



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teaching & Learning Committee

September 22, 2021

Online

In attendance: Dr. Joyner (Chair of Committee), Dr. Iline Tracey, Ivelise Velazquez, Dr. Paul Whyte, Pedro Mendia, Dr. Richard Therrien, Lynn Brantley, Sandra Cates-Clark, Rosalyn Diaz Ortiz, Tessa Gumbs-Johnson, Dr. Glen Worthy, Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Lynn Brantley, Dina Natalino, Ann Brillante, Kathleen Mattern, Michael Finley, Molleen Theodore, Cristina Ryan, Eugene Foreman, Cora Munoz

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

1. How can we ensure inclusive, robust discourse regarding student learning during the Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting? *Dr. Joyner*

Dr. Joyner welcomed us back to the school year and reminded the committee that. He commended everyone for their hard work. He made three points:

- we need to make a distinction between the responsibility of the board to make policy and the educators and administration to implement it.
- any policy we create should make things easier for teachers in the classroom to implement instruction for students, and make it clear what administrators have to do.
- he is committed to this work and expressed appreciation for educators and everyone on the Committee.

Dr. Joyner commended the Academics presentation at the previous board meeting as a coherent, evidence-based framework to determine how we teach and the resources we need. More importantly, how students are learning on our assessments. He expressed concern that the systems that have served our students in the past have been discriminatory; it takes a different type of system to educate them.

Dr. Joyner drew our attention to the 2nd page of the [Teaching and Learning Policy Template](#), with the quote by James D. Anderson, 1988 and the quote on the 3rd page by Cesar Chavez.

Dr. Joyner reminded us that policy development should reflect: who we teach, where we teach, what we teach, how we teach. He introduced a new template for policy creation that would include:

- policy narrative/literature review that “tells our story” and points out the evidence on which we are basing the policies
- administrative procedures/instructional practices
- accountability statements

He discussed the importance of accountability for everyone in the district, from students to parents, educators, administrators, superintendent, central office, and board members.

2. What is working or not with NHPS instructional policies that guide teaching and learning? Dr. Joyner and Academic office staff will review current and future policies on topics including:

Progress Update: *How close are we to a policy draft? Instructional Framework Literacy Across the Content Areas Policy*

Revision Priorities: *How close are we to completing policy revisions? Grading and Course Credits*
Others Resources: *Policy Template, Sample Policy Narrative (handout), Template Elements (handout)*

Ms. Velazquez noted that there had already been some discussion about which policies should be prioritized: one being Curriculum Guides/Instructional Frameworks and one being Grading.

Dr. Joyner noted that CAFE policies are “boilerplate” and we need more customized policies. For example, with grading, we need policy that takes into account high mobility rates of students from school to school, etc. He would like us to use our own scenarios and knowledge of our students to create policies. He asked that Ms. Velazquez prioritize the policies and make a recommendation for which one should be first.

Ms. Velazquez noted that the Grading Committee will have to continue their work and put it back into the Teaching and Learning schedule for presentation. Ms. Velazquez explained that the policy around the Instructional Framework is short and close to being ready. Dr. Joyner requested that she bring it to Dr. Tracey and then Dr. Joyner. It will go to Governance as well.

Ms. Velazquez talked about Literacy Across the Content Areas policy (see resources for this meeting). Dr. Joyner emphasized the importance of language development in accessing all of the content areas.

3. What are the strategies of the Multilingual Department to ensure quality instruction across the schools? Mr. Mendia, Ms. R. Diaz-Ortiz, Mr. Glenn Worthy, Ms. A. Jaca, K. Mattern, Ms. C. Munoz, and Ms. Ann Brillante

Ms. Velazquez thanked Pedro Mendia and Rosalyn Diaz Ortiz for the time they spent preparing for this presentation and discussing how current trends in the world are impacting multilingual students.

Please see the presentation in the [resources for this meeting](#), Multilingual Learners: Investments in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

Mr. Mendia highlighted key staffing decisions and the department focus for the last three years and showed the distribution of the multilingual learners in the district, by LAS Links level. The greatest percentage of multilingual students are still at the “beginner” stage. A total of 3,473 students were tested in 2020. 123 students are “newcomers” to both the language and the United States.

Mr. Mendia reviewed the model for staffing decisions, based on recommendations for instructional time from the Connecticut Department of Education. While NHPS is not meeting the numbers of the full certified-staffing model, there are also a number of tutors who are able to extend the expertise of the teachers to serve more students.

Mr. Mendia then presented the student to teacher ratio at each school. This is something they review each year to make sure that schools/students have what they need. He then highlighted the staffing challenges at various schools. There was a discussion about the need to reallocate resources/staff from schools that have less students to those with more need. Dr. Joyner noted that we need to be able to serve whatever shifts happen in terms of our populations and student needs, and that the strategy to move people around to cover may not be enough to meet the needs. He noted that additional staffing may need to be considered as a strategy as well.

Mr. Mendia talked about the initiatives the department is currently undertaking to fill the needs, such as new hires, transfers, building capacity of general education teachers, recruiting staff through alternate routes to certification, etc. (see presentation in resources for this meeting). He then proposed the work that will be done over the next three years, under the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Mendia asked Ms. Brillante and Cora Munoz from Wilbur Cross High School to talk about multilingual learners. Ms. Munoz showed data on the number of multilingual learners at Cross. There are 380 multilingual learners total: 353 Spanish speakers, 14 Pashto speakers, 5 Arabic speakers, 4 Dari speakers, 2 French speakers, and 1 each of Farsi, Swahili, Igbo, and Kiswahili. Ms. Brillante noted that the timeline for students arriving at high school as multilingual learners is “urgent.” She talked particularly about students with interrupted education who may have been working, refugee trauma, or other impacting factors. They are often the main working providers for their families as well.

Ms. Brillante noted that with extra positions they could provide courses specifically designed for the older students, spoken communication language, culture, social studies courses that focus on democratic process.

Dr. Worthy talked about the challenges at Hillhouse. This year, they created a Newcomer Center and that has helped students to be more adjusted both to Connecticut and to Hillhouse. There are still professional development needs among Sheltered Content teachers. He noted there is much improvement in how they are serving students this year.

Ms. Mattern noted that Truman has been implementing their programs for multilingual students for many years. They are currently fully staffed K-6. Their challenge is meeting the needs of their students in 7th and 8th grade.

Mr. Foreman from Troup noted that their English Learners teacher is only there three times/week. She does the best that she can, but their population has continued to grow, including students who have just exited the Newcomer Center, as well as refugees.

Evelyn Jaca from JS Martinez talked about how they are piloting a side-by-side model of the younger graders. Up to last year, with a bilingual class model in grades K-3, they had challenges as students moved to 3rd grade (English only) in terms of the transition. They have already noticed more collaboration between grade bands as well as an increase in student language development. She sees fidelity to the model and the mission; students have been showing that they can adapt in both languages.

Dr. Joyner commended Mr. Mendia for his presentation and noted that the presentation gave evidence of Dr. Tracey’s effectiveness. He suggested that we need a public relations plan to educate the public as to the kinds of things we have to respond to and the “truth” about what our schools are facing.

Dr. Joyner explained that the model Mr. Mendia used for this presentation could also be used to illustrate the numbers of reluctant learners and students who display antisocial behavior, so that we could look at staffing to support them.

Ms. Munoz noted the need to develop a dual-language high school program. It would help with our credit-attainment rate, it would assist students with interrupted education, and it would be able to serve speakers of languages such as Arabic, and others.

4. Closing Remarks

Dr. Tracey thanked everyone for their presentations and their hard work. Dr. Joyner ended with the idea that “we need to create a different system.” He thanked everyone for being tireless workers in the “battle against ignorance.” He welcomed Dr. Finley, Chief of Staff, to the Committee as well.

- **The meeting was adjourned at 6:02.**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2021.

Future meetings 2021: November 17th, December 15th.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Haxhi