

Newtown Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut
Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

J. Vouros M. Failla A. Uberti
D. Ramsey K. DiBartolo M. Correia

Minutes from the Board of Education Subcommittee meeting held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023.

J. Vouros called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

J. Vouros moved to approve the minutes from the 5/9/23 meeting.

D. Ramsey second the motion.

Public Participation: None

Presentation of Curriculum: Health 5 & 6 – Michelle Failla

M. Failla introduced herself as having been at Reed since the school opened in 2003 as the certified Physical Education teacher and also certified Health Educator. M. Failla was just elected Vice President of Health for Connecticut Association of Health Physical Education and Recreation Teachers. Health education is a requirement for high school graduation, M. Failla is laying the foundation at Reed. Health is one of the unified classes at Reed. It is being taught on a pass/fail basis. All the units are taught by M. Failla. Students attend the Unified Arts class once every six school days, all year long.

Below is the link for the for the slide presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Is3lobOJ7Mjmu_YLRZQXoH2jD7ieE2_dKqTwASrtJJA/e dit?usp=sharing_eil_se_dm&ts=65143ae1

D. Ramsey asked how you help students learn empathy for students with different needs? He also wondered how she helps those students access the curriculum.

M. Failla answered as the one health educator Empathy is a big part of the curriculum.

Dr. Correia is working on Empathy at the SEL lessons.

Mrs. Failla shared that she learns the students' IEPs. Disabled does not mean unable. Autism or any other students with disabilities are getting the education that suits their specific needs.

J. Vouros asked if parents on occasion for their child not to participate in a particular unit?

M. Failla answered yes. It has not happened in a while. It is not a particular unit. It is on a case by case basis. A permission form goes home to opt out. The understanding is the students are going to participate in every class unless there has been a discussion with the parent.

In April, she hosts a Health Night for parents. here we invite the parents. Parents are given a preview of sensitive subjects that will be discussed in class, such as substance abuse. Parents are shown a video that suggests questions to ask and tips on how to have the conversations about

body changes and puberty. The open house is very well attended most years. M. Failla and Dr. Correia get very good feedback.

Mrs. Uberti added that, by law, parents can exempt their children from sex ed. The District does all it can to be transparent about when these lessons are happening and what the content is. Extra copies of the video that is shown to students are available for parents to borrow to preview or share with their child at home.

K-Reading Initial Implementation Update- K. DiBartolo

K. DiBartolo started with the K-5 Professional Development.

In August for the Professional Development each grade level had their own presenter. The presenter was able to personalize the learning for what each grade level needed. Teachers unpacked the units and reviewed the priority standards. They spent time understanding what the “work time” portion of the lesson which is considered the heart of the lesson.

Teachers also had a virtual training with the Imagine Learning online platform which is called “ILC”. In the ILC there is a data dashboard where teachers can view their students’ assessments.

There is a teacher hub where teachers can go in and access their own professional development. It includes all assessments, scoring, rubrics, the slides the teachers will use to teach the lessons.

Coming up on 9/27 teachers in grades K-2 are going to have planning time as a team. Teachers will look at student work, assessments, modules and begin to put that together. Grades 3-5 will have a virtual session with training in the All Block. All Block stands for Additional Language and Literacy. During this portion of instruction, students are learning about grammar and extending their writing. All of the instruction connects back to modules. Each module has a specific topic. The second half of this professional development will take place on 10/4.

On 11/7 teachers will have in person training, broken up into each grade level where they are looking at strategic planning for the modules. During that time teachers will use a backwards design model process where they will look at what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson in order to understand how to get them there.

Grades 6-8 Reading Pilot Initial Update-K. DiBartolo

Grades 6-8 teachers who engaged in the Imagine Learning pilot have been able to join in on the grade level training with 5th grade, including the same “ILC” training the same as the K-5 teachers. On 9/27 the teachers will have “office hours” with trainers in order to address specific questions.

On 10/4 the teachers will have strategic planning, part one virtually. On 11/7 in person part two of strategic planning. Into Literature had pilot implementation training in August. We will have a follow up virtual session tomorrow regarding assessments. 10/4 is another session with office hours.

A. Uberti added that this is a big change for both the teachers and students. Teachers will need to adjust instruction based on what they are observing students are able to do and what areas they may need more support. Classrooms have different students with different needs and teachers will need to learn the program in order to effectively differentiate. There is a lot of learning and it will take time understandably for teachers to feel comfortable with the new programs.

D. Ramsey stated that all the good work that is happening in the elementary schools and the middle school are planting the seeds for increased performance at the high school level.

D. Ramsey and J. Vouros would like to observe the K-5 reading program and the 6-8 reading pilot.

Public Participation: None

J. Vouros adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.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.

