

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held on Tuesday, March 28, 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 4:58 p.m. by Michael Young.

PRESENT Dr. Michael Young, Chair (Virtual), Marcia Kupferschmid, Angie Moser, Liz Nord, Miriam Underwood, Jen Dzen

ALSO PRESENT Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Jonathan Guidry, Ellington High School Principal
Mr. Mark Richard, Ellington High School Asst. Principal
Dr. Linda Robinson, Technology Integration Specialist
Ms. Kirstin LaBranch, Mr. Bill Pernetta and Mr. Matt Lane

AGENDA ITEMS

High School Internship Pilot Program

Dr. Robinson and Mr. Richard described how the program will be starting with one internship for students interested in the trades or something beyond the existing academic curriculum. The high school contacted [Desco Manufacturing](#) (professional builders) to help students practice with interviewing, resume writing, and career pathways. The program will begin with one senior and two juniors and provide paid work up to 3 hours/day. The internship program will be developed further if the pilot is successful, including Culinary and other [State's "pathways" programs](#). The work will be covered by the company's insurance and transportation is expected to be provided by the participating students, though alternatives will be provided as needed.

Mr. Young asked if there were criteria for getting a student a job offer at the end of the internship and if there were general skills that might be in the curriculum more broadly. Mr. Guidry noted that the high school is looking into where general work skills might best fit, and Dr. Robinson reported that the employer will have criteria available at the time of the exit interview on which to base any potential follow-up employment offers.

Ms. Nord asked Dr. Robinson how much time coordinating the pilot program may take and any associated costs. Dr. Robinson discussed how the initial design is for no cost to EPS.

Mr. Barton reported that it is hoped the program will succeed and expand and that program designers have been in contact with Old Saybrook's similar program for college and careers.

Proposed New High School Classes

Mr. Barton presented four new courses as well as reported an effort at refreshing existing courses. Mr. Guidry reviewed the process for proposing new high school courses, which starts with surveying teachers for courses they would love to teach. This year there were seven possibilities that were then taken to a student survey asking students to "pick 2." From that process, there were four proposed for adoption:

1. Matt Lane - Basic home and auto maintenance, grades 9 to 12
2. Tesla Donovan - Criminal Minds & Modalities - true crime theme. For grades 11 & 12
3. Bill Pernetta - Musical theater - using musicals as examples of the eras in which they were written.
4. Kristin LaBranch - Interior home design, building a small model of a house, grades 9 to 12 possibly including digital tools for design

Ms. Nord asked if these proposed new courses are replacing existing courses. Mr. Guidry reported that course #1 is replacing an existing tech ed course, #2 is replacing several existing English courses, #3 is also replacing an existing course, and #4 may fill an opening when two fashion design courses are combined.

Elective Courses at EHS

Mr. Barton referenced a recent article in the press about the number of practical high school course electives that was brought up at the February 2023 Curriculum meeting by committee members. Courses that were open to all students and had a practical component. My Guidry provided a full list of such courses at EHS. The handout included courses introduced in the last four years, and courses that were vocationally focused like jewelry making and agribusiness. 119 courses in total were listed.

Ms. Nord asked about how many students were needed for a new course to be offered. Mr. Guidry said on the first trial usually at least 10 but typically 15 is the minimum and full classroom capacity is optimal.

Reading Program Update

Mr. Barton reported that the EPS waiver regarding the adoption of the State's mandated (any 1 of 8) early reading curriculum was submitted to the CSDE and EPS has undertaken an internal review of the eight State-recommended programs. Timing of the State review will not likely allow for any change of the current curriculum for Fall 2023. There is guide/rubric to the science of reading topics relating to the current Ellington early reading K-3 curriculum context and this has been used to narrow the review to a couple of prospective replacement curricula. This Spring teachers may visit one or two prospects and possibly pilot aspects of those curricula next fall. The concept would be to adopt one of the current finalists the teacher team has narrowed down from the new State curricula and fully replace the existing program combination. This change might take place as early as Fall 2024. A discussion of the process and budget implications ensued. The district seems to have changed its mindset, based on the analysis in developing the waiver and investigating the new options, and is leaning toward adopting one of the eight State recommended curricula. The implication for the Curriculum Committee is to now consider planning for budget and process considerations should a new early reading program be recommended by EPS.

Committee members were invited to visit the pilot [Modern classrooms project](#) at the middle school, and this invitation is extended to all BOE members.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

- First: M. Underwood
- Second: A. Moser
- To adjourn the meeting of the Curriculum Committee (6:13 p.m.)
- Motion carried unanimously.