

**NORWALK BOARD OF EDUCATION
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 13, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Mike Lyons, Chair; Mike Barbis, Sherelle Harris, Shirley Mosby.

STAFF: Tony Daddona, Deputy Superintendent, Christina Fensore, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Special Ed. Administrators: Robin Ives, Sara Legister, Kristen Mosher; BMHS: Suzanne Koroshetz, Tom Seuch, Rebecca Pavia, Rob Ayala; NHS: Reginald Roberts, Adam Reynolds, Jackie Aarons, Emma Perez-Rodriguez.

OTHER: Bruce Mellion, NFT

Call to Order

Mr. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m. and stated that members in attendance were as listed above and there was a quorum present.

Update on NEASC Process – BMHS and NHS

The following administrators and teachers on the NEASC accreditation teams contributed to the presentation:

Norwalk High School: Principal Reginald Roberts, Adam Reynolds, Housemaster;
Department Chairs: Jackie Aarons, Emma Perez-Rodriguez., English
Brien McMahon High School: Suzanne Brown Koroshetz, Tom Seuch, Science Department Chair and Interim Curriculum Specialist, Rebecca Pavia, Math; Rob Ayala, Social Studies.

NEASC binders and self-study assessments were distributed and power point presentations were made, with key summary pages as follows (and attached, pages 5-6).

Mr. Roberts gave an overview of the NEASC accreditation process:

The Association's **purpose** is exclusively educational. It serves the public and the educational community by:

- Establishing and maintaining *high standards* of educational excellence.
- Utilizing *evaluation processes* focus on self-improvement through effective peer review.
- Member schools voluntarily undertake an exhaustive self-study involving the participation of faculty, administrators, staff, students, community members, and board members.
- A committee of peers visits the institution to evaluate its adherence to stated standards, making recommendations that will lead to school improvement.
- School personnel then respond to report by designing and implementing short-term and long-rang plans for improvement.

Mr. Roberts noted that the visitation begins March 122, 2015 and he reviewed the process and staff involvement. Mr. Reynolds presented the timelines (Attached page 5-6).

Ms. Aarons reviewed the self study standards and explained that it serves as the guideline for the establishment of core values, and noted the Self-study reports approved by faculty:

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations Chairs: Lauren DeLong, Doug Marchetti

Standard 2 Curriculum - Chairs: Rob Karl, Kurt Simonsen

Standard 3 Instruction - Chairs: Kyle Heaslip, Sean Ireland

Standard 4 Assessment Student Learning - Chairs: Chris Laughton, Pat O'Shaughnessy

Standard 5 School Culture and Leadership - Chair: Larry Anastasia

Standard 6 School Resources for Learning - Chairs: Lynn Payton, Dan Sullivan

Standard 7 Community Resources for Learning- -Chair: Clare Juden

There was discussion about the new school report card that is separate from grades that will be mailed out next week. (attached page 9) Seven School-Wide Rubrics are Effective Writing (English Department) Reading for and Gathering Information (Social Studies) Oral Communication (World Languages Department) Problem Solving and Critical Thinking (Mathematics Department) Multimedia Presentation (Business and Science Departments) Collaboration and Participation (Art, PE, Health, and Music Departments) Service with Global Awareness (Advisory and JROTC)

Principal Koroshetz gave an overview of the process and introduced the members of the BMHS Planning for Excellence Committee. She spoke of the similarities of the self-study that has been on-going since 2012 but the NEASC visit timing is over one year later, which is May 2016. Mr. Seuch reviewed the self study standards and explained that it serves as the guideline for the establishment of core values (attached page 8)

Report and Discussion on Special Education Matters

Ms. Christina Fensore provided the following update:

Throughout the course of the 13-14 school year and up to today, the Department of Pupil Personnel Services has begun, completed and continues many initiatives to move special education forward within Norwalk Public Schools. The hard work and dedication of the staff to our students has helped lay the groundwork for significant changes to the quality of evaluations and programming within our schools.

The major areas that have been addressed include preschool program development, support for students with Autism and other social/emotional needs, assistive technology, teaching and learning, and decentralized decision making.

The pupil service administrative team has analyzed existing program design. This was done through discussions with staff and building administration, review of student need and observations within the schools.

With this, the special education administrators also did extensive research into effective program models in other public schools as well as private school settings. Using best practices in the field, we have been able to make decisions that have greatly impacted the continuum of services and recommendations have been made for further enhancement to existing service models within the district as well as additional models for consideration.

Update on steps NPS is taking to address the recommendations of the CREC Reports

Ms. Fensore provided an outline to address the accomplishments on CREC recommendations as follows: She fielded questions and comments throughout the discussion and there was an exchange of dialogue.

Pre-K Needs:

- Creation of Pre-K “task force” during the 13/14 school year. This includes a BCBA, Director of PPS, Pre-K Instructional Specialist, Special Education Supervisors, OT/PT supervisor and contracted Pre-K curriculum specialist. This team meets on a regular basis to discuss training and support to special education Pre-K teachers.
- Implementation of Pre-K Curriculum Frameworks for teaching and assessing (now shifting to the use of Early Learning and Development Standards). Teachers worked on creation of a document that assists in writing standards-based IEP goals/objectives.
- Consultation with teams and BCBA for students with Autism and behavior needs
- Training of teachers and paraprofessionals in a site-based coaching model
- Incorporation of special education pre-k teachers in training with School Readiness classrooms and other Norwalk community preschools. This has included work in early literacy skills. This work has also been in connection with kindergarten readiness.
- Discussions and proposal for district ABA preschool programming (including BCBA and ABA therapists).
- All Pre-K students in the integrated programs are being assessed with the PELI.

Autism/Emotional Disturbance Program Opportunities

- Contracted services with doctoral level BCBA’s for consultation/training of staff
- District-wide PD of social workers, psychologists, and speech/language pathologists in the use of the Michelle Garcia Winner social skills curriculum. (13/14 school year)
- 13/14 school year training for all school psychologists and social workers in cognitive behavior therapy
- Provision of ABA therapists and BCBA support where necessary for students with Autism
- Training of psychologists, social workers and SLPS in the principles of ABA therapy (14/15 school year)
- District-wide PD for paraprofessionals in handling difficult behaviors in the classroom (14/15 school year)
- 14/15 school year training was provided in the social thinking curriculum on a more complex level by 1 psychologist, 2 social workers and 1 SLP. This group plans to work with their colleagues in a “train the trainer” model.

Assistive Technology

- Contract developed with an independent AT evaluator/implementer to complete evaluations and work with teams (school personnel, students and families) for training and follow through — began during 13/14 school year and continues.
- AT evaluator/consultant meets and collaborates with district IT department
- Use of iPads and Chromebooks for specific students with disabilities across the district based on recommendations of evaluations
- 14-15 school year — full day training with all middle school special education teachers on the use of Google Docs

- Coordination of all middle schools in the use of Google Docs for science curriculum
- Increased technology used to support reading and math instruction with carry-over to the homes of identified students (through apps and websites). This includes parent training through home visits and assessing home needs.
- Use of Bookshare at all levels
- Special Education teachers are using CORE 5 (Lexia) at all levels to support reading
- Use of Read 180 and System 44 at Middle School level
- District site license for use of Read and Write for Google

Increase Focus on Teaching and Learning

- Training of several special education teachers in Orton Gillingham, PAF, Wilson Reading and Lindamood-BeII. (13-14 school year)
- Co-Teaching training attended by 4 teams from middle and high schools. These teams then presented the training to respective schools on 11/4/14 PD day.
- Special Education teachers at the K-5 level participated in Journeys training for differentiation of materials.
- Special education teachers at the elementary level have all been trained in the use of mClass in assessing students. Special education administrators are working with the teachers in use of this data to inform instruction as well as to write IEP goals/objectives.
- Consultation with reading specialist when necessary for specific student programming.
- Special education administrators participate in regular district level curriculum meetings.
- Quarterly meetings with representative from SDE to review/update on department accomplishments
- All school psychologists have been trained and are using the WISC V for cognitive assessments.
- Special education supervisors are participating in school-level team meetings to discuss student data and progress.

Decentralized decision making

- Bi-weekly meetings of pupil service administrative team
- Focus on best ways to communicate procedures to school teams
- Pupil Services involvement in principal meetings
- Development of protocol for extended resource room assignments
- During the 14-15 school year quarterly department meetings have been taking place with special education teachers, psychologists, social workers and SLPs for updates on procedures and policies as well as to inform them of any changes from the state and federal level.

Mr. Mellion stated that having additional behavior specialists hired is a long-over due part in bringing Special Education services in line with the CREC report. He added that we need to be to provide the resources required to implement the well developed plans as outlined by Ms. Fensore.

Update on plans to construct a SPED Pre-K facility at Roosevelt Center

Ms. Fensore reported that the BOE and City have approved the project, there were architect presentations to the Land Use and Facilities Committees that presented drawings and a schematic of the layout of the classrooms.

Ms. Fensore gave an overview on the plans that include:

- Renovations to the bathrooms to provide toddler sized toilets and sinks
- Logistics plans to accommodate increased traffic and drop-off/pick-up parking lot patterns.
- consolidation of classrooms allows for more efficient and effective use and freeing up much-needed space in s more crowded schools and consolidation of out of district placements.
- The second phase will include further enhancements, therapy rooms, occupational/physical education gym, technology-enhanced center, and additional classrooms.

Questions and comments from the members were fielded including the 50-50 mix of special needs students into Pre-K tuition classes. Ms. Fensore noted that the program is tuition funded used to support the consultants and administrative operations.

Update on plans to initiate a program for in-housing SPED children

There was discussion on the development of long-range planning for reducing out of district placements for special education. It was noted that the Behavior Specialists are funded in the budget and this will begin the onset of both in school visits and home training.

There was discussion on para-professional roles and responsibilities. Mr. Spahr spoke about how there is no certification required for para-professionals in Special Education beyond a GED equivalency, and this is a state issue not necessarily an isolated issue in the district. He noted the importance of communicating the student issues and IEP with the para-professional so that they are aware of the disability and the individual needs of the student.

Mr. Barbis noted that during in the NFEP negotiations it was outlined that training would be provided as part of the contract. Ms. Fensore explained that it is difficult to arrange with work-day schedules as coverage has to be provided for the students, but they are trying to arrange professional day training throughout the year on non-school days. Mr. Mellion spoke about on-line training available and courses at NCC that are recommended as appropriate whether classroom instructional, behavior intervention, special education or office skills.

There was a discussion on school over-crowding and the need for a facilities utilization plan. Mr. Barbis reported that there will be two additional portables at Jefferson School, as reported by Mr. Hodel. He expressed concern that the school is extremely over-crowded and the layout is not conducive to this portable layout with traffic patterns and a very congested campus and the absence of sufficient playground areas.

There was a discussion about schedules and Mr. Daddona reported that uniform scheduling is in development with the high school reform and they are working on a preliminary plan of letter day and block scheduling that will transition next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Knox, Telesco Secretarial Services

Documents attached: NEASC Accreditation Timelines:
Norwalk High School - Brien McMahon High School
Core Values – Self Study Guidelines

Norwalk Board of Education
Curriculum & Instruction Committee
January 13, 2015
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Norwalk High School – NEASC Accreditation Timeline

- 2011-2012 Develop Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations
- 2012-2013 Develop School-Wide Rubrics to Assess Student Progress Learning Expectations
- Pilot School-Wide Rubrics
 - Develop Plan for Completion of Self-Study, Including Preliminary Selection of Committee Chairs
- 2013-2014: *Self-Study*
- Report on Whole-School and Student Progress According to School-Wide Rubrics
 - Reflection
- 2014-2015
- Completion of *Self-Study* with 2014-2015 Update
 - Combining of School-Wide Rubrics to Report on Whole-School and Student Progress
 - Preparing for March 2015 Visit: Sunday, March 22, 2015
 - Sunday morning visiting committee arrives at hotel
 - P.M: **Attendance Requested:** BOE/Central Office, NHS Staff, Parents, Students, Community Members - Panel Presentation in NHS auditorium
 - Monday, March 23, 2015 and Tuesday, March 24, 2015
 - Regular days of school
 - Facilities tour conducted by students
 - Shadowing students including lunch
 - Classroom visits
 - Meetings with committees and groups (*specific date to be determined*)
 - Wednesday, March 25, 2015
 - Regular day of school
 - Possible shadowing students including lunch
 - Possible classroom visits
 - Meetings with committees and/or individuals
 - Visiting committee will present a sample of commendations and recommendations to entire staff after school

Critical Strengths and Needs

○ *Top 5 Critical Strengths*

1. Norwalk High School has a wide variety of clubs and extracurricular activities during and after-school, as well as courses that are offered that encompass a wide range of interests in the diverse student body.
2. Within its daily schedule, Norwalk High School provides formal time for common planning, as well as time to analyze assessment data and revise assessments in each department.
3. Collaboration of teachers to personalize strategies according to students' needs, frequently resulting in authentic learning through multiple types of media.
4. The commitment by teachers to expand their knowledge base in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices through higher education, pedagogical research, professional organizations, and/or personal endeavors.
5. The wealth of experience and knowledge that the licensed and certified personnel possess.

Brien McMahon High School - NEASC Timeline

2011

- Sept – Jun: Philosophical conversations about Core Values, Beliefs & Learning Expectations (CVBLE) among students, parents, and teachers
- Met with district personnel including Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent, and Curriculum Specialists to discuss NEASC needs and concerns

2012

- Mar: More in depth conversations about CVBLE among students, parents, and teachers
- Oct: CVBLE vote with faculty
- Oct: Technology concerns and needs for NEASC voiced to Director of Information Technology
- Nov: Introduction to Rubrics
- Nov: Substantive Changes Report submitted to NEASC
- Dec: Presentation of BMHS CVBLE to the Board of Education
- Dec: First Meeting of the Minds

2013

- Jan: Submitted Pre-Self Study Report submitted to NEASC
- Jan: Began rubric design process based on school wide learning expectations
- Spring: BOE Chairperson meets with Steering Committee to discuss concerns and needs
- Mar: Professional conversations surrounding new rubrics
- Apr – May: Rubrics piloted throughout the building
- Jan-Dec: Collaborative meetings with NHS/Central Office to discuss curriculum templates
- Meeting of the Minds held monthly

2014

- Jan: Substantive Change Follow-Up Report submitted to NEASC
- Mar: Assign faculty to NEASC Standard Committees
- Apr: Sign-up faculty for Google Drive and practice using resources
- May: Follow-up survey to parents & students to evaluate appropriateness of CVBLE
- Jun: NEASC Steering Committee attends Pre-Self Study Conference
- Sept – Dec: NEASC Standard Committees gather evidence and upload to Google Drive
- Nov: Ned Gallagher, Associate NEASC Director, visits BMHS for pre-self-study meeting

2015

- Jan: NEASC Standard Committees finish gathering evidence
- Endicott survey taken by students, parents, and professional staff
- Feb - May: Writing of report
- Jun: Final draft completed

2016

- Sept - Feb: Voting on standards
- Feb: Submit report to NEASC
- May: NEASC Visit

BRIEN McMAHON HIGH SCHOOL

Core Values:

Brien McMahon High School will prepare all students for the challenges of the 21st century by inspiring intellectual curiosity and fostering our students to become responsible, ethical, and innovative members of a global society.

Beliefs about Learning:

Students learn best when....

- They are active and engaged in their own learning
- Parents/Guardians take an active and supportive role in their child's education on a daily basis
- Teachers promote a high level of intellectual curiosity by presenting students with dynamic, relevant (personalized), rigorous lessons
- There are clear and consistent expectations and rules for all students, faculty, staff and administrators
- There is a safe, supportive, respectful and collaborative environment

Learning Expectations:

BMHS students, as innovative problem solvers, will draw upon prior knowledge to sustain active inquiry, and take educated risks as critical thinkers.

BMHS students, as ethical members of a diverse society, will demonstrate an understanding of civic rights and duties by positively and responsibly contributing to the school and larger community.

BMHS students, as 21st century communicators, will be able to listen, to write, speak and present ideas effectively.

BMHS students, as engaged learners will be responsible for their learning and effectively contribute to the learning environment.

NHS School-Wide Rubrics • NHS School-Wide Rubric Report

Norwalk High School
2014-2015 School Wide Rubric

► Seven School-Wide Rubrics

- **Effective Writing** (English Department)
- **Reading for and Gathering Information** (Social Studies Department)
- **Oral Communication** (World Languages Department)
- **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking** (Mathematics Department)
- **Multimedia Presentation** (Business and Science Departments)
- **Collaboration and Participation** (Art, PE, Health, and Music Departments)
- **Service with Global Awareness** (Advisory and JROTC)

Abrams, Caroline Eloise - Grade: 9

Throughout the year across all classes, Norwalk High School students are assessed as to how they are meeting the academic, social, and civic competencies according to the 21st century learning expectations found in the school wide rubrics. The goal is for students to earn at least 15 out of a possible 20 points for each expectation. More detail can be found online on our school website as well as in the PowerSchool Parent and Student Portals.

Academic Competencies

- Students will demonstrate effective literacy skills by communicating through writing, reading, and speaking.
- Students will be critical thinkers and effective problem solvers in real-world settings.
- Students will use technology ethically and effectively to enhance their learning.

Social Competencies

- Students will work effectively as a collaborative member of a group.
- Students will participate responsibly in their education.
- Students will communicate an understanding and empathy for global perspectives.

Civic Competencies

- Students will demonstrate the ability to be contributing members of their community.

	Q1	Q2	S1	Q3	Q4	S2	Y1
Reading for and Gathering Information							
Vocabulary and Diction							
Cognition and Comprehension							
Analysis and Evaluation							
Purpose of Text and Conclusion							
Ethical research							
Oral Communication							
Engagement and Body Language							
Use of Language							
Content and Organization							
Volume and Clarity							
Fluency							
Multimedia Presentation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

• *Top 5 Critical Needs*

1. Establish a formal structure and process to ensure effective and direct communication between the building leader and the school staff, as well as transparency in important decisions around the priorities of the school rooted in the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
2. Improve current state of technology to better meet the needs of the school's 21st century learning expectations.
3. Analyze and investigate class size and composition, especially in classes with special education students and English Language Learners.
4. Develop a long-term plan to aggressively identify curriculum, instruction, assessment, policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations that require alignment of the school's core values and beliefs about learning as well as the school's learning expectations.
5. Reduce staff cuts to limit the impact on the number of courses offered.