

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, February 25, 2020.

M. Ku A. Uberti R. Torres
J. Vouros A. Deeb K. Longobucco

Also present Board of Education member Deborra Zukowski.

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.
J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from 2/11/2020
M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None

Review New Curriculum: Western Studies I – Amy Deeb and Rachel Torres

Social Studies Department Chair and Teacher, Amy Deeb, noted that the two biggest changes to this revised curriculum is moving from two semester courses to a full year course that all freshman are required to take. This change ensures compliance with Public Act 18-24, the Connecticut Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness Act, which requires that public schools in Connecticut provide Holocaust and genocide education to their students at some point during their K-12 experience. In Newtown, most of this content will be delivered during the Western Studies World War II unit.

Social Studies Teacher, Rachel Torres, explained that a variety of resources are used to teach the content to students including Holocaust films, like Schindler's List, visits from Holocaust survivors, and visits to area museums. These additional opportunities help to enrich the learning experience. Amy Deeb added that journal writing is also incorporated into the unit and offers students a time to reflect privately on this difficult content.

NHS Principal, Kim Longobucco, added that it makes sense to require all freshman take a full year Western Studies course as a natural follow up to their full year experience in middle school. Requiring the full year course, versus offering Western I and II as electives, ensures that all students receive the required content and also provides for more continuity in instruction by ensuring students have the same teacher over the course of the year. In addition, given the sensitive nature of the topic, the genocide and Holocaust content is typically taught in May, after teachers have had almost a full year with their students.

Assistant Superintendent Update

Anne Uberti shared that subject specific curriculum committees are meeting on a regular basis and that she, and Director of Teaching and Learning, Frank Purcaro, attend all meetings. Committee work is focused on improving the curriculum writing process in order to strengthen the quality of curriculum, as it is written and revised. She shared an example of this kind of work that is occurring in the Social Studies Committee. That committee is developing a survey that will compare the written curriculum to the taught curriculum to inform future work. The committee has also been discussing vertical articulation, especially differences in expectations between Reed and Newtown Middle and High Schools. Additionally, the committee is reviewing the alignment of content as compared to the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks as well as taking into consideration other content taught in grade levels that may lend itself to integration.

Anne Uberti also gave an update on the development of 20-21 elementary, intermediate and middle school schedules. She is hoping to have draft schedules completed for all three levels prior to the end of March.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

M. Ku seconded the motion

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Norling

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.