

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday – May 11, 2015
Board of Education Conference Room
Hall-Elton Building**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

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

II. PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

A. Review Past and Present Curriculum Writing Process

Mr. Parkhurst, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated James Francese, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, will discuss the curriculum development process the district has had in place since 1999 and the proposed changes to this process. The process of developing curriculum starts with stakeholders (teachers, department heads, curriculum staff, administrators, etc.) who initiate the curriculum process which is sanctioned by the management team. The curriculum staff establishes a subcommittee to write or rewrite curriculum and all curriculum documents are written as course outlines. These curriculum documents are updated and prepared as units of study and then are submitted to the management team for initial approval. Curriculum approved by the management team is submitted to the Instructional Committee of the Board of Education for action at an Instructional Committee meeting.

Mr. Francese stated going forward the curriculum staff suggested that all curricula be reviewed with the Administrative Council (comprised of district administrators) and also establish a tradebook (i.e. novels) adoption procedure. All new/revised curricula will be submitted for Board approval. If the Board fails to adopt the new/revised curriculum, then no changes are recorded. Implementation will occur once the curriculum is approved. All assigned teachers must fully implement all new or revised curricula with fidelity, adhering to curricular documents as written and without change. Assessment of the new curricula will be through feedback sought from classroom teachers and the management team (who will assess the effectiveness of the new/revised curriculum) and then offer any suggestions for rewriting if need be.

Mr. Parkhurst noted at future Instructional Committee Meetings Board members will review curricular documents with the guidance of the curriculum coordinators. They will “walk through” the documents and advise Board members what to look for in each document. Dr. Menzo added that State statute states the Board of Education is required to adopt all curriculum being taught in the schools. Mrs. Castelli asked if Board members will be given a synopsis of the novels included in the adoption process. She and several other Board members voiced concerns about reading and reviewing perhaps several dozen novels waiting for adoption within a particular curriculum. Mrs. McKay stated our district has trained teaching staff which she considers the “experts” for writing and moving forward curriculum to the Board. Our curriculum writers have justification and can support the documents which come before the Board.

B. Share Format and Connect Back to Understanding by Design (UBD) Framework

Mr. Parkhurst informed the Board there are two documents being presented – one is a sample course outline which Board members have seen in the past and the second document is how all future curriculum documents will look when being presented. Christie Madancy, district Mathematics Coordinator, stated in the past the district had been using a format called UBD (Understanding by Design) which focuses on teaching and assessing for understanding and learning transfer. Curriculum writing began in 2003-2004 in response to issues cited in NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) visits at both high schools. From 2003 to 2010 all course outline documents followed UBD guidelines. Each unit included Enduring Understandings (what are the big ideas of the unit), Essential Questions (what key questions will be answered through the unit of study), Learning Objectives (what are the student outcomes) and suggested support materials, instructional strategies & assessments.

Mrs. Madancy continued stating in 2010 to the present the district has still been using UBD but with an updated, more focused template and each outline is unit specific rather than generalized to an entire course. Unit plans were written for each course and grade level and there are approximately six units of study within that subject area. The new unit templates now have three stages: Stage 1 – *Desired Results* is the key to the teaching and learning and the understanding teachers want students to have when that unit is completed. Stage 1 must include established goals and how to transfer those goals so the student truly understands when he/she can take learning and apply it to a context or situation. Desired results must also include “meaning” which is the understanding students gain from learning (what are the big ideas) and introducing essential questions; which are guided questions that allow students to dig deeper and engage actively within the classroom. Students must also acquire declarative and procedural knowledge which includes what we want students to learn.

Stage 2 - *Evidence* asks what is the evidence we need to determine the extent to which students have achieved the identified knowledge, skills and understandings in Stage 1. Teachers must assess if learners really understand something and can effectively apply and explain it along with the use of higher-order thinking in the use of content. Teachers select and develop tasks which require students to demonstrate their understandings identified in Stage 1. Along with these tasks, assessments of knowledge, skill and other goals not assessed by the performance task will be given to students.

Stage 3 - *Developing the Learning Plan* includes required text resources and a learning plan. The learning plan is a plan for the most appropriate learning experiences and needed instruction. It is meant to be a flexible framework – not a rigid plan – always prepared to be adjusted based on feedback. It is also meant to show the larger picture of which kinds of learning events are needed to achieve desired results.

C. Share Progression of Student Voice and Choice Across Grade Levels

Carrie Laudadio, district Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, spoke about moving toward nationally-based learning to increase “student voice and choice across grade levels”. Mrs. Laudadio reviewed the ELA (English Language Arts) curriculum and identified the various levels where there is currently “student voice and choice”. In grades K-5 one goal is to foster the development of all students as readers; so there has been a great deal of time matching books to student learning abilities. In all of the units in the K-5 curriculum, students have the choice to select individualized reading books at their own level in a variety of genres. Students read these books at their independent reading level in order to increase their comprehension and level of text complexity. They also have writing notebooks with student-generated lists on a variety of topics, sketches, pictures and/or graphic organizers for five writing ideas.

Students in grades 6-8 are establishing book clubs where each student belongs to a book club group using available texts based around the unit theme. Teachers may assign or allow students to select texts based on their knowledge or interests. The teacher must determine if each group will have similar or mixed reading abilities within the group along with interpersonal traits.

D. Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed 2016-2017 School Calendar

Cindy Lavalette, Assistant Superintendent, stated this proposed calendar meets all the requirements of having a unified regional calendar. It also reflects the dates required for the new state testing periods throughout the 2016-2017 school year. The committee also looked at having the school year end earlier in June. The tentative last day of school in June 2017 will be June 9th. Also, the day prior to Election Day, all schools will no longer be closed. There are eight two-hour early release days for students throughout the year to meet the demands of professional development for teachers.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed 2016-2017 school calendar to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy McCully
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary