



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning & Teaching Committee

September 18, 2019

54 Meadow Street, 2nd Floor Board Room
New Haven, CT 06517

In attendance: Mayor Toni Harp (Chair of Committee), Mr. Wilcox (Vice Chair of Committee), Dr. Paul Whyte, Lynn Brantley, Pedro Mendia, Dr. Michele Sherban, Evelyn Merzon, Dr. Richard Therrien, Sandra Clark, Carolyn Ross-Lee, Jessica Haxhi, Annie Praino & Tim Makris from Sandy Hook Promise

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Mayor Harp welcomed everyone and there were brief introductions.

2. Overview Ninth Grade Transition and Presentation by James Hillhouse/Wilbur Cross High School

- Mrs. Edith Johnson and Mr. Glen Worthy presented on the ninth grade supports that are in place for students. See attached PowerPoint.
- They highlighted the differences between middle school and high school, such as start times, scheduling differences, level of independence required, number adults students come into contact with, use of metal detectors, and the size of the schools/cohorts.
- They shared demographic information about the ninth grades, as well as academic challenges related to attendance, reading inventory scores, and math inventory scores.
- Mayor Harp asked if there were patterns in the data regarding which schools might be sending students who are not on grade level. Mrs. Johnson said that is possible to determine. Mr. Worthy made the point that there also might be a small percentage of students from each K-8 coming in to Wilbur Cross and Hillhouse who, as a group, make up a large cohort of students below grade level.
- Mrs. Johnson reviewed the suspension data for the schools and mentioned how monthly meetings happen at Cross to discuss those students and ways to address the behaviors. Mr. Worthy reviewed the data for Hillhouse. Both were broken down by gender.
- Mrs. Johnson listed a variety of supports and interventions in place for ninth grade students, including “student-led” conferences in the middle of the marking period, grade level teams for 9th and 10th grade, and “Academy Child Study Teams,” among others. Please refer to the PowerPoint. Mr. Worthy highlighted a “girls group” that has been successful with students. Mrs. Johnson discussed the Youthstat Summer Program.
- Mr. Wilcox asked how attendance is addressed by these supports. Mr. Worthy discussed the importance of the cohorts; Mrs. Johnson talked about how they call parents regularly, but are challenged to reach some students.

- Dr. Whyte mentioned that the supports identified for Hillhouse and Cross mirror what Hill Career has been doing successfully in terms of “on-track” checks for each student.
- Mrs. Johnson talked about how they use Homeroom, even with the A/B schedule, to function more as an advisory and as a way to take attendance. They will be doing restorative circles and preparation for student-led conferences in the Homeroom. She also discussed their professional development plan that connects to C5-C10 of the TEVAL rubric.
- Mr. Worthy discussed their grade level teams, freshmen capstone project, and student led conferences.
- Mrs. Johnson shared a list of projects and programming that had been successful at Wilbur Cross, but either are no longer there or have been reduced. These included a social work intern program, the Alive program, the Academy Structure, a fully-staffed College & Career Center, among others.
- Mr. Worthy discussed the programming that has been reduced, cut, or is lacking at Hillhouse, such as a reduced amount of electives, and the need to develop Career Pathways for students. He highlighted the need for instructors that are able to teach English Learners effectively, as many English Learners have been entering Hillhouse.
- Mrs. Johnson outlined some “asks” for both of the high schools, including staffing the College & Career Center, the Alive Program, summer training for teachers, summer planning and programming funds, and an articulation process for 8th to 9th grade. She also mentioned the need to be able to use half-days for Student-led Conferences. When half-days were in place, there was 80%+ attendance from families; now, there is only “meet the teacher” night from 5:00-7:00.
- Mrs. Johnson described an articulation process where she worked in Montgomery County, Maryland in which middle and high school teachers met in May to discuss students moving from 8th to 9th grade. Ms. Brantley noted that 7-9 ELA teachers met recently at the September 10th professional day to begin a conversation about the transition.
- Mayor Harp asked what some of the initiatives might cost. Mrs. Johnson described the approximate costs of each of the “Collective Asks” listed in the PowerPoint (slide 12). It was estimated to be about \$200,000 by the group.
- Mrs. Johnson further described the “student-led conferences” as a meeting in which the student leads a conference to discuss their grades and work with their parent, along with their Homeroom teacher. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and talk about what they need to work on, etc.
- Mayor Harp asked what a School Leadership Planning and Programming Week might cost in term of paying administrators and teachers to attend. The estimate was \$25,000 per school.
- Mrs. Johnson outlined some individual “asks” for each school, such as Student Retention Specialists, Reading Teachers, Counselors for Wilbur Cross. For Hillhouse, Mr. Worthy discussed needing an instructional coach and certified teachers for a Newcomer Center, as well as Sheltered Instruction teachers (Math, English, Sciences, Social Studies). He discussed the importance of serving English Learners and giving them equitable opportunities for success.
- Mrs. Johnson talked about the process that Wilbur Cross went through to create the International Academy. They asked their teachers who wanted to work with English Learners, told them the expectations, and gave them special training.
- Mayor Harp discussed the possibility of funding some or all of the “Collective Asks” presented. She mentioned the strength of both the Alive Program and the College and Career Centers. She asked that Dr. Whyte share the asks with Dr. Birks.
- Mr. Wilcox asked how the College and Career Centers fit with the other high schools. He asked if something could be done districtwide to support these centers.

- Mr. Wilcox noted that previous data that the Committee looked at allowed us to see that students who had issues with attendance/grades in middle school usually do poorly in 9th grade. He asked what was being done about that currently. Dr. Whyte confirmed that schools are currently looking at that data and have begun their attendance meetings.
- Mayor Harp suggested that perhaps we should look at student performance (attendance/grades) in middle school when looking at their choice/lottery for high school.

Recommendation: The Teaching & Learning Committee recommends that the Board of Education find ways to support implementing the requests from the two comprehensive high schools to improve 9th grade transitions, specifically those listed as “Collective Asks” (below and on slide 12) and that an update be provided at the next Teaching & Learning Meeting on October 18, 2019.

- **Collect & Career Centers**
- **ALIVE Program**
- **Student-Led Conferences**
- **Summer Trainings for Teachers**
- **Planning & Programming Summer Funding**
- **An Articulation Process for Middle and High Schools**

2. Domestic Overnight Trips for Approval

- There were no field trips presented for approval at this meeting.
- Sound School cancelled a trip to camp in Killingworth, CT the week of September 23rd due to the EEE mosquito presence in that area.

3. Follow-Up: Sandy Hook Promise Foundation App

- Mr. Makris from Sandy Hook answered questions that this committee had presented previously.
- The Sandy Hook tip app will not process any tips that are related to immigration or ICE processes.
- If a tip comes in and authorities are sent to a house because it is a “life safety” tip, Sandy Hook Promise can’t control what happens after that. They will call the authorities and the school if they think a child’s life is in danger.
- Mayor Harp noted that New Haven police will not ask a person’s legal status.
- With regards to FERPA, and HIPAA, all crisis center workers are trained in that, as well as the individuals who collect the tips. They never disclose any student information unless it is an emergency – a “life safety tip.” In those cases, they are required to report the location in order out in order to request that emergency services go out and help the child.
- If someone broke state or federal law and the school got a court order against that individual, then Sandy Hook may be required to give them an IP address for that person. They do not have the capability to look someone up by name and would not even be able to give out names related to an IP address. They could only furnish the IP address and only with a court order.
- For each school building, there must be 3-5 people on a NHPS team to receive the tips that come in. Sandy Hook Promise works with schools to discuss the launch date, then they help to make sure everyone is gathered from the buildings and trained. There is no cost to NHPS.
- They can do regional trainings in which they pay for conference rooms, etc. and send Sandy Hook people there to do the trainings. They also do virtual live trainings.
- They would also have a training for staff and administrators to make sure that everyone knows about the app. They trained all of Atlanta Public Schools virtually.

- As part of the training, they test the app system entirely. They ensure that the school teams know how to take and react to the tips.
- They also train the students in each school. They like to complete student training in 2-3 weeks. It is a 35-minute training which they can do in a live assembly, by videos, and by virtual training. They need a 6-week lead time for in-person trainings.
- They furnish awareness materials around the school and assist student clubs to get started, if desired. They train the club advisors and work with them, etc. The club could be folded into an existing peer advisory or other club.
- There have been some changes in how New Haven does dispatch, so they would update with the New Haven Police and 911. It could take up to 4-6 weeks, so that would have to be included in the timeline.
- He and Ms. Paino shared a copy of their MOU. He noted that it would cost Sandy Hook Promise approximately \$250,000 to come into New Haven. The MOU will list exactly what they will provide and what they would expect in return from NHPS. They have privacy information as well as references to Connecticut privacy laws. They do extensive privacy and background checks as well. Their Terms and Conditions section outlines when court orders are needed, indemnifications, etc.
- It does not cost New Haven Public Schools any money, but they do require a 3-year MOU from the City to show commitment to the program.
- They require that the Superintendent is on board with the program in order to ensure that it is implemented with fidelity and buy-in. This helps to ensure the success of the program.
- Mr. Makris shared that there is a 2-year waiting list of school districts interested in participating in the program. He also shared a timeline of potential implementation for an October 28, 2019 launch date.
- Ms. Ross-Lee mentioned that Dr. Birks is in support of the program, but that Dr. Birks would like the Board's support as well. Dr. Birks had recommended that Ms. Ross-Lee initially check with the School Resource Officers and Dispatch for their input, which she did. Dr. Birks had also wanted to make sure that Mr. Fontaine and the emergency response center was on board with this as well, and he is.
- Mr. Makris noted that the tip line is 24/7 so you do need to have someone from the schools who is willing to be available at night to look up an address if there is a safety situation.
- Mr. Wilcox asked about next steps.
- Ms. Ross-Lee said that the Sandy Hook Promise team has to meet with Dr. Birks and NHPS dispatch, and then the program could go to the board.
- Mr. Makris said that they could either do an amendment to the existing MOU that had been done with pilot schools or rewrite completely with a new amendment.

Motion: Mayor Harp moved that the Teaching & Learning committee recommend to the Superintendent that she approve participation in the Sandy Hook Promise program and submit a revised MOU to the Board of Education for approval.

Mr. Wilcox seconded the motion.

4. Next Meetings and Agenda

- There was a brief discussion about meeting dates for the rest of the year.

Motion: Mr. Wilcox moved to approve the following future meetings:

October 16, 2019

November 20, 2019

December 18, 2019

January 15, 2020

February 12, 2020

March 18, 2020

April 22, 2020

May 20, 2020

June 17, 2020

Mayor Harp approved the motion.

- The following items were suggested for the agenda on October 16, 2019
 1. Overview on SBA and NGSS Standardized Test Results
 2. Brainstorming of Proposals for Topics this year: Play-Based Learning, Q1 Student Results Check-ins, College & Career Centers, etc.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM.**

The next meeting is October 16, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Haxhi