

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ellington, Connecticut

NOVEMBER 17, 2020

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

The Curriculum Committee of the Ellington Board of Education met on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at the Ellington High School library.

Attendees:

Administrative/Staff Team Members: Mr. Brian Hendrickson, Ms. Hope DeBour, Mr. Solomon Leonard, Ms. Lori Purcaro, Dr. Kristy LaPorte

Board of Education Subcommittee Members:

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

Community:

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Mr. Young (Chair).

AGENDA

1. Citizen and Staff Forum

None.

2. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Specialist/BCBA Support Model Update

Mr. Hendrickson introduced Ms. DeBour (BCBA) and Mr. Leonard to present on district efforts to support student and faculty Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Ms. DeBour described the various elements of her role in supporting individual student behavior plans, a teacher's classroom management skills, and whole school initiatives to improve school climate and civility. She reported she designs her initiatives for the school drawing from her experiences with her son. Mr. Leonard described his position in support of SRBI and classroom management. He highlighted the personal voids in many apparently well-behaved students and his role in finding ways to help heal all students. He described their efforts to work together on issues of SEL and supporting Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs).

Mr. Leonard spoke to how the SEL team focused on aligning behavior approaches across district elementary schools. While not looking for a cookie-cutter approach, there was concern for equity and consistency across programs. One example was the use of common language for describing social-emotional learning. A coordinated use of language to name feelings would benefit students and teachers.

Ms. DeBour described a 5-step guide for teachers on the process of seeking a referral for behavioral issues. Both Ms. DeBour and Mr. Leonard showed their **online request forms** available to teachers, and reported their efforts to input information into the newly adopted Infinite Campus system.

Dr. LaPorte reviewed how social/behavioral supports provided by the SEL team is focused on helping teachers and helps create more opportunities for some students to stay in the classroom, improving their educational experiences and saving the district costs of outplacements. Mr. Hendrickson shared previous planning consensus of “non-negotiables” that included expectations of accessible, child-focus, non-evaluative assistance to teachers, and practical advice for parents. Ms. Purcaro confirmed that the approach taken by Solomon and Hope is working and available, consistent with the goals for these positions.

Ms. Kupferschmid asked about how much time the SEL team spent in each school. They reported they have scheduled to be in different schools each day with a half day overlap, but with flexibility.

Mr. Young inquired to what extent online and digital citizenship is a part of their efforts. Ms. DeBour described how she may be able to support parents with suggestions for how to supervise home computer interactions. Mr. Young ask also about how SEL team interventions look for our Silver students working remotely. Mr. Leonard reported one example of the online videoconference groups he runs for Silver students who have trouble connecting with other students.

Mr. Young also asked about how work with Infinite Campus supported and influenced their efforts. Mr. Leonard reported that historical behavioral data is not currently included and available in the system, but training is being completed and data visualizations will be expected in next year’s rollout wave.

Ms. Picard inquired if regular support and emails that are sent to elementary teachers (Fabulous Friday tips) might be made available to middle and high school teachers. Dr. LaPorte reported that it may be possible to explore expanding the idea beyond the elementary schools, and shared a sample email with the committee.

3. K-6 Academic Scientific Research-based Interventions (SRBI) Tier intervention system Update

Ms. Purcaro reported to the committee that, prior to the COVID response, there was an identified need for support for students experiencing challenges in their families and beyond. A short video was presented showing three examples of self-reported student success from the pullout small groups in Reading and Math, and push-in supports for academic skills in Math and Reading. She mentioned that the alignment among the three elementary schools was a bit of a challenge, particularly under the stresses of the emergency response to COVID-19. She noted that there was some variability of Tier 2 and 3 supports across schools and suggested it would be best if there was more consistency for equity, and in cases where students moved from one school to another. Ms. Purcaro showed a [draft of specific explanations](#) of 8-20 week cycles of the 3 Tiers of support. She emphasized that all three tiers include the same high-quality instruction present in the regular classroom.

Mr. Hendrickson added an explanation of how the district's academic specialists also need to align their supports so that services work together to nurture academic, emotional, and behavioral interventions. He highlighted that it is important that interventions be a peer-based, rather top down, approach that invites teachers into the process and supports their professional growth in a non-evaluative atmosphere. He shared that while alignment is critical, the purpose of suggesting changes to existing school models is to ensure best practices are provided in an equitable way across schools, that still recognizes the unique attributes of each school and faculty.

Ms. Purcaro explained how the planning documents for SRBI are guided by Infinite Campus as, for example, clarifying who is (or is not) an intervention specialist (like tutors or ELL) and the need for establishing and inputting a baseline and target level of achievement. She showed the teacher supports and user directions for creating an Intervention Plan in Infinite Campus. She reported that the alignment process is moving forward while respecting the need to maintain confidence and relationships of all involved.

Dr. LaPorte added the perspective of how the overall plan for SRBI alignment stands in contrast with prior concerns for losing the support of a specific Reading or Math specialist. Rather than being assigned to a particular elementary schools, the redesigned SEL team can provide more consistent and timely support for all three schools.

Ms. Underwood thanked the SEL team for their work and support, finding it to be a positive change and requested to hear continuing reports on progress of the SEL team.

Moved to adjourn – Ms Kupferschmid, 2nd Ms. Picard-Wambolt. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40