

Somers Board of Education Policy Meeting

Monday, May 9, 2022 6:15 PM

Somers Central Office Conference Room, 1 Vision Boulevard, Somers, CT 06071

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. Agenda



SOMERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Somers Board of Education
Marissa Marks, Chairman

Policy Committee Agenda

May 9, 2022

6:15 pm in Board Conference Room

Approve minutes of March 28, 2022

Review:

5121 Examination/Grading/Rating (waiting for info from state)

6141.51: Advanced Course or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment (new mandated policy)

6141.52: Challenging Curriculum Policy (new mandated policy)

6148: FAFSA Completion Policy (new) per state statute.

6172.1: Gifted and Talented (new) per state statute

Update on possible future Finance Committee

Next meeting: TBD

Vision: *The Somers Public Schools strives to be an exceptional and innovative educational community.*

Mission: *Prepare each student to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing global society.*

NOTES: A new mandated policy per state statute beginning in the 2022-2023 school year to consider.

DBS CODE: 6141.51

Instruction

Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

The Board supports advanced courses and programs that promote academic acceleration and encourages students to pursue these courses and programs. All students at the high school level will be provided an opportunity to participate in a rigorous and academically challenging curriculum. School administration will communicate information about advanced courses or programs to students and parents

Criteria for enrollment should limit 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 (grades 8-12) which may include but is 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 (e.g., strength of SBAC indicators);
- d. GPA improvement over time;
- e. Scoring near benchmark on local assessments;
- f. Student interests and persistence.
- g. Other criteria as determined by school and district administration

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.

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.

(cf. 6141.5 – Advanced College Placement)
(cf. 6172.1 – Gifted and Talented Students)
(6141.52 – Challenging Curriculum Policy)
(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:

NOTE: 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.

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.

Student identification process includes multiple measures in order to identify student strengths in intellectual ability, creativity or a specific academic area shall include consideration of all students including those who are English language learners and those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans.

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.

Identification Process

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

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 “A-” or higher in the core content areas);
- Creative thinking ability; and
- Giftedness.
- Teacher recommendations/referrals
- Referrals from parents, students
- Placement tests if available
- Parental approval

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.

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. 6141.5 – Advanced College Placement)
(cf. 6141.51 – Advanced Courses or Programs-Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment)
(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:

Instruction

FAFSA Completion Program

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that college, for many students, continues to be an important pathway that helps to provide students with the necessary skills for work and for lifelong learning. In addition, research has indicated the students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are more likely to attend college with financial aid.

The Board, through this policy, sets as a goal a District initiative to improve the completion rates for FAFSA among grade 12 students or students in District adult education programs. This goal aims to strengthen District efforts to improve postsecondary enrollment and student outcomes and to make it easier for students to attend postsecondary education.

The Board directs the administration to develop plans to pilot and initiate new strategies to increase yearly student FAFSA completion rates. The Board may accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations, to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 P. A. 21-199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to
 the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Sect.
 6, 7, 8.

Policy adopted:

Instruction

Gifted and Talented Students Program

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

The Somers Public Schools, in conjunction with State of Connecticut regulations and requirements, will identify students demonstrating extraordinary ability academically, creatively and artistically.

The identification process is based on a multi-criteria assessment process, typically including both subjective and objective data. It is recognized that identified students may be accommodated in a variety of ways, such as, but not limited to, the provision for supplementary materials, extensions to the curriculum and accelerated placement options.

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.

PA 17-82 An Act Concerning Services for Gifted and Talented Students

PA 19-184 An Act Concerning the Provision of Special Education

Policy adopted: