

Groton Board of Education
Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2016
6:00 p.m.
Central Office, Room 11

Members Present: Andrea Ackerman, Gretchen Newsome, Rita Volkmann

Also Present: Michael Graner, Mike Emery, Karen Bryer, Sean McKenna, Erin McGuire, Katrina Fitzgerald, Jay Weitlauf

Chairman Volkmann called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. **MOTION:** Newsome, Volkmann; to approve the minutes of November 2, 2015.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Review of New Courses at Fitch High School – Sean McKenna presented the committee with a proposal (attached) for several courses to be offered beginning in the 2016-17 school year.

MOTION: Volkmann, Newsome; to forward the following courses to the full Board for approval:

- AP Computer Science
- AP Statistics and Probability
- College Readiness Math

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Volkmann, Ackerman; to forward the *ECE Basic Writing* course to the full Board for approval.

Favor (2) – Ackerman, Volkmann

Opposed (1) – Newsome

MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Volkmann, Newsome; to forward the following courses to the full Board for approval:

- AP Government
- Specialized Social Studies

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Volkmann, Ackerman; to forward the *Spanish for Native Speakers* course to the full Board for approval.

Favor (2) – Ackerman, Volkmann
Abstained (1) – Newsome
MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Newsome, Ackerman; to forward the *IB Classical Studies in Latin* course to the full Board for approval.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Ackerman, Newsome; to forward the *IB Ab Initio Spanish* course to the full Board for approval.

Favor (1) – Ackerman
Opposed (1) – Volkmann
Abstained (1) – Newsome
MOTION FAILED

MOTION: Volkmann, Newsome; to forward the following courses to the full Board for approval:

- Specialized Health
- Personal Finance II
- PLTW: Honors-Civil Engineering and Architecture

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Review Referral List – the committee reviewed the referral list and identified three topics for the March 7th agenda: (1) Follow-up regarding Fitch High School courses that were proposed but not yet approved, (2) Update on the Advanced Placement testing procedure, and (3) Status report regarding computer coding at the middle and high school levels.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. in room 19 of the Administration Building.

MOTION: Ackerman, Newsome; to adjourn at 8:03 p.m.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Proposal 2016-2017

HS Curriculum Proposal

RATIONALE

The FHS administration proposes a series of new courses for the course selection process for the 2016-2017 school year. The course selection process commences soon, as the second semester of the current school year is well under way. Many of these proposed courses are advanced in nature, offering students Advanced Placement, IB, and/or UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) credit. In the case of the UCONN ECE courses, students may earn up to 4 UCONN credits for each UCONN ECE course that they take. In proposing these courses, therefore, we have identified the following drivers:

- Expanding & emphasizing the varied advanced course offerings for current FHS students and potential FHS students researching high schools in the SE CT education market.
- Student and parent requests over the past few years
- Middle school students receiving high school credit in middle school
- Changes in state and national standards (Common Core) and state testing
- Data from College Board
- College and Career Readiness

STUDENT NEEDS

Offering students more advanced courses in high school helps them to prepare for college, to challenge themselves, and to receive college credit while in high school during a time when college tuition, even state school tuitions, continue to climb. It is important to note that the FHS administration aims to cast a wide net on ALL learners with these course proposals, from the focused, accomplished learners to learners who are emerging and want more of a challenge. Therefore, some of these courses such as ECE Basic Writing and ECE Basic Chemistry appeal to students who are not concurrently enrolled in AP or IB experiences and who are looking to challenge themselves in an appropriate learning environment.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The courses proposed would require different approaches to curriculum development. To simplify things, we have devised a coding system that we hope helps in the understanding of how GPS would develop curriculum documents for these courses.

**These proposed courses have an existing FHS course that is currently offered. For example, many of the UCONN ECE courses currently offered at Fitch are linked to a curriculum document that has been developed and approved. Thus, the curriculum development for these courses would be minimum.

++These proposed courses originate from outside sources such as Advanced Placement (College Board) or International Baccalaureate. Thus, these courses have curriculum documents already that have been developed and vetted by an outside institution such as College Board or International Baccalaureate respectively. Project Lead the Way courses would also fall under this category. Therefore, the

curriculum development for these courses would involve a translation of scope, sequence, and learning objectives into the existing GPS approved documents.

@@These courses are new proposals originated by FHS faculty members who are aiming to respond to student need, student and parent request, and expanding the course offerings.

Math Department

New course:

1. AP Computer Science++
2. AP Statistics and Probability++
3. College Readiness Math@@

English Department

New courses:

1. ECE Basic Writing**
2. Falcon Writing Center (semester)@@
3. Women in Literature (full year)@@

Social Studies

New courses:

1. African American Studies@@
2. AP Government++
3. Specialized Social Studies++

World Language

New courses:

1. AP French 2017-2018++
2. AP Spanish Language 2017-2018++
3. Spanish for Native Speakers@@

ECE Courses

New courses:

1. ECE Marine Science/Oceanography 2017-2018**
2. ECE Basic Writing**

3. ECE Basic Chemistry**
4. ECE Music Appreciation 2017-2018**

IB Courses

New courses:

1. IB Classical Studies in Latin++
2. IB AB Initio Spanish++

PE/Health

New Courses:

1. Specialized Health++

Business

New Course:

1. Personal Finance II@@

Tech

New Course:

1. PLTW: Honors- Civil Engineering and Architecture++

2016-2017 Proposed Course Descriptions

African American Studies@@

African American Studies course will focus on the richness of African Americans from the beginning of civilization through the transatlantic trade into the 21st century. This course will take students on a journey through the historical, cultural and geographic facets of the African American experience. The course will highlight the contributions and influences of African American experiences to the sciences, arts, humanities, politics, and academia throughout the world.

AP Computer Programming++

AP Computer Science is equivalent to a first-semester, college-level course in computer science. The course introduces students to computer science with fundamental topics that include problem solving, design strategies and methodologies, organization of data (data structures), approaches to processing data (algorithms), analysis of potential solutions, and the ethical and social implications of computing. The course emphasizes both object-oriented and imperative problem solving and design using Java language. These techniques represent proven approaches for developing solutions that can scale up from small, simple problems to large, complex problems. The AP Computer Science A course curriculum is compatible with many CS1 courses in colleges and universities.

AP French (2017-2018)++

Is a course offered by the College Board to high school students in the United States as an opportunity to earn placement credit for a college-level French course. The AP French Language test is widely compared to a final examination for a French 301 college course. Enrollment requirements for AP French Language differ from school to school, but students wishing to enter it should have a good command of French grammar and vocabulary as well as prior experience in listening, reading, speaking, and writing French and a holistic cultural knowledge of francophone regions. The AP French Language and Culture exam underwent a change beginning in May 2012 designed to better test interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication skills

AP Government++

AP United States Government and Politics introduces students to key political ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the political culture of the United States. The course examines politically significant concepts and themes, through which students learn to apply disciplinary reasoning assess causes and consequences of political events, and interpret data to develop evidence-based arguments.

AP/ECE Spanish (2017- 2018)++

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course emphasizes communication (understanding and being understood by others) by applying interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills in real-life situations. This includes vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. The AP Spanish Language and Culture course strives not to overemphasize

grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. To best facilitate the study of language and culture, the course is taught almost exclusively in Spanish. The AP Spanish Language and Culture course engages students in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts. The course develops students' awareness and appreciation of cultural products (e.g., tools, books, music, laws, conventions, institutions); practices (patterns of social interactions within a culture); and perspectives (values, attitudes, and assumptions)

AP Statistics++

The AP Statistics course is equivalent to a one-semester, introductory, non-calculus-based college course in statistics. The course introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. There are four themes in the AP Statistics course: exploring data, sampling and experimentation, anticipating patterns, and statistical inference. Students use technology, investigations, problem solving, and writing as they build conceptual understanding

College Readiness Math@@

This course is targeted for students who are not yet "college ready" in mathematics or simply need some additional instruction in content to prepare them for success in college level mathematics. This course incorporates the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practices. Topics covered include Expressions and Equations, The Number System, Functions, Algebra, Geometry, Statistics and Probability. The course offers student activities in a range of applied contexts and helps students develop college and career readiness skills.

ECE Chemistry**

ECE General Chemistry is designed to provide a foundation for more advanced courses in chemistry. Atomic theory; laws and theories concerning the physical and chemical behavior of gases, liquids, solids, and solutions. Properties of some of the more familiar elements and their compounds. Quantitative measurements illustrating the laws of chemical combination in the first semester lab. Equilibrium in solutions and qualitative reactions of the common cations and anions in the second semester lab.

ECE Marine Science (2017-2018)**

ECE Introduction to Oceanography works with processes governing the geology, circulation, chemistry and biological productivity of the world's interrelationships between physical, chemical, biological and geological processes that contribute to both the stability and the variability of the marine environment.

ECE Music Appreciation (2017-2018)**

ECE Music Appreciation is Intended primarily for students who are not music majors. An approach toward intelligent listening, illustrated by recordings.

ECE Basic Writing**

ECE Basic Writing works with the development of the reading and writing skills essential to university work. The course works to develop students who are not yet qualified to take the required academic writing seminar (ENGL 1010 or 1011) but who would benefit from a preparatory course that carries college credit. Reserved for high school seniors only.

IB Initio Spanish++

IB Intio Spanish is a two-year course for 11th grades students who are interested in learning Spanish, but who have had limited exposure to Spanish during their freshman and sophomore years of high school. The course is ideal for students who are first-time language learners, or who have only had Spanish 1 or 2, and who hope to complete the full IB Diploma, or participate in the 2017 IB Career Certificate program. This class is also suitable for students who wish to earn college credit for beginner Spanish. Students will leave the course with confidence that they can successfully communicate in the language as visitors to Spanish-speaking countries.

IB Classical Studies in Latin++

IB Classical Studies in Latin is for students who have completed two years of Latin language study at the high school level. Students will engage in reading and translating texts from Latin, and will learn to speak and write in Latin. This course is ideal for a student who has an interest in continuing his or her Latin studies, and/or who wishes to use Latin as his or her language of choice while completing the full IB Diploma or participating in the 2017 IB Career Certificate Programme.

Personal Finance II@@

In this course, students will understand how a bank or financial institution functions as a business and the role it plays in the U.S. economy. Everyone must make financial decisions...this course will give students the knowledge to make those decisions. Money, Banking and Business will provide immediately useful banking knowledge as well as the foundation for new learning and enhanced career opportunities. Students will have the opportunity to learn banking systems through on-the-job training with Charter Oak Federal Credit Union. This real-work experience will enable the student to be employable in our on-site branch of Charter Oak Federal Credit Union. Whether the student chooses to do the on-the-job training or not, each student will take away a valuable work experience and new learnings to serve him or her in future endeavors.

PLTW: Honors- Civil Engineering and Architecture++

Students learn important aspects of building and site design and development. They apply math, science, and standard engineering practices to design both residential and commercial projects and document their work using 3D architecture design software. CEA is one of the specialized courses in TCD's Project Lead The Way Pathway to Engineering course sequence. Students who have successfully completed the IED and POE foundation courses at TCD or their high school can easily transition to this course. To receive maximum recognition or credit from PLTW-affiliated colleges and universities, students should successfully complete the two foundation courses, one specialized course, and the capstone course. Some affiliates offer recognition or credit on a course by course basis

Spanish for Native Speakers@@

Designed for heritage learners of Spanish, this course can accommodate students from a wide range of backgrounds, from those who are minimally functional (can comprehend Spanish but are not able to speak fluently, read or write) to those who are more proficient and/or literate in Spanish. The recommended entrance requirement for the Spanish for Native Speakers I is the Intermediate-Mid level of proficiency in listening comprehension on the ACTFL scale. It is not necessary that students speak or write at the Intermediate level prior to entering the course. This course focuses on the development of communicative competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening and viewing, as well as on understanding Hispanic cultures and issues of identity of heritage speakers of Spanish in the United States. Students will also develop an awareness and understanding of Hispanic cultures, including language variation, customs, geography, history, and current events. During this course, students will gain confidence using Spanish to express their own thoughts on social and academic themes, interact with other speakers of the language, understand oral and written messages, make oral and written presentations, reflect on language variation, and critically view and evaluate media resources and websites. Students will be able to understand material presented on a variety of topics related to contemporary events and issues in Hispanic communities.

Specialized Social Studies 9-10 & 11-12++

This course uses adaptive curriculum for World History, Civics and US History to meet the learning needs of adolescents with cognitive impairments. The content literacy skills and strategies presented and practiced in the lessons will allow students a more meaningful literacy based experience. The Reading Essentials in Social Studies supports the national standards: culture; time, continuity and change; people, places, and environments; individual development and identity; individuals, groups and institutions; power, authority, and governance; production, distribution, and consumption; global connections; civic ideals and practice.

Specialized Health++

The course includes an appropriate curriculum for teaching the current Health curriculum to adolescents with significant cognitive impairments. We have identified the Oak Hill School's Positive Choices Program as the best match for our students for several reasons. It is aligned to the CT Health Standards and recommended by the Health Consultant at the CSDE and the lessons and resource materials are developmentally appropriate for adolescents with cognitive delays. The Positive Choices Curriculum has a scope and sequence which consists of 31 instructional units of lessons, rubrics to assess skills development and videos to supplement the lessons.

Women in Literature@@

From Jane Austen to Marion Zimmer Bradley to Sistah Souljah and lots of others in between, Women in Literature explores it all. Feminist, classic canonical, and modern literature are all touched upon, as well as poetry from all ages. Students will read from all genres of literature, as well as analyze poetry and song. All traditional college prep Senior English norms will be observed including College Essay, essay writing, vocabulary, close reading, and creative writing. Can be counted as senior English credit.

Writing Center (Falcon Writing Center)

The Writing Center, Theory and Practice (.5 credits, half-year course)@@

The Writing Center, Theory and Practice is a half-credit, semester long course. Students enrolled in this course must commit to enrolling in *The Writing Center, Internship* for at least one school semester; they may take the internship for repeated semesters. In this course, students will be trained to run the Falcon Writing Center and to work in guiding students as they engage in the many stages of the writing process for different courses and different purposes. The course work includes, but is not limited to, reading texts and articles about staffing a writing center and current theory in writing instruction, practicing the one-on-one peer conference, creating small group tutorials for teachers and students immersed in a writing assignment, and learning to manage the daily operations of the writing center. Units of study focus on the genres of writing, effective peer tutoring strategies, and successful management of a vital and active writing center. This course has engaging classwork, fieldwork, and a final exam. After successful completion of this course, students are prepared to staff the Falcon Writing Center, and they should also be ready to apply for a writing center post when they go to college.

Course Pre-requisites

- Teacher Recommendation, grades 10-12
- Brief Interview and Application with the Writing Center Faculty

The Writing Center, Internship (.5 credits, can be taken more than once) @@

Students employ the 21st century learning skills of communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration as they staff, manage, and offer tutoring in the writing process to the students of Fitch High School. Working under the Writing Center Faculty, students will manage writing center appointments, engage in peer conferencing, and also offer in-class tutorials at the request of teachers working on processed writing in the classroom. Students can elect to take this course repeatedly after completing the prerequisite, and they may also engage in field training for current students of *The Writing Center, Theory and Practice*. In addition to staffing a viable writing center, students will engage in a semester long project purposed at improving and growing the writing center and its mission. Potential projects could include publicity for the writing center in our school community or assisting area Groton schools in developing their own student-staffed center.

Course Pre-requisites

- *The Writing Center, Theory and Practice*