

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Teaching & Learning Committee Minutes

DATE: April 7, 2021

LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT

SUBJECT: Teaching & Learning Committee

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Ellen Michaels, Committee Chair	Board of Education
N	Joanne M. Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Peter Berdon	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
N	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney	Board of Education
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	John Prins	Board of Education
Y	Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office

Others in attendance:

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL

01 Meeting was called to order at 9:07 PM by Ellen Michaels, Committee Chair.

APPROVE MINUTES

02 MOTION (Perrotti/Raynor) to approve minutes from the January 6, 2021 Teaching & Learning Committee meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

PRESENTATION

A. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)

Mr. Hernandez stated that Rachel Sexton will lead us through a presentation that started with a conversation at the Board level last summer when we had some students come forward and talk about their experience with our school district. Ms. Marinaro had already started shaping our curriculum long before things started occurring (including the death of George Floyd) that we were working on as a school district with intentionality. As a school District response to prepare students for the rest of their lives post education.

Among the items in her presentation, Ms. Sexton discussed Global Learning Competencies: Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow (active, well rounded citizens; self-directed learners; critical thinkers and effective communicators and collaborators), The face of BPS - race/ethnicity and students identified as “high-needs”, Diversity (a culture of one), Equity (reality, equality and equity), Inclusion and BPS Theory of Action.

B. ESSER II Planning

Mr Hernandez began by recapping what the ESSER II grant was. He stated that application is due April 19th and whatever we put in we anticipate it will be revised and the State understands that. There are four categories and we will be meeting with two of the biggest partners in the Community - the YMCA

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PRESENTATION (Continued)

and Park and Rec. The set aside for learning loss is 20%. We need to be mindful that there will be an ESSER III which is probably going to be bigger than ESSER II which is 1.5 million dollars. Mr. Hernandez stated that we need to think long term relative to a post pandemic environment, mindful of how to supplement our efforts (accelerated learning). The longer we have our students “in”, the better information we will have regarding next steps. It is a dynamic process and it is a multiple year plan. Ms. Sexton stated that the data differs by level. We will wait to see what impact having students five days a week has. We are looking at quantitative and qualitative data in regards to attendance (holding at 95%), disconnectedness (related concepts) and behavioral data. We will develop an explicit response plan to individuals. Mr. Hernandez continued that we want to make an explicit connection to the budget that is currently going through. The Interventionist that was talked about - those are the supports - one mechanism that we will be addressing not only students that are disconnecting but students that are starting to manifest some academic or behavioral issues as a result to being in a pandemic.

C. Full-Time In-Person Update

Superintendent Hernandez stated that this week BHS started back. We are fully phased in now with all levels. There was an adjustment to the calendar because of vaccination clinics and we do not plan to do that again. We did have difficulty staffing WIS on Monday - it was all hands on deck. We want to engage in meaningful instruction. Understanding that we just couldn't start assessing kids but we can start looking qualitatively how our students are presenting in school. So far we had three good weeks but there have been disruptions (quarantines and covering different classes). Mr. Hernandez concluded by reading part of letter that he received from Ms. Rivera's first grade class. He stated it was an assessment of how the students are feeling. Ms. Sexton stated that there are challenges of shifting schedules, seeing how VRO (K-4) students are doing, and support at WIS. VRO students are now participating in extracurricular and athletic activities. We now have outside tents for student lunches. The Kids and staff have done a remarkable job.

D. State Assessments

Rachel Sexton stated that there is a letter to parents that can be located on the website explaining student assessments. The State of Connecticut requires the administration of assessments every year as part of Race to the top and NCLB. All requirements were waived last year. This year the State applied for a waiver to decouple assessment from accountability measures - just take as a base line. The State has not received the waiver yet, but fully expect to get it. Ms. Sexton continued by stating that while being treated as a baseline, we are still required to administer assessments. On March 24th, Juniors took school date SAT's (we are awaiting results), in the PSAT's from Fall we saw growth improvements (Cumulative, English and Math). Fall 2021 SAT data (Seniors) did well - improved in benchmarks (ELA and Math) over the year prior. Preliminary data shows that we won't see significant loss as people have been predicting. On April 28th, Juniors at BHS will take NGSS (State standardized assessments Next Generation Science Standards). Between May 7th and May 26th, AP students at BHS will be taking College Board AP Exams (digitally or in-person). May 12th, grades 5-8 will take NGSS. May 18th through May 20th, grades 3-8 Standard Based Assessments (SBA) will take place for ELA and Math will take place for both in-person and VRO students. Ms. Marinaro stated that 23 students at BHS will be given the Seal of Bi-literacy distinction.

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ADJOURN

- 03** MOTION (Raynor/Cantu) to adjourn.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Michaels adjourned the meeting at 10:03 PM.

**The next Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting will be
Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM at Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.**

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich