

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT

Curriculum Committee of the
Trumbull Board of Education

Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 29th, 2022, 8:30 a.m.
Trumbull High School Main Office Conference room
MINUTES

- I. Call to Order/Introduction. The meeting was called to order at 8:37am.

Members Present

M. Petitti, BOE Curriculum Committee Chair
L.Nuland, BOE Member
J.McNamee, BOE Member
S.Iwanicki, Ed.D, administrative designee

- II. Public Comment
No public comment was received.

- III. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting 10/20/2022
Mrs. Petitti motioned to approve the minutes of the October 20th Curriculum Meeting. Ms. McNamee and the motion was unanimously approved.

- IV. New Business
- a. New Text Proposal- Grade 12 -African American Literature Butler, Octavia E, *Parable of the Sower*. New York, Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993. Mr. Bracksieck presented and relayed that the course was written in 2008 and this text would fill an important gap in the curriculum of “Afrofuturism” which is essentially the idea of a world that is not disrupted by slavery and colonialism and that focuses on hope and community. Other examples would be the *Black Panther* movies and the kind of alternative future that could arise from this movement. The text is about a young girl that spans environmental, economic, and social upheaval. The main character has “hyper empathy” and can feel other people’s pain and pleasure. The book speaks to how one feels a community and how one decides to form a community—the common bond and the common need. There is an emphasis on change and that focuses on change is a positive strength. Mrs. Petitti stated that if it was in suggested, supplemental reading she would not be as opposed, but her research indicated that in Trumbull, Westport, Bridgeport, and Monroe libraries-- the book is in the adult section. Ms. McNamee highlighted that a large number of our required novels in our curriculum are in the adult section for example, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Old Man in the Sea*. A conversation about the role of religion in the book was also held. It was stated that the book is a science

fiction novel which is not meant to teach religion in any way. Ms. McNamee asked where the book fits in the class and it was shared that it comes towards the end. This novel is being proposed for a 12th grade African American Literature elective which is not required. She mentioned that religion is referenced in many literature classes, such as Thoreau and transcendentalism. She also highlighted that current young adult literature has a lot of magical realism and futurism. It was also highlighted that the novel has a hopeful ending. Mrs. Nuland shared that she enjoyed the book and that kids being left on the own in 2025 was interesting. She relayed surprise about the parallelism between the books science fiction interpretation of the future and today; she added that although the characters make up their own religion, this happens a lot in terms of how people interpret their religion. Ms. McNamee and Mrs. Nuland moved to move the book forward to the Board of Education for approval. Mrs. Petitti voted against moving the book forward. The motion passed two to one.

- b. Curriculum Guide Update- Grade 4 Science and Grade 5- Mr. Silhavy from Middlebrook, Alison Cotter from Booth Hill, and Liz Doherty from Science Program Leader K-5. Mrs. Doherty highlighted that these guides had been in draft form in 2020 and were just being integrated into the classrooms with Carolina Biological. She worked with the teams in which teacher leaders put together final products as represented in the curriculum guides. Mrs. Cotter brought examples of Science notebooks- showing growth of both regular and special education students. It was discussed that the students are required to show their learning in Science notebooks and that working in curriculum over the last two summers, there was always at least one teacher from every school. Most students receive at least four hours of Science instruction a week in grades four and five. Mr. Silhavy noted that students have to be thinkers and understand the concepts—so the program drives for students to think about what they are about to learn before they explore it—the metacognition and combination of materials from Carolina Biological materials along with the standards has really been effective for Trumbull students. It was also added students use claim and reasoning skills to express their understanding. Mrs. Doherty noted students explain, explore, and elaborate and then do a STEM activity to culminate the activities. The team’s vision was to have a support hands-on curriculum that is aligned with the standards. Mrs. Petitti asked if the schools have the materials needed and if they are aligned. Mrs. Doherty stated they do have all the materials and the Mr. Silhavy confirmed that this happens annually. Ms. McNamee added that she loves the use of art for students to show their understanding of the process across the different types and abilities of learners. Mrs. Petitti and Ms. McNamee was asked how much kits cost and how many are used. Most grade levels use at least three kits a year. The squid unit, for example, costs \$3,839 districtwide and allows students to experience dissection as well as exploration of parts of the animal’s body. Ms. McNamee moved to present both curriculums to the Board of Education for approval. Mrs. Petitti seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. New Course Proposal- Grades 9-12 American Sign Language- Level 1, Special Education Department Chair Jen Wolyniec, Teacher of the Deaf, Jill Angotta shared her own experiences in learning two languages and later teaching them. She studied at Gallaudet University and was able to truly study her love for the language. It would be her joy to offer this to students at Trumbull High School. Many of our special education

students struggle with learning world languages such as French and Spanish, but may be able to access American Sign Language (ASL). The kinesthetic way of learning combined with the visual aspects really help students to acquire another language. A presentation was also shared with an overview of the rationale, audience, standards, and materials. Ms. McNamee asked about the class size and if the percentage of other world language classes at the current time with respect to special education students. It was further asked about the impact if the enrollment was above 50% of identified students. Dr. Iwanicki shared that the class would need to be co-taught if the numbers indicate enrollment of the required percentage and the presenters emphasized that the course is aimed to be integrated with both regular education and special education students. Mrs. Wolyniec relayed that the course is capped at 18 students. Mrs. Nuland added that this course also gives access to students that might already speak two language at home to learn another “different” language. She wished they had the course when her son was at THS as he would have benefited from it. Mrs. Nuland moved to bring the American Sign Language (ASL) course forward to the Board of Education for approval. Ms. McNamee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. New Course Proposal- Grades 11-12 Early College Experience- *If You Love It, Teach It*- CTE Teacher Diane Richard and Department Chair Christina Rusate presented a new course that would encourage students to explore the field of teaching. This course is for 11th or 12th grade students and is an elective. The course would require an additional text book for further approval in the future, Foundations of Education. Mrs. Richard stated this is the first course of this type to give students the choice of this field of study. Ms. McNamee motioned to move the course forward to the full board with the core text of Foundations of Education. Mrs. Nuland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Petitti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 am. Ms. McNamee seconded. The motion was unanimously agreed to.