

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Curriculum

Meeting type: Regular

Date of Meeting: 5/22/23

Minutes submitted by: Kim LaTourette

Members present: Tim Blair, Stephanie Strazza, Greg Flanagan

Members absent: Kathy Baker

Other attendees: Ken Craw, Julie Luby, Alyce Misuraca, Heidi Edel, Ernest Fabrizio-Garcia, Amy Twitchell, Kimberly LaTourette

Meeting Access: Curriculum Subcommittee (5/22/23 at 7:00 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/91931913594>

Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 919 3191 3594

Meeting called to order: at 7:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 24, 2023 – Regular Meeting - Approved by consensus

Motion: To switch the Information Items and Action Items

Made by: Tim Blair

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette

Recording of vote: All in favor

Motion: To switch the Information Items and Action Items

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette

Recording of vote: All in favor

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Proposed Paris + Orleans Exchange Trip - Heidi Edel joined the meeting to discuss this trip. Julie Luby introduced her and asked this committee to bring this to the full board if approved tonight. A trip to Paris, France is being proposed. We would be hosting students in October and our students would travel to France in February. She shared some benefits of our students travelling. Joel Barlow High School has an established exchange student program and Heidi would work closely with Ed Smith; however, Joel Barlow students would be going to France at another time. The itinerary was shared in her presentation. The plane tickets are around \$1400 per student and added activities may create a total amount of around \$3000 for the trip. Some activities may be eliminated to decrease the cost. Heidi also shared information about what the French students would be doing with our students when they are here in the fall. Some details will still be worked out and shared with the board.

Kim and Tim asked that the presentation be shared with the full board.

Stephanie wanted to make sure our policies are all set and in place as far as having international students here in our district, as well as in New Fairfield homes. We also want to make sure that our students will be all set when they stay with families in France. Heidi is hoping to find some sponsorship from the community so that some students who may not be eligible may be able to go. Dr. Craw and Heidi are hoping to have this approved this school year so they can move forward with finalizing plans. We would like to gauge interest as soon as possible and would love to have around 10-15 students participate. The more students, the less the trip will cost as well.

Motion: To bring this to the full Board for the first meeting in June

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette

Recording of vote: All in favor

B. Textbook Adoption - Middle School Science Resource: Mosa Mack Science - Julie Luby began by mentioning the need to review resources. The one we have in place at the Middle School has expired and they have been piloting a new resource. Alyce Misuraca spoke of the Mosa Mack science textbook. Alyce mentioned the other resources that were looked at as well. Amy Twitchell also joined in the meeting. All of the Grades 6-8 science teachers like this resource. Amy spent some time showing us the teacher and student platform. This is an online resource focused on the science standards. There is a

big focus on engineering, which the teachers like as well. Once you pick a unit, the program will offer a few different options for the students to engage in - something they need to solve, something they may need to make (in person or virtual), and then something they need to engineer and use their problem-solving skills. There are phenomena, animations, focus vocabulary, a lab, presentations, and materials. This can be linked to Google Classroom. There are also a lot of different supports in place for all of our different types of learners. There are a lot of PDFs where it can be opened in Kami and words can be translated for our Spanish speaking students. There is also leveled reading for different articles. Amy said that this has been an easy resource to get used to and to use, and it is user friendly and flexible.

Motion: To bring this to the full Board and to suspend the rules

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Seconded by: Tim Blair

Recording of vote: All in favor

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. 2023-24 Curriculum & Instruction Priorities (A Look Ahead) - Dr. Craw introduced Julie Luby to give a preview of what we will need to do and look at for next year. Julie shared a list of priorities for curriculum and instruction, as well as implementation. Alyce spoke about the science and reading waiver and how we are addressing the reading at the K-3 level. We are currently waiting to hear back and hope that will take place before the end of June. It will either be accepted or not. If it does not, we will have a choice of seven resources to choose from and be ready to pilot and purchase. If our waiver is accepted, we can continue on our progress. The state is shifting as far as their reading screening as well. The screening is required K-3. Bridges Math will be in year two and will have more of a focus on how teachers implement the math strategies and practices while addressing differentiation. EdGems will continue at the Middle School and launch in the fall. Middle School science documents need to be revised, to articulate the standards, and not be married to a resource. We will be piloting a science resource for grades 4 and 5. Mosa Mack spans 4-8, so that may be a good resource to pilot and help with the transition to the Middle School program, if approved. New social studies standards may be released in June. Elementary and High School may not have changed much, but Middle School may have changed their focus, but we will see them in June. We are looking to launch a program to hold our K-12 curriculum so that it has the maps, progression of skills among grade levels. This was cited by NEASC, so this work is important. Julie presented other items. The state is getting ready to release a new evaluation plan for teachers and administrators. What we are hearing is our own committee may have to create a plan with all of the pieces that go with it - observations, year-end review, and we will need a platform for this information to go. Some changes were made to Title IX regulations during COVID. New laws and regulations will be released this summer. This may make things easier for things to fall under Title IX, which means that we may be doing more investigations as well. We have an add-on to PowerSchool to store data. Admin has had some training, teachers have had none, but we need to figure out how this training can take place. Absenteeism/Chronic Absenteeism is still on the rise. These numbers are larger than usual, so much so that the law requires us to have certain things in place and try to figure out how to re-engage chronically absent students. More cultural and climate work needs to take place in regard to mental health, SEL, and behavior. Stephanie asked about the Math coaches and the implementation of the program. Dr. Craw and Julie agree that our Math coaches need to stay in order for this to be implemented with fidelity.

B. Curriculum & Instruction Restructuring as a Result of Required Budget Reductions

Dr. Craw reported that we currently have six coaches at the primary level and two at the secondary level. We are looking at restructuring without having the Director of Curriculum position. Without that position, we need to look at how we continue to move forward. It will impact all levels of our organization. Without final decisions in regard to the budget, it makes things very difficult to plan. We do not have the benefit of time with the obstacle of the budget. Our Assistant Superintendent position will take on some of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as well as professional learning. This will all be impacted.

While we tried to keep reductions away from students as much as we could, leadership does matter. This will force us to look closely at our coaches and department chairs. We will need to take a look at roles and responsibilities very closely as well. Planning right now is our biggest challenge. We are trying to bring clarity into this situation we are in.

V. OTHER – none

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Stephanie Strazza
Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Kim LaTourette
Meeting adjourned at: 8:23 p.m.