

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

PLACE: Meeting held via Zoom **DATE:** 4 May 2021 **TIME:** 6:00 P.M.
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Richard Bshara, chair

- I. Opening
- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MR. RICH BSHARA	X		
MS. TRACEY DELIEBRO			X(6:11PM)
MS. BETH LEBERGE		X	
TOTAL	2	1	

Also in attendance: Superintendent Joe DiBacco, Assistant Superintendent Steve Bergin, Mr. Paul Giansanti, Mr. John LaRovera, Mr. Pete Colaccino, Mr. Rubin Little.

II. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

III. Review and possible action of the following items:

1. Ansonia High School

A. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Requirement

Discussion: Mr. Bshara asked Assistant Superintendent Bergin to chair the meeting. Assistant Superintendent Bergin thanked everyone for attending. He said the first three pieces are for the high school, he turned the meeting over to Principal Paul Giansanti. Mr. Giansanti greeted the committee, he said the high school is looking to implement a twenty-five hour requirement of community service. He said the program will give students an opportunity to either obtain .25 credit within the school or they can choose to go out into our community and fulfill the requirement. Mr. Giansanti said the program will also allow students to serve up to 200 community service hours and receive up to 2 full credits. He said this will be overseen by the Guidance Department and there will be restrictions for the completion by senior year of high school. Mr. Giansanti said he is looking to have this program approved, to begin with incoming freshmen.

B. Schedule Change

Discussion: Mr. Giansanti said he would like to add a ten minute homeroom period to each morning. He said when he first came to the high school, he asked staff for suggestions, and re-implementing morning homeroom was at the top of the list. Mr. Giansanti said teachers feel this short period at the beginning of the day will allow students to get settled, hear about daily communications from staff, disburse all materials as well as carry a social and emotional piece. He said the same homeroom teacher will have these students, which helps build a relationship over the course of four years. Mr. Giansanti also said the next change to the schedule would be the rotation. He said this rotation allows students taking part in internships to attend without any impact on their learning time. He told the committee the first half of the day rotates and the last half of the day rotates. He asked if there were any questions, there were none.

C. Graduation Requirements

Discussion: Mr. Giansanti said when looking at graduation requirements, there are twenty-five needed to graduate. He said for starters is looking to change the mandated .50 credit of Computer Applications. He told the committee he would like to make that be a general computer literacy mandate. He said this would include a range of courses for example, Introduction to Computer Science, Computer Applications, or an Advanced Computer Science. Mr. Giansanti said when this mandate started, students were not on tablets and computers at 4 or 5 years old. He said the option should be there for our more experienced computer students. He said this will give the advanced students more opportunities. He said basic applications class will remain available. The committee agreed, this would be a great opportunity for all students.

Mr. Giansanti said since becoming principal, he implemented a Personal Finance Class requirement. He said one issue is, there are certain students who take Special Education classes. He said some of these students need a more modified, or basic economic course. He told the committee, Consumer Economics will help these students and any others who need to work at a slower pace. Mr. Giansanti reminded the committee the Financial Literacy course will still be made available.

Mr. Giansanti told the committee that World Language has always been a two credit requirement at the high school. He said this is getting more challenging for students to meet, for a number of reasons. He said a few examples would be; wanting to explore other pathways, finding room to incorporate the many other options available, or choosing to go straight to a career and not a four year college. He said students will always have the option to continue with four plus years of a world language if they choose. Superintendent DiBacco said the reality is, there are students who would take other courses that will benefit their plan. He said forcing students to take a class they have no interest, or desire to will not be beneficial, if it is not in their best interest.

Mr. Bshara asked what college requirements are. Mr. Giansanti said it is a two year requirement.

Mr. Bshara said he does not want to down play what needs to be taken if a student plans on going to college. Mr. Giansanti agreed, saying the guidance department will always guide students in the direction of a two year language credit. He said the majority of students work towards two credits, and the Spanish National Honor Society and Mandarin National Honor Society are very popular. He told the committee, the high school did a great job engaging students in whatever pathway they are looking to follow. He said the PACE Program students in particular are having a difficult time trying to fulfill the world language credits. Mr. Giansanti said it is hard to enter the career pathway and complete workplace opportunities while incorporating the world language requirement. Mr. Bshara said he agrees with this proposal and understands it is not a one size fits all, and think it will be great to become more diversified for the students' needs.

Mr. Giansanti thanked everyone for their time and said he is available for any questions.

2. AMS New Curricula for 2021-2022 School Year

A. 6th Grade – Introduction to Personal Finance I

Discussion: Mr. John LaRovera, District Math and Science Coordinator, told the committee, his desire for the past two years has been to increase opportunities for students, particularly through STEM. He said this year several partnerships are forming. He said the Sikorsky internship is evolving, and for this partnership to continue growing, students need to be more prepared. He told the committee, students can begin to prepare middle school, as they enter high school. Mr. LaRovera said there are two additions to the middle school curriculum. He said one for sixth grade students, one for seventh, and one for eighth grade students. He said one class will be over the span of two years. He said this will be a Personal Finance course that will include money management. He told the committee the other course is an eighth grade Introduction to Code. Mr. LaRovera said coding is becoming very popular and ties in with the STEM career pathway in high school. He said all students will have the opportunity to take these classes. He thanked Mr. Little and turned the meeting over to him to further explain the project he worked so very hard on.

Mr. Rubin Little, Personal Finance Teacher, Ansonia Middle School, thanked the committee and said he has been implementing this plan with the team for approximately two years. He said educating young people in financial literacy is a very important tool today. Mr. Little said the Personal Finance courses will align with our high school, as well as vertically aligning with state standards. He said students who are not college bound, will need to be ready to enter the workforce right after graduation. He told the committee the coding course is a direct segue from the Personal Finance courses. Mr. Little gave his own personal experience of not being aware of the necessary tools to get ahead. He told the committee he is proud to support and be a part of the vision for Ansonia students. Mr. Bshara said having a financial background himself, he agrees and appreciates the efforts being put in to teach our students this important piece they have been missing.

Mr. Pete Colaccino, Principal, Ansonia Middle School, told the committee he is very pleased with implementing the new courses. He said the challenging piece was creating a fluid, class based schedule, which coordinated with the financial courses. He said with the addition of sixth grade coming in, the rotation will allow all students to have exposure to these newly implemented courses.

Mr. Bshara thanked everyone for their time and effort.

B. 7th Grade – Introduction to Personal Finance II

Mr. Bergin noted this was discussed in item above.

C. 8th Grade – Introduction to Code

Mr. Bergin noted this was discussed in item above.

3. New Elementary (K-5) Report Card 2021-2022 School Year

Discussion: Mr. Bergin asked the committee to refer to their packet. He said this standard aligned, four point scale report card has been long overdue. He told the group that more specific information geared to each student will be given to the parent. He said the student's work habits and social development is a very important addition that has been added. Mr. Bergin said much credit goes out to the committee for their hard work in this new layout. He said John LaRovera and Bridget Calabrese made this happen, with the help from everyone involved on the team.

Superintendent DiBacco asked Mr. LaRovera to brief the committee about a few great things that will be coming to the district.

Mr. LaRovera said the team is building a bridge to the high school, which will allow students to continue down the career path they choose. He said they have created maker spaces within the grammar schools allowing students to create following the hands-on approach. He said these pillars will allow students to expose themselves to different components, while building bridges to career pathways. Mr. LaRovera said the head designer of Robotics class at MIT College met with the team. He said it was a very informative meeting, and they learned what is needed to possibly create a space at the high school. He said it is his intention to do what no one else around is doing, taking our students to the next level of learning. He told the committee about a plan with the Sikorsky partnership, including teacher development. He said teachers are going to spend two weeks at the different Lockheed locations to see jobs. Mr. LaRovera said this knowledge will assist in creating the curriculum for these hands on courses the high school will offer. He said this will ensure our students are prepared.

Mr. Bshara said he is happy to be a part of the revolution that is being built in the district. He thanked everyone for their involvement.

Motion: To approve all items presented and to bring these approved items to the full Board for approval.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	2	X		
MS. TRACEY DELIEBRO	1	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				

TOTAL		2	0	
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IV. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 6:54 p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	2	X		
MS. TRACEY DELIEBRO	1	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
TOTAL		2	0	

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Venson

5/9/2021

Recording Secretary

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Date