

## ***MEMORANDUUM***

TO: Curriculum Council  
FR: Jack Reynolds, Superintendent of Schools  
RE: The Relationship and Organization Governing Curriculum, Professional Development and Supervision & Evaluation  
DT: February 27, 2003

Please consider this memo to be an initial articulation, designed to provoke thought, conversation, and projection of future effects. I know we have gone through stages of varying perspectives on the issues listed in the “subject” of this memo, and this will reflect my present perspective and recent ruminations.

Organizationally, some of the structures include Board of Education, Superintendent/Central Administration, “Ad Staff,” Curriculum Council, P.D. Committee, and Supervision/Evaluation Committee. Individuals and personalities have had an impact on perspective and organizational structure. Recent legislation has promoted change of perspective and structure. Given all that ...

- I. The Board of Education has wide authority as established by statute and as exercised in practice. The Board approves curriculum – or it isn’t East Lyme Public School curriculum. The Board approves all textbooks. The Board approves a Supervision/Evaluation Plan and submits it to the Connecticut State Department of Education for their approval. The Board provides budgetary authority over Professional Development. Certainly, the Board listens to advice from our educational leaders and receives specific recommendation from the Superintendent. However, Board of Education authority must be acknowledged and my relationship to them, as Superintendent of Schools, places specific responsibilities on those relationships without which governance, budget and education, together, breakdown.
- II. “Ad Staff” is the central and most significant organizational vehicle providing educational leadership in this district. Nearly every issue of importance is addressed, considered, discussed, debated, determined or recommended at that level. I say recommended, because some issues are clearly at the discretion of the Superintendent. I truly welcome advice, but I retain the responsibility and authority for such issues. In general, however, the “Ad Staff” is the leadership or management team administrating the East Lyme Public Schools.

III. The Curriculum Council is the most broad-based standing committee in the district with members representing administration, teachers, parents, each school, and each major curriculum area. It is at Curriculum Council that our instructional program is discussed, with direct sharing of perspective and identification of need. Curriculum Council serves as a major source of communication, coordination, analysis of problem or need, and development of recommendation for improvement. Following are the responsibilities of the Council:

1. To serve as initiator, facilitator, and evaluator of curriculum development and the revision process.
2. To encourage, through participation in the Curriculum Council, staff initiative and creativity in developing curriculum program proposals.
3. To evaluate curriculum proposals in order to eliminate contradictions, imbalances and duplications.
4. To establish priorities for curriculum change.
5. To support fiscal recommendations for implementation of programs in terms of immediate and long-range goals.
6. To utilize community and professional resources in curriculum development.
7. To make recommendations to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction on those curriculum and assessment issues placed before the Council.
8. To work in cooperation and communicate with the Professional Development Steering Committee.
9. To establish and direct activities of the standing and ad hoc committees and be responsive to other instructional needs of the district.
10. To keep school faculties informed of Curriculum Council activities such as: posting of minutes, meeting with faculty members and subject area liaisons, and publishing a periodic newsletter as necessary.
11. To recommend the adoption of new primary learning materials (textbooks and instructional materials) submitted by standing committees.
12. To schedule five meetings a year and meet a minimum of four times a year.

IV. The State Department of Education publishes requirements for Comprehensive Professional Development Plans and plans for Supervision & Evaluation. Their regulatory authority enables the Connecticut State Department of Education staff to require specific plans, to evaluate performance in implementing those plans, and to impose sanctions against districts which are out of compliance.

”Comprehensive professional development is an ongoing process for determining and addressing what educators need to know and be able to do individually and collectively to ensure that each student performs at high levels. Effective, comprehensive professional development includes teacher performance evaluation.”

Professional development in East Lyme has included professional training that focuses a) on the individual, b) on the school and c) districtwide. While the administrative team has been actively involved in planning many P.D. opportunities, the Professional Development Steering Committee has served a planning and coordinating role in that task. New England accreditation studies at the high school level and construction and consequent program planning at the middle school and high school levels have superceded other needs for several years. A re-balancing is due and an active Professional Development Committee, working in harmony with Ad Staff and Curriculum Council, could play an effective role. *The rebalancing would include the following plan: A representative from each school will be asked to serve on the District-wide Professional Steering Committee, as well as a representative from SPED. The Superintendent and his/her designee will be an ex-officio member. The members selected from each school will represent the Development Professional Committee as a result of the 10/13/05 Curriculum Committee Meeting.*

Supervision and evaluation has both a formative and helpful aspect to it, and an accountability, legal and contractual compliance -- and a threatening aspect to it. Again, plans must be developed and submitted for State approval. The Supervision/Evaluation Committee has effectively addressed many demands, negotiated agreements, and met requirements.

While State requirements foster complementarity between professional development and supervision/evaluation, the agendas may be quite different. I am proposing that we maintain separate committees, with both reporting to Curriculum Council as well as being in coordination with Ad Staff. I have several concerns that led me to this structure. Initially, I do not want Professional Development - our in-service opportunities – to become overly structured by concerns of Supervision/Evaluation. We need to assure that curriculum and P.D. are always looking to the future – through research, proven practices, new technologies, student needs, through the dreams and hopes of our best teachers as to where we can and should go. That is not to say that Supervision/Evaluation is not also focused on instructional improvement. That is not to say that our supervision models and programs shouldn't focus on action research, growth opportunities, etc. But, Supervision/Evaluation must provide both accountability and growth, and that complicates the equation. Improvement in curriculum and instruction must be the focusing factor, and Curriculum Council, as well as Ad Staff, must provide coordination. But at present, I propose distinct but overlapping roles for Professional Development and Supervision/Evaluation

More to come, but I welcome your comments.

JR:bc