

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – May 6, 2013
Board of Education Conference Room
Mark T. Sheehan High School**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

M. Brooder, K. Castelli, J. Cei, C. Mansfield, J. Marrone, R. McKay, C. Miller, M. Votto

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

D. Bryant, E. Cohn, R. Duthie, A. Labas, R. Mancusi, B. McCully, S. Menzo, V.J. Sarullo

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Instructional Committee Meeting minutes of April 1, 2013 were accepted as presented.

III. PRESENTATION

A. Connecticut School Health Youth Behavior Survey

Dr. Menzo introduced Craig Turner, director of Wallingford Youth and Social Services, Eloise Hazelwood, director of Wallingford Health Department and Celeste George, Epidemiologist from the Connecticut State Department of Health. Ms. George is the coordinator of the Youth Behavior Survey and oversees the administration of the survey for all school districts in the State of Connecticut. Mr. Turner informed the Board he is seeking permission from the Board to administer the Connecticut School Health Youth Behavior Survey to students who attend Lyman Hall and Sheehan High School. The results of the survey will provide important results that both the Wallingford School district and the Town of Wallingford administration can consider as they develop a coordinated approach to school and community health. This data will also allow us to seek funding to develop a comprehensive community-based approach to promoting positive choices while reducing risky behaviors by our children.

The Youth Behavior Survey serves two purposes. First, it monitors priority health risk behaviors. Second, it measures protective factors and resiliency. The survey asks questions of every high school student in grades 9-12 in the following topic areas: Positive influences, Dietary behaviors, Sexual behaviors, Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, Alcohol and other drug use, Physical activity and School environment. In addition to these areas, there exists the opportunity to include additional questions the district may deem of interest to ask of its students.

Mr. Turner stated the survey results will give Wallingford the ability to compare itself to several other communities throughout Connecticut that have administered this survey and will provide the town with an opportunity to pursue federal funding through a Drug-Free Safe Schools Community Grant. If the town was successful in being awarded this grant, Wallingford would receive \$125,000 annually for five years with the potential renewal of this grant for an additional five years.

Ms. George stated when the survey is conducted at the high schools, teachers are asked to ensure there is a quiet and calm environment for students while they are taking the survey and all teachers are provided with a list of instructions for administering the survey.

The Centers for Disease Control Prevention designed this survey and has extensively tested results to see if students have answered questions honestly. The testing is done using Scantron sheets and all test answers for each student are private and confidential. Students are told results are not recorded by classroom or by grade level. In addition, they are told if they do not wish to answer a question they are allowed to skip that question. The survey is funded through HIV prevention; however the topics represented in the survey are the leading causes of death or illness in youth and young adults. This is a cutting-edge survey because Wallingford can customize it by adding up to ninety-nine additional questions. It takes about forty minutes for a student to complete the entire survey.

Dr. Menzo stated parental permission must be granted before this survey can be administered. The survey will be available for parents to review prior to administering it to students. There are two forms of parental consent – an active consent form requires a parent to actively give permission for their child to take the survey. A passive consent form is when notification goes home to the parent and the parent chooses to opt their child out of the survey (they do not want their child to take the survey); which requires the form must be returned to the school. If the consent form is not returned to the school it is otherwise assumed the school has parental approval for the student to take the survey. Ms. George stated she has been conducting this survey since 2005 and there has only been one school district in Connecticut where the Board of Education required active consent forms. Some of the concerns with using active consent is the schools must hear back from every parent with either a yes or a no answer. Using an active consent form can result in losing a lot of students who would be taking the survey; which defeats the purpose of administering the survey to as many students as possible. Parental consent forms will be sent via email or post mail.

Before administering the survey teachers can be provided with a “scripted message” for their students stating if they need to speak to someone (counseling services or social worker) after taking the survey, then here are your options. Ms. George informed the Board the results from this survey would be co-owned by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut State Department of Education and Wallingford Youth and Social Services. Any press release or findings from the survey would only be done through Wallingford. Dr. Menzo added the keeper of the data will be Youth and Social Services and the permission letter to parents must include this is a Wallingford Youth and Social Services survey which will be administered at both high schools and there will be a web site available for additional information. Mr. Turner stressed this is not just a “school survey” – it is a “community survey” which tells us what we need to know about our youth in Wallingford. The schools will have as much purvey to the data as desired. The Connecticut version of this survey is not available in Spanish.

Recommendations from the survey would come from Wallingford Youth and Social Services along with the Wallingford Health Department, the Wallingford community at large and the Centers for Disease Control Prevention. Mr. Turner noted there are three areas that will come into focus from the survey results: public policy changes, a review of law enforcement activities and a review of environmental changes within the community.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the approval for conducting the Connecticut School Health Youth Behavior Survey at both high schools in the fall of 2013 to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the approval for a passive parental consent form for students at both high schools to take the Connecticut School Health Youth Behavior Survey in the fall of 2013 to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes

Vincent Sarullo, Athletic Director at Sheehan High School and Amy Labas, Athletic Director at Lyman Hall High School presented the new Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes criteria to the Board. V.J. stated the current academic requirement is the State minimum and follows:

For students to be eligible for the fall season, a student-athlete must have earned credit towards graduation in four courses the previous school year. Summer school credit may be used in these calculations. To remain eligible during the school year, a student-athlete must pass a minimum of four courses per marking period. The proposed criteria is as follows: To be eligible for the fall season, a student-athlete must have a minimum overall average of 70% with no course failures and pass a minimum of four courses for the entire school year. Summer school credit may be used in determining these calculations. To remain eligible during the school year, a student-athlete must maintain an overall average of 70% each marking period with no F's in any course. There were several conversations with the high school principals, Dr. Menzo, coaches and student-athletes prior to developing and presenting this new criteria.

Implementation of the new criteria would go into effect beginning with the first marking period of the 2013-2014 school year. Eligibility for the fall 2013 season will be based on the current criteria of passing a minimum of four courses for the entire school year, with the use of summer school credit, if needed. After much discussion, the Academic Eligibility for Student-Athletes criteria was changed to the following with these revisions being presented to the Board at the Operations Committee meeting on May 13, 2013.

The following criteria are in addition to the CIAC minimum standards which require passing grades in a minimum of four classes.

To be eligible for the beginning of the fall season, a student-athlete must have a minimum overall average of 70% with no course failures for the entire previous school year. Summer school credit may be used in determining these calculations. All grade 9 student-athletes are automatically eligible for the beginning of the fall season.

To remain eligible during the school year, a student-athlete must maintain an overall average of 70% each marking period with no F's in any course.

B. Last Days of School in June

Dr. Menzo stated he has received phone calls and inquiries from the teachers' union asking if there is potential for making the last days of school in June half days for students. Board members are sensitive to the fact that families are impacted by half days and would require additional child care arrangements. June 28, 2013, the last day of school, is a scheduled half day. After much discussion it was decided that Wednesday, June 26th and Thursday, June 27th will be half days for students. Dr. Menzo noted he will draft a letter for Board members to review and will then send it out to all parents and staff.

The consensus of the Board, with Joseph Marrone voting no, was to make June 26 & 27, 2013 half days for students in Wallingford.

C. Project Graduation/Graduation Time

Dr. Menzo stated he has been approached by several grandparents and a few parents regarding both high school graduations occurring on the same evening at the same time. It is difficult for these families who have graduating grandchildren at each high school to attend both ceremonies. He is bringing this item to the Board to share the constraints that occur with Project Graduation. One of the parental recommendations is to stagger the graduations by one hour. Craig Turner explained the group of students who arrive an hour earlier would already be involved in the evening's event. The spirit of this party is for two graduating classes to come together as one large graduating class. The critical need for this evening to be a success is to ensure that every student attending Project Graduation gets on those buses immediately following graduation ceremonies at Lyman Hall and at Sheehan. David Bryant, principal at Lyman Hall High School noted the idea of one graduation ceremony at a venue such as the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford would be costly and his graduating students look forward to wearing their school colors and graduating at the school they attended for four years.

He feels the ceremony would be diminished if taken off school property. Mr. Turner stated he would call a few towns that have two high schools to see how they handle graduation ceremonies and get back to the Board.

D. 21st Century Innovation Project Update

Dr. Menzo stated that Rosemary Duthie and David Bryant have been working since January compiling research to determine what the next steps would be for the two high schools. High school reform has been reviewed on an academic level and on a social/emotional level. There is an existing structure which includes a student success plan for every student where each student in grades 6 to 12 will have a plan that outlines their academic progress from grade 6 to graduation. The thought behind this project is to take the existing structure and organize/enhance it so that it truly becomes a personalized learning plan for students.

The vision for Wallingford Public Schools is, with families and community, to distinguish itself with innovative teaching and learning experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Our goal is to ignite passion for learning and excellence in every student so that each becomes a life-long contributor to the local and global communities. Both high schools collaborated to plan further initiatives to support the district vision. The plan includes both academic and social emotional personalized learning initiatives. Academic personalized learning initiatives would include enhanced student success planning in grades 6-12, developing a standards-based diploma, develop Capstone projects, explore credit recovery options, the creation of a bridge academy, accelerated and delayed graduation options and an establishment of a Heritage Language Program. Social/emotional personalized learning initiatives would include the development of positive behavioral interventions and supports as well as supporting software, creation of a "check and correct" program to track and support at risk students, unifying existing student support systems and expanding opportunities in the alternative program and ARTS academy.

The high school reform plan will be supported through professional development, district involvement in the League of Innovative Schools, the Strategic Plan and the budget process. The plan is meant to move the district forward in providing the most engaging and effective educational experiences for students while coordinating existing efforts to ensure the efficient and successful implementation.

V. POLICY

A. Proposed Adoption of New Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy Policy - 5113

Dr. Menzo stated Rosemary Duthie and David Bryant have been working on this policy and regulation for many months. A teacher ad hoc committee has reviewed the two documents along with Ellen Cohn, Mike Votto, Kathy Castelli and all principals.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy Policy - 5113 to the Board of Education Operations Committee meeting for action at its next meeting on May 13, 2013.

B. Proposed Approval of New Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy Regulation – 5113a

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy Regulation – 5113a to the Board of Education Operations Committee meeting for action at its next meeting on May 13, 2013.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary