

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – February 10, 2014
Board of Education Conference Room
Hall-Elton Building**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

K. Castelli, J. Cei, K. Hlavac, J. Marrone, R. McKay, C. Shortell, M. Votto

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

D. Bryant, K. Daly, D. Kimball, B. McCully, C. McNamara, S. Menzo, M. Montagnon, S. Parkhurst

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Instructional Committee Meeting minutes of January 9, 2014 were accepted as presented.

III. PRESENTATION

A. Capstone Presentation

Ken Daly, member of the 21st Century Innovation Project team, spoke to the Board members about The Capstone Experience. He stated the Capstone Experience as defined in the Connecticut Plan is a culminating activity that provides a way for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquired during their secondary school years of education. It engages students in a project/experience that focuses on an interest, career path or academic pursuit that synthesizes classroom study and real world perspective. High school students are asked to demonstrate their ability to apply key knowledge and skills by planning, completing and presenting a culminating project linked to one or more areas of personal interest and the individual's Student Success Plan. The Capstone Experience may include an in-depth project, reflective portfolio, community service and/or internship. As part of the experience, the student will demonstrate research, communication and technology skills including additional relevant 21st century skills. Commencing with the Class of 2017, all Wallingford public school students will be required to successfully complete the Capstone Experience. Students will receive one-half credit for successful completion of the Capstone Course and one-half credit for the Capstone Project.

Mr. Daly stated the Capstone Experience course will be offered during the junior year with a strong emphasis on formal research skills, source analysis and evaluation, and the development of project proposals. The summative assessment for this component of the Capstone Experience will be a formal project proposal that will outline all elements of the student's Capstone Project. He emphasized that each student must complete a formal Capstone Proposal that includes the following: A statement of intent that outlines the primary intended outcome of the project; a brief description of the project that includes the plan that will be implemented to successfully complete the project; the resources that will be used during the course of the project (which must include a variety of source types that reflect extensive scrutiny on the part of the student); a statement that includes how the student plans to engage with the community during the course of the project and signatures of the student, his/her parents, and the Capstone Coordinators. Mr. Daly noted the rigor of this experience comes from having all students meeting the same standards.

Melanie Montagnon, member of the 21st Century Innovation Project team, stated the team visited two high schools and found when students are provided with a “menu” of Capstone ideas they could choose from, the success rate for students increased. Since the Capstone Experience is designed to allow students to explore their own interests, they may select from the following options in Wallingford as they pursue their Capstone Projects. Projects other than the following must be approved in writing by the Capstone Coordinators: Intellectual Project (i.e. a formal research paper); Physical Project (i.e. build a boat); Improve a System (i.e. revise the curriculum for advisory) and Planning a Major Activity or Event (i.e. develop and implement a Nelson Mandela Awareness Day). Ms. Montagnon noted all students must do research, regardless of which option they choose. They must demonstrate that they have conducted thorough research in the development of their Capstone Project. This research should reflect the use of multiple, highly credible sources. All sources must be accurately cited using appropriate citation protocols (MLA or APA). The research will be reflected in the final presentation, the formal abstract, and if appropriate, a formal research paper.

All students must demonstrate that they have made a connection(s) with the community as part of the Capstone Experience. This may include internships, job shadowing, community-based presentations/demonstrations and community service.

All projects must include an abstract (200-300) words that answers the following: What is the purpose of your Capstone Project? – What skills, techniques did you use in the course of your project? – What conclusions were you able to reach as a result of your efforts? – What bigger ideas/questions were inspired by your work? All students must also include journal entries that reflect their work throughout the course of their Capstone Project. The Capstone Experience will culminate with a formal presentation (October/January) that is reviewed by a panel composed of faculty and community members who will assess the value of the presentation using standardized rubrics. The presentation should encompass the entire Capstone Experience.

B. SEED/Teacher Evaluation Update

Colin McNamara, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, stated this year the district is submitting the new teacher evaluation plan (SEED – Connecticut’s System for Educator Evaluation and Development). Local and regional school districts, in mutual agreement with their Professional Development and Evaluation Committees, may choose to adopt one or more of the following flexibility options. Adopted Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation include the following: Number of student growth goals, Decoupling of state test data in 2014-2015, and Number of observations.

The first area of flexibility relates to the number of goals/objectives educators are required to set. While the existing guidelines allow for at least one (1) but no more than four (4) goals/objectives for student growth, the amendment clarifies and emphasizes that the minimum number of goals/objectives required for each educator can be one (1). For each goal/objective, each teacher, through mutual agreement with his/her evaluator must select multiple Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD).

The second area of flexibility pertains to the use of state standardized test data in compiling educators' summative ratings. As noted above, for each goal/objective, each teacher, through mutual agreement with his/her evaluator, will select Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD). One half of the 45% of the IAGDs shall be based on available standardized state test data (CMT, CAPT or SBAC). However, pending federal approval, districts now have the option of decoupling state standardized test indicators from educator evaluation in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015 school years.

The third and final area of flexibility addresses the specific requirements for the number of observations based on teachers' experience and performance ratings. PEAC recommended providing districts with the flexibility to reduce the number of required formal observations for teachers. Specifically, teachers who are not first- or second-year teachers and who receive and maintain an exemplary or proficient annual summative rating (or the equivalent annual summative rating in a pre-existing district evaluation plan) may receive a minimum of one (1) formal in-class observation at least every three years and three (3) informal in-class observations in all other years. In all years, at least one (1) review of practice is required. For non-classroom teachers, the above frequency of observations shall apply in the same ways, except that the observations need not be in-classroom (they shall instead be conducted in appropriate settings). Teachers with proficient or exemplary designations may receive a formal in-class observation if an informal observation or review of practice in a given year results in a concern about the teacher's practice.

On or before September 15, 2014, Professional Development and Evaluation Committees are responsible for reviewing feedback and reporting to their boards of education on the user experience and efficiency of the district's data management systems/platforms being used by teachers and administrators to manage evaluation plans. The data management systems/platforms shall be selected by boards of education with consideration given to the functional requirements/needs and efficiencies identified by professional development and evaluation committees.

Dr. Menzo added to implement any of the approved flexibilities, our district must convene their Professional Development and Evaluation Committee to consider the options and come to mutual agreement with the Board of Education. All changes to a district evaluation plan must be approved and adopted by the Board of Education.

IV. CURRICULUM

A. Proposed Adoption of H.S. Course – The Capstone Experience

Dr. Menzo stated the Capstone Experience course will be an essential part of motivating students to become fully engaged in developing the skills and attitudes needed to become truly college and career ready. It will be offered in the fall of 2014 as a pilot. Students will work independently on their Capstone projects during the spring semester under the guidance of the Capstone teacher who will serve as their mentors. Mr. Daly added the students selected for the pilot of the Capstone will come from recommendations from school counselors, teachers, and administrators.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new high school course: The Capstone Experience to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

B. Proposed Adoption of H.S. Course – The Crash Course in Creativity

Mr. Bryant stated the Crash Course in Creativity will be offered to all grade nine students (small group pilot in 2014-2015) starting in 2015-2016. This course will be largely problem/project based with teachers serving as facilitators for students as they engage in problem solving, teamwork, and critical thinking. By placing this course in grade nine, students will learn skills and attitudes that will shape their thinking throughout their high school careers culminating in their senior year Capstone Experience.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new high school course: The Crash Course in Creativity to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

V. REPORT

A. 2011-2012 Strategic School Profiles

Mr. Parkhurst reviewed the 2011-2012 Wallingford School district profile. He touched on student performance figures, class size, hours of instruction at all levels, special education data, State Assessments, and demographics.

VI. POLICY

A. Proposed Adoption of New Policy: Aquatic Activity Safety – 6142.63

Mr. Parkhurst stated this proposed policy was presented at the January 2014 Instructional Committee Meeting and was tabled at that meeting for additional review/revisions. Those revisions are noted in gray shading.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new policy: Aquatic Activity Safety – 6142.63 to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary