

Cheshire Public Schools



Board of Education Curriculum Committee (Virtual)

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

Committee Members Present: Faith Ham (Chair) and Anne Harrigan

Cheshire Public Schools Staff Present: Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Dr. Mary Gadd, Principal - Cheshire High School; Dr. Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal - Cheshire High School; Mike Woods - Principal, Dodd Middle School; Kelly Grillo - Principal, Norton School; Deborah Manke - Grade 6 teacher/Student Council Advisor, Norton School

Community Members Present: None

1. **Public Comment**

No messages received from the public via the CPSCovid19 email address prior to the public comment portion of the meeting.
2. **Review Minutes of February 8, 2021 Meeting**
 - a. Ms. Harrigan made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 8, 2021 Board of Education Curriculum Committee meeting. Ms. Ham seconded the motion. Ms. Ham and Ms. Harrigan voted to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **New Business - none**
4. **Old Business - none**
5. **Informational Items**
 - a. Celebrating Black History Month. Representatives from elementary, middle, and high school shared some samples of activities and other ways Cheshire Public Schools recognized Black History Month.
 - Deb Manke (Grade 6 teacher and Student Council Advisor) and Kelly Grillo (Principal) from Norton School shared a video presentation on the Black History

Museum. The video featured Student Council members showing exhibits that were created by students and displayed through the school.

- Mike Woods, Principal at Dodd Middle School, shared a presentation about the middle school recognition of Black History Month. Key parts to the presentation included recognition of the contributions, struggles, and journeys of African American figures in the United States, connections to both the Language Arts and Social Studies core curriculum, and future opportunities to infuse the work into the curriculum and experiences for students at Dodd.
- Dr. Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal at Cheshire High School (CHS), spoke about the activities to celebrate Black History Month at CHS. Using poems from the site 28 Days of Living Poetry, students read a poem a day over the announcements that featured black authors. During an advisory period toward the end of the month, students chose a few poems to discuss more in depth. RAMS Against Racism also offered and held three book talk sessions for the book *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Dr. Reed also shared a related event where 60 students participated in a forum as part of our district equity work through the State Education Resource Center (SERC).

b. [Mid-year data review \(due to Covid-19\)](#)

- Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator, shared a brief overview of kindergarten through eighth grade student performance in reading (Reading Inventory) and math (Easy CBM). In reading, students are performing at or near the level of performance in each grade level as compared to last year. In math, students are performing at or above the level of performance in each grade level as compared to last year. Teacher collaboration regarding, and implementation of, the curriculum utilizing practices of the Acceleration Framework (Connecticut Center for School Change) are likely to be some of the drivers of the success in student performance this year.

c. Update on teacher professional development

- Kevin Hanlon indicated that on the one early-release professional development day since the last Board of Education Curriculum Committee meeting, buildings continued to focus on various aspects of practices related to the Acceleration Framework as well as leveraging technology tools to foster increased student engagement. Marlene Silano added details of the district's effort to provide professional development on the Acceleration Framework outside of the professional development days. Specifically, a group of 51 teachers and administrators are attending a month-long evening professional development series on Acceleration provided by the Connecticut Center for School Change. The district anticipates a continued focus on professional development related to Acceleration for the remainder of this school year as well as beyond this year.

d. [Smarter Balanced Assessment letter](#)

- Mr. Jack Bestor submitted a letter to the CPS covid email account during the meeting regarding Smarter Balanced (SBAC) assessment and the letter was read into the record.
- Faith Ham, BOE CC Committee Chair, asked for some background information on the Common Core standards (CCSS), SBAC assessment and how the assessment

results are used. Marlene Silano shared that the CCSS are a set of academic standards in English language arts and math in kindergarten through 12th grade. They were developed through a state led effort by governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states. The genesis of these standards was to provide a common set of standards across states. Prior to this there was great variety on the quality and content of standards taught in any given state. In 2010 the CT state legislature unanimously adopted the standards which we refer to as CT Core Standards. Districts cannot opt out of teaching the Core. The Smarter Balanced Assessments was initially used as an accountability measure for the intended learning related to the standards. The SBA has further been used to focus on student performance/growth over time. The assessment results help the district review curriculum, plan professional development, and provide teachers and parents with information on student growth and progress.

- The draft of the 2021 NGSS Science and Smarter Balanced Assessment parent letter was shared with committee members.
- e. Cheshire High School student engagement and expectations
 - Dr. Mary Gadd, Principal at Cheshire High School (CHS), gave a report that included four main topics: In-person learning, upcoming events, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and the homework policy. As part of the report, Dr. Gadd indicated that there are three hundred more students attending in-person four days a week and CHS is looking to increase the number of four-day-a-week in-person students further. Events such as prom and graduation are being planned to be in-person, outside events. Details of how each event will run will be based on the most current state and local Covid guidelines/guidance. Wellness Wednesdays is one way CHS is continuing to keep a focus on Social Emotional Learning. Time management was the most recent topic, and part of a CHS effort focused on promoting strong student engagement. The CHS homework policy is being reviewed. The current purpose of homework as stated in the policy continues to represent the beliefs about homework at CHS. The parts of the policy that relate to the amount of time students spend on homework is currently being reviewed for likely revision/updates.

6. **Adjourn**

- a. Ms. Harrigan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Ham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (Ms. Ham and Ms. Harrigan). The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 19, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Hanlon

Kevin J. Hanlon
K-8 Curriculum Coordinator