

Curriculum Advisory Committee (Thursday, May 7, 2026)

Generated by Nazaneen Khalilnaji-Otto on Friday, May 8, 2026

[Sign In Sheet](#)

1. Call to Order

Member Tracy Costigan called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and stated that, per Board Guideline 006.2, all public meetings of the Board of Directors, including committee meetings, are audio recorded.

2. Approve Minutes

Minutes: 2.01 April 2026 Minutes

Ms. Costigan asked if there was any discussion regarding the April 2026 Curriculum Advisory Committee minutes. No comments or revisions were offered. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes.

April 2026 minutes approved.

3. Public Comment

Melvin Band of Solebury

- Mr. Band commented on differences he observed between recent Advisory Committee meetings, specifically regarding how public comment was introduced and facilitated. He commented on the wording used by Board Member during the public comment portion of meetings and questioned whether public participation was being viewed as a meaningful opportunity for engagement or as a procedural requirement to move through quickly.
- Mr. Band referenced a recent Right-to-Know request related to handwriting and cursive instruction. He stated that materials he received from the Pennsylvania Department of Education indicated that handwriting, grading, and instructional decisions are determined locally by school districts rather than mandated by the PDE. Mr. Band shared a concern on transparency and communication related the grading practices for handwriting.
- Mr. Band questioned how handwriting and cursive instruction are currently implemented in the district as a self-directed activity in the library and that students who need additional handwriting support should receive direct instruction from an actual teacher and not self-directed.
- No additional public comments were made.

Ellen Stiefel, Board Member asked a question not related to agenda items. Ms. Stiefel asked if a similar survey about computer use at the Lower Elementary School would be carried out for the other building, especially Upper Elementary and Middle Schools.

Dr. Amanda Benolken, school administrator, response that the district will share at back-to-school nights how devices are used at school and resources for parents to support monitoring of devices at home. Dr. Benolken added that Teacher on Special Assignment, Dr. Cait Keiper, will have a technology scope and sequence of skills by grade level bands.

4. Old Business

No old business was discussed.

5. New Business

5.01 Education Office Update

An Education Office update was provided by Dr. Benolken.

Field Trips

Dr. Benolken reported that the district is approaching approximately 50 field trips during the 2025–2026 school year.

Recent and upcoming field trips discussed included:

- Honey Hollow Nature Center trips for Kindergarten and 3rd Grade students;
- A middle school band and orchestra Broadway trip and music master class scheduled for May 27
- A 1st Grade trip to Shady Brook Farm;
- A 5th Grade Camp Kweebec trip;
- A 2nd Grade trip to the New Jersey Museum; and
- The high school senior trip to New York City.

Dr. Benolken stated that the district has seen increased participation in field trips across grade levels and departments.

5.02 Fall 2027 Central Europe Overnight Trip Proposal

Dr. Benolken introduced Mr. Fred Achenbach to present the proposed Fall 2027 Central Europe overnight trip.

Dr. Benolken stated that committee materials included the overnight field trip request form and the EF Tours proposal packet. She also noted that 2 additional travel company proposals had been reviewed administratively.

Mr. Achenbach explained that this proposal replaced the previously discussed Rwanda/Africa trip proposal as recruitment for the Africa trip was difficult.

Mr. Achenbach stated that the Central Europe proposal aligns most directly with courses including:

- AP European History;
- European History; and
- History of Fascism and World War II.

Committee had further discussion that included:

- Enrollment and recruitment challenges for international trips;
- Student interest in curriculum-connected travel opportunities;
- Financial considerations for families; and
- The role of experiential learning in history instruction.

Discussion also included the district's broader approach to international travel opportunities and curricular alignment.

5.03 Spring 2028 Netherlands Overnight Trip Proposal

Mr. Dave Bachart joined the meeting virtually to present the proposed Spring 2028 Netherlands music and arts trip.

Mr. Bachart stated that the proposed trip is scheduled for April 1–8, 2028.

Mr. Bachart stated that the group has been invited to perform at the Tulip Festival in the Netherlands and that additional performances are planned in Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Mr. Bachart discussed planned cultural experiences including:

- The Anne Frank House;
- The Van Gogh Museum;
- Canal tours; and
- Travel to surrounding cities.

Mr. Bachart stated that Amsterdam would serve as the primary location for the group, with day trips planned to other areas.

Discussion also focused on cost-management strategies. Mr. Bachart noted that the initial proposal reflects higher-end estimates to ensure all costs are accounted for conservatively. However, the group is exploring the use of smaller travel groups and public transportation options to help reduce expenses.

Performance expectations discussed included:

- Approximately two orchestra performances;
- Multiple jazz ensemble performances;
- Combined ensemble performances; and
- Approximately four to six total performances across the eight-day trip.

Mr. Bachart stated that the goal is not simply performance travel, but full cultural immersion through music, art, and shared experiences.

Committee members discussed:

- Interdisciplinary opportunities between music and visual arts;
- Student access to international arts experiences;
- The logistics of managing multiple international trips within similar timelines;
- The importance of broad communication and student recruitment;
- Financial accessibility for families; and
- Building stronger curricular connections before and after travel experiences.

Committee members also reflected positively on the recent France trip and discussed student growth, cultural learning, and the district's handling of student safety and emergency situations during travel.

Suggestions were shared for increasing awareness of international travel opportunities, including promoting trips through curriculum nights, course selection materials, classroom discussions, and broader district communications.

5.04 Updated Global Travel Plan 2026–2030

Dr. Benolken reviewed updates to the district's Global Travel Plan for 2026–2030.

Discussion focused on the district's effort to create a more intentional and balanced approach to international travel programming across departments and grade levels.

Topics discussed included:

- Expanding travel opportunities beyond traditionally travel-heavy programs;
- Creating stronger curricular alignment between travel and academic coursework;
- Exploring future opportunities connected to world languages, history, STEAM, music, and visual arts;
- Potential future travel to Poland and other European destinations;
- Continued partnership opportunities connected to the Dominican Republic; and
- Strategies for staggering trips to avoid competing financial demands on families during the same school years.

Committee members discussed how international travel opportunities can increase student engagement and interest in academic coursework while also broadening cultural awareness and experiential learning opportunities.

Additional discussion emphasized the importance of ensuring travel experiences are connected to meaningful academic preparation and reflection rather than functioning solely as tourism experiences.

5.05 Title I Funding End-of-Year Report

Dr. Rose Minniti provided a Title I funding end-of-year report.

Dr. Minniti stated that the district's combined funding allocation totaled approximately \$71,926 following a minor funding adjustment. Dr. Minniti explained that this total amount is combining all the district's Title I, Title II, and Title IV funding.

Dr. Minniti stated that the funding is currently used to support instructional and small group the Lower Elementary School and that the district plans to continue with the same support model next year if funding remains available.

Dr. Minniti shared that future federal Title funding is yet undetermined. She also stated that regardless of federal potential funding reductions will continue the small-group reading instruction.

6. Adjournment

Dr. Benolken also announced that there will not be a Curriculum Advisory Committee meeting in June.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned. Dr. Benolken reminded members that there will be no June Curriculum Advisory Committee meeting.