

Tolland Board of Education

Curriculum Committee Minutes

December 3rd 2020

Members Present: Jacob Marie (Co-Chair), Madhu Renduchintala (Co-Chair), Christine Griffin

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Willett (Superintendent of Schools)

Meeting called to order at 3:36pm

1. Welcome new member and Discuss Purpose of the Committee: The committee welcomed Mr. Renduchintala and a brief discussion was had on the purpose of the committee and its goals. Dr. Willett offered to share a PowerPoint presentation on the curriculum process to the committee; committee members supported this and thought it was a good idea. Additionally, Mr. Marie offered to have Mr. Renduchintala join him in a meeting with Dr. Willett to discuss goals for the committee.
2. Pandemic Update: Dr. Willett reiterated that the state is encouraging teachers to focus on goals related to social and emotional learning for the current school year rather than more purely academic goals. Ms. Griffin asked if Dr. Willett expected this emphasis to continue into next year. Dr. Willett stated that he did not expect this to be the case, but did anticipate the effects of the pandemic to have a two to three-year impact on academics. He added that he may need five to seven new positions in the next fiscal year to deal with increased SRBI needs, which will primarily help the tier ii population, which is expected to increase. These new positions would not be temporary, but he added that he expects the number of FTEs providing for the district's SRBI needs will return to pre-pandemic levels over the next several years as employees retire over the natural course of business.
3. Culturally Responsive Education: Mr. Renduchintala mentioned that he attended the December 2nd workshop and found it enlightening. Dr. Willett reiterated his objectives for CRE and a discussion was had about them. Ms. Griffin asked about the merits of requiring a class that focused specifically on CRE, such as the Black and Latino History class which will be launched soon.
4. Vocational and Business Programs at the High School Level: Mr. Marie discussed how this related directly to a Board of Education goal this year and how he believed it was important to begin this conversation. Dr. Willett discussed the Light House Program, a Tolland Public Schools initiative that relates closely to this goal. One of the goals of the program is to avoid attrition by decreasing the number of students who choose not to attend Tolland High School by offering them "career pathways" similar to that of a Magnet school. Mr. Renduchintala asked whether there should be an increased emphasis on trades in the high school. Dr. Willett responded by explaining that Common Core has remade curriculum with a heavier emphasis on preparing students for a collegiate education, but also mentioned that there are pros and cons to this that

should be explored. Mr. Marie inquired about whether the pathways programs were advertised to 8th graders to increase their popularity. Dr. Willett said that they are advertised but that this had been cut back during the pandemic. Mr. Marie asked about the budget considerations for the program. Dr. Willett responded that he did not see a major budgetary impact this year and that most of the classes and equipment for the pathways already exist, they just need to be restructured and reorganized. Ms. Griffin asked about whether students that do not want to be a part of a pathway have would have any options at Tolland High School. Dr. Willet responded that there will always be a general studies option available to students.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:19pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacob Marie