

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday – November 2, 2016
Board of Education Conference Room**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Cei, A. Doerr (arrived at 6:11), K. Hlavac, S. Glidden (arrived at 6:11), R. McKay, M. Votto

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Andreson, D. Bellizzi, G. Bikakis, J. Corso, P. Fleischmann, R. Kovi, C. Lavalette, R. Mancusi, B. McCully, S. Menzo, S. Parkhurst, K. Ripa

II. CURRICULUM

A. Proposed Deletion of High School Course: College Notetaking

Robert Kovi, Career and Technology Education Coordinator for the district, stated this course has not run for at least three years due to low student enrollment. The course is outdated and covers skills which are currently the focus in other classes.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed deletion of high school course: College Notetaking to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

B. Proposed Deletion of High School Course: Consumer Car Care

Mr. Kovi stated this course has not run for at least three years due to low student enrollment. As the automotive program has grown, this course proves to lack the rigor and relevance the district strives to maintain. Mrs. McKay noted the deletion of these courses provides an opportunity to offer new courses to our students.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed deletion of High School course: Consumer Car Care to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

C. Proposed Deletion of High School Course: Technology Enterprise

Mr. Kovi stated this course has not run for at least three years due to low student enrollment. Currently an updated course is being written which will promote student interest in this area. Jay Cei stated he is seeing a lot of *Supply Chain Management* conducted in how companies operate. He noted this is management of the flow of goods and services and includes the movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory, and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. Interconnected or interlinked networks, channels and digital data businesses are involved in the provision of products and services required by end customers in a supply chain.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed deletion of High School course: Technology Enterprise to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

D. Proposed Addition of New High School Course: Hospitality and Business Management- Foods 3

Mr. Kovi stated this is the third level course in the Food Service Program and offers students the opportunity to enhance the skills learned in prior food service courses in an authentic hospitality and business management experience. This course focuses on skills that align to post-secondary business management. It is designed to empower students to manage and operate the following school-based businesses: The Healthy Drive (district's food truck), The Cook's Table restaurant at Lyman Hall High School and the Cook's Table Catering. Students learn skills necessary to run and operate the Cook's Table restaurant. Mr. Kovi noted all instructors in this program are food safe certified and the student run restaurant along with the food truck are inspected annually by the Town of Wallingford Health Department Director before licensing renewal is granted.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed addition of new High School course: Hospitality and Business Management – Foods 3 to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

E. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing Unit 1 – Introduction to Engineering & Manufacturing, Unit 2 – Lean Principles, Unit 3 – Communication & Workplace Readiness, Unit 4 – Safety and Unit 5 – Job Research & Shadowing Experience

Mr. Kovi stated this Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing unit 1 is comprised of five individual units. Each unit has its own set of student understandings and essential questions related to the focus of the unit. Karen Hlavac questioned what is contemplated in each unit in the area of student performance tasks. Mr. Kovi stated the management team is in the process of writing and developing performance tasks for each unit. These units in the Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing course are designed to be more student engaging, to provide interactive tools, are collaborative and team-work oriented, are problem-solving oriented and include design elements. This course is for students in grades 11 and 12.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. New H.S. Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing Unit 1 – Introduction to Engineering & Manufacturing, Unit 2 – Lean Principles, Unit 3 – Communication & Workplace Readiness, Unit 4 – Safety and Unit 5 – Job Research & Shadowing Experience to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

F. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Hospitality and Business Management (Foods 3) Unit 1 – Safety and Sanitation, unit 2 – Leadership & Management and Unit 3 – Controlling Food Costs

Mr. Kovi stated this Hospitality and Business Management (Foods 3) unit 1 is comprised of three individual units. Each unit has its own set of student understandings and essential questions related to the focus of the unit.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. Hospitality and Business Management (Foods 3) Unit 1 – Safety and Sanitation, Unit 2 – Leadership & Management and Unit 3 – Controlling Food Costs to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

III. PRESENTATION

A. Long Term Exchange Students from Germany

Dr. Menzo stated Peter Fleischmann, the German teacher at Sheehan High School, has been approached to bring a long term exchange program to Sheehan High School. Rosemary Duthie, principal at Sheehan High School and Kimberly Moore, World Language Curriculum Resource teacher, are both in support of this program. Mr. Fleischmann stated the GAPP (German American Partnership Program) organization (which sponsors long term student exchange programs) has been in business for twenty five years and has 765 active school partnership schools in the United States. It also remains the strongest youth exchange program between American and German secondary school students. Wallingford has three host families who are each willing to take three German students up to six months. These students will need F-1 visas and this process will be handled by GAPP.

The current Board of Education policy: Foreign Exchange Students – 5111.1 states the Superintendent shall be authorized to approve the admission of exchange students where course scheduling can be accommodated. The exchange student(s) must be sponsored by a civic or community organization or an educational foundation. Accepted exchange programs are subject to review by the Superintendent or his designee to ensure compliance with Board of Education rules. Such periodic review will also consider the appropriateness and educational value of these programs. The Board of Education members authorized the school enrollment verification form for the GAPP long term exchange program to be signed for approval by Rosemary Duthie, Sheehan High School building principal.

IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. STEP Presentation and Criteria

Robert Mancusi, director of Pupil Personnel Services, stated the STEP (Student Enrichment Program) management team members, Danielle Bellizzi, Christine Melita, Karen Ripa, James Andreson, George Bikakis and himself, back in March 2016 the members of this management team were at the Instructional Committee meeting to discuss possible revisions to the STEP entrance and exit criteria. No action was taken at that time and Board members suggested revisiting this proposal at the November Instructional Committee meeting. In March the Board asked the STEP management team to review the procedures, protocols and to write a curriculum. There were concerns at that meeting the 90th percentile as one criteria for admission to the STEP program was too low. Dr. Menzo stated this is currently not and has never been about saving money by excluding students into the STEP program through proposed new entrance criteria. He also stated he does not want this program to go away. James Andreson, STEP teacher at Moran Middle School, stated he and Karen Ripa, STEP teacher at the elementary level, were both part of the STEP management team who initiated the 90th percentile criteria; motivated by having multiple measures for identifying gifted students.

In a power point presentation Mr. Mancusi informed the group that school districts are mandated by law to identify gifted students but are not mandated to provide a program for identified students. In our DRG (District Reference Group) eleven of the fifteen districts that responded to him do not service identified students and four districts service identified students. There is no consistent process within districts in our DRG to identify students who are intellectually gifted.

Mr. Mancusi stated some examples of identification processes of districts in our DRG include: parent referral through the PPT process, SBAC and STAR testing performance above 95th percentile with parent rating scale, OLSAT score of 130 or above (97th percentile or above), one district requires an individual IQ score of 140 or above (99%) and the use of student portfolios. Danielle Bellizzi, principal at Pond Hill Elementary School, stated all grade three students are given the OLSAT at the end of grade three in the spring and qualified students are serviced in grades four and five. Students take the OLSAT again at the end of grade five in the spring and qualified students are serviced in grades six and seven. Students take the OLSAT again at the end of grade seven in the spring and qualified students are serviced in grade eight.

Ms. Bellizzi informed the Board the current eligibility criteria for students accepted into STEP is the following: an OLSAT score at the 90th percentile or higher (counts for 50% of weighted score), a GRS (Gifted Rating Scale) completed by two or more certified staff with knowledge of the student and only for students who score 90 or more on the OLSAT (counts for 30% of weighted score). Also a performance task completed with the STEP teacher (counts for 10% of weighted score), Smarter Balance test results count as 10% of weighted score and parent surveys are sent home (which provides qualitative information for the STEP teacher). A final selection of eligible students is completed by the STEP management team. James Andreson, STEP teacher at Moran Middle School, informed the Board the GRS is based on the following five categories: academic ability, intellectual ability, creativity, motivation and leadership. In each of these areas there are statements about the student which are graded on a scale from one to nine.

Mr. Mancusi stated the proposed changes to STEP eligibility determination criteria are raising the OLSAT score to 98% or higher and the administration of a performance task by a STEP teacher to students who score at or above the 98th percentile if there are more students than available spots in the STEP program. Also a parent questionnaire (to use as a qualitative measure of the student) will be sent home and completed to gather qualitative information relative to student performance for students who qualify for STEP. He also noted although there is no standard definition of intellectual giftedness, it is widely accepted that those whose IQ is measured two standard deviations above the mean (IQ of 130 or above/98th percentile) are intellectually gifted. OLSAT school ability index scores have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 16.

Mrs. McKay asked if the proposed changes to the eligibility determination for a student include the elimination of the GRS and SBAC. The use of the OLSAT and the performance task will only be utilized if there are more students than can be accommodated in the STEP program.

Current numbers being served in the STEP program at both middle schools are as follows. At Dag Hammarskjold there are 39 students in grade 6 and 39 students in grade 8. At Moran there are 48 students in grade 6 and 48 students in grade 8. If the proposed criteria moves to an OLSAT score of 98% or greater those numbers would be reduced to 15 students in the STEP program at Dag Hammarskjold in grade 6 and 13 students in grade 8. Students in the STEP program at Moran in grade 6 would be reduced to 21 and in grade 8 the number of students would be reduced to 12. Mrs. Ripa stated she is able to serve the current number of students in the STEP elementary program.

Current numbers being served in the STEP program at the four elementary schools are as follows. At Rock Hill there are 17 students in grade 4 and 8 students in grade 5. At Pond Hill there are 9 students in grade 4 and 8 students in grade 5. At Yalesville there are 5 students in grade 4 and 9 students in grade 5. At Parker Farm there are 11 students in grade 4 and 9 students in grade 5. If the proposed criteria moves to an OLSAT score of 98% or greater those numbers would be reduced to 14 in grade 4 at Rock Hill, to 0 students in grade 4 at Pond Hill, to 4 students in grade 4 at Yalesville and to 2 students in grade 4 at Parker Farms.

Trista Rose LeBlanc, an eighth grade student who is in the STEP program at Dag Hammarskjold Middle School, passed out her OLSAT report to all Board members and spoke about her experience in the STEP program. The essay she read was entitled "*97- The Number I Scored on My OLSAT's Last Year*". Several Board members told Ms. LeBlanc her impassioned speech was exceptional.

Mrs. McKay asked if there was consensus amongst the STEP management team members regarding these proposed changes. Mr. Mancusi stated there was a general consensus from the management team to come before the Board with this proposal. A parent of a STEP student voiced her opinion and said she doubts there was consensus amongst the STEP management team members and she does support the 98th percentile as part of the proposed criteria. Mrs. McKay stated this is concerning and as a Board member she assumes there was consensus amongst the STEP team members. Mr. Votto stated he also has deep concerns if there was not a consensus of 98% amongst the STEP management team members. He asked why this was an agenda item for this evening's meeting if 100% consensus was not met regarding the proposed changes. Mr. Mancusi and Ms. Bellizzi both stated the group of six members on this management team did come to consensus to present these proposed changes to the Board at the November Instructional Committee meeting. Ms. Bellizzi stated all criteria was discussed and all power point documents were shared during the entire process.

Mrs. McKay also asked if the curriculum has been written. Shawn Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated there are some revised curriculum units which are complete and the remaining curriculum units are currently under revision. Part of the revisions include how rigorous challenges are being provided for these students. The units will be presented to the Board sometime in either December or January. All curriculum/revisions are being written by the STEP teachers. Mrs. Ripa and Mr. Anderson both stated they have spent hours and hours compiling the content within this STEP power point presentation.

Mrs. Hlavac stated she researched the State regulation and found the following under Section 10-76a-2: -The state regulations define "gifted and talented", "extraordinary learning ability", and "outstanding creative talent" as follows. Regulations Concerning State Agencies (RCSA) at Sec. 10-76a-2 state: "Gifted and talented" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (1) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (2) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the regular school program in order to realize their intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts as defined by these regulations.

"Extraordinary learning ability" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of either performance on relevant standardized measuring instruments, or demonstrated or potential achievement or intellectual creativity or both. The term shall refer to the top five per cent of children so identified. (Note: The term means 5% of the children so identified as gifted and talented within the district.)

"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. The term shall refer to the top five per cent of children so identified. (Note: The term means 5% of the children so identified as gifted and talented within the district.)

While identification is mandated under state law, programming is permissive under Section 10-76d(c) of the state statutes: "(c) Each local or regional board of education may provide special education for children requiring it who are described by subparagraph (B) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a and for other exceptional children for whom special education is not required by law." The State Regulations further require that "each board of education provide identification, referral and evaluation for gifted and talented children", see Section 10-76d-1(b).

Mrs. Hlavac stated she has spoken to Mr. Mancusi about including outstanding talent in creative arts into future STEP curriculum. Several parents who attended the meeting questioned why would the STEP management team look to reduce student numbers in the program. Dr. Menzo stated it is not about reducing student numbers; it is about addressing the rigor of the program, concerns about identifying the top 10% as truly identified gifted students and having the opportunity for these STEP teachers to work collaboratively with their other colleagues.

Mr. Votto stated he cannot accept having one criteria for entrance into this program. He feels the management team should research additional criteria that students must meet. Mrs. Castelli asked how many students can the district serve with our current allocated resources for this program. Mr. Mancusi stated currently both the middle schools are capped at 48 students per grade in the STEP program and at the elementary schools there are 45 students per grade. Mrs. Ripa stated she is very comfortable servicing that number of students. It was noted all students take the OLSAT test which takes about 45 minutes to complete.

Mr. Cei asked the administrators if they agree the criteria should be higher than the 90% percentile. Mr. Parkhurst stated he feels it should be higher and Dr. Menzo and Mrs. Lavalette both agreed it should be higher and include multiple indicators. Dr. Menzo asked Board members if there is a desire to raise the potential OLSAT and to have the committee look at multiple measures. Mrs. McKay stated she would like to keep in place the current eligibility determination criteria and increase the OLSAT to 92%. She also is looking forward to reviewing the curriculum. Ms. Doerr stated she would like to see multiple indicators and to increase the OLSAT to 93%. Mrs. Hlavac stated she would like to see the OLSAT increase to 95% and to see multiple indicators along with the written curriculum. Mrs. Glidden said she does not see a reason to reduce the number of students currently being served in this program without offering an alternative program. She would like to see the OLSAT increase to 93% or 95% if there is an alternative program. Mrs. Castelli would like to see the OLSAT increase to 93% and have current students in the program who did not receive a score of 93% be grandfathered. She also would like to see multiple indicators. Mr. Votto asked if there is time in Mrs. Ripa's schedule to provide coaching.

She stated she has three blocks available for enrichment in teacher classrooms; but it is yet to be determined how this time will be used. However, that computes to one day in a six-day cycle for her to be in that particular elementary school. Mr. Votto stated he would like to see multiple indicators and the OLSAT increase to 93% or 95%. Mr. Andreson stated with his current schedule at Moran Middle School, he has no problem incorporating coaching blocks. Mr. Cei stated he cannot provide a number and stated education is not his profession. He looks at administrators and educators to provide this expertise. He believes the role of the Board of Education is to assure that all children in this school system are affectively challenged and successfully educated.

Dr. Menzo praised the STEP management team members and the STEP teachers. He also asked Mrs. Hlavac if she would consider sitting in on STEP management team meetings. She confirmed she will attend future meetings. He also noted that management teams are open to any teacher in the district. The STEP management team will return in either December or January to present the STEP curriculum and criteria to the Board.

B. Instructional Strategies and Policies and Regulations

Mr. Parkhurst stated the basic premise of the draft revisions to the current *Basic Instructional Program* policy involve references to the district's cross curricular standards. Imbedded in these five items are references to these standards such as learners becoming effective communicators, resourceful problem solvers, critical thinkers and researchers, responsible and involved citizens, and independent and self-directed learners. Also included are the four district focus areas for instructional improvement. Mrs. McKay praised the content of this revision. Mr. Parkhurst asked for feedback from Board members on this proposed revision before it is discussed at the policy committee meeting on November 14, 2016. The draft regulation for *Instructional Practices* was distributed to Board members and feedback is also welcome before the November 14, 2016 policy committee meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary