

**WALLINGFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
INSTRUCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday – January 3, 2017  
Board of Education Conference Room**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Cei called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

J. Cei, A. Doerr, K. Hlavac, S. Glidden, R. McKay, P. Reynolds, M. Votto

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

J. Andreson, G. Bikakis, D. Bologna, J. Corso, K. Daly, G. Dirkson, R. Duthie, C. LaTorre, C. Laudadio, C. Lavalette, A. Loomis, R. Mancusi, J. Marciano, B. McCully, S. Menzo, M. Montagnon, K. O'Donnell, J. Piacentini, K. Ripa, T. Snyder

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Instructional Committee Meeting minutes of December 5, 2016 were accepted as presented.

**III. DISCUSSION**

**A. Proposed Approval of Sheehan High School Trip to Quebec City, Canada on March 10-13, 2017**

Dr. Salvatore Menzo stated this is a trip students have been involved with during the past two years. Thirty students in the World Language program will travel to Quebec City, Canada on March 10-13, 2017 and will have the opportunity to practice the language skills they are learning in class in an authentic environment. This experience will authenticate and enhance their learning in the classroom.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed approval of Sheehan High School Trip to Quebec City, Canada on March 10-13, 2017 to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

**B. Proposed Approval and Signing of Agreement for the Operation of Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School**

Dr. Menzo stated he believes Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School is moving away from its initial mission as a magnet school. Some services to students have been reduced, class sizes have increased and most recently they have reduced nine student days on their calendar. However, the tuition will not be reduced. With that being said, not signing this agreement gives Wallingford no voting voice or rights at any of the meetings. He noted our three year attendance rate at WIMS has gone down and under the current agreement Wallingford is allowed to reduce our membership based on this three year rate. During the last three years there are about 55 students each year from Wallingford attending WIMS.

Mrs. Hlavac stated she supports signing this agreement simply to give Wallingford a voice; however she is not pleased with how WIMS currently operates. Dr. Menzo asked Mrs. Hlavac if at the next governing Board meeting she would approach the executive director and invite him to speak to our Board regarding the direction of WIMS. She noted there are twenty-five voters in the catchment group. (Every school district has a member on the governing Board).

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed approval and signing of Agreement for the Operation of Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

#### **IV. CURRICULUM**

##### **A. Proposed Addition of High School Course: Introduction to Computer Science**

Kate O'Donnell, district Science Curriculum Resource Teacher, spoke on behalf of Robert Kovi, Career and Technology Coordinator who was unable to be at the meeting. She stated this course was developed through the districts participation in the "Computer Science for All" consortium grant that provides training for technical education teachers teaching computer science. It establishes an introductory course for robotics and computer science pathways and increases opportunities for students to develop reasoning and computational skills related to computer science. This course establishes a research-based *Exploring Computer Science* curriculum which includes units in human computer interaction, problem solving, web design, programming, computing, data analysis and robotics. Students will gain specific computer knowledge, support for their use of technology in areas of interest, and a greater understanding of the role of technology in today's society. This course is founded from a national course called Exploring Computer Science and is a yearlong course. Dr. Menzo noted this course may not run in the fall of 2017 if there is no approved curriculum. He added that with Wallingford being part of a consortium, the curriculum will be written by a group of consortium members.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed addition of high school course: Introduction to Computer Science to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

##### **B. Proposed Revision to World Language Leveling Guidelines for Incoming Ninth Graders**

Dr. Menzo stated the revision to these guidelines is the following change: Students in year three of a language in grade eight will be recommended for high school level 3 if an average grade of 85% or higher in the course year to date at the time of recommendation. Students in year three of a language in grade eight will be recommended for high school level 2 if they obtain an average grade of 70-84% in the course year to date at the time of the recommendation. Students in year 3 of a language in grade eight will be recommended for high school level 1 if they obtain an average grade below a 70% in the course year to date at the time of the recommendation. Students in year two of a language in grade eight will be recommended for high school level 2 if they obtain an average grade of 75% or higher in the course year to date at the time of the recommendation. Students in year 2 of a language in grade eight will be recommended for high school level 1 if they obtain an average grade below 75% in the course year to date at the time of the recommendation.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed revision to World Language Leveling Guidelines for Incoming Ninth Graders to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

##### **C. Draft of Grade 6-12 Retakes/Redos District Guidelines**

Dr. Menzo stated there was a PTAC meeting at the end of October 2016 followed by a Board of Education meeting at the end of November 2016 where there was a discussion regarding changing the time line for mastery-based learning. One of the key areas of concern for this change was the retakes/redos guidelines. A powerpoint presentation to the Board started with the Wallingford Public Schools Mission Statement – *To inspire through innovative and engaging experiences that lead all learners to pursue and discover their personal best.* Mastery-Based Learning District Leadership Team Mission Statement – *To engage students, staff, and community members in the design of a mastery-based learning system that offers clearly defined outcomes, flexible pathways and personalized supports.*

Dr. Menzo stated there are ten components to mastery-based learning and the top three are the focus areas for this year into next year. Component #1 states all learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students and families, including long-term expectations (such as graduation requirements and graduation standards), short-term expectations (such as the specific learning objectives for a course or other learning experience), and general expectations (such as the performance levels used in the school's grading and reporting system). Component #2 states academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported. Component #3 states students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.

Dr. Menzo added retakes and redos have always existed but there was inconsistency as to what could be retaken or redone, who was allowed to retake or redo and what impact the retake or redo had on the final grade. A degree of consistency needs to be ensured across teachers and across schools in the following areas: How many times may a student retake/redo an assignment? How will retakes/redos factor into grades? How is balance maintained between mastery and grading in the initial stages of mastery-based learning implementation? Most importantly is how this district ensures what we are doing is best for students.

The purist mastery-based learning approach has no limit to the number of retake/redo opportunities and focuses on mastery attainment, not grade acquisition with 100% of points earned back. The rigor associated with preparing for a retake/redo will encourage students to try their best the first time. In the purist approach, time is the variable and mastery of learning is the constant. In the proposed learning approach there is a limit to one opportunity to a retake/redo and 50% of the points to be earned may be gained in a retake/redo. Students will have one week to submit a request for a retake and HOW (Habits of Work) assessments to assist teachers in determining ability for a student to retake/redo. In the proposed learning approach time is still a constraint with semesters, marking periods and other structures.

Dr. Menzo stated the proposed draft protocol for student retakes/redos are as follows. Students can retake/redo an assignment as specified in their teacher's classroom expectations and may only redo an assignment or retest once. Students who wish to retake/redo an assignment or retest must schedule a time, outside of normal class time, to conference with their teacher within one week of the grade being posted and/or returned to the student. At the conference the student must explain what he/she plans to do, such as attend extra-help. Approval is granted at the teacher's discretion based on a student's adherence to the parameters and guidelines, demonstration of readiness and good standing as determined by habits of work indicators. (This protocol does not apply to midterm and final exams). It is not necessary for students to demonstrate skills and content knowledge that they have previously attained on the original assignment. A writing assignment would probably require the entire response to be redone while a summative assessment would provide opportunity for students to improve on specific areas of weakness.

A retake/redo grade can improve by half of the points missed on the 100 point scale. If the student's score does not improve, the higher score will prevail. Teachers should record a minimum of nine grades (tests, quizzes, projects, and any graded assignment) evenly distributed throughout the marking period. These grades must be included in the calculation of the marking period average. Teachers who are experienced in their implementation of mastery-based learning practices in their classrooms may continue to utilize best practices with building administration approval. Teachers would submit their proposals at least a week before the start of the upcoming school year to the designated building administrator for approval. All guidelines and procedures of the retake/redo policy will be shared with parents and students in class expectations.

Dr. Menzo added he is meeting with a group of teachers next week to review this draft version and gain feedback from this group. He is also meeting with parents and the following week PTAC will have a chance to weigh in on this draft version. School districts where mastery-based learning has been successful no longer have class rank at the high school level.

The consensus of the Board with Mr. Votto and Mr. Reynolds voting no was to continue with the retake/redo provisions as a district guideline of mastery-based learning.

#### **D. English Language Arts/Mathematics Data Presentations**

Christine Madancy, Mathematics Coordinator and Carrie Laudadio, English Language Arts Coordinator were present at the meeting to provide an update to the Board regarding the data used to continue to improve student outcomes at our elementary level. There are several components of a balanced assessment system. Mrs. Madancy stated a single test score does not define student learning. Balanced assessment systems replace high-stakes, pass/fail testing policies with a system of multiple measures to evaluate student growth. The result of this is better teaching and learning that will benefit all students. The multiple measures include but aren't limited to the following: Formative, ongoing, assessment guides and informs teaching and learning (IRLA, teacher-developed, exit slips) – Interim assessment guides and tracks learning (IRLA & STAR) and Summative assessment certifies learning (SBAC & unit performance assessments).

Mrs. Laudadio noted that IRLA is an ongoing formative assessment which is administered by the teacher; STAR is a timed summative assessment and is administered four times a year and SBAC is a summative assessment which is administered once a year. Both the STAR and SBAC assessment are standardized, nationally normed assessments. This school year is the first cohort of students using all three assessments. The IRLA is a formative, ongoing assessment that is common core and curriculum aligned. This assessment involves conferencing and personalized goal setting. The STAR assessment is a standardized, computer adaptive assessment aligned to the common core state standards. This assessment can project student achievement on the SBAC. The SBAC is a one time, standardized, computer adaptive assessment aligned to the common core standards.

Mrs. Laudadio stated both STAR and SBAC assess reading skills aligned with the Common Core Standards holistically using a computer adaptive assessment. These assessments measure foundational reading skills, key ideas & details, word meaning, analysis & comparison, vocabulary and range of reading & text complexity. IRLA assesses reading skills aligned with the Common Core Standards in ongoing, formative manner. This classroom and curriculum-based assessment focuses on establishing reading goals in a personalized manner between students and their teachers. This assessment measures foundational reading skills, reading comprehension & evidence, inferencing & evidence, inferring word meaning, vocabulary and range of reading & text complexity. Mrs. Laudadio reviewed grade three STAR reading data for 2015-2016 and grade three ELA Smarter Balanced data for 2015-2016 with the Board as well as grade three reading IRLA data for 2015-2016. She noted that any K-2 student who scores below set cut points on STAR and IRLA will be given an Aimsweb probe (letter naming & letter sounds) as a third assessment to triangulate the data. Students meeting two out of the three data points will qualify. Any grade 3-12 student who scores below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile on STAR and has an IRLA score below the cut point will qualify for intervention.

Mrs. Madancy stated STAR is used to assess mathematics skills aligned with the Common Core Standards holistically using a computer adaptive assessment. Domain scores, ranging from 0-100 estimate a student's percent of mastery of skills in each domain at each grade level. STAR also gives a student's grade level equivalency and growth percentile based on their mathematics achievement. SBAC assesses mathematics skills aligned with the Common Core Standards holistically using a computer adaptive assessment. At each grade level, these assessments measure concepts & procedures, problem solving, modeling & data analysis and communication & reasoning. Mrs. Madancy reviewed grade four STAR mathematics data for 2015-2016 and grade five data for 2016-2017 as well as grade four Smarter Balanced data for 2015-2016 with the Board. She noted that Kindergarten students are given Aimsweb probes, oral counting, number ID, quantity discrimination and missing number assessments. Students scoring below standard in two out of three data points will qualify for intervention services. Students in grades 1-5 who score below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile and students in grades 6-12 who score below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on STAR will take the Moving with Math (an intervention math program) assessment. Students scoring below 40% on the assessment or below 50% within specified domains of the assessment will qualify for intervention services.

Mrs. Laudadio and Mrs. Madancy agreed that while STAR data shows students are making progress in both English Language Arts and in Mathematics, there needs to be an investigation of alignment of these scores with CT SBAC expectations. The year 2015-2016 was the first year of implementation of both IRLA and STAR and could account for some discrepancies between the data from last year and this year. There also is a noted discrepancy between the June 2016 and September 2016 IRLA data as the grade level expectations shifted from grade three expectations to grade four expectations. SBAC data shows that a good portion of our students are at or near standard in the three claims. The district coaches continue to support these claims with Tier 1 instructional strategies.

**E. Proposed Adoption of Elementary STEP Curriculum AND**

**F. Proposed Adoption of Middle School STEP Curriculum**

Robert Mancusi, Pupil Personnel Director, stated the STEP committee spent months revising STEP criteria before writing the proposed elementary and middle school STEP curriculum. Karen Ripa, STEP teacher, stated these STEP curriculum units are written to inspire creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving and using research. Each of these units were developed using the following cross-curricular standards and indicators - Students will be clear and effective communicators, they will be creative and resourceful problem solvers, they will be critical thinkers and researchers, will be responsible and involved citizens and will be independent and self-directed learners. Kate O'Donnell, Science Curriculum Resource teacher, also was part of the team responsible for writing this curriculum.

Mrs. Ripa stated as clear and effective communicators, students will use a variety of modes of expression (spoken, written, visual, and performing arts including the use of technology to create and share expressions) tailored to a specific audience to clearly articulate and share information. Creative and resourceful problem solvers will define problems, utilize a range of practical and creative strategies to generate solutions and evaluate and refine solutions for implementation. Students who become critical thinkers and researchers will learn to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources and experiences to build upon knowledge, justify reasoning and transfer knowledge to new situations. As responsible and involved citizens students will participate positively in the community, respect diversity, demonstrate academic and personal integrity, practice appropriate digital citizenship and accept responsibility for personal decisions and actions. Students will become independent and self-directed learners who will develop initiative and responsibility for learning by setting goals, making informed decisions and exhibiting flexibility and independence. Mrs. O'Donnell noted some of the scoring criteria came from the cross curricular scoring criteria and some were created from the NGSS. Dr. Menzo added he did not feel this scoring criteria matches the rigor STEP students would be engaging in. He suggested to add different levels of scoring criteria.

STEP curriculum units presented at the meeting included Grade 4 STEM, Grade 4 & 5 Independent Study, Grade 4 & 5 Inventing, Grade 5 Raising Awareness, Grade 6 Complex Math & Logic Problems, Grade 6 Robotics Tournament, Grade 6 Silent Movies, Grade 7 Business Plan, Grade 7 Stock Market, Grade 7 & 8 Mock Trial, Grade 8 Video Game Programming and Grade 8 Wisdom of the Ages.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send the proposed adoption of the Elementary STEP Curriculum and the Middle School STEP Curriculum to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

**V. POLICY**

**A. Review of Policy: 6412 – Basic Instructional Program**

Dr. Menzo stated this policy was reviewed by the Board at the November 2016 Instructional Committee Meeting. There was a request to have it reviewed again and it is being presented at this meeting.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send Policy 6142 – Basic Instructional Program to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

**B. Proposed Adoption of Revised Policy: 6142.10 – District Wellness Policy**

Dr. Menzo stated the revisions in this policy are predicated from a review conducted by the State of Connecticut involving food services in the spring of 2016. Anthony Loomis, Health & Physical Education Resource teacher, Mrs. Lavalette and Mr. Bryant all worked on these revisions. Mr. Loomis noted he included information gathered from the Wellness management team and from CABE; along with reviewing a few wellness policies from other districts.

The unanimous consensus of the Board was to send revised Policy 6142.10 – District Wellness Policy to the Board of Education for action at its next meeting.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Cei adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy McCully  
Assistant Superintendent's Secretary