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New London Public Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Curriculum Standards Development and Implementation
Committee**

MINUTES

Date: March 3, 2009

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Location: Central Office – Conference Room A – 1st Floor

Chairman/Facilitator: Mr. William Morse

<u>BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE STATUS</u>
Mr. William Morse, Chairman/Facilitator and BOE Member	PRESENT
Ms. Susan Connolly, BOE Member	PRESENT
Mr. James Pearce, BOE Member	PRESENT

<u>BOARD OF EDUCATION STAFF, CITIZENS, ORGANIZATIONS, OTHERS</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE STATUS</u>
Mrs. Christine Carver, Assistant Superintendent of Schools	PRESENT
Mrs. Grace Conti, K-12 Literacy Supervisor	PRESENT
Mrs. Alison Ryan, Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Data	PRESENT
Mr. Daniel Sullivan, Principal - NLHS	PRESENT

I. Call to Order

Mr. Morse welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
A warm welcome was extended to Ms. Connolly, who was newly appointed to this committee.

II. Roll Call

A quorum was present and noted for the record.
Please refer to the above listed attendance chart on Page 1 for roll call status per member.

III. Approval of the Minutes from November 18, 2008

Motion: To approve the Minutes from November 18, 2009.

Motion by: Chairman Morse

Seconded by: Mr. Pearce

Abstention by: Ms. Connolly

Voice Vote: Motion Carried. (2- In Favor – 1 Abstention)

2 - In Favor – Chairman Morse - Board Member Pearce

1 Abstention – Ms. Connolly

Mrs. Carver requested that we go out of agenda order and address Agenda Item B. / NEASC Report before Agenda Item A.

IV. New business

A. Overview of enVision Math Program

- **Timeline for implementation**
- **Cost**
- **Professional Development plans**

Mrs. Carver stated this committee would need to take a vote so we are able to go to the full Board for the approval of the enVision Math Program. Mrs. Ryan submitted a detailed memorandum which depicted the charge of the committee, the process which was used for choosing the enVision Math Program, specific program details, staff feedback and recommendations.

Mr. Morse had a few questions which included:

1. How much time is required each day for this program?

The time would be between 45 – 60 minutes. An hour would be the optimum choice. This is the same amount of time we are currently dedicating to our current math program.

2. Are the teachers that served on the search committee comfortable with this program and the pace of instruction and the materials?

Mrs. Ryan stated they were comfortable, but it is very different than what we are using now. We are confident that after they have had an opportunity to use the program and see and use all of the components, the comfort level will increase. This program introduces the “visual learning bridge” which incorporates the abstract concept to a pseudo-abstract concept to a concrete concept.

3. Is the K-2 levels consumables?

Yes, K-2 is consumables and 3-5 is a medium sized hard copy text book.

4. Will the teachers have the ability to jump around and go out of order?

The teachers’ manual is not set up like the traditional spiral bound manuals. The teachers’ manual is set up in series of workbooks developed by their unit. Some contents will need to be taught before others, but in general, the teachers will be able to make these decisions.

5. Are we able to use the software that comes with the program? Do we have all of the hardware we need in place?

Mrs. Ryan replied this is a “yes” and “no” answer. One of the things that we liked about this program is that it enables the district to grow with it. Some schools, such as Jennings, have more advanced technology tools like Promethean boards, while others will have to use other options.

6. This program is budgeted for \$43,000.00 in the 2009/2010 budget, which is supposed to cover half of the cost. Where is the additional funding coming from? Did we decide on purchasing the manipulatives? Is there an additional charge for professional development?

Mrs. Carver explained the total cost will be \$117,000.00. We are hoping to take a portion of the funds from this FY 2008/2009 budget and we have allocated \$43,000.00 into FY 2009/2010 budget. We will be purchasing the manipulatives which are included in the \$117,000.00 quote. The \$117,000.00 is a “whole district” purchase. Right now, the company is including the professional development component as a purchase perk. Our current staff will be trained and could train other staff members in the future to economize.

Motion: To approve the enVision Math Program – K-5.

Motion by: Chairman Morse

Seconded by: Mr. Pearce

Voice Vote: The vote was unanimous. Motion Carried. (3 – In Favor – 0 – Opposed)

3 – In Favor – Chairman Morse, Board Member Connolly, Board Member Pearce –

0 – Opposed

C. NEASC Report – New London High School

- **Timeline for addressing curriculum and assessment cited shortfalls**
- **Guiding the development of core content areas**

Mrs. Carver gave a brief synopsis of the overall timeline and implementation plan for approaching the high school curriculum writing task which included:

- The revised/edited Curriculum Guide has been updated and was distributed in the agenda package folders and is posted on the website. The Curriculum Guide will be used as a “basis” for the entire curriculum writing task in our district.

- We have been working with the HS Department Chairs since September 2008 to develop a process for curriculum writing. In the past, the process that was used was to incorporate K-12 curriculum committees. The primary focus was on elementary curriculum and did not focus on the MS and HS. Some curriculums moved at a rapid speed and some were stalled. What we have learned over the years with regards to curriculum writing is that it is extremely important to have “teacher input” to the process at the writing stages of the curriculum; otherwise there would not be any “buy in” to the product. Curriculums are living documents.
- In our initial round, we are focusing on the 9th and 10th grade in the core content area classes. The curriculum is actually being written by teachers in the high school; the goal is that the curriculum product will then go back to the Professional Learning Communities (*PLC*) for their input and revisions in developing finalizing pacing guides and common formative assessments for each course.
- We hope to have a “draft” of the written curriculum in 9th and 10th grade in core content area courses by August 2009.
- The “drafts” will then go to the department “as a whole” for their input.
- By our planned approach which allows individual staff write the curriculum, while having a process by which all teachers will have input, is a nice balance and anticipated to be very successful.
- Mr. Sullivan stated the NEASC timeline is two years from the date they vote on the report which Mr. Sullivan anticipates to be later on this month. Hypothetically, the timeline would be about March 15, 2011.

Updates on content areas:

- Ms. Kate Ericson – Social Studies Department Head has finalized the freshman course of world history and beginning the writing process. Two units of American history are completed for sophomores. The State Department Social Studies Committee is in the process of changing the standards. Ms. Ericson is a member of the State Department Social Studies Committee. Government is also being worked on.
- Ms. Deborah Herrick – Math Department Head, is currently developing curriculum for Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and Geometry. Drafts are completed for Algebra 1 and Geometry, and we are waiting for feedback. These curriculums are being designed and realigned to get students ready for the CAPT tests. Mrs. Ryan stated we will not be re-writing the curriculums that already exist. Mr. Sullivan added AP teachers have to submit a syllabus each year which goes through a review process which will assure the rigor of the courses.

- Some of the curriculum at the Science and Technology Magnet School follow “Project Lead the Way” which is a predefined/specified curriculum under STEM. The HS has “Project Opening Doors.”
- Mr. Joseph Micelli – Science Department Head, is moving at a rapid pace and they do have a “draft” of a biology curriculum. They are also working on physics, chemistry and astronomy, as the focus.
- Mrs. Ryan reported the department heads are speaking and the middle school is included in the conversations.
- Mr. Edwin Mercado is the English Department Head. Mrs. Conti will be taking an active role in supporting the English Department in curriculum writing.
- All 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders will be in courses that are built around the standards. Through our Professional Learning Communities (*PLC*) meetings, we have learned that we need to address and develop units of 1) What are the content standards the we need to address. 2) How are we addressing these standards. 3) What are the commonalities that all 9th-12th grades need to learn? 4) How do we build assessments around these commonalities?
- Ms. Ryan referenced the upcoming April Data Fair (*Theme: Discipline, Climate, and Behavior*) where Ms. Ericson will be previewing some of the actual student writing. Mr. Sullivan stated the social studies department has worked hard to come together with specific skills that students need to know. As a result of a PLC meeting, they are looking at the standards and trying to decide how they could have a writing assignment in each grade level. Basically, we may be deciding on having a writing performance assessment which will take the place of the traditional mid-term. Interdisciplinary conversations are going on. Next year we anticipate the interdisciplinary conversations to grow and we will be discussing how we can meet our response to intervention goals and bridging the gap between the high school and the middle school.

Mr. Morse was concerned with the budgeted funds for curriculum writing. Mrs. Carver stated we have appropriations for this FY 2008/2009 budgeted and have appropriated funds for curriculum writing in FY 2009/2010. We are struggling with acquiring staff to write curriculum because it is a lot of hard work, time consuming and a commitment.

Mr. Morse inquired as to whether or not we are looking at the development critical thinking through project based learning and cooperative learning. What strategies are we looking at to develop this curriculum to foster the students and citizens that we want to nurture in this environment?

How are we getting an improved student / learning environment? Mr. Morse hopes we are looking at critical thinking, observation, problem solving, working together doing research and project based learning.

Mr. Morse also inquired and referenced the NEASC Report with regards to the library. The NEASC Report cited we need to make the library more conducive to learning and asked Mr. Sullivan what his three priorities would be without going into additional funding.

Mr. Sullivan stated we would need to go into some moderate additional funding and stated his three priorities would be:

- 1) We need dedicated student study space which would require building some sort of space; possibly glassed and/or enclosed. The students would need furniture for group sessions. Construction and furniture would need funding.
- 2) We need to take a hard look at what materials we have and possibly purge old materials and purchase newer/updated materials. The average copyright in our libraries are about 1978. This is a systemic issue. We have also had a hard push not to purchase consumables and to use online resources. Purchasing new/updated materials would require funding.
- 3) It would be very helpful to have a library assistant also. Maybe we could find a retired person to volunteer on a regular basis?

V. Comments from Citizens / Public

There were no comments from citizens or members of the public.

VI. Setting of Future Business / Future Topics of Discussion

No future business was addressed. Future topics of discussion will be forthcoming.

VII. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Motion by: Chairman Morse

Seconded by: Ms. Connolly

Voice Vote: The vote was unanimous. Motion Carried. (3 – In Favor – 0 – Opposed

3 – In Favor – Chairman Morse, Board Member Connolly, Board Member Pearce

0 – Opposed

Respectfully submitted by:

Marie Smith, Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools

