



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teaching & Learning Committee

May 19, 2021

Online

In attendance: Dr. Joyner (Chair of Committee), Matthew Wilcox, Ivelise Velazquez, Keisha Redd-Hannans, Dr. Paul Whyte, Typhanie Jackson, Pedro Mendia-Landa, Rosalyn Diaz Ortiz, Dr. Richard Therrien, Lynn Brantley, Dr. Michele Sherban, Sequella Coleman, JoAnne Wilcox, Barbara Puglisi, Stephen Mikolike, Derek Stephenson, Glen Worthy, Mary Beth Banks, Diana Hernandez-DeGroat, Dominique Argo, Evelyn Gonzalez, Kara Buontempo, Julie Austin, Angel Pickett, Jessica Haxhi.

Students from Riverside: Jonathan Torres, Jamile Gonzalez

Dr. Joyner called the meeting to order at 4:30.

1. How do we conduct this meeting respectfully and effectively? *Dr. Joyner*

Dr. Joyner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. What is the district policy on providing alternate education programs to students in need?

Typhanie Jackson shared the work of the NHPS Work Group on Alternate Educating Programs that is reviewing a proposal on revisions to the district's existing policy.

- Ms. Jackson provided an update on the goals discussed last meeting. Mr. Stephenson described how the Riverside team has been looking at data and curriculum plans to improve overall results. They have students attending Excel Academy for CNA certification and will have more over the summer. They are looking at opportunities with Excel Academy for certification for students in other medical-related areas.
- Curriculum Supervisors will visit Riverside from May 25-28 to review the curriculum and provide guidance for improvement.
- Ms. Hernandez-DeGroat spoke to ConnCAT about certification programs.
- Riverside is also looking to expand partnerships with local businesses for student job coaching on-site at places such as Walgreens, PetSmart, BigLots, etc.
- Riverside is also looking at *when* credit attainment occurs so that a student could earn credits each semester (versus just at the end of the year).
- Juniors and seniors will complete career interest assessments so that they can have a better idea of what students are interested in and create partnerships to support those interests.
- Ms. Jackson noted that they will also work on improving technology and infrastructure across the school. They intend to support all of this work with professional development in project-based learning and standards-based grading.

Mr. Stephen Mikolike, teacher at Riverside and administrative intern, introduced the concept of a “Fire Chat” conversation and a unit they are working on called “#DreamBig” identifying urban trauma and encouraging students to share their stories.

Ms. Barbara Puglisi, teacher at Riverside, led the “Fire Chat” conversation with students from Riverside. They asked them to think about barriers to their learning process and start their writing with the sentence starter “if you only knew.”

Jonathan Torres and Jamile Gonzalez, students at Riverside, shared their powerful personal stories with the sentence starters “if only you knew.” Ms. Puglisi asked what the students would like to see changed at the school. Jonathan expressed that regular school was not interesting; it was the “same things he had been taught his whole life, like eating the same food your whole life...new things are a must.” He noted that high school should be teaching students to get a job. Evelyn said that students want to know about credit, taxes and real-life.

Ms. Puglisi asked the students what they enjoy about Riverside. Jonathan said that the school makes things fun; Riverside has shown him how to “achieve the way you want to live by yourself.” Jamile said that, coming from a large high school, Riverside gave her “the attention she needed” and how to “develop her social skills to talk to other students.” She talked about how much Ms. Puglisi encourages her to think about what they want to be and “what’s next” for them in their lives.

Ms. Jackson emphasized the need to highlight the stories of students and make sure we are meeting their needs.

Dr. Joyner offered continuation of meeting with students and staff through a meeting where we can come into the school to be a part of the learning.

3. How does the district’s instructional frameworks support language development through vocabulary instruction, independent reading and writing? *Dr. Joyner, Dr. Tracey and Ms. Velazquez will discuss expectations for daily instructional practice. Dr. Joyner shared that interest is the soul of driving your education.*

- Dr. Joyner noted that high level engaging material needs to be available to drive learning. The initiative will be a top down framework. Broad language development is the focus.
- Ms. Velazquez shared the literacy framework and highlights in green where vocabulary development is explicitly taught. There is a published framework that has guidelines for schools with gradual release strategies, time frames, instructional block etc.
- Four areas have been defined as essential by Dr. Joyner, E. Velazquez, and Dr. Tracey. Purchasing material for print and on line will be done to add to our collections and to update resources.

Interactive Read Aloud and Literature Discussion is the first area. Second is shared and performance reading is an area done in the early grades. Writing is done district wide with explicit lessons and will be coached throughout the year. Word work involves vocabulary explicitly, done weekly and across the content areas.

- Dr. Joyner would like to support the framework and have the schools and district accountable to this being non-negotiable. This must be set in policy. Professional development will be the route to ensuring this is done well. Launching a year long series to support this work.
- Mr. Wilcox believes this to be a thorough plan, for alternative education we need this type of plan put into place. One year, three year, five year plan needs to be available for alternative education. When things get overlooked, we collapse programs from 3 to 4 to one as we have now. The use of the new funding should be defined by these needs. Mr. Wilcox has offered to be at any meeting necessary to support this work. Students should be able to move across schools as hubs vs individual worlds. The action part is where we need to be sure we strengthen our work. A way to give voice is to empower students to speak out as we have today.

4. How is Hillhouse using instructional pathways to engage and prepare students beyond high school? *Principal Worthy and teachers from Hillhouse will discuss the school's new Health Pathway. K. Redd Hannans stated that our students have given us a charge.*

- Ms. Redd-Hannan's introduced a large team from Gateway Community College, including the Asst. Director of Allied Health, the Dual Enrollment and CC Partnership Lead, and the Radiography Lead, as well as others.
- Ms. Redd-Hannans explained that the goal of this program is to expand college and career opportunities for our students. Hillhouse and Gateway have been meeting regularly to collaborate on this program. They are calling it "HCAP Program" for "Health, Careers, Academy Pathway. Mr. Worthy explained that Gateway and Hillhouse have collaborated to ensure that their students have dual-enrollment courses so that they can enter the workforce at an accelerated rate.
- Please see the attached PowerPoint for details about the program. The slides were presented collaboratively by Principal Worthy and Sheila Solernou from Gateway. Mr. Worthy will be meeting with incoming freshmen soon; interested students will begin this fall. The group also presented projected costs for the project, included in the attached slides.

5. Closing Remarks From Dr. Joyner

- Dr. Joyner noted that Dr. Tracey has created a space in the district for people to rise and meet the highest level of creativity.
- During this meeting, students brought us to the place where we understand what is really needed to engage them. He highlighted that we are moving toward providing a customized education, meeting their intellectual needs and with that we want to be sure the students are also meeting the level of commitment.
- **The meeting was adjourned at 6:00.**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Haxhi
Lynn Brantley