

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – June 15, 2015
Board of Education Conference Room
Hall-Elton Building**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Foss, J. Francese, S. Gomes, C. Lavalette, C. Laudadio, C. Madancy, B. McCully, S. Menzo, S. Parkhurst

II. ADDITION OF AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson Cei introduced Joe Raccio IV, a student at Moran Middle School, who read a letter stating on June 3, 2015 he purchased a meatball grinder for lunch and discovered black spots on the grinder roll and thought it might be mold. He took a picture of the roll and sent it to his mother. He also showed the roll to a cafeteria worker and told Board members that in the past students have been instructed to throw away a “bad food” item. Joe Raccio’s mother, Tammy Raccio, suggested school cafeteria workers maintain monthly logs to address complaints from students regarding food items. Dr. Menzo stated he has spoken to Ms. Wong, Food Service Director, concerning this kind of food item served at our school cafeterias and will speak to her about addressing this concern at a future Operations Committee meeting.

A. Presentation - Request to Conduct Future Student Health Surveys

Craig Turner, Director of Wallingford Youth and Social Services, stated he came before the Board in November of 2014 to discuss the 2013 Connecticut School Health Survey results and noted at that time there was a discussion regarding supplemental questions which might be included in future surveys. Mr. Turner brought a number of optional questions with him to the meeting for Board members to review and introduced Celeste Jorge, an epidemiologist from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. She oversees the administration of health surveys for all the schools throughout the state who participate on an annual basis in the survey. Ms. Jorge handed out copies of the 2015 Connecticut School Health Survey - Youth Behavior Component Student Questionnaire to Board members and copies of supplemental questions for consideration to perhaps include in the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey questionnaire. She noted for every question added to the survey from the supplemental list, one must be removed. Mr. Turner suggested looking at questions which are just not that significant to our community when deciding what questions to eliminate from the survey.

Mr. Turner stated he would like to administer the health survey in the fall of this year and the survey is required when applying for the Safe School and Drug Free Community Federal Grant. The town did not apply for this grant in the past because some of the paperwork was not completed by the deadline. Mr. Votto noted he has concerns regarding the results from the first survey and feels the majority of the burden for “fixing these issues” will rest with the public school system. He stated these are community issues and everyone in this community needs to be involved in finding solutions. Mr. Turner noted the Coalition for a Better Wallingford is completely committed to engaging Wallingford’s community resources to produce healthy, caring, and responsible citizens through raising awareness and reducing substance abuse among our youth. The grant is a prevention oriented program which provides education awareness and looks at policy changes from the community perspective.

Mrs. McKay stated she would like more information about the specifics of the grant before the Board allows access to our students. Specifics include what the town is looking to do with this grant funding and she wants to see a developed, specific action plan going forward based on the survey results; including how the survey results will be utilized.

Mr. Turner stated the Coalition for a Better Wallingford will be the recipient of the funds and the \$125,000 per year grant is a renewable grant for three years with the ability to reapply for an additional five years. A portion of the grant funding would be used to hire a grant administrator who works directly for the coalition. Before the coalition can even apply for the grant, one of the required elements is to have a representative from each of the fourteen subgroups within the community, committed to the grant plan. These subgroups include parents, students, and representatives from clergy, youth services, law enforcement, the medical community, the business community, the Spanish community and PTAC members. The plan spells out how the funding will be used in the first year. Having completed the survey in 2013, Wallingford is actually ahead of most communities who apply for this grant.

Mr. Bolat stated he would like to review the grant plan, who has signed onto being part of the grant, and how the school system will be involved in helping to develop a plan to address the issues generated from the student health survey. Mr. Turner noted all data from these surveys will be aggregate data. Mrs. Hlavac questioned how the data from the 2013 student survey will be compared to the 2015 data, knowing there is a different cohort we have collected data from. Ms. Jorge stated the district could select comparable questions for the 2015 survey from the student survey done in 2013. Mr. Cei stated he would like to focus on some of the issues resulting from the 2013 student survey before another survey is administered at our two high schools. Mr. Turner stated data drives decisions and we as a community must decide if that data and the decisions regarding solutions will make a difference.

Dr. Menzo noted he would like to see someone from the "town hall" step up and be a facilitator for a strategic plan which involves the town. Mr. Cei stated for any plan to be effective it must follow an organizational structure and how the community as a whole functions. He would like to see this issue on a September Town Council agenda so the Board of Education and the Town Council can discuss these issues as a community. His suggestion is for the Board not to approve another student survey until these issues are addressed at a future Town Council/Board of Education meeting. Mr. Turner reminded the Board that Town Council members are public policy makers and the votes they cast are directly related to either the town budget or to a public policy/practice. The Town Council cannot direct any department head in Wallingford to do anything – the mayor is the only person who can do that. The directive must come from the mayor to have any department head become involved with this initiative.

Mr. Turner asked what would prevent the Board from approving the administration of the 2015 student health survey. He stated if the Board decides not to administer the survey, Youth Services will still move ahead with the data they have and involve members of the community and parents in addressing the issues based on the data already collected. The \$125,000 grant is not the driving force behind all this. The federal government happens to have this grant program and this data fits that program. This funding will allow the community to address the most crucial issues in our town. Mr. Bolat would like to have the same 2013 student survey administered along with additional questions which focus on the family.

Mr. Turner suggested getting the PTAC group involved in helping the town and the BOE come together to find solutions to these issues. In many communities and towns residents form a Task Force to explore and find solutions to community issues. A decision was made that a plan must be devised, with both the town and the Board of Education. Dr. Menzo suggested that Mr. Turner, along with the town's public health director and himself, have a meeting to address the creation of a plan which can be presented to the Mayor. The Board members agreed to review the survey questions and make a decision to what questions will be on the survey. Ms. Jorge stated to administer the survey this October, the Board would need to approve the survey questions by the end of August. There was no Board consent on this item since it was added to the agenda this evening.

III. CURRICULUM

A. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Course: Advanced Topics in Mathematics (EEP)-Educational Enhancement Program

Christine Madancy, Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator, stated this course is specific to students in grade 12 at the Alternative High School. The course was developed based on needs of the students and what they have been struggling with this past year with the full implementation of Common Core. The addition of this course will provide these students with the opportunity to solidify their college readiness math skills while engaging in interdisciplinary applications.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. course: Advanced Topics in Mathematics (EEP) – Educational Enhancement Program to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

B. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Course: Advanced Algebra with Financial Applications (EEP)

Christine Madancy, Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator, stated this course is specific to students in grades 11 and 12 at the Alternative High School. The course is ideal for 3rd or 4th year math students who may otherwise find Algebra 2 inaccessible and applies mathematical concepts in practical business and personal business contexts. Advanced Algebra with Financial Applications is an Algebra-based, applications oriented, technology dependent course that requires Algebra 1 and Geometry as a prerequisite. It also encourages students to be actively involved in applying mathematical ideas to their everyday lives and makes math relevant for post-secondary and career success.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. course: Advanced Algebra with Financial Applications (EEP) – Educational Enhancement Program to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

C. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Course: Communications 1-2 (EEP)

Carrie Laudadio, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator and James Francese, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, both spoke about this new course. This course is for students in grades 9 and 10 at the Alternative High School and is designed to ensure essential literacy in a setting allowing greater flexibility for both instructors and students to exercise choice and customize learning to meet individual needs. Students will read and study typical literary fiction and literary non-fiction writing in a workshop setting focused on ensuring mastery of key English language arts standards. Students will write frequently, with a focus on clarity, conventional correctness and the ability to develop and support a line of reasoning or narrative with ample, persuasive support. Major reading selections (novels, plays, etc.) will be taken from approved curricular units. Since the course is designed to focus on the acquisition of skills and understandings rather than an attempt to foster thematic understanding, any book that provides opportunities for students to develop needed skills and competencies will be appropriate.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. course: Communications 1-2 (EEP) – Educational Enhancement Program to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

D. Proposed Adoption of New H.S. Course: Communications 3-4 (EEP)

This course is for students in grades 10 and 11 at the Alternative High School and is designed to ensure essential literacy in a setting allowing greater flexibility for both instructors and students to exercise choice and customize learning to meet individual needs. Students will read and study typical literary fiction and literary non-fiction writing in a workshop setting focused on ensuring mastery of key English language arts standards. Students will write frequently, with a focus on clarity, conventional correctness and the ability to develop and support a line of reasoning or narrative with ample, persuasive support. Major reading selections (novels, plays, etc.) will be taken from approved curricular units.

Since the course is designed to focus on the acquisition of skills and understandings rather than an attempt to foster thematic understanding, any book that provides opportunities for students to develop needed skills and competencies will be appropriate.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of new H.S. course: Communications 3-4 (EEP) – Educational Enhancement Program to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. Connecticut Core Standards District Performance Report

Dr. Menzo, Superintendent of Schools, stated in the fall of 2010, Wallingford Public Schools developed and instituted a roll out transition plan related to the teaching and learning of the CT Core Standards in Mathematics and English/Language Arts. This plan has been in effect and a guide for the work conducted each year. In the 2014-2015 school year, the focus was on continued implementation of the CT Core Standards K-8 and year 2 of implementation in Grade 9 and year 1 of implementation in Grade 10. The Curriculum Office, along with curriculum writers and management teams, continues to review units of study and performance tasks. The report provides a snapshot as to where our students are at this time based on the CT Common Core State Standards and performance tasks were designed based on units created by our teachers.

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary