

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
ZOOM Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – August 25, 2021

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Dana Philbin, Madhu Renduchintala, Sophia Shaikh

Members Absent: Tony Holt, Jacob Marie

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools; Jen Webster,

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – n/a

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- August 11, 2021

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2021 meeting.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

E. CORRESPONDENCE – n/a

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Nathalie Mitchell and Emily Pereira - none

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 Math Presentation (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett introduce Jen Webster, the Math Supervisor for the Tolland Public Schools.

Ms. Webster reviewed the following presentation:

- Tolland Public Schools: Mathematics, August 2021
- Terms to Know
 - Inquiry Based Learning
 - Student Centered
 - Problem Based
 - edReports
- What's New
 - Problem based learning
 - Using data to drive instruction
 - Supporting all learners
 - Fostering positive math mindsets

- Addressing Our Needs
 - Curriculum
 - New Resources
 - Data
 - Intervention
 - Co-Teaching
 - Summer Academy
- K-5 Pilot Adoption – Bridges in Mathematics
- EdReports Review – Bridges
 - Alignment
 - Usability
- 6-8 Pilot Adoption: Illustrative Math
- K-8 Resource Pilot
 - Math In Focus vs. Bridges in Mathematics and Illustrative Math
- Co-Teaching: Grades 6-12
- Looking Forward
 - Curriculum, Routines and Structures, Data

Ms. Plourd asked about the NWEA assessment and if they are using anything else to measure student achievement. Ms. Webster explained that depending on the grade they are using biweekly and monthly progress monitoring measures that are normed and standardized. Some assess foundational fluency skills depending on the grade level as well as progress monitoring measures that assess concepts and applications. Further, there are different benchmarks.

Ms. Griffin asked about Illustrative Math and if there will still be math levels in grades 6-8 as well as if there will be an algebra option. Ms. Webster responded that there will. Illustrative Math (IM) offers different levels, and she reviewed a comparison of IM with the former curriculum. She added that Algebra 1A will always be offered. Ms. Griffin asked what they do if they have 6-7 students and they do not run Algebra 1AB in the 8th grade. What is being done for those students who need a little more than just Algebra 1A? Ms. Webster responded that the only time they encountered this was this past year when there was 1 student and they put them in a 1A class and provided a variety of choices for extended projects and paired the student with an interventionist who was able to provide extension. Ms. Griffin asked about plans for changes at the high school level in terms of curriculum. Ms. Webster explained that the pandemic interrupted their work on this, but she expects to they will pick it back up. She added that it coincides with the Portrait of a Graduate. Ms. Griffin commented that due to the pandemic there was likely learning loss and asked if Bridge classes are available, staffed, and promoted. Ms. Webster responded that the high school teachers reviewed the coursework and prioritized major clusters of work. Anything they did not get to or reach as a level of exposure has been discussed during crossover meetings with the teachers who will teach the next courses in the sequence. The information is being added into the next sequence. This reaches all students to ensure they receive content. Ms. Webster noted that Bridge courses are still being offered and allows students the opportunity for continuity rather than skipping a semester.

Ms. Philbin confirmed that this summer all teachers were fully trained in Bridges in Mathematics and all of the classroom teachers have been provided a full Bridges kit for their grade level. Math interventionists and special ed teachers were previously trained and provided Bridges Intervention Kits which align to the grade level kits. All have been provided with planning time allowing them to work collaboratively and are receiving long-term support. Ms. Philbin commented that they had co-teaching at TIS for a time and it seems to be an area they can focus on for opportunities for growth. She asked if this would continue to grow in the lower grades. Ms. Webster explained that at TIS they currently have an informal model for co-teaching. Ms. Philbin asked about the Bridge courses at the high school and the game plan for students/parents to create their own pathways. Ms. Webster reviewed the chart of all possible pathways from 8th grade through graduation. Recommendations are made based on student data as well as teacher recommendations.

Mr. Renduchintala asked how students and staff are responding to the approach. Ms. Webster responded that the staff has been phenomenal and see the urgency for change. They review data and there is an urgency to meet students where they are and to improve for both students and staff. Co-teachers have seen value and enjoy working together. In terms of students, they have collected data at TMS and it shows they are enjoying the thrill of being mathematicians. Mr. Renduchintala asked what staff is needed for full and faithful implementation. Ms. Webster explained that the needs are the dedicated time for a co-planning approach with common planning time for teachers. Teachers need time to collaborate with each other as well as focus on data teams. Mr. Renduchintala asked what measures are in place to address learning loss over the summer. Ms. Webster explained that Summer Academy was open to all students. They had a math ELA comprised of comprehension and word work as well as SEL work. In terms of curriculum over time, they have updated the pacing guide to hyper focus on major cluster work for each grade level.

Ms. Plourd asked about the Bridge classes and if math is offered during every semester at the high school. Ms. Webster explained that it depends. Not every course is offered every semester, but the offerings are done in a thoughtful way. A student entering high school who is ready to take geometry may not take the course until the spring semester. Whether a student can take a math class every semester depends on the student's pathway and needs. Dr. Willett noted that Tolland students tend to be able to graduate with more credits than students from some other schools due to the structure.

Ms. Lundgren thanked Ms. Webster and commented that she is interested in seeing more about student achievement and see what is and is not working.

Ms. Shaikh asked if the trajectory is to end at Honors Calculus, why do the students take CP Precalculus and Honors Precalculus. Ms. Webster explained that it depends on a student's pathway. A student can go CP Precalculus to CP Calculus but to get to AP Calculus a student has to take Honors Advance Precalculus; however, someone who follows Honors leveling they go straight to AP Calculus.

Dr. Willett noted that he is reviewing a working copy this evening. Information is changing quickly, and they are making the necessary preparations. He expects there will be a revision of Executive Order 13D which will also affect information in the document.

Dr. Willett provided an overview of the information provided at the last meeting including the Pandemic Response Education Periods to respond to conditions.

- On August 5th, Executive Order 13A was signed which indicates that through September 30th masks must be worn in all schools.
- Vaccinated students and staff no longer need to quarantine. Unvaccinated students seated at least 3' away from a COVID positive student will not need to quarantine as long as the close contact student is asymptomatic and that students in the classroom are wearing masks. Close contact students and staff less than 6' away on buses, cafeterias, and other contexts must quarantine. Quarantines for students and staff deemed to be in close contact of someone who tests positive will be for 8-10 days from the day of contact. The person needs to be tested on day 5, 6, or 7. A negative test result needs to be presented on the 8th day in order to return to school. Otherwise, they need to wait 10 days.
- Students and staff do not need to report travel but do need to report COVID positive results.
- Masks are not needed for outdoor recess/PE
- Fall athletics will begin on time and fully vaccinated students and staff do not have to quarantine from sports or other activities
- Arts and Music – activities will be held outdoors when practical and extended distancing of 6' is required

Dr. Willett noted that he will hold Superintendent Open Forums via Zoom to answer questions on the following dates: August 31st and September 2nd at 6PM.

Dr. Willett noted that vaccinated teachers who are not symptomatic may be able to remove their masks when instructing students from the front of the room. Dr. Willett reviewed the Pandemic Response Education Periods and noted that a number of processes and forms will need to be created and available in the next week or so.

Dr. Willett noted that this year there is no remote learning option for Tolland for general education; however, students with severe health impacts that are at a level of COVID risk affecting their health severely or putting their life at risk, may apply for accommodation under an AIPGE Exemption Request (504). This would require that a medical personnel or mental health professionals designate that it rises to the level of severe health impact and that it may be a survival risk. If it does not raise to this level, it will not be granted. The State of Connecticut supports in-person learning designations. The AIPGE remote learning model will be online coursework with associated educator support. Families of students of special education would go through the typical IEP/PPT process.

The District COVID Accommodations and Exemptions committee (DCAE) will review all requests including mask accommodation requests, applications for the AIPGE, and provide determinations for staff requesting weekly testing condition. In regard to the

latter, under Executive Order 13D, Dr. Willett explained that the language reads that if staff or teachers have not been vaccinated by September 27th that their employment is to be discontinued. He noted that the document is being adjusted to what appears to be happening on the state level. The DCAE committee, which enforces the state's conditions, would provide determination for staff requesting a weekly testing condition should the option be allowed in an updated Executive Order 13D. Dr. Willett presented the language from Executive Order 13D.

Dr. Willett noted that people have the right to homeschool. While he is not saying that people should, he respects families' decisions.

Mr. Renduchintala clarified that if someone quarantines for 10 days then a test is not required to return. A negative test is only required to return on day 8 and it must be taken on day 5, 6, or 7.

Ms. Shaikh asked if students will be able to use lockers this year and what school lunch will look like. Dr. Willett responded that student will be allowed to use lockers and lunch will look normal with the exception that masks will need to be worn upon entry and sanitizers will be used. Cafeterias will operate as they have in the past, quarantines would be within 6 feet of a COVID positive person.

H.3 Field and Grounds Agreement – Turf Field (no enclosure)

Ms. Besaw explained that one of the issues is in regard to #21 where the Board and town will work collaboratively to come to up with a funding method for the turf field replacement. The turf roughly has 4 years before it needs to be replaced and the question is how they will get to the \$700K needed. The town has collected approximately \$128K in fees but Ms. Besaw is unsure if this is going toward the replacement and/or has been set aside. She explained that a plan is needed.

Dr. Willett presented an overview of the Fields and Grounds Maintenance Agreement and what the school system maintains. When the turf field was a grass field, it was under the domain of the town for maintenance. Turf fields require less maintenance but does need replacement in time.

Ms. Lundgren noted that this will be on the Town Council's agenda in September for discussion and is an important issue given the cost.

Mr. Renduchintala asked if there is a working definition for "working collaboratively". Ms. Besaw responded that there is not. There was discussion when the field was installed but it was not incorporated into the Agreement. The field has approximately a 10-year life span so one would not bond it for 20 years. She would like to know the Board's responsibilities and what can be expected from the town.

Ms. Plourd asked if the Board is going beyond its responsibility by discussing it early since it seems that collaboration comes later. If it is a capital request and the town cannot afford it, is there a chance it could be turned back to grass?

Ms. Griffin explained that the track resurfacing is in the capital budget and separate from the turf field replacement. Ms. Plourd apologized and thanked Ms. Griffin. Dr. Willett noted that a Spartan Re-Spray was done and paid for out of the Board's budget. Ms. Griffin explained that they cannot wait for a collaborative effort in 4 years. A plan needs to be put in place with information on how the cost will be split and funded.

Dr. Willett commented that as a grass turf field, the Board was not paying \$50,000 for maintenance. Over a period of 10 years, this expense was borne by the town. When the turf field was originally conceived, there was concern about this eventually becoming a Board burden. The language defines this as a major capital improvement is because it falls in the general category capital improvements, just as does a roof replacement etc.

Ms. Besaw noted that she agreed that the dollar figure is something that one would typically bond for, but the lifespan is not. The town is collecting revenue on the turf field, and this should be taken into consideration. The Board and the town are a team, and this should be discussed, and a plan created.

Dr. Willett will post the minutes from the original minutes regarding the turf field to the dashboard.

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

- Birch Grove Building Committee – Ms. Philbin noted that the CO was received, and the school was officially turned over to the town. The contingency balances are approximately: \$50K (town) and \$16K (construction). The project is on time and on budget. The estimated installation for the swing set is November and the site has been prepped. Grand Opening: September 18th, 10-1PM; hosted by TEPTO.
- Communications – Reviewed the COVID plan and communication
- Finance and Facilities – Reviewed the following: potential capital budget considerations for November; projected year end numbers; renewal of the CRF and discussion with Council. Ms. Griffin asked if funds in the Birch Grove Building Project's contingencies could be used to address the loading dock (\$5K). Ms. Murray will investigate this.
- Curriculum – will meet in October
- Policy – Discussed 4 policies needing updating for compliance; will be presented to the Board
- Mental Health Task Force – Discussed the following: meeting with the CEO of the Hockanum Valley Community Council; ideas for a proposed teen center; surveying the public for input; next meeting is the 3rd week in September

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Lundgren welcomed students back and she hopes it is wonderful. She is sure everyone will be ready to be back in the swing of things.

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Policy 9010

Ms. Besaw motioned to accept the changes to Policy 9010 as outlined in agenda item K.1 of the August 25, 2021, Board of Education Meeting.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Besaw inquired about item E. Dr. Willett explained that state statutes override employment contracts.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

K.2 2022 BOE Meeting Dates

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to approve the Board of Education 2022 Meeting dates.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

K.3 BGP Change Orders

Mr. Renduchintala motioned to accept documentation related to Project 142-0083-N State Change Order #7, presented in the Board of Education meeting of August 25, 2021, and authorize the Superintendent to sign all related documentation and approvals to apply for reimbursement from the State for eligible items.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Town Council Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2021

N. FUTURE

O. NEW BUSINESS – none

P. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Besaw motioned to adjourn at 9:28PM.

Mr. Renduchintala seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk