS platform has PD sessions for teachers.
- Board Member Williams questioned how many platforms were in use last school year, and how many we currently have this school year.
  - Director Nellegar spoke on how no platforms have been removed this school year, and that some were newly added. He did mention how he was currently looking at two platforms we currently use that provide similar services, so one will be removed for the next school year.
- Vice President Santana shared gratitude for the robust educational experience being afforded to students.
- Vice President Santana inquired about what is being used to test students' knowledge in IT.
  - Director Nellegar explained that this is done through AP courses at the high school level. Historically students have not done well on AP exams so the new curriculum focuses on AP computer science principles. He spoke on how he is working to create a more challenging curriculum so that students are ahead when they get to college. The work they are doing now will allow students to be proficient in different areas of tech. At the elementary level students work on code.org which is a website allowing students the chance to learn how to code. Director Nellegar is able to see the results of students' work in code.org, allowing him to analyze student data to check for understanding.
- Board Member Williams asked about the Tech Leads, particularly if these were organized at the school level on grade bands.
  - Director Nellegar explained that there is no full-time position at the elementary level for a tech lead, but each school has designated a person in their building to fill this role. This person is the designated point of contact for technology related matters.
- The Superintendent provided context related to Central Office Directors and how after 2011, these positions were eliminated. He discussed the importance of the strategic plan & the goals the District is working toward. The strategy has been to create leads in each of the offices who are experts in the fields, who have the highest expectations in each of the content areas.

Director Arango began her presentation on Health, Physical Education (PE) and Athletics at 5:58PM. She explained that a skills-based approach is the best practice for delivering high-quality health and physical education. Her presentation focused on 3 main areas:

1. Overview of K-12 Health and Physical Education
2. Highlights and Growth Areas

### 3. What's Next?

Prior to 2019, there was no oversight of Health and PE at the District level. The last curriculum adoption at that point was in 2010. After 2019, the District was awarded a 6-year grant from the CDC, trained curriculum writers were utilized, new HS PE curriculum was rolled-out, a professional development calendar was created, community partnerships were formed, and department look-for documents were created to establish norming practices.

Spark PE is a curricular resource for PE endorsed by the National Institutes of Health. It provides scope and sequence for Pre-K through 12th grade and is aligned with National PE standards. There are skill cards provided in English and Spanish, performance rubric assessments, and rubric peer assessments. Year-long professional development is also offered by grade bands.

Capacity building through teacher and administrator support is offered in different ways:

- Department walkthroughs
- Daily department office hours
- Monthly whole group meetings with DCs and ADs
- Webinars
- Google Classroom
- District Wide Professional Development
- Online Professional Development

Driver's Education begins in grade 10. The Driver's Education course consists of 30 hours of classroom instruction in the fundamentals of driving which provides the foundation for the knowledge exam portion of the State Graduated Driver's License program as set forth by the New Jersey State Motor Vehicle Commission. The course stresses safety, courtesy, driving laws, insurance and awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving and proper driving techniques. Up until the 20-21 school year, written tests were the only option in schools. In the 21-22 school year, online tests were piloted at East Side, Newark Vocational, Science Park and Weequahic. When students were given the option to test in 13 language options, significant gains were made in the passing rate of students. All schools provide the online test now.

NJ Legislative mandate in Health Education states students must receive instruction in CPR. A grant was secured that will allow us to purchase instructional equipment for all high schools and train teachers to become certified instructors enabling them to certify students. Rollout is set to begin this year with full implementation during the 24-25 school year.

NJ Bill S858 requires teachers of health and physical education in grades kindergarten through six in public schools to possess an appropriate endorsement to the instructional certificate. The law includes a "grandfather" provision for teachers who hold an elementary instructional certificate prior to the effective date of this law. The law took effect in the 2019-2020 school year.

In an effort to increase physical activity, action steps are being created to increase physical activity among students in K-12 physical education classes from moderate to vigorous. Community partnerships will also continue to be leveraged to achieve goals and schools will be identified to pilot this initiative.

Director Aranja concluded her presentation at 6:30PM, and welcomed questions and comments.

- Ms. Nelms remarked on the importance of students taking the Driver’s Ed test in their own language because of the passing rate as compared to when it was not offered in their language.
- Board Member Williams and Vice President Santana commended Director Arango and her team for their work.

Director El began her presentation on Leading Learning for Artistic Literacy & Fluency at 6:33PM. She reviewed the Arts Education Baseline Report and Arts Education Landscape Report of 2019-2020 and the Landscape Report Actions for 2020-2021.

Director El explained that The Office of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) and every school it supports is building sufficient capacity to implement arts plans, provide relevant professional development for arts leadership and certified arts educators, and establish internal structures and supports to deliver sequential arts education for all students. She then reviewed the different ways her department is doing this work.

Director El proceeded to discuss how every school is working to use District arts curriculum based on New Jersey Student Learning Standards-Visual and Performing Arts that guide teaching, learning, and assessment for student engagement with the artistic processes. Sequential pathways for proficiency through advanced learning are available to all students through progressive class offerings, arts-based co-curriculars, National Art Honor Societies, and community, regional and national arts experiences. She then discussed in further detail how this work is being done.

Director El then highlighted the various Arts programs throughout the District and the work students have done in these events, including the Young Artists Annual, All City Dance, All City Music Festival, Teen Arts Annual, Vocal Jubilee, and RAMP Concert.

She then discussed Infrastructure & Sustaining the Arts, and how sustaining a high-quality arts education for all students requires a diversified strategy of District funding, school budgets, private philanthropy and partnerships to ensure continued capital investment and sufficient District and school capacity (staffing, instructional materials, equipment and supplies, artistic experiences).

She concluded her presentation at 7:22PM and welcomed questions and comments.

- Vice President Santana inquired about assessments.
  - Director El shared that they are practice based, and not theory.
- Vice President Santana asked about the curriculum, and Director El shared the rebuilding process is ongoing.
- Vice President Santana asked what our music residencies currently look like, in which Director El used the Vocal Jubilee as an example. She explained that we have a Newark School of the Arts teaching artist that comes into schools and works around student schedules since they need to be pulled during the day for practice.
- Vice President Santana commended Director El, and noted the through line of equity was evident and tangible.
- Board Member Williams shared gratitude for the report.
- Chief of Staff Nazario explained how the Superintendent ensured that each school has money in their budget for a Music and Art teacher. He also shared that in regards to curriculum, the strategy is to ensure it exists for all arts programs.

At 7:30 PM Director Thornton began her presentation on High Impact Tutoring. NJ High Impact Tutoring Grant Overview:

- Funding \$768,000

- Designed for students in grades 2 through 5 at all elementary schools
- Provide intensive tutoring support to enhance student learning and academic achievement
- Tutoring conducted at least three times a week
- Tutoring group size not to exceed 4 students
- Program period ends August 31, 2024

Operational Details for tutoring:

- Principals identified Tutor Coordinators and tutors
- ALL students are eligible for tutoring
  - Focus for Grades 2-3: Foundations Assessments and diagnostic assessments
  - Focus for Grades 4-5: NJSLA scores between 725-765 in ELA and/or Math
- Tutoring materials
- ELA: SIPPS (2&3) and curriculum materials with a focus on reading comprehension (4&5)
- Math: Magma Math

She concluded her presentation at 7:36PM, and welcomed questions and comments.

- Vice President Santana asked for a checkpoint at a later committee meeting.
  - Director Thornton shared that data is collected through PowerSchool, and the District runs reports using this platform.
- Vice President Santana asked about a start date, and Director Thornton shared that coordinators have a meeting on January 24th, and the roll out will be the week after.
  - Ms. Nelms also commented that data is collected via testing, so this data will be ready in the fall.

Director Brewster began his presentation on Summer Programs at 7:36PM. He shared that the Summer Achieve! academic program for 2024 will continue to provide students in rising grades 1-8 with rich academic instruction ensuring they have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve. This program will focus on accelerating learning through access to a high-quality grade-level ELA and mathematics curricula. We are enthusiastic about the positive impact it will have on our students' learning.

The NEW Summer Quest! (1:00 PM - 6:00 PM) program for 2024 will be staffed by our own instructional personnel. Our dedicated teachers, coaches, and support staff members will be leading exciting and engaging activities for students in rising grades 1-8 to make the summer an unforgettable experience. From hands-on projects to creative exploration, Summer Quest! is designed to foster a love for learning beyond the traditional classroom setting.

We are actively seeking creative, enthusiastic, and qualified individuals from ALL content areas to join our team and contribute to the success of both Summer Achieve! and Summer Quest! Job postings for both of these initiatives will be posted in February. This is a wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact on our students' summer experiences.

Executive Assistant Perrone shared that Director Othman and the Office of English Language Arts have created the Summer Reading List for 2024. The titles were shared with the committee for review.

Director Brewster welcomed questions and comments.

- Board Member Williams shared her excitement for these offerings.
- Vice President Santana shared gratitude for this work and the growth of the programs.
- Vice President Santana commented on the Summer Reading Lists and the supplemental curricular materials, and support for when students return to the classroom.

At 7:42 PM Supervisor Killeen reviewed the resolutions for this month:

[Visual & Performing Arts Curriculum](#)

Authorization of District Field Trips

At 7:43 PM, Vice President Santana motioned to move resolutions to the full Board. This was supported by Board Member Williams.

Vice President Santana adjourned the meeting at 7:45PM.