

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 9, 2020 MEETING TRANSCRIPT
5:30 pm VIRTUAL MEETING

START TIME 5:30 P.M.

Shannon Carlson: It's 5:30, and we're going to start. We're going to call the meeting to order. Marie, are you taking notes?

Dr. Marie McPadden: Yes, I am; and we're recording it too.

Shannon Carlson: Perfect. Discussion and Possible Action on Minutes, if anyone can remember back to our February last meeting and anyone wants to make a motion to approve those minutes?

Carla Eichler: I'll make the motion.

Shannon Carlson: I'll second them. All those in favor? Everyone is in favor.

Dr. McPadden: Tonight we're going to go over some new course and course modification proposals. There are about six of them, and a couple of them are very inter-related. We are going to start with the first one, and that is called the Study Skills/Academic Skills. You were all sent these packets a while ago, I think maybe last week; but I'm going to have each teacher talk. I think you will get more out of it that way as well. Tom Brant will be first and second with Study Skills/Academic Skills, and then he will follow with the 21st Century Transition Skills after we go over and respond to the first course.

Tom Brant: The first course is a course modification for Study Skills and Academic Skills, and that is Amity's version of a pull-out resource model, so this is a pull-out class working on those IEP goals and objectives. Currently it is a graded class, both the middle school and the high school model. We saw that it really does not need to be graded. It should really be pass/fail based on the students' progress toward their goals and objectives because we were having students receiving passing grades, but they were not making satisfactory progress on their goals and objectives and vice versa. I am recommending making the modification to both the 7th-8th class, which is the Academic Skills, and the 9th-12th class, which is the Study Skills, moving them to PASS/FAIL. In complete transparency – and Ms. Mahon can answer any of the detailed questions about it – it would also remove it from calculation for overall GPA because currently now that class does factor into GPA calculation.

Dr. McPadden: Questions for Tom?

Robyn Berke: I have a question. When you say it's not factoring into the GPA, you get course credit but you don't get a grade?

Tom Brant: No, you'll receive a "P" or an "F" on your transcript, and then it just won't factor into when they're calculating the overall GPA.

Robyn Berke: But I always thought it correlates with the credits when the grade is assigned; so you'll still get the credit, but there's no factoring.

Anna Mahon: Essentially it's not unique to this course. For any course PASS/FAIL that's the way it works. It counts toward graduation requirements but does not count toward an overall GPA. It's just not factored in, so it means that if I am PASS/FAIL in my English 2 course and I pass, I have earned that

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credit for graduation.

Robyn Berke: I understand the theory of it. I always thought that it has to correlate so that when you have a credit there has to be an entry.

Anna Mahon: No.

Robyn Berke: It doesn't? Okay.

Anna Mahon: No.

Robyn Berke: The other thing is having students and knowing students who took this class, I know at least in the middle school there's often a lot of work that's assigned to this class by these teachers; and these kids are often taking these classes instead of a foreign language and things like that. I guess my concern is that if certain work is being assigned and a child works very hard that it's not really showing for a student who is. I understand for the students who may be under-performing and that's the problem, if they're not really reaching a goal, if they're just sitting at let's say what would be a "C" and getting a PASS. I understand that concern. I'm thinking of that in reverse – the student who works really hard at all the assignments and then doesn't get any benefit for putting in that amount of work.

Tom Brant: The benefit in that work is related to their goals and objectives. We're making the benefit of making progress on their meeting the Special Education needs, so it doesn't have that intrinsic motivational component to the student with receiving a numerical grade, but I also don't want the teachers creating graded assignments that don't relate to their goals and objectives at the same time.

Robyn Berke: That has been the case in the past, at least in the middle schools. I know from personal experience.

Tom Brant: Correct. That was one of the observations we made, so that will also help heed that off, simply creating a graded assignment because we need to a grade into the system where now they'll correlate their performance in the class to their overall performance on their goals and objectives.

Robyn Berke: I guess from a personal experience, having a child who performed really well and tried really hard, I feel like it would be less motivating for that; but I guess it's probably more the minority situation than the majority situation where the child's grades may be lower and affected by it. I just had those questions; thank you for clarifying.

Dr. Marie McPadden: Andrea, did you have a question; and then, Carla?

Andrea Hubbard: Yes, thank you, I just wanted some clarification. So, this is a course for students with IEP's?

Tom Brant: Correct.

Andrea Hubbard: I understand the PASS/FAIL; so students who don't require an IEP would not be taking this course?

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Tom Brant: Correct.

Andrea Hubbard: Right now they're receiving a grade for something that's part of their IEP?

Tom Brant: Yes.

Andrea Hubbard: Okay.

Dr. McPadden: Carla, did you have a question?

Carla Eichler: Yes, this is interesting, so I'm assuming in the past that students were given assignments in this class and then assessed on whatever they were able to produce on those assignments; but now that we're switching to PASS/FAIL how would the students be assessed? Would it just be merely on their progress toward their goals on their IEP?

Tom Brant: Yes, exactly.

Carla Eichler: So the way the students are assessed will be changed as well?

Tom Brant: Yes, it will correlate to what's on their IEP because what we actually found for some parents was it was difficult to understand why their child may be getting a certain grade in Study skills, but then we would go to the PPT and say they made unsatisfactory progress in this area. If the class that we assigned the student to work in the skills they've received a passing grade, but then we're reporting on something different at the PPT.

Dr. McPadden: Andrea?

Andrea Hubbard: Just kind of a follow-up on that – are the students working on skills and concepts that they would be working on in their regular courses? Is this to help them with History or English or something of the sort, or is this separate? I don't understand why they're assigning work in this separate class.

Tom Brant: That was an observation we made. I don't know what the long-term history of the class was, but the purpose of this class was specifically that if they have certain study skills goals, organizational goals, executive functioning goals, this is the environment they work on, which is different than a class where they might be taking a self-contained English class, which is in lieu of their freshman English, which then does run a parallel but modified curriculum to the English 9 class.

Andrea Hubbard: Okay, that makes sense. What type of work would be assigned in this class as far as executive functioning skills goes?

Tom Brant: It really would depend on the student. It could be anything from time management to how they're going to go about starting a long-term project to working on how they're going to reach out to their teachers. A lot of the work lately has been how to access technology and how to access the teachers on days you're not there, so those remote days, that skill-building set, tasks like that that are

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directly relating to whatever might be in their IEP.

Andrea Hubbard: Thank you.

Dr. McPadden: Any other questions? If not, Shannan, do you want to take a vote to see if we can move this forward?

Shannan Carlson: Sure. Any other questions? Any other discussion?

George Howard: One really quick thing under OBJECTIVES for the next course that we're looking at, it says, "This course will provide identified special education students (per their IEP)" ... maybe the language that you just had about transition skills, executive functioning skills, time management skills, could be spelled out in the OBJECTIVES to say any relevant identified areas "per their IEP" because right now it doesn't say very much, what the objective of this course is.

Tom Brant: Okay.

Robyn Berke: I'd also like to ask just one more thing. Is there input from the Special Education teachers directly about this change?

Tom Brant: Last year we had some input about it regarding why they were making up tests and quizzes and whether they found that a good use of part of their time, but nothing from them this school year.

Robyn Berke: I just think it may have been useful to get their input on how they felt about this change in terms of going to PASS/FAIL.

George Howard: I scrolled up to what it does say under the OBJECTIVE, it just says, "Special Education class as required by the student's IEP," so if you could just maybe say the things that you had said as per their IEP or something like that.

Tom Brant: Okay.

Dr. McPadden: We can add that tomorrow, if everyone is okay with that.

Robyn Berke: Is there any way that we can put this to the next meeting and just hear feedback from at least one of the Special Education teachers in each of the schools in this regard? I'd just like to hear what their comments would be. Would I have to make a motion to move this, or is it just a request to move it? Change is not taking place this quarter anyway, right?

Anna Mahon: No, it would be for next year.

Robyn Berke: So is it possible just to move this, so we could get a little more information from them?

Dr. McPadden: Anna, when does it have to go in the Program of Studies?

Tom Brant: Special Ed is currently not in the Program of Studies.

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Anna Mahon: Right, that was what I was going to mention is that with regard to the explanation and those kinds of things, these don't go into the Program of Studies. This is not a course that someone selects; it's not open to whomever. It is specific to the needs based on a child's IEP. I can give a little bit of history. In the past, up to about four years ago, this course really focused on specific goals and objectives as they related, as Andrea said earlier, to how they manifested in the classroom; so if I had a reading goal, then I would work in my English and History class maybe in my Biology textbook, those kinds of things. Then with some changes in administration there was a new focus on trying to really use the Study Skills course as a lesson, really focusing on, if I have 4 kids in my Study Skills class who all have executive functioning issues and I was going to build a lesson around executive functioning and teach that because we were giving a grade for it, and we've always given a grade for it, even though it's not really appropriate to give a grade for that. In an effort to try to justify that grade, I believe that was the explanation given to me; but it doesn't match the needs of the specific support. For example, we don't give grades to kids when they have a Counseling goal and they're working with a psychologist. They don't get a grade for that. We meet that through the IEP based on time and those kinds of things; so it's not really appropriate for it to be getting a grade because it doesn't really follow a curriculum. There's no curriculum that is being delivered. We can get feedback from teachers. It may or may not have a major impact on how we would move forward; but as Tom said, this isn't something that kids should be getting assessed on with their own progress because there's no curriculum that they're following. They're following the needs of the IEP, so it's going to be very specific to every individualized plan. It can be tabled until next time; it's not something goes in the Program of Studies, so it's not the same as the rest of these courses in here that really need to be handled tonight.

George Howard: The other courses say Anna Mahon as the building administrator. I'm sorry, but who is HTR?

Tom Brant: That's my signature.

George Howard: Okay, thank you.

Anna Mahon: That's because this is Special Education.

George Howard: No, understood. I had no idea.

Dr. McPadden: It's like me, I'm "E. Marie." Please understand too that all these proposals went before District Steering Committee, and they were all approved to go forward to the Board Curriculum Committee. I just wanted to make that clear about all of these.

Ann Mahon: The District Steering Committee has teachers on it specifically, including Special Education teachers.

Dr. McPadden: Teachers from each content area and administrators as well and Tom.

Carla Eichler: I just want to say this change makes a lot of sense to me because my first thought when I heard that in the past the students were getting grades -- my teacher hat says, "What are they being assessed on? What are the standards?" When you have a classroom of Special Ed students who are

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individually working on an IEP that are individual to them, being assessed using certain standards and assessments, and giving tests and quizzes, it just doesn't make any sense; so I'm happy to see this change. I think this is a lot more logical, and students who I know who are in Special Ed programs are working – the intrinsic motivation is to improve their own learning and to meet their own goals, which I think is more important than any grades, so I'm all for it.

Andrea Hubbard: I agree, Carla.

Robyn Berke: If everyone else wants to go forward today, then that's fine.

Shannan Carlson: Any other comments or questions or discussion? Robyn, are you comfortable moving forward with this?

Robyn Berke: No, I was curious because I know the amount of work that my child personally did in middle school. It's a little different now obviously this year with the whole way we are learning, but I was just kind of curious to get the opinion of the middle school teachers. I don't know for sure, but I was wondering if they felt like they would lose motivation from some of their kids. It's a possibility, so I was curious to hear what they had to say, but if everybody else feels strongly about going forward, I don't feel that strongly that it has to be put over if everyone else is in favor. I can see where this is going, so I'll just vote accordingly.

Shannan Carlson: A shift in Academic Skills 7-8/Study Skills 9-12 from a grade to PASS/FAIL -- all those in favor?

George Howard: Do we need a motion?

Shannan Carlson: Are you doing a roll call, Marie, or how do you want us to handle this?

Dr. McPadden: We could do a roll call, or you could just raise your hand because I can see everyone at once. All those in favor?

Shannan Carlson: I think George was making the motion.

George Howard: Yes, if we could have the motion.

Dr. McPadden: Who seconded it? Do we have a second?

Carla Eichler: I'll second it, Shannan.

Dr. McPadden: Carla? Okay. Any other discussion? Okay, all of you approve, raise your hand please? The motion carries, and Robyn, are you abstaining? Are you voting no?

Robyn Berke: I'm going to vote NO.

Dr. McPadden: Okay, the next course Tom is also going to move forward. This is called the 21st Century Transition Skills.

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Tom Brant: Sure thing, so this class is something we actually worked on creating in the previous district, and then we identified it as a need here if the Board will remember based on an outside consultation report that Ms. Raiola had done in June 2018 where they looked at our transition planning and programming for our students. It was one of the recommendations that led to the creation of the additional administrator to focus on transition at the high school level. This is one of the first outcomes with that new position is that with Ms. Guthrie's oversight and support we're recommending the creation of 21st Century Transition Skills that will not require any new staff. We're able to staff that with our existing Special Education teacher staff. In this course there's a planned roll-out, but in its initial year it will target 12th graders who are still showing deficits with their transition skills as identified by Connecticut Core of Transition Skills, which you would see are in the objectives. This course would meet once in a 4-day cycle for targeted 12th graders, and it would not receive a grade. They would work specifically on the transition skills that they are required to have developed upon graduation from high school. That was one of the areas that the District had noted as needing to improve, so this is our first step in improving it. You'll notice that I put 11th/12th grade. The hope within a 3-year rollout plan is that we start the first year with 12th grade. The second year would include 11th graders who need the class, and then the third year would be 10th graders. We'd have the ability to offer this to students if they need it in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades eventually; but initially starting with next year's 12th graders once in a 4-day cycle. It would really focus on those transition skills that they still need, and those skills would be including how to access any State agencies that they may be eligible to receive support from when they exit Special Education and continue our working relationship with DORS and level up including for job placements. Amity does an outstanding job of supporting students with their transition skills in our SAILS program, which used to be known as the transition classes, but now we need to expand it so that all Special Education students can have that access to it and starting with this gradual roll-out of the program. One Special Education teacher has already shown interest in it and started talking about it, so we're excited to hopefully offer this. Again, students would be placed into this class per their PPT recommendations; so the PPT would have to recommend a senior next year to attend that course, and it would be a year-long course meeting once in a 4-day cycle.

Anna Mahon: I have one suggestion that I should have given back in District Steering Committee. If the ultimate goal is 10th-12th, we should just make it 10th-12th right now so you don't have to come back to District Steering Committee and then Curriculum Committee in 2 years when you want to add 10th graders.

Tom Brant: Okay, that's good. Thank you, Ms. Mahon. We put 11th/12th, however, that should say 10th-12th. Thank you, Ms. Mahon.

Dr. McPadden: We'll make that adjustment tomorrow. Okay, does anyone want to make a motion to approve this?

Carla Eichler: I'll make a motion to approve.

Dr. McPadden: Who has questions? No questions. Motion to approve? Robyn, thank you. A second? Andrea, thank you. All those in favor, raise your hand please. We have Carla, Robyn, Andrea, Shannan, and George. It's unanimous. Thank you. This 21st Century Transition Skills, and it will move forward for next year, right, Tom?

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Tom Brant: Yes.

Dr. McPadden: Tom is also going to speak about Adaptive Science followed by Unified Science. He has worked with Angelo Amato, the department chair for science at Amity Regional High School.

Anna Mahon: I can help you out too, Tom.

Tom Brant: As Marie said, this was actually a thought that came up from Mr. Amato when we were looking at our science curriculum for our students in our self-contained SAILS program. The State of Connecticut still requires, and Amity requires, 3 ½ years of credits to graduate with your diploma; and we want to make sure these students are given every opportunity to graduate with their diplomas, but when looking at our science offerings we were struggling to find a science class that was most appropriate for these students. There is currently an integrated science class that is trying to meet the needs of multiple levels of students at once, and we saw it just wasn't meeting the needs of our SAILS students. This course, that Mr. Amato and I worked together on, would be an adaptive science class; and it would be required for the students in the SAILS program. They would take this course over the course of their time at Amity and work toward the credit requirement of the science distribution at the high school. The course would also then what we call typical peers, identified typical peers through a process that we would still work out, who would also take this class under the name of Unified Science. It would count toward an elective credit for theirs. When we were thinking about doing this we thought about a couple of different options, and we thought this would be a great way to have our typical students who are doing a great job in their Unified Sports program and in a way grow that into our academics. Many public schools across Connecticut offer classes like this, whether they are called Adaptive Science, Adaptive Theater, Adaptive Culinary. This is our first work at creating that model within the program.

Anna Mahon: We have Physical Education already.

Tom Brant: Yes, and we already have the model that we kind of stole from that Mr. Mahon is using for the Adaptive Physical Education class, so no need to reinvent the wheel. Give him due credit for that. We did steal some of his information because it was already there.

Dr. McPadden: They do a great job. I've seen the classes in action. It's really, truly wonderful to see.

Anna Mahon: Just to clarify that the students who are getting the science credit would be in this class for the full year, but the students who are getting the elective credit would only sign up for one semester; however, they would be able to take the class, I think, up to two times. I'm not sure if we specified that. That's usually what it is -- that we allow for a student to take the unified portion a couple different times. Oftentimes, there has to be some sort of criteria or a wait list because it is really dependent upon the number of students in the adaptive section to know how many kids we can let into the unified section. We can't just open it up like a regular elective of twenty-four kids if we only have ten kids in a particular section for the adaptive piece, so we match so that they're paired.

Robyn Berke: There are multiple times it doesn't have a limit of two in the description.

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Anna Mahon: Okay.

Robyn Berke: I think it's a very nice idea especially for students who may be interested in going into teaching Special Education who may want to have this experience multiple times.

Anna Mahon: We also figured that, as Mr. Brant said, we have unified theater and we have unified sports, so some of the kids who really like Physical Education like unified physical education class; but we're hoping that this would draw a whole other group of kids, kids who are really interested in being in a classroom or in a classroom environment or really like science or really want to help kids discover the science realm. I'm sure we will have some kids who will want to take every unified class we offer, so we have to keep an eye out and not block out sections because we have two kids who are all taking all unified classes; but Mr. Howard, you had a question.

George Howard: Only that the unified is specified as elective; and at the bottom of this page it says, "N/A." It doesn't say if it's required or elective.

Anna Mahon: For the adaptive? Okay. That's because there is a science requirement, but this doesn't have to be that class. All of our students take English 1, so all of our students take a particular English course.

George Howard: So there's actually three categories really: elective, required, and the other.

Anna Mahon: Distribution requirement, so this would fulfill that distribution requirement; but it's not in a scope and sequence you'd have to take in order to go to a next course.

George Howard: Thank you.

Dr. McPadden: Okay, any questions for Anna or Tom?

George Howard: That's a wonderful thing you guys came up with.

Anna Mahon: We've got more where that came from, not this year; but we're gonna be coming at you!

Tom Brant: We're coming! We'll be back at this time next year!

Dr. McPadden: If you saw the physical education, it's wonderful; it's truly inspiring.

Anna Mahon: We're looking to do this in visual and performing arts and CTE as well.

Dr. McPadden: Great, beautiful.

Carla Eichler: I may ask to steal that!

Dr. McPadden: Motion to approve?

Shannan Carlson: Andrea made a motion, and I think Carla seconded it.

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Dr. McPadden: Okay, raise your hand if you agree with moving it forward. Carla, Robyn, Andrea, Shannan, and George. That passes unanimously. Okay.

Anna Mahon: Thanks, folks.

Dr. McPadden: Yes, it's really great. Okay, Tom, do we have to vote on the adaptive?

Anna Mahon: I thought that was for both.

Dr. McPadden: Okay, that's good; that's easier. The next thing is, Anna, you were going to talk about the minor changes in the theater course. Rob Kennedy runs the Theater Department; he proposed this to the District Steering Committee, and people were very impressed with it as well. Go ahead, Anna.

Anna Mahon: In our visual and performing arts we do have with this class of 2023 more specific distribution requirement; so for instance, all students have to take a half credit in visual or performing arts, as well as a half credit in the technical classes. We are constantly trying to figure out how to fit them into kids' schedules but also make them appealing, and Mr. Kennedy had gone through various iterations of interest levels; but with these competing expectations, sometimes things get blocked out. With pre-requisites that you have to have in order to take different courses and those kinds of things it doesn't actually fit as well now as it did ten years ago. What he has proposed here is really a series of name changes and combining courses in order to create more of a scope and sequence. As you'll see, the first two are just more in line with what is typical in comprehensive high schools. Instead of Intro to Acting and Advanced Acting, it's just Theater 1, Theater 2, and then Theater 3 would be a new course which would really be that third year for kids who are really serious in pursuing theater beyond high school. It would be a more advanced theater course. That would be the scope and sequence that kids would take. He just combined everything here as one, just so that it would make sense for all of you. The first introduction class would be a half credit, so that would be a semester course and could be taken, depending on how it runs, fall or spring; and then the next two series would be full-year courses and would be open to, depending on how kids take them, 10th through 12th grades. Those are the first combinations. Then he wants to change the Intro to Technical Theater to a Technical Theater class because he doesn't actually have a further Technical Theater. Advanced Technical Theater was going to be combined with that Theater 3 course, so rather than making it sound like there was going to be one further on... The next two are general theater courses, but there have been prerequisites to take Intro to Acting; so rather than doing that, because really there's not a need for that, Children's Theater is as much of a story class as it is a Theater Performing Arts class. There's no real reason for a prerequisite. Acting and Directing for Film is actually a whole different set of skills than Theater. These are just to streamline things and give a little bit clearer organizational structure to the Theater mini department, which is a one-person show -- no pun intended!

Dr. McPadden: Thank you, Anna. Any questions about the changes and modifications to the Theater courses?

Robyn Berke: I just was curious, what were the prerequisites for those two last courses?

Anna Mahon: Intro to Acting.

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Robyn Berke: Oh, that was first, okay, that makes sense. Thank you.

George Howard: Also the prerequisite for Theater 2 is Theater 1; but if people are able to take these other classes without the prerequisite, would they then become maybe a prerequisite for Theater 2?

Anna Mahon: Probably not because they don't teach the same skills. Theater 1 is really that more specific to stage acting; and these other ones are more separate in tandem with, rather than in lieu of.

George Howard: I just wondered because some of the students have wonderful preparation, so I know they would make probably individual judgement calls.

Anna Mahon: For instance, we have kids who are really interested in films studying film, and they come at the film course through our more media focus; but then they're blocked out of taking that Acting and Directing for Film course. They have to have taken Intro to Acting, so this would open that up a little bit more.

George Howard: That's great.

Dr. McPadden: Okay, any other questions?

Carla Eichler: Are Theater 2 and Theater 3 separate courses, or are they a combined course?

Anna Mahon: I believe they're separate here, and I don't think he would combine them. Theater 3 would probably be more of that consortium smaller group where Theater 2 would be a regular size class. We opened that to everybody. It depends on your interest level. It would be more into that play piece including the technical piece. If you're interested in the technical theater piece and you took the Intro to Theater class, you could take Theater 3.

George Howard: As Carla pointed us to Theater 3, I'm looking at the prerequisite; and there it says any previous theater arts course. You could theoretically take the Children's Theater and go into Theater 3; but you couldn't go into Theater 2, so I'm just questioning that.

Anna Mahon: I think he was thinking either one of these -- he's thinking Theater 1, Theater 2, Theater 3; but maybe not because of the Theater Design -- there's the Tech Theater piece. You could take Technical Theater and then go into Advanced Play Production and then either Theater 1 ... If we have too many kids for Theater 3, we'll be in good shape. That's what we're looking for.

Dr. McPadden: Okay, does anyone want to make a motion to approve?

Carla Eichler: I'll make the motion.

Dr. McPadden: Carla and George. All those who approve, please raise your hand? We have George, Robyn, Shannan, Carla, and Andrea. It passes unanimously. Thank you. Now for our last one we have a special treat from one of our newer teachers, Shannon Martin, excellent English teacher, and Julie Chevan, excellent department chair. Shannon wrote this proposal for an elective for seniors, and it's called True

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Crime Narratives. Shannon, your proposal was extremely well written and very detailed, if you could just walk everyone through it.

Shannon Martin: Thank you. Thank you for entertaining this dream class of mine. So a quick history: this is my third year at Amity, and I did propose this in the previous district; but it was shot down due to budgetary reasons because I would have had to have taught it as a sixth course. There was no way that was going to happen; and so this course for me I think is super relevant right now. Every week on Netflix there's a new true crime documentary or series -- you ask the kids what they watch and it's Criminal Minds. This is a genre that the kids are really exposed to all the time. The thing that I find most interesting about it is who is writing these stories? Every other week there's a Ted Bundy documentary, but the way in which it is portrayed is different with different angles. Something else that's really fascinating is the evolution of the books that are coming out and the documentaries because the people who are gathering this information are presenting it to a specific audience. I think that our students need to be prepared because it is very easy to read one of those books or watch one of those shows and be like, "Oh yeah, they didn't do it. There's no way they did it." But somebody is telling us a story, and I think that the work we need to do is peel back and figure out what is real and what could possibly be embellishment or even fiction. My dream for this course is starting off with Truman Capote's In Cold Blood because that is arguably where this starts when it comes to true written true crime books. There are things before that, but it's mostly more news, exposes, and things of that nature ... but an actual book, it's Capote. Throughout the semester there would be a variety of book club opportunities where students would have a choice of different types of books that they could choose from, not just serial killers but a variety of different crimes, everything from Elizabeth Holmes and Bad Blood – I don't know if you guys read that book, but it is fantastic, and I highly recommend it – to Devil in the White City, a variety of different things, mob stories, and then ending the semester with a whole class text, Michelle McNamara's I'll be Gone in the Dark. I would argue that what Michelle McNamara does in that book is what Capote only could dream of doing. She actually led to the actual catch of the Golden State Killer because of the work that she did as an armchair detective. I'm super fascinated by where these people get their information from, how they build their narrative, and then how they then present it to us, the viewers and how we take all that information and dissect it.

Dr. McPadden: Questions for Shannon? By the way In Cold Blood was approved several years ago, so the only book that she'll be bringing forward will be the I'll be Gone in the Dark book.

Robyn Berke: My only comment when I was reading through this is that I want to take this class.

Dr. McPadden: Me too. I think it's great, and I bet you're going to have full classes. I hope you do. It's exciting, so would you like to approve to move this forward and we'll get it in the Program of Studies when they start putting that together? Robyn. Seconded the motion, Shannon. Any discussion? Would you raise your hand if you approve please? It looks like it's unanimous again. Thank you, everybody. That's great. Thank you, Shannon. You can go home now, you and Julie. Now, Shannon Carlson, I just want to say that it's about 6:12 now. Do you want me to just give the brief overview of summer curriculum that we did because I know some Board members have to travel?

Shannon Carlson: Yes, perfect.

Dr. McPadden: Back in March when everything came to a screeching halt we had planned for Alyson

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Zmuda, who is a UBD (Understanding by Design) curriculum framework expert. She was going to come in and do training for the District Steering Committee and the content leaders and department chairs, and then we all went out. We were able to have her reschedule to do virtual training two days back in July, two half days; and she did that all virtual with all the department chairs and the middle school content leaders. They worked in teams, they developed a FAQ guide, they worked on the how and the why and the what is -- the understanding by design -- because some people were more well versed in that and set up the template in our ATLAS curriculum house to match how people should be putting things in. Fast forward to August – she came in August for the full Professional Development Day. She did the keynote for all staff members, all teachers, and then she worked for another three-hour session. She did the keynote, and then she had them work in groups with her. They had provided her with a unit, and she met with 7-12 curriculum leaders and department chairs to go over what good indicators look like, what a good essential question is, what the difference is between an objective and standards and all of that; so it was absolutely wonderful. We're going to be having her back because we don't want people forgetting about this. It's just been hard with the scheduling. The last thing I want to give you a highlight on is that over this past summer 2020 Shannon, the teacher you just saw, with two other English teachers at the high school, went to a Penny Kittle literacy workshop, which is like a reader's/writer's workshop at the secondary level; and they absolutely loved it. They are piloting her work and her strategies. We're hoping that if it's contagious it will move along, and we're going to be starting with a readers' workshop in 7th/8th grades in May. I have two very well known consultants who also work for teachers' college coming in to do that. In the summer teachers also worked on the new courses you approved last year, the Financial Literacy and the Culinary Essentials. Math worked on common assessments. A variety of English curriculum including a co-teaching class. They wanted to get together and go over what they're going to do. The World Language vertical alignment 7-12 always have a half-day to go over their alignment. Middle school Math and Science all met. The World Language in the middle schools and the high school met. They have new textbooks. Advisory at both middle schools met. Moving forward to next summer 2021 you'll see when I prepare my budget Powerpoint for you on the 23rd of November that we have teachers who have already submitted for next summer curriculum writing. Some of those highlights include the readers' workshop, and I should tell you some of the reading consultants at the middle schools want to get together and start diving deeper into that and more work with aligning our curriculum with the UBD template moving from Stage one. There are three stages – stage one to now working in stage two on assessments and then eventually stage three. Also, some teachers have asked to work on common and/or performance-based assessments especially in this hybrid/remote time. It makes a little more sense to shape your assessments to a better way to assess students in this type of atmosphere and climate, as opposed to giving all multiple choice. There are other ways you can do this. Also, advisory has asked for time; and Counseling I think, Anna, at the high school, I think they're going to get time too for what they want to do, the developmental curriculum and counseling. That's what I have. I don't know if anybody has any questions you want to ask? We have continued professional learning on Thursday afternoons, which has been very well received; and we've done a lot of work with technology workshops related to the hybrid and/or remote or regular classroom. They've been really well attended. We also had Isabelle Stevens come back from the Connecticut Center for School Change. She has done social-emotional learning and the developmental framework for the social emotional. She worked with the teachers on that on November 3rd, and the highlight was on November 3rd we had Pacific Educational Group come. They're out of California; they're actually all over the United States. They presented simultaneously three of the same workshops for an introduction to Courageous Conversations and Implicit Bias. The feedback was eye-opening and it was really wonderful. We always have a few, but overall it was

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excellent; and we will definitely have them come back too. We've kept within our theme, what our PDEC has talked about for professional learning, and we will continue to do that. That's it.

Shannan Carlson: That's great. Thank you so much for the update. Any questions for Dr. McPadden? Thank you, Ms. Mahon, for being here with us.

Anna Mahon: My pleasure.

Shannan Carlson: Does anyone want to make a motion to adjourn? Robyn made a motion to adjourn, at 6:19. I don't think we need a second, do we? I don't know. Carla, go ahead, second. Alright, all those in favor? Everybody good? Alright, have a good night. Thank you, Dr. McPadden.

Anna Mahon: Thank you so much.