



Torrington Public Schools

**Packet for SIC Meeting**

*April 19, 2023*



## Torrington Public Schools

SUSAN M. LUBOMSKI  
SUPERINTENDENT

SUSAN B. FERGUSSON  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

### **School Improvement Committee Wednesday, April 19, 2023, 6:00 P.M. Southwest School**

There will be an opportunity to call in and speak as noted in the body of the agenda during public comment. Those calling in will need to state their name and address for the record and will be subject to the same rules as for in-person participation. Dial-in number: (425) 436-6343 Access Code: 225583

The meeting may be watched live via this link <https://vimeo.com/event/26843> The link is also published in the Board of Education section of the website. If you are participating in public comment, please mute the live stream while you are speaking.

### **Agenda**

*Comments may be solicited at any time during the meeting as recognized by the Chair*

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Public Participation: *Members of the public and staff may bring to the committee's attention information, ideas, or matters of concern related to all the duties and responsibilities of this committee. This committee will not allow comments regarding specific staff members or personal grievances. The time for individual remarks will be apportioned according to the number of speakers and will be limited to five minutes per speaker unless extended by the chair.*
6. Discussion and Next Steps:
  - a. Southwest School Report
  - b. Distinguished Alumnus Update
  - c. K-5 Update
  - d. Social Promotion/Retention Study

- e. Systemwide Focus Areas: (Attendance, Engaging and Differentiated Instruction, Targeting Student Needs, Community Outreach: Student, Parent, and Community Engagement)
  - f. TAG Update, Student Services Report
  - g. Alliance Updates
7. Topics for Future Meetings: Homogeneous vs. heterogeneous grouping, school climate, pathways update, facilities realignment, online materials as replacements for textbooks, AP access, personal finance and community service requirements, four-year college acceptance/retention, needs analysis, personal finance, community service, and dress code violation report.
  8. Comments for the Good of the Order
  9. Adjournment

Next Meeting: May 3rd, Torrington High School

Future Meetings: June 7<sup>th</sup>, Torrington Middle School



## Torrington Public Schools

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### School Improvement Committee Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 6:00 P.M. Forbes School Cafeteria

#### Minutes

1. Call to Order: 6:07 P.M.
2. Roll Call: Mr. Kissko, Ms. Richardson, Ms. Hoehne, Ms. Todor  
Also Present: Ms. Cappabianca, Mr. Putnam, Ms. Schulte, Ms. Veins, Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Fergusson, Dr. Deacon, Mr. DePretis (Remote), Mr. Barlow, Ms. Klimaszewski (Remote), Mr. Clyne, Mr. Scott (Remote)
3. Approval of Agenda: Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Ms. Richardson. All in favor.
4. Approval of Minutes: Ms. Hoehne made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Ms. Todor. All in favor
5. Public Participation: None
6. Discussion and Next Steps:
  - a. Forbes School Report: Mr. Kissko walked the halls of Forbes school and saw children engaging in purposeful learning. Mr. Clyne, principal, shared a report on Forbes school. The kids and the teachers are working hard. We are on an even higher trajectory this year. Ms. Cappabianca stated that the building looks great.
  - b. Distinguished Alumnus Update: Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup> was the deadline. Ms. Fergusson handed out the packets for the committee members to take home. There were 11 nominees this year. Unofficial meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> 5:30 P.M. Southwest School.
  - c. OTL Presentation: Reading Program: Ms. Fergusson and Dr. Deacon shared the presentation. Ms. Fergusson shared the timeline with the board – this conversation began more than 4 years ago. The State has now extended their deadline to July 1, 2025. “We do not believe that we can wait any longer. Our proposal does not align with the State’s timeline.” – Ms. Fergusson stated. The Board watched a presentation video entitled *What is the Science of Reading?*

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Torrington Board of Education.

The legislation mandates one core program that is focused on competency in the following areas of reading: oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, rapid automatic name or letter name fluency, and reading comprehension. The CSDE's CORE review team consisted of 16 CT literacy experts, CSDE staff, and educational leaders – Dr. Deacon was one of them. The committee members reviewed the programs. The SDE revealed the 6 approved programs on September 30, 2022. The State allowed districts until February 28<sup>th</sup> to inform the SDE of their decisions. More than 90 districts submitted waivers. Torrington submitted a waiver because the district wants to use a reading program that is not yet on the state approved list. Dr. Deacon introduced the committee members who served on this committee. Dr. Deacon shared the survey results from the committee – amazing/positive feedback. The program the committee recommends is Benchmark Education's Benchmark Advance 2022. – It has met the criteria all the reports State uses. The number one reason is that it aligns very closely with the instructional delivery model we have been using for the past year, as well as the work we're doing with Literacy How. It is also the program that contains the highest number of decodable texts in the primary grades. Dr. Deacon shared a sample packet with the committee members. The program met expectations in each grade it was evaluated. A huge draw to this program was that each grade level is tackling the same unit at the same time - build knowledge within and across grade levels. This program has explicit phonics instruction. This program has specific strategies, information and tips that the classroom teacher needs to know to advance the instruction for the ELL student. Dr. Deacon stated that there are supports for students that are falling behind and for special needs. How do we monitor the program's impact? In district assessments: built in program assessment and universal screeners and State summative assessments. He shared the implementation steps if this program is approved at the next BOE meeting. Cost? Around a million dollars for implementation. There is a digital component that is meant to be used at home. Why did the committee not bring it through 6<sup>th</sup> grade? When we move to 4,5,6 school that's when we were thinking. Ms. Cappabianca requested a quote for 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Mangan stated that the teacher manuals are very user friendly, and our learning curve wouldn't be as steep as it would be with the others. The board members thanked the committee members for all their hard work. Move to full board.

- d. Systemwide Focus Areas: (Attendance, Engaging and Differentiated Instruction, Targeting Student Needs, Community Outreach: Student, Parent, and Community Engagement) Next month more to come.
  - e. TAG Update, Student Services Report: The students are in the process of being reevaluated. More to come.
  - f. Alliance Updates: We are meeting with our rep next week. More to come.
7. Topics for Next Meeting:
- a. Social Promotion
  - b. Distinguished Alumnus
8. Comments for the Good of the Order: (paraphrased)  
Sue L.: "Many thanks to everyone who helped on the textbook adoption committee."

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Torrington Board of Education.

Fiona: “Many thanks, I have so much confidence with the people in our buildings knowing what is best for our students.”

Jeff: “Thank you everyone.”

Ellen: “Thank you so much.”

John K.: “Thank you for spearheading all of this and I echo all the sentiments.”

Jessica: Shared a bill to the committee about the sexual education that starts in kindergarten.

Sue F.: “Thank you to all the members and thank you to Andrew and the board members.”

Andrew: “I apologize for my long windiness, I thank you again to the committee and for your commitment.”

9. Adjournment: Ms. Todor made a motion to adjourn, second by Ms. Richardson. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 7:27 P.M.

Next Meeting: April 5th, Southwest School

Future Meetings: May 3rd, Torrington Middle School; June 7th, Torrington High School