

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT

Curriculum Committee of the  
Trumbull Board of Education

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 8:30 a.m.  
Trumbull High School Main Office Conference room

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order/Introduction- Mrs. Petitti called the meeting to order at 8:33am.

Members Present

Mrs. Petitti, BOE Curriculum Committee Chair  
Ms. McNamee, BOE Member  
Mrs. Nuland, BOE Member  
S. Iwanicki, Ed.D., administrative designee

Members Absent

- II. Public Comment  
No public comment was received.
- III. Approval/Minutes – Regular Meeting October 1-10-2023- Mrs. Nuland motioned to approve the minutes from 11-29-2022. Mrs. Petitti seconded. Ms. McNamee abstained. The motion passed.
- IV. New Business
- a. A motion was made by Ms. McNamee to amend the agenda to review the additional New Course Proposal for Native American Studies. Mrs. Petitti seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. New Course Proposal- Grade 9-12- American Indian History Class- History teacher, Katie Boland shared that the proposed American Indian History course would add to Social Studies elective offerings. Katie Boland is pursuing a second masters in Native American Studies, so offering this course will dovetail with this work. The course will have a specific focus on recognized tribes in Connecticut, including the Golden Hill tribe. There is a chance that UConn will allow Trumbull Public Schools to offer it as an ECE course in the future. Mrs. Petitti inquired if this course will meet the new legislation around Native American Studies. This course will be a pilot for the state as a standalone, but it *will* address the state requirement of teaching the content which begins next year. The class will be using a reader as one of the primary resources as there are very few quality textbooks in the area of Connecticut Native American History suitable for a high school level class. Ms. McNamee moved to accept the course Grade 9-12- American Indian History Class for full Board approval and Mrs. Nuland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- c. **New Course Proposal- Grade 12 Honors Authentic Science Research**  
The Honors Authentic Science Research course stems from a course that Will Heher has taught in other districts in the past and it is designed for students to look into peer reviewed science resources and experimentation for those students seeking a career in Science. It is not limited to one Science genre. Students learn about peer reviewed process, then study a topic in genre of their choice, and then can even engage in competitions that may produce substantial scholarships. Students will also have meeting with mentors and discuss their work. Mrs. Nuland asked if this could be worked into their Capstone. While not required, Department Chair, Tom Edwards, shared that it could be easily worked into the Capstone. The course is designed for high level Science students. Ms. McNamee asked if the course could be expanded to more than one year. It was shared that THS is open to the option of expansion, but needs to monitor the initial appetite. Ms. McNamee inquired about if it could be offered at the AP level. Will Heher shared that it is a new course being proposed by the AP Board and may become AP in the future. It was discussed that the course really should be at the Honors level; the title was changed accordingly. Ms. McNamee also asked how the course will recruit students who may not be enrolled from black and hispanic populations. Tom Edwards shared that the department frequently works to promote students and will continue to do so. Fellow Science teacher Jordan Miller added that he frequently makes recommendations based on a number of factors outside of just traditional test scores, including enthusiasm for Science. Dr. Iwanicki added that the district is also working with our District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) to monitor enrollment by subgroups in advanced coursework and address concerns accordingly. Mrs. Nuland motioned to accept the new course *Grade 12 Honors Authentic Science Research* for full Board approval and Ms. McNamee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. **New Course Proposal- Grade 11 and 12 Astronomy**  
Science teacher, Jonathan Albers, who has an undergrad in Astronomy in addition to a concentration in Physics, was motivated by a course in his high school career in Astronomy to propose this class. The time in our current Science programming is limited for Astronomy. Jonathan Albers is looking forward to using town resources (Hillcrest Planetarium and Middlebrook Telescope) and other news interests to work with students around topics related to the field Astronomy. The course is aimed at grades 11 and 12 because of the Math content that is needed to complete the work. It would serve as a complementary course to supplement courses they already take so students can earn full Science credits. Mrs. Petitti mentioned that there could be a younger population that would be interested in Astronomy as well. Dr. Iwanicki mentioned the middle school curriculum revision is being planned and integrating more Astronomy in the future is a possibility. Ms. McNamee asked about how the Sacred Heart University (SHU) Discovery Science Center and Planetarium played a role in this work. Dr. Iwanicki shared that Board Chair, Mrs. Timpanelli, proposed that we look into ways to rejuvenate the use of our Planetarium. As a result, a curriculum group called “Steps to Innovation,” has been meeting to review middle school curriculum and look for ways to modernize our spaces at both Hillcrest Middle School and Middlebrook Elementary School. This modernization includes generous donations of astronomical equipment and supports from SHU Discovery Science Center as well as partnerships in professional development. Jonathan Albers has a history of working and running Science shows connected to the field. He looks forward to being involved in this work. Mrs. Nuland motioned to accept the new course *Grade 11 and 12 Astronomy* for full Board approval and Ms. McNamee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- e. New Course Proposal- Grade 11 and 12 Forensic Science  
Department Chair Tom Edwards led the introduction to the course by sharing that Science Teacher Jordan Miller ran an after school Forensic Club for THS that was very successful. He took our students, sometimes up to 25, to competitions that they won against schools that offered the content as a class. Jordan Miller shared that this new Forensic course, if approved, will be offered to grades 11 and 12. Incoming 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be taking the course concurrently with Forensics. Hands-on work and lab-based projects that incorporate STEM skills will help students to learn deeply. Quality lab skills, problem-solving skills, and collecting evidence that speaks for itself will be at the core of the course. These structures help to bring authenticity to the course. Mrs. Nuland moved to accept the new course *Grade 11 and 12 Forensic Science* for full Board approval and Ms. McNamee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. New Course Proposal- Grade 9-12 Percussion Ensemble  
Music teacher, Josh Murphy shared that there are currently too many students in the Band classes that are percussion resulting in over 50% of the courses being comprised of percussion. In Josh Murphy's discussions with other Band colleagues in the region, a strategy to balance this is to create a Percussion Ensemble course which THS currently has healthy numbers to support. A lot of creativity can be built into the class and having it will allow students to access more types of percussion rather than have, for example, 10 snare drum players. Mrs. Petitti expressed that courses should have healthy numbers to be run and was assured that there are enough students right now. Mrs. Nuland asked if students will be able to take Band as well as the Percussion Ensemble or if they will run into conflicts. Josh Murphy shared that the current numbers show that they can support the variety of music course offered. Ms. McNamee offered that she imagined students who were interested in *just* percussion would now have the ability to participate. Department Chair Vincent DiScala mentioned the new schedule is allowing for this work to happen. Mrs. Nuland motioned to accept the new course *Grade 9-12 Percussion Ensemble* for full Board approval and Mrs. Petitti seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. New Course Proposal- Grade 9-12 Introduction to Piano  
Music teacher Josh Murphy also presented this class. He clarified that this course is aimed at students in grades 9-12 and complements the guitar class. Currently guitar often engages students not involved in other courses in ensemble music classes that may want to be able to participate on a more individual level. Piano is one of the more commonly played instruments at home. Department Chair, Vincent DiScala, shared that the music department spaced out a classroom and they can arrange to outfit the room with decent keyboards for approximately \$3,000. It can support 18 students at a time. Josh Murphy noted that the course would be a wonderful opportunity for students. J. Nuland moved to accept the new course *Grade 9-12 Introduction to Piano* for full Board approval and L. Nuland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- h. New Course Proposal- Grade 10-12 Unified Physical Education  
Adapted Physical Education teacher Pamela Nitsch noted that over the years, they have seen a need for regular education and self-contained students to develop more social relationships and interaction. Vincent DiScala added that they have also seen a lot of student interest. This course, if approved, would be scheduled concurrently with general

physical education. It would not affect staff numbers and expand opportunities. Mrs. Petitti added that this might actually help motivate some students that do not enjoy physical education. Mrs. Nuland mentioned that it will allow more integration for students to play team sports during physical education time as well. Vincent DiScala added that there would be a screening processes to enroll students. J. Nuland moved to accept the new course *Grade 9-12 Introduction to Piano* for full Board approval and L. Nuland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. New Course Proposal- Grade 12 Story of Self – Exploring the Bridge Between Fiction and Non-Fiction. English Teacher Jim McCaffrey shared that he has been thinking about the course *Story of Self* and exploring the life of real people in an English course elective for some time. Joseph Campbell’s story arch and life of the hero is a fascination and many memories follow that same story arch. The focus of this course is the ways in which heroes and people find meaning and forge purpose. Interviews will be involved as part of the course. Three major themes would be incorporated into a personalized portfolio project-- overcoming an obstacle/going through a defining moment, being called to action, and breaking a norm/ finding originality. He furthered that for students entering college, the skills of studying the arch, examining fiction and non-fiction, analyzing authors, and then finding their own stories of self that they present—will better prepare students that are both collegebound or seeking other post-college paths. He envisions a heterogenous class in which the content and skills meet all needs. When asked to expand on the rigor of the course, Jim McCaffrey shared that he plans to be sure all students grow from previous levels using THS rubrics and engaging in activities such as close reading. There will be several short reading and analysis activities that correlate with similar senior electives. It is a literature course with a heavy writing component. Ms. McNamee asked about the reading component and Jim McCaffrey noted that the reading and analysis promotes the writing. She further asked if it could be expanded to other grades; it was shared it was placed in electives for Grade 12 as that has been traditionally where electives have been offered. Ms. McNamee also asked about the quality of the novels and if we could add more high-quality texts. *The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida was also discussed and will be further researched. There are organizations that do not approve of its translation. Ms. McNamee moved to accept the new course *Grade 12 Story of Self – Exploring the Bridge Between Fiction and Non-Fiction* for full Board approval and Mrs. Nuland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- j. Future Meeting Date Adjustment to August 24<sup>th</sup> Date Discussion- Due to time constraints this item was tabled for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21am.