

Stonington High School
SBIT Minutes
September 21, 2010

Members Present: C. Chambers, M. Devine, T. Farrell, M. Gillick, L. George, J. McCurdy, A. Morrison, S. Mueller, S. Murphy, J. Norcross, A. Walsh, S. Whewell, C. Woodman

Visitors Present: J. Cappozzoli, C. Ferguson, S. Johnson, M. Kornacki, J. La Valley, M. Morgan A. Pelt, N. Sheffield, F. Zelepos

Meeting called to order: 5:00 PM

I. Reports

- A. Introductions and welcome to new SBIT members and visitors
- B. Student Report (Claire Chambers, Student Government Vice- President):

School started last Monday, August 30th. Over 60 upperclassmen served as Link Crew leaders to welcome the freshmen and help them through orientation.

Freshmen elections for both Student Government and class officers took place on Friday, September 17th. The candidates were required to give speeches to their classmates and optional voting took place immediately afterward.

"Q-Block" was also introduced this year to make X-Block more effective for both students and staff. Once a week during the first half of X-Block, students will report to their home bases to work on homework, receive extra help, and/or participate in class assemblies. Each class has Q-Block on different days so this system will help reduce the number of students in the café/commons at the same time while also building in time for assemblies which in the past would have taken place during instructional time. Every Wednesday students will report to their home bases for structured advisory. This new X-Block structure also allows each teacher to have "office hours" once a week. Therefore, students can meet with their individual teacher once a week for extra help and to make up tests/quizzes.

On another note, the SHS band encourages the school and community to visit them during home football games and at the Westerly Columbus Day Parade. Sports have begun their practices and tryouts for the drama production will be taking place in the coming weeks. Homecoming will take place on Saturday, October 9th and the theme is Disney Movies.

As the year progresses, I (Claire) will have more updates from specific clubs, but most are just having their first meetings and getting into the swing of a new school year.

- C. BOE Reports (Alisa Morrison):

- i. BOE has changed the way in which it will be represented and support SPS. **Alisa Morrison is the SHS liaison.** Now, one board member will be visible at SHS, attending SBIT, events, and other meetings during the year.
- ii. **Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy: (Handouts distributed)** Alisa shared that this policy has been under a lengthy review process. The BOE has solicited input from police, coaches, organizations outside of the town, and other area school leaders. The goal is to have it finalized and ready for implementation by Spring Sports Night. Prior to final approval, a Parent-Town workshop will be held in order to gain feedback. Also, the BOE is awaiting further input from administrators and coaches. When asked about initial feedback, Alisa commented that school leaders from other towns stated that it was not strict enough. Overall, the policy sets an expectation for student athletes participating in extracurricular activities and outlines appropriate behaviors. Students shall be subjected to sanctions, up to and including dismissal from participation in athletics and extracurricular activities for negative or inappropriate behavior, at any time during the calendar year. The current Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy will remain in effect until further notice.

D. Principal's report (Dr. Stephen Murphy):

- i. **2010-2011 Goals:** Dr. Murphy distributed copies of the SPS' 2010-2011 Goals and discussed the three primary goals shared by the district and SHS' adoption and alignment of school specific goals to help achieve these objectives. The goals are as follows:
 1. Integrate metaprocesses in all courses
 2. Implement a Response to Intervention (RtI) program
 - a. Involves an intervention program for students having difficulty in the classroom
 - b. Goal: focus on non special needs students
 3. Develop common formative assessments to inform teaching and learning
 - a. Assessments in real time
 - b. Presented during class to assess learning so that teachers can determine if what they are teaching is being learned by each student before moving on to the next lesson
 - c. Start with core academic areas
 - d. Use State developed core competencies, working with LEARN to create school specific rubric
 - e. Addresses 2016 NEASC reevaluation goal to have formative assessments in place
 - f. Goal: help identify gaps and needs for interventions
- ii. **New Hires:** Dr. Murphy reviewed the staffing changes at SHS. He noted that having an approved budget at the start greatly helped with the hiring process and allowed for a more effective outcome. Some key points: 1 teacher retired, 1 resigned, and 2 opted for part-time hours. 10 people were hired including new art, special ed, literacy and science teachers, 2 English

teachers, 2 counselors, and 2 math teachers. Additionally, a 24 hr. /wk Tech Para and a 15 hr. / wk Health Para were also added supporting SHS. Dr. Murphy noted other changes, including: Mr. Thomas Bousquet- appointed the new Director of Guidance, Mrs. VanEtten and Mr. Friese—new interdisciplinary/ academic coordinators. Discussion included an update on the TLC program which is in its 4th year at the high school. This program, for intellectually disabled students, recently introduced a new phase focused on teaching transitional and life skills to those students preparing to transition out of the program.

- iii. **Assessment Data/CAPT and SAT results:** SHS continues to demonstrate proficiency in core academic areas. CAPT testing results were higher than the state for goal and proficiency. Similarly, SAT results were above the State and Nation. In the area of Writing, SHS students exceeded standards significantly. A special BOE town meeting is planned later this week to review CAPT testing results with parents and students.
- iv. **Revised X-Block:** Both Dr. Murphy and Vice-Principal, Jennifer McCurdy, provided an update to changes to X-Block and the introduction of Q-Block to the school day schedule. Q-Block: each week, students will participate in Q block for 25 minutes of their X-Block time. Q-Block will be supervised by the student's home base/ advisory teacher. During Q-Block, students will participate in grade level assemblies; obtain extra help from teachers who have office hours, complete homework, and other activities. Comments from teachers were very positive. Ms. Norcross noted that it has been less hectic and nice to have built in time to interact with students instead of competing with the noise of the cafeteria. Ms. Divine added that the office hours have been a positive change and that she has had students show up for every scheduled time. Other comments included:
 1. Allows for greater flexibility especially with respect to preserving instructional time
 2. Creates more effective advisory time
 3. Accommodates more needs—assemblies, special meetings, etc.
 4. Allows teachers the benefit of working with students 1:1.
 5. Creates a calmer tone and provides for more seating in the cafeteria during lunch

Dr. Murphy noted that the changes demonstrated a testament of true collaboration between administrators and faculty. He also said that X-Block is always in flux, it is constantly being evaluated and changed to address the needs of the students and the school. He reiterated that the purpose of X-Block is to place students in a situation where they can demonstrate responsibility and display respect. X-Block allows them the chance to acquire these attributes. Students decide how best to use their time.

- E. **Strategic Plan:** The SPS Strategic Plan was discussed. Dr. Murphy directed attendees to access the SPS website for more complete details. Laminated copies of the Executive Summary complete with 3 core goals were distributed and reviewed. Dr.

Murphy noted that the strategic plan represented a 5 year goal consisting of implementation and on-going monitoring processes. Dr. Murphy highlighted the importance of aligning SHS' and SBIT goals to be consistent and supportive of district wide goals.

- F. **SBIT Goal:** The SBIT attendees discussed ways in which the team could help improve the school using the Strategic Plan goals as a source of guidance. It was decided that the team would like to focus on Community Integration with the educational environment to support student achievement. Conversations included a review of the benefits of the Career Center, job shadowing, and internship opportunities and ways in which these offerings could be expanded and improved upon. Students actively contributed their ideas and comment specifically on possible changes to the Career Fair, such as, allowing more time for the event or integrating career professionals into scheduled classroom time. Further discussion focused on the need to communicate more effectively and to capture the experiences of those who have already participated in job shadowing or internships to help influence other students to get involved.

II. **Visitor Comments:** None

III. **SBIT Comments:** Claire Chambers commented that she understands the benefits of Q-Block but stated that once an assembly ends and students join others already in the cafeteria that it is very hard to find a place to eat. Other students agreed. Ms. McCurdy said that she would look into this situation.

IV. **Action:** Attendees were asked to bring back ideas specific to the SBIT goal and to think of ways in which SHS and the community could better integrate. Students were encouraged to come back and to bring a friend. Their involvement could help better shape the programs meant for them.

V. **Agenda:** Add SBIT GOAL and IDEA Session to next meeting's agenda

VI. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM