

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room, 47 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Michael Young.

PRESENT Michael Young, Chair, Marcia Kupferschmid, Angie Moser

ABSENT Liz Nord

ALSO PRESENT Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Gomathi Ramachandran, Instructional Technology Specialist - STEM 5-6
Mr. Aaron Fliss, Director of Technology
Mr. Michael Nash, Co-principal at EMS

AGENDA ITEMS

STEM and Science Programming K-6

Mr. Young asked Mr. Barton to provide an update on the K-6 STEM and Science program. There has been an effort to integrate NGSS standards across elementary schools and have STEM lessons and STEM enrichment that are driven by curiosity, experiential learning, and hands-on activities. These include Skype A Scientist, engaging community volunteers, and STEAM Day. Every grade four to eight elementary class received a monthly STEM lab, co-taught by Ms. Ramachandran, providing a “hook” to a science lesson or unit. The activities were designed to the NGSS standards to help students “think like a scientist”.

Committee members were led in a sample inquiry activity Density bottle (Beads suspended in clear liquid, including Salt water and alcohol) by Ms. Ramachandran. The activity showed how epistemic curiosity could be nurtured with simple open observations and questions by students.

Ms. Moser asked how this approach challenges the “coverage” approach to Science and requires different teaching skills including following students with questions wherever they might go. Mr. Barton described how Inquiry-based teaching challenges teachers to know or find answers *with* students which models the scientific method. Mr. Young asked how technology like AI-generated searches might support such teaching in hands-on activities?

Ms. Ramachandran reported that this Enrichment is designed to pique the curiosity of all students as a school-wide model, but enables some students to dive deeper into topics based on their own interests.

Digital Tools for Data Access for Schools

Mr. Young asked Mr. Barton to update the committee on the use of digital tools for data-driven decision-making by teachers and administrators. Mr. Barton introduced Mr. Fliss who described how [Infinite Campus](#) and associated data visualizations are being built out based on teacher and administrator needs. Teacher adoption is challenging with some successes. Issues have emerged concerning how the district can support teachers to use data to guide their instructional decisions. Several projects have progressed quickly including integrated data visualization tools for SBAC, reading (Dibbles), and other data. [Edulastic](#) data is also being used effectively in some cases and district teacher surveys show there is more work to do. Data are being used to provide teachers with student data that could support grade transition (e.g., elementary to middle school, 8th to 9th grade, and transitions within schools). Athletics was also a beneficiary of the

data visualizations to support the work of compliance and eligibility as well as the continuous tracking of an athlete's academic progress. A new data tool in Infinite Campus has been useful for SRBI and tracking student Tiered supports and the dynamics of students moving in and out of supports. It is also being targeted at middle school Math performance.

The status of the rollout has revealed some interesting challenges in how teachers deal with data individually and in data teams. Additional work will follow on teacher data literacy and the use of new tools. One lesson learned this year has been the importance of co-creating tools with the educator end users to ensure the usefulness of the tool and to promote deeper implementation.

Informal Middle School Learning Walk on [Modern Classroom](#) and Workshop Formats

Mr. Young opened a brief discussion about the visit by Board of Ed members on a May 8th "learning walk" to Mrs. Herrick's and Ms. Shea's 8th grade Language Arts classrooms. The committee shared impressions of how traditional workshop models and modern classroom techniques were successful in engaging students in thinking about complex topics, such as in this case the factors associated with the Holocaust. The committee thanked Mr. Nash for hosting the visit and Mr. Barton for organizing the visitors to discuss the "noticings" and "wonderings."

ADJOURNMENT
MOTION

First: A. Moser
Second: M. Kupferschmid
To adjourn the meeting of the Curriculum Committee (7:35 p.m.)
Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Young, Curriculum Committee Chair

