

**Newtown Board of Education  
Newtown, Connecticut  
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee**

Minutes from the Board of Education Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, in the BOE Conference Room.

J. Vouros                      L. Rodrigue                      C. Pierce  
M. Ku                              A. Hiruo

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2019 meeting.

M. Ku seconded the motion.

Public Participation – None.

**Math Grade 2 / Math Grade 3**

L. Rodrigue recognized the hard work the committee has done. The Shift to concept based is not easy. In the end this is good for students to have a deeper understanding of content and the part of what people are doing and understanding. NGSS cross cutting concept is really a part of what is out there now. If you look at the questions alone on Smarter Balanced, we are on the right path.

C. Pierce stated we spent time on how to organize the curriculum. We wanted teachers to focus on the big ideas of Mathematics and the domains in each grade level. We wanted to organize instruction around the big idea, place value, addition subtraction, division, multiplication, geography, measurement and data. We start teaching place value for Grade 2 in September through May. We are introducing concepts and aiming for mastery of those concepts. Every year we go back to those big concepts. Math is very much layer upon layer. Every year we add another layer. What is the next important idea? Each idea of conceptual lens for each big idea should be the same. It is universal and the kids should keep coming back to. Students keep working on place value grade 1 through grade 4.

L. Rodrigue asked how this is different from before.

C. Pierce stated Mathematics compared to other subjects, is that it is very conceptual. We have been doing a very nice job in Mathematics for a long time. This gives the teachers a stronger understanding and a real focus to what the big ideas are.

Amy Hiruo stated it is not very different from what we were doing, but it highlights what is really important. The resource that we use, have so many wonderful things that we love, but this helps us shift the focus back to what is really important. Not just using the resource as our curriculum. It really helped us throughout the process to change and tweak to make better.

M. Ku asked how this ended up being the everyday practice in our schools.

Amy Hiruo stated this will be what they will be talking about next and how we want to introduce them to our grade levels. How can our resources support this? We have to decide the actual steps we want to take as far as really diving into them and shifting the focus a little bit away from that resource. How can our resources support this and what else do we need to add into what we are doing or take away from our resource to make this our focus.

C. Pierce stated that this year we started using the interim assessments that the state has. Helping teachers to see that this is great, also that this is not the curriculum. It is also helping the teachers to see this is not the standard we are really getting at. These assessments are showing what the standards are getting at. Teachers have more time to go over the assessments which will be helpful.

Amy Hiruo stated that we have seen big growth with teachers just going over the assessments. A lot of positive things have come out of this.

J. Vouros asked what those assessments look like.

Amy Hiruo stated she can speak for Hawley, which is all computer based. They take an interim assessment and focus on which domain we think was in need. For example Grade 3 and we choose numbers based on fraction focus. Knowing that they have not had much exposure to that in our curriculum at this point in the year, but they are going to need to know this information for SBAC. The teacher creates a test session. The students use the Interim Assessment Block (IAB) on the chrome books in the classroom. It worked out beautifully. The math version takes less time than the ELA component. It took about 15 minutes for the students to take it, with about 15 questions. Not a lot of instructional time lost, but it provides valuable information to guide the instruction. We took the information from the IABs and sat down together as a grade level with leadership within our building. We looked at the questions the students were very successful at and the questions the students struggled the most with and determined how we can instruct them on the areas they need the most help with. We need to look within the resource and outside the resource and see how it lines up with the standards and what standards we need to focus on to get the students to where they need to be.

J. Vouros asked about the children who have difficulty with reading.

C. Pierce stated some students have accommodations. Those students use text-to-speech, which is available in the assessments. Text-to-speech is available for 504 or IEP students.

Amy Hiruo stated also another way we are trying to use those IABs, is picking out the vocabulary and terminology that the students are not familiar with in hopes to help with some of the reading difficulty. By giving them direct instruction which some of them never had, exposing them to different ways the format will look will help us to understand is it the math or the reading.

M. Ku asked what the value of this compared to NWEA.

C. Pierce stated that this is a subject that keeps coming up. Are we over assessing? Are we assessing enough? Are we using the most important assessments? Then NWEA assessment gives us a comparison score. We can look at all of our students. We can compare within the district and nationally. It combines all of those important ideas into one test. The interim assessment looks at one grade at a time. We can look at student progress over time.

Amy H. added that she believed NWEA is a very valuable tool , especially grades K-2. It gives us a lot of information on what skills the students have already mastered and what they are ready to learn. I think it is also beneficial in grades 3-4. With the IAB I am curious to see what the approach will be that helps them on SBAC and close that gap because it is more tailored and specific to those areas of need.

L. Rodrigue stated that NWEA is a good predictor to Smarter Balanced. You use them in the beginning, middle and end of the year. Smarter Balanced is meant for the individual student to see where they are.

J. Vouros asked what we are doing for pinpoint learners that are more advanced and why the elementary schools do not team teach.

M. Ku asked is there a line where you are not supposed to be leveling students.

L. Rodrigue stated that teachers do group and pull students. The students are still in the classroom. It is okay if they are not there yet. Listening to students in the classroom that are there help the students that are not there yet.

Amy Hiruo added that at the elementary level every student hits a developmental burst at different times. The groupings are very flexible and fluid.

C. Pierce stated we are looking on a smaller level how the students are performing. At the elementary level students grade 2 thru 4 are being pulled out for enrichment.

Amy Hiruo stated that Grade 3 and 4 students that are really accelerating and are ready for new learning are pulled out two day a week with Dr. Earle and learning one day a week with myself. That is three days a week that they have an opportunity for new learning.

#### **Superintendent Update:**

L. Rodrigue noted that we are looking at the Senior Experience at the high school, "Portrait of a Graduate." Are we really from K-12 helping students achieve at the highest level by the time they graduate? Rubics make it easy to work backwards. It is also critical thinking content as well. "Map backwards"-what are the kinds of things students need to have and how we can work backwards to get them there? Look at internal growth of how the student's progress year to year. We always look A-Z. Backward mapping we would look Z-A. Backward mapping is what you want the students to get out of the lesson.

Public Participation – None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 11:20 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.

