

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Student Achievement Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 4:00 PM remotely. Committee members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor
Committee members absent: None
Community members present: Ms. Commins
Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Mr. Falcone, Principal of CRHS, Mrs. Melillo, Dean of Academic and Student Services at CRHS and Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education

Mrs. Petrella called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

Approval of Minutes - February 18, 2021

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2021 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of February 18, 2021, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

New high school course proposals

Mr. Falcone explained that they are working to bring in more interdisciplinary courses and real-life opportunities for learners. The first course they would like to add is an EMT Training Course. They would like to embed it into the schedule so that the students can actually complete the entire 180 hours at Coginchaug. Mr. Bradanini is a trained instructor who currently does this training for the fire department. This course will be an overage for Mr. Bradanini and is built into the budget. After completion of the program, the students would be eligible to take the state certification exam and would leave high school as a certified EMT. Learners would have to be 16 when they complete the course and there would be a \$500 fee, which includes the exam, books, stethoscope, blood pressure cuff and CPR certification. Interest in this course is pretty high.

The next course is Street Law which will provide students with an understanding of how the law and legal system impacts everyone's lives, especially kids. It focuses on constitutional and criminal law as well as individual rights. This course will be taught by Mrs. Legace who will do case studies, individual research, group discussions, debate and mock trials.

Mrs. Melillo introduced the next course which is Global Health, an interdisciplinary course taught by a health and world language teacher and will be partnered with a nonprofit, called Squads Abroad that offers virtual volunteering. They help support health and economic development of communities internationally, including Honduras, Ghana, Greece and Nicaragua. The focus will be on healthcare, but also cultural competence. This will be piloted with AP Spanish students in Q4 this year to see what the experience is like before starting it next year as a semester-long course.

Emerging Business Leaders used to be offered as a senior field experience and will now be offered to all four grades in the fall. They will focus on project management and work with the DECA club to present at the competition in March.

Mr. Falcone then reviewed some of the interdisciplinary courses offered and explained that they are going to be offering different schedules for these courses and utilizing the library as the central hub. He added that the students in the Global Health course will be virtually connected with doctors working in clinics and take data from the clinics, looking at trends. After discussion with students, they wanted a personal finance course which is offered through the Senior Career Experience. They also wanted a different perspective of looking at things and American Voices was developed. This will be a graduation requirement in humanities, which will be teamed up with civics. The teachers have chosen the novel, *The Other Wes Moore*, which takes place in Baltimore about two people with the same name and their paths in life. One is a Rhodes Scholar and the other is sentenced to life in prison at the age of 18.

Mrs. Petrella asked if CPR is offered and Mr. Falcone stated that they have offered it in the past and Mrs. Torres is certified in teaching CPR as well. Mrs. Melillo added that it is usually offered a few times a year after school. Mr. Falcone also offered a copy of *The Other Wes Moore* to everyone on the committee.

Mrs. Booth asked what will be done if a child is unable to afford the \$500 fee for the EMT course. Mr. Falcone explained that money was built into the budget in school supplies to help support anyone. It will be a full-year class and can only be one session as it will be an overage for the teacher. They hope to enroll approximately 10 in the class. Mr. Roraback asked how this class will be presented to people who may not have the means to pay for the class. Mr. Falcone explained that they first submit the enrolled list to Central Office to compare to the free and reduced lunch list. He would then call the parent to let them know the costs have been taken care of. Students also reach out directly to him and Mrs. Melillo.

Mrs. DiMaggio added that these classes tie into the project-based learning that they are striving for and more authentic experiences.

Mr. Moore stated that the state is considering more mandatory courses and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that a course is being written by CERC around Black and Latino culture that will need to be implemented by 2023. The district will not be able to force students to enroll in that, but the district will be required to offer it. Mr. Falcone added that the difficult part about that class is that it will be a full-year class and

may be difficult with the children's schedules. They are trying to be proactive by offering American Voices. Mr. Falcone also noted that the graduation requirements have been changed to 25 credits. He felt that this is really tying the hands of the high schools.

Programs supported by ESSER II funds

Mrs. DiMaggio explained that the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds will be coming in at \$194,000. The district will have a couple of years to spend the money, but there are state-level priorities for the grant that fall under four domains. One is the academic support for learning loss, learning acceleration and recovery. The next is family and community connections. The third is school safety and social-emotional well-being of students and staff and the last is remote learning, staff development and the digital divide.

Mrs. DiMaggio and Mrs. Keane met with Dr. Schuch, Mrs. Neubig, the principals and team leaders for input. They came up with a list of things that would benefit students of all ages. Starting with the elementary students, funding will be provided for before- and after-school tutoring sessions in reading or math for those in grades K-5. They sent out a survey to teachers to see who would be interested in tutoring and received quite a few responses. They will also fund before- and after-school tutoring sessions in grades 6-8 as well. At the high school, they would like to provide a mini course for some students to get caught up to be able to move into algebra. They are contacting parents to see if there is interest in that course over the summer.

For summer school at the elementary level, they will offer both ESY (extended school year) for special education students and a summer school for regular education students as well as those receiving special services. This year, summer school will be expanded to the general population who may need a little push. ESY with counseling support will also be available for grades 6-8 as well as 9-12. Mrs. Keane added that the state has specific criteria for students in special education to qualify for extended school year. Less than half of the district's special education students actually qualify under that criteria. They have found that counseling is a key component for well-being and getting some students back to school who have anxiety.

They would also like to provide educational thematic camps for students in grades 3-5 and 6-8. These will be one-week camps in July and they have already had three teachers apply to run these camps. They will be half-day camps, running Monday through Thursday. They are also proposing to hold a Kindergarten Prep Academy for incoming kindergarten students which will be half days for two weeks and they have a couple of teachers who are interested in that. Personalized learning projects in grades 6-8 and 9-12 will hopefully be an opportunity for students to stretch their minds over the summer.

Professional development will be held for K-3 teachers in June on reading. Kristen Allen and the reading team are working to put together an institute to really teach teachers the science of reading and structured literacy. They do have quite a few teachers who are interested in attending the session and it will run for two weeks in June. Mrs. DiMaggio has offered it to other districts and East Hampton is very interested in attending and Haddam-Killingworth has expressed interest as well. Decodable books for grades K-2 will be purchased and they will have padlet enrichment menus for grades K-2 and 6-8.

Mrs. Keane added that they are also looking to provide transportation for all students during the summer. Nursing and custodial staff will also be increased.

Ms. Commins asked about the counseling for students with anxiety and if that was COVID-related. Mrs. Keane noted that some kids and families are nervous about coming back to school in person, but the counseling will be for any social-emotional concerns that might come up. Ms. Commins also asked about transportation for the tutoring sessions and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that students would need to have their own transportation for that. Mrs. Keane added that the buses are on other runs at that time.

Dr. Taylor asked how students will be identified for possible summer school programs and Mrs. DiMaggio explained that there is a vetting system that they go through every year. There is a Google doc with specific criteria that is used with interventionists and team leaders to select students for the summer program. Parents will be contacted once the list is completed. Mrs. Keane explained that all special ed students have their own IEPs and ESY is already written into their IEPs. Other students are recommended based on data. Mrs. DiMaggio added that this plan is trying to provide options for everybody, not just those with special needs. She noted that summer school and the tutoring options will be more targeted, but the personalized projects and camps will be open to everybody.

Mr. Roraback asked when they will know how many students will take advantage of these options. Mrs. DiMaggio explained that no one has been technically hired yet because they need to know the numbers first. For the camps, they will be sending out a flyer and if they don't get enough interest, they won't run them. She did say she would run the camps with as little as five students. Mrs. Keane added that they started by surveying staff to see who would be willing to work the additional hours before anything was offered to parents and students. They did get a lot of interest from the teachers. Mrs. DiMaggio mentioned that one camp will potentially be a coding camp and another an art camp.

Mrs. Booth felt that it was a lot to be covered by the \$194,000 and Mrs. DiMaggio stated that it would pretty much spend all of that. She also mentioned that if they don't get a lot of interest, programs can be held in the fall. Mrs. Keane mentioned that they are expecting additional funds after that as well.

Mrs. Petrella is quite pleased with the list of offerings and the list of teachers who are interested as well. Mrs. DiMaggio noted that they certainly want in-person learning, however there may be some options for some remote teaching as well.

Dr. Friedrich felt that what they presented was truly remarkable with the diversity of offerings and the breadth of the target.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanella, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Dr. Taylor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
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