

Newtown Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut  
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on September 4, 2018, in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Vouros      M. Ku      J. Evans Davila      L. Rodrigue      D. Petersen

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

J. Vouros motioned to approve the minutes from June 7. M. Ku seconded the motion.

J. Vouros opened Public Participation; no members of the public offered comment.

Mr. Vouros asked Mrs. Petersen to describe interventions offered to students qualifying for specialized services in reading. Mrs. Petersen explained we have four teachers certified in Wilson Reading at Level 1, one of whom is in process of completing Level 2 certification, and they are placed in various buildings to provide services to students and work with general education teachers. Dr. Ku observed the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) website provides information on legal requirements and recommended assessments with regard to dyslexia. Ms. Evans Davila responded that this corresponds with recent legislation on early literacy and dyslexia, noting that the District chose DIBELS from the CSDE's required menu of assessments as our Universal Screen and Progress Monitor, and this data is used with other assessments to plan instruction. While the State mandates universal screening in grades K-3, our District administers DIBELS through grade 4. Mrs. Peterson added that Special Education uses DIBELS results with other data collected by her department when students are referred for reading. Dr. Ku observed that the CSDE does not recommend specific programs of instruction for dyslexia. Mrs. Petersen responded that the law is broad, pointing out that it does not specify "code-based" reading teachers as a requirement in districts. Dr. Rodrigue explained that Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) are equally important in meeting students' needs in reading because classroom teachers monitor student progress and provide for students' instructional needs on an on-going basis. Dr. Rodrigue also noted the each student has unique needs that are considered in planning SRBI. Ms. Evans Davila described how students are flagged through core instruction for Tier 2 and Tier 3 reading interventions, taking into account a variety of data when referral is made to the Special Education Department. Mr. Vouros asked if the State guidelines recommend the number of instructional minutes for interventions, and Mrs. Petersen confirmed that this is not specified and would vary by individual student. Ms. Evans Davila referred to the 2017 English Language Arts (ELA) Self-Study presented to the BOE, and the 2018 ELA Update provided to the C & I that includes work on word study and interventions. Ms. Evans Davila described the District's consistent practices in literacy -- core instructional program, guided reading and strategy groups, assessments, professional learning, roles of certified staff, and protocols for Tiers 2 and 3 SRBI.

The 2018-19 C & I Meeting Calendar was addressed as the next order of business. Tuesday, September 25 at 10:00 a.m. was identified as the next meeting date, and Ms. Evans Davila agreed to bring a proposed list of dates to this meeting for consideration.

Ms. Evans Davila provided the Assistant Superintendent's Update, including plans to send 10 teachers to the National Science Teachers Association's Regional Conference in November; elementary Math Science Specialists preparations to present two workshops at the NSTA Conference; and professional development plans for 2018-19, which will include sessions on social-emotional learning, Concept-Based Curriculum, and literacy. Dr. Rodrigue added that discussions are taking place to explore a course offering in American Sign Language, which could expand learning opportunities for students who do not take a language course in Middle School.

Mr. Vouros opened Public Participation. Mrs. Mendoza presented concerns with Special Education services for students with dyslexia and for struggling readers. personal expenses incurred for a private Orton-Gillingham tutor, difficulties with requests she has made to attain assessment data related to her child, a gap between IEP Goals based on Wilson Reading and lack of services in Wilson Level 1 instruction for her child. Mrs. Mendoza posed a question with regard to availability of research on Readers Writers Workshop's effectiveness for students with dyslexia, also asking how the district helps these students access curriculum in science and other subjects. Dr. Ku commented on the BOE's responsibility to remain objective and to maintain student confidentiality. Next, Mr. Mendoza commented, thanking the District for helping students at an early age and for identifying them. Mr. Lord spoke, sharing that his purpose in attending this meeting was to seek opportunities to partner with Newtown Public Schools in his new role as Director of C. H. Booth Library.

J. Vouros closed Public Participation, thanking all who were in attendance at the meeting.

J. Vouros motioned to adjourn at 10:44 a.m. M. Ku seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Norling

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE C & I  
COMMITTEE.