

Tolland Board of Education

Curriculum Committee Special Meeting Minutes

March 9th 2022

Members Present: Jacob Marie (Chair), Christina Plourd, Jayden Regisford

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Willett (Superintendent of Schools)

Mr. Marie called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

1. Quarterly Review of Student Performance: Dr. Willett provided a review of newly added data on the Tolland Public Schools (TPS) Data Portal, noting that there will be SBAC data available in late spring. In English/Language Arts (ELA), Dr. Willett noted that Middle of the Year (MOY) scores were improving from Beginning of Year (BOY) scores. Additionally, MOY math fluency scores were generally better than BOY scores. Dr. Willett also reviewed science data. Although NGSS testing data is not yet available Dr. Willett stated that Science Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are available for the Committee to review. Dr. Willett also noted that the TPS Data Portal contains sections for Covid-19, standardized testing, and Social and Emotional Learning. Mr. Regisford asked when the TPS Data Portal will be up for everyone to view. Dr. Willett answered that it should be up for the public next week. Mr. Regisford also asked what the intent of creating this site is. Dr. Willett said that it can be useful for those Board members and citizens interested in how well schools are performing. Mr. Regisford asked when teachers will be able to see the data presented. Dr. Willett stated that teachers typically work with very specific datasets for their students whereas the data presented in the Portal is aggregated.
2. Review of Making a Difference Social Studies Curriculum: Mr. Marie noted that since the Committee has already seen the new curriculum once he'd like to proceed directly to questioning. Mr. Marie confirmed that the Making a Difference unit is for 2nd Grade and then asked if more conventional historical figures, such as Washington and Lincoln, are covered alongside some of the young kids highlighted in the curriculum. Dr. Willett replied that they are not covered in this unit, but are covered elsewhere in the curriculum. He emphasized that this is just one unit of many that a child will experience throughout their time in TPS and that Making a Difference strives to be developmentally appropriate for second graders. Second graders might not be able to grasp what someone like Washington has done but can understand something a child their own age has done. Mr. Marie asked if students were taught that it is ok for people to have differences of opinion when it comes to deciding what is best for a community. Dr. Willett said that that value is taught and reinforced as one that is important for our democracy. Ms. Plourd confirmed that the program was developed by Birch Grove teachers and stated that she thought that their direct impact was great. Mr. Marie asked about an assignment where students are asked to analyze a "nonviolence pledge." Dr. Willett said that he would look into this. Mr. Marie asked how conversations about local, regional, and global problems will be

guided as to be developmentally appropriate for a second grader. Dr. Willett stated that the unit would focus mostly on issues at the community level as they are easier to grasp for a young child, but may occasionally discuss a national or global current event if a child asks about it in class. In that situation, teachers will often try to explain the event in terms a child can grasp, for example a conflict between nations might be approached with an analogy about disagreement on the playground. Mr. Regisford confirmed that Making a Difference is a seven-week program. Dr. Willett also noted that he hopes to add more units and rehabilitate social studies in general.

3. New Curriculum Committee Meeting Dates and Time: Mr. Marie noted that he had received feedback from Committee members that the current regular meeting time is no longer convenient. Dr. Willett suggested a new meeting time of 5:30pm on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Ms. Plourd and Mr. Regisford stated that that time works for them. Mr. Marie was also fine with the proposed time, he asked Dr. Willett for confirmation that the Committee could legally change its meeting time and date mid-year. Dr. Willett believed that the Committee could but stated that he would double check to make sure.
4. Adjournment: Ms. Plourd motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Regisford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacob Marie