

**ENFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

The September 15, 2022, Curriculum Committee meeting was called to order by Amanda Pickett at 5:04 PM.

Present: Amanda Pickett, Dr. Gerald Calnen and Jean Acree
Absent: None
Also Present: Michelle Middleton, Joel Senez, Madam Chair LeBlanc, Board member Josh Hamre
Audience: Zach Zannoni

Discussion of African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino History Course:

Mr. Senez showed committee members an overview of the summer work done to plan for the new State-mandated, elective course. This consisted of taking the massive curriculum document (provided by the State through SERC) and making it manageable to teach in one year. Lesson plans were written, with resource links embedded, and some pacing was adjusted. Mr. Senez explained the pacing of the course. The first part of the course is the African American/ Black History, while the second part covers the Puerto Rican/Latino History. Because the first part is slightly longer, it will take the class through February, which is slightly more than a semester. Mr. Senez informed committee members that we are running two sections of the course with forty total students enrolled.

A committee member asked if we knew what students taking this course were planning to study in college. It was explained that we have not looked at that, but it would be interesting to see. The question was asked as to whether this course is honors; it is not. This course is only open to students in Grades 11 and 12.

Mr. Senez walked committee members through the unit and lesson layout on the Class Notebook portion of the Teams page for this course. He explained the course starts with African history. Mr. Senez showed committee members some of the huge questions and ideas that students will be thinking about throughout the course. One such idea is Africa's place in the formation of humanity.

A committee member asked if there was a diverse population of students enrolled in the course to help the discussion involve multiple perspectives. Mr. Senez explained that he has visited that class a couple of times already. He said the makeup of the student population was diverse. He also explained that when he was in the room, the teacher was having the students help set ground rules as a class for difficult conversations as preparation for some of the discussions they would be having. Mr. Senez continued to walk committee members through some topics, such as the African empires and looking at influences African history had on the world.

A committee member asked how the sources were determined. It was explained that the State curriculum contained a great deal of resources, too many to use. When the teacher was reviewing the curriculum and creating lesson plans, he decided which resources he thought fit best and would most connect with his students.

Next, Mr. Senez showed another big idea the course presents: understanding race and the transatlantic slave trade. This topic is too big to answer at the end of unit 1, as it presented in the

curriculum, so the teacher decided to have the students keep revisiting this concept throughout the course. Mr. Senez also talked about the complexity of the provided unit assessments and some revisions made to make them fit into our pacing, while still covering the concepts. Mr. Senez explained that unit two covers slavery and is framed through the idea of resilience. The five themes of slavery are discussed. Students are given an understanding of what was happening in Africa when the Europeans arrived. In this unit, slavery in Connecticut is discussed, which can be eye-opening to students, even in Grades 11 and 12. Unit three is getting to the Civil War, unit four covers Reconstruction and the struggles in the year that follow. Unit five addresses the movement for equality and unit six talks about power, politics, and culture.

A committee member asked if there are supports in place for the teacher of this course. Mr. Senez explained that the teacher has had training on facilitating courageous conversations in his classroom. Mr. Senez is regularly checking in with the teacher and keeping a pulse on what is happening in the classroom. SERC is also providing quarterly workshops which Mr. Senez is attending and bringing information back to the teacher. SERC is also providing a coach for the teacher. The coach has not yet been assigned, but Mr. Senez is hoping that will happen soon.

Mr. Senez addressed a concern raised by Ms. Acree when the course was presented to the committee in the spring. She hoped that culture was going to be addressed in the course. Mr. Senez wanted to let Ms. Acree know that the course talks about culture itself and the influences that are evident throughout history to today.

A committee member asked how the Puerto Rican and Latino portion of the course will be handled. Mr. Senez explained that some working of that part still needs to take place and will be done during department meetings and professional development sessions. It was asked if the differences between Latin America and South America will be discussed. Mr. Senez said that is addressed a little bit, but it is an American History course, so that section of the curriculum was written with a focus on Latino Americans.

A committee member brought up that the names Derrick Bell and Ibram Kendi are listed in the supplemental resources section of the curriculum. Are those resources used? Mr. Senez explained we are not using those resources.

Committee members thanked Mr. Senez for his time and invited him back later in the year to discuss the Puerto Rican/Latino History portion of the course.

Items from the Table:

Committee members referred to a question by an EHS student at a June Board meeting about the possibility of waiving mid-terms and/or finals if a student has an A- average. Ms. Middleton will meet with a team from EHS to discuss this topic.

The next Curriculum meeting will be held on October 20, 2022.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Middleton
Chief Academic Officer