

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

March 17, 2008

Curriculum Committee Meeting

The Meeting of the Technology Committee was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on March 17, 2008. The meeting was called to order by T. Sean Maher at 6:40 p.m. with a pledge to the flag.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
PRESENT

T. Sean Maher, Chairman
Gerald A. Calabritto
Andrew R. DePalma
Eric Murillo

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
ABSENT

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Palmieri
Toni Paine
Patrick Egolum
Howard Horvath
Rob Saley

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

T. Sean Maher, Chairman for the Curriculum Committee thanked all the curriculum people for coming and had Scott Shand give a brief introduction to the board about the curriculum committee and what they do. The Curriculum Committee is comprised of a group of teachers who look at what has been done in classrooms, consult other teachers working in the same medium, request materials from textbook companies to get ideas, evaluate the current curricula, have a very strict standard so all curricula will look the same. They do this in order to have new teachers be competent in following the same structure. We have six curricula to look at tonight and we are almost at the end and we now are about 90 – 95% done. Every eight years we revisit the curriculum to make additions and changes. We are coming close to revisiting the eight year cycle once more. The ones we did just seven years ago are up to being re-evaluated.

Neil stated he hope we will shorten this to a five to six year re-evaluation cycle. We are also up-dating textbooks. Now that we have a formalized curriculum in all of our subjects this will not take as long.

Eric Murillo asked who makes up the Curriculum Committee. Scott Shand is the administrator and is an Ad-Hoc member so he is not a voting member. The Department Heads are on the committee and there are 12 teachers. Right now there is no chairman.

Neil introduced Phyllis Silver, Music Teacher, who has the bulk of the curricula with three. Two of them are a result of her being at WHHS full time next year.

Phyllis stated that the three curricula are for the choral department: Chorus, Camerata and Bel Canto. She then gave a general overview of each.

CHORUS

- Chorus is the basic vocal group which consist of 25 – 45 members
- Introduction to choral singing (everyone who comes into the choral department comes to chorus first so we can see what their vocal abilities are – some people have never sung before and some have been singing through the elementary and middle school so we have varying levels)

CAMERATA

- Camerata is the intermediate group. It is all women it averages 27 members.

BEL CANTO

- Bel Canto is the advanced group and is comprised of 16 to 18 members.

The three curricula are based on the goals and objectives of the National Standards for Music Education. This information is located on page 10 of each curriculum.

Ms. Silver explained how students begin vocally:

- They must sing with proper vocal technique: proper vowels, proper consonants, proper breathing, articulation, and with a clear tone
- They learn to look at the music and identify all their notation, symbols and terminology
- There are three concerts a year; through the repertoire they learn to read the notation.
- By Bel Canto they are able to look at the music and hear it without any sound being present. They are learning how to sight sing.
- They learn different styles of vocal singing, techniques, interpretation and the history behind the composers etc. The objectives are basic in chorus and progress in difficulty as students move into Camerata and Bel Canto.

Discussion: Rob Saley asked if students can write music. They can't write music because it is not a theory class and there is not enough time available at the moment in the class. In a theory class they will learn how to do this.

Sean thanked Phyllis.

Internship I, II and III

Sean introduced Lynn Mihalyak a Special Ed Teacher who teaches the Internship Program. Lynn's curriculum teaches students employability skills so they can make the transition from school to work.

- Internship I is classroom based instruction for two periods a day for half of the year
- Internship II takes place the second half of the year
- Internship III is for the full year – students have jobs

The major purpose of this is to teach them job skills and employability skills.

Discussion: Neil asked Lynn to tell the board what types of jobs are we able to place kids in and how is it monitored. We have all Special Ed students. We have found work for them at the Animal Shelter, the library, and the Veterinary office. A lot of our small businesses have been very good to us. Lynn meets with these people regularly. Eric Murillo asked the number of kids who participate. This semester there are 12 Special Ed juniors, seniors and senior plus (12th grade plus). He asked if everyone has a job and the response was yes. Toni Paine thanked Lynn.

Sean thanked Lynn.

Word Processing II

Sean introduced Jan Del Gado a Business Teacher. The curriculum she introduced is Word Processing II. The pre-requisite is Word Processing I. In Word Processing II she continues with the keyboard skills of 30 words a minute. One student can key 79 words. We review what was learned and then go to multi-documents, columns, reports, graphics, and table of contents etc.

Discussion: Neil stated that this is an elective but asked what kinds of kids are taking this course. She has a variety of students taking the course and has some Special Ed students who also take it. She has a couple of deaf students who take classes. They have a lot of board space and other things geared to helping those kids that have learning problems and disabilities. They begin work right away so they don't sit around in the classroom waiting for the teacher to open up the books. I can give some special attention to the kids who are Special Ed.

Sean Maher asked if there was a specific word processing program used for this is it Word or an academic program? Microsoft Word 2007 and Office 2007.

Toni Paine asked if this course has evolved from the caveman days when it was called typing. This is used more as a utility program for editing text. It is quite involved now. This has different functions and different ways to put page numbers onto reports etc. Tony said then this really has evolved from this. Yes, a lot has. Eric Murillo asked if she also teaches Word Processing I. Yes, she has also written the Word Processing I Curriculum, Keyboarding, Business Technology I, II, and III and Advanced Research. He

asked if any internship students go through Word Processing I etc. She is not sure but she does have special learning needs kids.

Sean thanked Lynn

General Science

Nate Hill teaches science to sophomores and wrote the curriculum for the general science course. This curriculum came about with the new State standards that went into place in 2004 trying to align freshman and sophomore science with CAPT Science. We formerly taught geo-physical science which had an earth science spin into it but the state wrote that out of the curriculum with their new standards. We took the Earth Science portion out and recreated geo-physical science to general science. When he wrote it he went through the state standard objectives, contents and expected performance they are looking for and rewrote it tailoring it to our school.

Freshman Biology Curriculum was re-written about three years ago. The state says there are five imbedded tasks that have to be complete by the time the CAPT Test comes along in March. We decided we would do two of those tasks freshman year and three sophomore year in the General Science class. There is an Energy Transformation, a Solar Cooker Lab that goes along with this. There is a Polymer Lab that they do with the chemical structures and properties standard. There is an acid rain lab that we do with global interdependence taking into account global warming etc. The curriculum is written for both academic and basic levels because the state doesn't differentiate. Our main philosophy for the course and all science courses is that we really want to give the kids the tools necessary to become independent learners. There is a lot of hands on and a lot of inquiry based learning. They are creating the procedures themselves.

Discussion: Howie Horvath said it is his understanding that the Federal Government is now evaluating science. Nate believes so under a lot of the new recommendations. It is not part of AYP yet but he believes at some point it will be. Howie asked if there is a national set of standards. The Connecticut State Standards were taken from the National State Standards so we are right in line with them.

Sean thanked Nate and all the other teachers who came before the board.

Jerry Calabritto made a motion that this committee recommend to the full board the implementation and acceptance of all the curriculums that were presented.

Howie Horvath seconded the motion.

All were in favor

Motion to be added to tonight's agenda during the committee reports.

Andy DePalma made a motion to adjourn

Jerry Calabritto seconded the motion

All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:10

Respectfully submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Secretary