

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Curriculum

Meeting type: Regular

Date of Meeting: 3/25/24

Minutes submitted by: Sue Huwer

Members present: Tim Blair, Sue Huwer, Ed Sbordone (*for Greg Flanagan*)

Members absent: Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan

Other attendees: Ken Craw, Kristine Woleck, Ernesto Fabrizio-Garcia, Karen Gruetzner, Allyson Story

Place of meeting: Meeting Access: Curriculum Subcommittee (3/25/24 at 7:00 p.m.)

Web: <https://zoom.us/j/99865845636> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 998 6584 5636

Meeting called to order: at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 26, 2024 – Regular Meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 26, 2024, as presented

Made by: Tim Blair

Seconded by: Sue Huwer

Recording of vote: All in favor

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Middle School Unified Arts, 24-25 – Karen Gruetzner presented plans underway to change the scheduling of the Middle School Unified Arts Program courses. This program includes Health, STEAM, Art, PE, and Music (divided into General Music and Performing Arts including band, chorus and strings). STEAM, Health, Art and General Music will change from presently being offered once every four days on an A-D rotation during the entire year to being offered every other day on an A-B rotation on a trimester basis. The intent of this change is to benefit students and teachers – to allow them to connect better as a result of being able to meet more frequently, to get to know each other better, and to allow for greater continuity in teaching and completing student projects, more responsive teaching, and better feedback between teacher and student. Performing Arts (band, chorus, strings) will meet every other day throughout the year in the deliberate effort to make this program more robust. Karen added that the 3rd trimester will include additional STEAM offerings, presently being developed, that will offer students a little bit of choice. PE and World Language classes will continue to meet every other day throughout the year, back-to-back with these courses.

B. World Language Program Expansion – Next Steps Update. For the first time, 6th graders will have the chance to pursue a language (French or Spanish) as presented by World Language Chair Ernesto Fabrizio-Garcia. He and language teachers Ms. Smith and Graves met with 5th graders recently to discuss this. Students will be able to study one or two languages in middle school for three years and can switch to a different language in high school if they wish. Foreign language will be mandatory in middle school unless an IEP or 504 indicates otherwise. In the year 2025-26, language instruction will move from being offered every other day to every day. Presently, our middle school is the exception in not offering daily World Language according to Dr. Craw. Ten years ago, we used to offer daily World Language in middle school and, coincidentally, our high school students performed better on World Language advanced placement tests, achieving scores of 3-4. By increasing our language offering in middle school, we hope to move our students to higher level courses in high school and have greater language literacy. Presently, our high school students' AP foreign language scores are 2-3, due to a weakness in speaking the language but exhibiting strengths in reading, writing, and listening.

C. Curriculum and Instructional Coach Overview – Christine Woleck discussed how the role of our instructional coaches has expanded beyond instruction to curriculum assessment. They also provide professional learning for our staff throughout the year in the classroom and at staff meetings. Because coaches have content expertise, they will be important in the upcoming curriculum writing led by Dr. Woleck. Our coaches look to see how our curriculum is being implemented in the classroom in the

moment. They help teachers assess how students are progressing in their learning by evaluating data and how else to address a student's needs by adjusting the teacher's practices. Coaches help see where our students are growing through the curriculum and where our curriculum may need to be adjusted to facilitate greater learning. All high-performing districts invest in coaches. We look at student outcomes to assess the success of our coaches.

IV. ACTION ITEMS - none

V. OTHER – K-5 Reading Pilot Update – Allyson Storey said teachers are seeing a great volume of work being produced by students in grammar, vocabulary and comprehension in the pilot projects in these last three weeks. Teachers are comparing both programs regarding vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension, writing, and students' engagement in what they are reading. At this point, teachers are looking at pros and cons coming out of both programs, most impressed with vocabulary development. Pacing, the materials, and presentation of materials are being discussed. Now teachers are focusing on small group instruction -- moving kids through at their level in both the programs. Coaches are participating in seeing how the programs connect with the standards, weekly planning with teachers, and guidance on strong instructional moves for getting instruction across. More work is underway. There's not enough evidence yet to make a decision on which is the preferred program and better match for us in terms of meeting our needs.

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Susan Huwer
Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Tim Blair
Meeting adjourned at: 7:58 p.m.