

Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 6, 2022 9:15 AM
Remote Session

I. Call to Order, Verification of Quorum

II. Approval of Minutes

II.A. Approval of minutes from the June 7, 2022
Policy Committee Meeting.

III. Discussion regarding Policy Committee meeting schedule

IV. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws

IV.A. Discussion of new policy and
regulation: Policy Addressing Enrollment In An
Advanced Course Or Program And Challenging
Curriculum and Administrative Regulation
Addressing Enrollment In An Advanced Course or
Program And Challenging Curriculum

IV.B. Discussion of new policy: Policy for the
Equitable Identification of Gifted And Talented
Students

V. Adjournment

Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 7, 2022 8:30 AM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Sharon Ferraro, Peter Gordon, Melissa Walker. Present: 3.
Additional Attendees: Lisa Wolak Barbiero, Superintendent of Schools Tracy Edwards, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

I. Call to Order, Verification of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 8:39 AM by Melissa Walker, Chairperson.

A quorum has been verified. Move that the Policy Committee begin the June 7, 2022 meeting. Unseconded with a motion by Walker, Melissa.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of minutes from the April 5, 2022 Policy Committee Meeting.

Move that the Policy Committee approve the April 5, 2022 meeting minutes. Carried with a motion by Ferraro, Sharon and a second by Gordon, Peter.

Sharon Ferraro: Yea, Peter Gordon: Yea, Melissa Walker: Yea

Yea: 3, Nay: 0

III. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws

A. Discussion of a new policy series 6000: Instruction: Policy for the Equitable Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

Tracy Edwards, Director of Pupil Personnel Services gave an overview of a new policy entitled Policy for the Equitable Identification of Gifted and Talented Students. This policy outlines definitions of gifted and talented and the evaluation/assessment process. A key note is that the Board has discretion as to whether the district provides services for any student identified as gifted and talented. Ms. Edwards and Ms. Barbiero discussed some of the programs Weston currently provides for gifted and talented students; project challenge at the intermediate and middle school level and honors/AP class offerings at the high school level. We need to make sure there are opportunities in the arts for students at the lower school levels as well as upper level.

IV. Discussion of policies, regulations, and bylaws in future meetings

A discussion around prioritizing things for the new school year took place. A first read on the bullying policy was brought to the Board. However, it was put on pause to revisit some key components. We started to talk about the visitor observation policy and Ms. Edwards

indicated she would take a look at these policies prior to us moving forward. We also briefly discussed changes to the student discipline policy, which mostly comprises inclusive language changes. These policies will be discussed at the Admin Retreat over the summer. Hopefully, we can have them ready to move forward in the September policy meeting. Ms. Edwards would also like to revisit the special education, suicide prevention and medicaid pollcies. She will come back to us with more information on these.

V. **Adjournment**

Move that Policy Committee adjourn the June 7, 2022 meeting at 9:03 AM. Carried with a motion by Ferraro, Sharon and a second by Gordon, Peter.

Sharon Ferraro: Yea, Peter Gordon: Yea, Melissa Walker: Yea

Yea: 3, Nay: 0

Chairperson

Superintendent

POLICY ADDRESSING ENROLLMENT IN AN ADVANCED COURSE OR PROGRAM AND CHALLENGING CURRICULUM

The Weston Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of providing opportunities for students to enroll in an advanced course or program and offering students challenging curriculum in the Weston Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with Connecticut law, this policy shall explain the manner in which the District determines eligibility for enrollment in advanced courses or programs and creates academic plans for students in the District.

I. Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

"Advanced course or program" means an honors class, advanced placement class, International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge International program, dual enrollment, dual credit, early college or any other advanced or accelerated course or program offered by the Board in grades nine to twelve, inclusive.

“Advanced placement” program is a program authorized by the College Board that offers college-level courses and exams that students take in high school.

“Dual credit/Dual enrollment” courses are college courses offered by high schools in partnership with a college or university. Students taking these courses in high school are simultaneously enrolled with the partner higher education institution. Students who successfully complete a dual credit/dual enrollment course earn credit toward high school graduation as well as college course credit that appears on a student transcript issued by a college or university.

“International Baccalaureate (“IB”) program” is a program that offers international education through four programs for students aged three (3) to nineteen (19). The four programs are: Primary Years, Middle Years, Diploma Program, and Career-related Program. Schools must be authorized to teach IB programs. Every authorized school is known as an IB World School.

"Prior academic performance" means the course or courses that a student has taken, the grades received for such course or courses and a student's grade point average.

II. Eligibility Criteria

Consistent with state law, the District will identify students in grades eight and nine who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course or program. Students

will be eligible to enroll in advanced courses or programs throughout their high school career, even if they are not identified as eligible in grades eight or in any year of high school.

Eligibility for enrollment in an advanced course or program shall not be based exclusively on a student's prior academic performance. There are multiple methods by which a student may satisfy the eligibility criteria for enrollment in an advanced course or program, including:

- Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors or other school personnel.
- A student's prior academic performance, as determined by evidence-based indicators of how a student will perform.

III. Creation of an Academic Plan/Challenging Curriculum

The District will create an academic plan for each student who is identified in grade eight or nine as eligible for enrollment in an advanced course or program. Such plan will be designed to enroll the student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn college credit or result in career readiness. Such academic plan will also be aligned with:

- The courses or programs offered by the Board,
- The student's student success plan, created pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221a(j),
- High school graduation requirements, and
- Any other policies or standards adopted by the Board relating to the eligibility for student enrollment in advanced courses or programs.

The academic plan may be part of the student's success plan, which plan is required for each student by Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221a.

A student, or the student's parent or guardian, may decline to implement the provisions of an academic plan created for such student.

IV. Guiding Principles and Implementation

The Board recognizes that course access and academic planning should be guided by considerations beyond traditional course eligibility criteria. Specifically, the Board recognizes that academic achievement and engagement in middle school are strong precursors to high school success. In addition, the Board recognizes the importance of engaging with a student's parents and/or guardians throughout the student's educational experience, reducing barriers to opportunities for advanced courses and programs, and providing a wide range of advanced courses that appeal to students with various interests.]

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for implementing this policy and developing procedures in furtherance of this policy and in accordance with guidance provided by the Connecticut Department of Education.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221w

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221x

Connecticut State Department of Education, District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy (April 2022)

ADOPTED: _____

REVISED: _____

DRAFT

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS ADDRESSING ENROLLMENT IN AN
ADVANCED COURSE OR PROGRAM AND CHALLENGING CURRICULUM**

The Weston Board of Education (the “Board”) understands the importance of providing opportunities for students to enroll in an advanced course or program and offering students challenging curriculum in the Weston Public Schools (the “District”). In accordance with the Board’s Policy Addressing Enrollment in an Advanced Course or Program and Challenging Curriculum, the administration adopts the following regulations:

1. The District will identify students in grades eight and nine who may be eligible to take or enroll in an advanced course or program. Students will be eligible to enroll in advanced courses or programs throughout their high school career, even if they are not identified as eligible in grades eight or in any year of high school.
2. Eligibility for enrollment in an advanced course or program shall be based on the following:
 - Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors or other school personnel.
 - A student’s prior academic performance, as determined by evidence-based indicators of how a student will perform.
3. In addition to or as part of student success plans required by Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-221a(j), the District will create an academic plan for each student who is identified in grade eight or in any year of high school as eligible for enrollment in an advanced course or program. A student, or the student’s parent or guardian, may decline to implement the provisions of an academic plan created for such student.
4. Such academic plan will be designed to enroll the student in one or more advanced courses or programs and allow the student to earn college credit or result in career readiness.
5. Middle School Preparation: Academic achievement and engagement are strong precursors to high school success. Therefore, the District strives to:
 - Coordinate standards, instruction, and expectations across middle and high school by fostering regular communication among faculty districtwide, with a focus on vertical articulation of content across the grades rather than offering courses for high school credit in middle school.

- Offer career awareness, exploration, and immersion activities that directly align with the high school program of studies.
 - Encourage high school faculty to familiarize themselves with the Smarter Balanced system of assessments and Next Generation Science Standards assessments, including interim assessment blocks, which can be used to measure student understanding and adjust instruction in Grades 9-12.
 - Remind middle school faculty that their messaging to students regarding high school expectations has an impact on students, and assure students that if they are mastering middle school standards, they are prepared academically.
 - Share students' middle school data with high school faculty to improve the quantity and quality of information available for decision making, reduce unnecessary pre-tests and the administration of screening tools, and maximize instructional time.
6. Partnerships with Families: The District recognizes and values the importance of engaging with a student's family throughout the student's educational experience. Therefore, the District strives to:
- Engage families in the development of student success plans during students' middle school years.
 - Continue and improve upon effective systems of family engagement used in middle school at the high school level.
 - Ensure families are fully aware of the benefits of taking college courses and participating in work-based learning opportunities, if available, during high school.
 - Communicate in a manner that is ongoing and accessible to families.
 - Provide families with a variety of options for engaging on the topic of course selection (e.g., large group information sessions, sessions offering more personalized support, and small sessions designed for families that have not experienced college).
 - Invite students and families to express interest in advanced coursework and discuss those choices along with career options with their school counselors, who can answer questions and serve as an advocate for the students.
7. Reducing Barriers: The District recognizes the importance of reducing barriers to opportunities for advanced courses and programs. Therefore, the District strives to:
- Urge staff to pay special attention to student interests and coursework fit rather than relying solely on past performance when recommending advanced coursework for students.
 - Not exclude students from consideration based on disability status or English language proficiency.
 - Communicate directly with students from low-income families that registration fees and exam fees for advanced coursework will be waived.
 - Encourage students to self-advocate based on their individual goals and future plans.

- Monitor course registrations throughout the enrollment period and encourage students to reconsider selections if they have potential to be successful in more challenging courses.
8. Increasing Supply: The District recognizes the importance of providing a wide range of advanced courses that appeal to students with various interests. Therefore, the District strives to:
- Re-evaluate prerequisites so that educators identify what is needed to succeed in the course rather than before the course.
 - Promote enrollment in advanced courses to students in all grades, including for students who may not have taken an advanced course at the beginning of high school.
 - Review the current program of studies to identify courses with the potential to be offered in partnership with a college or university.
 - Consider adding sections of high-interest courses while encouraging teachers of advanced courses to ensure consistency of content and expectations for a diverse set of learners.
 - Consider offering or expanding work-based learning opportunities for students.
 - Leverage remote options to expand the range of courses available to students.]

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221a

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221w

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-221x

Connecticut State Department of Education, District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation Policy (April 2022)

**POLICY FOR THE EQUITABLE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND
TALENTED STUDENTS**

The Weston Board of Education (the “Board”) will use equitable methods to identify students enrolled in the Weston Public Schools (the “District”) that have an extraordinary learning ability and/or outstanding talent in the creative arts, the development of which requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular school programs. Such students will be identified as gifted and/or talented.

I. Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

“Extraordinary learning ability” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of either performance on relevant standardized measuring instruments, or demonstrated or potential achievement or intellectual creativity, or both.

“Gifted and talented” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (A) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (B) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the general education program in order to realize the child’s intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term includes children with extraordinary learning ability (“gifted”) and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts (“talented”).

“Outstanding talent in the creative arts” means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts.

“Planning and placement team (“PPT”),” for purposes of the evaluation, identification or determination of the specific educational needs of a child who may be gifted or talented, means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative, and pupil personnel staffs, and who participate equally in the decision making process.

II. Referral

Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve, inclusive, in a District school may be referred to the PPT to determine eligibility as gifted and talented.

A referral may come from any source, including the student's teacher, an administrator, the student's parent/guardian, or the student.

III. Evaluation and Identification

The PPT shall be responsible for conducting evaluations and identifying whether students are eligible as gifted and talented, and shall meet, as needed during the school year to determine the eligibility of groups of children for whom evaluation and identification as gifted and talented are planned. When a child has been individually referred to the PPT for consideration as a gifted and talented child, the PPT shall provide the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of the referral.

The Board requires the use of multiple methods of identification of gifted and talented students. The PPT will use the following methods of evaluation in determining whether a student is eligible as gifted and talented:

Group Assessment. The PPT may use an appropriate standardized test administered to all students in a particular grade. In administering standardized tests, the PPT will use a locally normed cut score to identify students for consideration for gifted and talented classification. Parent/guardian consent is not required prior to the administration of a group assessment.

Individual Evaluation. Individual evaluations may be recommended by the PPT in appropriate circumstances, such as when there is a possibility of identifying the student as gifted and talented in areas that are not typically addressed by large-scale standardized tests, such as social studies, a technical discipline, music, creative arts, or performing arts. The PPT may also recommend an individual assessment for a student referred to the PPT for an evaluation when the student is in a grade level in which group assessments are not administered. Before a student is individually evaluated for identification as gifted or talented, the PPT must secure the written consent from a parent/guardian.

After the PPT has determined from an individual or group assessment that a student has potential for or has demonstrated extraordinary learning ability or outstanding talent in the creative arts, the student will be identified as gifted and talented only if the PPT determines that the child requires differentiated instruction or services beyond those provided in the general education program in order to realize the child's intellectual, creative or specific academic potential.

The results of the PPT meeting concerning a determination of the child's identification as gifted or talented shall be provided to the parent or guardian electronically or, if the District does not have the parent or guardian's e-mail address on file, in writing. Such notice shall include, but is not limited to, (1) an explanation of how such student was identified as gifted and talented; and (2) the contact information for (A) the District employee in charge of the provision of services to gifted and talented students, or, if there is no such employee, the District employee in charge of the provision

of special education and related services, (B) the employee at the Connecticut State Department of Education who has been designated as responsible for providing information and assistance to boards of education and parents or guardians of students related to gifted and talented students and, (C) any associations in the state that provide support to gifted and talented students.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the results of the evaluation conducted by the PPT, the parent/guardian has a right to a hearing.

The District may identify up to ten (10) percent of the total student population for the District as gifted and talented.

IV. Provision of Services

The provision of services for gifted and talented students by the Board is discretionary.

Legal Reference:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76a
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-76xx

Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76a-1
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76a-2
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76d-1
Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-76d-9(c)

Connecticut State Department of Education, *Gifted and Talented Education: Guidance Regarding Identification and Service* (March 2019), available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Gifted-and-Talented/Gifted-and-Talented-Education---Guidance.pdf>

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