



**Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School
Minutes of the Combined Meeting of the
Academic Excellence and Academy Culture & Community Committee**

Draft

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom Video Conference
Members present: Linda Denault, Margaret Ferrick*, Jessica Miller, Sarah Risotti*, Richard McGrath
Members absent: Jennifer Melendez, Zaina Rivett*
In attendance: David Burris, Jim Donahue, Melissa Hogan, Alex McConnon, Jasmin Rivas,

*Non-Trustee Committee member

Order of Business:

Public Access 1 on Docketed Items*

1. Approve the minutes of the January 4, 2022 meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee Linda Denault
2. Approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee Jessica Miller
3. Review of health standards from Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, health and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) curriculum Lisa DeTora
4. New/Other Business

Public Access 2*

Adjournment

Documents and Exhibits:

- Draft Minutes of the January 4, 2022 meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee and January 25, 2022 meeting of the Academy Culture & Community Committee
- Framing Memo AEC ACC 2.9.22 (3)
- Health Presentation 2022 (2)
- Health Frameworks
- 2021-2022 Opt out letter (2)

Dr. Denault called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Alex called a roll call for a quorum for each committee. Quorum was established.

Public Access 1 on Docketed Items

Dr. Denault asked if there were any comments from members of the public. There were none.

1. *Approval of the minutes of the January 4, 2022 and January 25, 2022 meetings of the Academic Excellence Committee and Academy Culture & Community Committee*

Dr. Denault asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2022 Academic Excellence Committee meeting.

Motion: Ms. Risotti moved to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2022 meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee.

Second: Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

All in favor. (Mr. McGrath abstained)

Ms. Ferrick joined the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 Academy Culture & Community Committee meeting.

Motion: Dr. Denault moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting of the Academy Culture & Committee.

Second: Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

All in favor. (Ms. Risotti abstained)

2. *Review of health standards from Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, health and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) curriculum*

Dr. Hogan said Old Sturbridge Academy (OSA) is starting the health puberty lessons for the fifth graders and is focusing on “Standard 4, Reproduction and Sexuality”. Per Dr. Hogan, frameworks for fifth grade say students will be able to identify the components, functions, and processes of the reproductive system. Students will also label functions and organs of the reproductive system on a blank diagram. In Standard 4.2, the students will identify the physical changes as related to the reproductive system during puberty with a recommendation to have an individual who specializes in children (school nurse) to discuss changes that take place in puberty. Per Dr. Hogan, this curriculum came from Maine Family Planning and it ties to Old Sturbridge Village (OSV) which was chosen based on Dr. Fazen’s recommendations. Per Dr. Hogan, this was taught last year and will run for six weeks. A member of the administrative team, the deans, Ms. DeTora, or Dr. Hogan will attend the classes for support and all genders will be taught together.

Dr. Hogan said the students had options to meet in small groups last year based on their levels of comfort. From the curriculum, OSA is teaching units one and two and both units address standards 4.1 and 4.2. OSA is notifying parents in regards to curriculum. The policy in writing was adopted by the School committee and a letter will go home to the parents and program instruction materials/a video will be available. The health presentation will be shared to parents once it is approved by administration.

There is also an opt-out letter, which will give parents the opportunity to opt out of one or both units. If they opt out, there will be supplemental work for the students. OSA will present and give parents information with a follow-up where they can ask questions.

Dr. Hogan said the eighth grade unit that will be taught next year is about recognizing emotional and physical changes, abstinence, and short-term/long-term consequences in sexual behavior. Dr. Hogan reviewed all the standards to the committee.

Dr. Hogan asked for feedback to prepare this unit for the spring and for next year. Ms. Ferrick asked how standards 4.1 and 4.2 were chosen. Dr. Hogan said Ms. DeTora and Dr. Fazen picked them. Ms. Ferrick mentioned standard “4.3, defining sexual orientation” and Dr. Hogan listed examples that are worked on in Crew. Ms. Ferrick asked if there would be an inclusion lense and Dr. Hogan confirmed. Ms. Rivas said 4.3 speaks to the inclusion piece but if it is not introduced in that stage around reproduction, it will hinder what is taught in eighth grade around sexually transmitted diseases because there are certain ideas that need to be explained to students.

Dr. Denault asked if there was a face-to-face meeting with the parents. Dr. Hogan said there is a video presentation that is sent to the parents. Dr. Hogan explained that there was positive feedback last year and only a few students opted out.

Ms. Ferrick suggested that standard 4.3 should be included for the students. Dr. Hogan will bring it to the Wellness committee for review. Ms. Rivas said this curriculum has an addendum that refers to other supplemental materials that would cover 4.3 and is important for students to have this information for identifying themselves.

Dr. Denault asked if OSA will teach gender as social construct. Ms. Rivas said evidence based curriculum teaches standard 4.3 this way. The anatomy is often taught first and then gender identity and the difference between gender identity and biological sex. Ms. Rivas said biological sex is explained as what you are born with and gender refers to how you feel.

Dr. Denault suggested having it be an opt-in option instead of opt-out as discussed in the last meeting. Dr. Hogan said it would be changed to both an opt-in or opt-out option and if a letter is not returned, OSA will notify the parent.

Discussion ensued about different curriculums.

Dr. Denault said 4.3 is a good foundation for eighth grade and asked if it should be included in fifth grade. She suggested teaching a minor introduction of the terms along the way. Dr. Hogan will bring the concerns to adding it to the curriculum back to the Wellness committee.

Dr. Denault encouraged Dr. Hogan to include a live parent meeting in addition to the materials sent. Mr. Burris expressed the importance of having transparency with parents with updating them on the plan but also expressing that OSA is preparing the students for the future.

Dr. Denault asked about the staff training for those who are presenting it. Dr. Hogan said the health teacher, the school adjustment counselor, and the school nurse are prepared to do this presentation and the administrative team will be there for support. Mr. Burris described the process last year.

Ms. Risotti asked if there would be accommodations for students who needed it and Dr. Hogan confirmed.

Ms. Miller asked if there have been in-person parent meetings in past. Dr. Hogan said there was one planned but was cancelled due to the pandemic.

Dr. Denault asked how much of the curriculum is implemented. Dr. Hogan said it has been simplified to decrease time per lesson, covering the standards, and keeping it as straight forward as possible.

Dr. Denault asked about student response. Dr. Hogan said focusing on anatomy with a matter of fact approach and keeping it simple was successful.

Mr. McGrath noted that having parent engagement would strengthen the whole process. Ms. Rivas said other curriculums have activities that parents and students can do together so that the parent knows what lesson is about. This could be a component to engage/partner with parents.

Mr. Donahue said having an in-person meeting for parents/caregivers could be a resolution of the committee that could be brought back to Ms. DeTora. This could also be brought to staff as a recommendation. Mr. Donahue also suggested doing a survey to collect data from students after the delivery of the curriculum as well as doing professional development with the staff. Mr. Donahue will come back to the committee with recommendations.

3. *New/Other Business*

Ms. Miller asked if there was any new or other business. There was none.

*Public Access 2**

Dr. Denault asked if there were any comments from members of the public. There were none.

Motion: Mr. McGrath moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Ms. Ferrick seconded the motion.

Vote: All in favor

Ms. Miller adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm.