Curriculum Advisory Committee (Thursday, November 5, 2026)

Sign In Sheet

1. Meeting Opening

1.A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. It was noted that, per Board Guideline 006.2, all public meetings of the Board of Directors, including committee meetings, are audio recorded.

2. Approve Minutes

2.A. Approve Minutes from the October 1, 2026 meeting

Dr. Benolken noted that the October minutes did not include the names of several public comment speakers, as the District was not certain it had accurate names for everyone who spoke that evening. She invited any speaker who would like their name attached to their comment to let the District know so the minutes could be amended accordingly. With that note, no further concerns were raised, and the minutes were approved.

3. Old Business

3.A. Middle School Ed Tech Self-Analysis

Dr. Benolken provided an update on technology-related work stemming from last month's discussion. The District is developing a middle school ed tech self-analysis protocol to help teachers evaluate their own technology use in the classroom; this protocol is still being developed. She also reported meeting with 3-5 grade teachers and will be with the K-2 teachers to begin norming classroom technology practices, and to review which curricular technology tools are required at each level. She indicated she would continue to bring updates on this work to the committee throughout the year.

4. Public Comment

- Melvin Band said that decisions about screen time for grades K through 2 should be guided by student health and welfare rather than by technology or curriculum considerations, and encouraged parents involved in the technology petition to seek input from the American Academy of Pediatrics and other health organizations. He asked whether the District had assessed and evaluated reading and writing skills for grades 4 through 12 at the start of this year, consistent with past practice, and requested the results if so. He also raised concerns about cursive and handwriting instruction at the high school level, referencing past district practice under previous administrations, and asked the committee chair to request a response from Dr. Lentz on these points. He additionally commented on equity in field trip funding between local and international trips, and referenced reports of international travel by Dr. Lentz, asking whether that travel had been funded by the District.
- Pamm Kerr spoke in support of the lawn-to-meadow proposal and shared that she had heard a Borough committee member speak about the District's underused land, which she thought the committee would want to be aware of.
- Jade Green thanked the District for continuing the technology conversation and shared her support for the lawn-to-meadow project, noting her involvement with the LES/UES HSA Sustainability Committee, which she said would be glad to help with the project.
- Jessica Hough voiced support for the lawn-to-meadow project and asked whether bicycle safety is part of the curriculum.

In response, Dr. Benolken noted that handwriting is taught and assessed through grade 3, consistent with prior responses to Mr. Band on this topic, and that current events are discussed as part of classroom instruction. She confirmed that bicycle safety is taught as part of Upper Elementary School physical education, including a unit in which every student learns to ride a bicycle using the District's own set of bikes.

5. New Business

5.A. Education Office Update

Dr. Benolken reported on three field trips in October: 9th and 10th grade students visited MBIT on October 28, 6th grade students attended a theater performance of a novel they had completed on October 23, and high school Unified Leaders visited Bucks County Community College on October 21.

She also reported on the District's most recent professional development day: elementary teachers worked on reading and math assessment practices, led by Mrs. Marrone and Mrs. Given, while the kindergarten team continued work on the cognitive play program. Chris Balme, whose middle school advisory work was previously approved by this committee, worked with staff and also led an evening parent program on election night that drew 40 to 50 attendees. High school staff worked on Cognia accreditation and used data from a student survey of over 300 respondents to begin establishing department-level guidelines for AI use; Dr. Benolken indicated she would like to bring both the survey results and the resulting guidelines back to a future committee meeting.

Dr. Benolken reported that the District's Seal of Biliteracy program, now in its third year, received 30 applications this fall, up from 6 in its first year. The District plans to begin offering the ALTA language proficiency exam as an additional path to the Seal, since students who take AP Spanish or French do not receive AP exam results until after graduation; the ALTA exam, offered in spring, would allow juniors to demonstrate proficiency earlier while still being encouraged to take the AP exam as well.

She also reported on the District's first voter registration drive, run by the social studies department, which registered 45 students ahead of the general election. The District is aiming for the state's Governor's Civic Award, with a goal of registering 85 percent of eligible students by May to qualify for the Gold level. Committee member asked whether the effort was being resourced efficiently given that many students are not yet age-eligible to register. Dr. Benolken explained that eligibility is tied to specific cutoff dates, that some confusion arose around students who would turn 18 between those dates, and that the District plans a second drive in the spring to capture that group. Discussion also noted a small number of first-time student voters who encountered provisional ballot issues on election day related to mail-in registration status, which the District will look into.

5.B. Japan Trip Student Report

Seniors Parker Taylor and Jocelyn Barry, who traveled on the fall student trip to Japan, presented a video of the trip and shared highlights with the committee. Over the course of the trip, the group of 23 students and chaperones experienced a mix of cultural and STEM-focused programming, including a visit to a maglev technology center and a ride on the bullet train, the Edo-Tokyo Museum, a sushi-making workshop, the Cyberdyne robotics exhibit, a tour of the JAXA space center, Hamarikyu Gardens and a traditional tea ceremony, Sensoji Temple, the historic Tsukiji fish market, the teamLab digital art installation, and Ueno Park. Both students described the trip as having broadened their interests, including an unexpected appreciation for engineering and design, and spoke to the value of the cultural immersion and the connections formed with fellow students.

5.C. Lawn to Meadow Conversion Project

Building on a proposal brought to a previous meeting by district parents, Dr. Benolken introduced a presentation on a potential conversion of underused campus lawn to a parcel of native meadow and outdoor classroom, developed with the high school's Environmental Club. The presentation was given by science teacher Mrs. Lever, who co-advises the Environmental Club with Mr. McDonald, and by student club officers Vivian Chaney (treasurer) and Jake Eggering (president).

Mrs. Lever described the proposal as an opportunity to convert underused space into a shared outdoor learning area for all three campus schools, and connected the project directly to Pennsylvania's new STEELS science standards, which emphasize hands-on, real-world learning over rote memorization, particularly through the environmental literacy and sustainability standard and the technology and engineering standard. She outlined example lessons at each level: elementary students comparing biodiversity across meadow, lawn, and wooded areas; middle school students studying solar energy through a proposed small solar array tied to the project; and high school students conducting statistical analysis of ecosystem data, including diversity index calculations, at the AP Environmental Science level.

Vivian Chaney shared results of an informal survey of high school students on desired features for the outdoor classroom, which included amphitheater-style seating, Wi-Fi and technology access, a weather station or sundial, shaded seating such as a pergola with optional solar panels, and space for quiet or informal use outside of class time. Jake Eggering discussed anticipated benefits to student engagement across grade levels, including hands-on problem solving, cross-grade and peer connection, and interest expressed by high schoolers in additional elective coursework, such as an introductory environmental science course and a botany curriculum, that could make use of the space.

In discussion, committee members and staff noted potential cross-curricular connections beyond science, including art, writing, and the elementary reading program, and recalled a past cross-curricular outdoor education day at the canal as a point of comparison. Mrs. Sheehan asked about potential locations; Dr. Benolken indicated that several areas have been informally considered, including space between the Upper Elementary School and the shed or near the softball fields, with specific site selection to be reviewed by the Facilities Committee. Dr. Benolken thanked the students and Mrs. Lever for their work and said the proposal would move to the Facilities Committee for review of site and logistics, with the students available to return to a future meeting if needed.

5.D. Number Worlds Program Adoption

Dr. Bell and Mrs. Marone presented a proposal to adopt Number Worlds as a supplemental mathematics program for the Special Education curriculum at the Lower and Upper Elementary Schools. The program was selected after review of two supplemental options; it is research-based and aligned to state standards, uses placement testing to target individual students' conceptual gaps, and emphasizes explicit, teacher-led lessons. At the kindergarten and 1st grade level, instruction is fully hands-on with manipulatives and does not require student technology use; at other levels, the program includes a digital adaptive practice component. Staff noted that the program aligns well with the District's Everyday Math core curriculum, allowing students to move between the supplemental and core program as appropriate, and that it can also support Tier 3 intervention.

Staff noted that the District has not adopted a supplemental math program since 2008. The proposal includes teacher manuals for Special Education staff at both elementary schools, print materials expected to last three to four years, a one-time purchase of manipulative kits, and in-person professional development in February; the District anticipates minimal ongoing cost in future years, limited to student materials as needed. In discussion, committee members asked how the program differs from Everyday Math; staff described it as more concrete and less language-heavy, with a mastery-based structure rather than a spiraling curriculum. Staff also clarified that sample materials shared with the committee were older editions and that the materials being purchased reflect the current 2025 edition.

At the close of the agenda, Dr. Lentz addressed a statement made earlier during public comment regarding his personal travel, clarifying for the record that any overseas trips referenced were personally funded and not paid for by the District.

6. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.