

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ellington, Connecticut

December 9, 2020

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

The Curriculum Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Tuesday, December 9, 2020, via Google Meet.

Attendees:

Administrative/Staff Team Members: Mr. Brian Hendrickson, John Guidry, Andrea Howarth, Nancy O’Brian, Suzanne Markowski, Jessica Marshall, Steve Oteri

Board of Education Subcommittee Members:

x	Ms. Miriam Underwood	x	Dr. Michael Young (Chair)
x	Mr. Gary Blanchette (remote)	x	Ms. Marcia Kupferschmid
x	Ms. Picard-Wambolt	x	Ms. Jen Dzen
x	Liz Nord		Michael Purcaro
	Jen Mullen		Kerry Socha

Community:

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Dr. Young (Chair).

AGENDA

1. Citizen and Staff Forum

None.

2. Mr. Hendrickson added Astronomy to the list of proposed courses that had been distributed, noting the Astronomy proposal had been inadvertently omitted from the packet. Mr. Guidry began our briefing on course proposals by providing his perspective on the importance of enabling a variety of courses that meet the interests of both faculty and students, and to continue to expand options while removing courses with waning interest. There were 13 new courses proposed this year, despite the COVID response, compared to 11 in 2019. Students requested language courses as well as a wide range of other course topics when given an open-ended request for possible courses.

The committee reviewed and discussed the following Ellington High School course proposals for inclusion in the 2021-2022 Program of Studies (with a brief [review of the proposal and student/faculty survey process](#) the lead up to this year’s proposals):

- i) [Arabic II](#)

- ii) [Astronomy](#)
- iii) [Creative Writing: Fiction and Storytelling](#)
- iv) [Creative Writing: Poetry and Spoken Word](#)
- v) [Diverse \(Indigenous, African-American, Black, Puerto Rican, and Latino\) Perspectives in American History](#) (offered in two single-semester parts, “Diverse Perspectives A” and “Diverse Perspectives B”)
- vi) [History Through Music and Pop Culture](#)
- vii) [Introduction to Cinema Studies](#)
- viii) [Military Preparedness](#)
- ix) [Portuguese I](#)
- x) [Psychology in Literature](#)
- xi) [The Science of Art](#)
- xii) [Visual Creative Writing](#)
- xiii) [Woodworking II](#)

Ms. Kupferschmid spoke up on the topic of the importance of Personal Finance. Ms. Picard-Wambolt asked about the Science of Art course, asking if it were being offered by the Art teacher. Mr. Guidry explained how this course is about the science of paint, film development, and how does glazing work chemically.

Ms. Nord asked about the cost of the additional courses and if these would be offered as a 6th period of teaching for some teachers. Mr. Hendrickson explained that new courses would be offered only within existing teacher schedules. Ms. Picard-Wambolt asked if the Military Preparedness course was a physical education offering. It was not. Dr. Young asked about a new literacies perspective on Cinema Studies. Mr. Guidry replied that the course was not currently intended to address content such as how to do light and sound for videoconferencing, but that option might be explored. Ms. Dzen commented on how her child was loving Arabic I and is looking forward to the option of Arabic II. Ms. Dzen pointed out the agency that students felt in proposing these courses seems to contribute to a feeling of engagement and excitement about the high school curriculum.

3. Discuss possible reinstatement of Personal Finance as a graduation requirement for the class of 2025 and beyond (for reference see BoE [Policy 6146](#) regarding High School Graduation Requirements).

Dzen. Moved for reinstatement of Personal Finance as described in Board Policy 6146
 2nd Marcia K
 Unanimous pass.

4. Discuss rationale for removal of 2 courses from the Program of Studies:
 - i) Shakespeare
 - ii) Creative Writing

Mr. Hendrickson presented that some course would be retired as new courses became available. In these cases, the content of Shakespeare and Instruction in Creative Writing have been adopted within several new courses allowing the specific courses

currently addressing them to be retired. The committee supported removing these courses.

5. Discuss benefits of moving to single-semester courses vs. year-long courses.

Mr. Guidry described the request from current English teachers to “semesterize” all current year-long courses to enable more boutique topic courses to be offered and to make scheduling a bit easier. The guidance staff spoke as to how offering a variety of courses can only strengthen the already effective array of possible courses offered by a relatively small district like Ellington. The committee supported this proposal.

6. Discuss student & family communication/marketing for new course offerings and Program of Studies.

Mr. Guidry described the important task of ensuring students are aware of new courses. Students begin course selection in January and can select through March for their next year options. Dr. Young asked about the possibility of a short video to be included as part of future course proposals, and the guidance staff requested teachers visit with them to promote the new offerings. Ms. Kupferschmid thanked the guidance staff for their continued work.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

1st. M. Kupferschmid

2nd. K. Picard-Wambolt

VOTE: Unanimous. The motion passed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Michael Young, Curriculum Committee Chairperson