



EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes

TO: Board of Education
CC: Dr. Angel Turner, Superintendent
FROM: Dr. Charmekia McCoy and Principal Charlise Berkel
DATE: November 17, 2025
RE: Foster Elementary School: Science Curriculum Adoption Committee Update

Objective: **X Information** ___ **Discussion** ___ **Follow-up** ___ **Decision**

Purpose

This memo provides an update on a science curriculum proposal presented to the Curriculum Adoption Committee (CAC) concerning Foster School.

Current Curriculum & Proposal Summary

Currently, students at district elementary schools receive science instruction through Mystery Science (Grades K-2) and PhD Science (Grades 3-5). As a neighborhood elementary school Foster School would otherwise be slated to adopt these science materials for SY 2026-2027.

At the recent CAC meeting, Foster School Planning Principal, Charlise Berkel presented a request to replace the current materials and pilot the Open SciEd curriculum for grades K-5 during the upcoming school year at Foster.

Principal Berkel identified the new program as a high-quality science curriculum that is well-suited for Foster School for the following reasons:

- **Standards Aligned:** It is a phenomena driven science instructional framework directly aligned to the three dimensional Next Generation Science standards. It has received high quality ratings from Ed Reports.
- **Curriculum Alignment:** It is an inquiry-based curriculum, which directly supports the second tenet of Foster School's educational philosophy (Anchored Inquiry Learning in Science).
- **Equity and Access:** The K-5 curriculum provides comprehensive resources in both English and Spanish, and highlights the contributions of minority scientists to the field. Additional support for "Supporting Emerging Multilingual Learners", "Supporting Universal Design for Learning", and "Attending to Equity" are available in educative boxes in the teacher guide.
- **Continuity:** The program is designed to provide strong vertical and horizontal (K-5) continuity in science instruction, as Open SciEd is a district curriculum adopted across all middle schools.

- **Compatibility:** It is compatible with the "Learning in Places" framework, which can be used as a supplement.
- **STEM Integration:** The phenomena based instructional approach lays a firm foundation upon which to integrate STEM instruction. STEM-specific expectations are designed to be integrated as before- or after-school experiences.

Implementation Considerations

During the discussion, it was noted that Dawes School is also rolling out Open SciEd in grades 3-5. Feedback from the Dawes pilot highlighted that the professional learning component is essential for successful implementation, noting that their piloting teachers received formal training. This will be a key consideration for the rollout at Foster if approved.

Current Status & Next Steps

This proposal was presented to the CAC for initial review. Committee members are now sharing the request with their colleagues at their respective buildings to gather broader feedback.

A formal vote on the Foster School pilot proposal is scheduled for the next CAC meeting. We will update the Board on the committee's decision following that vote.