

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday – May 26, 2015
Board of Education Conference Room
Hall-Elton Building**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

J.P. Bolat, K. Castelli, J. Cei, K. Hlavac, J. Marrone, R. McKay

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Francese, C. Laudadio, B. McCully, S. Menzo, S. Parkhurst

II. PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

A. Review Information Gathered from Joint English Department Meeting

Mr. Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated the English Department staff at each high school had a meeting to discuss concerns regarding professional development, teacher voice, student needs and voice, instructional needs of the teachers, planning & implementation of the curriculum, data collection and rubrics (the number of rubrics). A second meeting was then scheduled with staff from both high schools' English department to review and discuss all the above concerns.

Mr. Parkhurst noted he along with James Francese and Carrie Laudadio, both Humanities Curriculum Coordinators, will meet with the department heads from both high schools next week to review all the identified areas of need and design action steps which will be presented to both English departments before the end of the school year.

B. Quantity of Reading Students Are Doing

Mr. Parkhurst informed the Board that Mr. Francese and Mrs. Laudadio compiled a list of elementary, middle and high school reading practices and the amount of independent reading students are doing at each level and how much voice students have in what they read. Mrs. Laudadio reviewed the number(s) of instructional and independent reading books which are read at the K-5 level in a school year. Additionally, she provided a listing of the average number of books (per student) checked out of Highland/Moses Y. Beach and Parker Farms/Pond Hill school libraries annually. Mrs. McKay noted she is concerned about the discrepancy in the numbers between these four schools. Mr. Francese stated there are fewer books being used as instructional texts at both the middle school and high school level where instruction is guided using short stories, poetry and novels.

C. Discussion of Philosophy for High School English Language Arts Curriculum

Carrie Laudadio spoke about the philosophy of the high school English/Language Arts curriculum from resources she felt are current and match which she feels is our philosophy for K-12 English/Language Arts curriculum in Wallingford. The curriculum should not focus units around a book or resource but on priority transfer skills and desired learning outcomes.

Students should be exposed to an interactive inquiry process for a deeper understanding of a topic and to develop an evidence-based perspective. Instruction must incorporate guided skill development with on-grade level reading to build comprehension and vocabulary. Reading at a given student's independent reading level will promote the development of authentic, strategic, and effective readers. There should be less focus on test preparation and more emphasis placed on the development of lifelong readers.

Teachers must continue to provide instructional support for students when reading difficult texts. Time for authentic recreational reading and a classroom filled with rich student-centered discussions will provide students with an environment to flourish. In addition, there must be student choice in what topics and resources are used. Effective communication skills such as public speaking, writing and student lead discussions are critical for students to master along with blending genres to achieve more authenticity in student writing.

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary