



Torrington Public Schools

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TPS Secondary Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting Thursday, October 18, 2018, 5:30 PM THS Library Media Center MINUTES

1. Call to Order 5:32 PM
2. Roll Call: Ed Arum, Jill Baranowitz, Dave Bascetta, Darlene Battle, Kelly Browning, Fiona Cappabianca, Joanne Creedon, Patricia David, Gary Eucalitto, Sue Fergusson, Roni Gelormino, Ellen Hoehne, Diane Holland, John Kissko, Donna Labbe, Robin Ledversis, Mario Longobucco, Sue Lubomski, Sandy Mangan, Charlie McSpirtt, Peter Michelson, Bryan Olkowski, Wendy Pataky, Kathi Peterson, Jeff Putnam, Jess Richardson, Jeff Shannon, Kim Schulte, Tina Schultz-Milanese, Jasmine Skarupa, Andy Skarzynski, Joann Stefurak, Hilary Sterling, Allie Therrien Guest: Idalmis Calderon
3. Approval of Minutes: Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Kissko. All in favor.
4. Sub-Committee Assignments – See Attached
5. Break Out Session Summaries:

FACILITIES

Discussed high school construction projects--will review projects at next meeting
Reviewed maintenance items for high school--approximate cost \$45 million
Committee agreed on a 7-12 school, with separate addition for 7th and 8th grade
Discussed accessible parking in back of school
Need to find out reimbursement rate and allowable square footage
Need last 3 years of enrollment numbers
Reviewed dates--final report end of December 2018, BOE approval January 2019, hire architect February 2019, referendum 2020, file state forms by June 2020

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

SURVEYS:

- Do we want to use google forms, survey monkey, etc?
- Donna will look into survey monkey and its capabilities
- What is our audience? Parents use Facebook, Twitter, students use Instagram/Snapchat
- Remind app can be used at a district level for parents
- We have a low percentage of parent participation with surveys (10%-15%)
- What about doing a blast email to communicate?

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- Need to use multiple modalities to communicate
- Go to our audience-at work, at home
- How can we use parent-teacher conference days/nights?
- Make a template for survey and stick with the same template--hopes and dreams?
 - Surveys to parents that have kids going to another school
 - top/bottom 3 things at your child's school
 - What do they love?
- Share information with Tim Gaffney--what do we want to share?
- Debunk rumors
- Survey launch campaign
 - Flyers
 - Tim's magazine
- Survey alumni and start keeping in touch with them; ask them to have names on survey so we can use the comments as a marketing tool
- New website coming
- Community "forums" in various parts of town
- Look through Endicott survey to choose questions to create our own surveys
- Celebrate what is offered at THS--sports, arts, music, course offerings
- Create an inventory of all the positive things district wide sent weekly
- Use TPSProud@torrington.org and TPS Facebook page to be used to dispel rumors and provide accurate information
- What Pathways are students interested in? (include as a survey question)
- Survey monkey gold

Next Steps

- Look through Endicott survey for possible questions
- Donna to send group email for Endicott
- Choose questions for surveys--geared toward parent/teachers/alumni/students
 - Keep it short. 6-10 question surveys is what we're looking for
 - Comment box

SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL MODELS

Pros (7-12)

- 7th and 8th graders on same campus will feel more of a connection to their high school; they will know all the good things happening at high school
- Stop students from leaving the district after 8th grade
- Need new facilities/addition if this model is adopted
- Students will have access to high school courses and labs that are not available in middle school
- Save money with bussing
- Better option to offer electives that may create additional pathways for students.
- Helps with getting content area certified teachers with 7-12 certification in one building.
- An alternative school should be included with this model.
- If district adopted School-Based Health Center, they could service students across 6 grades instead of either 3 or 4.

Cons

- Cost of new building to accommodate this concept
- Could be difficult separating the middle schoolers from the high schoolers

- Bussing would include middle and high school students
- Decision: a middle school model for 7 and 8 or a junior/senior high school model?

Pros (8-12)

- Could be a hook to keep 8th graders who may leave to stay in district at the high school.

Cons

- Not a good model as 8th graders are not high schoolers and will be isolated from other students in grades below and above them.

Pros (9-12) (this was not discussed as it is our current model)

Cons (this was not discussed as it is our current model)

Pathways

Do we want to select pathways that align with our community's strengths or do we want to pick something that no one else is doing? Or can we do some of both based on what students requests are? How many pathways can our district support?

- Torrington is an Arts town. There is a lot of competition in area for our students. Are there a lot of careers for students in this field? The Arts do create opportunities for students to be creative.
- Applied arts need to be explored
- There are many STEM and Manufacturing companies who we could partner with.
- Not a lot of schools in area that focus on Marketing/Finance/Business – do a trading floor? Cybersecurity classes? Offer certificate programs – selling real estate and/or insurance? Graphic design? Fashion design? Perhaps there is a link between business and the arts?
- Medical field offers careers that a lot of students will find jobs. Could align with local hospital- CNA, medical coding, LPN, Ultra sound tech, etc.
- Education academy will offer opportunities for district to team with students to “grow our own” teachers and paraprofessionals, etc.

What is the state of Connecticut willing to support? Is there a pathway that they are funding?

What schools are doing these pathways well?

What electives do middle schoolers really want? How do we expose our students to careers?

- We need to design a high school experience, so our kids can have a purpose in life? How can we give our students a larger voice in our schools?
- How do high school mandated courses impact our chosen pathway(s)?
- We have to help our kids find their passion and connect to opportunities they may not know about in our schools.

Next Steps

- Research the 7-12 models that have existing Pathways Programs that include alternative education
- Research funding opportunities provided by the state department of education
- Identify additional staff that would be needed once Pathways have been chosen-future

CURRENT COURSE OFFERINGS

We need to define what we mean by a Career Pathway.

Current Course Offerings:

- Are our course offerings comprehensive enough? Broad enough? Do they align with the New Graduation Requirements
- Courses in our Course Offerings Booklet are not all available. They are left in the booklet because all courses need approval from BOE. They don't remove it because it is a long process to get approval.
- We only offer what the state requires us to offer.
- Do they incorporate 21st Century Skills?

What courses/pathways do we need to offer to make the high school competitive with the other high schools our students are choosing?

Possible missing pieces at the high school: connections, communication, engagement

We need to provide courses that hook kids.

We need a framework that includes course, clubs, and activities (help kids make connections)

Differentiate senior year so students remain excited and engaged.

Do we need a Capstone Project?-(future discussion)

Freshmen Year: Offer exploratory courses to help kids find areas of interest and/or pathways.-(future discussion once the Pathways have been chosen)

Areas of concern we need to address:

- Absenteeism
- Antiquated grading system
- Standards Based curriculum

Sue Fergusson will bring to the next meeting:

- New Graduation Requirements
- Information about 21st Century Skills
- Course Catalog copies for each person

6. Adjournment: Ms. Hoehne made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Mr. Eucalitto. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.