

**WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Weston, CT**

**Meeting Date:** December 17, 2018

**Information Only**

**Action Requested**

**Agenda Item Subject:** November Curriculum Committee Minutes

**Submitted by:** Kenneth Crow

**Document Summary/Purpose and/or Recommended Action:**

November Curriculum Committee minutes for Board review.

For more Board of Education Meeting and Committee Meeting Information, visit:  
<https://meeting.cabe.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=47&AgencyTypeID=1>

## **Curriculum Committee Meeting**

November 14, 2018 8:15 a.m.

Central Office Conference Room

### **1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m.

#### Present Committee Members:

Sara Spaulding (Chairperson), Dan McNeill, Ellen Uzenoff

#### Present Administration:

William McKersie, Superintendent; Kenneth Crow, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent; Lisa Deorio, WHS Principal; Dan Doak, WMS Principal; Laura Kaddis, HES Principal; Alex Bluestein, K-5 ELA and Social Studies CIL; Andrea Noble, K-5 ELA and Social Studies CIL; Christina Conetta, 6-8 Social Studies CIL; Janine Russo, 6-8 Mathematics CIL; Mercedes Fernandes, K-12 World Language CIL, Sydney Girardi, K-12 Visual Arts CIL

#### Members of the Public:

Gina Albert

### **2. WHS new course proposals for 2019-20**

Discussion:

Ms. Conetta and Ms. Russo presented on their respective proposals.

- Full-year AP Government
  - Currently, WHS offers a one-semester AP Government course, and is one of the few area high schools that does not offer a full-year course.
  - After carefully considering faculty and student feedback, analyzing AP exam scores, and a comparison study of other DRG A and B schools, the Social Studies Department strongly recommends extending the course to a full year.
  - The department feels that a full-year course would increase the depth of content, rigor, and authentic learning; they also feel this expanded course will support students in learning the AP content in greater depth and breath, thus better preparing them for the AP assessment.
  - The impact on staffing would be an increase of .1 FTE to run three full-year sections in 2019-20.
- AP Computer Science Principles
  - The purpose of offering this course would be to expand our coding offerings to a broader population of students.
  - The current AP coding course, AP Computer Science A in Java, is a third year course and is considered to be one of the more difficult AP courses offered. It also has a 10:1 male to female ratio of students.
  - The department feels this course would appeal to more females; and, since it is an AP level course given at an introductory level, it would help grow the pool of all students interested in coding and computer science.

- The staffing impact would be neutral.
- Other budget related costs are laptop computers as well as a curriculum provider. (These items are outlined in the proposal.)

### **3. WMS new course proposal for seventh and eighth grade Art for 2019-20**

Discussion:

Ms. Girardi presented on the new course proposal for WMS.

- The purpose of this new course proposal is to increase the amount of visual art instructional time for seventh and eighth graders.
- This course would add a second trimester of visual art for all seventh and eighth grade students and will help ensure that the extensive Connecticut Visual Arts Standards can be met.
- The added trimester of art will be included in the PFA cycle; the Passion Project and Science Discovery Workshop courses will be moved from the PFA trimester cycle to the extension block as enrichment offerings for interested students.
- With this flipped scheduling, the staffing impact is cost neutral.

### **4. World language update**

Discussion:

Ms. Fernandes presented on the Seal of Biliteracy.

- Seal of Biliteracy
  - The Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy is aimed to award students for their language skills. Seniors would be awarded the Seal in recognition of their high level of proficiency in English and one or more world languages.
  - The world language department is exploring the best option of external assessment to be used for the Seal and are piloting assessments this year.
  - Costs are estimated to be about \$2,500 to test 130 students.
- World Language Instructional Time
  - The World Language (WL) Department is looking to increase the WL instructional time for the sixth grade. Currently, WMS sixth graders are receiving instruction every other day.
  - Weston is the only DRG A district that does not have WL daily instruction in sixth grade.
  - The recommended minimum instructional time per week is 90 minutes in more than two sessions.
  - Mr. Doak provided the committee with three scheduling options for implementing daily instruction, none of which are viable options at this time.
  - The District does not have a recommendation at this time for increasing sixth grade WL instructional minutes and will continue to study the issue.

### **5. K-5 Fountas and Pinnell reading update**

Discussion:

Ms. Bluestein and Ms. Noble presented on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment system.

- The Fountas and Pinnell system (F & P) was piloted by a few WIS teachers last year in anticipation of the transition from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The pilot was extended a bit longer into the current year, however, this was a one-time issue.
- With the F & P system, once students have been initially assessed, follow-up assessments are on an as-needed basis rather than a hard schedule, as with DRA.
- Reading comprehension goes a lot deeper than DRA and the fourth and fifth grade teachers have given very positive feedback on the new system.
- Another difference with this assessment is that the actual levels are in use in the classroom.
- Pre- and post-assessments are verbal, and since students are more apt to elaborate verbally, they may move up a level more readily than with the DRA written post assessments.
- With the K-2 level books, the texts are a bit harder. In response, K-2 teachers are adjusting their instruction in anticipation of the F & P implementation next year.

## **6. WHS ninth grade PSAT pilot for fall 2019**

Discussion:

- The District is considering piloting a ninth grade administration of the PSAT next fall. It would be given at the same time as the tenth grade.
- High school departments currently use the tenth grade PSAT to inform instruction. The ninth grade PSAT would be used for the same purpose and provide more longitudinal data.
- The ninth grade PSAT is not intended to move the college process earlier, however, some committee members expressed concern about this and about adding another assessment.
- The administration is continuing to review the pros and cons of administering the PSAT at the ninth grade level and will report back to the Committee.

## **7. November 6 professional learning day update**

Discussion:

- Mr. Rizzo and Dr. Craw provided an update on the professional learning activities held on Election Day. See schedule of professional learning activities for details.

## **8. Approval of October 2018 minutes**

**Motion Passed:** passed with a motion by Ellen Uzenoff and a second by Dan McNeill.

**3 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

## **9. Other curricular issues**

No other items were put forth for discussion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Curiano

Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent