



## NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### **Learning & Teaching Committee Minutes**

November 18, 2020

Online

**In attendance:** Dr. Joyner (Chair of Committee), Mr. Conaway (Board Member), Mathew Wilcox,

NHBOE: Ivelise Velazquez, Dr. Paul Whyte, Dr. Iline Tracey, Lynn Brantley, Carolyn Ross-Lee, Pedro Mendia Landa, Sandra Clark, Dr. Richard Therrien, Ellen Maust, Dr. Michele Sherban, Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Ken Mathews, Rosalyn Ortiz-Diaz Jessica Haxhi

Guests: Elizabeth Gonzalez, Erica Nava, Frankie Roman, Erica Bradley, Tina Carlson, Ruben Rodriguez, Esther Woo, Qiana Dinkins, Dave Greco, Emily Hays, Brian Zahn

Mr. Conaway called the meeting to order at \_\_435\_\_.

#### **1. How do we conduct this meeting respectfully and effectively?**

M Conaway welcomed everyone to the meeting, welcomed everyone, please conduct in a respectful way. Dr. Joyner is Chair for the meeting, Ms. Velazquez is the Host, and Mr. Conaway is the Timekeeper.

#### **2. How are our community of learners and families managing in this new paradigm? Remote Learning Update - Panel of Families, Ms. Ivelise Velazquez introduced the concept of having family and community members to give input into how remote learning is going.**

Elizabeth Gonzalez - Rosalyn Ortiz Diaz, ELL Supervisor introduced. The parent spoke in Spanish about her experiences, thanks for interest in our children (5th grader and high schooler), currently has children in different schools will speak in a general way. Been a little difficult helping them and the technology is sometimes difficult. She has seen how difficult it is, feels teachers are working hard, but the technology sometimes gets in the way. To share an important point, it is difficult for the youngest children to sit in front of the computer for a long time (and she has seen this in childcare as well), Feel that screen time in class all day and then homework on the screen is too much, prefers the option of going into school. Thank for the opportunity trying to learn, thanks for all you do.

Erica Nava - Rosalyn Ortiz Diaz introduced. The parent spoke in Spanish about her experiences and Rosalyn translated. Her children (2 high schoolers) would rather be in school in person, the children in high school say that the teachers are giving a lot of online work and that they learn less in the online situation. At times something that has come up is that internet connections drop, kids have been marked absent, please take that into consideration. There is some desire that teachers are stronger with encouraging students to have cameras on or have some consequence to make sure they are more engaged.

Frankie Roman - Rosalyn Ortiz Diaz introduced. Frankie Roman, community member, represents LEAP (New haven students and college students), helps coordinate one of the 5 sites LEAP is hosting, oversees the student counselors that work with younger students. A lot of the feedback LEAP has gotten is that it is a lot for students to juggle being remote for a long period of time and keeping themselves accountable. A lot of students difficulty with the self-discipline of keeping themselves to log on, pay attention, and in addition to keep up with the work. For example at one of the Fair Haven sites, some counselors are struggling, they have risked being left behind, LEAP has set up resources for the counselors, checking up on transcripts. Also has been making sure they are set up with proper technology, some of the students have expressed difficulty with getting what they need.

Dr. Joyner paused to ask Mr. Roman some questions, commended LEAP for what they are doing, was concerned that students did not have the hardware, was under the impression that the district was supporting them. Expressed that students should reach out to the district level officials if that is an issue still. Asked that they send a list of names of students that haven't been given devices by the district. Dr. Tracey said that every student should have the access to the hardware now, as well as hotspots. Mr. Roman clarified that much of this technology support happened earlier in the spring before the district was able to distribute all these resources. Dr. Joyner emphasized that we are reaching more students now than we have ever reached. Mr. Conaway asked some questions about LEAP, they have 5 7-12 students sites and one for 13-15 year olds. They are now remote.

Erica Bradley - Jessica Haxhi, World Language Supervisor, introduced. Spoke that in March communication was good at her middle school, district resources were good. Said that the magnet high school now has been good, daughter is a self-starter, had to get used to teacher different styles, School has given child resources needed. Daughter will say she misses friends, She is a self-starter, independent, 14, has ways of communicating with friends. Parent appreciates her being home, although they do fight over the weak Wi-Fi. Appreciates how the district has supported and how difficult the job is.

Dr. Joyner appreciates the input, notes the support the student has at home as well as part of it. Emphasizes that all should realize the need for a strong work ethic to move forwards. We are doing the best we can, and wants everyone to match that commitment, keeping safety in mind.

Tina Carlson - Sandra Clark, introduced parent who has a daughter who is a junior at Wilbur Cross. Thanks for the opportunity to speak and hear different perspectives, has fortunate that there is good Wi-Fi at home and a parent working from home as well, as well as tech knowledge, that not everyone has. Another daughter special needs outplacement. In the spring, it seemed that teachers were simply dumping assignments, but appreciates all the work done in helping teachers get up and running, can see the curriculum outlines, and work. Feels that remote learning has been beneficial, getting more homework done, less of a struggle, but could be due to less other activities. She doesn't have to worry about security, crowds in the hallway and in the lunchroom. Some of the cons, lack of time with friends as a group face to face. Missing acting and the arts. Thanks again for the opportunity to share.

Ruben Rodriguez - Ellen Maust , Arts Supervisor introduces him as the Director of the Music in the School Yale partnership that enhances in the schools. Previously had been focused on concepts of ensembles. Went to all remote. Had successful summer programs that also focused on creation/composition. about 180 NHPS students in the program with about 80 Yale Music School artists working with them. Activities are optional, include weekly 30 min private lessons, group lessons that work across schools and grades, have creative music making class , music and culture that aligns music with different cultures, have a robust program with juniors and seniors that includes mentors on SATs, essays, college prep. \*\* This is also happening in other programs such as Yale Pathways to Science/Evolutions.

Esther Woo - an assistant director at the Yale Music initiative, explains they are trying to be sensitive to screen time issues, adjust expectations and provide resources that students might want at any given time, really have moved to one on one mentorship model.

Qiana Dinkins - has two sons , one in high school, one in middle school. Neither is happy about going to remote, sad about not participating in person for the music ensemble programs over the summer. They have really come to enjoy that time and the mentors are so welcoming and encouraging. They have been provided with the resources they need, including instruments. Feels very good to have people on the other side who understand what kids need during this time. The program is warm and inviting, and thanks the Yale Music Initiative.

Dave Greco - Co-Director of ARTE Inc., program that works with students after school. Virtual programs were difficult in the spring, but has been great now with Internet and hardware. Some programs were done over the summer in conjunction with YFCE Dept for thirty to forty at risk students. Credits parents for adapting to the tough task on hand. Feels that the number of non-engaged students is very low. 12 different after school programs running, 47 students signed up in virtual arts academy. Students really need a social emotional component, try to encourage cameras on so it is social and that there is interaction. Have heard a lot of students that are lonely. They were 187 families signed up for Family Science Workshops, with Yale scientists, came back from breakout rooms. (More Family Science Nights will be coming)

Ms. Velazquez and Dr. Tracey both thanked parents and community members. Dr. Joyner finds it inspirational and uplifting. Thanks all the district leaders. Mr. Conaway also thanks the Tiger Team,, and thinks we will be a better, stronger district and that we will have learned things from this. Ms. Maust talks about how she has recently attended state meetings about Social Emotional learning in the arts, and the state was complimenting New Haven on the work we have been doing to include all students, specially SEL learning

## **2. What are we doing to ensure that we continue to engage in productive conversations about equity? Productive Conversations about Race Protocol, District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) Update on the new Policy on Race and Equity**

Update from Carolyn Ross Lee impressed by committee meeting and the diversity that we show. We have switched vendors for the DELT equity work, we have been providing training and ongoing conversations, curriculum supervisors, ELA coaches, invitations already to come in

and work with several schools and work with their staff. Will also be working with Early Childhood. Have sent some district people to intensive training in the last two days, will be working with principals and APS in January. We had a large DELT advisory meeting that includes many community members., we also be working with Elm Cities (Housing) Family group and YCFE. Ms. Velazquez explains that we are about to launch large training for all administrators with Pacific Education Group, 2 days in January, followed up with some intensive summer training. Will also be looking at curriculum and applying equity lens.

Dr, Joyner compliments the work. Says we have a long way to go in this country. Do we think there will be any policy recommendations?

She explains: There is a strong equity policy that is in front of the Board that addresses this moment in time/politics, but it will stand the test of time. By using the four pillars, students, pedagogy, equity resources, family community engagement it will require us to use these values in all the system.

Ms. Velazquez says that the pillar of culturally relevant pedagogy will have a big impact and shift of the work of Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Joyner agrees, but recognizes it will require going against some preconceptions and require us to face some painful truths. The Teaching and Learning Committee reinforces the commitment

### **3. What resources are available for teachers to ensure students have access to content that is culturally relevant and engages their critical thinking? Humanities Curriculum: Black and Latino Studies and Social Justice – Sandra Clark, Supervisor of Humanities and Social Studies**

See Presentation:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/u/0/d/1bLh2gzAmDfuszmoo3B9KX0cBLDj6s76Zbe3fJ7y9\\_7E/](https://docs.google.com/presentation/u/0/d/1bLh2gzAmDfuszmoo3B9KX0cBLDj6s76Zbe3fJ7y9_7E/)

Ms Clark explained this as a follow up and some of the ways that the social studies department supports teachers. List of textbooks and resources, supplemental content and partners as well. We emphasize implications of human rights, social justice, immigration, role of government. As they study their world they study ways to solve problems and solve global and local issues, including specific people. Social studies guidance includes a strand on diversity that should be included in all teaching. She reviewed some of the partners that help us bring enriching, empowering content to students, including ethnic heritage center. For example yesterday Nov 17, was a presentation on Native American History. Mentioned the effort to include in the district calendar the effort with Danny Diaz to educate parents on meaning of holidays. Reviews the other resources and programs, including American History in Ourselves, Discovering Amistad Program, Taking Civic Action.

Ms. Velazquez emphasizes a specific point that is important in cultural shift.. takes about holidays and months that may focus on specific cultures, but this is not enough, for example on slide 4 shows how the content will engage students in critical analysis of why things are they are.

Shift away from "celebrating" diversity to focusing on what is history and how all the pieces work together, develop questioning and criticism. Focusing on what is taught and also what is left out.

Ms. Clark reviews the many partners and programs available to teachers, how they have been trained, including in project based learning. Additional resources also available for English Language Learners.

**5. Closing Remarks, Dr. Joyner**

Thanks everyone again

**Dr. Joyner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at \_\_\_557\_\_\_\_\_.**

**The next meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2020.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Therrien, Ed.D.