The Meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held at the Blake Building, 25 Ogden Street, West Haven on April 2, 2007. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Toni Paine at 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Howard Horvath
PRESENT
Mark Palmieri
Robert Guthrie

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Krista Pickering, Chairman
ABSENT

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE: M. Toni Paine
Raymond Collins
George Monahan
Eric Murillo

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Gerald A. Calabritto

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Dr. Joanne Andrees, Superintendent of Schools
Neil Cavallaro, Assistant Superintendent

Neil Cavallaro stated we have been working on the accreditation process for the past couple of years in order to prepare for the NEASC Accreditation and we will be in full swing come September. Marilyn Lynch is here to give an overview of where we are now and then the Curriculum Committee will present the Curriculum to the Board tonight.

Marilyn gave a brief curriculum presentation. The first thing is that learning is planned and guided. We have to specify in advance what we want to achieve and how we are going to do that. When we write curriculum we are trying to teach children and change their behavior and add to their learning. It is critical to recognize that the objective is not on the instructor it is for the student.

There are two Curriculum Committees. One is the West Haven High School Curriculum Committee with Margaret Dolan as Chairperson and the other is NEASC Standards Curriculum Committee and Mark Consorte is the Chairperson. These two committees have been working together to get all the curriculum finished.
The purpose is simply our school’s formal plan to fulfill the mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school’s beliefs, expectations for student learning and its instructional practices.

In preparation for the NEASC Visiting Committee’s arrival in the Fall of 2007, the Committee has set the following goals:

- Get 100% of the courses offered at WHHS to have an updated written curriculum.
- Have all curricula follow the WHHS Curriculum Template.
- Get all curricula on-line and easily accessible to all.
- Have curriculum binders for all courses in the Library-Media center, Principal’s Office, each Departmental Office and the NEASC Visiting Committee Workroom.

Marilyn Lynch and Laura Garceau did a complete curriculum inventory this year and explained how the data base for all courses and curriculum is updated continuously.

Howard Horvath asked if curriculum mapping is done in the high school. Neil stated all curriculums are aligned following State standard formats for K-12.

**Freshman CAPT Social Studies**

Mark Consorte gave some specific examples of how we have aligned state standards. Part of our template is to include State Standards. At the middle school all curriculum we rewrote all curriculum for social studies within the last two years for grades 6, 7 and 8. The elementary school level is pretty general for us and is our next step. The middle school and high school is geared toward improving writing skills for the CAPT test. We have classes on Saturday to review for the CAPT Test. We are hoping the scores go up because this is the first group that did the freshman seminar last year. There is no quick fix it improving writing skills. We do align with State Standards as part of each template and we have some ideas of how we can incorporate Social Studies into the Language Arts. There are also ten honor courses at WHHS. There are many things that happen to students in this town i.e. their house may have burned down or their parents may be going through a divorce these things affect the students. The CAPT Scores or their homework will also be affected by this and that is where the responsive service component comes in.

**AP U.S. Government & Politics**

The other curriculum we will present tonight is AP Government & Politics and there is a National Standard for this. There is National Advanced Placement Exam on May 7th and we have been teaching the course for eight years and have done very well with it. We also have ten different honors courses at WHHS. So to answer your question we are aligned with both State and Federal Standards. A further discussion took place.
Tonight they are bringing in five curriculum programs and hoping by the end of May to get another five courses and a lot of those are honor courses.

It is a challenge to get the kids to work at college level but we know it is paying off.

Dr. Andrees stated that in looking on line and at the CAPT Scores writing is very consistent in West Haven Schools. What you are doing here is creating a process that is consistent and the same process for all students. This has help to ensure that scores are higher not just for the elite or honor students but for all students. She commended Mr. Consorte and hopes to take this process to other departments. She complimented him for this.

Neil stated the process is exactly the same at the elementary level but what we need to do is incorporate the content areas. For example when we do writing we need to be teaching social studies; we need to be teaching science. The process and program is there but we need to put more of the content area into it.

Mark went on to say that grammar is an integral part of this and that the basic sentence structure of some of our students is poor and we need to work on this. You can’t write well if your grammar skills are lacking.

Toni Paine was quite impressed while visiting the schools in Kindergarten and first and second grade they are instituting this and doing quite well. Is this something that has taken place only over the last few years and they haven’t seen a result from it yet? Neil stated we are probably about four years into our writing program and doesn’t think it has been to the high school yet but should be filtering into the middle schools. We do a great job of showcasing the student’s work in all of the elementary schools. Kids really do enjoy writing and enjoy putting their thoughts down on paper.

George Monahan stated you indicated that every curriculum will be reviewed and revised in a maximum of an eight year cycle. Suppose we are two years into a newly revised curriculum and something isn’t quite right how do you deal with changes shorter than in an eight year cycle and how do you decide we need to take action right now rather than wait.

Mark stated that the curriculum is constantly changing and being revised. About five years ago there was no cycle in place. Now within eight years the curriculum is definitely being revised. We have come along way.

Neil stated it is certainly easier to change a couple of objectives now seeing that everything is done electronically. Once we complete this cycle we will no longer be bringing you 10, 12 or 15 curriculums every spring.

**AP Physics**
Brandy Heflin took the approach that if you were a first year teacher what would you need to know to make this a workable course. She took the documentation she received at her professional development and joined the electronic discussion group that puts her in contact with AP Physics. It covers the five major sections that the College Board has covered. She took the documentation from the Taft School and turned it into units. It is not necessary for the student to cover all of this to get a 5 on the exam. She has had decent success. She has had 16 students take the exam and 10 have passed it. She has had two 5’s, three 4’s, five 3’s and four 2’s and two 1’s. So this has been working. The change before going to Taft School and then after is remarkable. The gentleman who taught the course has been teaching physics longer than Brandy has been alive. She would love to work on grants to get some computer based equipment.

Dr. Andrees asked her to speak with Neil Cavallaro about this tomorrow as this certainly makes a big difference for our students. Brandy agreed that it makes a big difference when the students can get hands on with this level of equipment.

**Special Ed. Reading**

Paula Brackenbury teaches special education reading and for the last two years she has been working on this curriculum asking herself what is it that I do and how is it different. She looked at the reading curriculum and what was going on with the reading was basically just following the English Curriculum and that doesn’t work with Special Ed. kids who really need the basics and a lot of the things you see in the elementary level. She has kids with a wide range of disabilities and this program seems to work for them. The hardest thing is finding material that is low enough that they don’t want to throw it out the door and say this is for babies I did it in kindergarten. Some kids can’t read or write a word. She took some of the parts of CAPT and uses that. Some of her students are 21 years old and she tries to teach them words they will need when they are out in the community and she reads things to them so they can relate to how life will be like when they leave her and go out in the community.

Dr. Andrees asked if she has incorporated technology into her curriculum.

Paula stated she has and has a computer in her room. She has also had one pointed out to her from the curriculum website called Star fall which is very basic. She needs a new computer and could do a lot more if she had more equipment. She has also done things with hearing impaired and has had amplifiers and things like that to use with them.

Dr. Andrees hoped that she would take advantage of the media center because she would like to see more students there.

Howard Horvath asked if this was for students in the mainstream classroom. No, it is actually for both. Most of her students are in inclusion classes but a few are not. This is for kids that really struggle with their reading with the basics. Her grades are based on their ability and effort. Decoding and comprehension are the two major parts of it and to try to get them to understand what they are reading. She teaches five classes of reading.
and assesses students before they come in. She is the only reading teacher at the high school.

**Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum**

Dr. Rose Paolino was appointed Department Head in 2003 and before this no program had existed. Out of seven counselors five were new. The program was built upon State and National standards. There are three Domains: Academic, Career and Personal/Social Issues. The domains are aligned with our Connecticut Goals CSCA and are aligned with the ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs and the NOICC Competencies and Connecticut’s Common Core of Learning. Everything we do is standard based.

There are four components to our program. There are many things that happen to students in this town i.e. their house may have burned down or their parents may be going through a divorce these things affect the students. The CAPT Scores or their homework will also be affected by this and that is where the responsive service component comes in. Our lesson plans and the individual student planning component are very critical. The board wanted us to see all students at least once a year. We developed a portfolio and now we meet with students at least twice a year. You may pick up a counselor’s schedule at anytime. We keep a daily and monthly logs. We meet every Monday morning first period. Accountability is a new component to the state program. We are proud of this program. We have approximately 5 to 10% less failure for the Freshman population. We owe this in part to the counselors really zeroing in on the freshman. She is very proud of the program they have come a long way. This is a document that didn’t exist a few years ago. A further discussion continued.

Bob Guthrie asked if NEASC has a correlation between the number of counselors and the number of students. Yes they do they have no more than 1 to 300.

George Monahan stated what a terrific job is being done; your department hosted a college fair night for juniors and their guardians. It is a wonderful service and you go above and beyond the necessary duties.

Dr. Andrees stated what a good job they have done. In the West Haven Community they start talking about college as early as first grade. How do you make services available and successful to all classrooms. Dr. Andrees has thrown this out as a challenge to all the administrators in our district. Neil has stated that Rose has advocated for counselors in the elementary schools for years. Dr. Andrees stated with the same staff of course.

The Board gave thanks.

Neil Cavallaro stated that we need to entertain a motion from the committee to get the five curriculums on the Board’s agenda tonight.
Bob Guthrie made a motion to have the following five curriculums be brought before the Board during the curriculum reports to add them to the agenda tonight:

SPECIAL ED. READING
AP PHYSICS
FRESHMAN CAPT SOCIAL STUDIES
COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE CURRICULUM
AP U.S. GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Howie Horvath seconded the motion
No discussion
All were in favor
Motion Passes

Howie Horvath would like to entertain a motion to end this sub-committee curriculum meeting.

Bob Guthrie made a motion to adjourn
Howie Horvath seconded the motion
All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marylou Amendola
Board Clerk