

**PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, November 30, 2023: 5:00 PM

Meeting Topics:

1. **Update on 'Right to Read' Grant and Elementary ELA Curriculum**
2. **Upcoming shifts in middle school Social Studies curriculum**
3. **PHS New Course Proposal**
 - A. **Fine Arts**
 - B. **Social Studies**
 - C. **English**
 - D. **Math**
 - E. **P.E.**
 - F. **World Language**
4. **Adjournment**

Place and Time: **Plainville High School Learning Commons**
47 Robert Holcomb Way
Plainville, CT 06062

Members Present: Becky Martinez, Becky Tyrrell, Lori Consalvo

Members Absent: Rachel Buchanan, Cassandra Clark

Also Present: Brian S. Reas, Superintendent of Schools
David Levenduski, Assistant Superintendent
Crystal St. Lawrence, Foster White

Early Departures: None

Chairperson Becky Martinez called the meeting to order at 5:13 pm. She then turned the meeting over to Assistant Superintendent David Levenduski to review the New Course Proposals at the Plainville High School.

Proposal #1: The Fine Arts Department is proposing to add **Integrated Arts Class** to the PHS Program of Studies. This course is being suggested in order to provide students with significant special education needs the opportunity for meaningful inclusion in a less restrictive environment. Along with supporting students with significant special education needs, it will also provide students who have strong visual art

skills the opportunity to educate, coach and facilitate visual artistic skills with their peers. This course will also provide students who may have an interest in working with special needs students, working in the education field, or any special service careers the opportunity to have some experiences doing so. This course aligns with the district's career pathways initiative while providing a positive learning environment for students with special education needs.

Proposal #2: The PHS Fine Arts Department is proposing to add **Popular Music and Diversity in American Society (ECE)** to the PHS program of study. This course would add the first ECE option within the music department and be a viable option for non-performing music-oriented students. This class would serve as the UCONN ECE course of popular Music & Diversity in American Society. This class would serve as an introduction to popular music and diversity in America: jazz, blues, Top-40 pop, rock, hip-hop and other genres. Musicians and their music studied in the context of twentieth-century and contemporary American society, emphasizing issues of race, gender, class, and resistance. The course addresses cross-curriculum standards in history, business and political science coursework.

Proposal #3: The PHS Social Studies Department is proposing to add **Media and American Cultures** course to the PHS program of studies. The PHS social studies department surveyed the students during the 2022-2023 school year in hopes of finding new engaging courses to add to the PHS social studies curriculum. In surveying the school, we had 295 responses. For the history through film or media course we had 162 students show interest in this course. *As a certified history and theater teacher I thought it would be engaging for the students to merge the use of history content and writing skills with artistic analysis. Many universities have courses of this nature in their curriculum. The course will be based on curriculum development by various universities around the country as well as sourcebooks such as "The Americans" by Danzer and "Drama Projects" by Tanner.*

Proposal #4: The English and History Department are proposing to add and **American Writing and Discourse Interdisciplinary Seminar** to the PHS program of studies. PHS students are seeking further opportunities for enrichment in critical reading and writing beyond the scope of an honors-level humanities class. Students have increasingly expressed interest in ultra-competitive and elite postsecondary institutions, and this program provides an opportunity for students who already meet or exceed high-level expectations to extend their expertise in writing and communication and gain a competitive edge in college admissions.

Proposal #5: The English Department is proposing to replace current **English 11 course with English 11 – Digital Media Literacy**. Students benefit from having opportunities to choose electives that appeal to their interests. Allowing students to choose their class gives them a sense of autonomy and participation in their education and is another way to promote student's willingness to be active participates in their learning. We do, however, still value the research skills that students learned and strengthened in the first semester of the junior English program, as they are essential skills to many of the other classes they will take here at PHS as well as in college and future careers. The course being offered in the Fall semester only assures that our students have a larger selection of electives to choose from in the Spring semester.

Proposal #6: The English Department was asked to propose an **Application of Reading Strategies** course to add to the PHS program of studies. This 9th-grade reading strategies course aims to empower students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate the diverse range of texts they will encounter in high school and beyond. It will be taken in conjunction with the student's 9th grade English course. A student may earn up to a half credit towards an elective. The primary goal of this course is to equip students with the tools and techniques necessary to comprehend, analyze, and critically engage with a variety of texts. The curriculum will focus on both fiction and non-fiction materials to ensure a well-rounded approach to reading. Grammar and vocabulary study are also included.

Proposal #7: The Math Department is proposing to add **Foundations of Math** to the PHS program of studies. Historical data (iready, SBAC, pre-assessments) shows that more and more students entering high school are below grade level. After discussing this issue with the middle school, CPT, and PLC groups and administrators we have decided that there is a need for a full-time intervention course to best support our struggling students. This course will provide additional instruction/guided practice and small groups of identified students who are struggling as identified by 8th grade iready tests. Students will get assistance with review material for upcoming assessment, classwork assignments and projects.

Proposal #8: The Math Department is proposing to add **Career Math** to the PHS program of studies. Students need 3 years of math and there is a population of students (those interested in trade school, community college, 2-year college) that shows interest in exploring more about how math is used in their particular career interest. After discussing this issue with CPT, PLC groups and administrators we have decided that there is a need for students to be able to earn a 3rd math credit other than at the Algebra 2 level. The course is designed for students who need career and technical math skills. Students find practical applications for their math skills through the hands-on oriented class. A review of foundational math skills, Geometry and Algebra leads to development and construction of products and solutions to problems encountered in everyday life. The applications of mathematical concepts to trade experiences reinforces this curriculum.

Proposal #9: The Health and Physical Education Department is proposing to add a **"Hero Course"** to the PHS program of studies. This course will diversify the offerings of the Physical Education department. It will allow students who are interested in following a pathway toward a career as a first responder to begin training and earning certifications toward a career in that field. This course will not only serve as a pathway toward a long-term career, but will also provide certification that will allow students to upon completion of the course gain immediate employment as a lifeguard. According to a recent CBS News article the country is facing a lifeguard shortage. ***"Across the country, about half of the nation's 309,000 public pools will be forced to close their doors or reduce hours, according to the American Lifeguard Association" (Preston, 2023).***

Proposal #10: The World Language Department is proposing to add **American Sign Language Level 3** to the PHS program of studies, in addition to the current level 1 and 2 being offered. Adding American Sign Language Level 3 (ASL 3) to the Plainville High School World Language program can have several potential benefits: 1) Deeper Language Proficiency: ASL 3 would allow students to deepen their proficiency in American Sign Language, building on the skills and knowledge they gained in ASL 1 and 2. This can lead to better communications with the Deaf and hard of hearing community

as well as meeting the Language requirements for students interested in pursuing higher education in fields related to ASL or Deaf studies, ASL 3 is often a prerequisite or provides an advantage. 2) Cultural Awareness: Learning ASL at a higher level can also lead to a better understanding of Deaf culture. ASL is not just a language, it's also a cultural expression. A more advanced curriculum can delve deeper into the cultural aspects of ASL leading to a well-rounded overall experience. 3) Career Opportunities: Proficiency in ASL is valuable in a wide range of careers, such as education, healthcare, social work or in any trade such as car mechanics where you may interact with the deaf and hard of hearing community. ASL 3 can prepare students for those roles, potentially increasing their employability. 4) Inclusivity and Accessibility: Teaching ASL at a higher level promotes inclusivity and accessibility. It helps break down communication barriers and promotes equal access to information and services for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. This also pertains to empathy towards all special needs individuals as well. All in all: personal growth, learning a new language, especially one as unique and expressive as ASL, can be personally enriching. It challenges students to think differently about language and communications.

Becky Tyrrell asked Superintendent Reas if he had heard anything regarding the "Right to Read" Grant and if it had been accepted. Mr. Reas explained that a presentation was done by the Curriculum Director Tawana Graham Douglas and the districts RIT's. He received positive feedback and is optimistic that the Grant will be approved. He should know something within the next week or so. Discussion continued.

BECKY TYRRELL MADE A MOTION TO MOVE FORWARD AND BRING THE ABOVE COURSE PROPOSALS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THEIR APPROVAL. LORI CONSALVO SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MOTION CARRIED.

BECKY TYRRELL MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. LORI CONSALVO SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MOTION CARRIED. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tina Gryguc
Recording Secretary

**MOTIONS MADE AT THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

BECKY TYRRELL MADE A MOTION TO MOVE FORWARD AND BRING THE ABOVE COURSE PROPOSALS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THEIR APPROVAL. LORI CONSALVO SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MOTION CARRIED.

BECKY TYRRELL MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. LORI CONSLAVO SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MOTION CARRIED.