

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education and Instruction Subcommittee meeting held on Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

J. Larkin J. Vouros
D. Ramsey A. Uberti

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.
J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the 5/24/22 meeting.
D. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Public Participation - None

Curriculum Approval Calendar – A. Uberti

A. Uberti gave a summary of the curriculum work that was done over the summer. Projects that were completed will be moved forward for review this year. Other projects are in progress and expected to be completed by the end of the 22-23 school year. Those will likely move forward for review in 23-24. In addition to the projects listed below, other work was completed to that will complement existing curricula: development of modified math lessons and assessments in grades 5 through 8 for special education and English learners, development of modified curriculum in science and social studies for the RISE (Reaching Independence through Structured Education) program in grades 7 and 8, and modifications to core curriculum at the high school level for English learners.

Anticipated for BoE Review in 22-23

Calculus A/B
Calculus B/C
Library Media K-4
Greenery 1&2
IPES
Physics
Spanish 5/6
Weight Training (PE2)
Chemistry
Chemistry CPA/Honors
American Studies
Health 5/6
Myth and the Modern World
Latin I & II

Anticipated for Completion in June, 23

Project Adventure 7/8
Kitchen Science 7/8
Computer Repair - Hardware
Anatomy & Physiology

Summary of State Testing Results to BoE – A. Uberti

A. Uberti shared that she would be making a presentation to the Board of Education that summarizes the district's performance on state-mandated testing from last year. She stated that she usually includes achievement by grade level, summary achievement data, year to year achievement comparisons, as well as comparison to other DRG B districts. She asked if there was any other specific

data that C&I members would like presented. Ms. Larking asked that she include next steps in curriculum and instruction to which Ms. Uberti said it is usually part of the presentation as well.

Pilot of New Universal Reading Assessment K-3 – A. Uberti

Ms. Uberti shared that the CSDE released a revised list of approved universal screening reading assessments and that school districts will be required to administer an approved screener to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 3, effective July 1, 2023. Newtown has already purchased a screener that is on the list, DIBELS 8th Edition with M-Class, and will begin a full pilot with all K-3 students this year. Beginning in the 23-24 school year, parents will receive their child's parent report three times per year. DIBELS 8th Edition with M-Class assesses students in the areas of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and rapid automatic name or letter fluency. Students in grades 2 and 3 will also continue to take the iReady assessments.

Shifts in Reading Curriculum & Instruction – A. Uberti

Ms. Uberti shared with C&I members that reading instruction in Newtown will be shifting towards explicit, systematic instruction in reading that is aligned with current research on effective reading instruction. She noted that districts across the state are awaiting the state's directive on required reading instruction that is said to be coming this year. Not knowing what the state will be requiring, she shared that she has been working with language arts consultants in grades K-8 to begin preparing teachers for the shift.

Some of the steps that have been taken:

- Implementation of and ongoing training for Foundations in Grades K-2
- In-house training for grade 3 teachers in the six syllable types, along with materials for teaching
- Purchase of ample decodable texts for use in grades K-3
- Pilot implementation of Dibels 8th Edition with M-Class
- Implementation of Heggarty, designed to teach phonemic awareness
- Development of specific criteria for intervention entrance and exit
- Leveled teaching materials and resources for equitably access across all four elementary schools
- Access for 5-8 interventionists and special education teachers to DIBELS for students with reading challenges
- Purchase of *Shifting the Balance* for all teachers in grades K-3
- Professional development through the *Shifting the Balance* course for teachers in K-3

In grades 5-8, the English language arts curriculum is under revision. Last year's audit revealed a lack of alignment to Common Core Standards, poorly defined learning activities, assessments that are not well-aligned to grade level standards and a lack of explicit vocabulary instruction. Work began last June on improving the curriculum in these areas and will continue throughout this school year.

While some components of the readers and writers workshop models in grades K-8 will be retained, including choice in student's having a choice in what they read, there will be a shift away from a pure workshop model in order to incorporate more explicit instruction in areas of weakness as demonstrated by district assessments.

Assistant Superintendent Update – A. Uberti

There were no additional updates by Ms. Uberti.

Public Participation – None

D. Ramsey adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

J. Vouros seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Norling

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