

AUGUST 9, 2022 ACADEMIC AND CURRICULUM MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Foley: I hear Laura but I don't see her. Is Laura on?

Ms. Harris: Yes. My video is on. Rebecca is not going to make it today.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Mr. Foley: Dan Foley and Laura Harris. Rebecca O'Hara is not present.

Also Present:

Dr. Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Schools

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Dr. Conway: We'll turn it over to Jenn and Hunter to explain to the Committee their idea for an exchange program.

Mr. Foley: I do have a few questions I need to clear up. Jen.

Ms. Olson: Hi, Dan.

Mr. Foley: Go ahead.

Ms. Olson: Yeah, I just wanted to thank you for giving us a chance to share with you some exciting programming. I think before we get to this part of it, we'll back it up just a tiny little bit where you can see in the spring where we started in spring of 2022, we were very fortunate to have started a partnership really outside of the walls of Derby High School. It actually started with Ms. Haversat, the Italian Teacher with us for a very short period of time, her mother took ill. And shortly after being appointed, she needed to go to return to Italy to go and care for her mother. Before she left though, she had started a partnership for some tours, for some virtual tours that introduced us and our students to really live travel and tourism to some really great popular Cities in Italy.

Hunter took over right as we were starting those transitions and it is the first real experience our kids had of hearing the language spoken by native speakers and kind of being immersed in the language. They were very short tours. But then Hunter actually took it to another and began with the shared classroom. And so he has partnered with a teacher and a classroom in Italy, we'll talk a little bit about that. And the students have themselves now been communicating with other students. It's like pen pals of our day right now. They've been virtual buddies and that experience is leaving messages and responding to each other in creating video. So, I'll turn it over to Hunter, but that's the work that we've done this year. And now there's been a proposal made to really expand this program for the upcoming school year. And it would include an Exchange Program of students from Derby going to Italy and some students from Italy coming here. So, that's the genesis of our presentation tonight. Hunter would like to share that with you. And, you know, begin answering, I'm sure there will be lots of questions that

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MARC J. GATOFALO, MHA

people would have about that program. But it's certainly very exciting and a chance for our kids to get some really unique experiences. So, without further adieu, I'll turn it over to Hunter. He's done an amazing job of the first-year teacher with us and we're super proud of the work that he will share with you.

Hunter: First, hello. And thank you for hearing our proposal before the Board here. To expand a little bit on what Jen was saying, was that Ms. Haversat was saying before she returned to Italy, had a friend, more of a colleague, who's living in Cosenza and Cosenza is in the Calabria which is in the southern half of Italy. It's very far down on the boot. She, her name is Tatia (phonetic) is her name is a teacher and she teaches English as I teach Italian at High School. And she teaches English to Italian students. It's a high school course just like we offer Italian in High School. And she, after we had been doing these exchanges of videos. You know, we did about four throughout the year because you know it takes time because both of our classes decided to do the videos in both English and Italian so you got practice in both languages. Hearing natives speak their own language and hearing the one that they're learning.

And I'm going to say back perhaps in May she approached me with a program that they have, which they currently have, well pre-COVID what they have done with two-partner schools that they had in other country, so this school in Cosenza has an Exchange Program with a school in Argentina and a school in Brazil that they exchange students with. And the way the exchange works is that you know there's a public session. There's a fall session and a spring session which lasts for anywhere between 12 to 15 days depending on travel, depending on all the logistics. And the way they do it is because their classes are a little, the sizing is just a little bit different. They usually send around 8 to 10 kids. However, given the size of our classes, we were thinking more around like 4 to 6 kids. I was originally under the assumption of one with an exchange. However, you know after hearing that, which I believe I put in the written proposal, I think I explained it. And the idea here would be that the students would be swapping, you know, basically living the lives of their counterparts while habitating with the families, other people who they have exchanged with.

Everything between demographics and between the structure of the seasons, it's very different from Derby. So, obviously they walk everywhere. They use public transportation here. But anyway, the idea would be the students would spend roughly two weeks in the life of the other person attending their school, seeing the Town that they live in. Italy is an obviously much smaller country so they take a lot of day trips. Other parts, you know, like we might travel to the next Town over or you might have taken a train into New York. They do that very often just in their local area.

And when the students return, I know they I asked Senora, she said their students write a reflection about you know, their time there, cultural differences, cultural similarities. That kind of stuff. So, that would be what we were thinking what might the students do when they return, well around that, while they are there, they're making little notations and taking some cultural observation of the differences. But it is primarily for the experience of immersing themselves you know, in a language that is obviously not their own in a culture that is not their own and having them to be able to identify, which we do in class, the major differences between the two. And obviously, there are many logistical things I am sure bring up many questions so if you have any.

Mr. Foley: Okay. Hunter, some quick questions. One, a student from Derby.

Ms. Harris: Only students from Derby High School.

Hunter: Yes, it would be the students with Derby High School because that's the partnership as of right now that we approach. So, it would be restricted to the singles, so that way all of the students are sort of traveling together.

Mr. Foley: And cost. Who will be paying the cost for the airplane travel?

Ms. Olson: I think that's something that we would have to determine, but I think just the cost of the program you're referring to.

Mr. Foley: Yes.

Ms. Olson: We are really creative grant writers here, you know, this is something that we could potentially writing a grant or doing some kind of cost sharing for students or fund raising or, you know, if the Board can support a portion of it. I think that's to be determined. We recognize that it would be you know, to put the cost solely on the shoulders of the students and the parents would make it you know, kind of inequitable access. It really wouldn't be available to all students. And we want to be able to make sure that cost isn't a factor in prohibiting somebody from exploring it. But we also know that to put it all on the Board's shoulders might be difficult as well. So, that's something that we have to put a little bit more time in exploring. I think the priority of looking is to just see there was interest at the District level you know for us to continue planning for this.

Mr. Foley: I'm excited about it. And Hunter, by the way, Calabrese is part of Naples.

Hunter: Years ago the kingdom of Naples encompassed everything around there. So, for years, people who were from Calabria from Napoli, but it's actually much farther south.

Mr. Foley: Most of Derby came from Calabria, AM Club.

Hunter: There is a huge Calabria population in Connecticut. A lot of them did move to Connecticut.

Mr. Foley: Derby in particular.

Ms. Harris: Yes. That's my grandma's hometown.

Ms. Olson: It's exciting.

Hunter: How cool is that. It's an opportunity I think that despite that how small we say the World has become, it doesn't come up that often, so obviously taking into account the significant logistics of budgeting and the travel itself, I do think it is a very worthwhile opportunity.

Mr. Foley: Honestly, I think it's a great opportunity.

Ms. Harris: Would it be just for Italian III and IV students?

Hunter: Well, that would be something else that as a school we would have to determine. You know, in my mind would think the students would be most well equipped to go would be the Italian III because they have the most exposure to the language. However, I do have some exceptional students who, they were in Italian II this year, that could have been very well prepared to go. So, I think that it would really depend on the student, but I think we're looking mostly at Italian III.

Mr. Foley: How many chaperones would be going over or no chaperones.

Hunter: Well, you know, according to Senora Malay what would be expected on their end is that again travel is very different in Europe, even in the school system. They think very differently. So, to them they would expect the students to fly over and maybe be met at the airport by the families of the people who would be their host. But it is not uncommon in Europe, you know, students they fly, they take the train, they take buses all on their own because there, it's very small, and they do it so often. Here, it's not the same. So, that would be something that I would specifically iron out with her to determine what we think the best course of action is.

So, the way it would work is they would fly into Rome, because Rome handles all international air travel and then there's a smaller airport in Vicenza, which handles like the Inter-Italian travel. And that would be where they would be met by. So, they would have to do the connecting flight in the minds of the people doing it. I'm assuming they're assuming that the connecting flight would be done on their own and then they would be met in the Calabrese Airport.

Mr. Foley: All right. Any other questions?

Ms. Harris: No. I'd like to see a little more you know, info on all of the subjects we talked about and definitely put before the full Board for discussion. And would you already know that students would take this or would you survey your students and parents see who would be interested?

Hunter: So, I mentioned nothing of this to any of them prior to talking with you guys. I had already obviously talked with Jen about it, but I had not said anything to them. Knowing the students I have in Italian III, I think there would be quite a bit of interest in it. But it can be something that if before, you know, we can do a survey of it if you think that would be best. Otherwise, at the beginning of the year when we start the year, I'll start it with, this is something that we're planning for the fall or the spring whenever you would like to start it. And say, who would be interested. And then obviously we'd have to set forth some sort of incentive or some sort of benchmark that they would have to meet in order to say that you are eligible to go. Not just because you take Italian III, you have to meet a certain standard.

Ms. Harris: That makes sense to me.

Hunter: Right. Presumably you want the top tier student in terms of grade point average because they'd be away for two weeks. And it would be during school time, so you want to make sure that they don't fall behind on anything where it affects the rest of their grades as well or that they are willing to do makeup work when they get back.

Ms. Harris: Right.

Ms. Olson: Hunter, did they share with you about what specifically the time frame. I know that you said either fall or spring. But it would be us sending students to Italy, would they be sending students to us as well as a shared kind of exchange or is it kind of like us only?

Hunter: No, this is the same. Whoever we're sending there, they're sending people to us. So, if we send four, they send four.

Ms. Olson: Now, I'm going to talk like, as a mom. And say, you know, I might be really excited for my child to go over there and you'll have that experience. But then like going to someone's home and not knowing them. Do you think that, I will just ask Laura and Dan, I think that the District has done this kind

of exchange before, have they always stayed with other families or was it chaperoned or in a hotel kind of thing with. Do you recall previously?

Mr. Foley: I'm sorry, Laura. I don't recall.

Ms. Harris: They stayed at the homes.

Ms. Olson: They did.

Ms. Harris: Because we did something from Spain years ago and my daughters were in that. And we had two kids stay here and two kids went there. Yeah, it was like for a couple of years they did it.

Hunter: It's good that the District had that kind of experience with it. We did it in Trumbull because I went to Trumbull High. And I remember we had three years in a row, three sets of students in France. And they did the same thing. They stayed with the family we're swapping with.

Ms. Harris: Right.

Ms. Olson: Okay.

Ms. Harris: It worked out back then. I think it would be a great opportunity for any student to visit any other country in the world. But it would be great to get some more info. You know, like the ability to, you know. There has to be some kind of clause there that the Board of Ed or the Derby Public School system is not responsible for whatever, you know, health concerns. If somebody has an EpiPen, are they going to make sure they have all of their medication with them, whatever is needed. You know, that kind of thing that as a mom like Jen said, I would worry about that. You know, with asthma person, so.

Dr. Conway: I think we have enough schools probably that we can draw from from their packages that they already had together for something like this. So, we're not recreating or starting from scratch or missing things. I think we can, if we can get some other package from other schools and look through those and see what we can borrow from there and certainly then together we would put together the package and share it with Kyle to review as well to make sure we're capturing everything to protect the Board.

Hunter: Which was also something I said to Tatia (phonetic) which was that we were sort of just waiting when we had this meeting. And that if there were any specific questions, we know we needed to have answered like in the write-up that I did you know she answered some of the questions about some of the logistics while they're there, nothing too specific but she did answer some of those questions. But if there were anything more specific that you wanted answered, that I wouldn't necessarily think about being not in administration. If you wanted to give me a list to send to her, and she can either you know, fill it out herself or hand it to her supervisor to fill it out, I can certainly do that.

Ms. Olson: That's great. Thank you. So, the next Board meeting is September 6th. I think between now and then Hunter and I will work on getting some kind of rough costs for the program, looking at other school Districts. I'm trying to access some forms and materials that they use for you know, sharing information with parents and then certainly from the liability standpoint. We'll prepare all of those and seeing if they can put this program on the agenda for the 6th so that we can present all of that information out to everyone and then engage in a larger discussion with more information.

Mr. Foley: Very good.

Ms. Olson: Okay.

Mr. Foley: Doctor, is there available from the funds from the Board.

Dr. Conway: This is something that ARP ESSER Funds would support, so to get us started anyway. I think that might be an appropriate source of funding to look at.

Mr. Foley: Okay. Laura, anything else?

Ms. Harris: No, not right now, thank you, Dan.

Mr. Foley: Doctor, do I need a motion to bring it up?

Dr. Conway: No, as long as you just agree, we'll bring it up at the September 6th Board meeting.

Mr. Foley: Okay.

Dr. Conway: But I think even in fairness to everybody the Board may want time to ask questions and then digest answers before they confirm which way. And we may see it go to, you know, present at the COW with no expectations necessarily, but to generate more questions which will only help us design a great program and not miss things. And then go back to our regular Board meeting in September and maybe for approval.

Mr. Foley: Sounds good. Jen, anything else?

Ms. Olson: Not for this group. No, thank you. I appreciate it and I'm excited and I appreciate the support. We're getting kids these experiences outside of Derby and their four walls of their classroom. It's pretty amazing. So, we're appreciative of your interest.

Mr. Foley: And Hunter, we're very privileged to have you on the staff.

Ms. Harris: Yes, definitely.

Hunter: Thank you very much. I appreciate you guys for taking the time to hear us out.

ADJOURN

Motion that the Academic and Curriculum Subcommittee adjourn its meeting. Passed with a motion made by Ms. Laura Harris and a second by Mr. Dan Foley.

Mr. Dan Foley Yes

Ms. Laura Harris Yes

Mr. Foley: Okay. Can I have a motion to adjourn, Laura?

Ms. Harris: Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Foley: I second it. There's no one disputing it.

Marianne Samokar, Recording Secretary

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