

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020.

M. Ku	A. Uberti	M. Guarino
J. Vouros	E. Hall	K. Longobucco

Also present Board of Education member Deborra Zukowski.

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from 1/28/2020

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None

Preview New Curriculum: Statistics – M. Guarino and E. Hall

Meg Guarino gave an overview of each of the five units in the proposed Statistics curriculum: Exploring and Understanding Data, Exploring Relationships Between Variables, Gathering Data, Randomness and Probability, and From the Data at Hand to the World at Large. The course builds throughout the year by beginning with the basics of data and moves towards utilizing real world data for understanding.

Eugene Hall stated that there are many students who take one of the two levels of Statistics that are offered: Advanced Placement (AP) or College Prep (CP). Both courses cover similar material however AP Stats goes deeper than CP does. AP students can earn college credit for the course by performing well on the AP test. CP students can also earn credit by taking Western Connecticut State University's (WCSU) test. Mr. Hall is working with WCSU to see if the test can be offered at NHS which would increase the number of students who might participate.

Preview New Curriculum: Algebra Foundations I – Kim Longobucco

Algebra Foundations I is a course offered to students who need to develop the prerequisite skills for eventual success in Algebra I. Most students taking this course receive special education services. This course began as a pilot for students who were not meeting success in co-taught Algebra I but for whom the next level of math (Topics in Math) was not appropriate either. (A co-taught course is one in which both a general and special education teacher

provide instruction.) There are currently 25 students in Foundations I. All of the students enrolled have significant deficits in math. Due to the high number of students and the high needs of those students, several staff members are needed to appropriately differentiate the material to meet students' various learning needs. Next year, the class size will be reduced to make the instruction even more manageable and effective. There are three levels of Algebra Foundations – I, II, and III. Some students go on to Foundations II and some are able to progress into Algebra I the next year.

Anne Uberti added that she has asked NHS Principal, Kim Longobucco, NMS Principal, Tom Einhorn, RIS Principal, Matt Correia, and Special Education Supervisor, Maureen Hall, to do a retroactive study of the students who have placed into the course over the past three years. She would like them to look backwards to see if the instructional decisions made for these students earlier on in their school careers contributed in any way to a widening instructional gap over time. She stressed that almost all of these students have IEPs and that instructional decisions made during PPTs are based on individual student performance at the time. Given the high numbers of students placing into the course in recent years, and the fact that several have been able to successfully progress to Algebra I the following year, she believes this is something the administrative team should look at more closely to ensure that decisions made in earlier grades are not setting up students for falling further behind. She will follow-up with the conclusions of the study at a future meeting.

Update on Review of New Math Programs – Anne Uberti

Anne Uberti reported the Math Committee is reviewing a potential new K-6 math resource for the 21-22 school year. The K-4 math resource, Origo Stepping Stones, was originally adopted in 2013 on a 5-year contract that expired in 2018. The District has been renewing Origo Stepping Stones on an annual basis for the past two years, with another annual renewal planned for 20-21. The 5-6 math resource, Envision, was originally adopted in 2014 on a 6-year contract will expire in 2020. An annual renewal of Envision is planned for the 20-21 school year. The 7-8 math resource, Big Ideas, does not expire until 22-23.

The expiration of the Origo and Envision contracts presents an opportunity to review our existing resources and compare them to others. The availability of high quality, teacher friendly, Common Core-aligned math resources has increased significantly since the adoption of Stepping Stones and Envision in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Newtown Public School students move through three resource changes between grade 4 and grade 7: Stepping Stones (4), Envision (5,6) and Big Ideas (7,8). Data from NWEA and Smarter Balanced Summative assessments indicate that math scores in the District are trending downward. General impressions from Learning Walks do not indicate enough rigor or attention to Common Core Mathematical Practices. The goal will be to use a thoughtful process to select a robust resource

that is teacher friendly and to purchase materials in order for teachers to receive training prior to the end of the 20-21 school year so they can return in the fall of 2021 ready to implement.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

M. Ku seconded the motion

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Norling

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.