

Tolland Board of Education
Curriculum Committee Minutes
January 7, 2021

Members zoom: Walter Willett, Mr. Marie, Mr. Renduchintala, Ms. Griffin

Meeting called to order at 3:35 pm

1. Mr. Renduchintala asked if CREC can come in and assist with Open Choice presentation. Dr. Willett indicated that they could, but it probably should be him that does it in partnership with us because so both local and state aspects can be covered. Dr. Willett gave brief history of the program, and offered to give more of a financial impact point of view-that he could do it in 1 or 2 parts. The committee expressed it makes sense to do it with him and then if need be, he can ask CREC. Would start with the philosophy portion first then bridge with the financial portion if need be. Also, about the most sensitive and effective way to discuss the financial aspects of the OC program. Mr. Marie thought it would be a good idea to handle the financial aspect head on as to be able to have an honest discussion. Dr Willett explained that this can be done but care should be taken in the discussion of the financial aspects to focus on program value and expense so people can get a good idea of program value without unnecessarily traumatizing any student or family who might see the discussion or minutes and get the impression the district feels the child isn't worth having be part of the district for the amount provided. Dr. Willett expressed given the history in the United States of putting a value on black and brown bodies, discussions should be executed thoughtfully. Mr. Marie asked if we wanted to do a full board presentation or committee level. Mr. Renduchintala stated full board would be appropriate based on feedback from the board and interest received from the town. All were in agreement. April should be when we do it.
2. Dr. Willett expressed that next year will be focused on human capital needs as opposed to materials needs this year. Specifically gaps that have been created due to the pandemic: counselor needs, bargaining unit increases, social work, IEP's etc. Ms. Griffin asked about making curriculum adjustments due to pandemic. Dr Willett said adjustments will be made but won't be a full blown rewrite or adding more hours of services. Tweaks to technology curriculum and grow the robotics program. Ms. Griffin asked how it will affect the high school specifically the 4x4 block. Dr Willett replied by saying the blocks can be beneficial from a remediation standpoint and kids' express benefit from having fewer classes and can devote more time. Mr. Marie asked if the state has sent guidance about providing a cushion about getting kids up to speed. Dr. Willett said we need to see what the priorities are of the new commissioner.
3. Dr Willett talked about the qualifications/job description for a curriculum coordinator/assistant superintendent. Without one it falls to him to perform or delegate out when available. Dr. Willett shared that Tolland needs one but doesn't want to have to give up another position like a speech pathologist. Ms. Griffin asked if we could consider restructuring the supervisor positions. Dr Willett said we replaced our 4 coordinators with supervisors because structuring the jobs that way in the teacher bargaining unit made the position less effective and the supervisors are a better value and went from five that included a director, to three without a director. Also talked about the best way to attract high quality candidates for the positions. Mr. Marie commented that there is value to this position but that he sees what Dr. Willett's issues are with the allocation of resources. Says ideally, we would have four supervisors and a director.
4. Math curriculum presentation would be in May. All were in favor.
5. Dr. Willett gave a brief history of social and emotional learning. Adult and students learn strategies to assess their emotional state in the morning and make decisions about what tasks are optimal to do for work that day based on their advantages and disadvantages of their emotional state at that time. Helps kids become better learners and get along better with each other. Employing these skills helps with life trajectory.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Renduchintala