

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education and Instruction Subcommittee meeting held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022.

D. Ramsey S. Stamm A. Uberti
J. Vouros S. Mullen

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the 10/25/22 meeting.

D. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Public Participation: None

Presentation of New Curriculum: Greenery 1 & 2 – S. Stamm, S. Mullen

S. Stamm and Shawn Mullen presented the Greenery 1 & 2 curriculum by unit:

- Plant Culture
- Plant Science
- Plant Classification
- Composting & Soil Food Web
- Enterprise Practices & Career Readiness

Greenery 1 or 2 can be taken either in the fall or spring, depending on what time of year the class meets that is what works best in terms of growing. These are hands-on courses that prepare students for possible careers in the growing industry. Students learn about plants, plant science, growing, marketing and sales.

When the courses were first introduced, enrollment was low but the courses have become very popular as students see other students working in agriculture in the garden, the greenhouse and other places on campus. Currently all sections are full. Ms. Stamm and Mr. Mullen shared that they seek out opportunities to engage with the community through plant sales and food share programs. They also encouraged members of the Board to drop in to visit a class in action.

Response to Reading Mandate Update – A. Uberti

A. Uberti shared that five programs have been scheduled for each of the five programs approved by the CSDE. They will all be completed by Thanksgiving. She is working with a team that consists of the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Language Arts consultants from the four elementary schools and Reed. Although the mandate is for K-3, the team must consider how a shift in programming will impact the upper grades. The programs are being reviewed with a possible implementation to the upper grades in mind. Some of the programs are K-5, some are for K-6 and some are for K-8.

She shared that the program must be something that would be a good fit for our students, teachers and district as a whole. Cost will be a factor in determining which grades would implement a new program, if that is the direction the team recommends.

In addition to reviewing new programs, the team will be meeting over the next few weeks to review the existing programming to see if it will meet the new requirements and, if not, to determine the feasibility of updating it so that it does. The CSDE has informed district's that there will be a waiver process but the form has not yet been released. Instead, the team will use the rubric that the CSDE used to evaluate and select the approved programs. Part of the waiver process that has been shared is that districts will need to present data that demonstrates the existing reading instruction has been effective for all subgroups. The team is currently pulling data in order to do a preliminary analysis. Again, this will be challenging give the CSDE has provided no information about what benchmarks for achievement they will use.

The CSDE has released a survey that all districts across the state are asked to complete by December 16, 2022, which indicates the intention to either apply for a waiver or implement a new program. This is non-binding.

A. Uberti plans to provide on-going updates to C&I throughout this process and will provide a status update at the 12/13/22 regarding submitting the district's intention.

Several questions were raised by C&I members about the possibility of maintaining existing programming such as Foundations. A. Uberti explained that the team has originally hoped to do that but it may not make sense given that some of the programs are highly integrated and that the scope and sequence of the phonics within a program may not align with the Foundations scope and sequence. Other questions were raised regarding the selection process and teacher input. A. Uberti shared that the team is hoping to conduct a limited pilot of two programs, if that is the direction that is recommended. The pilot would follow a similar process as was used to select Bridges Math and Into Math and would seek input from all stakeholders.

Before and After School Program Updates – A. Uberti

All four elementary schools before school programs began week of 10/24. The principals are planning three cycles this year. Students were invited based on their performance on in-house assessments.

Newtown Middle School began an after-school program the same week. They are planning to run a second cycle that would help prepare students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

D. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Norling

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