

Minutes
Watertown Board of Education
Curriculum and Instruction Sub Committee Meeting
Wednesday February 11, 2015 – 6:30 p.m.
Swift Middle School
Library/Media Center

Members Present: Ray Nardella, Chairman of Policy & Labor Committee
Cathie Rinaldi, Committee Member
Janelle Wilk, Committee Member

Members Absent: Jim Gambardella, Committee Member

Others Present: Leslie Crotty, Chairman, Board of Education
Don Orsini, Board of Education
Paul Jones, Principal, Watertown High School
Dr. Bridget Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools
Jill Browne, Business Manager

1. Convene Meeting

Mr. Nardella, Chairman of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and then immediately turned the meeting over to Paul Jones to discuss the changes and updates to the program of studies at Watertown High School.

2. Review of the Meeting

Mr. Jones began by explaining that the presentation will prepare Watertown High School for state legislation regarding high school graduation requirements and continue the process of evaluating and updating the Student Learning Expectations as part of our ongoing 10-year re-accreditation for NEASC. The reasons behind these changes are the two changing Connecticut state laws: CT General Statutes 10-221a & Public Act 10-111.

The changes will effect staffing, graduation requirements, schedules and graduation performance standards. Mr. Jones reminded the audience that the High School adopted a new mission statement and reviewed that along with his and his team's vision & core value beliefs for the High School, and also reminded the audience of the vision for the Watertown Public Schools. Mr. Jones then went over the learning expectations for his students and they include in the area of academics: comprehension, critical thinking, information literacy, and

communication. He spent time going over each one and what they mean to the students. The expectations also include social responsibility and civic responsibility.

Mr. Jones then went over what the current students need to graduate. A chart was put up explaining what credits are needed to graduate up to and including 2018. These students need a total of 23 credits and he listed what the minimums in each subjects are. He then went on to the proposed changes for 2019 to include increasing the social studies, science, & world language credits and adding a counselor workshop and a senior capstone, taking the total required credits to graduate to 24.5. By 2020, students will need to take 4 math credits and 3 science credits and include personal finance as a required $\frac{1}{2}$ credit course, along with the above mentioned courses, bringing the total required credits to graduate to 26. Mr. Jones put up a slide to show that most students average these requirement changes already and this should not be a huge impact. From that point, he placed in a slide to compare the three years of changes and what it will look like to the average student, along with a slide to show an average schedule for all four years. He showed that the electives are still easy to take and the schedules will not change much. Currently, a world language is an elective. This will change to become a graduation requirement with a minimum of two credits required.

Mr. Jones then went on to explain in great detail what a senior capstone is. "As part of our Student Success Plan process, students will work be able to complete their Social Expectation. We expect students to take responsibility for their learning and behavior, as well as ownership of their futures so that they will be prepared for wherever life takes them. As part of our Student Success Plan class, Senior's will complete their Capstone project and their Civic Expectation. We expect students to become socially aware citizens who contribute positively to the culture of our school in a manner that actively engages them in the local community. " He went on to say that he has given this project to the class of 2016 as a graduation expectation (a completion requirement, no credit, but is a "pass/fail") and discussed in detail what that means to them. As of 2017, this will become a graduation requirement. Some students had difficulty with this and those that did had the opportunity to meet with their councilors to obtain additional help.

Mr. Jones then explained the changes in physical education and health which includes recommending starting with the class of 2019 where all students will be required to take $\frac{1}{2}$ credit of Health during 9th grade. We also recommend starting with the class of 2019, all students will be required to take 1 credit of Physical Education. ($\frac{1}{4}$ during 9th & 11th grades and $\frac{1}{2}$ during 10th grade.) We then recommend starting with the class of 2019, all 11th and 12th grade students who have passed 9th and 10th grade Physical Education will be allowed to take Weight Lifting or Elective Physical Education as an Elective. With only two Physical Education teachers, these changes need to begin immediately. This will impact current students' schedules as well. Mr. Jones then went on to discuss the Counselor Workshop. This is designed to help students who need a better understanding of how high school works (9th grade), how to set up their schedules, how to prepare for college entrance exams (11th grade), how to apply to college and

so on. It will also help prepare them for life outside of high school. Because this will directly impact all current and future students, we recommend this be added starting with the class of 2016 students. This will also follow a model of other district schools in providing direct contact between school counselors and students and can be paired with the 9th and 11th grade ¼ credit Physical Education classes.

He then went onto discuss the science changes. They include: recommending the class of 2019 be required to earn 2.5 Science credits, the class of 2020 be required to earn 3 Science credits, and adding ½ credit Science courses to help for both remediation and enhancement.

We recommend that the Program of Study requires students to take at least 1 credit of Biology (Life Science) and 1 credit of Physical Science. With the world language changes, students would be required to take two world language courses. Students would be able to enroll in a higher level course at the high school depending on middle school teacher's recommendations. A question asked was if there was a need to add to staff for Science and the answer was no, as these courses do not require an extra Science certification.

Math changes include, starting with the class of 2020, students be required to earn 4 Math credits. We recommend the Program of Study require all students to take Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. We also recommend adding ½ credit Math courses to help for both remediation and enhancement. Students would be able to enroll in a higher level course at the high school depending on middle school teacher's recommendations. Both science and math will have new course offerings. Science will include forensics, marine biology, and astronomy. Math will include statistics, math applications and intermediate algebra. The personal finance course can also be included for a ½ math credit and will encompass students in the twenty-first century to be prepared with a basic financial knowledge. It can also be a ½ credit in technology if the student prefers. It was noted that for any student to get credit for a math course, it must be taught by a math teacher.

Finally, he discussed middle school students coming into the high school. Only credits earned at the high school level will be considered for graduation. Students can enroll in a higher level course at the high school depending on middle school teachers' recommendations. This is a change for students that took high school courses in middle school. Reasons for this include NCAA requirements (they only recognize credits starting with the 9th grade) along with what colleges are looking for in that they only want to see courses taken in high school on a transcript. In closing, Mr. Jones talked about where we go from here. A scheduling committee is currently comparing our data with similar schools to see if our master schedule needs revision based on achievement data and the need to add more course availability to meet increased graduation requirements. As we increase credits in certain areas, there will be a need to reevaluate personnel needs and placement.

3. Adjournment

Mr. Nardella adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

He then called for a motion to adjourn.

Subject: Motion to Adjourn

Motion Presented by: Ms. Wilk

Motion Seconded by: Ms. Rinaldi

Motion Passed

Respectfully submitted by,

Mindi Davidson

Recording Secretary