



SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes
Curriculum & Professional Practices Committee
Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001
Via Zoom
Thursday, May 27, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Attendance

Members Present: Jackie Blea, Chair; Debra Chute; Jeffrey S. Fleischman; Bogdan Oprica

Member(s) Absent: none

Administration Present: Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent; Jodi Kryzanski, Program Director

Others Present: Shirley Moy, Board Clerk; Staff – Todd Dyer; Sarah Chaves; Eric Lord; Justin Schumacher

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Blea called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

II. Approval of May 4, 2021 Minutes

Debra Chute moved, Jeffrey Fleischman seconded, to approve the February 1, 2021 Curriculum & Professional Practices minutes as presented. The motion carried 4-0-0.

III. Communications from the Public

There was no communications from the public.

IV. Grades 6-12 School Counseling Curriculum – Todd Dyer, Director of School Counseling & Sarah Chaves, School Counselor

Dr. Nestler-Rusack introduced the two curriculums being presented tonight. The CT Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Framework 2020 Standards which was devised and adopted by the State Education Department this past year and are used for this curriculum. Mr. Dyer explained that this curriculum has been in development and review for the last two years. School Counseling is a framework approach that looks at the Whole-child (academic, career, and social-emotional).

Ms. Chaves reviewed the Grades 6-8 Units of Study:

- Grade 6 – Advocacy; Effective Communication & Conflict Resolution; Peer Pressure & Decision Making; Career Exploration; Goal Setting & Time Management; and Transition.
- Grade 7 – Access & Advocacy; Mindfulness; Effective Listening & Conflict Resolution; Reflection & Planning; and Career Exploration

- Grade 8 – Decision Making; Mindfulness; High School Planning; and Career Exploration

Mr. Dyer reviewed the Grades 9-12 Units of Study:

- Grade 9 – Transition to High School; Freshman Individual Planning; Success Planning; Career Exploration; and Social Emotional Learning
- Grade 10 – Career Exploration; Planning for Success; Reflecting On & Setting Goals; and Social Emotional Learning
- Grade 11 – College & Career Planning; Exploring & Planning My Postsecondary Goals; Monitoring & Evaluating Postsecondary Goals; and Social Emotional Learning
- Grade 12 – Tracking Progress for My Postsecondary Being & Self Care

Mr. Dyer and Ms. Chaves also explained to the Committee the three Domains:

- Academic Domain focuses on the foundation of skills necessary for student success; the Student Experience in Grades 6-8 (academic learning styles); and Academics at the high school (Grades, GPA/credits and Learning)
- Career Domain includes interests, personality inventory, use of Naviance and the Student Experience in Grades 9-12
- Social-Emotional Domain focuses on the whole child approach and center of student success

Dr. Rusack, Mr. Dyer and Ms. Chaves continued discussion with Committee members centered on whether there was overlap with the health/wellness curriculum to which Dr. Rusack commented that yes, both curriculums support each other; Ms. Chaves and Mr. Dyer indicated that staff may co-teach certain elements and will be more comprehensive. Committee members indicated their appreciation of the important work. Mr. Dyer also spoke in responses to a Board inquiry on post-secondary opportunity conversations with students, how critical thinking and the Internship program; Mr. Dyer clarified that the Internship program is not under the Guidance Department. Ms. Chaves explained how counselors planned to go into classrooms once a month to deliver lessons or co-teach with other subjects; while at the high school also push lessons into other disciplines, there is opportunity with advisory to interject lessons. As to noticing a social-emotion change in students, Ms. Chaves replied she has noticed a change in use of language and terminology in student conversations which indicates their understanding of social-emotional aspects. Mr. Dyer added that at the high school level students are looking for ways to expand and use their interacting/interpersonal skills with peers.

V. Grades 7-12 Technology Education Curriculum – Eric Lord & Justin Schumacher, Technology Education Teachers

Eric Lord presented the Technology Education curriculum in Grades 7 & 8 to the committee which incorporates application of scientific, math and engineering principles to solve a problem or need; all units align with the Technology Education curriculum at the high school. Various student work was also presented.

- Grade 7 Units of Study include Architecture; Engineering (Structures) and Video Production I
- Grade 8 Units of Study include Game Design; Engineering (Robotics) and Video Production II

Justin Schumacher presented the Technology Education curriculum. He shared with the Committee how he and Eric Lord worked to align the curriculums between the middle and high school. Elective courses for Grades 9-12 include:

- Engineering, Drafting & Design I & II; Architectural Design; Principles of Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Computer Modeling for Gaming I & II; Computer Programming for Gaming; Video Production I & II; Television Production and Digital Art.

Committee members expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm for the various programs available for students and allowing students to have to trouble shoot and “debug” when programs or projects do not work as planned. Answering a Committee member question, Mr. Schumacher explained that there is a career exploration aspect to the various engineering courses. Dr. Rusack added that Level II or additional courses are available to students who are interested in pursuing certain programs of studies. Mr. Schumacher also addressed how the department addresses the changes to technology. Mr. Lord thanked the Board for providing the tools that allows these opportunities for students.

Jeffrey Fleischman moved, Deb Chute seconded, to move the Grades 6-12 School Counseling Curriculum and Grades 7-12 Technology Education Curriculum as presented to the full Board for their consent.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

VI. Update on Student Performance

Dr. Rusack addressed the student performance at the elementary level now that the Aimsweb benchwork assessments were completed. However data was not yet received for SATs, Smarterbalance, next generation Science or AP results; this data will be presented in the Fall. Ms. Kryzanski explained the use of aimswebPlus to manage and report the assessment data which will allow the district to not only compare national norms but also norms within the Avon district. Universal screenings are done three times a year in grades K-6, with it extending to grade 7 next year. Ms. Kryzanski reviewed the aimswebPlus Early Literacy Benchmark given during the Spring which showed Avon trending very closely with national norms in current grades K and 1. Current school year grades 2 through 6, data shows Avon students achieving above national norms, increasingly so as the grades increase. Ms. Kryzanski reviewed the Early Numeracy Benchmark data which showed similar but stronger results which is above the national average. Addressing a Committee member question, Dr. Rusack clarified that Avon did not adopt the Common Core Standards and common curriculum, Avon adopted both the Connecticut State Standards (that were based on the Common Core) as well as National Standards and built our own curriculum. As the curriculum grows and changes Dr. Rusack assured the Committee that more information will be brought to the Board. Ms. Kryzanski also explained the importance of differentiating between standards, skills and strategy. In response to a question, Ms. Kryzanski confirmed that teachers have access to these scores and it is used to determine supports needed. The Committee asked Dr. Rusack for additional information on high school grades, especially failing grades and supports/interventions in place for students needing extra help. Comparing high school student standardized scores and grades would also be of interest.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:06 pm.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jackie Blea, Curriculum & Professional Practices Chair

Jackie Blea, June 9, 2021

Minutes respectfully received by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, June 9, 2021

Board minutes are approved at the next Curriculum & Professional Practices meeting, and any corrections to the minutes, if needed, will be made at that time.