

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT NO. 57
Office of the Superintendent
Waterboro, ME 04087

Curriculum Committee Meeting
November 8, 2022

MHS East Training Center

Committee Members:

Anastasia Ferguson - P

Wes Phinney - P

* Hunter VanBrocklin - P

Amy Littell - P

Jodi Laine - P

Adam Tanguay - P

Judith Vasalle - P

Administrators:

Amy Troiano - P

James Fryzlewicz - P

Dr. Stephen Marquis - P

Kyle Keenan - P

Catherine Poulin - P

Allison Ellis - P

Erica Mazzeo - P

Megan Holden - P

* Student Representative

AGENDA:

- A. Call to Order - 6:08 pm
 - B. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum - Quorum reached
 - C. Adjustments to the Agenda - None
 - D. Approval of minutes from [October 11, 2022](#) Motion to approve - Jodi Laine;
Seconded - Amy Littell; motion passes unanimously
 - E. Old Business - None
 - F. New Business (see below)
 - a. MHS Program of Studies Overview
 - b. Review of Handbooks
 - c. Review of Cursive Handwriting
 - G. Other - None
 - H. Adjournment - Reminder of the PAC next Tuesday. Adjourned at 7:07.
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- a. [MHS PoS Overview](#)
 - Allison presents additions to the 2023-24 MHS Program of Studies
 - Cover and photos are new additions
 - Staffing updates throughout all departments and admin

- The conversion chart approved end of last school year has been added
- Added Honor Roll eligibility; also added first and second semester requirements and dates of the announcement (10 days following grades posting)
- Added Homeroom
- Literacy officially added to PoS supported pathway for English
- New themes for Jr/Sr English class themes
- Adding Applied Mathematics - to come before Algebra 1, will help students build foundational skills
- Science added Natural Resources
- Career and Tech - added entrepreneurship and business course
- Computer Basics added - provide foundation to be ready for AP Computer Science and Computer Science Pathway
- Fine Arts - combining Graphic Design and Digital Photography
- Visual and Performing Arts adding Music Theory 1 and 2 back in from previous years
- Added Spanish 4

Judith shares concern about there being equal courses between visual arts and performance arts. Allison shares the offerings in performing arts and in visual arts. Judith wonders if we have so many courses to offer, why don't we require more credits for graduation? Jodi points out that the graduation credit requirements were a board decision. Erica clarifies that graduation requirements represent a minimum required for graduation but that students are encouraged to pursue their interests without being inhibited by requirements that are not in their interest area. Allison explains that the minimum requirements create a true pathway model and allows students to choose their focus. Steve clarifies that the purpose of this committee is to share the current reality of our Program of Studies. The Steering Committee will determine where we want to go in the future. Judith asks if she can be provided with the state graduation requirements. Jodi Laine makes a motion to accept the adjusted Program of Studies; Seconded by Adam Tanguay. 4 in favor; 1 opposed pending receipt of state graduation requirements via email.

b. Handbook Changes

Kyle asks for Cathy and Amy to present substantive changes to the Elementary and Middle School Family Handbooks for the 2022-23 School Year. Cathy - 3-4 years ago Elementary principals decided to streamline for the district by combining/sharing handbook among all 5 schools. Elementary principals removed COVID related material from handbooks. Some COVID additions proved to be beneficial and were kept, such as dismissal procedures. There are some slight differences due to the different sizes of the schools. Amy shared that at the Middle School also the changes were reflective of a return to pre-pandemic school operations. At the HS there were a few more substantive changes, such as the addition of a

homeroom period to enable students to have a check in time with their advisor at the start of the school day. This also helps with announcements and distribution of school materials and minimizes disruptions to the school day. Another change was to make the cell phone policy more clear and outlined. A statement was added regarding social media and its impact on youth. A tier of interventions was added to address inappropriate cell phone use during the school day. Redo and retake of assessments language was added. The glossary of terms was moved to the end as an appendix. Anastasia clarifies that all of these changes were made over the summer, prior to school and that families are already aware of these changes. That is confirmed by all admin.

c. Cursive Handwriting in Other Districts

Erica shares a graphic that displays the data she collected from 21 districts around the state via a google form survey asking "Is cursive handwriting a component of your published/mandated curriculum?" The data shows that 61.9% of districts (13/21) answered no and 38.1% (8/21) answered yes. Primarily grade 3 is where it is done and also primarily never again was a response. In recent memory it is not assessed by the state, there is a lack of an external driver for the work. Where it is used, Handwriting Without Tears is the common resource material that includes a grade 3 cursive unit, which might be why grade 3 is where it is most commonly seen. Cathy states that RSU 57 does not teach cursive in grade 3. Judith asks about people who are confronted with situations where cursive is required, such as signing documents. Erica shares that it is addressed in the financial literacy courses in the context in which Judith is asking about, and that if taught in grade 3 only that skill may not transfer to adulthood. Hunter shares that he was always told that he didn't necessarily need to be in cursive, it only has to be consistent. Steve clarifies that the issue at hand is whether or not to teach a cursive curriculum in place of something that we currently offer at the elementary level, but the need being referenced is the ability to sign a personal signature as a life skill. He proposes that this may be added as a life skill to Mustang Time. Jodi agrees that teaching cursive in elementary school is not necessary, but that learning how to sign their name in HS could be remedied quickly. Erica agrees that more work can be done on this at the HS and also the context in which this skill might be needed.