

Watchung school board lays out five-year curriculum plan

By **CLAUDIA CEVA**

STAFF WRITER

WATCHUNG – The Board of Education outlined a new, five-year curriculum plan at its meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 26.

The plan allows the school board and administration to assess each area of instruction on a rotating basis over five years.

“The purpose of the Five-Year Curriculum Plan is to ensure that the curriculum for every subject matter is investigated, developed, implemented and evaluated in a regimented and recurring process,” Board President Margo Langer said in an email.

Interim Superintendent Stephanie Bilenker and her administrative team composed the plan and presented it to the board for their approval.

The curriculum for each area of study, from mathematics to vocal music to

physical education, goes through four processes: inquiry and investigation, development, implementation and evaluation.

At the inquiry and investigation level, those programs are analyzed and a plan for improvement is sought. At the development stage, a revised, improved, and updated curriculum is built for each program.

The implementation step puts the newly developed curriculum in place. Finally, the programs at the evaluation level are reviewed to see how the curriculum has performed, and to assess whether the programs are on the right track.

In any given year over the course of four years, a program’s curriculum will be subjected to one of the four processes, before advancing to the next stage the following year.

The math curriculum, for example, finds itself in

the inquiry and investigation stage during this 2018-2019 school year. Having undergone development and implementation over the next two school years, the curriculum will undergo evaluation during the 2021-2022 school year.

Programs fall out of the schedule for one year after the evaluation stage, before cycling back to the inquiry and investigation stage. Readers can view the five-year schedule on the district website at <https://tinyurl.com/yal89pku>.

The 2018-19 School Year

Programs being looked into this year include mathematics and algebra, instructional support, English as a Second Language (ESL), Holocaust and genocide studies through the state’s Caring Makes a Difference program, and study skills in grades 5-8.

In development this year are visual arts, vocal music, instrumental music and performing arts will have curriculum developed.

New curricula implemented this year include Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), technology education, physical education, health and seventh grade robotics.

Programs being evaluated this year are world language, social studies and industrial arts in grades 5-8.

Editor’s Note: A story that appeared in the Thursday, Oct. 4, edition erroneously stated that the board introduced a five-year strategic plan at the meeting, rather than the curriculum plan. The strategic plan covered in the Oct. 4 edition was presented at a meeting in May. We regret the error and any inconvenience it caused.