

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION Special Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting Title: ► **MSP—Presentation on new math curriculum and resources**
 ► **MSP—Discussion regarding shift in Algebra for high school credit course**
 ► **Potential expansion of middle school courses for high school credit**
 ► **Expansion of high school dual enrollment offerings for College and Career Pathways**
 ► **Addition of honors level courses in the CTE department to entice more students to enroll**

Date: Monday, April 4, 2022

Time: 5:30 PM

Place: Plainville High School Learning Commons

Attendees: Chair Rebecca Martinez, Rachel Buchanan, Deborah Hardy, Becky Tyrrell, and Lori Consalvo, Ex-officio

Also Present: Superintendent Steven LePage, Assistant Superintendent David Levenduski, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Tawana Graham-Douglas, MSP Assistant Principal Ryan Cornelius and MSP Assistant Principal Melissa Orfitelli,

Board Members: Cassandra Clark, Crystal St. Lawrence and Foster White

Members Absent: None

Early Departures: None

Chair Rebecca Martinez called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

► **MSP—Presentation on new math curriculum and resources**

Ryan Cornelius began the meeting with a PowerPoint and discussed the Middle School's piloting of a new Math curriculum and resources. Mr. Cornelius reviewed the Middle School's Strategic Priorities and Goals. He stated that the Middle School has taken a look at three potential pilot math programs. These resources were selected based on their ratings from ED report which is an independent reviewer of curriculum resources designed to help educational institutions select high quality programs. Only two resources were piloted this year due to similarities between Envision and Carnegie.

He then discussed the piloting process:

For both pilot programs that were selected the following occurred:

- a) Presentation was given by the vendor or content owner.
- b) Samples or trial login information was provided to teachers well in advance of any expected teaching from the resource.
- c) Each program was taught for a minimum of one complete unit. Teachers were asked to follow the resource and its pacing materials as closely as possible.
- d) Follow up presentations took place when questions arose or more information was needed.
- e) As a math team, we utilized a rubric that was created with our priorities and long-range goals in mind. The team then rated each curriculum at the conclusion of the pilot window.

When possible, the team solicited the input of other districts:

- a) An administrator consulted with several districts that have made similar choices recently.
- b) Input was gathered from representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- c) Several math team members visited Clark Lane Middle School in Waterford to see what their implementation of *Desmos* looked like. Their experience was shared with the department as a whole.

As a math department, and based on the criteria selected as part of the rubric design, the middle school selected their next resource, and also took into consideration what would be best for the students, the district, and gave teachers the tools and flexibility they needed to be successful with the new resource.

Envision was the first resource piloted:

Positives include:

- ▶ A wide variety of resources for differentiation
- ▶ Links well with Google Classroom
- ▶ Digital practice provided relevant and timely feedback.

Negatives include:

- ▶ Instructional video didn't align with teaching methods.
- ▶ Navigation was difficult for teachers and students.
- ▶ User interference was often slow or laggy.
- ▶ Not all lessons provided sufficient scaffolding.
- ▶ The abundance of resources actually became a hindrance to efficient and consistent planning.
- ▶ No digital manipulatives.

Desmos was the second resource piloted:

Positives include:

- ▶ The resource is well organized, well thought out, and has an easy to follow scope and sequence.
- ▶ The lessons are well thought out, and have low entry points, meaning all students can access the material.
- ▶ In order for this resource to be successful, lessons have to be student centered and students will be doing the heavy lifting.
- ▶ Digital tools are interactive and engaging for students.
- ▶ Accessible entry points mean more students can find success in their daily math lessons.
- ▶ Teacher dashboard provides real time student data that is immediately actionable for teachers.
- ▶ Students are expected to explain their thinking through written prompts in each lesson.
- ▶ Manipulatives in this program are digital, which means students can access the same tools at home as they have in class.
- ▶ In conversations with dozens of students at each grade level, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

Areas in need of additional work:

- ▶ Assessments will have to be carefully screened and aligned to ensure they are valid data points.
- ▶ The implementation of this resource will require a substantial shift in instructional practices for most teachers. While this will require some additional work for teachers, the students will benefit immensely.

Mr. Cornelius then referenced a couple of activity sessions from the teacher's dashboard showing the Curriculum Committee how the software works. He also discussed why the team felt *Desmos* was a better fit, i.e., it's easier for students to access content, inclusion, lessons are phenomenal and align with the elementary level. Mr. Cornelius stated that teachers and administrators are striving to create a strong K-PHS alignment. Discussion ensued among Mr. Cornelius and Committee members.

Mr. Cornelius then discussed what the next steps will be:

In SY22-23:

Instructional Shift: Department wide movement toward student centered learning methods.

Curriculum works:

- ▶ Vet the scope and sequence that has been provided. Teachers will refine the units in their grade level teams, with support, to solidify pacing and supplemental materials for the 2023-24 school year
- ▶ Analyze and refine assessments to ensure alignment with the major work of the grade level and the unit it is assessing.

In SY23-24:

Instructional Shift: Refine student centered methods of instruction and embed purposeful student groupings using real time data.

Curriculum works:

- ▶ Refine differentiation strategies for struggling learners.
- ▶ Continue to refine the scope and sequence as needed.
- ▶ Refine assessments to ensure alignment with major work of the grade level and the unit it is assessing.

In SY24-25:

Instructional Shift: Implement differentiated strategies for struggling learners, as well as remediation, while working to implement meaningful and aligned enrichment activities.

Curriculum works:

- ▶ Movement toward individualized learning plans for all students through purposeful embedding of remediation and enrichment activities.
- ▶ Each lesson will have strategies, resources and processes designed for both high achieving and struggling students.

In SY25-26:

Instructional Shift: Movement toward individualized learning plans through use of “paths” with each unit.

- Exceeding the learning target
- Meeting the learning target
- Approaching the learning target
- Below the learning target

Curriculum works:

- ▶ Design and work to implement the various “learning paths” utilizing the work from previous years.

“Learning paths” are not the same as tracking. These paths will occur simultaneously within the same classroom, utilizing many of the same resources, and utilizing the same collaborative methods.

Students will be able to move freely between the paths. If a student shows growth, or is not showing progress that is expected, students can have their path shifted within a unit based on real time data. Student paths can be determined within the first couple of days within a unit to avoid any preconceptions from keeping a student within a given path.

These paths are a step toward our ultimate goal, which is a learning experience that is tailored specifically to each student.

Discussion ensued.

- **MSP—Discussion regarding shift in Algebra for high school credit course**
- **Potential expansion of middle school courses for high school credit**
- **Expansion of high school dual enrollment offerings for College and Career Pathways**
- **Addition of honors level courses in the CTE department to entice more students to enroll**

Assistant Superintendent David Levenduski then discussed the aforementioned topics. He stated that one half of the Middle School's 8th grade class is taking Honors Algebra I. However, once students go to the high school, some are not ready and cannot pass the Algebra II credit classes that are offered.

He stated that the goal is to pare the number of sections down from 4 to 2. This will help ensure that everyone is fully ready and also ensures success with access. He stated that the current math curriculum is not giving the students a foundation to build their skills. Also, coming out of COVID certainly exacerbated learning loss. The new middle school curriculum will help to strengthen rigor and instruction. With a strong new curriculum, more students will be ready to take the high school Algebra class while in 8th grade. Looking at iReady scores, SBA scores and classroom data should also be helpful in identifying students who are ready to take the high school Algebra courses. Other ways to give students access is to offer alternative credit courses at the Middle School level, such as art, music, and career and technical education. This expansion can give more students access to courses for high school credit in their interest areas beyond just World Language and Algebra, as it currently stands.

In addition, there is an expansion of high school dual enrollment offerings for College and Career Pathways as follows:

UCONN ECE Coursework in Education: (for students interested in teaching)

EDCI 1100: If you Love It, Teach It

EDLR 2001: Contemporary Issues in Sport

EPSY 1100: Introduction to Special Education

Tunxis Coursework for Business: (for those students interested in entering the business world)

ACC 100: Accounting

BFN 110: Personal Finance

Student materials are funded through Tunxis via the Perkins grant. Credits can be transferred to other colleges.

UCONN ECE Coursework in Health: (students exploring medical options)

AH 1100: Introduction to Allied Health Professions

AH 2001: Medical Terminology

One of the Science teachers approached Mrs. Graham-Douglas about offering a foundational course for APRN training.

Goodwin Manufacturing Pathway

CAD (Computer Aided Drafting)

Fourteen students are getting college credits for engineering concepts. The district is looking to move to two manufacturing courses, instead of one, allowing for more access.

Mr. Levenduski stated that many students have interests in various areas. If they are interested, they will succeed. However, the district doesn't want barriers to get in the way of giving them access.

Mr. Levenduski has heard that additional honors level courses are being offered through the State Department of Education via virtual classes (for credit), which can be of some benefit. There is also talk about a virtual academy. The district is looking into this option for further details.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DEBORAH HARDY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY BECKY TYRRELL. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
Meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joan Calistro
Recorder of Minutes