



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning & Teaching Committee

August 19, 2020

Online

In attendance: Mr. Conaway (Co-Chair of Committee), Mr. Wilcox, Dr. Iline Tracey, Ivelize Velazquez, Rosalyn Diaz Ortiz, Carolyn Ross-Lee, Emily Hays, Lihame Arouna, Lynn Brantley, Michele Bonanno, Michele Moore, Pedro Mendia Landa, Richard Therrien, Tessa Gumbs-Johnson, Ellen Maust, Kenneth Mathews, Sarah Miller, Adrian Huq, Tristan Ward, Kiana Flores, Jessica Haxhi

Mr. Conaway called the meeting to order at 4:31.

1. Introduction – Mr. Conaway

Mr. Conaway welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Agenda item #5 was moved here.

1. Request for Recommendation to the Board of Education of the NHPS Strategic Plan - Dr. Tracey

Dr. Tracey described how the Strategic Planning process included a number of stakeholders; it was presented at the previous Teaching and Learning Committee meeting. It has been designed for online readability. Dr. Tracey noted that it is an iterative document that can be changed as situations arise. Mr. Conaway asked if the Plan had been revised in any way since the previous time it was presented; Dr. Tracey noted that there will only be an especial focus on Social-Emotional Learning as we move forward.

MOTION: Mr. Wilcox made the motion that the NHPS Strategic Plan be sent to the full board with recommendation for adoption. Mr. Conaway seconded.

2. How can we relaunch remote learning to improve engagement and the delivery of instruction? - Ms. Velazquez and Curriculum Supervisors

Ms. Velazquez shared the “sample schedules for remote learning” document. Schools have taken these samples and made them specific to their own schools. Mr. Wilcox asked how the lunch periods may “match up” for families that have children at different levels (elementary, middle, high). Ms. Velazquez explained that school schedules will vary by school. Mr. Wilcox noted that, in remote learning, it would be good if students could all have their lunch at the same time. Mr. Conaway asked for the hybrid learning schedule; Ms. Velazquez said those would be finalized with Principals this week.

Ms. Brantley talked about how literacy instruction and curriculum will be framed during remote/hybrid learning. She described three major areas for literacy: (1) Scope and Sequence (2) Opening Units (3) Platforms for on line learning. There is a need to train students on the structures and systems they will need what they are outside of school. They also need programming, such as “Universal” and “Imagine Learning” that will assist with remote learning. When they are in-person or remote, teachers will be training students on how to use those structures and platforms so that students know what to do when

they are working at home. They plan to upgrade all licenses as of the Finance and Operations meeting on Monday. They have extended the programming so that high school students can access it up to midnight.

Mr. Conaway noted that the “new normal” may be flowing in-and-out of hybrid, in-person, and remote.

Dr. Therrien described what science will look like in the remote/hybrid model:

He explained that they intend to make remote and hybrid learning look as similar as possible so that teachers can go back and forth. Expectations for elementary science are still the same as regular years. This synchronous time should be interactive, with group work, etc. Elementary science topics to be in the year include “Why am I a scientist? How do I do science? Why do I wash my hands?” experiments with masks, etc. Experiments like these can be done at home or in-person. All grade levels have elementary online “Mystery Science” units this year; it is an online platform where students can engage in mystery-based science inquiry learning. If we return in-person, he will look into how the science kits can be utilized safely in classrooms.

For middle and high school, in-school teacher time will be saved for time that teacher is needed.

Similar activities as mentioned above will start the year. He is encouraging teachers to “chunk” instruction in two-week segments.

Mr. Conaway asked what is different for science now versus in the spring. Mr. Therrien explained that it will be organized around how to get students the hands-on experiences that they need. We have more online sources and intend to have teachers doing science experiments in front of the students. That is what we missed the most so we will try to include that as much as possible. They are also revising units so that there are plenty of activities that students can do at home, such as going outside to make observations, etc.

Mr. Mathews described math instruction in the remote/hybrid model:

Math has revised the scope and sequences of all of their courses K-12 to reflect what was and was not completed last year and to anticipate various remote and hybrid models that will be used this year. His team has adopted the following hybrid instruction models: whole group rotation, station rotation, flipped classroom and playlist model. Currently, 10 teachers are working on revising the first units for each course to work well in a remote or hybrid environment. The math department has been working to identify virtual manipulatives, both free and paid platforms. He will offer professional learning on Friday the 28th for all teachers (as are the other content areas).

Mr. Wilcox asked about concerns about student “slip” over the summer.

Mr. Mathews said that they will take a day to reactivate prior learning at the beginning of each unit, and do a pre-assessment.

Ms. Maust explained the plan for the Arts:

We intend to include all of the Arts that are usually included in the schools. In the spring, many students only did their “academic” work and not the Arts lessons as much. She is offering many supports; the two-way camera capability will allow much more work in the performing arts. She explained that teachers will have a lot more opportunity to focus on response to art, thinking like an artist, etc. with a focus on more “process over product.” She will also emphasize student choice and the being very purposeful about social-emotional components. Large ensembles will focus on individual work and composition work; students will be able to focus on building their own skills versus being part of a large ensemble.

Ms. Haxhi described the world languages hybrid/remote focus:

World language curriculum will focus on the development of proficiency skills and intentional skill development, versus coverage of any specific vocabulary or content. Teachers will be encouraged to do more formative assessments and regular feedback. World languages instruction will focus on student engagement through lessons that “spark joy,” promote social-emotional learning, are relevant and interesting for students, and use lots of visuals and videos from the target culture. The Re-entry unit for all languages and levels focuses on social-emotional learning and “lifting each other up.”

Mr. Diaz-Ortiz described the hybrid/remote plan for English Learners:

The goal is to support English Learners and support their Biliteracy students. When schools closed, students had access to Imagine Learning. It will be used for hybrid and remote for grades K-7. They are in the process of finding a platform for the upper levels.

They have a plan for how English Learner teachers will collaborate with general classroom teachers, during any of the remote/hybrid models. The plan provides visual supports for the teachers to use with students. English learners must have access to the curriculum and general education teachers will collaborate. General education teachers must know the language profiles of their students in order to assist in differentiating instruction for English Learners.

Ms. Clark, History/Social Studies Supervisor, was unavailable for this meeting.

Mr. Conaway said that he noticed that there was a different type of energy for preparing for the flow from remote to hybrid to full in-person schooling. He offered thanks to the Curriculum Supervisors, Ms. Velazquez, and Dr. Tracey.

3. How is our learning community engaging in productive conversations about racial equity and social justice? Productive Conversations about Race Protocol, District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) Update - Ms. Carolyn Ross Lee and Mr. Matt Brown

They are implementing the Courageous Conversations about Race Protocol. The Four Agreements of it are: Stay Engaged, Speak Your Truth, Experience Discomfort, and Expect and Accept Non-Closure. She showed the Courageous Conversations “Compass” which is a graphic that helps us understand our feelings during a conversation. It is essential to recognize where you are when entering a conversation so that you can understand where the other person is entering the conversation from, in order to always recognize where you and the other person are.

She showed an example of something they had discussed in their “Lunch and Learn” series. She had over 50 teachers participate in sessions this summer in which people were introduced to the Four Agreements and the Compass and key definitions of race, racism, and other terms. Her exit-survey results from teachers were overwhelmingly positive, expressing that they would like more professional learning in this area.

Ms. Ross-Lee will be sending out a survey shortly that will be used to inform future professional learning opportunities and she is looking at various initiatives such as a movie series, a book series, etc.

Mr. Conaway asked how the process could be integrated across the district so that there could be more “critical mass” of teachers and paraprofessionals who have been trained. Ms. Ross-Lee explained that this was a pilot of interested people who volunteered to participate. Ms. Velazquez explained that there is a 4-part “equity plan” that includes engaging all administrators in formal training, groups of teachers

doing anti-racist work, student voice and work including for the rollout of the Black and Latino studies courses, and parent/community engagement and meetings.

Mr. Conaway said that he would like to see this agenda item repeated so that the Teaching and Learning Committee can be regularly updated about progress.

4. Climate Change – Dr. Therrien, Science Supervisor, Ms. Arouna, Student Representative to the BOE and New Haven Climate Movement

Dr. Therrien had presented in June about how Climate Change is addressed in science classes. Students had voiced their concerns during public comment at Board meetings. Some of the students are part of the Sister City Leon Project, who are already working on a website and supporting students. Dr. Therrien has indicated to the student groups that he will ensure that teachers are addressing climate change conversation as well as addressing social and personal impacts. He mentioned that there are two areas of potential discussion: (1) In NHPS, we teach about a broad variety of environmental issues, especially those that impact urban areas, such as water/air/lead pollution, in addition to climate change. And (2) Educators teach about science in science class and the issues and impact, but to what extent should they be telling students how to live their lives.

Climate Justice Schools Initiative Proposal

Lihama Arouna from Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School, the Senior representative on the Board of Education introduced the topic and described how the New Haven Climate Movement came up with a proposal Climate Justice Schools Initiative. The full proposal can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NUx3CVXyGgCNS_S7CFTKApJlyT04_w1srQclKv5Rv-g/edit

After the introduction, the students presented to the Committee, as follows:

Adrian Huq, 2020 Graduate from Metropolitan Business Academy, entering Tufts University.

Why are we doing this?

Please see full statement below minutes.

Tristan Ward, Sophomore from New Haven Academy.

Why is this important to us?

Please see full statement below minutes.

Kiana Flores, Rising Senior at Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School.

Main Points of the Proposal

Please see full statement below minutes.

Discussion ensued about how to enable the students to move their proposal forward.

Dr. Tracey offered the students congratulations on their organized presentation and dedication to promoting their platform. She encouraged us to move forward with action steps for the students. Dr. Whyte talked about how they came through the Student Council originally. There would need to be involvement of food services, facilities, etc.

Dr. Tracey would like there to be an integrated approach, making sure that Principals, teachers, facilities, transportation, and everyone who would need to assist in implementation be involved.

Mr. Conaway requested that the Proposal be resent to board members for consideration.

Ms. Velazquez noted that a number of staff members are interested in working with the students; therefore, some time could be given to those tasks, and making sure we assist them in making the connections.

Other students present on behalf of the proposal:

Azucena Zecua-Herrera from Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden talked about how she is very passionate about this change in order to show future generations how they can make change themselves.

Tristan noted that they have close to 800 signatures on the Proposal currently.

Grace Laliberte from The Foote School expressed support for the Proposal.

Julia Kosinski from Hopkin School expressed passion for the work and thanked the Committee.

Young In Kim from Wilbur Cross High School expressed that he thinks the proposal is important to implement because their generation will inherit the planet and they need to take better care of it.

Adrian Huq will resend the proposal to all and inquired about next steps. Mr. Conaway said that he will forward it to the Board of Education, ask that interested staff members work with students, and then have the students come back to this Committee to review it again. Mr. Conaway praised the students' presentation and engagement. Dr. Therrien asked students to review future curriculum units.

Dr. Therrien and Ms. Velazquez will reach out to the students in order to assist them in navigating the process for working with other staff members in New Haven Public Schools.

5. Closing Remarks, Mr. Conaway

Mr. Conaway emphasized that school will be starting September 3, 2020. It is the Board's goal to get students back into schools as soon as possible, as quickly and safely as possible.

Ms. Velazquez recognized Ms. Tessa Gumbs-Johnson for the hard work she has done in the past few weeks to implement teacher and parent trainings to prepare everyone for remote learning. Ms. Gumbs-Johnson described how effective teacher-peer teaching has been for the trainings and the positive feedback she has received.

Mr. Conaway sent deepest condolences to Dr. Joyner on behalf of himself and the Committee. Dr. Joyner had a loss in his family today.

- **Mr. Conaway made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07PM. Ms. Haxhi seconded the motion.**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Haxhi

Statements from Students on the Climate Justice Schools Initiative Proposal

From Adrian Huq, 2020 Graduate from MBA, entering Tufts University:

Why are we proposing this?

At my old high school, Metropolitan Business Academy, I had multiple positive experiences around climate education due to my science teachers wanting their students to truly learn about climate change. However, not everyone has had that same quality climate education across the district or can vouch for the fact that their science units adequately covered climate change. It's time to ensure all NHPS students have access to quality climate change and climate justice education in order to make sure they are aware of the most pressing issue we are facing as a planet, the social and ethical implications of the crisis, and equip them with the knowledge they need in order to make informed decisions regarding their lifestyles.

Teaching climate change is a key part of teaching youth about the changing world around them that they will be inheriting. This education can even help create the leaders we need if we are going to tackle this global emergency. Additionally, passing this proposal is in line with the Climate Emergency Resolution that our group helped to pass in New Haven last summer. New Haven has declared a climate emergency, but it's time for us as a city to start treating the issue as the emergency that it is. A key part of that passed resolution was for the city to commit to educating New Haven residents on the climate crisis, and that should include our youth, who happen to be one of the most vulnerable populations when it comes to climate change. Thank you.

From Tristan Ward, Sophomore at New Haven Academy:

Why is this important to us?

As we all know we face an unprecedented crisis. The climate crisis that the world's renowned scientists at the UN has been warning the world for a long time. Government officials from all levels of the political structure, domestic and international must work together to save our planet. This could be characterized as the next pandemic that is starting to show signs of effects now but as years go by, we will see the damage we have caused. There will be less reliable sources of clean drinking, droughts, extreme heat food shortages, mass migrations stronger and more frequent storms. New Haven has an opportunity to take a stand against this future even when our federal government doesn't display this leadership. Our city has a contract with our citizens to represent our interests and the city must uphold this contract and be that catalyst for change in the pursuit of equity for all. By building on the foundation already taught by teaching about environmental racism and who is benefiting from destroying the planet they will become better thinkers and question this status quo. We feel it is irresponsible to leave our generation in the dark about who are the stakeholders in destroying the climate because we are going to be most affected by it. Thank you.

From Kiana Flores, rising senior from Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School:

Once again, thank you for allocating this time for us to discuss the Climate Justice Schools Proposal. As a quick overview, the CJS proposal is a student-led implementation of climate education in New Haven Public Schools. The proposal outlines the need for at least 30 hours of interdisciplinary climate education per grade level. The proposal also indicates that these hours should also be fulfilled using student-led school-wide activities and an allocated climate week and the implementation of project-

based learning surrounding climate change mitigation, such as reducing greenhouse gases through cleaner means of school transportation.

However, what makes this proposal incredibly unique and would represent New Haven as a climate action leader, would be its encouragement of climate awareness outside the classroom. The proposal lists that schools should encourage students to apply 10% or more of their required community service to be filled by climate change/sustainability-related volunteering. Additionally, enacting the proposal would allow schools to take environmentally progressive steps to implement meatless Mondays, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transportation, creating energy-efficient buildings, and phasing out single-use plastics in cafeterias. All of these are necessary to educate students through peers and teachers on the reality of the climate crisis and the steps required to mitigate the plethora of issues it carries.