



**NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Learning & Teaching Committee**

December 18, 2019

54 Meadow Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Room  
New Haven, CT 06517

**In attendance:** Mayor Toni Harp (Chair of Committee), Mr. Wilcox (Vice Chair of Committee), Dr. Iline Tracey, Glen Worthy, Dr. Paul Whyte, Richard Caldwell, Robert McCain, Dr. Richard Therrien, Pedro Mendia-Landa, Lynn Brantley, Brooke McPhearson, Holly Smith, Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Keisha Hannans.

**The meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m.**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Mayor Harp welcomed everyone and there were brief introductions.

**2. Field Trips for Approval**

DATES	SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADE	Students: Chaperones	Requested by	Chaperones
3/16-3/19 2020	Edgewood	Nature's Classroom Ivoryton, CT	6	5:50	Holly Smith	Holly Smith Brooke McPherson Christopher Bosse Michael Kuszpa Julia King
3/19-3/21 2020	HSC	Philadelphia, PA	HS	3:25	Matthew Brown	Cari Strand Jesus Suarez Jakaya Crump
3/26-3/27 2020	HSC	Providence, RI	HS	4:30	Matthew Brown	Jesus Suarez Michael Papintonio Jess Dormotor Rosalyn Diaz Ortiz
5/17-5/22 2020	Mauro Sheridan	Walt Disney World/EPCOT Center Orlando, FL	8	5:20	Sandy Kaliszewski	Melody Gallagher Caroline Apgar Cedric Robinson Diane Glenn Ryan Clough
5/20-5/22 2020	Barnard	Gettysburg Battlefield Gettysburg, PA	8	5:45	Richard Caldwell Robert McCain	Richard Caldwell Robert McCain Suzette Boutin Elisa Basini

- There was a change made to the Barnard trip to be 45 student participants and 5 chaperones (from 30 participants and 4 chaperones).

**MOTION: Mr. Wilcox moved that the field trips were approved as amended and it was seconded by Mayor Harp.**

## **2. Update on High School Supports/Ninth Grade Transition (Dr. Whyte/Mr. Worthy)**

- Mr. Worthy noted that 83% of students at James Hillhouse had actually passed Algebra I first quarter; this was a data point that had been reported in error last meeting.
- Students did not pass are meeting with teachers 4 times per week for support.
- They are keeping track of the students who are failing courses and more students are back on track. They also created “Rise Bucks” to motivate 9<sup>th</sup> graders along with regular assemblies. Mr. Worthy said that some students are back on track.
- Dr. Whyte explained that there had been a meeting at Hillhouse after the last Teaching and Learning Committee meeting in which central office staff committed to helping with various initiatives at Hillhouse.
- There was discussion about what to do about students who continue to fail courses despite the supports and incentives put in place.
- Mr. Worthy and Dr. Whyte talked about how important it will be to have an articulation plan for 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are entering the high schools in terms of the schools talking to each other, and the need for summer programs.
- There was an extended discussion about what new initiatives are being done to address 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are struggling.
- Mayor Harp asked whether college-age students might be available to assist with tutoring students during the school day, especially in math and science.
- Mayor Harp suggested that local fraternities and sororities might be able to collect donations from local companies for items that students could purchase with their “Rise Bucks.”
- Dr. Tracey talked about a behavior incentive program in another district that had a large prize at the top, with prizes at other tiers.
- Mr. Wilcox mentioned that the “Rise Bucks” may connect to community service and perhaps New Haven Promise. He also asked whether students are being consulted as to the changes that are being made with the new incentives and what would be most motivating to them.
- Ms. Clark mentioned that peer tutoring of older students to younger students should also be considered.
- Mr. Wilcox said that we should begin to look at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years as our next steps.
- Mayor Harp summarized that the Committee can look at the 8<sup>th</sup> grades, what is already being done such as the Rise and Shine Initiatives, and the data from the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders, as well as showing the middle schools how their students are doing in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Mr. Wilcox talked about the need for making sure that high school principals are talking to middle school principals about these issues.

- Mr. Mendia said that we could use the “Early Intervention Tool ” that the state puts out to determine which students are the most in need of greater support.
- Ms. Hannans talked about how the size of the class alone can be overwhelming to students, as well as the transition from walking in lines to being independent, etc.
- Ms. Brantley said that the need for a “real middle school environment” came up in the discussion during strategic planning.
- There was discussion about the middle school model and what that might mean for scheduling and staffing. Dr. Tracey mentioned various research in regards to what structure we might want to look at (K-6, 7-8, etc.)
- Mayor Harp talked about the possibility of looking at the college model in preparing students for high school entrance, such as going early the summer before and visiting regularly the year before.
- Mr. Wilcox asked about the students who have been identified as needing support in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and whether they can get any kind of special consideration in the school choice process. Mayor Harp suggested that it might be worth looking into, even though it might be a discussion with the state.
- Dr. Therrien talked about how it is important to make sure all students know about the choices for magnet schools, but it is also important to attract students to the comprehensive high schools.
- Dr. Sherban mentioned how important it is to make sure students know about their options during the choice process, which is starting now.
- Mayor Harp proposed that maybe certain students have to “opt out” if they don't want to be sent to certain schools.
- Dr. Tracey explained that when students put in their choices in the electronic selection process, it is not possible to determine where they will get in.
- Ms. Hannans talked about the importance of school counselors meeting with families and helping students do applications and make choices.

### **3. Update on Strategic Planning and Curriculum Audit (Dr. Tracey)**

- Dr. Tracey described the communication plan for the Strategic Planning Process. After the initial 6-day process, there was another meeting last week in which initiatives were finalized. In the administrator meeting today (December 18<sup>th</sup>), there were more specifics discussed and initial action step planning.
- The Mission and Vision were posted on the nhps.net website along with a survey to get feedback from the community. It will also be brought to Student Council.
- Mr. Wilcox said that a number of good ideas and initiatives are coming out of the process. Dr. Therrien said that it was evident that many of the action steps are coming directly from the Curriculum Audit. Mr. Wilcox noted that his strategic planning group found items from the Curriculum Audit to be helpful in wording.

### **4. NGSS Results (Mr. Therrien)**

- Dr. Therrien presented the NGSS tests results that were just released the previous day.

- The state reports the results as the percentage of students who have achieved the minimum level of science achievement.
- See attached document summarizing the scores and describing the plans for improving science achievement.
- The document shows that New Haven did not do as well as the state average, but did do better overall than 5 other urban districts.
- Dr. Therrien noted that the new NGSS Standards has some content (such as Galaxies and Stars) that has never been taught in New Haven before. This will require some curricular and instructional changes.
- Mayor Harp asked whether the textbooks and materials we are using are current enough to address the new content/topics. Dr. Therrien noted that all new materials and science kits would be extremely expensive, but it would be possible to update teacher handbooks, etc. to match the new standards.
- Dr. Tracey noted that the test itself is reading-heavy and this was confirmed by Dr. Therrien. Students may not be used to that amount of reading in science. Ms. Brantley said that we would have to look at whether reading scores have direct alignment and other factors, such as STEM magnets, etc.
- Mr. Wilcox suggested that the science scores be presented to the full-board when the plan for curricular alignment, etc. is in place. He said that data should “drive the questions” and that it is essential to be able to talk about why the scores matter to science skills and how they can do better in science (versus just on the test). Mayor Harp reiterated that the data should be analyzed thoroughly and presented with a plan including solutions and links to literacy, etc.
- Ms. Hannans asked when the last time was that there was a textbook adoption in science. Dr. Therrien explained that schools have traditionally made those decisions and purchases themselves in the middle schools. In the high schools, there are usually only a few available textbooks that they choose from. Ms Hannans suggested that he review textbooks for the schools.
- There was discussion of the science kits. Mayor Harp noted that experiential learning is essential for students. The Science Fair Committee is working on getting more mentors for middle and high school students. Mayor Harp noted that Yale, Southern CT State University and others can do more to assist with science instruction.
- The Committee thanked Mayor Harp for her work and leadership on the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Mayor thanked the Committee and talked about her appreciation for the hard work of its members.
- **The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 PM. Mayor Harp made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Wilcox seconded the motion.**

**The next meeting is January 15, 2020.**

- The following items were suggested for the agenda on January 15, 2020

1. Discussion how to work with 8<sup>th</sup> Graders to encouraging them in their school choice process
2. Strategic Planning and Curriculum Audit Discussion
3. Discussion of Current Textbooks in All Subjects
4. Inquiry- and Play-Based Learning

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Haxhi