



Education Committee - Board of Representatives

Megan Cottrell, Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, March 24, 2022
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Education Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Cottrell, Vice Chair Shaw, and Committee Member Reps. Jean-Louis, Mays, Pierre-Louis, and Pollack. Excused was Rep. Di Costanzo. Also in attendance were Reps. Goldberg and Moore; Tamu Lucero, BOE Superintendent; Rebecca Hamman, Jennienne Burke, Daniel Dauplaise, BOE; Bridgette Fox, Janeene Freeman, Cindy Grafstein, Mayor's Office; Monica Lahiri-Hoherchak, ELL Coordinator; Rebecca Wilson, College & Career Coordinator; Claudia Berlage, SHS Assistant Principal; Stephen Perry and Jay Tepper, Planning Board; Kemp Morhardt, Principal and Architect, SLAM; Mike Zuba, Director of Public Education Master Planning, SLAM; and five members of the public.

Chair Cottrell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. E31.007	Progress for any Recommendations Made in Day Pitney's July 22, 2021 BOE Hostile Work Environment Investigation Report. 03/09/22 – Submitted by Rep. Di Costanzo	HELD
2. E31.005	REVIEW; Discussion of Superintendent's Contract Terms. 02/09/22 – Submitted by Reps. Cottrell and Sherwood	HELD

Due to the unavailability of one of the invited guests, Items #1 and #2 were held.

¹ 4. E31.004	REVIEW; Stamford Public Schools Block Schedule Proposal. 01/27/2022 – Submitted by Rep. Goldberg.	REPORT MADE
---	--	--------------------

Item #4 was taken up out of order.

Rep. Goldberg discussed his reason for putting this item on the Agenda. He has been hearing from many constituents about block scheduling and wanted to give Dr. Lucero and her colleagues an opportunity to discuss it.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:00:30

Dr. Lucero explained the block scheduling and there was discussion.

- There have been discussions in the Stamford BOE for the past six years about this. There was a change in the number of credits required to graduate high school in Connecticut. The BOE Administration decided this was a good time to switch to block scheduling to give students more opportunities to earn school credits.
- A hybrid 4 x 4 and A/B model will be implemented in Westhill and Stamford High. Students will have a choice of two options:
 - The 4 x 4 model, taking between four to eight classes - four classes will meet every day for one semester, and another four classes will meet every day for the second semester.
 - The A/B model, which allows taking eight classes for the entire school year.
- AITE will pilot some 4 x 4 courses, but most will be A/B courses.
- BOE is in the process of completing a curriculum audit to determine which courses are better as a 4 x 4 and which are better as an A/B.
- The 4 x 4 model can help reduce a student's course load each semester while earning the same amount of credits for the year as the A/B model.
- In block scheduling all classes are 90 minutes, as opposed to 48 minutes, allowing more time for teachers to engage with students.
- Most Connecticut school districts have moved to some type of block schedule.
- Students might need a quick break during a 90 minute class.
- The A/B model is a "one-size-fits-all" with little flexibility.
- The lunch period will be 27 minutes, in two waves.
- Block scheduling is helpful for English language learners who do not have to focus on eight classes while trying to learn English. It is also a more immersive experience to have longer classes, which helps in learning a language.
- There will be a cooperative work program. More flexibility allows for earlier release, which helps students that have part time jobs. Workplace experience can be matched with curriculum content. With eight classes, curriculum rotates every day so a student cannot leave early.
- The block scheduling is supported by 100% of school administrators, even though some teachers do not support it. Teachers will be given curriculum development to help guide them through this change.
- It will be very important to get feedback from teachers, students, and parents about how the block scheduling is working.

Chair Cottrell stated that it is important for all branches of the City government to communicate on this plan and how it will evolve over time.

Mr. Morhardt and Mr. Zuba reviewed the [attached](#) presentation in detail, and there was discussion.

- SLAM is working on finalizing the draft report to be ready the week of March 28, 2022. The report will be in two parts, 1) an executive summary and 2) all of the appendices, which will contain detailed assessments for each school.
- Funding for the Lockwood building was withdrawn as a priority designation and is no longer being pursued by the Administration.
- Westhill is on the State agenda's priority list. Mayor Simmons and Dr. Lucero gave testimony to the State Education Committee. It is going thru the legislative process right now. Requests have been submitted for additional funding beyond the standard 20 percent, aiming for as high as 80 to 90 percent.
- The legislative process needs to work through. We have to find out what the local funding share will be. There will be a better sense of that by the end of the legislative session towards the end of Spring.
- The City will then go back and work with SLAM, the Engineering Department and Facilities Department to figure out what will get done within each school.
- There can be a big variance of what can be done based on what the funding will be. How Westhill fares in the legislative session will be a determining factor to what the finances will be for all the schools.

Chair Cottrell noted that if anyone has additional questions about block scheduling to send her an email and she will reach out to the Superintendent, and possibly the BOE Teaching & Learning Committee to get more information.

Chair Cottrell adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Cottrell, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).