

# WBOE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 20, 2020

**Present:** Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. David Ross, Joyce Shavers, Dr. Michael Strambler, Dr. Jeffrey Townsend, Committee Members; Dan Cowan, Board Members; Robert Gilbert, Superintendent; Cheryl Mammen, Special Services Director; Analisa Sherman, Principal; Doreen Merrill, Assistant Principal; Joe DePalma, Peter Halsey, Monique MacDonald, Nancy Smerekanicz, Teachers; Grace Halsey, Community.

Ms. Piascyk called the meeting to order (4:31 PM).

**Public Comment** – Ms. MacDonald responded to comments made about making curriculum easier for teachers. Curriculum is formulated and structured in the best interest of children and their respective needs. Teachers are provided with resources and support to create optimum learning environments based on student needs.

**Responsive Classroom Presentation:** Messrs. Halsey, DePalma and Ms. Halsey provided an overview on the nuances of Responsive Classroom and its implementation process at Beecher. RC is a student centered approach to teaching that believes that the social emotional curriculum is just as important as the academic one. The four key areas are:

1. *Engaging Academics* - learning tasks are active, interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful and connected to students' interest.
2. *Positive Community* - nurturing a sense of belonging, significance and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers.
3. *Effective Management* – creating a calm, orderly environment that promotes autonomy and allows students to focus on learning.
4. *Developmental Responsive Teaching* – creating a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

Strategies are adapted based on student need and may look different from classroom to classroom. Social and emotional skills have to be taught and modeled repeatedly inclusive of clear expectations for student behavior. Approximately 150 Beecher staff members (teachers, teacher assistants and administrators) have been trained since 2007. Future priorities include advanced course training, individual staff coaching and enhanced professional development opportunities. Questions arose for how RC was selected, options for students who do not respond to RC practices and/or lack discipline, additional behavioral strategies, resources and objectives outside of the classroom teacher (psychologists, behavior specialist, etc.) how RC interfaces with academics and whether we have consistent implementation practices / student expectations for all grade levels.

**Next Meeting:** The March 19 meeting will be the second part of the math presentation with Jen Michaeluk a math consultant from the Connecticut State Department of Education and a representative from Amity High School. The focus will be on math differentiation for all learners within a classroom. Suggestions for future topics include Word Study and Unified Arts with the exception of Spanish and Technology and converting the Curriculum Committee into an additional full Board meeting to allow for the attendance and participation of all Board members.

**Meeting Adjourned:** (5:48 PM)