

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held on Tuesday, November 14, 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 5:02 p.m. by Michael Young.

PRESENT Michael Young, Chair, Steve Viens, Jen Dzen, Marcia Kupferschmid

ABSENT Angie Moser, Miriam Underwood, Gary Blanchette

ALSO PRESENT Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Linda Robinson, Technology Integration Specialist
Mr. Marc Richard, Assistant Principal Ellington High School

AGENDA ITEMS

Acceptance of Minutes: October 24, 2023

MOTION: First: Ms. Kupferschmid
Second: Mr. Viens
To adopt the minutes of the October 24, 2023, Curriculum Committee meeting.
Motion carried unanimously.

Update on Internships at the High School

Mr. Barton provided the committee with information on the Desco High School Internship. Mr. Oliver reported this is a pilot program that EPS hopes to expand slowly. Mr. Richard provided a handout titled "Phase #1 of Career Readiness Pilot Internship." The initial real-world experience with Desco included multiple rounds of interviews with the employer and required Desco to provide an authentic career context. The program starts with one senior and one junior working for Desco manufacturing wood products using CNC machines in Fall 2023. The internships include office work and manufacturing. Participating students receive high school credit for at least 60 hours of work equating to .5 credit/semester.

The handout also contained a briefing about plans for Phase #2. Dr. Robinson reported plans for Phase #2 during which there might be two additional local companies providing internship opportunities. She outlined the State restrictions on unpaid internships. Participants must be over age 16. The justification that students must be paid is consistent with child labor laws and a portion of the internship work must be done during the school day. Any participating company must adapt a work schedule for the afternoon after the student has been to school in the morning, and must appreciate the balance of school and work. The company must be prepared to provide workman's compensation insurance coverage for on-the-job time and be active participants in the student selection process. It is also essential that there are career skills involved and not simply routine work.

Ms. Kupferschmidt asked about previous internships she was aware of in which a student worked at attorney Draghi's office. Mr. Barton reported that it may have been discontinued as a result of the COVID emergency.

Ms. Dzen asked if companies outside of Ellington would be considered. Mr. Richard stated that transportation beyond the immediate EHS area might prove an additional challenge. Some discussion occurred about what businesses might be viable, and Ms. Dzen agreed to be a point of contact between the Board of Education and interested local businesses.

Mr. Viens asked who might be involved in selecting Phase #2 businesses. Mr. Barton suggested a process that involved both Chair Dzen and central administration in concert with high school administrators.

Mr. Young asked how this program might be different from the EMT or firefighter course and certification classes.

Discussion on NGSS Results

The Next Generation assessment was given statewide to grades 5, 8, and 11. Mr. Barton presented a slide deck on our Ellington results from Spring 2023 and prior years. The results show good performance in Grades 5 and 8 with Ellington above State averages at all three tested grade levels. However, compared to Ellington's prior performance on this assessment, we were less successful at grade 11 than in previous years. Looking at combined year-over-year results (2021-22 and 2022-23) Ellington showed no increase while other high-performing schools (like Simsbury and Farmington) showed growth. There is reason to be concerned with the performance of our 11th graders and the grade 8 curriculum may be pivotal as well to high school science assessment performance.

One possible issue is the inclusion of Earth Science in the NGSS assessment, in addition to Chemistry and Physics-lab science classes that our students may see as more critical for college admissions. Perhaps resequencing of topics in the lower grades to provide additional Earth Science and dynamic systems content may help. Science faculty will be asked to review individual students' performance on other assessments, including State-provided practice NGSS style assessment in high school. There was also discussion of possible motivation for 11th graders, perhaps approaching this test as non-essential for college admissions and thus taking it lightly, which may have influenced our students' performance on this test.

It was suggested that Infinite Campus might provide a more accessible visualization of these NGSS data for science faculty and support data-driven curricular adjustments, particularly concerning Earth Science topics.

The Curriculum Committee will continue to monitor the issue of high school performance on this assessment and look for reports on efforts to address any issues.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

First: S. Veins

Second: M. Kupferschmid

To adjourn the meeting of the Curriculum Committee (6:05 p.m.)

Motion carried unanimously.

