

**CORRECTED
MINUTES
4/6/09****TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
BOARD OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS**

In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.

NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION	Board of Education Curriculum Committee
DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED	March 26, 2009
LOCATION	Training/Conference Room
DATE OF MEETING	March 30, 2009
TIME MEETING STARTED	6:30 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary
VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING

1. Charles Wisnioski, Chairman	2. Rene (Skip) Rivard
3. Catherine Vargas	4. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
5. Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan	6. Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts)
7. Assistant Principal Edward Malizia	8. Patricia O'Brien (Teacher/Dept. Chair 9-12)(Left at 7:35 p.m.)
9. Margaret Hale (English Teacher)	10. William MacDonald (Chairman of Bd. of Ed.)
11. Nadine Bell (Bd. of Ed.)	12. Various parents and students, etc. of the Summer Reading Program Committee (Left at 7:35 p.m.)

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM 2 QUORUM PRESENT Yes No

TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES

1st MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, that the Curriculum Committee forward the approval of the Personal Finance and Technology Course to the full Board of Education.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

2nd MOTION Passed Failed Tabled

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:23 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: _____.

Town of Rocky Hill
Board of Education
Curriculum Committee Meeting Working Notes
March 30, 2009

A Curriculum Committee meeting of the Rocky Hill Board of Education was held on Monday, March 30, 2009 in the training /conference room. Chairman Charles Wisnioski called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were: Rene (Skip) Rivard and Catherine Vargas. Also present was William MacDonald (Chairman of Bd. of Ed.), Nadine Bell (Bd. of Ed.), Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar, Assistant Superintendent Marian Hourigan, Darlene Brown (Coordinator of Language Arts), Assistant Principal Ed Malizia, Patricia O'Brien (Teacher/Dept. Chair 9-12) (Left at 7:35 p.m.), Margaret Hale (English Teacher) and Various Parents and Students, etc. of the Summer Reading Committee (Left at 7:35 p.m.).

1. Revised Summer Reading Proposal

Superintendent Dr. Villar said there were some interested guests who were present this evening and many of them were Summer Reading Committee members. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan introduced some of these guests. She said they were very happy to come together to talk about summer reading because they have a very strong passion for this. They wanted to come up with something they felt the children would be interested in participating in. They would like to do a Rocky Hill reading culture that would extend from elementary school all the way up through the high school. This would be throughout the year and not just in the summer. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan mentioned that Mrs. Brown has done a lot with guided reading as well as with accelerated reading in order to try to get more of an interest in independent reading. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said that some of the ideas they have brought to the Curriculum Committee seem to be somewhat accepted and some suggestions were brought back to the Summer Reading Committee. There was a new revised Summer Reading Proposal and she passed out copies of this to everyone. Mrs. Bell asked when this was revised and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said it was revised on March 16, 2009.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the Summer Reading Committee felt that there should be two self-selected books but they also wanted to give the children an option to read from genres. The English Department came up with some ideas as to what the students would be learning in future instruction. The genres are listed on the Summer Reading Proposal. The Curriculum Committee was very comfortable with just having the children reading two self-selected books. As other various districts were looked at, this is something they also advocate because they have found that if children are interested in reading and they pick a topic that they like then they are more likely to read. The librarians from the Cora J. Belden Library as well as Rocky Hill High School's librarian have worked very closely with them on this. The librarians were happy to put together any kind of book list that was wanted. The Curriculum Committee had made a suggestion that more description be given on the types of books that would be

recommended if the children wanted a suggested book in order to give them a good starting point. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan passed out copies of the Rocky Hill High School summer reading suggestions for 2009. Some of these suggestions are listed by authors for the juniors and seniors and some are by genres. The library is very willing to help in any way it can. She explained why it is helpful to the library when authors are given and not specific titles of books.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said another suggestion that had come from the Curriculum Committee was for the children to have teacher mentors. When this was brought back to the Summer Reading Committee, this fell in very well with what they are trying to do at the high school with an advisor-advisee format. Homeroom teachers are currently with the same students for the four years. Two homeroom teachers are assigned to a class. These teachers already know the students once they are sophomores, juniors and seniors. They felt this would be the perfect time for the students to share what they had done in the summer with their reading. Some of the suggestions from the last Curriculum Committee meeting were for the students to share any kind of a response (i.e. an artistic impression, a poem or a song). Other students who might want to write down a summary of what they read or who might want to speak to someone about this would also have the opportunity to do so. There would be some type of sharing so that the children could learn from one another about some great books that are out there. The English Department was more than willing to determine some open-ended questions that could be used to promote discussions. She gave some examples of what some open-ended questions might be.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they want to have parents sign off after students have read the books. They want this to be a very positive experience for everyone. With regards to the current program, the participation is very low and there is a very strong feeling that it is not a good thing to have a negative attached to reading. It didn't appear to inspire children to read by having them starting off the school year by losing points. Some of the ideas and the incentives are to get the community together and to have the children receive a ticket for completing their incentive. These children would then possibly be able to get items they are interested in (i.e. tickets to a sporting event or to the prom, etc.). They are trying to have a big kick-off so that children are excited about reading and want to read. The children will know when they come back to school that they will be sharing what they read with the other students in the homeroom. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this is what the Summer Reading Committee came up with along with including the revisions that have been discussed.

Chairman Wisnioski asked if anybody else wanted to make a presentation before the Curriculum Committee members asked questions. Mrs. Tabshey thought this is a great forum for children, teachers and parents. Children are hesitant about reading. She said she could name hundreds of children who read throughout the summer but maybe don't read exactly what is listed on a paper that they are told they have to read. In talking about this program, the children are excited. They are excited to read just like adults are. She thinks reading helps to develop a child. She thinks their main goal is have the children love reading and for them to have enthusiasm as well as want to read instead of making

this a “slap on the hand” kind of thing. She thinks this would bring the community closer together in that school at the beginning of the school year. She mentioned how they even had talked about how great it would be if the children all loved a certain book and they wrote in the newspaper how great the book was. She spoke about children who aren’t reading but she said if they hear all of their friends talking about an exciting book then she can almost guarantee that those children might pick up that book. This is a great way for the children to communicate and the teachers to communicate with the children. Hopefully the children will enjoy the love of reading which is what all of the Committee members are trying to do. She hopes this works out because she knows that everyone has worked long and hard on it.

Chairman Wisnioski asked the Curriculum Committee members if they had any comments. Mr. Rivard said he didn’t have any yet. Chairman Wisnioski said the summer reading program was historically an academic exercise and it got “off the tracks” somehow. The first thing he suggests that has to be determined is whether the reading is going to be an academic exercise. He said he was going to raise a bunch of issues that he thinks have to be resolved before anything is finalized.

Chairman Wisnioski assumed that the proposal is grade neutral. He confirmed if he was correct and he was told that he was. He said the idea as it is outlined needs a flow chart as to how all of this works. He referred to the homeroom teacher being the mentor. He said this isn’t what he intended and he thought a mentor would be someone who would have some kind of a tie to the student (i.e. If someone is interested in English then maybe an English teacher would be the mentor.). He wasn’t sure what mentor relationship was proposed for the high school but he got a sense that it was a little more qualitative than just being “shoved in a room”. He spoke about the flow chart idea. He gave an example of the idea he had. He said a junior going into their senior year will identify their mentor. Someone in the administration will say that the mentor and the student will have a discussion. The mentor and the student will agree on at least one or two books and that will be approved. He thinks it is more important to have a young person pursue reading something instead of having the English Department do this. This young person could find someone to share this with who would also be able to determine if the child actually read the book. This could be expressed in any format. There will also be at least some assessment form/rubric so that there will be consistency. One of the criticisms before was that people were held to different standards and reviewed differently. This would be given to the student before they begin their work so that they would have a sense of what to do. Chairman Wisnioski said he doesn’t see this yet.

Chairman Wisnioski referred to the lists and he said they are fine but “one size is not going to fit all”. Some students will have their own books but there has to be some way of saying that the books are acceptable because they don’t want to get into a situation where one person feels a book is inappropriate. He thinks this needs a lot more organization.

Chairman Wisnioski asked if there is a reading requirement for the summer for the middle school and he was told that there is. Chairman Wisnioski asked if it is two books.

He was told that it is two books but the children probably have a list of approximately eight books to choose from. Chairman Wisnioski asked if there is some type of rubric that they have to respond to.

Chairman Wisnioski said there are a bunch of things that he wants to know before this goes to the full Board of Education but he didn't need to know these things for this evening. He referred to how it had been mentioned that it was suggested that students were going to be asked certain kinds of questions. He wanted to know how these vary for the elementary school, middle school and the high school. He thinks the questions should be more challenging for a high school student. He said this should be part of the assessment/rubric.

Chairman Wisnioski said he was not in favor of any kinds of gifts for reading. Students are not given gift cards, etc. for any other kind of academic exercise. He thinks this is a bad practice. He also doesn't agree with the parents signing off with regards to their children reading the books. The old idea for this had been that this was an academic exercise in extension of the year and students were asked to do something. There was a negative or there wouldn't be a positive three points off or three points on if they didn't do this an independent effort. He thinks this is part of the mentor relationship and parents have enough friction with children. He thinks it is a better idea to have a mentor. He doesn't think the relationship is maximized with someone in the faculty when the mentor is just the homeroom teacher.

Chairman Wisnioski wanted to know what the SAT performance is in writing and in reading. He asked if this is needed or if people care. This is all tied back to what the Board of Education looks at. He also asked what the accountability is here and who is going to look at this. He mentioned how he had been on the Board of Education a long time ago when the idea of summer reading was created. It had been thought to be part of the school curriculum and somehow in the interim this disappeared and this was waived but no one seems to be able to find any evidence of how this occurred. He thinks there needs to be some type of reporting back to the Board of Education on a periodic basis once this is approved so they know what is going on. Their failure to do this in the past has caused this to go "off the tracks".

Chairman Wisnioski told the students who were present that he was looking for some kind of effort that they would support that would cause them to go out and read. He asked the students if they read and if they read for pleasure. Some of them said yes. Chairman Wisnioski asked them what they read. One student said they read whatever they hear from other people as being a good book. Another student said they had to do a book report on a book last year and she ended up reading all of the books that the author of that particular book had written.

Mrs. Tabshey told Chairman Wisnioski that she respected all of his questions and his opinions but she thought some of the things he was proposing would take the enthusiasm out of the children. Mrs. Tabshey said by all of the numbers that it shows these children are not reading. She explained more. She thinks the homeroom teachers are following

the children and that they are more than just homeroom teachers. She thinks these teachers do have a relationship with all of those children and she mentioned how her children do.

Chairman Wisnioski asked where it is in the proposal that it states homeroom teachers are going to have book clubs, etc. Mrs. O'Brien said this is an advisor/advisee program. Chairman Wisnioski asked if this is a mentor and Mrs. O'Brien said that it is basically a mentor from freshman year. Mrs. O'Brien said these homeroom teachers are the children's adult contact in the high school from their freshman to senior years. Chairman Wisnioski said this is not in the plan. He confirmed that the mentors are intended to be the homeroom teachers. Assistant Principal Malizia said they are called advisors and this is an advisor/advisee program. Many studies show that this is what schools should be going towards to make sure children don't fall "through the cracks". This makes sure that there is an adult in the building besides a teacher that the children know they can go to at any time for any issue. A relationship is built from the freshman year through the senior year. Different activities are planned for these groups and this period can be taken and expanded out to whatever time period is needed. The idea is that the children read the books and go to that advisor. They discuss the books they have read with the advisors and their groups. There is a relationship there and this would foster the relationship even further.

Chairman Wisnioski asked when this proposal is rewritten if the students are going to be assigned to homeroom teacher advisors. Assistant Principal Malizia said this is already in place. Mrs. O'Brien said if she was a student and she was hearing her fellow students say that they really liked a book they read over the summer then if she didn't read, maybe this would be a way of mentoring to check out the book. She thinks the students can be mentors towards each other to get them to read. They could have book discussions in the classrooms. If someone has been with students for four years, they know the students.

Mrs. Tabshey referred to being a parent and signing off on something. She said she has some responsibility on teaching her child and she is not going to only leave this on the teacher. She hopes that she has taught her children enough that they will read. She will sign off on things and she does take responsibility. She hopes that a lot of parents will take responsibility. Some of the children are not reading anything at all that they are being sent home with. Summer is short but she thinks the children need to read. She thinks a lot of families go away but the children read when they are on vacation. She mentioned how her children read when they are on vacation. She thinks it would be an exciting incentive for the children to come back to school after the summer and to say what they have read. She thinks they can bring the love of reading back and the community back together which she thinks they are lacking.

Mr. MacDonald thinks overall that this is a very good job. He thinks the administration, students and parents should be commended and he said the students especially should be. He envisions that they will make changes but he thinks they have to take out of this that they had input into a change. They don't have this opportunity many times in many schools. He told the students if nothing else that they can understand how things happen

in the Board of Education and how they go from here on up through what they will actually end up being instructed in at school. He thinks this is a good example. He thinks the process was broken. He is a parent and he told everyone how his son would pick the smallest book that was on the shelf in the library because he had no interest in some of the items or in the books that were left there.

Mr. MacDonald thinks this is definitely a change and he is seeing this more as a culture of lifelong reading for both knowledge and pleasure. He thinks the list of the authors is a great suggestion and it is wrong to just limit specific books. He doesn't care what the students read but he said there have to be some guidelines of course. He would want to sign off on this as a parent. He thinks there are various forms of expression to detail that the reading was performed. He is fine with a poem, etc. and he thinks this is better than having a student do something on a computer the Sunday before school starts because he said that is a total waste of time. He told Chairman Wisnioski that he thinks he disagrees with everything he has said but he agrees with him about not giving a water bottle for example at the end to the students as a token because he doesn't think it is appropriate. He would rather have positive reinforcement (i.e. adding three points onto a grade). He has been against deducting points if children don't do the reading.

Mr. Rivard looked at his summer reading displeasures and he said that he was always an avid reader. He loved to read until it was put upon him as an academic situation where he was required to read. He told Chairman Wisnioski that he "hit it" when he asked the students if they do any pleasure reading. Mr. Rivard thinks all of the reading has to be pleasure reading. Any reading that is done in the summertime has to be done because it is enjoyed. There shouldn't be the academic disciplines that go along with it. He mentioned how they keep referring to "children" and he thinks they have to look to the fact that there were "young adults" present this evening. Young adults have to set their own disciplines and he thinks they have to be responsible as well as enjoy what they are doing. He referred to the signing off on things and he said that he told his children many times when they put a form in front of him that he was not signing it. He told them they are a creator of their own destiny and they are responsible for their own actions. He would rather have a parent sign off on a form if their children didn't read something.

Mrs. Vargas said she agreed with Chairman Wisnioski and she didn't like the idea of giving raffle tickets. Mrs. Vargas told them that she would like it if they developed the book clubs and get the children excited. She would like this to be on the excitement side so that people would want to read. She was never paid for getting an "A" or "B" in school because her Mother had said that was expected of her and she was going to do it. She expected her children to get good grades and she didn't pay them. She doesn't like rewarding for this. She also is very much in favor of how children can express what they read and she hated watching her children write essays.

Mrs. Vargas asked how many homeroom teachers there are. Assistant Principal Malizia said there are two of them per homeroom. Mrs. Vargas asked when this was changed because her children always had one homeroom teacher. Assistant Principal Malizia didn't know when this got changed because there were two homeroom teachers when he

got to this district. The School Psychologist and Guidance Counselors are all in as advisors in there. He explained that one teacher is listed as the homeroom teacher of record but there are two teachers in every room. Mrs. O'Brien said there had been a mentor/mentee program that had been set up a number of years ago which was artificial. They randomly picked names when the freshmen came in and it was difficult to forge a bond with these children. They thought that at least in homeroom, these teachers see these children everyday and they can touch base everyday. They have two teachers because the children will be exposed to two on a day-to-day basis.

Mrs. Vargas said in defense of Chairman Wisnioski's mentor comment that she understands what he is saying. Mrs. Vargas said if a student is into music or art then they would have no connection if they have a homeroom teacher who is a History teacher and maybe there is a Guidance Counselor there too. She explained more and she said if there is a teacher that doesn't do much for a student then maybe having someone who has an interest may get that student to read.

Mrs. Tabshey was hoping this would come into play when they have the group. The idea about gifts is not her biggest thing. She loves the fact that the children can have discussions when they all come together. She knows her children learn about other books when they discuss them with other children. She said there is going to be a child who is going to write down a sentence or two of why they really liked a book but that is probably a child who never read last year. A whole discussion can start from the sentence this child wrote.

Evan Pelletier, a student who is a member of the Summer Reading Committee, said one of their chief concerns of their very first meeting was for incentives for things. They were trying to get away from the punitive side of this. This was the whole program that they came up with last year and they altered this. This year was based around the meeting and the discussion as the center of the incentive of having children coming in and enjoying this. This would build even more into the next year. There will have been a gradual process of children finding out that they like the program and they enjoy talking to the students.

Pooja Shah, a student who is a member of the Summer Reading Committee, referred to the mentors. The students don't only have the teacher with them but they have all the other students with them. The homeroom teachers obviously have backgrounds in all different subjects so it is not like the students are totally disconnected from them and they can still have a conversation that they can engage in. She explained that most of the time the students aren't really looking at what happened in the book but instead they are looking at why it is important and why they can connect to it. She thinks the theme is the most important and she thinks that everyone can relate to it somehow if all different types of books are looked at. She didn't think it matters if a student is stuck with a certain type of teacher who teaches the same subject of the book. They are with their homeroom teachers for four years and they see them everyday. Also students are with other students in homeroom who they generally aren't with in all their other classes. They build relationships with people that they wouldn't build them with in a normal day. They get

to know things about other people. The students get to see different sides of different stories and this is probably one of the reasons they decided to have this in homeroom and with those teachers. She thinks this makes for a greater discussion in homeroom instead of just in English Class that they are in everyday. Someone asked what would prevent any student from going to an art teacher if they are interested in art. They could then go back to their mentor. This person didn't think that having discussions centering around the homeroom would prevent someone from seeking out other sources of book suggestions.

Mrs. Bell thought the present program they have is not working. They need to have a change. The Board of Education has set a policy that states they want to have a Summer Reading Program and they've looked to Superintendent Dr. Villar and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan to come up with some changes that they are recommending to the Board of Education. Mrs. Bell said they are working with students, parents and professionals. She would rather err on the side of trying something new they have presented. They can potentially fine tune it after a year. If they see some issues with it then they can delay it and wait another year. She thinks this Committee has been working on something for two years and they have taken a lot of Board of Education input which they have tried to react to. She is afraid if they try to fine tune this to the perfect Summer Reading Program that they are going to lose more children. She explained some more and she said they can do an assessment to get some data to look at how many children have been reading. She thinks they will have made an impact if there are twice as many children reading.

Mrs. O'Brien referred to what Mrs. Tabshey had said earlier about generating enthusiasm. Mrs. O'Brien said they often have children who read books outside of the class and then they do a presentation in class. This is student centered and they point out what they enjoyed about the books. The enthusiasm can be contagious and other students ask what the book was because they might want to read it. She thinks if they model the homeroom discussion on this then it might create the same kind of environment where they get ideas about other books that will peak their interest.

Chairman Wisnioski thinks the students who were present this evening probably represent readers. He asked the students if any of them go to the Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science (GHAMAS). None of them did. Chairman Wisnioski said he had five children who went to Rocky Hill High School and one of them went to GHAMAS. When the freshmen and sophomore students went to GHAMAS, they used to go in the morning and they didn't go to homeroom. He asked if this was still the case and he was told that it was. As the summer reading program evolves and is an interim thing, he would advocate that the person who is doing the assessment with the student not be limited to the homeroom advisor or mentor. He also said they should permit students to have a relationship with someone of their choice through administration's approval. He didn't think this was difficult to do.

Chairman Wisnioski referred to the students who are not likely to read. There are certain reasons why they don't read (i.e. they may be working, or reading is not part of their

home life culture, etc.). This is really not addressed to the children who read. They are trying to get the students who don't historically read. He didn't know what kind of information they get from the middle school. He said they might get some "heads-up" as to who is reading and who isn't. He didn't know if the students who read in the middle school get a reward or if they are given points. This needs to become a districtwide K-12 thing. There are some students who won't read for pleasure. He asked what the first book is that the students read in English when they are sophomores. Mrs. O'Brien said it depends on the level. Chairman Wisnioski asked her to pick a book. Mrs. O'Brien gave the title of a book. Chairman Wisnioski said there wasn't any reason why they shouldn't be able to read this over the summer and the more time they had to do this might be helpful to them. He thinks there ought to be flexibility for a student who wants to pursue this versus the newest book by a particular author. Not every student is going to read for pleasure. There ought to be a way where they have more time to do what might take place in an academic environment and in which the reading can be helpful to them.

Chairman Wisnioski said he reads a lot and he never wants to talk with anybody about what he reads. Some of his pleasure reading takes him somewhere else and he wants to stay somewhere else by himself. A few students might be lost if they are forced to have a discussion with others. He thinks this should be as flexible as possible. He was told that three people in the senior class read last year and he said this obviously is not working. He agrees that there should be an assessment.

Chairman Wisnioski said a common question asked when students are applying to colleges is what they have read. Obviously what the students were given as a district in the past few years didn't work and he was all for changing this as much as they can and as soon as they can. He asked what the accountability is, how it is going to be implemented and who is going to run this. He thinks there needs to be a flow chart so people can be proud of what they have done. He asked who is monitoring this and he asked if they should even care if it is not academic.

Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks the flow chart is a very good idea because they can start to see which things they haven't thought about. He referred to the monitoring of this. He said there are seven hundred and sixty children at the high school and they can't possibly match everyone with someone who has the same interests. He said they should start with the homerooms. They can have some process where a student states that they really like a teacher and they can ask if that person can be made their mentor. He referred to the accountability and he said there is not a lot "of teeth" in this plan. He thinks the concept of constantly reinforcing reading is a necessity. He spoke about the one book event at the middle school that was highly successful. The more of these things that are put into place then the more they work if there is a concerted effort, if they talk about it, reward it and then bring children to the Board of Education to say they did a spectacular job of reading. To enforce things with employees, corporate America uses these types of things and he didn't see any reason why these shouldn't be used with the students. He thinks they forget what school is about sometimes. Chairman Wisnioski said they all have different ideas about what school is about. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that is the other big problem.

Mrs. Tabshey said she received an e-mail from the President of Fairfield University who said that University along with Holy Cross College and a few others aren't really going to be looking at the SAT scores at all. With regards to being admitted into these colleges, an essay will have to be filled out by the children. They are finding out that SAT scores are not a good characterization of the children. She thinks they need to work with the children to help them grow as times and things are changing. She told Chairman Wisnioski that she appreciated his comments and she believed in some of his comments.

Chairman Wisnioski said the SATs are just data. They are trying to collect as much data as they can to see how well they are doing. He referred to how there will always be more tests such as tests for college and graduate school, etc. He hates this and he is not an advocate for evaluating a person on standardized testing but it does give a sense of if the student is able to comprehend the English language on a common basis. He explained more and he said this can't be ignored because it is a common thing to all students. He would rather have a student do something that they are personally interested in expressing because it will show some life in them. He told them about SAT tests that he took in courses he actually never took (i.e. Hebrew). If John Hopkins Engineering School is applied to, they will give a project for someone to do. He gave an example of what this project could be. He said he is an advocate of dance or a poem, etc. but there has to be an assessment tool to show that the student really did this. He asked the parents, administrators and English Department if they are involved to do better than this. He questioned why Assistant Principal Malizia and the rest of the staff should be bothered about this if this is not a Board of Education academic requirement and they should just tell the students that they hope they read and if they don't then it is too bad. He questioned if internet reading is reading and he thinks it is. He also questioned if Kendall notes or reading a book online is reading.

Mrs. Tabshey said as parents, students and teachers that they have been working towards making a change for next year. Chairman Wisnioski said they could sit down and finish this within fifteen minutes. Mrs. Tabshey asked if she is going to leave here this evening saying that there is going to be more documentation at the next meeting and then more at the meeting after that. Chairman Wisnioski said the Board of Education meeting has just been rescheduled from April 9, 2009 to April 30, 2009. He said this is just an action to move this item to the full Board of Education. He didn't think there is any doubt this will happen but he just thought that this would be a little more rigorous, more thought out and that there will be a flow chart so that the high school administration can understand exactly what is going on and what is expected of them. He isn't sure what role the English Department has in this. His personal opinion is that they want the students to demonstrate an interest in something as well as an effort to go and pursue it. He spoke about assessment of this and he said maybe it will be someone in the family or even community who is just as able to assess if they have the proper paperwork to demonstrate. He thinks the parent is the wrong focus because there is enough trouble between children and parents. He thinks a homeroom mentor restricts this too.

Mr. MacDonald asked Chairman Wisnioski what the next step is. Mr. MacDonald mentioned that Chairman Wisnioski can work with the team and he thinks within the next

week or so they will be able to get the flow chart back. They can take the input that he received and he thinks they will be in good enough shape for them to see this and move this up to the Board of Education.

Mrs. Bell asked Mr. MacDonald when he anticipates the Board of Education taking action on this. Mr. MacDonald said he anticipates this in April. Mrs. Bell confirmed that it will be on April 30, 2009 and Mr. MacDonald said yes.

Superintendent Dr. Villar asked for clarification. He asked if they wanted the reworked documents given to this Committee before they go to the Board of Education or if they want these documents to go the Board of Education. Mrs. Bell said these can just be sent out. Chairman Wisnioski said it had been mentioned that there was going to be a Curriculum Committee meeting prior to the next Board of Education meeting. Mrs. Bell thinks this item should go on the April agenda for the Board of Education's meeting.

Mrs. Margaret Hale said she is new to this district and she was trying to be a quiet observer. She is an avid "read for pleasure" person and she questioned why an essay should be written. She asked if they could find some way to assess as to whether children did or did not read in order to get them to read for pleasure. She asked if they could just put on the children's transcripts "summer reading: yes or no" without grades or pluses or minuses. This way the students would get the public accountability for this as opposed to taking away from the pleasure part by making it so rigidly academic.

Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale is she is a parent. Mrs. Hale said she is an English teacher. Chairman Wisnioski thought they were already past the point where they didn't want this to be a dull essay type of thing. There may be some students who are okay with this but they are looking for the student to suggest how they can convey what they were engaged in for a reading assignment. He said they are open to this but there needs to be a standard way of evaluating if the students actually read. Whatever they do will part of their application to college and he said this should be something that they are really proud of as well as what they like to do. Within acceptance by the high school administration, the children can read what they want and almost do what they want. In some cases, this might be more difficult than just writing. They are looking for the children's creativity and he said this should really be open-ended. He sees the homeroom as being one restriction which he thinks should be off. He thinks they will go along with whatever flexibility gets the children to read.

Mrs. Bell said they are trying a new program and they really want people to read. She said if the numbers don't go up then they will be going back to the old way. This is a change and they are trying to promote reading but they need to see something come out of it.

Mrs. Tabshey confirmed the date of April 30, 2009. Mr. MacDonald said this item will be on the April agenda for the Board of Education meeting.

Mr. Rivard asked Mrs. Hale what she feels about the written summaries in general with regards to pleasure reading. Mrs. Hale said from a teenage perspective to “dump it”. She said as it has been brought up that there are various ways of presenting but there should be some way to verify that it has been done. At her previous school, she was the AP instructor and she had the children participate in online discussions. She loves all of the ideas that had been expressed at this meeting.

Assistant Principal Malizia said the goal is to make this better from the beginning and to make children want to read. He listened to lots of people talk about how they can get children to read. When looking at other districts, the accountability is on the children as well as on the parent in most of them. There is the sign-off that the parent does and there is the child saying they read the book. The child has to be given some responsibility at some point and their integrity has to be believed. He doesn't see the homeroom as being restrictive but he sees this as being a group where there are some great ideas. Children can bring in posters if they want to instead of joining in on the discussion about a book if they don't want to. He referred to the whole assessment piece and he said this will be September of a new school year. It is a very difficult time for teachers because they are trying to get the year going and they shouldn't be assessing what happened in the summer beyond how children's summers were. He explained some more. They are just trying to get the children to read and to enjoy it. In the summer, they are not trying to get the children to become better readers. He thinks though that the children will be better readers as well as writers the more that they read. He had a student who read the books but said they weren't going to do the essays and they lost three points. Chairman Wisnioski said this is also about responsibility and the child takes the consequences for not writing. Assistant Principal Malizia said absolutely. Chairman Wisnioski asked what was wrong with this and Assistant Principal Malizia said nothing at all. He said though that they talk about not paying them to read but they are willing to give them points which he said is paying beyond. Chairman Wisnioski said this is not in the present proposal. Assistant Principal Malizia said this was brought up in the discussion. In giving the children points for reading, this pays them in a way and it throws off the real assessment for the teacher with regards to what they actually did that semester. Chairman Wisnioski said this failed and they are moving onto something else. In the old days, they thought this was a requirement and an extension of the school year.

Mrs. Tabshey said it would be really nice to move this along. She mentioned per se that the Summer Reading Committee could get together next week, go over everything, submit everything and it could do a couple of little revisions. She told everyone they would then have a copy of this and then they could go in front of the Board of Education to take care of this. They can see what happens for the first year.

Evan Pelletier felt that they spoke a lot about assessing children. The problem with assessment is that it punishes children who put in an effort. He feels that if the children are being assessed that pressure is being put on them and all of the issues of the previous program are being brought back.

At this point, a five minute break was taken at 7:35 p.m.

2. Accelerated Reader Requirements

Superintendent Dr. Villar said questions had been asked about the funding source for Accelerated Reader. He had asked Mrs. Brown to break this down for them.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mrs. Brown had a presentation prepared on Accelerated Reader but he said she could do a quick summary instead. Mr. MacDonald said he would like to take a copy of the presentation with him. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this could be sent out via e-mail to them. Mrs. Brown said she has a copy of the PowerPoint presentation but she said it didn't have her talking notes. She passed a copy of this out to everyone.

Mrs. Brown said Accelerated Reader is a webbased program that this district can purchase to support what is already being done in the academic curriculum. This helps teachers to monitor what the students read, etc. She told everyone that she can send them the actual PowerPoint presentation which has links on it to view demos of what the quizzes look like that students would take with regards to books they have read or books that were read to them. There are also sample reports. There is an administrator dashboard and she explained more about what this is. A strong component to Accelerated Reader is the home connect parent piece which allows the parents to have access to everything the student is reading. This allows the parents to know how the students are doing with the quizzes and it allows them to pick books that are appropriate for them based on the reading level.

Mrs. Vargas asked if this is for K-5. Mrs. Brown said this is for Grades Two through Eight. She said this does go K-12 but in talking with Superintendent Dr. Villar, Assistant Superintendent Hourigan, the school media specialist, reading professionals and school administrators that they agreed the best place to start would be when the children are already proficient in reading. Mrs. Vargas asked if what is being proposed here is for Grades Two through Eight. Mrs. Brown said the price quote is for Grades Two through Eight.

Chairman Wisnioski referred to when Mrs. Brown had said this was webbased. Chairman Wisnioski asked if the reading is done with hard textbooks and if the assessments are webbased or he asked if this is both. Mrs. Brown said this is done with regular literature that students can take out from the school library, the teacher's classroom and public library, etc. Chairman Wisnioski confirmed that this is not just an identified series they purchase and that this can be anything. Mrs. Brown said it wasn't just an identified series. She believes this has a collection of over one hundred and twenty thousand books for which there are questions. Chairman Wisnioski asked if this is always being added to and Mrs. Brown said yes.

Mr. Rivard said they are collecting more data for anything that is software based like this. He asked if the data is something they can take and use to make this productive. Superintendent Dr. Villar said in his previous district, they were able to look at the percentage of students who read non-fiction versus fiction. The percentage of comprehension, etc. can also be looked at. Mr. Rivard asked who will oversee this and if

it will be one person. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are a couple of accountability systems. One is Mrs. Brown whose role is Language Arts Coordinator for K-12. There is also a district data team that sets district goals and looks for data sources from which to monitor those goals. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Accelerated Reader gives them another tool that allows teachers to monitor what they are already asking the children to do in school which is to read these books. This is highly motivating from the student side because it gives them more feedback on their success and they like that. Chairman Wisnioski said this is just SRA in a different format and Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is somewhat. Superintendent Dr. Villar explained what data this gives. This gives teachers time to work on guided reading classes and it gives them time to work with children on improving their skill. There is an accountability that is built into this because when children are independently reading, they are still being monitored. This is a very successful program.

Mrs. Vargas asked if they are planning on having this started in September. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have funds this school year to purchase this. Mrs. Vargas said they are already in April. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a great time to implement new things with teachers.

Mrs. Bell asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he is talking about Title I funds that he has for year one. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was correct. Chairman Wisnioski confirmed this was in the Education Foundation and Superintendent Dr. Villar said this was correct. Chairman Wisnioski asked why the number is so odd and that it is to eighteen cents. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is how it breaks down. Title I can only be used for the cost at Moser School and for Stevens School. It can't be used at West Hill School. Chairman Wisnioski asked under Title I if they have a reporting obligation. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes. Chairman Wisnioski asked what this entails. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they have to be told how the funds were expended and she said they were fine.

Chairman Wisnioski asked what this required for computers in the classroom and he asked if this can be done when the lab is available. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this can be used on the classroom computers and it is webbased. Chairman Wisnioski said there are two computers in a classroom and he asked how students get access. Superintendent Dr. Villar said two to three computers in a classroom are all that are needed and he explained why. Chairman Wisnioski asked on a given week or month how often the student would go on the computer. Mrs. Vargas said it would depend on how quickly the student reads the book. Mrs. Brown gave an example of a teacher allowing students to be independently reading for twenty minutes when she is taking her guided reading groups. If two children finish the book then they go to the computers, log on, take their quiz, get their scores and then go back to get another book to start reading. This is cyclical and ongoing.

Mr. MacDonald asked Superintendent Dr. Villar to help him understand how this came in front of them. Mr. MacDonald asked if they sought out the Education Foundation and told it that Accelerated Reader is what this district needed money for out of all of the

things out there. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this was somewhat his fault. In working with Mrs. Brown, Superintendent Dr. Villar said he has known this program, has seen its work and its success. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he had Mrs. Brown put together the work and he went to the Education Foundation to ask it to help them out with seed money. Year one costs the most. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his view of the Education Foundation is that it should be helping out with seed money on programs that will really stress this district's budget. The Education Foundation came up with more than fifty percent of the cost and he knew they could get the rest from Title I. They are looking at a cost of maybe \$5,000 annually to the Board of Education because they can offset this. He thinks out of their \$21,000,000 that this is a nominal expenditure annually which will give the teachers a tool to monitor independent reading. He said they are also pitching Blue Ribbon assessment software to the Education Foundation. He meets with the Education Foundation once a month.

Mrs. Bell referred to the cost of approximately \$5,000 for year two. She asked if this is for year two and every year thereafter. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is about the cost.

Mrs. Vargas asked if this is in the 2009-2010 budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this money is currently built into the budget. Mrs. Vargas didn't remember talking about this when they did the budget and she asked where this is in the budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is in Mrs. Brown's budget breakdown. Mrs. Brown said this is a generic listing under supportive material. Mrs. Vargas asked where this is under. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is under Language Arts. Mrs. Vargas said she had asked for a tab of all Language Arts things and they never got it. She asked if Accelerated Reader was within elementary schools but she said it wouldn't be just elementary because this would be for the middle school. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he couldn't think of the program number but they could show her where this is in the budget.

Mr. MacDonald told Superintendent Dr. Villar that if he said it is in the budget then he takes his word for it that it is. Mr. MacDonald said the bigger issue is that their budget got cut \$300,000 from the Town Manager. Mr. MacDonald said that although he thinks Accelerated Reader would be interesting because it is a new program, this needs to be evaluated along with everything else when they come up with how they are going to balance the budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he understood. He said they can look at options at that time. His philosophy on budget cuts is that they have to be sure they aren't crippling their ability to offer a high quality instructional program. This would be low on his cut list because of the cost effectiveness of this versus some other programs.

3. Logistics of Virtual High School Implementation

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Assistant Superintendent Hourigan put together information on the Virtual High School. Some handouts were passed out with regards to this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this Committee has been very interested in it and he thinks they should spend some time discussing it. He had a suggestion. Upon the conclusion of this evening, the next step for this will be to go to the Policy Committee

because changes will need to be made in the policies ultimately. There is the curricular component along with how credit is going to be handled and how many courses can be taken, etc.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said Principal DiMaggio has been doing a study on this for part of her course work. Principal DiMaggio couldn't be at this evening's meeting but she wanted to share the research she did with regards to the towns that she has looked at that have Virtual High School. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan told everyone how Principal DiMaggio broke all of this down (i.e. student criteria, reasons for implementation, etc.). Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said Principal DiMaggio stated what her recommendations would be. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said before they go forward with this, they will have to decide on policy decisions.

Chairman Wisnioski asked if they aren't going to be engaging CABE. Superintendent Dr. Villar said CABE does a policy review but they don't actually have a model policy on Virtual High School or online learning. Mr. MacDonald said there are many schools that have this so there must be other model policies from other schools. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan thought they had been given Simsbury's at a prior meeting. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are recommendations that came from the high school. He has some minor revisions that he is going to work with them on so that he can support them 100%. He wants these recommendations brought to the Policy Committee because he thinks they can fit these in for a change in policy. They will then be clear to implement the Virtual High School.

Mrs. Vargas referred to what Mr. MacDonald had mentioned previously with regards to the \$300,000 being cut from the budget. Mrs. Vargas said this is something that they will have to consider if they don't even have the policies in place for it. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Virtual High School is aware of this. They have details of developing an online course for them and they have also identified a person to be trained as the Site Coordinator. Virtual High School understands that unless the Board of Education approves this that they are not financially obligated or committed.

Mrs. Bell gave an example of Chinese or Latin V being offered. She said one of the reasons for this trying to be done is to cut down on the singleton courses where there is low enrollment or to offer a variety of courses to address student needs. She asked if there would be a maximum number of students at Rocky Hill High School in any given class and she asked what this would be. Superintendent Dr. Villar believes five students are allowed in any one section that is offered under Virtual High School. Most districts have said if this is a course that is physically offered at the school then this wouldn't be signed up for Virtual High School. The concept is to promote all of the other courses that aren't offered. Chairman Wisnioski asked if there is a conflict. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the recommendation from the high school which he agrees with would be to have a principal override then there would be flexibility.

Mrs. Bell asked how many students they would anticipate in Virtual High School in any given year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have twenty seats. Mrs. Hale said there

would be twenty-five each semester. There would be fifty children if these are all semester courses or one child would take up two slots during a year long course.

Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale if she is the teacher who has volunteered to do the Virtual High School. Mrs. Hale said yes. Chairman Wisnioski thanked her. He confirmed that it was a total of twenty-five seats and not twenty. Mrs. Hale said it would be a total of fifty seats across the year but a year long course would count as two seats. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that both he and Assistant Superintendent Hourigan were told by Virtual High School that it was twenty seats. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said they had a different rate because they went through the CREC Consortium.

Mrs. Bell asked if it could be fifty different courses for the fifty students or if it could be three courses. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it could be any course that Virtual High School has. Mrs. Bell said for a "X" number of students that they could sign up for "X" number of courses. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they can sign up for any Virtual High School course that is out there that fits this district's criteria.

Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale if the course she intends to teach is a full year course or a semester one. Mrs. Hale said she is doing a semester one but she would be teaching it each semester. Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale what she is going to teach. Mrs. Hale said she is going to teach poetry writing. Chairman Wisnioski asked her if this is any poetry writing and Mrs. Hale explained what this course is designed around. Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale if this fills a void that the students didn't have before and he asked her if she has been through some standards review. Mrs. Hale said she is only in week five of her course and she doesn't know how it ends. Chairman Wisnioski asked her if she has to create a syllabus. Mrs. Hale said she is going to be modifying a previously established and accredited course. The course is already aligned to the standards. Chairman Wisnioski asked Mrs. Hale why she wants to do this. Mrs. Hale said she loves technology and she did her Masters in an online program. She thinks this is a great experience for the children to have. Chairman Wisnioski asked if this will be one of her five contractual obligations. Mrs. Hale said she is only a .6. Chairman Wisnioski asked what would happen if Mrs. Hale was to take a full time job somewhere else. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are ways to have the students continue but it would change the cost formula. He mentioned how it would be ideal to have more than one teacher teaching a course and in the future this is the direction he would want to head in. Mrs. Hale said she has already made some changes in her regular classes based on the some of the new professional development she has been getting along with best practices. Chairman Wisnioski asked where the people are that Mrs. Hale is interacting with. Mrs. Hale said they are in Maine, Washington State, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Chairman Wisnioski asked if their professional standards are acceptable. Mrs. Hale said these are national standards. She mentioned how she is finding this experience meaningful as a teacher.

Mr. Rivard asked Mrs. Hale if she has taught any online courses before. Mrs. Hale said she hasn't. She explained that they are putting her through what she is expected to do and it is phenomenal. Mr. Rivard asked Mrs. Hale if this system allows her to log on so

she can see how much time each student has spent and she said absolutely. Everything is public. Mrs. Hale said an online behavior policy had to be designed. Chairman Wisnioski asked if this will be digitalized and if students can do this whenever. Mrs. Hale said this is global and she explained more.

4. Personal Finance and Technology Course Outline/Proposed Textbooks

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this is with regards to Mr. Greg Gomes' Personal Finance Course. Mr. Gomes had worked out a course outline. They aren't finished with the curriculum for this as of yet but this will give an idea of what the course will look like. This course will be financed through the Perkins Grant. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this is something that would be a pilot and the textbooks for this could be purchased this year. Mr. Gomes had looked through some textbooks and he has some recommendations with regards to what he would like. He has a timeline with regards to each unit. A handout was given out with regards to this. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan referred to the asterisks on this and she said this would be for the technology projects that would be done along with the units. Mr. Gomes is developing significant tasks currently and these will be activities that all students will engage in during the units.

Assistant Superintendent Hourigan passed some textbooks around to everyone and she pointed out the one that Mr. Gomes would like to request. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan pointed out what it is that Mr. Gomes likes about this textbook. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan pointed out what the second supplemental text would be and she said a lesser amount of those would be purchased. These would be used to help with specific projects. There is money to be spent on textbooks and the course can be developed through the Perkins Grant. She told everyone with their approval that they would like to recommend this to the Board of Education.

Mrs. Vargas asked if students will be allowed to select this for September. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said yes. She said the Guidance Counselors will be able to have some students take this. There are some students, who are sophomores and juniors, and they did take computer essentials. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan thought these students would be the ones they would want to prioritize. Mrs. Vargas confirmed that this wasn't put out as a possible course. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said it wasn't because it wasn't approved. Mrs. Vargas confirmed that they will be able to get students to fill this in September. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was correct. Assistant Principal Malizia said the Guidance Counselors will have to do a little backtracking but they will be able to find the children that this course will benefit the most. He said these classes will be able to be filled. Mrs. Vargas asked how many students are being looked at. Superintendent Dr. Villar said twenty or so students would fill the class. Mrs. Vargas asked if this is just one section and Superintendent Dr. Villar said that is correct. He is hoping that this will allow them to go to the Board of Education with a proposal to change the current requirements of computer essentials. He doesn't think that computer essentials is accomplishing what it may have originally been intended to do in his estimation as well as after having had conversations with Assistant Superintendent Hourigan and with educators at the high school. By looking for other courses that have

integrated technology in them to meet the technology requirement, it will allow them to remove students from a class that doesn't challenge many students' computer abilities and this will also allow them to increase their scheduling flexibility. This course is instructing at a basic level of technology. He explained more. He said if technology is taught as how to solve problems then students can adapt as learners as technology changes which is a better target.

Chairman Wisnioski asked how soon computer essentials can be gotten rid of. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks they can do this, this year. For next year, there will be some scheduling implications and they will have to meet with Guidance Counselors to work out the impact of this on students but he thinks this can be done. Chairman Wisnioski referred to the books and the faculty for the new course. He asked if every student would have access to the books. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this will be a course that they will have the books for and the Perkins Grant money will pay for this. Chairman Wisnioski asked how many sections there will be. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said she is getting fifty books. Assistant Principal Malizia said Mr. Gomes' lab holds sixteen or eighteen students so they may be able to get three sections out of this if this is what they desire. Mr. Gomes had said that he can teach this course by having a couple of sets of books that he can use. Assistant Principal Malizia said it would be better if Mr. Gomes had all the books. Chairman Wisnioski asked if Mr. Gomes is the only faculty member who is teaching computer essentials. Assistant Principal Malizia said no. He explained that they are trying to do the "catch up game" for a lot of students who don't have computer essentials. They are hoping that maybe Mr. Gomes can teach three sections of personal finance. If computer essentials is lifted as the requirement then there are other courses where technology is being integrated.

Chairman Wisnioski confirmed that there is no longer a middle school proposal. At one time there was a non-certified person who was going to teach computer essentials. He confirmed that this is a "dead issue". Mrs. Bell said yes.

Chairman Wisnioski told everyone to assume that this new course is adopted which he thinks it should be. He asked if there is some way of testing those students who got too far forward and had tight schedules so they can't take this. He always wanted to "test out" instead of having computer essentials. He was hoping they could be flexible with regards to how they make this judgment. Superintendent Dr. Villar said policy does provide for this in cases. Principal Almeida has the authority to allow them to override in a case that is an extreme situation.

Chairman Wisnioski referred to his daughter who had gone to GHAMAS. A laptop was provided to those students but they were permitted not to have to take it. He mentioned how all of the grade point average came in and he assumed there was some way to resolve this. He mentioned how this had been silly. Assistant Principal Malizia said this is still the case and that the GHAMAS students don't take computer essentials.

Mr. Rivard referred to a concern with regards to anything that talks about using software programs. He asked if they have Microsoft Office 2003 on the computers presently.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have some licenses for Microsoft Office 2003 in the schools and they also have some licenses in the district for Microsoft Office 2007 as well. Mr. Rivard referred to one of the textbooks that had just been passed around. He said it is partially obsolete because it is a 2005 one and it refers to the setting up of templates that are in old projects and old Excel and Access formats. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the issue here has to do with Mr. Gomes' flexibility as Microsoft continues to change its software packages. The core of Excel hasn't changed in ten years or more. Assistant Principal Malizia said if Mr. Gomes has the correct edition on the computer then the textbook is used for its part but Mr. Gomes would be teaching the new version because it would be there. The concern is to make sure that this is on there too. Chairman Wisnioski said instead of buying the textbook that he would rather spend money on the machine and on the software. Assistant Principal Malizia referred to the textbook that Chairman Wisnioski was referring to. He said the projects in there are probably tied more to the thinking process used in the technology rather than to which version. He said it might be a good idea to look and see if this will be useful "down the road". Chairman Wisnioski preferred with regards to the middle school model if all of the teachers of a student got together and said it would be better if this student did a project in another course that he learns how to do through Mr. Gomes. Chairman Wisnioski asked how much it would cost for sixty textbooks. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said the cost for those would be \$1,000. She said they are going to get twenty-five of them and they each cost \$40. Mrs. Bell said these will be used as a reference book. Chairman Wisnioski assumed that the decision would be made carefully with regards to whatever version to get. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said sure.

Mr. MacDonald referred to Unit 6 which is about investment portfolios and the simulated investments. He asked if there was any discussion on the programs that are out there for the stock market simulation. He mentioned the fact that many high schools run the stock market simulations as part of a course or through a club. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this can certainly be suggested to Mr. Gomes. Mrs. Bell said this was done in the middle school in the past.

Assistant Principal Malizia referred to the topic that is listed with regards to investments and he told everyone that they just have an outline of what Mr. Gomes is going to teach. He thinks Mr. Gomes may have done the stock market game in a course. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan said this may be a significant task of Mr. Gomes because he isn't finished with those yet and she said she will ask him.

Chairman Wisnioski said he had told Superintendent Dr. Villar earlier today that he wanted to know what the national standards are that are being referred to. Assistant Superintendent Hourigan thinks Mr. Gomes found these in the Jump Start Coalition for Personal Finance for Literacy. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is an organization that sets standards for this topic and the State of Connecticut has much broader standards that don't focus to personal finance. Mr. Gomes is working off of more focused national standards.

Chairman Wisnioski confirmed that this will be a business education course and Superintendent Dr. Villar said that is right. Chairman Wisnioski told Superintendent Dr. Villar that he sent him some information from Ohio with regards to technology and business education. There is a national model that relates tech ed students and the middle college idea. In Ohio, he said this had to do with community colleges. There is a very established curriculum that he thinks is some sort of national model. Governor Rell has proposed something about the middle college thing. He asked where they are going on this with regards to this state. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is an idea. Chairman Wisnioski asked if this is nothing that will materialize that they will get involved with. Superintendent Dr. Villar said there are many districts that already have a collaborative effort in place. He explained more and he thinks Governor Rell is trying to formalize this a little bit. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is a good idea. The other Perkins Grant monies are being used for them to start to reach out with Manchester Community College. Mr. Rivard confirmed that Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is a good idea. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is a good idea to have high school students involved in community colleges if they have advanced through the district's curriculum and if they can benefit from it. Mr. Rivard agreed with that.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they are asking for approval to move forward with this course. Mrs. Vargas asked if this has to go to the full Board of Education. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this can be moved to the full Board of Education and this item can be put on the agenda for the Board of Education's April 30, 2009 meeting. Mrs. Vargas asked if this will give them enough time to get students. Mr. MacDonald said they are all in favor of this and they have five Board of Education members' votes here this evening. Chairman Wisnioski thinks there is some "fleshing out" that needs to be done but this permits the high school to move forward. He asked Mrs. Vargas if she had any objections, comments or information that she needed from the administration. Mrs. Vargas said she was just saying that this would not be a full Board of Education vote regardless of how many members they had present this evening. Chairman Wisnioski said this is acknowledged. Mr. MacDonald said there is a consensus that the five Board of Education members who are present this evening are in favor of this. Mrs. Vargas voiced her concern that this is not the full Board of Education. Mr. MacDonald said this is understood. Chairman Wisnioski said he didn't want to start a new precedent. He agreed with Mrs. Vargas that this issue should be brought to the full Board of Education. Mrs. Vargas said she would make a motion that this Committee's three members could vote on.

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, that the Curriculum Committee forward the approval of the Personal Finance and Technology Course to the full Board of Education.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Rene (Skip) Rivard, to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

**FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth

Accepted by: _____ Date: _____