

**Minutes**  
**Board of Education/Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee**  
**Wednesday, August 11, 2021; 3:30 p.m.**  
**BoE Conference Room**

**Present:**

Jonathan Kapstein, Chairman  
Michael Devine  
Carol Ann Brown (arrived 3:40 p.m.)

**Also Present:**

Wayne McAllister, Acting Superintendent  
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations  
Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Taryn Fernandez, Assistant Principal, Nonnewaug High School

**Call to order:**

The meeting was called to order by Jonathan Kapstein at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Kapstein read an introduction with his ideas as to the role of this committee and ended by going around the table to identify some ideas from those present.

All three courses to be added to the curriculum have been given to the Board members for a first read: Black History/Puerto Rican Latino History, Animal Therapy, and Medical Emergencies. Ms. Nelson Kauffman reviewed concerns and answered questions. Ms. Fernandez announced that Mike Sturgis would be teaching the Black History/Puerto Rican History course, which has 15 students currently signed up. They are attending workshops for the schools teaching the new state mandated course. Discussion continued about the status of the course as a pilot.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m. with next meeting to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Ann Brown

Jonathan Kapstein  
Chair, Curriculum Committee  
CT Region 14 Board of Education

*(Opening remarks / notes for first meeting of the new Curriculum Committee 11 Aug 2021)*

Let me open with a welcome (and introductions around the table) –

We have not had a curriculum committee for some years – Just to remind us all of the background, the US Dept of Education created the Common Core standards initiative in 1980s, and by a decade ago 41 of 50 us states had adopted the program one way or another. So there are national standards and local concerns.

Perhaps now in a time of domestic argument over the science of pandemic control and in the face of international competition, it is time to revive our own local appraisal.

As CT region 14 board members we have three main jobs: hiring and overseeing the superintendent, the annual budget now in the \$26 mln dollar range, and the curriculum. Perhaps overwhelmed with issues around the Superintendency and in dealing with numbers that change year-to-year if not in fact day-to-day, we have let education and the curriculum slip a bit below the waterline. Have we lost the bubble? I don't think so.

But I do think that we have a job to do in figuring out how we can support our curriculum and advance education. This will be a workshop – the first of many – to see where we fit and what we can do to help. We are lucky to have a strong committed curriculum director now in her fourth year. We are blessed with general community commitment to educational goals.

- Vision of a Learner is a solid program but my view Covid-19 put it and many other issues on the back burner. Let's not kick it down the road. It's something with which we need to engage fully. How can we support it?
- For that matter do we have a curriculum policy? In my view the statement of the Region 14 website is vague and nebulous. Do we need to sharpen it up and in what directions?
- What are measureable metrics on which we should base our actions? We spend \$24,000 annually on each pupil. If I were a cynic, I'd say we could close the school system and send everybody to private schools for only a few thousand more per person annually
- Ultimately and in reality, are we preparing students for the modern world? We send a few high school graduates annually to highly ranked colleges but I have concerns that in order to broaden our output we need to sharpen our focus. Just as minor example: the only foreign languages we offer are French and Spanish. And some would argue Spanish is not a foreign language in the US any more. What about German or Italian? Mandarin or Arabic? Latin or Greek.....

But before we focus on specifics. We need to create an outline.... A program.... A direction. In that sense I rely on the training mantra, 'Slow is fast.' We are a new committee. We need to explore boundaries and limits and goals. We need – perhaps –what business calls a SWOT analysis. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

With that, let's go around the table and identify some ideas in general discussion. Thank you.