

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room, 47 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Michael Young.

PRESENT Michael Young, Chair, Angie Moser, Gary Blanchette, Miriam Underwood (Virtual), Marcia Kupferschmid

ABSENT Liz Nord

ALSO PRESENT Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Erica Bushior, Math Teacher, EMS
Ms. JoAnna Schmidt, Assistant Principal, Windermere School

AGENDA ITEMS

Educator Evaluation (TEVAL) Plan Pilot

Dr. Young asked Mr. Barton to provide an overview of the pilot plan for Educator Evaluation in Ellington in response to State requests. This TEVAL redesign was intended to meet several goals including ensuring high-quality teaching and service delivery for other special services. Mr. Barton provided a brief background, and the State's interest in reducing the burden of paperwork in the current process, with a focus on educator growth and agency for setting professional learning goals. Ellington is also seeking to connect their process more directly to teacher professional learning opportunities. Teacher participants were anxious to pilot the new process this year which resulted in the current planned activities with input on, and the endorsement of, a select Ellington TEVAL Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC).

Ms. Schmidt, a member of the TEVAL PDEC committee, related that a hallmark of the existing process is setting goals (like 80% growth for the group or district) would make some teachers who had students who fell short (like 78%) have to report not meeting goals. The new pilot process focuses on teacher best practices for moving students ahead rather than reaching a specific target goal for groups of students. Mr. Barton related how parent feedback held individual teacher evaluations to schoolwide aggregated goals on survey forms, such as improved parent communication (acquired anonymously from parent satisfaction surveys). Ms. Bushior, another member of the PDEC committee, described how the pilot program is enabling teachers to create and pursue more meaningful professional growth goals.

Mr. Young asked about the representation of other stakeholders, such as students, parents and the community, in ensuring Ellington has excellent teachers. Mr. Barton described the representation on the current PDEC and suggested that the intention is not to have student and parent feedback removed from the process. He suggested that now may be a good time to consider expanding the committee and consider how more can be done to revise how data/input from other stakeholders could become part of the revised TEVAL process.

The new TEVAL system focuses on Professional Growth Goals and Observations & reviews of practice. Ms. Schmidt related one example of a 5th-grade teacher who was trying a new collaborative unit but found the need to set goals for student collaboration skills so the students could learn to work effectively in small groups.

The new system would allow teachers to create such emergent goals for their professional learning.

Mr. Barton provided details about the Professional Grow goals that will include details of what will be learned, and how the teacher will work toward the goals. The new process will ask the teacher for observations of how they improved their practice as well as a portfolio of evidence.

While high-stakes tests, like SBAC were not shown to be useful for the existing TEVAL process and were largely dropped from the process during COVID, under this pilot system some teachers may now find ways their students' SBAC and other test scores can be useful for supporting their TEVAL portfolio.

The existing rubric for TEVAL that included 'Approaching, Meets, and Exceeds Standards' has been simplified in the pilot system to 'Standards/Goals Met or Not Met'. A discussion of how the process might identify excellence among teachers in various areas ensued. Mr. Barton noted that TEVAL for beginning teachers within the first three induction years of teaching, TEAM, will remain in place.

Mr. Young asked about how the revised TEVAL system being piloted this year might support teacher creativity and risk-taking that could, in some cases, initially result in productive failures. A discussion of how teachers might inform their students and model for them productive failure with support of administrators and within the TEVAL process, ensued.

Discussion on NGSS results (Tabled until the November Meeting)

MOTION

First: A. Moser
Second: M. Kupferschmid
To table the discussion of NGSS results and move it to the November Agenda
Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

First: G. Blanchette
Second: A. Moser
To adjourn the meeting of the Curriculum Committee (6:05 p.m.)
Motion carried unanimously.