

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – April 6, 2015
Board of Education Conference Room
Hall-Elton Building**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Shortell called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

C. Lavalette, B. McCully, S. Parkhurst

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Instructional Committee Meeting minutes of March 9, 2015 were accepted as presented.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Proposed Change to Elementary Step-Up Program

Shawn Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, stated presently kindergarten orientation occurs in late April for students and their families. The proposed change has students on the last day of schooling visiting their teacher for the following year - grade 1 visits grade 2, grade 2 students are bused to visit grade 3, grade 3 visits grade 4, grade 4 visits grade 5 and grade 5 students visit the middle school for a building tour. Within these proposed Step-Up program changes kindergarten orientation will occur on May 1st for students and their families and in June, grade 2 students will visit their grade 3 school. In late May/early June, Grade 5 students will visit the middle school for a building tour, K-5 specific teacher assignments will be mailed home to families the week of August 17th and all K-5 students and families will visit their new teacher on August 28, 2015 from 8:15 to 10:15 a.m.

Mr. Parkhurst stated the rationale for this proposed change comes with the uncertainty of funding for full-day kindergarten and potential staffing shifts as a result. In addition, class lists will not be ready by Friday, June 19, 2015 – the last day of school. K-2 schools were challenged with scheduling and providing two Step-Up experiences due to AM and PM kindergarten and as a result kindergarten students had a very limited experience to meet their teacher. This proposal provides administration with a chance to best balance classes over the summer based on staffing and class sizes. It provides the ability for administration to allocate resources, such as special needs as well as balance special education needs across teams even with late transfers/registrations. In the event a new section of any grade must be opened, students will not be moved to a new class when they have already met their new teacher. Students and parents will have the opportunity to meet their new teacher on Friday, August 28, 2015 from 8:15 to 10:15 a.m.

Mr. Parkhurst added that he, Mrs. Lavalette and Dr. Menzo have been attending PTAC meetings at all schools to keep parents informed of these proposed changes. Mr. Votto stated he is not in favor of informing the PTAC committees at each school about these proposed changes before the Board has approved the change and he hopes this does not take away from parents attending open-house at their student's school in September.

Mrs. Castelli noted she feels the two hours on August 28, 2015 when students can meet their new teachers might be an imposition on teacher's time when they are trying to get prepared for the start of school on August 31, 2015.

B. Proposed Extended Timeline for Capstone

Mr. Parkhurst stated this item is to provide an update for the Board regarding Capstone. Beginning with the graduating class of 2020 Capstone is proposed to be a graduation requirement. This school year 2014-2015, there are 20 Lyman Hall High School students and 20 Sheehan High School students participating in the Capstone Project. The proposed extended timeline for Capstone in 2015-2016 is 40 students at each high school, in 2016-2017 it will be 80 students at each high school, in 2017-2018 it will be 120 students at each high school and in 2018-2019 it will be a requirement for all juniors at both high schools. Students involved in this year's Capstone Project were hand-picked by their teachers and school counselors.

C. Kindergarten Orientation

Mr. Parkhurst stated there have been several discussions regarding the need for consistency in how Kindergarten orientation has been conducted at the K-2 schools. The K-2 principals collaborated and developed a proposal for May 1, 2015 (AM Kindergarten would be cancelled). The objective is to inform new parents of the philosophy and procedures of the building & the district through the district mission statement, providing an academic overview, discussing required health information, introducing PTO leaders, providing a school video/photo slideshow and conducting informal building tours. The building principal, counselor, nurse, office staff and PTO members would all be involved.

All incoming Kindergarten students will visit with their classroom teacher, the speech/language teacher, counselor and the ELL & Bilingual teacher. Through these meetings staff will obtain initial assessment information for class placement of each student through number identification, letter identification, observing social interactions, observing fine motor skills, book handling and the use of oral language. Students move from station to station during this process. Each student will receive a gift bag which includes a Childhood Development pamphlet, a bookmark, pencils, crayons, PTO items, the school newsletter and LEF books. Mr. Shortell suggested that parents be allowed enough time at the start of the orientation program to ask questions of staff; thus allowing more dialogue between staff and parents.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. Agreement for the Operation of the Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School

Mr. Parkhurst and Mr. Votto attended the Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School Steering Committee meeting last month where the agreement for the operation of the school was an agenda item for discussion. One significant proposed change is for ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services) to take back conducting the annual lottery process. ACES is proposing to create and publish an online application and such applications will be due online by March 1st of each year. They would provide an enrollment report by district for each Steering Committee member. Additionally, ACES would confirm the number of seats open for each district prior to running the lottery so that none of the partner district's enrollments would exceed the numbers in the agreement.

Mr. Votto noted that Wallingford gives siblings preference when applying to Wintergreen; however Hamden does not give sibling preference. He questions the motivations for the changes Hamden is looking to make in the agreement and feels there has been no rationale presented for these proposed changes. Mrs. Hlavac commented she is not convinced that Wintergreen is delivering the same "top shelf" curriculum they did when the school first opened. Mr. Parkhurst asked that Board members give their concerns regarding this agreement to him and Mr. Votto before the next Wintergreen Steering Committee meeting on April 29, 2015.

V. CURRICULUM

A. Proposed Modification of High School Course: Introductory Foods

Mr. Parkhurst stated this course has a name change from Introductory Foods to Introduction to Foods and Culinary Arts. The rationale for changing the name is due to the required certification by the State to teach this course. Mrs. Lavalette, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, explained there are two certifications which cover teachers who teach Family and Consumer Science courses. One certification is an 045 which no one in the State of Connecticut carries any longer. She checked with Saint Joseph University in West Hartford, CT and was told there are no new graduating students with an 045 certification. For more than a year there has been a noncertified substitute teacher teaching a Family and Consumer Science course in our district. She stated she has been able to find teachers who have an 098 certification; which covers teaching occupational trade courses depending upon the title of the courses. By adding the words Culinary Arts to the course title and incorporating culinary arts into the curriculum, an 098 certified teacher can now be hired to teach this course.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed modification of High School Course: Introductory Foods to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

There being no further business, Vice Chairperson Shortell adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary