

Policy Subcommittee

Wednesday, June 8, 2022 7:00 PM

Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (6/8/22 at 7 p.m.) Web:

<https://zoom.us/j/95182556293> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 951 8255 6293, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

II.A. March 23, 2022 - Regular

III. ACTION ITEMS

III.A. Policy 6141.51 – Advanced Courses or Programs,
Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

III.B. Policy 6141.52 – Challenging Curriculum Policy
(Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)

III.C. Policy 6172.1 – Gifted and Talented Students
Program

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

V. OTHER

VI. ADJOURNMENT

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Policy Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Policy Meeting type: Regular
Date of Meeting: 3/23/22 Place of Meeting: Zoom
Members present: Kathy Baker, Samantha Mannion, Amy Johnson, Stephanie Strazza
Members absent:
Other attendees: Dr. Pat Cosentino, Julie Luby, James D'Amico, Dominic Cipollone
Minutes submitted by: Stephanie Strazza
Meeting Access: Policy Subcommittee (3/23/22 at 6 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/91860914614>
Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 918 6091 4614

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 24, 2022 - Regular

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 24, 2022, as presented

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. Policy 0524 - Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in Schools - Samantha Mannion summarized Policy 0524 - Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in Schools. The motivation for the policy stems from a rise in behavior in the High School surrounding hateful activity. The committee agreed to the alternate language for the introduction because it gives more flexibility to the district. It was agreed to changing the language "he/she" to "they/their" wherever it is used throughout the policy. The Subcommittee members agreed that incidents of bias, that are not classified as hate crimes, should not require an immediate referral to the police department.

B. Policy 4118.11/4218.11 - Nondiscrimination - The amended language is non-discretionary.

C. Policy 6146.11 - Grade Weighting and Class Rank - The amended language is non-discretionary. The district is required to notify students and parents of the GPA weighting of AP courses in the student handbook. James D'Amico reported that the district is already complying with this revision.

D. Bylaw 9327 - Electronic Communications Among Board Members - The subcommittee reviewed the samples provided by CABE and selected a version, with modifications, that was agreeable to all.

E. Bylaw 9327.1 – Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks - The members reviewed our Bylaw that was revised May 6, 2021, and there are no further revisions.

Motion: To bring to the full board the following policies and Bylaws for consideration: Policy 0524 – Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in Schools with suspension of the rules to be voted on at the next BOE meeting; Policy 4118.11/4218.11 - Nondiscrimination; Policy 6146.11 – Grade Weighting and Class Rank; Bylaw 9327 – Electronic Communications Among Board Members and Bylaw 9327.1 – Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Seconded by: Kathy Baker

Recording of Vote: All in favor

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS - none

V. OTHER

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Samantha Mannion

Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Amy Johnson

Meeting adjourned at: 7:20 p.m.

A new mandated policy beginning in the 2022-2023 school year to consider.

Instruction

Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

Purpose

The Board of Education (Board) believes in the basic principle that academic rigor and the opportunity to accelerate learning are powerful motivators for students to meet intellectual challenges and excel in the academic environment. The Board supports advanced courses and programs that promote academic acceleration. All students at the high school level will be provided an opportunity to participate in a rigorous and academically challenging curriculum.

The Board encourages students to pursue rigorous, challenging academic coursework such as, but not limited to, honors classes, dual enrollment, dual credit, advanced placement classes, International Baccalaureate courses, and the Cambridge International Program.

The Board, to encourage student participation in advanced courses or programs, will communicate information about advanced courses or programs to students and parents; offer district-wide counseling to students about the benefits of advanced level courses and programs; and annually report on District progress toward increasing students' readiness and participation for advanced courses or programs.

The benefits of advanced coursework opportunities are not limited to one particular model.

Definitions

An **“advanced course or program”** is defined as an honors class, advanced placement class, International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge International Program, dual enrollment, dual credit, early college or any other advanced or accelerated course or program offered by the Board of Education in grades 9-12, inclusive.

“Prior academic performance” means the course or courses that a student has taken, the grades received for each course, and a student's grade point average.

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles

The Board is aware that minority students are chronically underrepresented in advanced level high school courses and programs of similar rigor. Low awareness of advanced courses and programs, insufficient preparation, and fear of social isolation prevent low-income and minority students from enrolling in such courses or programs. Further, other barriers to participation include the failure to identify students with potential, insufficient motivation and incentives on behalf of teachers and/or students, and funding.

An emphasis on equity must include a focus on increasing student's access to rigorous learning opportunities to assist all students to be prepared for success after high school. The following District and school-level principles will contribute to fostering greater equity in student participation in advanced courses or programs:

Instruction

Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles (continued)

1. Provide a course sequence and foundation-building in earlier grades, ensuring high expectations for all students, that makes later advanced coursework a viable option;
2. Create multiple access points to advanced courses and programs, allowing students to access these programs at various points of their high-school experience;
3. Use only enrollment access criteria that are educationally necessary;
4. Use multiple methods by which a student may satisfy eligibility criteria for enrollment, including but not limited to:
 - a. Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors, or other school personnel;
 - b. Criteria not exclusively based on a student's prior academic performance;
 - c. Use of a student's prior academic performance must rely on evidence-based indicators of how a student will perform in an advanced course or program;
 - d. GPA improvement over time;
 - e. Scoring near benchmark on local assessments;
 - f. Student interests and persistence.
5. Offer a robust set of student supports, which can include tutoring, access to technology, and support from school counselors, that help all students succeed in advanced courses or programs; and
6. Publish and disseminate materials that encourage all students to participate in advanced courses and programs and making these materials available in multiple languages.

In order to access advanced courses or programs students need to complete sufficiently difficult coursework at the middle school level. This equitable course enrollment policy is based on rigorous learning opportunities for all students in elementary and middle grades.

High school students willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum shall be admitted to an advanced course or program as defined in this policy. Students who have successfully completed the prerequisite course work or have otherwise demonstrated mastery of the prerequisite content knowledge and have permission from the course instructor to participate will be allowed to enroll in advanced courses or programs offered by the District. The student must request the course or program through the guidance counselor.

District administrators and guidance counselors shall advise students and parents/guardians of the opportunity to participate in advanced courses or programs as defined in this policy. When students' success plans are prepared and revised, the academic component shall include appropriate preparatory courses and advanced course and program participation. Teachers shall also encourage students to take challenging courses.

Instruction

Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles (continued)

The Board seeks an equitable course enrollment policy that limits prerequisites and entrance requirements to those that are directly related to a student's potential for success. Therefore, multiple measures must be used to identify students for advanced coursework so that no single measure excludes their participation.

Advanced courses or programs must comply with applicable District policies and state standards and this policy must be in accordance with SDE promulgated guidance.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall ensure the development and/or identification of program stipulations, eligibility criteria, student attendance and discipline standards/expectations and criteria for continuation in advanced courses or programs, and shall ensure the development and/or identification of procedures for students encountering difficulty and/or wishing to drop advanced courses.

Evaluation

The Board will review annually data on student participation in advanced courses or programs, the data shall be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and free/reduced lunch participation. Such data will be used during the planning process for course and program offerings in the upcoming school year.

(cf. 6141.4 – Independent Study)
(cf. 6141.5 – Advanced College Placement)
(cf. 6172.1 – Gifted and Talented Students)
(6141.52 – Challenging Curriculum Policy)
(cf. 6141.7 – Honors Programs)
(cf. 6172.6 – Virtual/Online Courses)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 P.A. 21-199 Section 3
 10-221r Advanced placement course program. Guidelines.
 District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy

Policy adopted:
cps 4/22

A new mandated policy beginning in the 2022-2023 school year to consider.

Instruction

Challenging Curriculum Policy (Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)

The Board of Education (Board) believes academically advanced courses and/or programs are designed to motivate students to understand rigorous content. The Board recognizes its responsibility to identify these students in grades 8 and 9, in compliance with Section 5 of P.A. 21-199, and to provide them with appropriate instructional adaptations and services. Any student who is capable of and wishes to do advanced course work or take an accelerated course or program, as detailed in this policy should be permitted to do so (in grades 8 and 9).

An “**advanced course or program**” as defined in this policy means an honors class, advanced placement class, International Baccalaureate Program, Cambridge International Program, dual enrollment, dual credit, early college or any other advanced or accelerated course or program offered by the Board. Such courses or programs are specifically designed to extend, enrich, and/or accelerate the standard school program in order to meet the needs of District students.

The Board’s goal is to create a culture of deliberate excellence through its commitment to all students who have the capability, potential, or motivation to access advanced academic curriculum and instruction. The Board desires to nurture potential in all students and to challenge students with advanced capabilities through differentiation and responsive instruction. The needs of advanced and high potential learners will be equitability addressed across all populations.

In compliance with Section 5 of P.A. 21-199, the Board adopts this “challenging curriculum policy” aligned with State Department of Education (SDE) guidance. This policy includes, as required, the criteria for the identification of students in grades 8 and 9 who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course or program, as defined, and that such identified students have an academic plan.

Priority placement will be given to students identified as gifted, as per policy #6172.1, “Gifted and Talented Students.”

District middle schools will offer advanced academic classes in the four content areas of language arts, mathematics, social studies and science.

Students taking high school credit courses in the middle school are required to meet all expectations for earning course credit applicable to meeting high school graduation requirements.

Criteria

For purposes of this policy these are students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the District and who would benefit from advanced courses or programs in order to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Instruction

Challenging Curriculum Policy (Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)

Criteria (continued)

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures for an ongoing identification process that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity or a specific academic area. The identification process shall include consideration of all students including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans.

The purposes of identification are to find students who display characteristics which make them eligible for the taking of advanced courses or programs, as defined; to assess the aptitudes, attributes, and behaviors of each student; and to evaluate each student for the purposes of placement. Student aptitudes, attributes and academic behaviors will be identified, assessed and reviewed through a multistep, multimodal, and multidimensional identification system.

Students who experience success in advanced courses or programs typically exhibit the following characteristics: reading at or above grade level; strong study skills and self-motivation; proficient oral and written communication skills; self-discipline to plan, organize, and carry out tasks to completion; and interest and self-directedness in the particular subject.

Such students may be found within any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group; within any nationality; within both genders; and within populations of students with disabilities.

Identification Process

Identification is a multistep process, which shall consist of screening and referral, assessment of eligibility and placement/enrollment.

The Superintendent or his/her designee is directed to develop and document appropriate curricular and instructional modifications and/or programs for such identified students, in grades 8 and 9, indicating content, process, products and learning environments.

The identification process shall include the following:

- Identification of students with:
 - Superior cognitive ability;
 - Specific academic ability in one or more of the following content areas; math, science, language arts, social studies (consistently received grades of “B” or higher in the core content areas);
 - Creative thinking ability; and
 - Giftedness.

Instruction

Challenging Curriculum Policy (Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)

Identification Process (continued)

- Teacher recommendations/referrals
- Referrals from parents, students
- Placement tests if available
- Parental approval

Detailed information will be made available on the District website regarding this policy and the procedures used to identify students who would benefit from enrollment in advanced courses or programs, and the required academic plan.

Academic Plan

Each identified student shall develop an academic plan for the period grade 8 through high school. The plan, developed with the assistance of parents/guardians and with the advice and recommendations of school personnel, shall be reviewed annually. The plan is to include a list of courses and learning activities/programs in which the student will engage while working toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements.

The student's academic plan must be designed to enroll the identified student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn high school and college credit or result in career readiness.

The academic plan must be aligned with the following:

1. the courses or programs currently offered by the Board of Education;
2. the student's student success plan;
3. the high school graduation requirements established in state law; and
4. any other Board-adopted policies or standards relating to student enrollment eligibility for advanced courses or programs.

A student or his or her parent/guardian have the right to decline the implementation of the provisions of the academic plan.

The academic plan enables a student to take a deeper look into what the high school years and beyond will look like. The student needs to be honest about himself/herself and consider their interests, strengths, likes, dislikes, as well as who they aspire to be as an individual. The plan should be updated as necessary and at a minimum, at least once a year.

Instruction

Challenging Curriculum Policy (Criteria for Identification of Eligible Grade 8, 9 Students)

Academic Plan (continued)

Beginning in the middle school years, students must be counseled on opportunities for beginning postsecondary education prior to high school graduation. Such opportunities include access to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate, or Cambridge courses or college-level courses for degree credit. Wherever possible, students shall be encouraged and offered opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment) upon approval of the Principal prior to such participation, the willingness of the college to accept the student for admission to the course or courses.

(cf. 6141.4 – Independent Study)

(cf. 6141.5 – Advanced College Placement)

(cf. 6141.51 – Advanced Courses or Programs-Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment)

(cf. 6141.7 – Honors Programs)

(cf. 6172.1 – Gifted and Talented Students)

(cf. 6172.6 – Virtual/Online Courses)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

P.A. 21-199 Section 5

10-221r Advanced placement course program. Guidelines.

District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy

Policy adopted:

cps 4/22

Existing policy 6172.1 with modification based on P.A. 21-199 and update to legal reference.

Instruction

Gifted and Talented Students Program

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes its responsibility to identify gifted and talented students within the school district [and to provide these students with appropriate instructional adaptations and services]. (*Districts are required to identify but provision of services is at the discretion of the local district.*) The Board is committed to providing identification and assessment which is responsive to students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, disabling conditions and cultural diversity.

For purposes of this policy, "gifted and talented students" means a child identified by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) as (A) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (B) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the general education program in order to realize the child's intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts.

For purposes of this policy "outstanding talent in the creative arts" means a child identified by the Planning and Placement Team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts.

~~Gifted students are those with outstanding learning abilities or outstanding talent in the creative arts.~~

The school district shall provide educational programs for the gifted and talented including a broad spectrum of learning experiences to:

1. broaden and deepen knowledge and to develop skills necessary for the student to function successfully in society;
2. encourage students to excel in areas of special competence and interest.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures for an ongoing kindergarten through grade twelve identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity or a specific academic area.

Multiple measures may include, but are not limited to, tests of academic achievement, aptitude, intelligence, and creativity; achievement test scores; grades; student performance or products; samples of student work; parent, student, and/or teacher recommendations; and other appropriate measures. The identification methodology will include consideration of all students, including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans, be developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered by the District.

The final determination in the identification of students as gifted and/or talented must be done by a PPT. Such PPT charged with this responsibility shall be composed of a group of certified or licensed professionals representing each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs.

Instruction

Gifted and Talented Students Program (continued)

Though early identification of the gifted and talented is important, it is essential that the identification of these students be recognized as an initial step in a continuing educational process. Also, special abilities and skills appear at different times in children's lives.

Accordingly, the school district recognizes the importance of providing programs for gifted and talented students. The school district will review the guidelines, developed and promulgated by the State Department of Education (SDE), for providing services to those students. The guidelines include best practices for the district to consider for (1) addressing the intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students in schools and (2) providing teacher training and professional development on gifted and talented students.

Upon the identification of a student as gifted and talented, the District shall provide electronic notice of such identification to the parent/guardian of such student. Such notice shall include, but need not be limited to:

1. an explanation of how such student was identified as gifted and talented,
2. the contact information for the District's employee in charge of the provision of services to gifted and talented students, or, if there is no such employee, the District's employee in charge of the provision of special education and related services,
3. the employee at the State Department of Education who has been designated as responsible for providing information and assistance to boards of education and parents or guardians of students related to gifted and talented students, pursuant to section 10-3e of the General Statutes, and
4. any associations in the state that provide support to gifted and talented students.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-76a-(e) Definitions.
10-76d-(e) Duties and powers of Boards of Education to provide special education programs and services.
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Sections 10-76a-1–10-76l-1.
P.A. 17-82 An Act Concerning Services for Gifted and Talented Students.
P.A. 19-184 An Act Concerning the Provision of Special Education.
Gifted and Talented Education: Guidance Regarding Identification and Service. SDE Guidance, March 2019.
P.A. 21-199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Section 2.

Policy adopted: September 16, 2010
Policy revised: May 3, 2018
Policy revised: December 5, 2019
Policy revised:

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut