

Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee
Please note: These minutes are pending the Subcommittee approval

Minutes of the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee meeting held on March 24, 2015, 10 a.m. in the Newtown High School Main Office Conference Room.

M. Ku	L. Gejda	L. Rodrigue	T. Lima	R. Lye
J. Vouros	M. Hiscavich	C. Dietter	J. Diaz	

The Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Motion: J. Vouros motioned that the minutes of February 24, 2015 be approved. M. Ku seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Public Participation: none

C. Dietter, Co-Chair of the Curriculum Council Committee, presented a streamlined draft, easy to follow “Curriculum Development Guide” and another on “Curriculum Document Guidelines”. These guides match perfectly with Rubicon Atlas and can be used by everyone. The documents will help move the five year plan faster with all curriculum vertically aligned. M. Ku suggested that the Newtown Strategic Plan be included in the Curriculum Development Guide. C. Dietter agreed to the suggestion and will make changes to the guide.

L. Rodrigue, proposed two pilot program courses under Digital Arts and Science Academy, The Center for 21st Century Skills at Education Connection. The program is designed to blend math and science for college prep students, starting in 9th grade. This is a four year, student commitment helping them to develop independence through research. The pilot program would be introduced to 8th grade students and parents. These two courses, Skills 21 (Digital Media and Literacy) and Earth and Energy Essentials (Earth Science), would be taught by a Library Media Specialist and a current science teacher. No additional staff is required. M. Ku and J. Vouros endorsed this pilot.

T. Lima, explained the SRBI Reading support program at NHS and how students are referred based on teacher recommendations, NWEA scores and grades. The goal of the program is to assist students in developing reading skills and provide them with the opportunity to strengthen word attack skills, learn and practice literal and inferential reading skills, and develop a broader reading vocabulary, preparing them for the CT Standardized Testing and academic success in high school and beyond. Students have become motivated and confident through this program. In the past, resources for SRBI had have not been as plentiful at the high school as at other levels but this program will provide another resource. Districts need to help students become successful.

T. Lima not only helps teachers with students in need of support but spends time one on one with students. The student will work with T. Lima instead of having a study hall and will be graded on effort, participation, and in-class work that they complete. Through this intervention the student will become a better reader, a reflective writer and self-directed learner.

Due to her schedule and ability to only meet with students once or twice during the 8 day rotation, it makes it difficult to adhere to schedule more time with students who could benefit from working with Ms. Lima. T. Lima would like to have more classes for intervention and would like the support of the BOE to continue this program for grades 9-12.

R. Lye and J. Diaz presented information on the UCONN Writing Center Theory and Practice Pilot Program currently servicing 1,725 students. This program is based on the UConn model currently being used in dozens of schools throughout the state. Students work in a collaborative environment to refine their own writing skills and their ability to assist other students with their writing.

Students will be trained as tutors by R. Lye and J. Diaz and will refine their own writing skills, work to create and maintain a student-centered learning environment that is inviting and comfortable for all students. Both tutors and students will be better prepared for college and career writing. The tutors are trained for one semester and work with other students in subsequent semesters. They receive credit for training and for tutoring. M. Ku and J. Vouros endorsed this pilot.

M. Hiscavich presented the Jazz Improvisation 1 and 2 curricula to the subcommittee. She explained that students, working as a team, use their own knowledge and creativity to perform together. The jazz group takes all instruments regardless if they are in another school group or not. Currently, they are looking into a vocal section for the jazz group.

L. Rodrigue led the discussion on the pilot "AP Computer Science" program in which students will learn to design and implement computer programs correctly and efficiently to solve given problems. These programs will be understandable, adaptable, and when appropriate, reusable. For those students who have completed JAVA and required math courses and who are looking to take more math courses, this is an established course offered through the College Board Advanced Placement offerings. Many students have requested this course be offered and have taken it as an independent study. Requesting piloting the course in the fall of 2015, only one section will be offered to all sophomores, juniors and seniors who have completed JAVA. M. Ku and J. Vouros endorsed this pilot.

Follow-up discussion about the math presentation to the Board was postponed.

There was no public participation

M. Ku motioned to adjourn. J. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Schaedler

