

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on November 15, 2017 in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Evans Davila

J. Vouros

M. Ku

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

J. Vouros motioned to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2017 meeting.

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public participation: None

J. Evans Davila gave an update on the status of the District's transition to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The 4-Year District NGSS Transition Plan was introduced as a point of reference, which identifies action steps for each year along with a timeline for completion, persons responsible, evidence of completion, group impacted, resources required, and monitoring notes. An abbreviated overview of the Transition Plan for the 2017-18 school year was shared with the committee, and Ms. Evans Davila noted that our current status of the transition aligns with the current school year's recommended progress as compared to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) NGSS Implementation Timeline. Ms. Evans Davila also noted that the State's Timeline isolated areas of the transition, focusing at times on a full year dedicated only to awareness of the standards while the plan she developed in with input from the District's K-12 NGSS Leadership Team keeps focus in all four components of transition: leadership, curriculum, professional development, and resources. Ms. Evans Davila identified and described the curricular resources and the professional development that is in place this school year, and she explained how the schools are being allocated resources for supplies necessary to implement a CREC Model Unit in each grade level in elementary schools.

The role of the NGSS Leadership Team was discussed with regard to the composition of the committee and its charge, which began last year with a crosswalk of existing science curriculum and alignment with NGSS. Ms. Evans Davila provided information on the steps taken to ensure common baseline training experiences for the NGSS Leadership Team, teachers of science, and administrators. It was noted that transition planning involves on-going partnerships that Ms. Evans Davila has developed with a local university, The Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, CREC, and the CSDE's Education Consultant for Science. Ms. Evans Davila explained early efforts to register science leaders from Newtown in CREC's curriculum writing consortium before it was relocated to Windsor Locks, and she described the alternate professional learning opportunities that she put in place that were effective in keeping the district on pace to be able to implement CREC Model Units upon release for purchase. All currently available units from CREC were purchased immediately upon release in July 2017, which consists of unit bundles for K,

1, 2, 3, 6, and 9. In addition, Ms. Evans Davila contracted with CREC to bring the consortium leader Dr. Jamie Rechenberg to the district at the start of the school year, to train science leaders in the structure and implementation of the units. Mystery Science, a digital resource vetted by the CSDE for alignment with NGSS, was purchased to provide grades K-5 with supplementary materials to integrate into the existing curriculum to address the Science and Engineering Practices that are a component of implementation of NGSS. Both Mystery Science and the CREC Model Units include a blog component where our science teachers and science leaders can collaborate virtually with staff in other districts who are using these resources. Currently, our administrators and specialists or science department leaders are attending PLANS training in Hartford at the Connecticut Science Center to learn about implementation of NGSS aligned instruction.

J. Vouros stated his concern that the implementation of the CREC unit in K-3 will be starting in April. Ms. Evans Davila explained that this is in pacing with the professional development that is preparing teachers to align instruction with the practices of NGSS, and she described how current instruction is being infused with new resource materials that are moving the district toward inquiry based science instruction, which is a key component of NGSS.

Mr. Vouros asked to extend the discussion of the NGSS transition to the next meeting. Ms. Evans Davila was asked to be prepared to inform the committee on the frequency and time allotted to science instruction in K-4, and the number of staff at Reed who are certified to teach science

M. Ku requested that the next meeting agenda also include information regarding staff turnover within the district.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros motioned to adjourn at 11:06 a.m.

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Schaedler

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