

CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting Title: 1) Fine Arts New Course Proposal
2) Learning Adventure Days
3) High School-UCONN ECE Education Coursework
4) College and Career Pathways
5) MSP Math and ELA Curricula (Discussion)

Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Time: 5:30 PM

Place: Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Chair Rebecca Martinez; Deborah Hardy and Becky Tyrrell

Also Present: Rachel Buchanan; Lori Consalvo; Crystal St. Lawrence; Foster White; Superintendent Steven LePage, Assistant Superintendent David Levenduski; Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Tawana Graham-Douglas; Plainville High School Principal Carl Johnson; and Fine Arts Instructional Leader Todd Helming

Members Not in Attendance: None

Early Departures: None

The Curriculum Subcommittee meeting was called to order by Chair Rebecca Martinez at 5:34 PM.

FINE ARTS NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Mr. Helming stated that the Music Department is proposing the addition of Music & Media Technology to the Plainville High School Program of Studies. He stated that there are no courses taught at Plainville High School that teach these skills or provide these kinds of opportunities. He stated that while researching other High Schools around the state, every school that was looked at in-depth, provides some form of music technology at the High School level.

- 1) In some schools, this course has become a primary job of the music teachers with as many as 6-8 sections running per year.
- 2) In some schools, this is part of a diverse set of music offerings (similar to how it will look in Plainville).

- 3) In other schools, this course is part of interdisciplinary departments that integrate classes between Unified Arts and Fine Arts.
- 4) In professional conversations with other music teachers, the few High School programs without music technology are pursuing the start of this coursework in the near future.

Level 1 of Music & Media Technology will consist of Digital music applications, podcasting and storytelling with sound.

Level 2 will consist of Music/Business concepts such as Technology in Theater.

Level 3 will consist of production and daily applications.

Level 4 will consist of capturing i.e., Board meetings, archiving and broadcasting.

Mr. Helming went on to say that students and Alumni have and are pursuing careers in fields that are directly related to this course content. PHS Alumni studying related professional fields (music business, video production, professional musician, and music education) would have benefitted from these courses as well.

Additionally, 80% of PHS students opt to not take a performance music class (band and chorus)--this course would appeal to those 80% of students as follows:

- 1) The skillset of this course differs from current general music classes (songwriting and guitar) as it is based on composition and arranging through digital means as well as the production aspects of music.
- 2) The skillset this class will offer have broader application and focus on developing cross cutting skill sets that are usable in everyday tasks—from creating short videos and presentations, to writing your own ringtone for an electronic device.

Colleges offer degrees and viable well paying careers in these fields of study. There are career pathways that allow for work directly following college interning within the music business and/or working independently with music technology.

At Plainville High School, one of the potential levels for this course would be to provide an opportunity for students to focus on the media production side of this course—allowing students to assist with capturing and sharing school events from concerts to meetings. Another potential level would provide students with the opportunity to create announcements that would support the entire PHS community—similar to the MSPN announcements at the Middle School.

Mr. Helming also listed the sources used to guide the development of the proposed course, the prerequisites for Music & Media Technology courses 1, 2, 3 and 4 and provided a succinct description of the proposed courses, along with objectives and outcomes. He also explained how the implementation plan will work.

The Timeline is as follows:

- Early April: Utilize counseling and Unified Arts Department to identify twenty (20) students who would be strong candidates for the program.
- Late April: Parent & Student interviews for the program will begin.
- Early May–Final decisions made by students to take part in the program, with a signed agreement from students and parents.
- May 9th Board of Education Meeting: set the Tunxis course before the Board for approval.

The results of this program evaluation will be shared with the Superintendent and then with the Board of Education during their annual “PHS Strategic Update” report. A three-year cost projection was given. Mr. Helming stated that the department is looking at creative options to move staff around. A .4 teacher can be transferred to one of these programs. The overall costs will be minimal.

Learning Adventure Days (LAD)

Mrs. Martinez introduced Mr. Johnson, High School Principal, to give a brief update on Learning Adventure Days at PHS.

Mr. Johnson stated that the pilot of Learning Adventures Day was a great success. He reported that a video summation of all of the activities has been created and will be shared with the members of the Curriculum Subcommittee and Board of Education.

He then discussed the benefits and value of Learning Adventures to students:

- 1) To ensure that students are exposed to a variety of learning experiences to prepare them for a well-rounded life post high school.
- 2) LAD's are directly aligned with the district's work on student voice and choice in their high school experience.
- 3) LAD's will also be connected directly to the Portrait of the Graduate, and these skills will be explicitly addressed during sessions.
- 4) LAD's will also assist with the Mastery-Based Graduation requirement in the 2023 Graduation Standards.
- 5) There will be a major focus on reflection and how these activities are building strength in Portrait of the Graduate skills.
- 6) This will directly align with the district's SEL work as a school.

A Portrait of the Graduate (POG) Connection Chart, created by Assistant Principal Jennifer DeLorenzo, shows the connections made to POG skills.

A survey was sent to students asking, “How would you rate your experience in the Learning Adventure session?” (247 students responded) 74.9% of students surveyed would rate their experience during Learning Adventure days as a 4 or 5 out of 5.

One = 7 (2.8%), Two = 17 (6.9%), Three = 38 (15.4%), Four = 83 (33.6%), Five = 102 (41.3%)

Students were asked what they would like to see in their next Learning Adventure Day. 83.4% of students surveyed reported that they would join their selected session again if offered during a future Learning Adventure Day.

Teachers were asked if they would be willing to lead a session in January. (29 teachers responded) 69% said Yes, 17.2% said Maybe, 13.8% said No. 86.2% of faculty surveyed reported that they may be willing to lead an activity during the next Learning Adventure Day. Mr. Johnson also reported on the list of future sessions teachers would like to participate in.

Next Steps (pending approval):

- 1) Work with our Community Partnerships, through Lynn Davis and Sue Bradley, to expand our session offerings to include Job Shadows, College Visits, and Career Exploration.
- 2) Connect with Alumni who may be interested in leading a session for our students to engage in.
- 3) Expand our learning adventure opportunities to full-day sessions to allow for students to take part in multiple activities or longer sessions off site.
- 4) Hoping to have 3-4 days per year dedicated to these adventures.
- 5) This would allow for students to have 12-16 of these experiences during their high school experience, directly related to the PCS Vision of the Graduate.

He then gave special recognition to the Class of 1980 and 1982 who donated approximately \$3000 toward this Learning Adventure Day experience. He gave special thanks to the LAD Committee and PHS staff which includes: Jonathan Coe, Jennifer DeLorenzo, Chris Farrell, Deb Pikiell, John Czerwinski and Lena Pietri.

Potential dates for future LAD opportunities:

February 17th-Day before Winter Break

April 8th-End of Quarter 3 and day before April vacation

Mr. Johnson hopes that the Board will vote to approve the expansion of Learning Adventure Days.

UConn Education ECE Courses

Mr. Johnson stated that these three Introductory courses are for students hoping to hold a career in general education.

EDCI 1100: If You Live It, Teach It: This is a three credit course offered in the Fall, Spring or Full Year. It is an introductory course offered to any student interested in pursuing a career in education at any level. The course will include studies of K-12 teaching, learning, and schooling in the United States; historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education as well as a self-study to reimagine education futures.

EDCI 2001: Contemporary Issues in Sports (Sports Management): This is a three credit course offered in the Fall, Spring or Full Year. It is an introductory course offered to any student which includes socio-cultural, economic, political, and other related issues in sport. Sport as a social institution, the impact on sport in American culture, and the impact of American culture on sport. Sport at the youth, intercollegiate, professional, and international levels: how sport at these levels is experienced differently by individuals, communities, organizations, and society. Issues in sport relative to gender, race (ethnicity), differing physical and intellectual ability, sexual identity, and gender identity.

EPSY 1100: Introduction to Special Education (Those interested in teaching Special Education): This is a three credit course (\$150) offered in the Fall, Spring or Full Year. It is an introductory course offered to any student which includes Special Education services in American education, including various exceptionalities and roles of professionals.

Mr. Johnson stated that he is excited about the three courses and hopes to add them to the Program of Studies, with the Board's approval. The timeline for the first class could begin next year and will build in the other two the following year if there is student interest. The cost of ECE classes is approximately \$150 for a three credit course. Grant funding has been used to eliminate barriers for those who cannot afford the courses.

Mr. Johnson stated that Dr. Irizarry, Dean of Education at UCONN, envisions that in a few years, students applying to the University of Connecticut School of Education will have UCONN courses already listed on their applications. Mr. Johnson stated that he is excited that these opportunities are available to any student as an early college experience.

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Mr. Levenduski stated that his report will display the continuum of learning the district envisions for each grade level with regard to college and career readiness. The Pathways Committee will work to define explicit student opportunities and experiences at each level.

Setting the stage for pathways involves:

- Marketing what we already do, i.e., posters, videos, website
- Embedding this work into the district's current systems, i.e., POS in High School and transition planning for students and families.
- Building upon current practices in a systemic/coherent way, across all grade levels, and tracking student experiences along that journey.

Initial work for promoting the pathways is to create and post information for each of the college and career pathways within the high school first, and then adding the middle school and elementary schools.

Vision for staff, students and families:

- Defined continuum of learning for both college and career from elementary to high school.
- Based on that continuum of learning, providing targeted opportunities aligned with areas of interest.

We are also incorporating the pathways within the high school program of studies, to ensure parents and students can use the pathway information and student interests to assist with course selection. We also want the pathways to work, to help parents and students understand the continuum of learning we want to create to truly connect learning experiences from elementary to middle to high school.

The overarching vision of our college and career pathways work is to articulate an explicit continuum of learning across grades and schools. Long-term goals include: tracking and collecting student interests and applying into course selection/pathway choice and experiences. And, curricula connections between coursework and careers (transferable skills and related jobs).

As students report areas of interest and motivation within their schooling on an ongoing basis, we will be able to align academic and work-related experiences to that area of interest and to gradually change the philosophy of “typical” schooling, where time is the constant and courses/experiences seem unrelated.

The district wants to push students to extend their learning in their areas of interest, and have the opportunity to take rigorous coursework to better prepare them for success on standardized assessments as well as develop the necessary skills to be successful in college and careers.

Activities/Opportunities by grade level:

Elementary: Exposure to different careers through curriculum activities, technology, field trips and presentations. Connecting MakerSpace to career skills, learning about the various businesses within our Plainville Community, virtual tour of the middle school Unified Arts classrooms and learning early about the ability to take high school courses for credit during middle school, being a digital personality profile with interests, hobbies, learning styles, etc.

Middle School: More in-depth exploration of careers and jobs, the skills necessary and how your interests and strengths align with different careers and jobs. More exploration of college and career pathways. Including site visits to local companies to see the connections between academic content and work, virtual tours of the high school CTE classrooms and learning about the various dual enrollment opportunities offered to earn college credits, learn more about post-secondary education and opportunities, including the various college and career pathways, and beginning their resume building process with digital portfolio of experiences they are having connected to college and careers.

High School: Experience real world experiences related to careers/jobs and college and actual job shadows/field work experiences/internships to allow students to experience life of an

employee in their field of interest. In addition, roundtable experiences to hear what employers indifferent fields are looking for in an employee as well as career fair experiences, visit a college campus as a Freshman, complete the FAFSA and attend college fairs, build their digital resume/portfolio throughout high school with the various experiences they are participating in and successfully completing, earn certifications/credentials for proficiency/mastery of content/skills and celebrations for field work experiences, college credit acquisition, FAFSA competition, college acceptance and credentials earned.

A marketing term used: ***Everyone has a pathway, what's yours?*** This term is used in the district's marketing materials regarding pathways, to promote the development of specific areas of interest for students over their Plainville Community Schools career. Samples of marketing materials, i.e., posters, videos of students and alumni will be used to inform our students, families and community about the district's pathways work.

Digital Testing Resource for CTE coursework and resume building: This resource was purchased recently and will allow the district's CTE teachers to assess their students on the essential skills and knowledge necessary for success in the related field and career. This assessment information will not only guide the teachers in what areas to focus on instructionally, but will also allow the students to gauge their progress and receive a certificate of proficiency on the essential skills when mastered.

A key to successful college and career pathways will be a systemic approach to tracking and collecting student interests. It is also important to make connections between coursework and careers/majors, and be specific about what college, career and life skills a course will offer for the students. It's connecting that connection and intersection between coursework, student interest, and life skills that will hopefully serve to better engage the students in their learning, or at the very least, provide more meaning for why the course is important for the student.

The district has a perfect time right now, with ESSER funding and the pandemic, to truly REIMAGINE schooling for students. There are many positive aspects of this work happening across the district, it's just a matter of enhancing what the district already has, and building in additional student experiences in a coherent and well defined manner.

MSP Math and ELA Curricula

Tawana Graham-Douglas, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment stated that *Illustrative Math* was chosen by the district as K-5 resource in May of 2020, was piloted in 2021 and will begin implementation during the 2022 school year. *Illustrative Math's* approach to problem-based learning requires a substantial shift in the daily habits and practices of teachers, which means the journey to implementation integrity in the classroom takes time. Teachers are given over sixteen hours of training in *Illustrative Math*. Professional development also helps teachers learn.

In Tier I support, the district has three math resource teachers, every K-5 teacher has had multiple classroom support sessions, 39 lessons were fully modeled, 43 co-teaching sessions

took place, 83 Tier I support systems included supporting small group instructions to working with partnerships. The next step will be to shift intention to model/co-teaching by implementing targeted cycles as determined by STAR data, by need.

Tier II—the Intervention Identification Process: Interventions are determined and re-evaluated to ensure relevance and need. Students are exited based on proficiency and the identified standard. The process includes: Screening Report, Instructional Planning Report, Triangulation of Data and Skill-based Intervention Groups.

The STAR Screening Report graphs students' placement above and below benchmarks based on STAR scores.

The Instructional Planning-Student Report provides a list of recommended skills for individualized instruction based on the most recent student activity.

STAR data is compared with *Illustrative Math* standards-based assessment documents and classroom observations.

Skill-based Intervention Groups: Students are grouped into intervention groups based on their identified needs. Specific standards and skills are targeted and progress monitoring is included.

The math department is in the exploration/pilot phase of identifying the district's new curriculum resource. The ELA department is in its first full year of implementation of Teachers College Reading Units of Study.

At the elementary level Pre-K-5, *Illustrative Math* has been implemented as the K-5 resource. Currently the elementary schools are utilizing student workbooks as their primary resource. The MSP will be implementing the *Illustrative Math* curriculum as powered by DESMOS. DESMOS is not a certified partner of *Illustrative Math* by design. The DESMOS curriculum is aligned very well with the content and instructional strategies of *Illustrative Math*. Not being a certified partner allows for more creativity in how they approach the skills. DESMOS uses interactive digital simulations, manipulatives and scenarios to teach math concepts. Print versions of the materials are available through their website.

ELA Updates

Mrs. Graham-Douglas stated that each grade has finished teaching one of their three units of study. Having seen some of this curriculum in person, it is very well written and provides solid structure for students while reinforcing ELA skills that can be historically challenging. Current PLC work is focused around building and revising meaningful assessments for each unit, complete with rubrics that correspond to the standards-based grading system. Assessments are also being designed to ensure they align with the major work of the unit so that it can eventually be moved to Performance Matters. In the 2nd year, utilizing i-Ready diagnostic tools for informed instructional decisions for SRBI and classroom instruction. The ELA department has indicated the data derived from this assessment has been very valuable.

The MSP Department Strategic Priorities:

- 1) Consistency across the math classrooms in grades 6-8. This includes curriculum, routine, and consistently high expectations for instruction and student learning.
- 2) Well thought-out vertical alignment that ensures our students are able to move from grade to grade without any gaps in knowledge. Ideally, this would extend to grade 5 as well as to Algebra 1, whether that be at PHS or MSP.
- 3) Implementation of a consistent data collection system. This data should be based on authentic assessments that are well aligned with the curriculum. Level of rigor should be consistent with the expectations that district teachers have for their students as well as grade level expectations as outlined by CT Core Standards.

Where is the Math Department:

–The Math department has completed the review of the EnVision curriculum.

–Staff members have received hands-on training with our next potential resource, *Illustrative Math* powered by DESMOS.

–All math teachers will be piloting DESMOS following the 2nd i-Ready diagnostic administration.

Both Mr. Levenduski and Mrs. Graham-Douglas stated that a more in-depth overview of this program will be done at a later date.

Mrs. Martinez thanked everyone for their presentations. The Curriculum Subcommittee will now bring the three proposals (Fine Arts new course proposal, Learning Adventure Days extension and the UCONN ECE Education course work) to the next Board of Education meeting on January 10th for approval.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BECKY TYRRELL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE. DEBORAH HARDY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Joan Calistro–Recorder of Minutes