

Cheshire Public Schools



Board of Education Curriculum Committee (Virtual)

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Faith Ham (Chair), Tony Perugini, Anne Harrigan

Cheshire Public Schools Staff Present:

Dr. Jeffrey Solan, Superintendent; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Dr. Mary Gadd, Principal-Cheshire High School; Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal-Cheshire High School; Timothy Galvin, Social Studies Department Chair

Community Members Present:

None (no messages received from public via CPSCovid19 email address)

Tony Perugini, BOE Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Faith Ham, Curriculum Committee Chair, rejoined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

1. Review Minutes of March 9, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Harrigan made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 9, 2020 Board of Education Curriculum Committee meeting. Mr. Perugini seconded the motion. Ms. Harrigan, and Mr. Perugini voted to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2020 meeting. Ms. Ham was not present in the meeting at the time of the vote. The motion passed unanimously by members in attendance at the time.

2. New Business

- a. New Textbook Recommendation: Timothy Galvin, Social Studies Department Chair, presented a recommendation to use the Essentials of Comparative Politics with Cases, 6th AP Edition (O'Neil) for the Cheshire High School Advanced Placement Comparative Government class. No motion was made to move the textbook forward to the full Board of Education. Ms. Ham requested time to review the textbook. During a typical textbook adoption, following presentation to the Curriculum Committee, the text would be available for review for two weeks. Given the current executive orders in the state related to "social distancing", it was agreed to extend the viewing period to one month. Individuals interested in viewing the text should contact the Assistant Superintendent's Office to arrange for review. A vote to move the textbook forward to the full Board of Education will take place at a subsequent meeting.

3. **Informational Items**

a. Grading

Dr. Mary Gadd, Cheshire High School Principal, gave an update on the grading practices relative to the fourth quarter at Cheshire High School (CHS). CHS will continue to use traditional letter grades for the fourth quarter. There will be no final exams for high school level classes. Adjustments to the weighting of each course component for full-year courses will be as follows: Quarters 1-3 each worth 25%, the midterm exam worth 10%, and quarter 4 worth 10%. For half-year courses, quarter 3 is worth 65% and quarter 4 is worth 35%. Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, reported that Dodd Middle school will use a similar system.

b. April 20th PD day

Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent, shared the main areas of focus for the April 20th professional development day. A partial list of the day's work included: Identifying the priority standards to be covered in the last marking period, preparing lesson materials for the remote learning environment, preparing how to assess students mastery of the identified standards, creating Screencastify videos for instruction, setting up Google Meets for students and/or parents and/or extra help sessions, reviewing the technology support videos and Lunch Bytes archived recorded episodes, planning with special educators to support the needs of students with IEPs or 504 plans, and/or attending one of the fifteen half-hour tech sessions offered throughout the day.

c. CollegeBoard Testing Plans

Dr. Mary Gadd shared details of both the SAT and Advanced Placement (AP) testing plans. The SAT was canceled for the March, May, and June administrations. There are tentative plans by the College Board to offer an SAT session in August. Additionally, there are tentative plans to offer current juniors an in-school SAT day in September.

Testing for AP courses has moved online. Those test sessions will be forty-five minutes in length, address approximately three-fourths of the typical AP curriculum, and be open book/note. The nature of the tests, then, will be more about students applying their learning from the course. Colleges have agreed to accept the scores from this year's version of the AP tests.

d. Grade K-2 Adjustments to Remote Learning

Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator, shared an update on the adjustments made to Remote Learning for students in Kindergarten to second grade. Distribution of the second version of the K-2 Learning Toolkits happened via contactless pickup up at Highland School the previous week. The work contained in the Toolkit represents the shift from reviewing, practicing, and maintaining previously learned skills, to representing new content and new standards that are key priorities in our curriculum.

To support effective communication and access to appropriate online tools, teachers began communicating lessons through Google Classroom student accounts instead of daily emails to parents via School Messenger. While the majority of work for K-2 students remains offline, there are opportunities for students to access 10-20 minutes a day of instruction and 10-20 minutes a day of work online. This addition to the K-2 Remote Learning Plan was based on both parent and teacher surveys.

- e. **Grade 3 Adjustments to Remote Learning**
Kevin Hanlon also shared the update to adjustments made to the grade 3 learning plan. Grade 3 classes. Similar to grades K-2, the updates for grade 3 represents the shift from reviewing, practicing, and maintaining previously learned skills, to representing new content and new standards that are key priorities in our curriculum. Grade 3 has also made the shift to using Google Classroom. In addition to the notes on K-2 regarding being a key communication tool, grade 3 is using Google Classroom in a similar manner to grades 4-6. They have the ability to do a greater percentage of their work online, submit work directly to teachers, and receive feedback directly accordingly. Although there are increased opportunities to work online, grade 3 students are still doing a good bit of their work offline.
- f. **Attendance**
Marlene Silano shared that attendance was largely based on students engaging in the learning opportunities. Examples of engaging in learning opportunities include joining a Google Meet, responding to a question or prompt within Google Classroom, submitting an assignment, or a student reaching out for support or help from a teacher. Each building has procedures in place to check in with students who haven't engaged in a learning opportunity after a period of time, and follow up with any support, communication, or help needed.
- g. **Bright Spots/Challenges of Remote Learning**
Marlene Silano shared that one of the key challenges was meeting the needs of families who are struggling to attend to education in this Remote Learning environment as well as meeting the needs of families who express that they are looking for additional work, resources, and opportunities for education in this Remote Learning environment. It has been a challenge, but our plans do have ways to accommodate the wide spectrum of family needs. A related bright spot has been that families have been reaching out and communicating with the district about their experiences and needs. That has allowed the district to truly personalize what is happening for each student.

4. Public Comment

None (no messages received from public via CPSCovid19 email address)

5. Adjourn

Ms. Harrigan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Perugini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (Ms. Ham, Ms. Harrigan, and Mr. Perugini). The meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Hanlon

Kevin J. Hanlon
K-8 Curriculum Coordinator