

Curriculum Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 3:00 PM

Remote Session

I. **Call to order**

II. **Approval of May 2023 meeting minutes**

III. **Presentation of the 2023 Academic Year in
Review**

IV. **Adjournment**

Curriculum Committee Meeting

May 8, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

Via Google Meet

Present Committee Members:

Bernadette Kingsley (Chairperson), Chad Hoepner, David Felton

Present Administration:

Tina Henckel, Ed.D, Assistant Superintendent; Meghan Ward, WHS Principal; Matt Filip, WHS Assistant Principal; Dan Doak, WMS Principal; Dru Walters, WMS Assistant Principal; Pattie Falber, WIS Principal

1. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m.

Discussion:

Dr. Henckel reviewed the general purpose of the Curriculum Committee meetings and reviewed the virtual meeting norms.

2. Approval of April 2023 minutes

Motion Passed: Move that the Curriculum Committee approve the April 2023 meeting minutes. This motion made by Chad Hoepner and seconded by Bernie Kingsley.

3 Yeas – 0 Nays

3. Curriculum and Instruction Updates

Discussion:

- Literacy
 - Dr. Henckel reported that the District has officially adopted the American Reading Company as their core curricular literacy program.
 - She is working with the company to scaffold the roll-in of the program to allow proper time for teacher professional development. The materials will be delivered on a rolling basis as well.
 - The State also mandated districts work with recommended assessment screening tools for grades K-3. Weston has been working with the recommended tool (DIBELS) and Dr. Henckel is working with a company to train the elementary teachers in the DIBELS 8th edition online protocol. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of literacy skills.
- Math
 - Dr. Henckel stated that the Tri-State visit report has been received by the District. It will be reviewed with all of the schools and presented at a later date.

- Assessment
 - Dr. Henckel reported that the state Smarter Balanced (SBAC) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessments are underway. The window for testing will end in the beginning of June.
- Summer '23 Weston Youth Services
 - There are two new summer programs being offered this summer. Dr. Henckel has been working collaboratively with Weston Youth Services to bring STEM-related offerings to middle school-aged students: Junior Flight School and a STEM coding program using Society Craft and Minecraft.

4. Presentation on District Attendance Process, Protocols and Data

Discussion:

Dr. Henckel gave a presentation on the CT State Next Gen Accountability System focusing on chronic absenteeism.

- There are 12 broad indicators on the report that look at schools holistically, with some indicators carrying more weight than others. Each district, as well as each school, receive a score. The scores include both a performance index and an accountability index.
- Weston as a district has done a lot of work with the schools this year on how our absenteeism is reported. They have met as a committee to review standards, consistency, etc.
- Dr. Henckel has edited and updated district attendance policies to bring them in alignment with Shipman & Goodman and neighboring districts.
- The Attendance Committee focused on being more proactive with families and discussed supports they can offer families on chronic tardiness and absenteeism. The committee will meet in the summer to analyze the 2022-23 data.
- Dr. Henckel explained that although absenteeism is only one part of the 12 indicators, it can be the root cause of points lost on other indicators.

5. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Academic year in review presentation

6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Curiano



Academic Year In Review

2023 Highlights

Dr. Tina Henckel - Assistant Superintendent
&
District Curriculum and Instruction Leaders (K-12)

Agenda

- What were the high-leverage focus areas that led to the greatest accomplishments this academic school year?
- What were the areas of celebration and lessons learned/takeaways from your work this academic year?
- Thinking ahead, what are the proposed next steps for the district and school to continue moving the work forward?



Weston's Curriculum, Instruction and Support Leadership Members

Humanities

- Andrea Noble K-2 English Language Arts and Social Studies
- Alex Bluestein 3-5 English Language Arts and Social Studies
- Jessica DiBuono 6-12 English Language Arts
- Nicholas Torres 6-12 Social Studies

STEM

- Kelly DelVecchio K-2 Mathematics
- Carolyn Vinton 3-5 Mathematics and K-5 Science
- Janine Russo 6-12 Mathematics
- Jamie Charles 6-12 Science and Technology

Specialists

- Mercedes Fernandes K-12 World Language
- Kate O'Keefe K-12 Visual Arts
- Liz Morris K-12 Performing Arts
- Patty Powers K-12 Physical Education and Health
- Meredith Starzyk 9-12 Director of School Counseling

Summary of Presentations Aligned to Teaching and Learning

Board of Education Meetings

- September 19, 2022: Math/Reading Goals & Student Performance 2021-22
- October 17, 2022 BOE Meeting: Weston's Perspective for Continued Success & Improvement, 2022-23
- December 19, 2022: WHS Statistical Report
- February 13, 2023: Weston's Winter Progress towards Continued Success & Improvement
- March 13, 2023: Portrait of the Graduate

Board of Education - Subcommittee Meetings (Curriculum and Instruction)

- January 10, 2023: Update of the WHS Program of Studies
- February 10, 2023: Exploring Weston's Social & Emotional Learning Curriculum
- March 14, 2023: Tri-State Visit Overview
- April 18, 2023: Presentation on WHS Standardized Test
- May 8, 2023: NextGen Accountability System-Chronic Absenteeism



Weston's Academic Year in Review

- Focus Areas
- Areas of Celebration
- Takeaways
- Next Steps



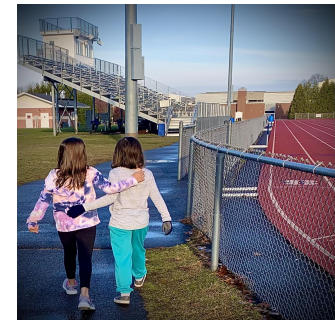
Health & Physical Education, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Integration in all grades 6-12
- Connecticut Physical Fitness Testing - cardiorespiratory fitness and flexibility components, testing environment and strategies
- Backward Design - unit planning and assessment
- Increase the Social-emotional learning experiences in the K-5 PE setting

Areas of Celebration:


- DBT incorporated in grades 6-10, reinforced in 11-12
- Health teachers worked with counselors to provide professional development for all 6-12 staff
- New performance-based assessments created in health classes
- New instructional practices in place to improve SEL in PE in K-5
- Improved RULER integration and classroom instruction/environment in K-2 health



Health and Physical Education, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Need to consistently reinforce DBT skills with students and expand DBT language/learning to parents and caregivers
- The environment and planning for fitness testing is critical
- Need more professional development in unit design, data collecting, and assessment strategies
- SEL integration improves behavior and classroom environment in both health and PE



Issue	Helpful DBT Language
Off-Task & Distracted	"I want to thank you for letting your students think. I see that you really want to stick to your track (and an feeling frustrated) as it's distracting to my teaching and interfering with the learning of everyone else in the class."
Lack of Effort	"It does seem like a lot about what going on here. There do you think this situation would be different if we approached it using our "five Rs"? Let's go back to this individually... I am not trying my best AND I should move my seat so we can focus better and reduce the distractions."
Tardiness	"I see that you are coming to class late everyday. AND I'd like to have a conversation to discuss how this impacts you, your learning, and the classroom environment."
Chronic Absence	"Let's discuss what you may be using when you choose to play a game on your chronbook when the directions are to do research for your project. How do you think this is impacting the success of your project?"
Work Completion	"I see that you are having difficulty completing assignments. I understand that you may have a lot on your plate AND I'm happy to help you create a plan to get more organized and hopefully finish all of your responsibilities."
Academic Frustration	"Why don't you take a minute to grab a water bottle and a drink of water in the hallway for a few minutes. When you come back, take a few deep breaths, and use your five Rs to help you through this. OK. I see that you are frustrated AND I think you can take a minute break in the hallway before you continue."
Overwhelmed	"I see that you are overwhelmed AND I'd like to have a conversation about how we can make this workload more manageable. First, let's see what you are able to do. Take a little break and we will talk about this when you get back."
Submissiveness	"I'd like to see you are feeling right now. Listen and share... I see that you are not AND I'd like to help you with this. OK. I see that you are not AND I am very confident that your counselor can help you navigate through this."
Disruptive	"Make a connection. Chat about anything and do it often and regularly. It's looks like you aren't ready into this AND I'm really excited to be fully engaged. How can I help you do that?"
Anxiety	"It looks like your anxiety level might be coming up here. I'd like to help you explore your thinking. Let's think about this about this. Perhaps... I don't get the grade's wanted AND next time I will study differently and let me know how I can help about of time. You are a very capable student and I am very confident you will rebound from this."

Next Steps:

- Develop a plan with health teachers and counselors to share DBT skills and common language with parents and caregivers
- Continue researching strategies to optimize fitness testing environment
- Incorporate DBT and RULER language into CPFT planning and execution
- Enhance existing health and PE units with the “end” in mind



School Counseling, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Curriculum review & update K-12
- Building resilience, coping, and social skills in individual and group counseling
- Reviewing and reinforcing building-wide behavioral expectations
- Developing of classroom and school charters and reinforcement of RULER skills in classroom lessons
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) consultation teams (Grades 6-12)

Areas of Celebration:

- Parent presentations for RULER and DBT
- RULER embedded in ELC 4's program
- PD for staff regarding SEL (DBT, managing student anxiety)
- Increased access to students through the HS advisory program
- Introduction of DBT skills group at the HS



School Counseling, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Ongoing training with RULER and DBT is needed
- Continued collaboration and communication with families around SEL skills and strategies would be beneficial
- MTSS process needs to be reviewed and revised to address Tier I strategies and processes in Tiers II and III
- Further discussion about SEL assessment strategies and data collection us needed

Next Steps:

- Implementation of School Links in Grades 6-12
- Ongoing parent workshops and presentations for DBT and RULER
- Additional training for RULER and DBT for staff
- Wellness Seminar at the HS
- Partnership with Challenge Success in Grades 9 -12



Literacy/ELA, Grades K-12



Focus Areas:

- Establishment of K-12 District Literacy Committee
- State Legislation of Literacy Curricula and assessment
- Multiple Systems of Support for all students
- Continued improvement of students' reading and writing performance

Areas of Celebration:

- Selection of new core literacy program K-5
- Budget support for full time instructional coaches
- Focus on instructional supports within the Tier 1 classroom
- Literacy experience and data demonstrates improvement from pre-pandemic levels



Literacy/ELA, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Need for developing K-12 language around literacy instruction and assessment
- Need for a broader variety of instructional supports to meet the needs of all learners
- Full time instructional coaches will support teachers more consistently and robustly in the Tier 1 classroom
- Refine and revise assessment structure across grade levels

Next Steps:

- Development of updated district and K-12 assessment calendar
- Summer update of K-12 curriculum documents to reflect vertical alignment
- Fall Implementation of new literacy program K-2
- Focused professional development on updated curricula, assessments, and instructional practices (June 16, 2023 - DIBELS 8)



Social Studies, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Assessments and instruction utilizing the inquiry arc, i.e. Guardians of the Earth project
- Skills-based instruction as a vehicle for content delivery, i.e. Learning content by analyzing sources
- Vertical articulation, i.e. 8th grade writing portfolio to inform 9th grade writing assessments

Areas of Celebration:

- Informational reading instruction to support the district reading goal
- Partnership with Weston Historical Society, and focus on local history
- Strong achievement and growth in informational reading



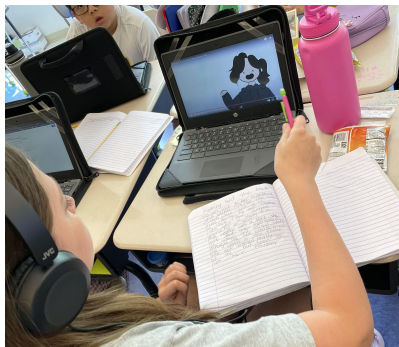
Social Studies, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Curricular revisions will reflect new standards and model curricula
- Resources to teach updated standards need to be determined
- New standards may impact allocation of K-5 instructional time

Next Steps:

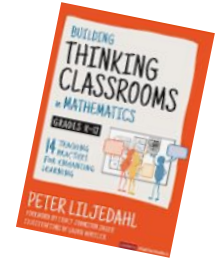
- Review new standards and statutory requirements
- Prioritize grade levels for curriculum revision as needed
- Enhance opportunities for inquiry-based learning
- Work with other departments to promote cross-curricular instruction



Mathematics, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Continuing the focus on student-centered learning strategies
- Enhancing mathematical thinking and communication through work with *Building Thinking Classroom* strategies
- Preparing for the Tri-State Consortium visit focused on metacognition and access to high-level curriculum for all students



Areas of Celebrations:

- Successful implementation of Methodology: Developing Roots in Kindergarten
- Returned to in-person parent workshops in K-5
- Implemented rigorous and engaging project-based mathematics workshop in grades 6-8 to address topics in probability and statistics
- Piloted and will be adopting a new curriculum resource in grades 6-9; Illustrative Mathematics



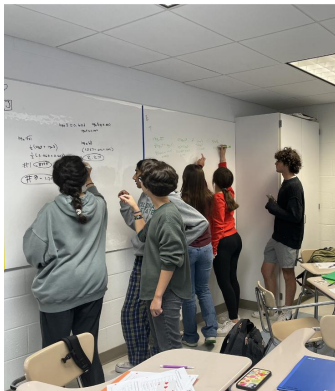
Mathematics, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Reflect and revise current instructional supports to meet the needs of all students
- Full time instructional coaches will offer more consistent support to teachers

Next Steps:

- Implement new resources in grades 6-9
- Unpack and plan for adjustments to our mathematics program based on the Tri-state feedback
- Research and pilot new resources for MTSS
- Update all curriculum documents as we move away from Atlas



Science, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Return to full Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) implementation (K-5)
- Increase student capacity in the science and engineering practices of the NGSS
- Implement tasks providing actionable data regarding student skill levels and use data to inform instruction and provide growth opportunities

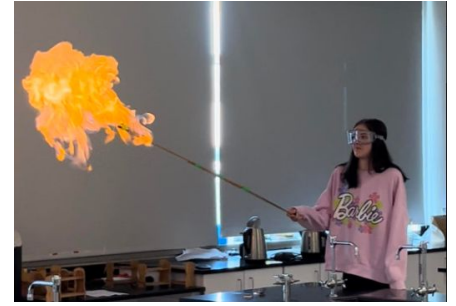


Areas of Celebration:

- Enthusiasm of young science learners
- Successful implementation of skills-based science workshop classes in MS
- Revised science and social studies interdisciplinary project (*Guardians of the Earth*) in grade 6 focusing on human impacts on environment
- Implementation of new Sustainability course at the HS in addition to district-wide Green Teams focusing on green initiatives throughout the schools, district, and the larger community



Science, Grades K-12

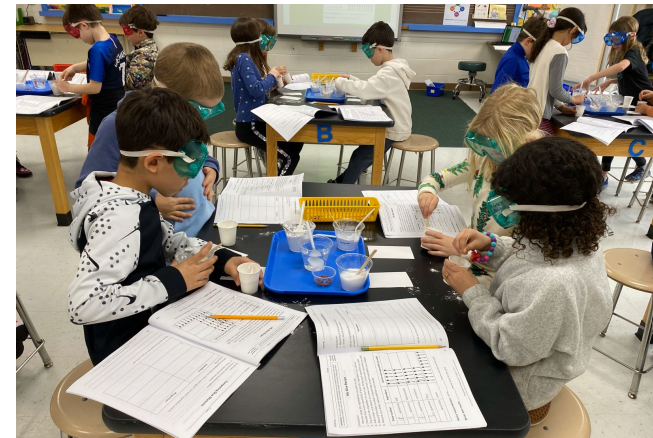


Takeaways:

- Curricular revisions will help ensure all courses remain aligned to meet necessary skill and content demands of the NGSS in K-12
- Enhanced methods for compiling and analyzing course-specific performance data on NGSS skills will help gauge student progress across grade levels

Next Steps:

- Refine ways to collect and analyze student performance data on NGSS practices throughout the year across grade levels
- Identify the most effective instructional resources that align with each curricular unit to enhance teaching and learning in accordance with the NGSS expectations
- Update all course-related curriculum documents to reflect current scope and sequence in transition from Atlas to Google drive (beginning in June 2023)



Technology Education (Information & Digital Literacy), Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Expand coding experience and enhance current MakerTech experience in K-5
- Increase exposure to Digital Citizenship lessons in K-2 (i.e. balancing screen-time)
- Scaffold the engineering design process in introductory MS and HS classes to build student confidence and skills in order to enhance the synthesis and application of new learning
- Continue to incorporate career exploration into lessons to better expose students to various STEM fields

Areas of Celebration:

- Differentiation of projects and opportunities K-12 allowing for student choice, creativity, and collaborative problem solving
- Additional 3D printers in all schools to increase access for students to observe and/or design personalized items
- Anticipated enrollment increase of over 40% in Project Lead The Way (PLTW) courses at the HS for the 23-24 school year



Technology Education (Information & Digital Literacy), Grades K-12

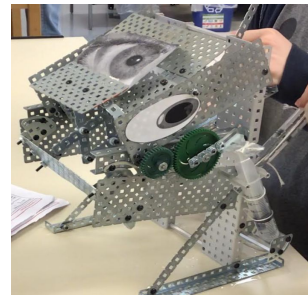


Takeaways:

- A need for more integration within the content areas, especially in K-5
- Revised schedule in grades 6-8 requires curricular adjustments to allow for opportunities to practice core skills while also engaging in inquiry and design
- Diverse skill levels of students in the HS Introduction to Engineering Design course warrants the need for both honors and standard-level courses to enhance student learning and skill progression

Next Steps:

- Continue to revise the vertical articulation of the K-8 scope and sequence to ensure the alignment of skills and expectations in accordance with Computer Science and ISTE Standards
- Continue to explore the ideal sequence of courses in the HS PLTW program to best meet students' needs and desires



Music, Grades K-12

Focus areas:

- Active listening for musicianship
- Rebuilding performing ensembles after Covid
- Aligning music criteria for assessment and measurement

Areas of Celebration:

- [Performing Arts Calendar](#)
- [22-23 Performance Opportunities](#)
- [Music in Our Schools Month](#)
- Regional, All State and National musicians
- Music Performance Trips



Music, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Focus on instrumental programs to ensure proper instrumentation and performance level
- Teacher schedules across buildings continue to be a challenge

Next steps:

- Refine the K-5 scope and sequence
- Evaluate leveled music criteria and the needs of instrumentation 6-12
- Refine common assessments and assured experiences
- Update curriculum documents K-12



Visual Arts, Grades K-12

Focus Area:

- Creation and implementation of District Wide Critique & Responding rubrics aligned with National Core Standards in the Visual Arts
- Creating more opportunities for exhibition of student work both in the community and within the district

Areas of Celebration:

- Enrollment increase in videography and photography at the HS (return to pre-pandemic)
- Return of our in-person district-wide art show: Art Jam
- Successful implementation of the revised course sequence in the 2D pathway at the HS
- Return of field trips: NYC trip to the Met, Radio City, and *Lion King* on Broadway



Visual Arts, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Vertical Alignment work will need to continue between the MS and HS due to changes at both levels and to revisit instructional practices, student engagement, opportunities to engage in responding and connecting practices

Next Steps:

- Continue the implementation and revision of the Critique & Responding Rubric K-12
- Continue increasing district-wide opportunities to exhibit student art work
- Explore course options/opportunities in the 3D Art and Design pathway at the HS
- Continue to explore opportunities to infuse STEAM implementation district wide
- Continue to explore content-based PD opportunities to promote teacher confidence and growth



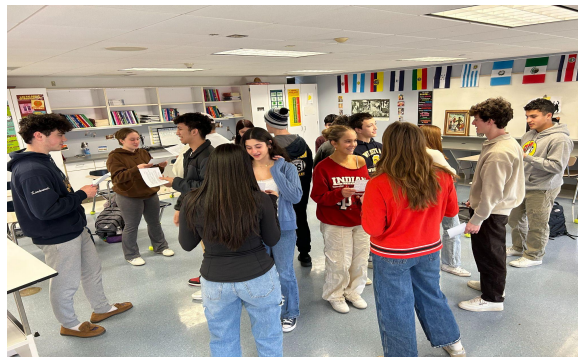
World Language, Grades K-12

Focus Areas:

- Increase oral proficiency in all modern languages
- Increase reading comprehension in all languages
- Develop perseverance in language acquisition
- Encourage academic risk-taking in a comfortable learning environment

Areas of Celebration

- A renewed enthusiasm for continuity in Spanish learning for grades K-5
- Daily World Language instruction in 6th grade
- New reading comprehension instructional activities and resources for all languages at WMS including textbooks and level readers
- Student performance in national language exams



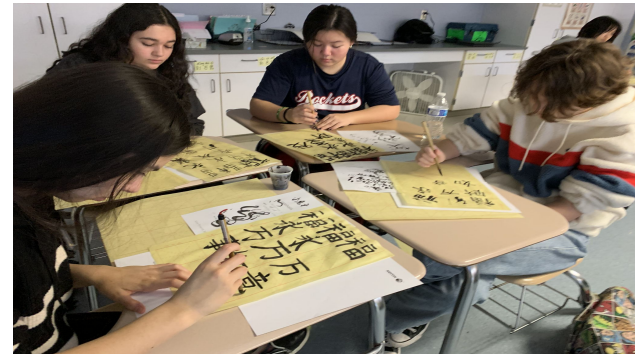
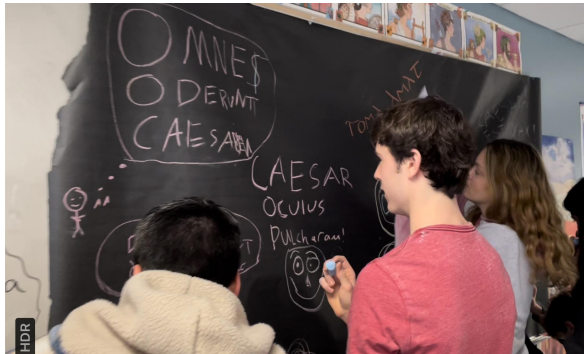
World Language, Grades K-12

Takeaways:

- Refined the use of digital resources to support instruction
- Reflected on and revised instructional supports to meet the needs of all learners

Next Steps:

- Update curricula of identified high-priority courses
- Continue to focus on increasing reading comprehension skills and vocabulary retention at all levels
- Continue to refine benchmark assessments
- Strategically partnering department staff with new teachers to provide more consistent and ongoing support



Summer Curriculum Academy ('23)

- June 21 Kickoff: Full team training grounded in research
 - Understanding by Design (Grant Wiggins & Jay McTighe)
 - Universal Design for Learning (Why, What, How)
 - Introduction of new Weston Curriculum Framework using Weston Curriculum Templates
- June 21- June 27
 - Allocation of days range from 1 to 5 full days per team
- Who is working and how will they be organized?
 - Approximately 45 teachers
 - 13 different teams across K-12
 - 7 different content areas
- **Targeted curriculum based** tasks to be completed per team
 - K-12 Scope and Sequence
 - Pacing Guide per grade
 - Unit 1 Planner and beyond



We do not learn from
experience... we learn
from reflecting on
experience.

- John Dewey

AND acting on it!

- Dr. Tina Henckel

