

Newtown Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut  
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on November 27, 2018, in the BOE Conference Room.

Present: Jean Evans Davila  
John Vouros  
Michelle Ku

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:22 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the October 11, 2018 meeting.

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation – None.

J. Evans Davila provided an update on the District's use of Pearson's *Words their Way* (WTW) as the instructional resource for word study. She explained that word study focuses on phonics, word recognition, vocabulary development, and spelling. WTW is based on a morphological approach to word study, teaching students to recognize patterns within groups of words. J. Evans Davila stated that recommendations from last year's ELA Self-Study included evaluating the effectiveness of WTW while investigating other published resources. A subcommittee has been studying this issue throughout this school year, and together with the Language Arts Consultants, the decision was made to enhance staff's current level of training in implementation of WTW. In the opening week of school, the Language Arts Consultants established consistent practices for implementation of WTW. In addition, all K-4 teachers were provided with on-site professional development in early-November, and the Language Arts Consultants are discussing next steps in supporting teachers' understanding of how to implement instruction with fidelity. An updated edition of WTW is now available in digital format. This updated resource would eliminate a lot of busy work for teachers, which involved hours of copying, cutting, organizing, and inventorying slips of paper for the sets of word sort activities. The newer resource offers additional word sort activities, updated assessment items, and increased ability to monitor student learning. J. Vouros asked for an explanation of words sorts and the reason why cutting is involved, and J. Davila described the way resources are prepared and used in the classroom. M. Ku asked if WTW addresses the needs of students with dyslexia. J. Davila responded that this is a resource for our core instruction program and additional approaches are used with students receiving tiered intervention.

Next, J. Evans Davila was asked to update the committee members on the status of the curriculum work from this past summer. J. Davila summarized the list of subject area curricula and their various stages of development. She identified those curricula which are ready to proceed through the approval process and those which remain in progress with additional revisions required. Business Foundations and Financial Literacy are two high school BEAT Department offerings that required full revision and will be reviewed by the Curriculum Council

within the next several weeks. In addition, Public Speaking and ELA Grades 3 and 4 are being prepared for review by the ELA Committee and will be sent to the Curriculum Council. Several courses in mathematics were revised during the summer, and will be reviewed at Math Committee meetings in January and February; these courses include Math 5/5+, Math 6/6+, Math 2 and 3. Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry still require completion of the interdisciplinary connections; therefore, allocation of extra work hours will be considered for completion of these projects during the school year. Kathy Swift, our trained Concept-Based Curriculum facilitator, continues to support staff as needed during the curriculum development process. K. Swift is working closely with World Languages to refine the new Spanish 1A-Hybrid course curriculum during this school year. J. Vouros requested an update on the launch of this new course, and J. Davila agreed to arrange this for the upcoming Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting. Next, J. Davila described the status of updates to the Science curricula and stated that Biology will be reviewed by the NGSS Leadership Team in January and brought to Curriculum Council afterwards. M. Ku asked about the purpose of aligning curriculum to our Concept-Based model. J. Davila explained that the model ensures deeper understanding and inquiry on the part of students, helping them to relate concepts from one course to another. M. Ku asked if curriculum changes in this process. J. Davila said the content itself does not change, but it is framed differently through instruction.

J. Vouros asked J. Davila to put draft a list of dates for Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meetings for the remainder of the school year. J. Davila agreed to have this ready for the next meeting.

Public Participation - Booth Library Director Douglas Lord announced that he has received grant funds to engage residents in use of online resources from the Library of Medicine. J. Davila recommended that he make contact with Susan McConnell and Tim DeJulio, teachers of the new Project Lead the Way Bio-Medical Tech courses at Newtown High School, as these resources would be useful to our students in the program.

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Submitted by Donna Norling.

These draft minutes are subject to the approval of the C & I Committee.