

Governor Mifflin School District

NEWS

10 South Waverly Street, Shillington, PA 19607

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISTRICT ANNOUNCES CURRICULUM CHANGES

SHILLINGTON, PA, APRIL 2010 - On Monday, May 17, 2010, the Governor Mifflin Board of School Directors reviewed a summary of the curricular changes associated with attrition and other budget reduction opportunities for the 2010-2011 school year. The curricular changes impact *non-mandated courses only*, as described below:

1. Implement \$10 Activity Fees for Participation in Non-Mandated High School Courses

The implementation of curricular activity fees for high school elective courses in art, music, family and consumer science and technology education relates to a school policy that has been ignored for many years. Policy #110* requires students to compensate the district for any projects rendering items of use that the students are permitted to keep. Food, artwork, furniture, crafts and instrument supplies are examples of such items.

Requiring a \$10 standard activity fee is the district's way of enforcing the school policy. \$10 is less than the actual cost of the materials used per year. As noted in the policy, special consideration will be made in the case of financial hardship.

* To read policy #110 in its entirety, please visit www.GovernorMifflinSD.org/board_policies.asp and click on "100 PROGRAMS."

2. Discontinue Grade 3 & 4 Individual and Small Group Instrumental Lessons and Rehearsals

- **Impact of the Change:** The PA Chapter 4 requirement to offer instrument lessons in elementary schools is already satisfied with the offering of Keyboarding courses for all third graders. In addition, K-4 students will continue to receive mandated instruction in general music education classes in these buildings. Furthermore, students in Grade 3 who wish to continue string instrument lessons next year may do so under the Grandfather clause.
- **Problems with Current Practice:** Pulling students out of classes for lessons and rehearsals forces students to miss core instructional time. It also causes disruption to teachers who must coordinate supplemental instruction time. Even in the best case scenario, the scheduling of pull-out lessons and rehearsals at each K-4 building cannot be coordinated without dictating the district-wide scheduling of courses. The situation becomes dire when students who demonstrate the need for academic interventions must be afforded additional instruction within the course of the school day.
- **Rationale for the Change:** In an ideal scenario, the district would negotiate the time and scheduling constraints of these instructional obligations by hiring additional teachers, at cost to the district and its taxpayers. However, in this economic climate, GMSD must make a choice whether to prioritize the offerings of non-mandated, co-curricular programs or to consider the overall implications on the community at large.

GMSD recognizes the valuable role that music instruction plays in a student's educational experience, as well as the esteemed legacy of GM's music program. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the intent of a non-conservatory K-12 music program is to expose students to music and that public funding should be maximized in areas that benefit all students.

DISTRICT STATEMENT:

It is the duty of a public institution to consider the best interests of the entire community that supports it. District residents rely on school board members and school administrators to make decisions that balance the purpose of education with the limited resources of the community and its economy. The aforementioned curricular changes represent GMSD's response to the challenging times we are facing.

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