

These minutes were approved by the Torrington Board of Education on January 27, 2021.



Torrington Public Schools

SUSAN M. LUBOMSKI
SUPERINTENDENT

SUSAN B. FERGUSON
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

School Improvement Committee Wednesday, December 2, 2020, 6:00 P. M. 355 Migeon Ave/Zoom

Minutes

1. Call to Order: 6:01 P.M.
2. Roll Call: Mr. Kissko, Ms. Richardson, Ms. DePretis, Ms. Gelormino (Teacher Rep.)
Also Present: Ms. Cappabianca, Ms. Hoehne (Remote), Mr. Corey (Remote), Mr. Eucalitto, Mr. Maniccia (Remote), Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Fergusson, Ms. Schulte, Ms. Klimaszewski, Ms. Mazzatto, Ms. Ledversis, Ms. Conroy, Mr. Deacon, Ms. Herold
3. Approval of Agenda: Ms. Richardson made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor.
4. Approval of Minutes: Ms. DePretis made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Ms. Richardson. All in favor.
5. Public Participation: None
6. Discussion and Next Steps:
 - a. Systemwide Focus Areas: Updates will be forthcoming.
(Attendance, Student Engagement, Targeting Student Needs)
 - b. Board Goals for 2020-2021 (2021-2022) School Year(s)
There were no new board goals brought forth since the last meeting. Mr. Kissko offered to work on them to bring forward at a future meeting.
 - c. Strategic Plan Update: Ms. Lubomski presented the Strategic Plan and mentioned that the administration would be sharing a District Improvement Plan at the January SIC meeting.
 - d. Distance Learning: Preliminary Discussion:
The challenges of distance learning were discussed. Some positives were also pointed out. Mrs. Fergusson shared the summary of a state-wide Thought Exchange that went out to students in grades 5-12 across CT. In summary, students participating in distance learning are calling for more face time with teachers and classmates, and more flexibility with assignment deadlines.

A survey was also sent to all TPS teachers. There were 204 participants. The common themes are:

These minutes were approved by the Torrington Board of Education on January 27, 2021.

1. Online “live” interaction is more likely to keep students engaged than videos or asynchronous assignments.
2. Collaborating with colleagues (grade level/department) is critical.
3. Having access to the necessary technology is making a positive difference.
4. Remote learning is much more successful now than it was in the spring.
5. Student engagement and attendance continue to be a concern for a percentage of the population.
6. It’s a challenge getting an entire class onto Google Classroom. Small groups tend to work better and keep students engaged longer.
7. Assessment and grading are difficult.

Mrs. Klimazewski shared that some students with IEPs are actually doing better on a distance learning platform. This tends to hold true for students who were struggling with the social/emotional aspect of school prior to the pandemic. Distance learning has removed the social element of school that for some students is especially challenging. Mr. Deacon stated that distance learning has pushed us to find unique and creative ways to engage our students. This situation has forced the acquisition of technology skills starting at very young age. At the elementary level, most students are keeping their cameras on and they are engaging.

- e. New Course Proposals: UConn ECE History: Western Traditions Before 1500 – Ms. Conroy presented her proposal. This is a semester long course, elective and .5 college credit. Move to full board with recommendation for approval. Ms. Ferguson presented an update on other course proposals that the board approved with a document for the board to review.
- f. Website, Altice, Social Media Updates: Ms. Ferguson and Ms. Herold gave an update.
- g. TAG Update: Ms. Klimaszewski gave an update on the status on the development of the district TAG program. She explained that the SDE requires districts to have a process for referral, identification, and evaluation of public school students as gifted and/or talented but does not require districts to provide services. Ms. Klimaszewski presented her recommendation beginning the identification process for giftedness. Due to COVID-19, it would be extremely challenging to attempt to identify talent. At this juncture, TPS would identify students who meet the criteria for gifted, and would make recommendations for what can be done in the classroom to extend their learning. Post-COVID, she plans to offer additional recommendations on how to develop a comprehensive program to address the needs of talented and gifted students in our district.
- h. Alliance News: Ms. Fergusson shared that we had a very positive and productive meeting with Iris White, the TPS Alliance Liaison. She was complimentary of all the good things that are happening in TPS and invited Alison Herold, Director of Technology, to present some of her work at the state level.

7. Comments for the Good of the Order:

Laura K. – “Hope you had a great Thanksgiving and stay healthy.”

Robin L. – “Thanks for all that you do, and we are all trying hard to make it work.”

Ellen H. – “Thanks for everything that everyone does.”

Maureen M. – “It sounds like we are on a good path for distance learning.”

Andrew D. – “I echo what everyone said. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the SIC meetings.”

Veronica G. – “Thank you everyone, this was a great meeting.”

Aly H. – “I couldn’t do any of this without the help of my team – I have a phenomenal team.”

Ed C. – “Thank you everyone for a good discussion on distance learning.”

Kim S. – “I echo what Maureen said and there was some good discussion tonight.”

Jessica R. – “Thank you for all of the updates, especially an update on the passed electives.”

Sue D. – “Thank you for all of the information.”

Gary E. – “Two moms reached out to me from Torrington Schools and things are going much better there, despite the circumstances.”

Sue L. – “Great discussion, great meeting and thank you to everyone everywhere.”

Fiona C. – “I echo what everyone else said.”

John K. – “Thank you everyone who participated tonight, it was a great meeting.”

8. Topics for Future Meetings:

a. Distance Learning

b. School Liaison

9. Adjournment: Ms. DePretis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Ms. Richardson. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Next Meeting: January 6th, Migeon Avenue