

Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes of the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting held on November 3, 2014, at 12:30 PM in the Board of Education Conference Room, 3 Primrose Street.

J. Vouros	L. Gejda	A. Uberti	M. Hiscavich	K. Sherman
M. Ku	P. Kennedy	A. Marks	J. Gabriel	

The Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting was called to order at 12:35 PM.

Motion: M. Ku moved to accept the minutes of October 14, 2014. J. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion: M. Ku moved to amend the minutes of the September 23, 2014 to include "J. Vouros made a motion to elect M. Ku for Chairperson of the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee. Motion passed unanimously." J. Vouros seconded the motion to amend the minutes. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion: To add, to all future agendas, public participation at the beginning and end of all Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee meetings. J. Vouros seconded. Motion passes.

L. Gejda requested that item numbers on the agenda be moved to help the committee through the agenda in a timely manner.

P. Kennedy presented an update on Full Day Kindergarten in Newtown. Some of the benefits being the development of speaking and listening skills, problem solving, and learning from peers. Teachers are using strategies from Writing and Readers workshops. Children are exposed to Science weekly and the Science Lab at least five times a year. There is now time for Developmental Play/Playacting allowing children to work on their social skills and behaviors. Full Day Kindergarten allows the learning to be in a more relaxed environment and not rushed as was in the past. Para-Educators in Literacy and Math come into the class to assist the teachers. Paras that work 1:1 also help in small group settings when possible. Positive impact of Full Day Kindergarten include more time for differentiation, increase communication with peers, explicit instruction with hands-on experiences across disciplines and structured and independent choice centers.

A. Marks chair of the Newtown High School English Department reported that teachers have been working hard on a number of courses for future presentation to the Board. Sports Literature, Composition Through Contemporary Issues and Writing through Film are currently being revised and updated.

Since Columbia's Readers Workshop does not expand to high school teachers are very interested in learning from the eighth grade teachers how the program works and would like the opportunity to spend time with the eighth grade teachers. This would help with the transition from 8th to 9th grade. Middle school teachers should shadow high school and high school should shadow middle school. True collaboration is needed. Mrs. Marks will return to the committee when the curricula are complete.

A. Uberti : Goal of the advanced math program at Reed is to provide rigorous mathematical instruction for highly capable math students while respecting where students are developmentally (average age of 10 when entering Reed). The mission since spring 2014 has been to design a program that will prepare highly capable math students for participation in either advanced 7th grade math or 7th grade algebra while at the same time allowing for flexibility to move students both in and out of the advanced math class between fifth and sixth grade.

M. Hiscavich and J. Gabriel spoke about a Unified Theater Arts Program, for students of all abilities currently at the high school. It is a student run activity allowing students with special needs to become involved in the various aspects (e.g. set design, acting) of a production that they would normally not get involved in. The production is entirely organized, written, and directed by the students themselves. Currently, there are 16 applicants to become student leaders, most of which are freshman. An Arts in Education Mini-Grant has been submitted to fund stipends and materials, etc. If the grant is not received, the program will be run as a club.

K. Sherman stated that Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II are set to be presented to the Board. K. Sherman mentioned that our curriculum is much more rigorous than the CCSS. Students must be taught to “THINK”, be persistent and logical. Motion to move the curriculum to the Board. J. Vouros seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

No public participation

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Schaedler