

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Vouros	L. Rodrigue	B. Vazzano
M. Ku	A. SanAngelo	K. Longobucco

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.

M. Ku moved to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2019 minutes.

J. Vouros seconded the motion.

Public Participation: Visiting teachers from Singapore – Puay Lim and her husband Barry Chua

Kim Longobucco introduced Puay Lim, teacher from Singapore and her husband Barry Chua who were visiting Newtown High School. During their visit they observed classrooms and meetings.

Grade 2 Social Studies

Andrew SanAngelo and Brianne Vazzano presented the curriculum.

Andrew stated that they have been working on the Grade 2 Social Studies Curriculum for about a year. When looking over the entire K-8 curriculum, we realized that grade 2 was in most need of revision. It has not been revised since 1998. We worked on the curriculum writing over the past summer and finalized it the past few months. We ultimately made a curriculum that can be realized within the school year. Brianne stated that the NGSS units are done fall, winter, and spring unit. We are also doing this with the Social Studies curriculum in that content.

Dr. Rodrigue asked what did you find when it came to assessments that impacted how you assess student learning. Did this really impact changes? Andrew stated teaching elementary is very different. I was more of a guide to get into the conceptual piece. Seeing the assessments that they created, I am very impressed. Brianne added that she feels very confident in the assessments that we came up with. I think they really encompass things that we are trying to teach the students. Brianne presented the three units.

Michelle Ku asked about the time allotted for Social Studies. Brianne stated that some schools have thirty minutes and some schools have a little more time. We wanted to make sure we had

time with NGSS and Second Steps. Andrew stated we might be working on science then come back to social studies. It might not be every day for thirty minutes. Brianne stated we would do this the way we do NGSS with the seasons. We do have the flexibility to spend extra time if we are working on a special project. Brianne feels this is the best way to teach Social Studies on the same line as NGSS.

Michelle asked how this fits in with grade 1 and grade 3. Brianne stated we looked at the standards that we were exposing them to that they might see later on. John Vouros asked if all of the classes and all of the schools are on board. We plan on breaking this down to be more teacher friendly. It will be consistent and all schools will be doing it. Andrew stated that we had representation from three of the schools. We will present it to the fourth school. All four schools will all be on the same page. Michelle asked how this becomes part of what the teachers are teaching. Brianne stated that all goals for each lesson will be listed. We will have resources and the link available for teachers.

John Vouros asked if all teachers are trained in concept based. Brianne and Andrew stated no. Dr. Rodrigue stated that it is an ongoing process. The curriculum writing is approaching and those teachers will get trained. All teachers will eventually be trained. Training has to be done in small groups, otherwise you will miss very critical aspects of how this works.

Brianne stated she feels it is important to have the district- wide grade 2 teachers as a whole sit down together to go over the social studies curriculum.

Testing Strategies

Kim Longobucco stated that there a lot of strategies that are embedded in the courses that we are teaching. Support centers offer test taking strategies. PTSA offer SAT Boot Camp Catalyst review every year. I talked to department chairs to see what test taking strategies they are using in their specific content area. They are preparing different content in the test taking strategy. What test strategies are used in Math is very different from the test strategies used in English. Dr. Rodrigue asked if this is still the Freshman Seminar. Kim answered yes. Dr. Rodrigue said that is where this was supposed to be housed. Every freshman was going to get a better understanding of this, which is different than middle school. There are more challenging courses. The strategies and the studying are different from the middle school. Kim stated that this is happening in class. This just started last year; juniors and seniors did not have that class when they were freshman. John asked perhaps it would help to whoever is doing the freshman seminar that they could tell us how they are doing it. Then we could put it on the agenda for the BOE. The BOE can hear that all the freshman are getting it. Kim agreed. There are two Library Specialists that teach the Freshman Seminar class. There is not a curriculum. They meet once every eight days. Dr. Rodrigue added that test taking strategies should not start at the high school level. If we look at backward mapping how do we get students to pull from the

strategies they were taught at the secondary and middle level. Kim stated part of this was still grounded in SAT. We have shifted particularly in math to do more SAT prep questions. Every test is different. All in all how we approach studying can cross over grades and subject areas.

Superintendent Update

Thank you, Puay Lin and Barry Chua for joining us.

Public Participation – Puay Lin and Barry Chua discussed education in Singapore which included curriculum, testing, school day start/end time, and school year start/end.

John Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:37

Michelle Ku seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Norling

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