

Tolland Board of Education

Curriculum Committee Minutes

April 27th 2022

Members Present: Jacob Marie (Chair), Christina Plourd

Members Absent: Jayden Regisford

Others Present: Dr. Willett (Superintendent of Schools)

Mr. Marie called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

1. Teaching Evaluation Flexibilities: Dr. Willett reviewed the background information for this item. The state is looking to rewrite its current evaluation guidelines in time for the 2022-23 school year, and although the exact document has not been written yet it is expected that the new guidelines will be very similar to the flexibilities currently in place. However, the new guidelines will have a summative component while focusing on Social Emotional Learning and other new metrics. Mr. Marie asked for clarification on what the Board's/local school districts' role was in this process versus that of the state. Dr. Willett answered that the Board can decide whether or not to extend flexibilities, which if it did, would make the transition to the new guidelines more seamless. Once the state does rewrite its guidelines, the role of local Boards of Education becomes a bit more constrained as it is harder to just reject what the state is asking local districts to implement. Ms. Plourd asked which version of the flexibilities the Board will be asked to extend. Dr. Willett stated that they would be asked to extend the version approved in October 2021, which did have a summative component. Ms. Plourd asked how the staff felt about extending the flexibilities. Dr. Willett stated that there are both those who are supportive and those who are not. He added that the district formulates its specific evaluation plan through a committee called PDEC, which is created by statute for this specific purpose. It consists of both administrators and teachers with the intent that an evaluation procedure will be created collaboratively. Dr. Willett added that anything that comes to the Board will have been approved by PDEC first. Mr. Marie asked if the data-driven standards (the summative component) are rigorous enough in both the flexibilities and the expected new guidelines. Dr. Willett stated that he is confident that PDEC will find a healthy balance between including objective standards to measure success without discouraging teachers from pursuing rigorous teaching goals. Mr. Marie asked when a decision was needed on extending flexibilities. Dr. Willett stated that he would preferably want a decision before June. Both Ms. Plourd and Mr. Marie felt one reading at a full Boarding would be fine before voting on the matter barring any major changes from the state that would affect the extension, and were comfortable forwarding the discussion to the full Board.
2. Overview of Health Curriculum: Dr. Willett provided a summary of the district's health curriculum. He noted that the district's curriculum does not deviate significantly from state guidelines, and focuses on substance-use avoidance, STDs, healthy behaviors and healthy living.

He added that if a certain sexual act leads to an STD, it may be discussed in that particular context. Mr. Marie stated that the curriculum doesn't appear to have changed much from when he went through it and that it appears to be well written. He thinks that the curriculum tends to find a good balance between those wanting less content and those wanting more without stepping on people's personal beliefs. Ms. Plourd asked if parents have the right to opt their children out of health classes. Dr. Willett answered by saying that because health is a graduation requirement, opting out or making accommodations would be tricky. Mr. Marie asked if there were any changes to health curriculum coming from the state. Dr. Willett answered that he wasn't aware of any.

3. Adjournment: Ms. Plourd moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:14pm. Mr. Marie seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacob Marie