

Minutes of the Planning/Personnel Committee of the Board of Education  
Regional School District 14 [www.ctreg.org](http://www.ctreg.org)  
April 7, 2014

A meeting of the Planning/Personnel Committee of the Regional School District 14 Board of Education was held on Monday, April 7, 2014 in the Central Office Conference Room, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, Connecticut.

Present were Committee Chair Maryanne Van Aken, Charles Cosgriff, Superintendent Jody Goeler, WMS Principal Alice Jones, NHS Principal Andrew O'Brien, Dean of Students/Athletic Director Bill Nemec, Director of Instruction Sue Domanico, community member Vic Losure, and BoE clerk Deb Carlton.

The meeting came to order at 6:03 pm and concluded at 7:25 pm.  
The committee discussed the following:

**Professional Learning Calendar - draft:**

Ms. Domanico supplied and reviewed two handouts with the committee. The first compared "professional development" with "professional learning" and was meant to show that the changes are not semantics but rather meant to change practice to achieve better outcomes for students. The second outlined recommendations for changes to the PD calendar for 2014-15 and was developed by the Curriculum and Professional Development Committee Ms. Domanico leads. The net changes proposed would result in 1 less in service full day, 3 more modified days, and a weekly increase to Modified Mondays from 45 to 60 minutes. She offered rationale for these changes and noted that, this year, PD opportunities for teachers were not necessarily productive and often pre-empted by other needs. This schedule allows for almost monthly PD and ongoing, sustained progress.

Ms. Van Aken cautioned asking for more time when the time teachers were given this year was deemed underproductive. She anticipates some level of push back from parents if more time is requested next year.

In response to questions about required amounts of PD, Ms. Domanico said 18 hours is required, which we more than provide, and 900 hours of instruction for students (we average 960 or so).

Ms. Van Aken saw this proposal as one needing full board discussion and urged polling surrounding districts for their practice. When Ms. Domanico's proposal is offered to the board and community, she said, it will be important to talk both about the "gold standard" for PD and also about what those districts around us do.

Ms. Jones and Mr. Nemec both commented that teachers, unlike in the past, very much want to work in collaboration with each other and not in isolation. They are also much more willing to discuss their shortcomings with students or in practice, and to ask their colleagues for advice on how to improve their practice. This is a great benefit of organized professional development.

**Integrating Language Arts and Social Studies at WMS:**

Ms. Jones reported on the combining of LA and Social Studies in response to the need for more time for literacy in grades 7-8. This results in sustained blocks of time with students, twice daily, for a richer experience. The two subject areas lend themselves to this and students learn, in both areas, about citing text, supporting arguments, central ideas, meanings of words, and so on. Combining the two disciplines allows for naturally aligning skills in both areas, resources flow

naturally, and kids are engaged. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are also incorporated, and students learn more about collaboration, being a productive group member, problem solving, depth of thinking about “big ideas” and exploring a sense of self.

Ms. Van Aken confirmed that Ms. Jones is doing this at her school this year, which she is. Kids have been surveyed and report that the combining of subjects makes sense to them, they like it, and it gives meaning to what they’re doing. She wanted to make sure the committee was aware of the changes she is making.

Ms. Domanico provided a handout that illustrated that this is actually part of a K-12 concept, the C3, or College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards, that at the national, state and district level is the wave of the future. The middle school, she said, is once again leading the way in Region 14.

Ms. Van Aken will be interested in having Ms. Jones and appropriate faculty come to a full board meeting to report on this.

### Lacrosse Update:

Mr. O’Brien and Mr. Losure provided results of the interest survey and gave financial estimates related to adding lacrosse as a sport at NHS. There is student interest in adding the sport and survey results showed minimal impact on current teams. They outlined estimated costs for a first, second and third year, adding that much of the startup costs could be raised through fund raising and grants.

Ms. Van Aken had 3 concerns. If offered at NHS, students participating in a spring sport would need to choose between lacrosse and another sport. If it remains a town club sport, students can do both. She also expressed concern over the upcoming building project and disruption to our fields. The timing of adding a new sport is not good. Third, in this budget season, the cost of the sport is cost prohibitive.

Mr. Goeler suggested considering what other activities that are not well populated could be phased out to provide funds for lacrosse. Mr. O’Brien thought gymnastics might be an example of an expensive sport with very low participation. He was looking to provide for something that is just not here.

Mr. Nemecek again stressed that we will soon shoulder the entire expense of football, and also added that we are somewhat obligated to the Berkshire League and the sports in that league. Only 3 BL school currently field a lacrosse team.

Mr. Losure commented that Woodbury Park and Rec may combine with Pomperaug to build a feeder program. This was seen by the committee as a great idea and will provide more opportunity for athletes to build lacrosse skill before a team is formed at NHS.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryanne Van Aken

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