

Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes of the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee meeting held on February 18, 2015, 10 a.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room, 3 Primrose Street.

L. Gejda	1 Public
M.Ku	1 Staff
J. Vouros	

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

Motion: M. Ku motioned that the minutes of January 29, 2015 be approved. J. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Public Participation: L. Main, 42 The Old Road, a Newtown parent and former Math and Gifted teacher spoke regarding “ Fourth Grade Slump” and the addition of rigor to the math curriculum. She stated that it is better to aim to be a better problem solver instead of aiming to get higher test scores. She suggested a separate math class to address the top 25 % of 4th grade, and provided copies of an article: “The “Fourth-Grade Slump” and Math Achievement” by Kristin Grayson and Veronica Betancourt. M. Ku thanked L. Main for her information.

J. Vouros stated the importance of starting to track students in fourth grade in order to get to the proper high school science courses.

Discussion of District Math Program (Gr.K-4): K. Feda, Math and Science Specialist from Sandy Hook School, provided an overview of the district math program, ORIGO: STEPPING STONES, and stated how very pleased everyone is with the program. Teachers have licenses for K-5 so they can explore what other grades are doing in order to meet the needs for all students. Stepping Stones, current resources K-4, were written based on the Common Core State Standards. They provide many different resources for the teachers, including more or less instruction, problem solving, investigation questions, and group discussions using the whole class to teach each other.

Stepping Stones has an assessment element that allows four checkups for each module. It provides a grid that shows how the class and each child performed. A pretest is given so teachers can tailor their lessons.

Criteria for identifying advanced students in the elementary schools were discussed. NWEA, RIT score and percentiles, the AVG of Stepping Stones module tests and basic fact fluency, performance tasks,

OLSAT scores and Math Olympiad problems along with teacher evaluation and observation are all factors used to identify these students.

Students that are advanced in our elementary schools are offered differentiated instruction within the classroom or in small group at Tier 2 along with Math Olympiad for gr. 4. The importance of having Para- educators within the math class is crucial to the program and allows this differentiation to take place. Our resource for the advanced math student is available up to Grade 5 and provides enrichment for the students. Each school examines extreme outliers on an individual basis and plans accordingly.

Update Latin I textbook adoption request: This is an updated textbook of the one currently being used. Other titles have been reviewed. L. Gejda referenced information that P. Greenfield provided about other high school Latin textbooks. There is an anticipated increase in enrollment in Latin for next year. J. Vouros moved that the Latin I textbook "Ecce Romani I" be presented to the Board for first review. M. Ku seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Update Smarter Balance Assessment: L. Gejda stated that the elementary schools, will be starting the Smarter Balance Assessment testing on March 17 thru April 2, 2015. Students taking the Smarter Balanced assessments on computers are untimed. RIS and MS assessment window will look longer due to other activities. NHS, Grade 10, CAPT Science will be held March 2-4 and Grade 11 Smarter Balanced April 27 thru May 29, 2015.

Curriculum Development Process and Cycle: L. Gejda explained how the Curriculum Council Committee is developing a guide on the process and cycle of writing curriculum. Currently in draft form, the committee is looking for approval and suggestions.

Public Participation L. Main stated that the elementary school math identification criteria is above and beyond. She suggested that we want the higher achieving groups working the math specialist. Most important is rigor intensity and it starts in fourth grade.

M. Ku thanked L. Main for her input

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Schaedler