

Curriculum Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 9:00 AM

Google Meet Dial In: 1 302-505-1122 PIN: 133 239 649#, 24 School Road,
Weston, CT 06883-1623

I. Call to Order

**II. Discussion on WHS New Course Proposal for
English 12**

III. Update on WMS Teaming Model

IV. Update on WPS Goals

- **Healthy Learning Environment**
 - **School Climate, Social-Emotional
Well-being, Alternative Pathways**

V. Follow up on WHS Advanced Placement Courses

VI. Approval of November 2021 minutes

VII. Other curricular issues

New Course Proposal

This proposal should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent by the principal of the school on behalf of the department chair and/or staff involved. All proposals are due to the building principal *one week* prior to this date. *All proposals must be approved first by the building principal. Requests will be reviewed with the principal, Curriculum Instructional Leader and Assistant Superintendent prior to presentation to the Curriculum Committee.*

School: Weston High School Proposal Submitted By: Jessica DiBuono

Department: English

1. **Population to be served:** Senior students earning their fourth year of English credit

2. **Identify and discuss the Need**

In the past five years, there has been a change in the enrollment of English 12.

Currently, seniors have three options to fulfill their fourth year of English requirement: English 12, Honors Humanities, and Advanced Placement Literature and Composition.

Over the past five years, English 12 enrollment has decreased 55.5% while Honors Humanities enrollment has increased 358%. In the school year 2021-2022, English 12 students are 73% male and 26% identified as Special Education.

There is a need to not only offer students a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for life after high school, but also that offers true choice, engages students, and motivates them to become lifelong learners. Research demonstrates that “giving students real choices in the classroom...can boost their engagement and motivation, allow them to capitalize on their strengths, and enable them to meet their individual learning needs” Parker, et al., 2017).

3. **Impact on Other Courses / Schedules**

This proposal would revamp what is currently being offered as English 12. Students would enroll in English 12 their fall semester and choose a Senior English 12 Elective for their spring semester.

4. **Budget Related Items.**

- Staffing (FTE needed): no additional FTEs required
- Supplies: Texts for spring electives: 3 texts per course - at \$10.00 each - \$900
- Equipment: - none
- Other (software) none
- Estimated Overall Cost of Proposal: \$ 900

6. **Evaluation for Program Success or Continuation:**

Student interest surveys were conducted prior to proposal and showed significant interest in the idea. Student and staff surveys would be conducted at the end of the first year to assess student learning and interest.

7. **Other Information for Consideration**(optional): We wish, like many of our DRG A colleagues, to offer students diverse experiences with choices that are rooted in thematic concepts yet still ensure similar skills.

Current juniors and seniors were surveyed, and students overwhelmingly felt positive about the opportunities as a choice to expand their skills and thinking.

8. **Please attach a description of the course including the units of study.**

English 12 (Fall Semester)

This course builds on students' previous years and is designed around the literacy skills needed to be college and career ready. Units are focused on Common Core aligned skills such as personal narrative, literary analysis, argument, and synthesis. Different genres and voices will be featured throughout this course, including but not limited to novels, short stories, memoirs, film, graphic novels and non-fiction reading.

Units of Study: *Note: These are skills-based Common Core aligned units*

- Personal Narrative (College Essay/Resume - college and career readiness)
- Literary Analysis
- Argument
- Research & Synthesis

English 12 Semester 2 (Spring Semester)

- **Criminal Minds: Psychological Analysis of Literature**
 - This semester-long elective course is offered to seniors in their spring semester. In this course, students will explore the significance of crime in narrative form. Students will trace the roots of this form, reading a variety of texts to analyze how authors use crime as a plotting device to study character, reveal social order and critique society. Students will focus on nonfiction, mystery, and film to explore and examine the complex role criminality plays in defining a culture.
 - Potential Units:
 - History of Crime Literature (*Sherlock Holmes*, Agatha Christie, *Killers of a Flower Moon*)

- Nonfiction (Truman Capote)
 - Mystery (*The Guest List* by Lucy Foley)
 - Media (Podcasts, film, television)
- Identity: Journey to Self-Discovery
 - This semester-long elective course is offered to seniors in their spring semester. In this course, students will explore thematic ideas of identity and self-discovery. The course will ask students to conduct close reading of literary texts while analyzing characters, conflicts, and the thematic understanding that arises from these conflicts. Students will explore universal questions such as “Who am I?” and “Who am I becoming?” as they examine the progression of identity through literature.
 - Potential Texts:
 - Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*
 - Malala Yousafzai’s *I Am Malala*
 - Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*
 - Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese*
- The Future is Now: Archetypes in Fantasy, Myth, & Science Fiction
 - This semester-long elective course is offered to seniors in their spring semester. In this course, students will explore different elements of science fiction. Students will read horror, mystery, fantasy, and science fiction in order to analyze and interpret how authors use setting, character, and conflict to reveal cultural commentary. Students will define, analyze and interpret fiction, non-fiction, television, and film in order to understand the genre of Science Fiction. Assignments will ask students to think critically and creatively both collaboratively and independently.
 - Potential Units:
 - History & Elements of Science Fiction
 - Fantasy
 - Mystery
 - Science Fiction
 - Potential texts:
 - Isaac Asimov, *I Robot*

- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
- Arthur C. Clark, *The City and the Stars*
- Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn*
- Tochi Onyebuchi, *Riot Baby*
- H. G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*

Parker, F., Novak, J., & Bartell, T. (2017). To engage students, give them meaningful choices in the classroom. *Phi Beta Kappa*.

English 12 Proposal

Jessica DiBuono
Weston High School
Curriculum Instructional Leader
English 6-12



Current Offerings for Senior Level English:



**AP Literature
and
Composition**



**Honors
Humanities**



English 12

Needs:

-Offer students a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for life after high school

-Offers true choice, engages students, and motivates them to become lifelong learners.

Research demonstrates that “giving students real choices in the classroom...can boost their engagement and motivation, allow them to capitalize on their strengths, and enable them to meet their individual learning needs” (Parker, et al., 2017).



Proposal:

Keep current offerings, just expand English 12



English 12 Fall Semester

- Skills based
- College & Career Ready
- Universal experience



English 12 Spring Elective

- Builds on skills from fall
- Thematic experiences
- Increase engagement through choice!

The background is a textured, light brown color. On the left side, there are several large, stylized feathers in shades of brown and blue. In the top left corner, there is a faint, light brown silhouette of the United States map.

Fall Semester:

-Skills based

-College & Career Readiness

-Proposed Units:

- Personal Narrative
- Literary Analysis
- Argument
- Synthesis/Research
- Universal Culminating Endpoint



Spring Semester Elective Options:

- Criminal Minds:
Psychological of
Analysis of Literature
- Identity: Journey to Self
Discovery
- The Future is Now:
Archetypes in Fantasy,
Myth, & Science Fiction

Criminal Minds: Psychological Analysis of Literature

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Identity: Journey to Self Discovery

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The Future is Now: Archetypes in Fantasy, Myth, & Science Fiction

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Potential Units:

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Weston Middle School Teaming Model



Daniel Doak, Principal
December 8, 2021

Enhancements of Proposed Changes to WMS Schedule



- Return to Pure Teaming Model: ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies
- 50 minute periods for all subjects, all three grades (6-8)
- Academic Workshop replaces quiet study with instructional time
- Focus on development of critical skills necessary for academic success
- SRBI interventions, strategies, Project Challenge will be scheduled during Academic Workshop
- Everyday world language in 6th grade

What is Academic Workshop?



- All four academic teachers on a team will teach workshop at the same time
- Teachers and students explore content-related themes, in addition to conferencing and one-on-one, small group work with students
- Develop key skills in communication, critical and creative thinking, quantitative problem solving, collaboration

| | ELA | Math | Science | Social Studies |
|-----------|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 6th Grade | Reading/ Writing Conferences | Quantitative Problem solving Consumer Math | Observing Your World: Citizen Scientist | Exploring local issues (Public speaking) |
| 7th Grade | Reading/Writing Conferences | Quantitative Problem Solving Personal Finance | Creating a sustainable world (community service) | Exploring how local Issues impact the world (Debate) |
| 8th Grade | Reading/Writing Conferences | Analyzing Data Probability & Statistics | Applying principles of environmental science | Analyzing contemporary issues (Public presentation) |

Sample Student Schedule



| Period | Time Block | A Day | B Day |
|--------|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1 | 7:45-8:35 | Math | Math |
| 2 | 8:39-9:29 | Social Studies | Social Studies |
| 3 | 9:32-10:22 | PE / Health | Art / Tech & Eng |
| | 10:26-10:56 | Lunch | Lunch |
| 4 | 11:00-11:50 | ELA | ELA |
| 5 | 11:54-12:44 | Band | Academic Workshop (math/ELA/science/social studies) |
| 6 | 12:47-1:37 | Science | Science |
| 7 | 1:40-2:30 | Spanish | Spanish |

Sample Teacher Schedule



| Period | Time | A Day | B Day |
|--------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 7:45-8:35 | Math | Math |
| 2 | 8:39-9:29 | Math | Math |
| 3 | 9:32-10:22 | Math Workshop | Prep/Team Meeting |
| | 10:26-10:56 | Lunch | Lunch |
| 4 | 11:00-11:50 | Math | Math |
| 5 | 11:54-12:44 | Prep/Team Meeting | Math Workshop |
| 6 | 12:47-1:37 | Math | Math |
| 7 | 1:40-2:30 | Prep/Curricular Partner Time | Prep/Curricular Partner Time |

Curriculum Committee Meeting

November 10, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Via Google Meet

Present Committee Members:

Taffy Miller (Chairperson), David Felton, Bernadette Kingsley

Present Administration:

Kenneth Craw, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent; Juliane Givoni, WHS Principal; Dan Doak, WMS Principal; Kate O’Keefe, CIL K-12 Visual Arts; Jamie Charles, CIL 6-12 Science; Michael Aitkenhead, WHS Science Teacher

Members of the Public:

Anthony Pesco, Kristana Esslinger, Ms. Guerra, Mariana Nery-Buckmir

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Discussion of WHS New Course Proposals for 2022-23

Discussion:

Mr. Aitkenhead presented on the proposed new science course, Sustainable Solutions:

- The course is designed to address real world sustainability issues by engaging students in project-based solutions rather than hypothetical classroom solutions.
- The course will be offered to juniors and seniors and is a good segue for students taking Environmental Science at WHS, although this is not a requirement.
- As a one-semester class has constraints, the recommendation is to run the course as a full-year course so that students can follow a full year cycle of planting, for example.
- It is a non-lab course and as such will fulfill one science requirement but not one of the lab science requirements.
- The estimated yearly budget for the course is \$2,000-\$3,000. Students will also be encouraged to be entrepreneurial and explore ways to obtain funding for projects.

Ms. O’Keefe presented on the proposed new visual arts course, Digital Illustration & Animation:

- Ms. O’Keefe gave an overview of the WHS Visual Arts course offerings and where the new course fits in. She spoke on the career paths and opportunities that require animation skills.
- The Digital Illustration & Animation course is a one-semester course and will replace Advanced CMD (Contemporary Media Design).
- There is an equipment requirement to run the course. It requires the purchase of digital drawing tablets and pens and is estimated to cost \$10,000.

- Once approved, the funding of the course will be part of the FY 2023 budget process.

3. Presentation and Discussion of WMS Teaming Model

Discussion:

- Mr. Doak presented on the updated Teaming Model proposal for WMS. He first spoke on the Extended Learning Time Block (ELT) that was added to the schedule three years ago and the benefits provided to students and where it may have fallen short. The current 40-minute ELT serves 20% of the students who receive interventions and enrichment, while the remaining 80% of students are assigned quiet study time.
- The new model proposes to increase instructional time, which will entail a restructure of FTE with minimal increase in FTE. The proposed plan will replace quiet study with an instructional block of time called Academic Workshop.
- He explained that the proposed new WMS Teaming Model is aimed at better meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of the students and building a stronger sense of community within the school.
- In this workshop model, all students will have access to academic supports such as math, reading and writing support, study and research skills and guest speakers to enhance units of study, to name a few. In addition, the extra help would be with their own teacher.
- Teachers will be conferencing with students and all will be assigned to a workshop or intervention. The next step in the development of the proposal is to flush out flexibility and structured supports.

4. Information on November 2, 2021 Professional Learning Day

Discussion:

- Dr. Craw reviewed the professional learning day and gave an overview of the activities.
- Ms. Givoni highlighted the professional learning activities at WHS and specifically a workshop on assessment and grading practices. This was focused on looking at grading patterns at the school and departmental level. Teachers reflected on their practices and analyzed whether changes are warranted.
- Mr. Doak highlighted a teacher workshop that took place on differentiation instruction.

5. Information on WHS Advanced Placement Results by Course

Discussion:

Dr. Craw discussed on the 2021 AP course scores as presented on the attached chart. He mentioned that many students cancelled their exams during the pandemic year since they were able to be reimbursed.

6. Approval of October 2021 minutes

Motion Passed: Move that the Curriculum Committee approve the October 2021 minutes. This motion, made by Taffy Miller and seconded by David Felton.

3 Yeas – 0 Nays

7. Other curricular issues

Discussion:

Committee members expressed concerns on mental health issues coming out of the pandemic and if there are practices in place to track school climate. They agreed that if such practice were to be put in place, it would be communicated to parents first. The goal would be to check on student's level of comfort and if they are in good mind for learning.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Curiano