

**Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee**

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, June 11, 2019, in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Vouros	L. Rodrigue	R. Smith	K. Eppley	L. Fuccillo	C. Moretti
M. Ku	T. Einhorn	A. Volpacchio	S. Strait	P. Vitarelli	

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the May 30, 2019 meeting.

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None.

Grade 8 Unified Arts

T. Einhorn introduced R. Smith (Computer Integration), A. Volpacchio (Family Consumer Science), and K. Eppley (Tech Ed Teacher). T. Einhorn stated we are going to try to pilot for the next school year for students to have more time in areas of interest. Students would apply for the pilot to continue in an area of interest that they started grade 7 and would like to continue in grade 8. At the grade 7 level students went thru the full rotation of the courses. At the Grade 8 level they would be able to continue with their level of interest. Students will still get courses in grade 8, plus two additional quarters. This is an enrichment opportunity, an extension of personalization, a voice in choice for the students that they can still work in the area that they have a passion for.

L. Rodrigue asked if you would have too many students who have an interest in one area.

T. Einhorn stated that students could pick one of the courses or all three. It would be done equally thru a lottery. Then we would see which students would fit with their unique need. We had to take a look at individual student schedules and what is the priority where they can fit into this program. We had to look at the master schedule. We need to have full sections to offer this opportunity. J. Vouros asked what happens if we do not have enough sections.

T. Einhorn stated that we first looked to see that it can work. How do we continue to refine it? We will then offer multiple sections for next year. We have full cohorts for each one of these sections for next year.

K. Eppley stated that he had the opportunity to pilot the robotics this year. The response from students was positive. It was a challenge, but it worked well. The students were really able to

personalize their learning. The grade 8 students sparked a lot of interest in the younger students. Grade 7 students are very excited about taking the course in grade 8. I am very excited to teach this course again next year.

R. Smith stated she was very excited to create this extension of what the students already learned. The students are figuring out what they learned and how to demonstrate what they learned. I will coach them with learning and to share what they learned. With this particular program the students will have been exposed to 3D design and robotics. I plan on focusing on AP Computer Science on a much more relaxed, simpler extent. The students can also get a little taste of graphic design and game design for the high school.

A. Volpacchio said the main interest of the students is culinary arts. Students love to cook and love to eat. This is a perfect opportunity for students to explore more in depth their culinary skills. Basically what I do in grade 7 is teach a course "Food Fundamentals". They will learn the fundamentals of baking and cooking. Safety and sanitation is priority for both years. In grade 8 we will review some of what the students learn in grade 7. Grade 8 I teach "The World of Food." We will study different cultures according to different religions, holidays and food availability. I will have the students research the different cultures, design the lab and create the recipes. This pilot will give me more time with the students. My main goal is to prepare them with the high school program. J. Vouros stated that this is the perfect segway into the Capstone. Did you explain the Capstone to grade 8? T. Einhorn stated that they have a great partnership with the high school. They communicate to grade 8 students what their responsibility will be at the high school. The students are very excited about their connections with the high school. L. Rodrigue stated that the connection with the high school is so important. We are starting to work with "Portrait of a Graduate", where you look backwards. This is so timely with the connection is huge and the Robotics, Computer Science, and Culinary are huge at the high school. The rubrics were recently revised. They are critical thinking, communication, creativity and media research. The language will start to spread. This will all start to connect.

New Course Proposal for Reed – Project Adventure and Beyond

S. Strait stated that she currently teaches Project Adventure and 21st Century Skills. My proposal is that I teach 30 Project Adventure classes. The Project Adventure and Beyond course at Reed Intermediate School will incorporate all elements of Project Adventure and applied Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Connections will be made between the skills learned and practiced in Project Adventure to situations students experience in their typical daily life.

Social Emotional Learning and Alpine

L. Fuccillo presented an update on Alpine. Alpine began to get accepted and implemented this year on a regular basis in each school, K-8. We are still working with the high school. There is an electronic system that transitions with the student from school to school. Alpine takes all the data, testing, what they have for services, SBAC scores, Power school discipline, grades, and can even see every book that they take out of the library. Teachers are only to view only the students in their classrooms. This summer when power school opens, the teachers will be able to see their incoming students. Our goal for next year is to work with the high school. How they are using it, the consistency and what the process is. Additional training next year will be available for the administrators. The data shows if the classes are evenly balanced. There will be a template for when a teacher wants to recommend a student for SRBI. Alpine is updated on a weekly basis, if not daily.

L. Fuccillo presented an update on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) we adopted the frame work last year. The building committees were focused on what the breakdown was in each of the schools for social emotional support. We are figuring out what is working, what is not and what needs to be revised. We put together an SEL action plan. All schools have done this. K-4 lead teachers put together a unified action plan. The goal for next year is implementing this plan. The buildings will give feedback on what is working, what is not working, and if we need more training on some of the plans.

We did the SEL survey as a pilot to measure growth mindset, growth strategies, and social awareness. The building committees took the results of those and measured against what we have, and what we want to focus on. We did a breakdown of the SEL survey to the classroom level. The teachers can then see the results for their classrooms. We are to discuss in the fall if it is really worth breaking down to the classroom level. There was not really much difference between the school level and the classroom level. There will be a new tab of SEL on the new district website.

Foundations

C. Moretti stated a small group went to observe Foundations in Waterford. It was a small mix of staff, which was our Wilson teacher, Special Ed and LA Consultants. They really liked the program. They came back and presented it to the Administrators. Administrators and ELA Consultants made a visit to Monroe school district just to look at instruction, assessment and intervention. While we were there we happen to notice they were doing the new Teachers College Phonics Program. We decided to look into both and went to Region 10 because they had switched from Foundations to the TC Phonics Program. We also visited Trumbull who are using Foundations and love it. We observed both, and decided to recommend Foundations, which we all preferred.

P. Vitarelli stated the self study that was done three years ago. One of the areas that was highlighted more was systematic foundation and strengthening the phonics in our elementary students. We didn't feel Words their Way was satisfying that need. We did not implement the program across the district. Our priority this year was a retraining and a reboot to Words their Way. We felt there were still gaps, with both students and teaching. Foundations teaches students the six syllable types that are necessary to bring to communicate quickly and why a vowel pattern is a vowel pattern. It makes the English language less random. It has more rules and patterns than we tend to accept. Foundations will provide teachers with training by the lessons they teach. As a result you are going to have stronger reading teachers in the elementary schools.

Superintendent Update

40 people responded to be on the Parent Educator Advisory Council. PEAC will meet in August and look at the issues impacting the school community. We can't just choose to highlight three action items when you haven't read the strategic plan.

Public Participation: None.

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:33 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.