



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning & Teaching Committee

January 15, 2020

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

In attendance: Mr. Wilcox (Chair of Committee), Mr. Goldson (Board President), Mr. Conaway (Board Member), Dr. Iline Tracey (Interim Superintendent), Assistant Superintendent Keisha Hannans, Assistant Superintendent Paul Whyte, Dr. Richard Therrien(liason), Ellen Maust, Sandra Clark, Typhanie Jackson, Lynn Brantley, Dr. Michele Sherban, Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Pedro Mendia, Kermit Carolina, Jessica Haxhi (notetaker)

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

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

- Mr. Wilcox welcomed everyone and there were brief introductions.
- Citywide student council will be held Wednesday the 23rd at Metro from 10:00 AM-1:00

2. Field Trips for Approval

- There were no overnight field trips for approval at this meeting.

3. Update on High School Supports/Ninth Grade Transition

- Mr. Jackson explained that School Counselors will hold Town Hall meetings with 8th graders to go over the process of choosing high schools, etc. This has been chosen as an alternative to the “high school fairs” that were held last year as those were not well attended and this method will allow counselors to give more detailed information directly to students. Ms. Jackson noted the importance of making sure that students have sufficient information on the magnet school offerings and the non-magnet offerings.
- Dr. Tracey suggested that parents be given a one-pager on the high school process. Ms. Maust suggested that students be given information about arts offerings at all of the high schools so that students can make informed decisions.
- There was a discussion about possible public misconceptions that students who go to magnet schools with a certain focus (i.e. Betsy Ross and the Arts) believe they might automatically get into high schools with a matching focus (i.e. Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School).
- Mr. Wilcox noted that we want all parents to understand the process for high school selection, but in particular this time we are interested in providing guidance especially for students who might not do well at larger comprehensive high schools.

4. Update on Strategic Planning and Curriculum Audit (Dr. Tracey)

- Dr. Tracey described the steps that are being undertaken to complete the Strategic Plan. At the Superintendent's Meeting today, administrators looked over the current drafts and discussed which items should be prioritized.
- Carolyn Ross-Lee put the new "Vision" into an online survey for feedback from the public and those responses are being collected.
- Dr. Tracey intends to give the completed draft to the Board of Education in April.
- Mr. Wilcox noted that he appreciates that the process is utilizing work that has been done in the past, such as the curriculum audit and the previous strategic planning.

5. Update on Inquiry/Play-Based Learning

- Ms. Augustine-Jefferson said that she has posted 3 positions to assist with the play-based learning initiative.
- They have put in orders for various manipulatives and materials to support the play-based classrooms.
- Kindergarten and pre-kindergarten professional learning meetings are being held to discuss topics such as the "wondering questions" that drive inquiry-based learning.
- Dr. Tracey noted that even though we are piloting at 4 schools, the new Obama School is also taking on this initiative in their classrooms.
- Ms. Augustine-Jefferson partnered with "New Haven Child" and Bank Street to create an additional professional learning committee that supports teachers in learning about play-based learning.
- Mr. Wilcox asked how the initiative will be expanded to other schools and how the program will be evaluated. Ms. Augustine-Jefferson explained that we will still be using the same measures as we normally use with students at this grade level to measure results, but the "vehicle" through which students are learning is inquiry/play-based learning. The standards that students will meet and the measures remain the same.

6. Update on Sheff v. O'Neill

- Mr. Wilcox noted that there was a new court decision on Sheff V. O'Neill last week.
- There was discussion about the effect of the decision on New Haven Public Schools.
- Mr. Goldson asked if CAFE could be brought in to talk to the Board of Education about the effects of the new decision.
- Mr. Wilcox suggested that it could be discussed at the Finance and Operations meeting on the 22nd.
- Mr. Goldson will reach out to CAFE to see what dates they have available.

7. Process for Revision of Board Policies

- The curriculum audit highlighted a number of policies that were outdated.
- Mr. Wilcox noted that the policies related to curriculum were last created in 1995. He has been researching the existing policies and comparing them to what is available through CAFE.

- Ms. Jackson noted that some policies are required by the state and those are currently being updated. She explained that another policy required is “Homeless Students.” CABE has been hired to assist with updating policies and the Governance Committee has been working on them all year and are almost complete. In the upcoming Board Meeting, the “Student Privacy” policy will be discussed. “Alternative Education” will be discussed at the next Governance Meeting.
- Mr. Goldson asked if the Teaching and Learning Committee could be provided a schedule of when various policies are coming up for discussion.
- Mr. Goldson asked about the Connecticut legislation about inclusion of African-American and Latino studies. Ms. Clark explained that the requirements take effect June 2021. NHPS must show that the subject matter must be included in the curriculum in all grades K-12. In 2022, all districts will be required to have a high school course in African-American history and Latino Studies, even though all students will not be required to take the course. She has started having workshops for her teachers about the topics and doing curriculum writing to identify areas in which the topics could be included. CERC will provide the high school course that will be required to be taught. Ms. Clark is on the state committee to assist with the develop the course and next steps.
- Mr. Goldson asked if Ms. Clark could provide a one-pager on the details of legislation, what the anticipated costs might be, training for teachers, etc.
- Mr. Wilcox noted that this particular example illustrates how we need policies for these types of curricular (and other) changes so that we can consider the implications and the ways in which we might want to implement certain initiatives in New Haven.
- Ms. Jackson noted that there are policies related to this discussion that need to be updated and language related to this discussion could be embedded.
- Dr. Therrien said that graduation requirements were updated in 2010, but they need to be updated again. Dr. Sherban concurred that graduation policies need to be updated.
- Mr. Wilcox asked which policies need to be prioritized. Mr. Goldson asked how parents and other stakeholders are being involved in the policy discussions. Mr. Wilcox noted that they might be discussed in Governance, where the public could participate, but others might warrant a larger group discussion, such as the African-American and Latino History course discussion.
- Mr. Wilcox suggested that the policies themselves might allow for a certain range of decisions to be made at the school level.
- Ms. Jackson asked that if certain policies are fairly straightforward, we could move forward on them quickly.
- Mr. Mendia mentioned the Bi-Lingual and Bi-Cultural Education policy as something that could be quickly updated because we are out of date as compared to new state law.
- Dr. Tracey asked if the Supervisors could generate the list of prioritized curricular policies that should be updated at their next meeting. Mr. Wilcox explained that it should be a list of 5 of the most important policies to begin to update, with a timeline for completion.
- Ms. Jackson asked if the policies currently in process could be looked at by the Teaching and Learning Committee before they are brought to Governance.

- Mr. Goldson suggested that the Teaching and Learning Committee stay focused on its bylaw mission, and ask Governance to write policies, even if they come back to Teaching and Learning for discussion.
- Mr. Wilcox asked that policies driven by curricular needs (via Teaching and Learning) be discussed in this Committee.

Alternative Education Policy

- Ms. Jackson shared the proposed Alternative Education Programs policy. Dr. Therrien suggested an addition to the policy that he will forward to Ms. Jackson.
- Mr. Wilcox asked the Committee to look over the policy and send any suggestions to Ms. Jackson.

- **Mr. Wilcox made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 PM.**

The next meeting is February 12, 2020

- The following items were suggested for the agenda:
 1. Field Trips Review/Approval
 2. Update on Strategic Planning
 3. Update on High School Supports/9th Grade Transition and Second Semester Grades for 9th Graders
 4. Board Policies Update