

## **Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting**

Monday, April 25, 2022 7:00 PM

Meeting Access: Curriculum Subcommittee (4/25/22 at 7 p.m.) Web:

<https://zoom.us/j/93068026787> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 930 6802 6787, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

II.A. March 28, 2022 - Regular

### **III. ACTION ITEMS**

### **IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

IV.A. Processes for Selection & Re-evaluation of  
Instructional Materials (Policies 1312 and 6161 will be  
referenced.)

IV.B. Update on Secondary Math

IV.C. Strings Follow-Up Information

IV.D. Number Corner in Action

### **V. OTHER**

### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT**  
**Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting**

Name of Subcommittee: Curriculum Meeting type: Regular  
Date of Meeting: 3/28/22 Minutes submitted by: Tim Blair  
Members present: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Stephanie Strazza  
Members absent:  
Other attendees: Julie Luby, Alyce Misuraca, Deanna Rivers, Jessica Pratt, Ed Sbordone  
Meeting Access: Curriculum Subcommittee (3/28/22 at 7 p.m.)  
Web: <https://zoom.us/j/96885656981> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 968 8565 6981

**Meeting called to order:** at 7:01 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. February 28, 2022 – Regular Meeting

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of February 28, 2022, as presented

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

**Approved by consensus**

**III. ACTION ITEMS - none**

**IV. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**Motion:** To move Information Item IV.D. Strings Update to the top of the Information Items list of discussion

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Second: Tim Blair

**Recording of vote:** All in favor

**A. Item IV.D. Strings Update** - Julie Luby provided an update, along with information from teachers Deanna Rivers and Jessica Pratt. They gave current numbers on students currently enrolled with one of the string instruments and its potential challenges to carry on the program as a music option going into middle school and beyond. We do not currently have a full-time strings teacher and that provides a challenging situation to also incorporate band instruments. Third and fourth grade string enrollment is high but some thinking is because they have the ability to have smaller instruments at that age group makes certain strings more appealing at the younger age. Overall discussion will continue to continue strings program as is, potentially add a dedicated strings educator or focus all the resources into the band program which can be enhanced. We currently have 65 band students in grade 5. Our goal is to maintain as many of them as possible so that ideally, our high school band would have 100 students. We currently have 18 strings students in grades 5 and 6 of whom also are playing a band instrument. We have to commit to adding staff for the coming year and for each of the several following years, if we wish to offer strings. There is currently no staffing above grade 5. We can make that commitment, or, we may want to consider, based on our size, starting band instruments earlier and investing our effort in growing one large, strong program. We will gather information about what other DRG and other similarly sized school systems offer.

**B. Website Update** - Julie Luby shared more detailed information and improvements to the website, including a complete core resources review that will be accessible to all teachers, students and parents. Two new sections have been added. The K-8 Art continuum is now on the Curriculum Overviews page. A new section, Curriculum Resources, has been added and includes links to all of our core programs.

**C. Secondary Math Resource Update** - Julie Luby and Alyce Misuraca presented the update. Recently we decided to move to a new program and explore options. We are piloting several programs that we are considering as replacements for our current secondary math resource. The goal is for the resource to provide the highest quality education and ensure we can do that with unnecessary distractions. Teachers grade 6-12 are in the beginning stages of the pilot process. Desmos is currently being piloted in

8<sup>th</sup> grade, and our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are piloting Illustrative Math. Desmos is more digital intense at about 80% digital and 20% paper/pencil, and Illustrative Math is more paper/pencil. We are finding that Illustrative Math is a common program that is used in neighboring districts.

**D. Core 21 Update** - Julie Luby shared potential changes to the structure of this class; using what worked best and eliminating what would not be needed going forward. Core 21 involves a series of units of instruction designed around problem-based learning tasks. There will likely not be a designated period of the day for this next year; rather, the instructional model and units will likely be shifted into the core content classes.

**E. Bridges Implementation** - Alyce Misuraca explained the timeline and progress made in the implementation of this program. Materials will arrive for teachers in April and full implementation of the program is in the fall. We took a team to visit with neighboring district Newtown who began using Bridges this year, and feedback from educators is very positive regarding student interaction with this program. It was very valuable to see it in action and to be able to learn from their experience. We are setting up two spotlight classrooms this spring in order to pilot Bridges units of instruction. We have implemented Number corner this year, which is a standalone component of our soon to be implemented math program. It already is showing great shifts in our students' thinking, and it is helping teachers become familiar with the Bridges program. All members expressed excitement of this upcoming program.

**V. OTHER** - Stephanie brought up two agenda items for next meeting:

A parent from a meeting earlier in the year expressed concern about a couple of the books her student was reading in class. Who is the decision maker for these books and for the books on display in the library and how is that process decided?

**Motion to adjourn:** Made by: Kathy Baker  
Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Greg Flanagan  
**Meeting adjourned at:** 8:23 p.m.

## **Community Relations**

### **Public Complaints**

The Board of Education welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from the citizens whom it serves. Constructive criticism of the schools is welcome whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to allow the schools to do their tasks more effectively. However, the Board has confidence in its professional staff and desires to support their actions in order that they be free from unnecessary, spiteful or negative criticism and complaint. Therefore, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will promptly be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

Since individual Board members have no authority to resolve complaints, other than by formal Board action, Board members shall refer persons making complaints about the schools to the most immediate level at which the problems can be resolved and, as may be necessary, through lines of organization to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board expects that the administration will develop a procedure for receiving complaints courteously and that it will take steps to make a proper reply to the complainant. Follow-up shall be in the form of a written memorandum to the Board members.

Anonymous complaints provide no avenue for response or redress of the complaint. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that such complaints need not be pursued. An unsigned complaint need not be read or acted upon at any meeting of the Board and anonymous telephone complaints need not be brought to the Board by any individual Board member, administrator or other District employee. The administration need not act on any anonymous complaint.

Parents should be made aware of the proper channels of communication and appeal. Complaints for which specific resolution procedures are provided shall be directed through those channels. The decision of the Principal regarding a student must include notice to the parents of the next step of appeal. Any appeal from the decision of the Superintendent to the Board shall be in writing and signed.

Complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level of authority. If the complaint cannot be resolved at the building level, either party is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools.

If all other remedies have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be appealed to the Board of Education. No appeal will be heard by the Board and no charges or accusations against an employee will be investigated unless the accusations are reduced to writing, signed by the party making the complaint, and presented to the Board through the Superintendent.

## Community Relations

### Public Complaints

The Board will not consider or act upon complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate level or complaints for which specific resolution procedures have been established that do not include Board review. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, the Board shall make a decision which shall be sent to all interested parties. The Board's decision is final.

Upon receipt of a written petition signed by one percent of the voters or fifty voters, whichever is greater, the Board of Education shall hold a public hearing on any question specified in the petition within three weeks of receipt of the petition.

### Challenged Material

A procedure for processing and responding to criticism of approved materials shall be established and followed. This procedure shall include a formal, signed complaint of standard format and an appointed committee to re-evaluate the material in question.

In all cases, the decision to retain or reject shall be made on the basis of whether the material represents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material has literary or social value. Factual material shall be included in all instructional material collections.

(cf. 1220 – Citizens' Advisory Committees)

(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference:        *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)  
                                  *President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25* 457 F.2d  
                                  289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976)  
                                  *Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District*, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir. 1976).  
                                  *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v.*  
                                  *Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).  
                                  Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of  
                                  Education, 9/9/81).  
                                  Connecticut General Statutes  
                                  10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy adopted:        June 21, 2007

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 New Fairfield, Connecticut

## **Community Relations**

### **Public Complaints**

The Superintendent and all building or unit administrators shall maintain a log of all written and signed public complaints received, the results of any study or investigation undertaken, and the particular action or disposition rendered. These records shall be deemed personal working files and not subject to public disclosure except that the Superintendent may review all such files at any time.

The Superintendent's own records shall be reviewable by the Board chair. Heresay and rumor shall not be considered a complaint unless directed by an identifiable complainant.

Administrators shall use understanding in dealing with the public, but nothing contained herein shall imply that any staff member is compelled to subject him/herself to inappropriate or unrestrained forms of insult, upbraiding, or other like abuse. Complainants are to be advised of their right to appeal decisions and actions to the Superintendent whose determinations may in turn be reviewed by the Board.

The Board may request a disinterested third party to act as a moderator to help it reach a mutually satisfactory solution. After the Board's decision, the usual appeal route pertains.

Any parent, guardian, or other person who insults or abuses any teacher or other employee on school property or in the presence of students may be prosecuted by the district under the provisions of law.

### **Request for Re-Evaluation of Instructional Materials**

The following procedure shall be followed whenever there is a request for the evaluation of instructional material other than textbooks:

1. The Superintendent shall establish an ad hoc review committee broadly representative of:
  - A. Teachers competent in the area of the content covered by the material.
  - B. Administrators, directors, and supervisors appropriate to the level and/or subject for which material is used.
  - C. A media specialist who shall serve on the review committee.
  - D. Parents when appropriate, as determined by the Superintendent.
2. Objections to materials and requests for re-evaluation must be presented in writing on the proper form. Request for Re-Evaluation of Materials forms are available in the office of the Superintendent.
3. Initial action on a written request on the proper form shall be taken no later than fifteen school days after receipt of the request.

## Community Relations

### Public Complaints

#### Request for Re-Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

4. A written report from the review committee shall be submitted to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall then communicate his or her decision to the person requesting the re-evaluation.
5. Should the decision of the Superintendent not satisfy the person requesting the re-evaluation, the Board of Education may hold a special hearing to review the Superintendent's decision.
6. Once instructional material has been re-evaluated the material cannot be subject to further review without special approval by the Board of Education. Challenged instructional materials shall remain in use in the schools pending a final decision by the Board of Education, or unless suspended by the Board of Education prior to a final decision.

(cf. 1220 - Citizens, Advisory Committees)

(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Keyishian v. Board of Regents*, 385 U.S. 589, 603 (1967).

*President's Council, District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25*, 457 F. 2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S. 998 (1976).

*Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District*, 541 F. 2d 577 (6th Cir. 1976).

*Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982).

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81).

Connecticut General Statutes

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education

Regulation approved: June 21, 2007

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Fairfield, Connecticut

## **Instruction**

### **Textbook Selection and Adoption**

It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide instructional materials that support and enrich the curriculum and further the achievement of the school system's instructional goals. Section 10-229 of the General Statutes of Connecticut states: No Board of Education shall change any textbooks used in the public schools except by a two-thirds vote of members of the Board, notice of such change having been previously given at a meeting of such Board held at least one week previous to the vote upon such change.

The selection of textbooks will be carried on continuously in order to keep up with the great expansion of knowledge and the rapid changes going on in our world today. Textbooks are defined as that resource which provides 50% or more of the information upon which the program of instruction is based.

Where applicable, all textbooks should present balanced views concerning the international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future. Textbooks should:

1. Provide materials to stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
2. Provide materials that will help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
3. Provide materials that will develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
4. Provide for all students an effective education that, in compliance with the Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.
5. Allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of student.

The administration will develop and review administrative rules outlining a procedure to select textbooks which meet the above criteria. This procedure shall include analysis, evaluation, and recommendation by professional staff. The Superintendent or his/her designee will make the textbooks recommendation to the Board.

## **Instruction**

### **Textbook Selection and Adoption** (continued)

#### **Overview**

In accordance with Board policy, 6161(a) Textbook Selection and Adoption, the selection of textbooks will be carried on continuously in order to keep up with the great expansion of knowledge and rapid changes going on in our world today. Textbooks are defined as that resource which provides 50% or more of the information upon which the program of instruction is based.

Textbook adoption is the change process from one textbook to another. A textbook should be viewed as a tool for effective teaching. Just as a surgeon must select the very best tools for each operation, school administration must ensure that the best tools are selected and well utilized by teachers. The textbook should not be the curriculum. There is no such thing as a perfect textbook. It is the teacher, who must constantly use and modify instructional materials on a daily basis, who ensures that final student outcomes are met.

It is, therefore, not the textbook that is critical in the textbook adoption process, but how that textbook is selected and used. Consequently, it is important that a framework or structure is provided that does not dictate or mandate specific decisions nor state specifically how decisions will be made, but one that allows qualified staff to select textbooks and to meet certain educational and district requirements. This framework must allow for flexibility yet ensure that good decisions be made.

#### **Basic components of textbook adoption process**

An effective process will have the following components:

- Require a level of expertise/training for those responsible for making a decision;
- Request that certain procedures be included in the process before coming to a decision;
- Request proof that specified criteria has been met.

#### **Expertise/Training**

- Any person serving on a textbook adoption should have expertise in the subject of adoption;
- Any person serving on a textbook selection committee should have training in how to evaluate textbooks;

## **Instruction**

### **Textbook Selection and Adoption** (continued)

#### **Expertise/Training** (continued)

- Any person involved in the textbook selection process should have current knowledge of and/or exposure pertaining to the last five years of research in the subject of adoption;
- Any person involved with the use of the basic textbook program should be provided with specific training on how to use it.

#### **Procedures**

- Textbook adoption committees will be formed as part of school improvement or district curriculum development plans. (See tasks framework)
- Each textbook adoption committee should identify specific goals and/or major objectives that the new program is expected to achieve and provide a plan for how these will be identified and evaluated in the competing materials. (See plan framework)
- The textbook adoption committee should submit a plan for how the newly purchased program will be implemented, and monitored and evaluated.
- The textbooks adoption committee should make sure that approved textbooks are developmentally appropriate, durable and cost effective.

#### **Proof of Performance**

- The textbook adoption committee will show evidence that any textbook program submitted has met criteria for selection before full district adoption.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-18a Contents of textbooks and other general instructional materials

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

10-228 Free textbooks, supplies, materials and equipment.

10-229 Change of textbooks.

Policy adopted: May 2, 2002  
 Policy revised: January 5, 2006

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 New Fairfield, Connecticut