Newtown Board of Education Newtown, Connecticut Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Meeting held September 7, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Vouros M. Ku J. Evans Davila L. Rodrigue A. Uberti E. Buckley J. Fonovic D.J. Nicholson

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Public participation: None

J. Vouros opened the meeting explaining that the C and I Subcommittee would like to hear about the present state of the mathematics curriculum at Reed, including progress of the on-going curriculum development project.

A. Uberti summarized the staff's observations regarding the impact of the slower pacing of Math 5, including a gap in fifth grade students' application of math and problem-solving skills. She explained that process that resulted in the vertical articulation of Math Pathways, which was the work of a committee of leaders coming together for focused discussions and agreement regarding how students progress from start to finish following coursework and skill development that prepare them to progress through various pathways in an organized manner. The Math Pathways site is presented to parents and students during Open House, and there is a link to the site on the schools' web pages. A. Uberti also explained adjustments to the manner in which parent meetings are conducted regarding placement in math courses based on student data. If the parent believes the student has a deeper interest in math which should be pursued, the child is assigned summer work to complete online along with some handouts. If the student demonstrates the effort, they will be placed in Math 5+. It is essential for parents and children to understand Math Pathways, as it is key to what will happen when they are ready to transition to Newtown High School. If students with interest in math are new to Reed, they can be placed in the Plus Cluster, as Reed does not want to hold anyone back. Reed tries to mix students without pulling anyone out in order to accomplish this.

The Math Curriculum for grades 5 and 6 is in Rubicon Atlas, but it is not in the concept-based curriculum format. At the end of the last school year, Reed's Math Science Specialist J. Fonovic, began the work of identifying conceptual lenses for the units and writing the guiding questions along with a consultant provided by Central Office. J. Evans Davila suggested the possibility of providing funds for extra-work hours to enable J. Fonovic and K-8 Math Coordinator/Reed teacher E. Buckley and staff to gather after-school a few hours weekly after school to move the project forward. A. Uberti stated that Reed teachers are reluctant to do curriculum writing after work, but she said she would ask them. She stated that she

has been successful in offering staff time during the last school week in June for these projects, and some staff have agreed to work additional hours during the summer months.

M. Ku distributed her notes summarizing the timeline of the math curriculum which has extended over a period beginning prior to the 2015-16 school year, and she expressed the need for this project to be completed. M. Ku stated that the math curriculum needs to be put online on Rubicon Atlas, so it corresponds with what is being taught in the classroom. M. Ku suggested that the Math curriculum possibly be taken down from Rubicon. A. Uberti explained that it is in a different type of format, and still reflects what is being taught; additionally, she stated her agreement that the project needs to be moved forward and revised. A. Uberti explained the need to rewrite the whole Math curriculum at Reed, with the issue being adequate time for staff to work on this project. L. Rodrigue stated there is the need for a discussion between J. Evans Davila, A. Uberti and L. Rodrigue on how to prioritize and plan for the work to occur during the school year and summer months. J. Evans Davila offered the solution of opting to remove "public view" of the existing curriculum through the Rubicon Atlas platform until the project has been completed; it was determined that before such action is considered, J. Fonovic review the curriculum on Rubicon Atlas and let J. Evans Davila know if this is advisable. M. Ku requested that A. Uberti return to C and I with an update on the data for Math 5+ courses that Reed had provided three-years prior during the Math Self-Study Presentation to the Board of Education . A. Uberti suggested this occur at the end of October. With the discussion of Reed's Math Curriculum being concluded, A. Uberti, J. Fonovic, and E. Buckley left the meeting to return to Reed.

J. Vorous opened the discussion of Project Lead the Way, with Newtown High School teacher D. Nicholson present to answer questions pertaining to the Introduction to Engineering Design course. J. Vorous expressed that the Board is excited about the STEM Partnership with Project Lead the Way being in place at the high school; however, the C & I has a potential concern with the way in which students are scheduled this year. Last year the high school had one section taught by two teachers, with students in a cohort structure. Now, in the second year, the students are placed in two section more teachers providing the instruction in math courses and the sciences, meaning the students are no longer together in a cluster or cohort. M. Ku stated the original plan was to place students in a cohort that would relate them with one another, which would be an advantage to the program; however, this year's scheduling does not seem to correspond to the original plan. Students are split, having different math and science teachers. D. Nicholson explained that students are still getting all the subjects and engineering as planned. L. Rodrigue stated that she would follow-up with those responsible for scheduling these students. J. Vouros stated his concern that the children are not scheduled properly this year, and parents would like their children scheduled together in a cohort as was presented in the STEM Partnership brochure which the C and I and the Board of Education which was provided at the program was approved. L. Rodrigue explained the limitations that scheduling presents due to the need to build in the flexibility students require in order to engage in coursework that allows them to meet their goals and pursue their interests. L. Rodrigue, reiterated her intention to speak with the Science Department Chair and the Assistant Principal responsible for oversite of the program and the scheduling of students. D. Nicholson explained the level of training required by Project Lead the Way for teachers of engineering courses. This past summer, D. Nicholson completed 80 hours of intensive training and passed all the

requirements for certification within the program. D. Nicholson explained that teachers assume the role of learners during the training, maintaining a project journal the same as his students must do. He noted that he enjoys observing his students working in collaboration with one another, which is a skill required in the real world beyond school. J. Vouros inquired how many students choose to leave the program the second year, and D. Nicholson noted that at least half of the students will choose not to continue into the next year due to scheduling conflicts; however, he noted that a student who leaves for a year does have the option of returning to the program as they gain flexibility in their schedule. J. Vorous when we anticipate introducing the program in Newtown Middle School. L. Rodrigue stated that she has already been in contact with Principal T. Einhorn. The Biomedical component of Project Lead the Way is in the beginning planning stages for next year. J. Evans Davila confirmed this discussion will be placed on the C and I Meeting Agenda for October 4, 2017, with L. Rodrigue, S. McConnell, and D. Roach present for the discussion.

Public participation: None

M. Ku motioned to adjourn. J. Vouros seconded

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bev Schaedler

These are draft minutes and are subject to the approval of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee