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Instructional Policy & Student Achievement Committee

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Notes to reader: *Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.*

Summary

- Learning Specialist Adam Motter said Akron Public Schools (APS) will be adopting the new [Social Studies School Services Nystrom: Young Citizens Program](#) for K-3 students. This service includes a digital textbook and pre-made printable lessons and worksheets for teachers to use. This was selected as the best option by both the teacher team and administration steering team.
- Motter said there will be a new “Pearson: The Western Heritage since 1300” 12th edition textbook that will better prepare students for the AP exams.
- APS Executive Director of talent and organizational development, Larry Johnson Jr. said the district is working with local university and college partners to recruit new teachers and pay for education for APS teachers and training for APS staff. APS also attends job fairs to recruit teachers and other district staff and hosts three staff talent fairs and one teacher fair to attract more staff.

Follow-Up Questions

- How is there both a teacher shortage and a budget shortfall that requires layoffs in

APS?

- Is there a correlation between overall school quality and performance and substitute fill rates?

Notes

- Akron Public Schools (APS) Board Member Diana Autry started the meeting at 4:30 p.m.
 - Board Members Bruce Alexander, Summer Hall and Rene Molenaur were present
- The previous meeting minutes passed unanimously
- Assistant Superintendent Tamea Caver said a \$126,000 grant to support the 8th grade [Changemaker Challenge](#) from the Akron Community Foundation will be on the next board agenda
- Caver said they will extend Ellet CLC's partnership with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park

SOCIAL STUDIES ADOPTION

- Learning specialist Adam Motter said they are recommending adoption of a new K-3 social studies curriculum that will help to connect with more students and foster curiosity.
 - He said the K-3 curriculum is based on an internal-growing-outward approach where students start with learning about themselves in kindergarten and by fourth grade are learning Ohio and U.S. history.
 - He thanked teachers and partners who helped with elementary curriculum adoption. He said this process includes evaluating possible new curriculum options in the classroom during the first semester and then having vendor presentations with teachers and partners during the second semester
 - Motter said [Social Studies School Services Nystrom: Young Citizens Program](#) is being recommended by the teacher team and administration steering team.
 - He said students will have access to online textbooks with interactive activities and an “inquiry-forward look at social studies.” The curriculum has handouts ready for teachers to use for hands-on activities and to help students learn how to read maps.
 - He said teachers will receive orientation in the fall for the new curriculum
- He said APS has not adopted new textbooks for Firestone CLC's year-long AP European History course in 15 years and has recommended “Pearson: The Western Heritage since 1300” 12th edition. He said this will help support students on the AP exam

- Autry asked why new curriculum hasn't been adopted in 15 years
 - Motter said there have been changing mandates around reading and math and there hasn't been enough time to adopt new social studies curriculum
 - Caver said they started with adopting new social studies curriculum for 4-12 and not K-3 because K-3 recently received new reading curriculum and they didn't want to overwhelm teachers
- Hall said she is excited that they are teaching kids about reading maps and about their community
- Alexander asked how kindergarten teachers teach social studies
 - Motter said they use stories, reading and coloring to teach social studies concepts
- Molenaar said she is excited that students will be reading to learn about social studies
- Autry asked if the new curriculum teaches civics
 - Motter said "it is a very important goal of social studies..." to prepare students to be members of the community

RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW

- APS Supervisor of Secondary Schools, Larry Johnson Jr. presented information to the board.
- He said APS works with Teach for America to help recruit new teachers and train teachers in their first two years.
- He said a 10-member recruitment team helps increase recruitment and retention and fully staff APS by the start of the 2025-26 school year.
 - He said APS participates in the Cleveland Area Multicultural Educators Recruitment Association (CAMERA) to collaborate with Northeast Ohio districts to recruit multicultural educators in Cleveland.
 - He said most Cleveland area districts have a teacher shortage and districts work with each other to recommend teachers to one another
 - He said he works with university partners including the University of Akron to recruit new teachers
 - He said APS works with Teach for America to help recruit new teachers and train teachers in their first two years
 - He said the Harrington Scholarship identifies UA students interested in being a teacher at APS and provides a full-ride scholarship, including housing and books
- He said APS holds three talent fairs designed to recruit substitute teachers, transportation staff, nutrition specialists and custodians. APS also has a teacher

fair. The most recent fair had a panel of APS administrators who could answer questions from prospective candidates

- He said the Grow Your Own scholarship is a four-year, \$7,500-a-year scholarship for people who work in APS who are looking to get a teaching license and commit to working in their home district. He said there are 60 statewide applicants and they will soon know how many slots APS applicants win
 - He said this is for current APS staff, including safety team members, and long-term substitute teachers who are interested in becoming teachers
- He said some APS paraprofessionals can be reimbursed for job-related courses at places including Stark State College
 - He said Stark State is offering to waive up-front costs for APS employees in order to remove obstacles for employees

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER REPORT

- Johnson also presented the following data for teacher absences in March
 - Elementary school:
 - Approximately 300 absences per weekday with the most absences on Fridays.
 - Middle school:
 - Approximately 125 absences per weekday with the most absences on Mondays and Fridays
 - Several middle schools have low fill rates (rate of how often a substitute teacher was hired when a teacher was absent) including Hyre (64%), Innes (68%), and STEM (68%)
 - High school:
 - Approximately 225 absences per weekday with the most absences on Fridays
- Alexander asked if there is data based on cluster to see if there are patterns that should be addressed
 - A staffer said they can get that data
- Molenaar said they should look at buildings with 100% fill rates like Akron Early College to find what is going well
- Molenaar asked what happens when absences aren't filled
 - He said some are filled by other teachers during their planning periods
- The meeting ended at 5:31 p.m.