

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – August 17, 2015
Vo-Ag Community Room
Lyman Hall High School**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

J.P. Bolat, K. Castelli, J. Cei, K. Hlavac, R. McKay, C. Shortell

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

C. Lavalette, B. McCully, S. Menzo, S. Parkhurst

II. CURRICULUM

A. Review and Take Consensus on the Recommendations of Special Curriculum Writing Team Regarding the Anchor Texts for Grade 9 and the Parent Notification Letter

Mr. Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent, informed the Board the newly adopted curriculum writing policy states teacher teams will write curriculum; which will then be reviewed by the Curriculum Management team in the related subject area. The Curriculum Management team will review, revise and recommend curriculum to the Board of Education for final approval (statutory requirement). Curriculum Management teams do not convene during the summer so this step in the process must still occur to comply with policy.

The Special Curriculum Writing committee was charged with conducting a more expansive review of the literature and the manner in which it is utilized. They also decided upon the inclusion of literature for grade nine and if recommended, will determine the most appropriate instructional approach for the literature. These recommendations will be presented to the Board of Education's Instructional Committee for review and approval. The following anchor texts (texts teachers can choose to use as part of the curriculum) are recommendations of the Special Curriculum Writing committee: *Speak, A Separate Peace, The Bean Trees, The Iron Heel, Night, Fahrenheit 451, To Kill A Mockingbird, An Enemy of the People, MacBeth, Great Expectations, The Chocolate War, The Hunger Games, The Laramie Project, Twelve Angry Men, Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman, Autobiography of a Face, Romeo and Juliet, The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, All But My Life, Odyssey, Beyond the Chocolate War and Antigone*. Anchor texts are books that are chosen by teachers for all students to read, regardless of reading level, to expose them to "necessary vocabulary and concepts needed at their stage of development" according to the curriculum writing committee. It was noted the list did not include *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Carrie Laudadio, the district Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, told the Board the novel was initially on the curriculum committee's recommendation of Anchor texts, but was removed because it was grade six reading level.

Shawn Parkhurst stated the list is used as part of grade nine curriculum and the curriculum consists of four units. Teachers choose two books from this list for each unit (a minimum of eight books). Each unit runs eight to ten weeks. The committee worked to create a list that encompasses a variety of genres. Before each unit is taught, parents will receive a letter from teachers telling them which two books were chosen. A detailed synopsis will be provided, as well as a warning of graphic passages or strong language. Anchor texts are on-grade level texts all students are exposed to and required to read.

Mr. Shortell asked if a teacher could use a book that is not on the list. Mr. Parkhurst stated a teacher would not be able to do that. Mrs. Laudadio noted the Anchor text list and the book list are one and the same and the book list is revised each year as part of the curriculum process.

Mr. Bolat said he questioned the subject matter in some of the books on the list and believes there are plenty of books that can deliver the same message in these books and do not contain graphic passages or strong language. Mrs. McKay and Mrs. Castelli both agreed some of the topics in the books on the Anchor text list are challenging and difficult, but they're reality. It's important to discuss these things in a classroom setting guided by the teacher.

The Special Curriculum Writing committee also recommended a common Parent Notification letter be used by teachers for all Anchor texts read as a class. Independent reading is suggested but not required at this time. However, teachers implementing independent reading will follow a district protocol that will require parent notification. The final steps in curriculum review and approval is for the curriculum management team to review, revise, and recommend units to the Board.

The Board did not feel comfortable voting to move forward the Parent Notification Letter until there were revisions/deletions incorporated into this document. Mr. Parkhurst stated all Board members may email him with suggestions for revisions/deletions to the proposed Parent Notification letter (letter includes a listing of the Anchor texts) presented at this meeting. He noted prior to the start of a new unit, the approved Parent Notification Letter will be sent home to parents.

The consensus of the Board, with the exception of Mr. Bolat voting no, was to send the proposed adoption of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Anchor Text List to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

B. Provide Feedback Specific to Grade 9 – Search for Identity Unit to be Shared with Curriculum Management Team Prior to Board of Education Official Approval in October 2015

This item was not discussed at this meeting.

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary