This meeting will be held at Lakeview High School and Via Teleconference

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 20
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Meeting Agenda

Curriculum Committee

5:00 p.m., Thursday, September 17, 2026

Meeting Link: meet.google.com/hju-kvdw-zid

Dial-In: 1 316-746-4145
PIN: 655 569 487#

Committee Members

Tiffany Parkhouse, Chair	Diane Barnes
Sharon Mahieu	Josh Szwed

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Curriculum Committee Special Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2026
3. Grade 6 Digital Literacy Course - Plumb Hill Middle School
4. Curriculum Development Presentation
5. Adjournment

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 20
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2026

Curriculum Committee

Committee Members

Margaret Hunt, Chair	Tiffany Parkhouse
Diane Barnes	Billie Jean Sideris

1. Call to Order The Curriculum Committee meeting held at Lakeview High School and via teleconference was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Margaret Hunt.

   Members present: Margaret Hunt, Chair, Tiffany Parkhouse, and Billie Jean Sideris.

   Also present: Jeffrey Villar, Ph.D., Superintendent, Julie Haggard, Assistant Superintendent Pupil Services, Julia Cardillo, Chief Financial Officer, Pam Vecca, Principal Plumb Hill Middle School, Val Leifert, ELA Teacher (Gr. 6), Kim Thompson ELA Teacher (Gr. 6), Christy Concilio, ELA Teacher (Grs. 7 & 8), and Melissa Swanson, ELA Teacher (Gr. 8).

   Absent: Diane Barnes.

2. Approval of Curriculum Committee Special Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2026
   Tiffany Parkhouse made a motion for the Approval of Curriculum Committee Special Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2026. Billie Jean Sideris seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Review the Plumb Hill Middle School Pilot Implementation of *Arts & Letters* and Prepare a Recommendation to the Full Board of Education Regarding Potential Adoption
   Pam Vecca and her team of ELA (English Language Arts) teachers presented the *Arts & Letters* pilot results for Grades 6–8. Key takeaways included improved student engagement, instructional consistency, curriculum lesson format to fit 50-minute periods and vertical alignment with K–5. Pam Vecca and her team addressed questions from the Committee members. After all questions were addressed the Committee Chair polled each member and as a whole, they were in support of moving the *Arts & Letters* curriculum to the full Board of Education for potential adoption.

4. Adjournment There being no further business to come before this Committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Escobar
Secretary, pro-tem

Grade 6 Digital Literacy
Course Overview & Rationale

This 6th Grade Digital Literacy course provides all incoming middle school students with the essential foundational competencies required for long-term college and career readiness in a tech-driven world. Designed as a single-quarter course delivered across 23 sessions, the curriculum is taught directly by the PHMS Library Media Specialist to leverage the natural synergy between information literacy, research methodologies, and digital technology.

The coursework balances core tech mechanics with workplace-relevant critical thinking. Students establish professional workplace habits—such as mastering iPad settings, Gmail etiquette, and Google Classroom organization—before advancing to digital identity, online safety, and effective communication. The curriculum then builds deep media literacy, teaching students strategic searching, lateral reading for source evaluation, bias identification, and ethical citation practices using state database resources like ResearchIT CT. Grounding research in modern environments, the course concludes with hands-on AI literacy where students analyze AI bias, practice prompt engineering in Google Gemini, and fact-check automated responses against trusted sources to prepare them for an evolving academic and professional landscape.

Attachment: Scope & Sequence Document

Grade 6 Digital Literacy

Comprehensive Pacing Guide (23 Sessions - One Quarter)

Session	Topic	Teaching Point	Student Activities / Projects / Assessments	Resources	AASL Standards	Instructional Strategy
1	Welcome to Digital Literacy	Introduce course expectations and the role of digital literacy in middle school.	Student information survey; class discussion; establish class norms.	Google Slides & Forms, Pear Deck, Course Syllabus	AASL Inquire	Discussion, Reflection, Pre-Assessment
2	Mastering the Digital Workspace	Students establish iPad and Gmail settings and familiarize with Google Classroom.	Set default browser app, clear Gmail, create Signature, practice Google Classroom.	iPad, Gmail, Google Classroom		Guided Practice
3	Email Etiquette	Write respectful, formal emails to teachers, follow professional communication guidelines.	Email etiquette, Performance Task: create and discuss each section of an email.	Google Slides, Gmail, Pear Deck		
4	Digital Footprint & Identity	Active and passive online actions create lasting digital identities.	Digital footprint investigation Pear Deck; reflection journal & discussion.	Common Sense Education, Pear Deck		Discussion, Reflection, Think-Pair-Share
5	Sharing Personally Identifiable Information	Think critically about sharing personal information online	App sign up examples, reflection, and discussion.			
7	Digital Communication	Online posts change the way we share and connect with others.	Reflect on examples of in person versus online communication.			Role Play, Project-Based Learning
8	Unit Summary	Facilitate the development of products that illustrate learning.	Create a professional email to a business requesting sponsorship.	Teacher-created rubric		Workshop
9	Effective Searching	Strategic searching produces stronger research results.	Google Search challenges; keyword practice, Boolean operators.	Google Slides, Google Search	AASL Inquire AASL Curate	Guided Practice
10-11	Evaluating Websites	Understanding author's purpose and subject authority.	Evaluate sources using lateral reading.	Google Slides, Google Search, Pear Deck		Source Evaluation
12-13	Fact, Opinion & Bias	Students recognize bias and distinguish fact from opinion.	Analyze news articles and websites.	Checkology, Google Slides, Pear Deck		Media Analysis
14-15	Misinformation & Disinformation	Students verify information before sharing or believing it.	Fact-checking investigation.	Google Slides, Pear Deck, Checkology, AllSides.com, Snopes.com		Inquiry Investigation
16	Citation & Plagarism	Good researchers organize information and credit sources.	Digital note-taking; citation practice.	Google Slides, Google Docs, ResearchItCT		Guided Practice
17-18	Unit Summary	Facilitate the development of products that illustrate learning.	Create a Canva Research Poster.	Canva, Teacher-created rubric		Workshop
19	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	AI benefits and drawbacks based on how it is trained	Explore AI examples, how it is trained and discuss benefits and limitations.	Common Sense Education, Google Gemini	AASL Inquire	Discussion, Reflection, Think-Pair-Share
20	AI Chatbots & Friendship	AI chatbots can impact our idea of friendship.	Explore AI chatbot design and purpose.			
21	AI Bias	Understanding the impact of AI bias and how it happens.	Explore AI bias; Performance Task: AI Training Bias.			
22	Responsible AI Use	AI-generated information should be verified, used ethically and critically.	Performance Task: Fact-check AI responses using trusted sources.			Guided Practice
23	Unit Summary	Facilitate the development of products that illustrate learning.	Create a Google Gemini prompt; fact-check response.	Google Gemini, Teacher-created rubric		Workshop

Unit Breakdown
Unit 1 (Sessions 1 - 8)
Foundations of Digital Identity & Systems
Performance Task: Create Professional Email
Unit 2 (Sessions 9 - 18)
Information & Media Literacy
Performance Task: Digital Inquiry Project
Unit 3 (Sessions 19 - 23)
Artificial Intelligence
Performance Task: AI Source Evaluation

Curriculum Development

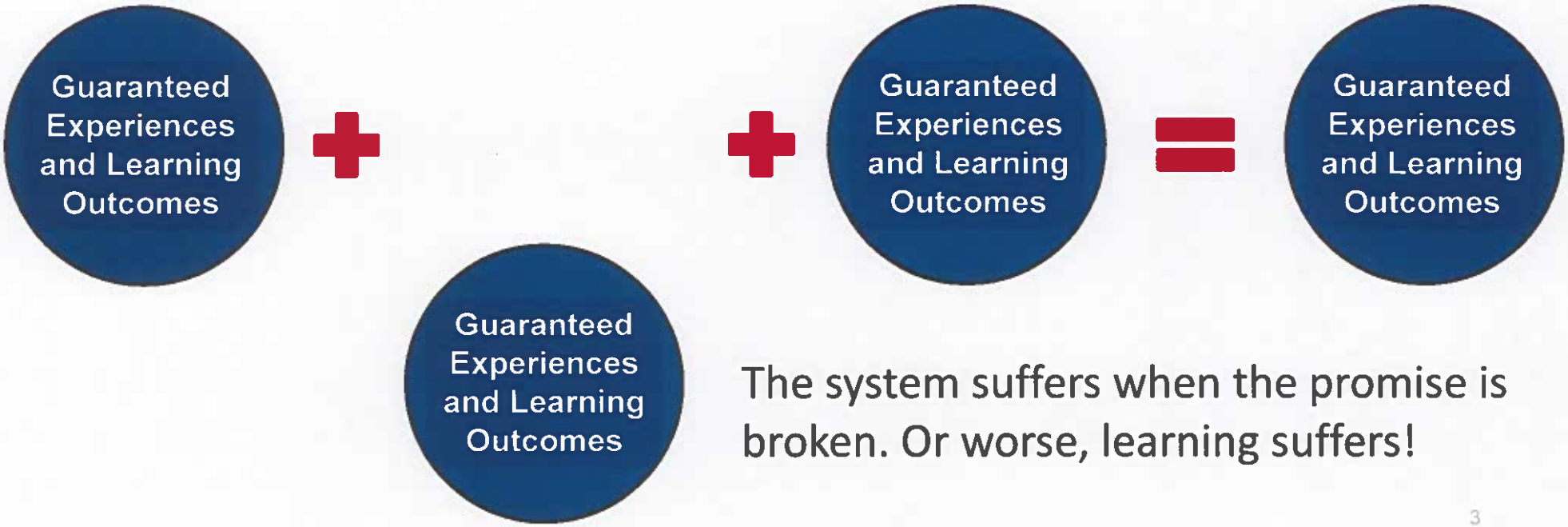
Regional School District 20

September 17, 2026

Curriculum is a Promise Among Teachers



Curriculum is a Promise Among Teachers

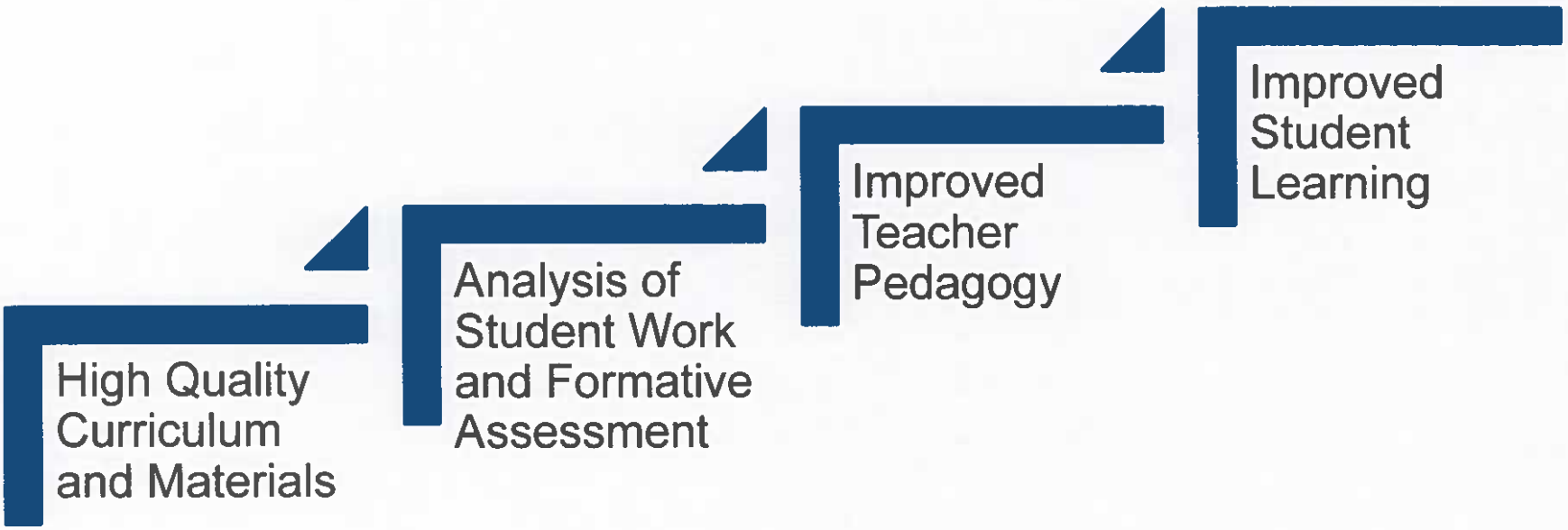


The system suffers when the promise is broken. Or worse, learning suffers!

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

- Guaranteed: Ensure all students have access to same learning opportunities - regardless of school or teacher
- Viable: Scope and Sequence and Pacing must align with time allotted to content.

Curriculum Foundational Component to Improved Student Learning



Process for the Adoption of Curriculum and Selection of Support Materials

- Grade Level/Department review and recommendation in collaboration with school administration
- Curriculum Council review and recommendation to the Superintendent
- Review and recommendation of the Board of Education Curriculum Sub-Committee
- Final Step - Board of Education Approval

Curriculum Development Process



Five-Year Review Cycle

Describe the Curriculum

- Unit Title
- Duration of Unit (weeks /days)
- Essential Question(s) Are not yes/no questions…
- Key Understandings /Big Ideas
- Likely Misunderstandings
- Aligned Standards
- Description of Assessment / Culminating Activity

- Lesson Title /Number
- Duration
- Description of Lesson (Teacher Actions and Student Actions)
- Formative Assessment Description

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- Duration
- Description of Lesson (Teacher Actions and Student Actions)
- Formative Assessment Description

- Culminating Activity /Assessment

Ideal Implementation of Curriculum

- Regular Grade Level/Department Meetings to Discuss and Prepare Curriculum and Instruction, Note any Needs for Revision or Concerns
- Formative Assessment
  - Capture Student Results
- Bring Assessment Results to the Grade Level/Department Meeting for Analysis

Status of Elementary Curriculum & Instruction

District Implementation & Next Steps for Future

Current Core Programs

Literacy Instruction

- **Wit & Wisdom:** Core English Language Arts (ELA) content
- **Fundations:** Foundational skills focus
  - *Phonological & Phonemic Awareness:* Sound recognition and manipulation
  - *Phonics & Word Study:* Letter-sound connections, syllable types, and spelling rules
  - *Handwriting:* Explicit letter formation and automaticity
  - *Vocabulary & Fluency:* Word meaning and reading comprehension
- **Heggerty:** Targeted phonemic awareness practice

Mathematics Instruction

- **Reveal Math:** Core elementary math curriculum

Next Steps: Curriculum Mapping & Documentation

- Document units, scope and sequence, and recommended lessons for all grade levels.

Formative Assessment Strategy

- Develop and identify Common Formative Assessments (CFAs).

Data Protocols & Teacher Training

- Implement Data Analysis and student work analysis protocols to ensure assessment data directly drives daily instruction.

Continuous Improvement

- Utilize ongoing student performance data to guide future curricular revisions.

Secondary Curriculum Status

Over 2025-2026, we made significant progress implementing a common curricular format and merging curricula from previous districts. However, this work is not complete.

High School must balance work with the demands of the upcoming NEASC visit as part of its Accreditation process.

Middle School has made excellent progress completing the task of the merger.

Next Steps in Curriculum Development

Curriculum Council: Establish a team to help manage the curriculum process. Distribute leadership in direct response to the complete elimination of the curriculum office in the 2025-2026 School Year.

Curriculum Council will help develop capacity to manage and evaluate curriculum.

- Evaluate Effectiveness (alignment, impact)
- Manage K-12 Alignment Process
- Identify Status in the Curriculum Revision Cycle

Note Regarding Data & Curriculum

- Build Data Systems to be Responsive to School Instructional Needs
  - Capture data measuring effective implementation practices to answer the question: Are we using best practices to implement, and to what extent?
  - Data can inform effective instruction- formative data
  - Data can identify problems with curriculum summative data

District Goal - Programming/Curriculum and Instruction

By June 2029, Regional School District 20 will implement a K-12 curriculum that fully consolidates the curricula of the original two districts, is aligned with state standards, and establishes a process for reviewing all curricula on a five-year cycle, resulting in consistent instructional expectations across all schools. We will measure progress toward this goal based on:

- Improvement of student proficiency on state assessments for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Target improvement by 2029 = 10%
- Improvement in the quality of curricular development as measured by an agreed-upon rubric (in development). Target improvement TBD following initial assessment.