

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

J. Larkin	A. Hiruo	C. Pierce	F. Purcaro
D. Ramsey	B. Hart	E. Hall	A. Uberti
J. Vouros	J. Fonovic	M. Correia	

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the 3/8/2022 meeting.

D. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None

Presentation: Proposed Changes to Math Pathways 22-23

A. Uberti began with a brief summary of the current advanced math pathways that students can qualify for at the end of grade 4 for advancement beginning in grade 5. The grade 5 advanced math course, known as Math Plus 5, is an enriched curriculum that covers all of the fifth grade content, one unit of sixth grade material with a heavy emphasis on math application (problem-solving).

With the implementation of Bridges Mathematics K-5, the K-12 District Math Committee believes it is the appropriate time to reconsider the practice of advancing students beginning in grade 5. The level of rigor provided by Bridges is comparable to what was provided by Math Plus 5 using prior program, Envision. A survey of area schools indicates that advancement typically begins in grade 6 resulting in those students taking Algebra in grade 8.

An analysis of the mathematics performance of current fourth grade students suggests that they would benefit from another year of math instruction before being assessed for advancement. It is important that any student who enters an advanced pathway demonstrate the prerequisite skills necessary for success.

Delaying the placement into an advanced math pathway from fifth to sixth grade will not affect the outcome for students, as the revised pathway would still result in students being placed in Algebra in grade 8. It also does not change the need for the district to develop individualized programming for students who demonstrate mastery of advanced math skills beyond the typical advanced pathway. In addition, students who are not initially placed in advanced math will continue to be considered for advanced placement by demonstrating mastery of prerequisite skills.

The K-12 District Math Committee has also recommended a slight change to the pathway at the middle school. Grade 7 will offer standard grade 7, enriched grade 7 and math 7-8. The math team believes that an enriched 7th grade curriculum offers students seeking advancement at the end of 7th grade a

stronger foundation than the current 7 Accelerated course. This is demonstrated by the fact that no students have been able to progress from 7 Accelerated to Algebra in the past several years.

B. Hart added that every cluster would have an enriched section and the strongest students would be placed in that section. Students in the enriched classes are expected to complete the additional work. Students in the standard math 7 are offered enrichment if they demonstrate readiness.

J. Fonovic added that the teachers at Reed feel the Bridges program is very rigorous. Current 6th teachers have commented that students who were in the Bridges program last year have demonstrated a deeper understanding of complex concepts compared to other students.

M. Correia stated that Bridges emphasizes math application. He also commented that when visiting classrooms he hears student utilizing math terminology correctly.

J. Vouros and J. Larkin expressed concerns about the amount of reading that Bridges requires and inquired about how students with reading deficits are being supported.

M. Correia responded that at Reed, students needing reading support in math are provided with that support.

C. Pierce added that Bridges provides explicit vocabulary instruction. Words are posted in the classroom for students to reference and they are expected to use the vocabulary. Assessments may be administered differently if it is suspected that reading may be impacting a student's result. She stated that they want to be sure that math assessments measure what a student can do in math. She also noted that in grades K, 1, and 2 math assessments are read to all students. By grade 3, students with reading difficulties have usually been identified and are provided with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications.

A. Hiruo shared that Bridges provides specific guidance for teachers regarding how to administer assessments and preparing students for assessments. This includes reminding students to raise their hand if they need something read to them. The program is very deliberate in its instructions for teachers.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

D. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Norling

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

