Minutes
Special Meeting
Curriculum Committee
Thursday, October 2, 2025; 2:15 p.m.
Central Office Conference Room

Board Committee Members Present	**Absent**
Alice Jones, Chair	N/a
Carol Ann Brown	
Jim Crocker	
Michael Carbonneau	
Chris Matta (ex-officio)	

Also Present
Brian Murphy, Superintendent
Taryn Fernandez, Director of Teaching and Learning
Toby Denman, Science
Shelly Stone, Science
Karen Sandor, World Language
Jane Caruso, World Language
Kelly Nichols, English
Nicole Cowles, Math
Leanne Foster, Agriscience
Eric Berkenberger, Agriscience

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:16 p.m.

II. Curriculum Documents for Approval

A. AP Biology

- AP Biology curriculum updated using new course and exam description as primary resource
- AP Biology is an introductory college-level biology course.
- Course fosters scientific reasoning, data analysis, and argumentation skills while developing critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, perseverance, and adaptability
- Curriculum organized into 8 units covering atoms and molecules through ecology and natural selection
- Each unit provides opportunities to address multiple vision of learner attributes

B. Biology

- Course redesigned as combined honors and college prep level for sophomores
- Introduces students to fundamental life science concepts through inquiry-based instruction, laboratory exploration, and real-world applications

- Students investigate the molecular building blocks of life, explore cellular and genetic processes, analyze evolutionary and ecological systems, and examine the structure and function of the human body
- Aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards
- Course prepares students to think critically and creatively about biological issues that impact individuals, communities, and the planet

C. Biotechnology

- Second revision of hands-on curriculum teaching lab skills, DNA analysis, microbiology, PCR, and bioethics
- New DNA unit features opioid addiction simulation where students research genetic vs. environmental factors
- Added "tragic case" unit simulating hospital infection scenario with MRSA testing and antibiotic resistance analysis
- Students perform real-world tests including ELISA assays and antibiotic sensitivity testing
- Course emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, ethical reasoning, and real-world applications, preparing students for post-secondary study and careers in science and technology
- Course requires biology prerequisite and primarily serves juniors with few sophomores

D. World Languages – 3rd Year

- Course builds on Year 2 foundation following 6 AP themes: family, communities, science/technology, personal identity, arts, daily life, and global challenges
- Major grammar focuses on moving students beyond present tense into past tense structures
- Course incorporates student interests at Nonnewaug, music, arts, and practical skills like resume writing
- Sample portfolios collect student work overtime to demonstrate progress

E. The Writer's Studio (ENGL 3082)

- New semester-long ECE course (English 3082 at UConn) designed by Participant 6 with UConn's first-year writing program
- The Writer's Studio Course is a tutor training and composition course that prepares students for the responsibilities of tutoring in the NHS Writing Center and encourages students to take on the role of academic leaders.
- Students will self-reflect on their own experiences as writers and learners, conduct field research and collect perspectives of their peers, read current scholarship on the development and maintenance of high school writing centers, and participate in a workshop model of writing revision.
- As individuals and as a class, students will identify their personal tutoring values and develop actionable plans to sustain a successful writing center.
- Assignments in this course will emphasize self-reflection, research, inquiry, and the recursive process of writing.
- Students who enroll in the UCONN Early College Experience credit will complete assignments that are specific to the UCONN Writing Center standards. Additional Writer's Studio enrollments will also count toward the Humanities elective requirements.

F. Algebra 1

- Updated curriculum aligns with new standards and connects to 8th grade preparation
- Students will learn through cooperative investigations of the major topics of Algebra
- Student literacy in the structure and application of Algebra 1 is the goal of the course

- Topics include: one- and two-variable statistics, linear equations in one and two variables, systems of linear equations and inequalities, functions, exponential relationships, and quadratic functions
- This course is designed to improve student discourse and critical thinking skills

G. Aquaculture 11/2 Year B

- Course covers 3 main Connecticut fish hatcheries, ornamental fish (koi), diseases, and aquaponics
- Students work with live koi on campus to identify Japanese terms, color patterns, and scale patterns
- Major project involves Connecticut's trout management plan divided into 4 pillars with student groups teaching each section
- Students create their own worksheets to teach classmates, providing insight into effective learning materials
- Aquaponics unit requires students to build functioning systems using home and school materials, maintaining plants for 1 month
- Course limited to grades 11-12 with aquaculture prerequisite from sophomore year
- Hands-on approach includes problem-solving, critical thinking, measurements, and pipe construction skills

H. Greenhouse 10 Plant Production and Processing

- Combines greenhouse production, plant culture, and floral design for grades 10-12
- Seasonal experiences include poinsettias in fall and bedding plants in spring
- Students create corsages, boutonnieres, and 2 arrangements (mound, long and low, or triangle)
- Horticulture portfolio system allows students to document work across multiple years with shared photo folders
- Students receive adopted plants requiring research on common names, genus species, and pest management
- Community service integrated including Petal it Forward
- Course serves as springboard to encourage students to continue in agricultural programs
- FFA and SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) always integrated into curriculum

III. New Courses for Approval

A. Video Game Design II/EGM201 Psychology of Gaming (Post University)

- Redesigned course now offers Post University dual enrollment credit for **$150** (compared to **$5,000** independent cost)
- Curriculum shifted from pure coding focus to comprehensive game design including psychology of gaming
- Students learn Unity industry gaming engine with free platform access and professional tutorials
- Course examines 4 types of gamers and strategies for balancing gaming ecosystems
- Psychology component covers game addiction, bullying, self-regulation, marketing, and player motivation
- AI integration is discussed as coding support tool rather than replacement for human creativity and design thinking
- Course maintains STEM designation for academic validity while emphasizing creative elements
- Teacher emphasized that modern game development uses AI for code generation, but humans still define game rules, mechanics, and integration

B. Video Game Desing III/EGM401 Gaming Project Management (Post University)

- New course focuses on large-scale project management with professional industry mentors
- Students work on internship-style projects with meetings, stakeholder management, and project tracking tools
- Potential school collaborations with art, music, and business departments for comprehensive game development
- Partnerships include Southern Connecticut State University, Affinity Esports (Sandy Hook/Milford), and Quinnipiac University
- Region 14 esports team currently #1 among Connecticut schools, competing at Post University's donated arena
- Students serve as game testers for professional mobile game launching next month
- Course offers additional Post University dual enrollment focusing on large-scale event planning and group dynamics
- Students completing all 3 video game design courses earn 9 total credits
- Fourth-level Post University course includes assigned professor oversight for credit requirements

IV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia
Paige Board
Clerk
Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk

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