

by **Ben Freda** for The Abington Journal

Lackawanna Trail principal discusses curriculum changes at meeting

FACTORYVILLE At the Lackawanna Trail school board meeting Feb. 9, high school principal Dr. Mark Murphy, using a Power Point presentation, revealed an annual review in the curriculum for both junior high and senior high.

"(There are) many hands on this document," he said. "I do appreciate everyone taking a look at it and offering feedback."

The first significant change in the junior high curriculum guide he mentioned was the combination of the subjects World Cultures and Geography for seventh grade. He said eighth grade is currently taking World Cultures and Geography as two different courses. He stated that the reason for combining the two courses is because they are not eligible content for PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment).

"Currently, there is no standardized assessment in the field of World Geography or World Cultures," said Murphy. "Not that they're not important, but not reflected in our school performance profile at the junior and senior high school."

Murphy added that a standardized assessment in Civics for eighth grade will be implemented in the 2019-20 school year.

"We want to be fiscally responsible with regard to curriculum resources that we have, so we're going to be sharing with the seventh and eighth grade students," said curriculum director Dr. Tania Stoker. "So, we will be working with the faculty to make that hap-pen, so we're not buying a second set of textbooks just for one year."

Murphy then announced that the course Child Exploitation will be implemented as a health course in the curriculum. "We already teach similar sensitive topics in health classes, and we feel that would be appropriate for that class," he stated.

Another significant change in the curriculum that Murphy stated was the courses earth science and space science will be replaced by integrated science. He said earth and space sciences didn't focus on what was tested on the PSSA exam.

Murphy also announced three options for changes in the senior high curriculum. In Option 1, if a student passes a course but fails the exam by a small margin, that student will take a remedial course. Murphy said this option is called Supplemental Instruction. Murphy then explained Option 2, which is if a student passes a course but fails the exam by a large margin, the student will take a Keystone enhancement course (a half-credit course studying only remedial courses).

Murphy then mentioned Option 3, which is remediation within the curriculum, for literature class only.

"If a student fails to pass the proficient benchmark on their literature exam, they could still register for English III in the regular education curriculum and as a part of that course, the teacher would infuse remedial materials into that," he said.

Murphy thanked everyone including Dr. Tania Stoker and assistant principal Brian Kearney for their input in the curriculum. He also asked the board to let him know if anyone has any questions.