**Curriculum and Instruction**
**BoE Subcommittee**
**Tuesday, May 26, 2020**
**Virtual Meeting**
**1:00 P.M.**

*In consideration of public health, open meetings and the Governor's Executive Order No. 7B dated March 10, 2020 regarding PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE - FURTHER SUSPENSION OR MODIFICATION OF STATUTES; this meeting will include an option for the public to phone in to listen to the audio of the meeting. Please note that public comment will be received by phone at the beginning and end of this meeting.*

**Joining info:**
**(US)+1 219-213-3784**
**PIN: 126 436 705#**

| Item | Estimated Time | Topic | Person Responsible |
|------|----------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1:00 PM | Call to Order | |
| 2 | 1:00 PM | Approval of the 5.12.20 Minutes | |
| 3 | 1:00 PM | Public Participation | |
| 4 | 1:05 PM | Review of Revised Curriculum Development Guide | Anne Uberti |
| 6 | 1:35 PM | Review of Summer Curriculum Writing Projects | Anne Uberti |
| 7 | 1:45 PM | C&I Communication to Staff | Anne Uberti |
| 8 | 1:55 PM | Public Participation | |
| 9 | 2:00 PM | Adjourn | |

**NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
**Curriculum Development Guide**

The mission of the Newtown Public Schools, a partnership of students, families, educators and community, is to INSPIRE EACH STUDENT TO EXCEL in attaining and applying the knowledge, skills and attributes that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global community.

We accomplish this by creating an unparalleled learning environment characterized by:

● High expectations
● Quality instruction
● Continuous improvement
● Civic responsibility

To achieve this, the process for developing a high-quality curriculum must be systematic, flexible, sustainable and inclusive of teacher input.  The outcome of the process should lead to a curriculum that is relevant, rigorous and viable so that all students are guaranteed the same opportunity to learn.  The Newtown Public Schools Curriculum Development Guide provides guidelines that should be followed by district curriculum writers in order to achieve these goals.

**Steps to the Curriculum Development Process**

**Phase I:  Needs Assessment & Determination of Work To Be Completed**

1. The Assistant Superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Teaching and Learning, Principals, Directors and Subject Curriculum Committees, will evaluate the need to create new, or revise existing, curriculum based on changes in state and national standards, student performance, and/or any other relevant information gathered by Subject Curriculum Committees or other designated team.
2. Subject Curriculum Committees (or other designated team) will work in conjunction with the Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of Teaching and Learning to develop a scope and sequence for new or revised curriculum to ensure vertical alignment.
3. Content Area Leaders, Curriculum Coordinators and Department Chairs, will recommend curriculum writing projects to be included in the fall budget development process to the appropriate Principal no later than June 30th.
4. Supervisors and Directors of Visual and Performing Arts, Counseling and Special Education will recommend curriculum writing projects to be included in the fall budget development process to the Assistant Superintendent by June 30th.
5. Each summer, the Assistant Superintendent, in conjunction with the Administrative Team, will identify and prioritize projects to be included in the fall development process.
6. Each fall, according to the timeline presented in the budget development calendar, Principals, Director of Visual and Performing Arts and Director of Special Education will submit any budgetary requests for

curriculum writing projects to the Assistant Superintendent for consideration of inclusion in the next year's budget request.

7. Such requests will include the number of participants, the number of facilitators, the estimated number of hours needed to complete the work, and the scope of the work to be completed.
8. Budget requests for curriculum revision and/or development will be considered and prioritized for inclusion in the next year's Curriculum and Instruction budget by the Assistant Superintendent.
9. Principals will be notified as to which projects will be included in the proposed budget.
10. Principals will notify their staff as to which projects have been moved forward in the budget process.

**Phase II: Curriculum Development**

1. Following budget approval, notification will be sent by the Assistant Superintendent to all Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, Department Chairs and Directors identifying approved projects. Included in this communication will be:
    a. Designated site(s) at which curriculum writing teams will assemble to complete the approved projects.
    b. Specific dates for the curriculum writing window which will typically begin within three days after the last day of school and last no longer than 10 days.
    c. Request for preliminary confirmation of participants, facilitators and hours for the project.
2. The Assistant Superintendent will then forward contracts to each participant outlining information specific to each curriculum writing project and will include:
    a. Designated site(s) at which curriculum writing teams will assemble to complete the approved projects.
    b. Specific dates for the curriculum writing window which will typically begin within three days after the last day of school and last no longer than 10 days.
    c. Name of the "Curriculum Coach" assigned to the project.
    d. Number of approved hours.
    e. Definition of the product expected at the end of the approved hours.
    f. Any professional development requirements that must be completed prior to beginning work on the project.
3. The role of "Curriculum Facilitator" will include the following responsibilities:
    a. Ensures that curriculum is not written in isolation; those not having a team will partner with a companion writer or Curriculum Coach.
    b. Coordinates with other members of the curriculum writing team in all matters related to the work.
    c. Ensures that members of the curriculum writing team have been trained within the past two years or have been actively involved in writing or reviewing curriculum within the past two years.
    d. Coordinates with Assistant Superintendent to ensure members of the curriculum writing team have editing rights in Rubicon Atlas prior to beginning the work.
    e. Coordinates time for the team to meet with the Curriculum Coach prior to beginning the work.

f.   Consults informally with the Curriculum Coach throughout the curriculum writing process

g.   Requests formal feedback from Curriculum Coach after completion of the first unit of study, at the project midpoint and at the project end.

h.   Ensures the accurate and timely completion of the Curriculum Work Log throughout the writing process

i.   At the end of the curriculum writing window, provides details of any remaining work and the plan for completion in the Curriculum Work Log.

j.   Receives and responds to written feedback from the Curriculum Coach during the writing process and, following completion, from the Subject Curriculum Committee and the Curriculum Development Council.

k.   Represents the curriculum writing team (and may include other team members) at the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee of the Board of Education (BOE) and at the BOE meeting on the date the curriculum will be presented for the "First Read".

l.   Participates in any professional development required by the Assistant Superintendent prior to beginning work on the project.

4. Completed curriculum is defined as having: units of study, resources, proposed core learning activities, proposed assessments and /or performance tasks and identifies assured experiences/assessments.

5. Requests for new resources, such as textbooks, will be brought forward to the Assistant Superintendent for consideration as part of the development and/or revision process.

6. Curriculum writing teams will complete all work in Rubicon Atlas using the Concept-based Curriculum and Instruction (CBCI) framework template.

**Phase III: Curriculum Approval Process**

1. Curriculum must receive approval from the Curriculum Coach at the designated checkpoints during the curriculum writing process.

2. Curriculum Approval Calendar will be established and managed by the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

3. Curriculum will be presented to the appropriate Subject Curriculum Committee (or in the absence of a committee specific to the discipline, to colleagues) for review.

4. The Subject Curriculum Committee will provide feedback on the content, core learning activities, assessments, and may also make recommendations on the CBCI format.

5. Once feedback has been incorporated into the curriculum, the Subject Curriculum Committee will recommend the curriculum to the Curriculum Development Council for review.

6. The Curriculum Development Council will provide feedback on the CBCI format.

7. Once feedback has been incorporated into the curriculum, the Curriculum Development Council will recommend the curriculum to the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee of the Board of Education (BOE C&I).

8. BOE C & I  will review curriculum and make final recommendations prior to recommending to the full BOE for approval.

9. The Curriculum Facilitator will present a brief overview of the curriculum to the BOE during the "First Read" and will receive feedback and/or questions from the BoE at that time.
10. Any additional feedback and/or questions from the BoE following the First Read will be submitted in writing to the Assistant Superintendent.
11. The Curriculum Facilitator will not attend the BoE "Second Read" unless specifically requested to do so.
12. Following the "Second Read", the BoE will make a motion to approve the curriculum:
    a. If approved, an implementation plan will be developed.
    b. If not approved, the curriculum will return to the Curriculum Writing Team for revision.

**Phase III: Implementation**

1. The Assistant Superintendent will work in conjunction with the administrative team to create an implementation plan that includes appropriate professional development to support the roll-out, including any professional development for new resources.
2. Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Supervisors and/or Coordinators will monitor the implementation plan which will:
    a. Provide ongoing support for teachers to implement new curriculum and any new resources
    b. Provide regular opportunities for gathering teacher feedback on curriculum throughout the first year of implementation through surveys, grade level and/or department meetings.
    c. Finalize core learning activities, assessments and/or performance tasks during the first year of implementation.
6. Teacher feedback and student performance outcomes will be regularly reviewed by Principals, Directors, Supervisors and/or Coordinators in collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of Teaching and Learning to determine the need for minor modifications and adjustments to the curriculum.
7. Should minor changes be necessary, the Curriculum Writing Team may be reassembled to complete the work.
8. Substantial content changes to Board-approved curriculum will require the curriculum development cycle to begin again, including progression through Board approval.

**Phase IV. Evaluation:**

1. Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Supervisors and/or Coordinators will consistently monitor the implementation of curriculum.
2. Curriculum effectiveness will be reviewed regularly as determined by the process outlined in this document.
3. The following indicators may prompt an immediate review of curriculum:
    1. Changes to state or national standards
    2. Changes in format to state-mandated of other relevant standardized testing
    3. Declining student performance on state-mandated or other relevant assessments

## Appendix A:

## Estimated Work Hours and Payment

### Estimated hours required for complete rewrite of curriculum (ex. rewrite in concept-based format; new standards adoption)

Full-year course       ……………       100 hours
One semester course   …………....        50 hours

### Estimated hours required for curriculum revision (dependent on scope of work)

Full year course       …………….        40 hours
One semester course   …………….         20 hours

Members of Curriculum Writing Teams and Facilitators will be paid at the contractual rate as set forth in the current Newtown Federation of Teachers and Newtown Board of Education Contract.

# Summer 2020 Curriculum Projects

Spanish (Med & Bus)

Intro Physical & Earth Science

Physics

Power Technology

Travel & Tourism

Accounting I

Personal Business

AP Calculus AB

AP Calculus BC

AP Computer Science A

Conversations on Race

US History

World Religions

Economics

Writing through Film

World Literature

Grade 6 Science

K-4 Library Media Science

Grade 7 Math

Grade 8 Math

Grade 6 ELA

Grade 7 ELA

Grade 8 ELA

# *Curriculum & Instruction Updates*

April 27, 2020

## Welcome to the second edition of Curriculum & Instruction Updates!

Just to give you an idea of how much things have changed in a very short time, when the first C&I Updates were sent, Frank was not yet officially in district and the school year was new. Now we are still in the same school year and yet find ourselves in a whole new world.

We are in awe of how hard everyone is working, how much dedication you are all demonstrating and how much new learning you are all acquiring. We want you to know that we are working as hard as we possibly can to support the work you are doing, to maintain a sense of consistency and coherence to the instruction being delivered virtually, and to bring relief to staff when and where possible. We thought that a periodic newsletter that addresses topics of concern to staff would be helpful.

Feel free to read the entire newsletter or skip to topics that are of interest to you. We plan to send another newsletter in a couple of weeks. If you have topics you would like addressed that you think will benefit others, please email us and we will do our best to write something about that in our next edition.

Till then, remember to take care of yourself and do your best. And most importantly, remember that your best is always good enough. There are amazing leadership teams in place at each of our schools. Frank and I also see our roles as supportive of our principals and of our staff. If you need support, please reach out. We truly ARE all in this together.

Anne & Frank

# Strategies for Maintaining Balance When Working from Home

*Create a dedicated work space*
Having a specific space will help you stay organized and help you focus on work when in that space.

*Have a Google-Meet friendly space*
This may or may not be in the same spot as your work space but having a predetermined space with good lighting, an appropriate back-drop and good internet connectivity will reduce stress when you have to jump on a live meeting or videotape a lesson.

*Have a plan for your day and communicate that to your family*
You can share your plan with older children so they know when you are "working" and shouldn't be disturbed. If you have small children, you may need to schedule your work time around their naps or another caretaker's schedule. If you have adult children or are an empty-nester, you want to be careful not to work around the clock.

*Do your best to minimize distractions while "at work"*
Avoid doing personal tasks while at work and avoid doing work during personal time.

*Limit the number of times you check your email*
Establish specific email times and share them with your students and/or parents so they know when they can expect to hear from you if they have a question. Then stick to it by not checking your email so you can focus on the other work duties.

*Take breaks*
Get up and stretch, work in smaller chunks of time, or take a short walk outside to stay mentally sharp when working at a computer most of the day.



# Leveraging PLCs/Cross School Grade-level PLCs

Teachers are strongly encouraged to plan together in PLCs in order to share the workload. This is particularly important at the elementary level where teachers are teaching all subject areas and teachers, students and families generally have less familiarity with online platforms.

Teachers should understand that it is anticipated that they will not be able to cover all of the content they would have if we had been in school. Furthermore, assessment of learning is limited. Grade level/content area PLCs should focus on and setting realistic targets for where students will end in June. In deciding what aspects of the curriculum to focus on, consider the following:

- knowledge and skills that will be relevant throughout a student's lifetime (such as learning how to read or how to interpret a map)
- knowledge and skills used in multiple academic disciplines (such as writing for purpose)
- knowledge and skills necessary for success in the next grade level or the next sequential course in an academic subject (such as understanding algebraic functions before taking geometry or calculus, which require the use of algebra)

## The Need for Printing - Moving From a "Traditional" to "Tradigital"

At first it seems easy, upload the workbook pages into Google Classroom, kids print them out, complete them and then…

Many families do not have access to a printer. Many have a printer but don't have ink, don't have paper or have technical issues. And even if they can print, many can't scan or lack the skills to even take a picture and email it back.

It is extremely important for teachers to be aware that printing is an issue for students and families. When possible, create assignments that do not require it. If you need support with this, reach out to your library media specialist and they can help find ways to circumvent the need for printing.

Teachers using a school issued device cannot download printer drivers to these devices simply because] every printer driver that every user has would need to be downloaded. If you have a personal device connected to a printer, you can open Google Drive on that device and print from there. If your printer has wireless capability, it may be "discoverable" on your school device and you should be able to print. Again, if you need help with doing this your library media specialist can assist.

## Online Learning and Protection of Staff & Student Privacy

BOE Policy P6141.32(a) addresses responsible computer, network and internet use and includes the expectation that students, staff and families will "…exercise appropriate personal responsibility in their use of these resources" as digital citizens in our school community. Further details outlining expectations for participation in online/distance learning were outlined in a separate letter from Dr. Rodrigue to parents on 4/9/20: Distance Learning Participation, Confidentiality. These types of issues are not unique to the virtual learning setting and, as in the typical classroom setting, if a staff member is aware of a potential violation of the Board policy or distance learning guidelines, it should be immediately reported to building principals.

## Tips for Setting Up and Running Secure Google Meets

Google and its suite of apps have provided teachers and students with important and beneficial tools for distance learning. One might argue that no app is more important than Google Meet, as it is the primary option for the countless virtual meetings taking place daily throughout the district. From online PLCs to faculty meetings, Google Meet is the choice for teachers and admin alike. As we continue to move forward with our distance learning plan and real-time interactions with students steadily increase, teachers will become even more reliant on Google Meet for conferencing and small group instructional needs. With this in mind, Liza Zandonella created a thoughtful and practical guide for teachers to follow. Especially important are some of the precautions to take when setting up a Google Meet with students. Thank you to Liza for creating this important resource, please use the link to access the set-by-step guide:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gvyb8f8ixZ3TSfwP8HA3znyqlCIgF0WJz0ftpoPa6rM/edit?usp=sharing



## Fridays..."Quiet" to Kids/Parents, Flexible for Staff

*Quiet Fridays* will take place May 1 through June 5. Lorrie's message to parents gives you the flexibility to not have to respond immediately to parents or provide immediate or real-time feedback to students. However, as professionals, you should use your judgement about what you need to do on these days. Many of you are in need of time to learn new platforms, practice with new platforms, collaborate with colleagues, and on and on. Some of you may be in a comfortable place and may find your time is better utilized fulfilling your regular teaching duties. Again, this is a flexible work day and what work you complete should be based on your professional needs and judgment.

We will continue to offer live professional development sessions via Google Meet on Fridays. In response to your feedback, we have reduced the number of sessions and are limiting the number of

participants to improve the personalized experience and to mitigate technical issues. We are focusing on offerings related to those platforms that were in greatest demand, and we are offering various levels of to better meet your learning needs.

Keep in mind that if you prefer not to participate in live sessions on Quiet Fridays, our Distance Learning Resources Page is continually updated and provides a wealth of videos, including those recorded on our last Quiet Friday. You can access that page here:
https://sites.google.com/newtown.k12.ct.us/npsdigitalresources/home

As we move forward, Quiet Friday offerings will evolve in order to meet changing staff needs. So please continue to send us suggestions! Likewise, if you would like to lead a session, please reach out to Anne, Frank or a member of the PD Committee.

Sign-ups for this week's sessions will go out first thing Tuesday with more details.

Spoiler alert - Anne and Frank will be offering a one-hour Q&A on any topics of interest or questions you would like answered- or just drop in to say hi! Hope to see some of you then!



## Expansion of Online Teaching and Learning Resources

As part of the district's ongoing commitment to review and adopt resources that can assist in the facilitation of distance learning, two new and exciting online programs were added in April, RAZ Plus and IXL Learning.

**RAZ Plus**, is an award-winning teaching product that provides comprehensive leveled reading resources **for students in grades PreK-6**. Hundreds of eBooks are offered at 29 different levels of reading difficulty for students to practice reading anytime, anywhere, This includes corresponding eQuizzes that measure student comprehension, Spanish eBook and eQuiz translations for ELLs, and a digital management and reporting tool for teachers, making it easy to track individual and class-wide reading progress.

The second program added in April was the suite of resources offered by **IXL Learning. Available for students and teachers in grades PreK-12**, IXL provides online skills practice to students in the subjects of ELA, math, science and social studies. An extensive database of standards-aligned student activities can be assigned by teachers and completed directly by students into the online portal. Reporting and analytics are available to track student progress and remote engagement. For those who are interested but have not had the chance to set-up accounts for RAZ Plus or IXL, please use these links to access email instructions that were sent out recently to district staff:

IXL:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p8PjhvOPGsT3Uo4_8NC42ycDD_634ccVgnshoSmOQ1I/edit?usp=sharing

RAZ Plus: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RWSoJEPjAO-cJFlwc-Ida2Y9pw8HEyyJslLJLM2Bgqc/edit?usp=sharing

The district will continue to explore other options to enhance teaching and learning in this online environment. Please look for more information on the addition of Lexia Learning as a resource for grades PreK-6 later this week. Training for current and future online resources will be provided to staff as part of the "quiet" Friday PD offerings. Please be aware that all online programs will be evaluated at the conclusion of the school year and decisions will be made on the continuation of these programs into the fall based on teacher feedback, student impact, and overall usage.



## Teacher Work Day Expectations

The first phase of the Alternative Learning Plan identified that the student work time should amount to about 4 hours (arrived at by subtracting the lunch and preps from a typical school day). The NFT MOU states that teachers are expected to work a minimum of 4 hours. It is not surprising that teachers will end up working what they would work in a typical work day. And, certainly, it can be expected that even more time may be needed as teachers learn and experiment with platforms that are new to them. This will hopefully be reduced as teachers become more familiar with new tools and are able to rely on team members to share the burden. However, if teachers find that they are spending excessive amounts of time, they must reach out for support. Our administrators are here to help find solutions.



## Responding to Reports of COVID-19 Cases

As trusted adults in our schools, you may be the first to hear of COVID-19 cases in your students' families. If this information is shared with you, we ask that you notify your principal. This is an important piece of tracking, but even more importantly, sometimes families are unsure of what to do.

Through our nurses and our town health director, we can help connect them with the health resources they need. And especially, if they have younger children, or children with special needs, we can also find appropriate ways to provide extra academic support, if needed.

You are **braver** than you **believe**,
**stronger** than you **seem**,
and **smarter** than you **think**.
{CHRISTOPHER ROBIN}

## Anne Uberti, Assistant Superintendent

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|---|---|

## Frank Purcaro, Director of Teaching and Learning

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|---|---|

# C & I Updates

May 7, 2020

## Dear Teachers,

While we are all doing our best to provide continuity of learning during this pandemic, we know that what our students and families will remember most about this school year is how we made them feel. That is true even in a normal school year. Yet, being physically separated from students and creating one-way videos makes maintaining meaningful connections quite challenging. For both students and teachers, this can feel very isolating and lonely.

If you think back to our opening in August, Dr. Rodrigue shared six core values that support our "culture of care" in Newtown Public Schools. At the top of the list...relationships. Maintaining relationships with our students is essential, and even more important when their world is turned upside-down. This newsletter offers several resources, tips, and strategies that can help deepen your connection with students during the remaining five weeks of school.

This spring, you've faced unprecedented challenges, and you've risen to meet them head on. You are teaching, by example, the importance of perseverance, flexibility and lifelong learning. You are true heroes, and we thank you for keeping our school community together, even without the schoolhouse walls.

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, in addition to C&I Updates, you will find a few "surprises" sprinkled through the newsletter. Thank you for everything you are doing and happy reading!

Frank & Anne

## If you have to put someone on a pedestal,

## put teachers.

## They are society's heroes.

-Guy Kawasaki

## Lights, Camera, Action! Increasing Live Interactions with Students



Now that school has been called for the remainder of the year, the need for increased "live interactions" between teachers and their students becomes even more important. Recorded lessons and posted assignments continue to be the primary mode of communication to students and their families, but many realize that increased opportunities for both social and academic "live interactions" are an essential part of a comprehensive and long term distance learning plan. Teachers have asked whether this is the same as "live teaching" and the answer is "no" in the purest sense. The virtual world can never completely replicate the teacher-student experience when school is physically in session. However, it is extremely important that teachers continue to experiment with ways to promote socialization and instruct students through live methods.

We applaud the efforts that have been made thus far at many grade levels to incorporate live sessions into your weekly plans. Students and their families have repeatedly expressed how pleased they are to see their teachers and classmates. Teachers have already demonstrated that "live interactions" can take many forms and can be different at each grade level. Primarily social interactions can include class meetings and check-ins, while more academic interactions may include book clubs, mini-lessons and virtual labs. Please follow the link below to access a document with descriptions of the ranges of "live interactions" that are possible at each grade-level. Examples are also provided and many of these are drawn from feedback and input we have received from teachers engaging in these practices. Additionally, please feel free to join us on Friday from 1-2 to further explore this topic, as we will review the linked document and answer questions you may have about "live interactions" and the expectation in the distance learning plan.

Live Interactions: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T4cZL8rvPOKJbhWnOJjAn9xCOYtinAG-caAT93Jw-a8/edit?usp=sharing

## Mics Muted!! Establishing Clear Guidelines for Student Etiquette in Google Meets



As distance learning continues to move forward, more and more teachers are engaging in live Google Meet sessions with their students. As teachers have learned, the "live" experience brings with it a whole new set of challenges, among these are setting up a clear set of student expectations for participating in a Google Meet. Classroom routines are typically established early in the school year and the move to distance learning has forced us to revisit these processes this spring. Consider sending a clear list of expectations to both students and families well in advance of the Google Meet. Defining the expected etiquette for the live session can be a critical piece toward facilitating an effective virtual meeting, especially with a large number of participants. Some expectations to consider include:

- Be on time
- Find a quiet place to engage in the meeting
- Sit where your laptop/iPad remains immobile (on a table or desk) and the camera is directed on your face
- Mute your mic shortly after entering and greeting everyone
- Mute your mic when not speaking
- Use the chat feature to ask questions when possible or raise your hand and wait for the teacher to acknowledge you before speaking
- Do not share your screen unless told to by your teacher
- Do not talk while someone else is talking, allow your classmates time to speak

Please remember, as the organizer of the Google Meet you have the ability to mute any participant who is not cooperating and in extreme situations remove members who repeatedly ignore the guidelines.

Click on this link for sample guidelines that you can copy, personalize and share with students: https://drive.google.com/file/d/160TKQrC7ULMlQZLFldydlxPEsSiYHE9P/view?usp=sharing

## Better to be Safe than Sorry...(especially when posting YouTube Videos)

Are you finding *Youtube* videos that would be helpful to support distance learning with your students, but are worried about inappropriate ads? Or in some cases, you find the video is blocked by our filter? If so, consider using safeyoutube.net. **SafeYouTube** is a free resource that will allow you to share YouTube videos without the fear that students will be exposed to unrelated or offensive content that can appear on the traditional YouTube page. Sharing videos is easily accomplished. Copy the link of your *Youtube* video. Then, go to **safeyoutube.net** and paste your *Youtube* link into the designated area, and click "Generate Link." A new "safe" *YouTube* link will be generated that you can email to students or input it directly into your Google Classroom. Please know that **safeyoutube.net** is experiencing an unusually large amount of internet traffic and it may take a few attempts to open the webpage. The site has better availability in off peak hours, at the beginning and end of the day. You can access SafeYouTube at [www.safeyoutube.net.](www.safeyoutube.net)

## Planning for English Learners in the Distance Learning Environment

Please consider the following when planning instruction remotely with English Learners. These considerations, as well as, additional strategies for ELs will be explored further in a professional development session facilitated by Nancy Conron and Maggie Stevens from ACES/PDSI in the following weeks. Look for the session summary and registration information - coming soon!

- English learners are still developing competence with technology
- Where available, provide EL students and their families tutorials on how to use and access tech tools you're using in the classroom ([Google Classroom in Spanish](#))
- English learners may need additional time to complete tasks
- Consider what are the most important tasks for a given lesson, and ask EL students to complete the essentials
- Extend deadlines and provide a designated "catch-up" time for EL students
- English learners need access to reading and writing
- Provide simplified instructions in writing
- Provide sentence frames/ word banks to complete a task
- Utilize Google Translate
- Utilize Google Read and Write extension
- EL students may need *scheduled* check-in times during office hours
- Coordinate with Nancy Conron for additional support for your ELs

## Sharing Students in RAZ Kids and IXL



Providing support to special education students and English language learners during this time can be challenging, especially when using some of the online resources available to staff. Two recent additions, IXL and RAZ Kids, have considered this issue and address it in two very different ways. IXL is set-up so that the student accounts are stand alone and not associated with one specific classroom or teacher. Set up this way, multiple teachers can roster the same student in IXL and all class assignments set up by the teachers will be visible to the student through their individual account. On the other hand, RAZ Kids is set up so that student accounts are linked directly to homeroom and classroom teachers. In this case, teachers using RAZ Kids have a simple process to follow in their *My Classroom* dashboards to ensure students who receive support from other teachers are actively "shared." Please see the attached form for the step-by-step process for sharing students in RAZ Kids.

RAZ Kids: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QOVQToRGl06pbXkqiUAQDOwWGmwDT3JY/view?usp=sharing

# Social and Emotional Learning Resources for Educators and Families of Students K through 12

### Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom provides advice about virtual morning meetings

### Second Step Resources

The Committee for Children is offering on-demand access to second step lessons (taught by CFC staff) and free online professional learning for educators, including access to the all new Adult SEL online professional development program.

## Life is Good with Steve Gross

Steve Gross from Life is Good Playmakers program created a short video for parents about how talk to children about the Covid-10 crisis.

## CASEL Resources

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has new webinars for school staff and a new resources page to support educators and parents during the crisis. This page is updated regularly.

## SOS Program Resources

Mindwise Innovations, creator of the SOS program, has developed a set of guided relaxation exercises and information on coping strategies to support middle and high school students.

## Jordan Porco Foundation/Check-in At Home

The Jordan Porco Foundation, creator of the Check In Day mental health fair, has developed a list of ideas to support mental health and wellness at home - linked to the Check In Fair activities that NHS implemented at the January fair.

## The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.—B. B. King

### Anne Uberti

@anneuberti

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# Frank Purcaro

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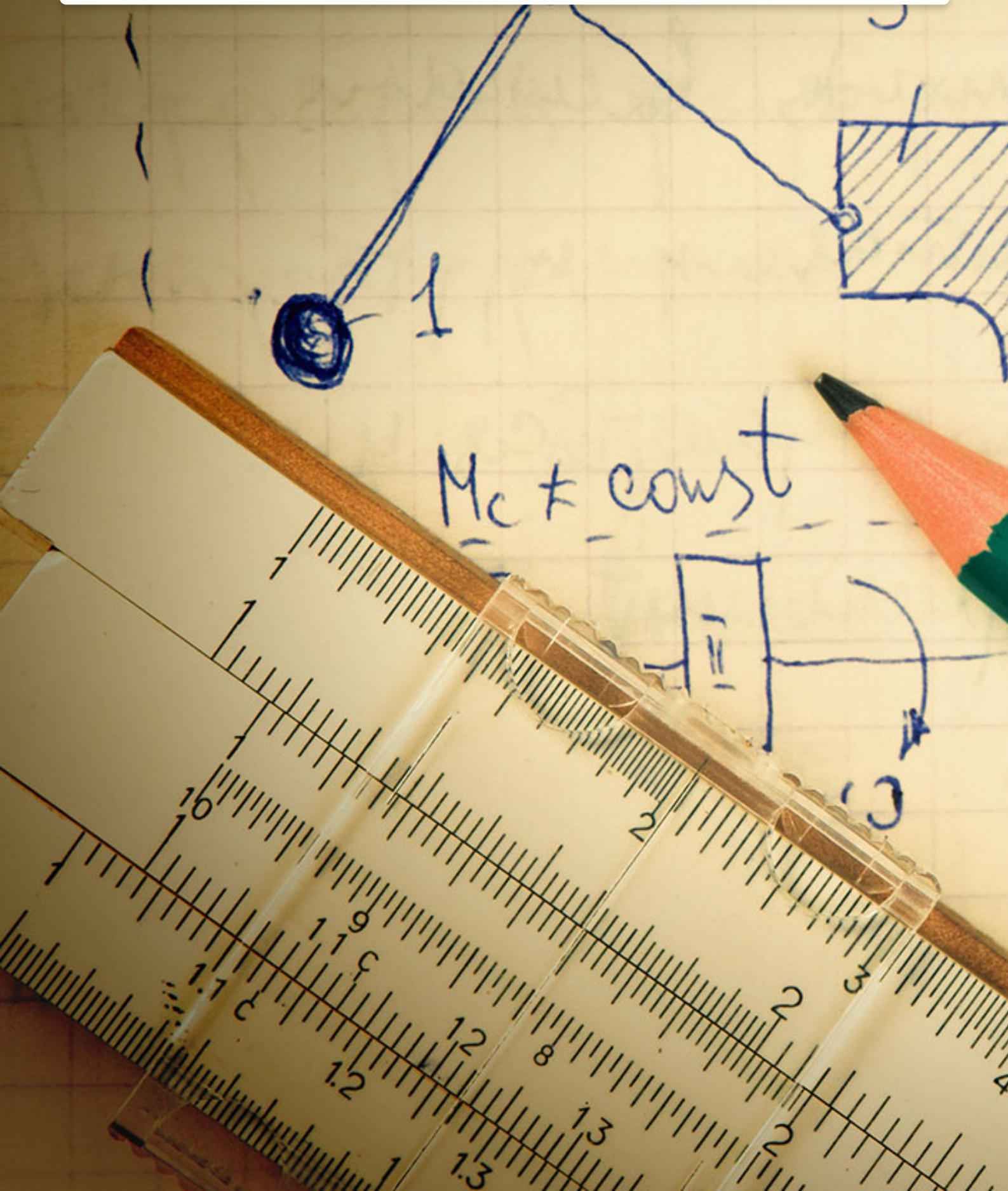
# C & I Updates

May 15, 2020

## How You Cross the Finish Line...

"It's not how you start the race or where you are during the race - it's how you cross the finish line that will matter." ~Robert D. Hales

What a long, strange trip it has been since early March. Yet you have all stepped up and gone above and beyond to do what is best for kids. You are the reason that so many of our students have remained engaged despite the physical separation and a myriad of other challenges.

As we enter the home stretch, we encourage you to work with your colleagues, grade level teams, content area or interdisciplinary teams to offer personalized projects or tasks to maintain momentum for both you and your students.

One such example is the use of Passion Projects. If you are unfamiliar with Passion Projects, consider launching a version of this idea with your students in the final weeks.

Passion Projects: http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol15/num17/passion-projects-fuel-student-driven-learning.aspx?utm_source=ascdexpress&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1517-motivation

### Responsive Classroom Virtual Institutes

As a Responsive Classroom district, our goal is to ensure that every elementary teacher has received training in the RC approach. Let your principal know if you are interested in participating in virtual training. Click the button for more info.
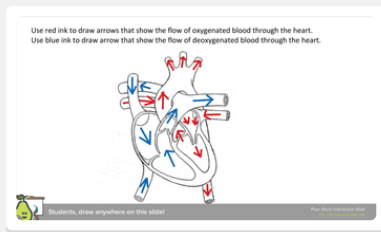
*Distance Learning - Student Work*
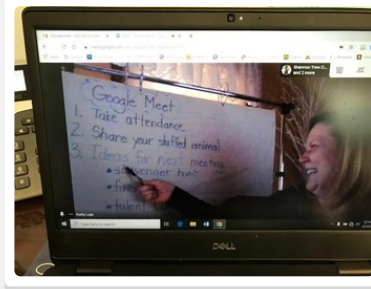
*Distance Learning - Wait, We Have to Make Videos of Ourselves?!?*

*Distance Learning - Creativity Still Blooms*

## *Introducing Lexia Core5 Reading and PowerUp Literacy*



We are pleased to announce that the district is now offering access to Lexia Learning's Core5 Reading for teachers and students in grades PreK-4 and PowerUp Literacy for teachers and students in grades 5-6 (PowerUp is also available for reading intervention and support in grades 7&8).

**Lexia® Core5® Reading - for use in grades Prek-4:** This program supports educators in providing differentiated literacy instruction for students of all abilities. Lexia's research-proven program provides explicit, systematic, personalized learning in the six areas of reading instruction, targeting skill gaps as they emerge, and providing teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small-group instruction.

**Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® - for use in grades 5&6:** This program is designed to help struggling and nearly-proficient readers become proficient readers and confident learners. PowerUp helps educators simultaneously address gaps in fundamental literacy skills while helping students build the higher-order skills they need to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and compare increasingly complex literary and informational texts. (PowerUp is also available for reading intervention and support in grades 7&8).

See below for instructions on accessing your Lexia account:

**Teacher Login Information:**

Students and teachers in grades Prek-6 were uploaded into the Lexia database this week. The initial upload generated automatic emails that were sent directly to staff with instructions for setting up accounts.

- Go to [www.myLexia.com](www.myLexia.com) and enter your **username (your school email address)** and click "Next." Note: when logging in for the first time, you will need to set your password.
- Now click the "Forgot Password" link on the myLexia.com login page, and click "Send."

- You will receive an email with a secure link to reset your password (the link will be valid for 24 hours). Please check your Spam/Junk folder if the email does not appear in your inbox. After you have entered your new password, you may log into your myLexia staff account using your username and your new password.

**Student Login Information:**

**Lexia Core5 Login for Grades PreK-4:** The Lexia Core5 Reading app has been pushed out to all student chromebooks and ipads. If students are using their own computer, they can login directly at www.lexiacore5.com The first time a student uses Core5, they will be prompted to enter their teacher's email address. Students can then log in with the username and password information below.

- Step #1 - Teacher Email (for initial login and setup):
- Step #2 - Username: The first six characters of the student email address, usually two letters corresponding to their first and last name followed by four numbers.
- Step #3 - Password: Student ID #

**Lexia PowerUp Login for Grades 5&6:** If students are using a desktop computer or laptop, they can access PowerUp Literacy through their web browser by going to www.lexiapowerup.com A direct link to this URL has been pushed out to all student chromebooks and can be found in the apps list on these devices. The first time a student uses PowerUp, they will be prompted to enter their teacher's email address. Students can log in following the same steps listed above for Core5.

**FAQs**

Will the district be offering training for Lexia?

The district is offering a "Getting Started" webinar for new Lexia Core5 and PowerUp users on Friday, May 15th. Two back-to-back webinars for Core5 will be offered from 9-10 and 10-11am. Please know that this is the same webinar for both sessions. A beginner PowerUp webinar will be offered from 11-12. The district also encourages teachers to use the wide-selection of online resources provided by Lexia Learning:

**Online Resources and Support:**

The Getting Started with Lexia Products toolkit can be found at:
http://elearning.lexialearning.com/Product_Onboarding_LexiaProducts/index.html#/?_k=kxwk18
This site gives you access to information on how to get started with both Lexia Core5 Reading and Lexia PowerUp Literacy. This digital toolkit contains implementation checklists, training guides, interactive reports and training on demand videos.
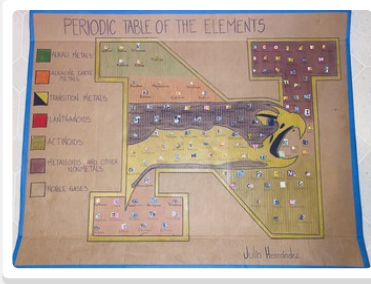
For additional information to help guide your use of Lexia with your students, log into myLexia, and select the Resources tab to access the Resources Hub:
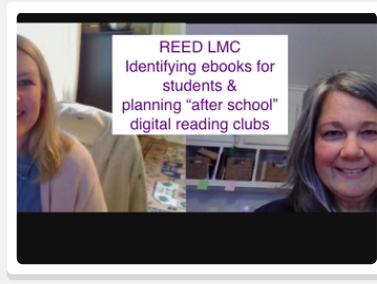https://www.lexialearning.com/customer-resources/support-for-educators

If you have any questions about Lexia, please email Anne Uberti or Frank Purcaro directly.

*Distance Learning - Our New Classrooms*



*Distance Learning - Hawks Rule!*



*Distance Learning - Supporting Our Students and Colleagues*

## Newsletter Update! - Recording Google Meet Sessions



In our newsletter last week, we discussed the importance of increasing live interactions with students in a distance learning environment. Many have asked whether live academic/instructional lessons delivered on Google Meet can be recorded. Could these recordings be posted in Google Classrooms for students who were unable to attend to view later? The answer is "yes!" Please know that this recommendation by the district is a shift from earlier communications released during the initial phase of the distance learning plan. Updated legal guidance in combination with the district's release of a *Distance Learning Participation, Confidentiality, and Opt-out* letter to parents accounts for the new recommendations for staff regarding recording Google Meet sessions.
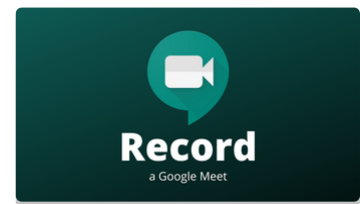
**The one exception to this new guideline is for special education staff working one-on-one or in small group virtual instructional settings with students, as recording restrictions will still apply.**

For those who have not experienced recording a live session, please click the three vertical dots at the bottom corner of the Google Meet screen and choose the "Record Meeting" option from the drop-down menu. When the meeting is finished, return to the drop-down menu and choose "Stop Recording." When the meeting is closed, a video file of the recorded session will be automatically uploaded into your Google Drive. Please know that it may take time for the video to show in Drive depending on its size. Copy and paste that file into your Google Classroom for students to view.



## SRBI Plans/Alpine

For those who manage SRBI plans in Alpine, guidance for closing out SRBI Plans in Alpine will be forthcoming in the next week. Stay tuned!

## Limitations on Accessing Google Meet through Google Classroom Header Links

When setting up a Google Classroom, many teachers have explored the "Generate Meet Link" option to embed a permanent Google Meet link on the header of the Classroom title page. Recent questions about this Google Meet option include: Are these permanent header links visible to students? and can students use the links to access Google Meets? The link generated that shows up in the header of a Google Classroom does not work across domains. Our staff are in the newtown.k12.ct.us domain and our students are in newtownps.org. Think of this domain setup as two very separate containers. Staff are in the newtown.k12.ct.us container and students in the newtownps.org container. GSuite allows us to create sharing rules across containers however, it reserves certain features as available only within the single originating container and this is one of them. Students can not see that link nor can they join the Meet.
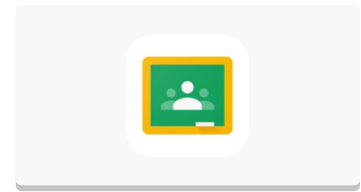
## Will the Free Resources Continue?

We are currently in the process of gathering feedback on the usefulness of the many resources that have been rolled out. We realize that we will be making decisions based on a very short period of time, yet there have been some clear winners. We encourage you to continue to share your opinions on what has been useful with your administrators or directly with us. It is our hope that we will be able to make the most useful platforms available, not only to teachers for the fall, but to families so students can have opportunities for additional practice and engagement over the summer.

## How Will We Assess Where Students Are Next Year?

Your administrators will share with you how we will collect and utilize what we know about what students completed between March and June. This will look very different at the high school than at the lower levels, for obvious reasons. At the lower levels, we will be developing a collection tool to capture where kids left off, what they covered and what we know they mastered. We will be developing a plan for remote assessment in the fall, in the event that it is necessary. Finally, we are working with principals to create other plans for Kindergarten screening, Plus Math at RIS and Advance Math at NMS. If you have any questions, reach out to your Building Principal or to Frank or Anne.

## Anne Uberti, Assistant Superintendent

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