

These minutes were approved by the Torrington Board of Education on March 24, 2021.



Torrington Public Schools

SUSAN M. LUBOMSKI
SUPERINTENDENT

SUSAN B. FERGUSON
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

School Improvement Committee Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 6:00 P.M. Migeon Avenue School

Minutes

1. Call to Order: 6:00 P.M.
1. Roll Call: Mr. Kissko, Ms. Richardson, Ms. DePretis (Remote), Ms. Todor (Remote) Ms. Gelormino (Teacher Rep.)
Also Present: Ms. Cappabianca (Remote), Ms. Hoehne, Ms. Eucalitto, Mr. Corey (Remote), Ms. Fappiano (Remote), Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Fergusson, Ms. Klimaszewski, Ms. Schulte, Mr. Marchand, Ms. Maguire, Ms. Ledversis, Ms. Mazzatto, Ms. Sterling, Mr. Scott, Mr. Deacon, Ms. Herold
2. Approval of Agenda: Ms. Richardson made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor.
3. Approval of Minutes: Ms. Richardson made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor.
4. Public Participation: None
5. Discussion and Next Steps:
 - a. Systemwide Focus Areas
(Attendance, Student Engagement, Targeting Student Needs)
We are working to identify the learning gaps that have occurred and continue to occur as a result of the pandemic. The CSDE recognizes the challenges resulting from the shut down and have encouraged districts to consider completed assignments as attendance. We are due to receive 2.9 million to use over the next 2 years to address the learning gaps. Intervention programs such as extended day, extended week, and extended year are being explored. We have also reached out to KidsPlay, and EdAdvance for potential assistance and partnerships. We must apply for this grant and our application has to be approved.
 - b. Delegated SIC Board Goals:
 - 1.(shared with full Board) Monitor the implementation of the district strategic plan and its integration into the city strategic plan once that plan is developed.
No update right now.

2. Monitor and support the Middle School/High School Building Committee and allocate resources to the development and implementation of the “Pathways” approach to the secondary curriculum.

No update right now.

3. Oversee and support whatever is necessary to deal with the educational impact of the effects of prolonged distance learning.

Discussed later in the meeting.

c. Liaison Roles/Expectations:

Each liaison should reach out monthly to the administrator at the school to request an update of all the good things that are happening in the schools and then bring this information to the full board. The liaison should be a positive bridge between the school and the board. Ms. Richardson stated that the report should be the bare minimum that they do. The liaison should be able to visit the schools and see a much better perspective on what the school is about. The liaisons should be there when the budget is presented. Ms. Hoehne stated that the liaison should report on what events are coming up so people could attend. The committee passed this item to policy. It was noted that during COVID, there are no visitors allowed in the schools.

d. Grades in the Time of COVID: Ms. Lubomski reported that we have been reflecting on our practices during this time to ensure that we are doing everything possible to reach all students. Our number one priority is making sure that all students are learning. Do they have that foundation, can they think critically, can they apply the information we have thought them? Ms. Fergusson explained that a Grading Committee has been formed (grades 6-12) to gather more information. The committee broke down into two sub-committees. One sub-committee is researching the barriers to student success and the other sub-committee is researching what other districts in the State are experiencing and how they are responding. The committee has not arrived at any conclusions. This is an information gathering effort. Professional Development around this topic is planned for February 16th which will allow all teachers to voice their opinions, concerns, and suggestions. Mr. Eucalitto stated that we should allow the teachers to grade as they see fit. Ms. Richardson stated that she as a parent does not want to see her child fail, but if her child is failing then that means there is something going on and then you can get to the root cause of the issue – does she not understand the material, is she not engaged, is she playing too many video games? Ms. Fergusson stated that the committee’s role is to explore what grading practices are currently being used in our schools and where the inconsistencies exist. The intent is not to lower standards. Ms. Lubomski is looking for consensus and what’s best for students. Ms. Cappabianca wanted to clarify that no one suggested that kids should be given grades that they don’t deserve and what we all need to do is to work together to reach the kids that are not doing well to help them succeed.

e. Distinguished Alumnus: Nomination Process, Medium for Presentation:

Applications are due April 1, 2021. The award will be presented virtually on June 3, 2021.

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- f. Website, Altice, Social Media Updates: Ms. Herold provided a report. The download and upload speed with Fiber are identical. We had a lot of positive comments about snow days.
 - g. TAG Update: Ms. Klimaszewski reported that we have a referral form that parents can fill out. Our next step is to post it on the website. It is important to state that right now, Torrington is not offering services for identified TAG students.
 - h. Alliance News: Meeting next month with our Alliance Rep. We will have our STAR assessment results.
- 6. Comments for the Good of the Order: (Paraphrased.)
 - Jessica, Sue F. and Sue L. – “Thank you for a very efficient and productive meeting.”
 - Veronica – “Thank you, always good to have a discussion about students and grading.”
 - Laura – “Thank you for recognizing how hard our staff works.”
 - Leanne – “Happy to be here and happy to learn from one another.”
 - Nikki – “I am interested in finding more about the barriers to student success from the grading committee.”
 - Maureen – “I echo what Nikki said and I appreciate Veronica and Hilary’s comments.”
 - Kim – “I share the same sentiments and I echo about looking at all the barriers.”
 - Andrew – “I love a good discussion and I thank the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.”
 - Brian – “I want to thank Veronica for speaking up.”
 - Ali – “Looking forward to virtual awards nights.”
 - Hilary – “Thank you everyone.”
 - Gary – “I agree with Sue F., Sue L., and Jessica: Open and honest discussions are appreciated and don’t take it personally, we can get through this. The teachers are doing a great job.”
 - Ellen – “Thank you for throwing something my way for Policy and another great meeting.”
 - John – “Thank you for putting up with me tonight, I was looking at this as a dialectic meeting.”
- 7. Topics for Future Meetings
 - a. Social Promotion
 - b. Report on PD
 - c. Civic Virtue
- 8. Adjournment: Ms. Richardson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Ms. DePretis. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 P.M.
Next Meeting: March 3rd, Migeon Avenue