

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Curriculum

Meeting type: Regular

Date of Meeting: 2/23/26

Minutes submitted by: Kris Woleck

Members present: Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson (*arrived 7:03 p.m.*)

Members absent:

Other attendees: Ken Craw, Kristine Woleck, Ryan Ragan, James D'Amico, Karen Gruetzner, Allyson Story, Dom Cipollone, Ed Sbordone

Meeting Access: Curriculum Subcommittee (2/23/26 at 7:00 p.m.)

Web: <https://zoom.us/j/96143557088> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 961 4355 7088

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Dr. Craw. Although the first order of business was to nominate a committee chair, the committee decided to proceed with information items while waiting for additional members to join the meeting.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIR

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 24, 2025

Discussion occurred regarding outstanding committee minutes from a prior meeting. It was decided that action to approve previous minutes (November 24, 2025) will be taken at a future meeting in March.

III. INFORMATION / ACTION ITEMS

A. NFPS STEAM Program Overview (Curriculum / Instruction goals) - Kristine Woleck and NF Middle School STEAM teacher Ryan Ragan presented an update on the district's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) program. Over the past 18 months, the district has worked to more clearly define STEAM experiences and create coherence across grades K–12.

Elementary Level (K–5)

- STEAM lessons are now embedded into each of the three science units at every grade level.
- Students work with the elementary STEAM teacher, Mr. Giuliano, on hands-on engineering practices connected to their classroom science content.
- Examples: Kindergartners design shade structures during weather units; 4th graders explore coding and patterns through the study of light and sound waves.
- Enrichment: Optional clubs for grades 3–5 include video broadcasting, robotics, film production, and 3D printing.

Middle School Level (6–8)

STEAM is part of the "UA" (Unified Arts) block, where every student takes one trimester of STEAM annually, meeting every other day. These classes have been designed in collaboration with Jeanne Gephart as part of the science curriculum work; they connect NGSS science grade-level content with engineering practices. Mr. Ragan shared photos and video of students engaged in this work.

- 6th Grade: Focuses on magnetism, static electricity, and current electricity.
- 7th Grade: Covers selective breeding (designing a "dog" with specific traits) and a personal finance/travel research project.

- 8th Grade: Includes the study of digital and analog waves, building tsunami warning models, and a tower-building engineering contest.
- STEAM Exploration Electives are additional courses available to MS students based on "Project Lead the Way" modules, including Design and Modeling (6th), Flight and Space (7th), and VEX Robotics (8th).

Future Work

- Digital Literacy & AI: The district plans to embed AI competencies and digital literacy skills into existing STEAM courses.
- Industry Credentials: The district is exploring opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized certifications, such as Adobe certification.
- Design Thinking: A continued focus on iterative problem-solving and prototyping, aligned to the NFPS Vision of a Learner to prepare students for modern career fields.

B. NFHS 2026 SEE Project Update (Instruction goal)

Senior Enrichment Experience (High School)

An update was provided regarding revisions to the high school Senior Enrichment Experience (SEE) in response to changes in Connecticut graduation requirements removing the mandatory capstone, post-pandemic internship placement challenges, and feedback from students, staff, and community internship partners.

Current-Year (2026) Adjustments

The program has been redesigned to offer students multiple experience pathways, including:

1. Work-study release opportunities,
2. Career pathway internships,
3. Applied project-based learning experiences, and
4. Other individualized enrichment options.

These changes aim to improve the quality and authenticity of student experiences, reduce strain on community internship placements, and better align senior experiences with the NFPS Vision of the Learner and NEASC accreditation priorities. Discussion referenced the district's next NEASC accreditation visit, anticipated during the 2029 calendar year, and the importance of aligning current programmatic enhancements (e.g., Senior Enrichment Experience) with long-term accreditation expectations.

Planning is ongoing for additional refinements for the 2026–2027 school year.

ELECTION OF SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Craw called for nominations for a new chair.

Motion: To nominate Amy Johnson as Chair of the Curriculum Subcommittee

Made by: Greg Flanagan

Seconded by: Sue Huwer

Recording of vote: Ay - Unanimous

Amy Johnson is chair of this committee.

IV. OTHER – Topics for future meetings include retaking exams and curving the score on an exam.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Amy Johnson

Seconded by: Greg Flanagan

Recording of vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at: 7:51 p.m.