

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: none

Also Present: Amy Benton, Sue Cohen, Warren Gohsler, Marianne Lippard, Lisa Myer, Mary Raiola, Marika Wissink, Sheila Wycinowski

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held on Monday, April 23, 2012, at 5:30 p.m., in the Presentation Room at District Offices.

- 1. Call to Order:** Julie Altman called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.

The approval of minutes from the January 5, 2012 was moved back on the agenda to allow an update on the iPad Pilot at the Middle School to be moved to Item #3.

3. Update on iPad Pilot – Middle School

Teachers Lisa Meyer, Amy Benton and Marika Wissink of Team Black in Bethany gave an update on the iPad pilot, which began in October 2011 and involved a small number of special education students. A policy guide was created to establish procedures at the outset of the program. On October 20, 2011, students met with teachers for an orientation. Some applications were installed at that time. Routines were established for each class and each learned procedures for accessing information. As the pilot got underway and students got familiar with the technology, they managed to work more quickly with the iPads. Students have helped other students. Technical skills and research strategies are among the skills the students have been acquiring.

The teachers said that the Notability app is helpful for students because it allows the use of both type and handwriting and is easy to keep organized. PDF files can be opened in Notability. When students are absent, other students can send them information.

Editing and revising of student work can be done through e-mail. One of the benefits of using e-mail for this type of work is that students are usually checking e-mail frequently anyway. Most of the files that are shared between teachers and students are PDFs.

So far, it appears that the iPads are helping students achieve better test scores. Comparing test results between students that are using iPads versus those not

using iPads, better results have been seen with the iPad users. With one test, iPad users scored an average of 80 percent, while non-users scored 60 percent. On a second test administered to both groups, the iPad users still managed to score higher on average compared to the non-users.

Julie Altman questioned how the group without iPads was tested. The teachers said that the test questions were written out manually. Students had dictionaries, but were less likely to use them. Ms. Altman also questioned whether Moodle is being used at all. Ms. Wissink said that she uses Moodle all the time.

The teachers all use Notability. Students are doing projects and using iMovie as well. The quality of the work that the students have done has been good. The students are developing their own ideas, not copying and pasting as would be a concern. While students are using the iPads, they are also working with books. Although new textbooks work well with iPads, new textbooks aren't needed at this time. Using the technology, the teachers can play to the students' strengths and differentiate instruction as needed. One of the benefits of the iPads is that students aren't losing track of their research, as sometimes happens with computers. Some time is lost learning the procedures, but time is gained once the students are familiar with teacher expectations. Time isn't wasted searching through papers. Teachers can build their own curriculum.

Ms. Altman questioned if the teachers are running into problems with copyrighted materials. Ms. Benton said that it is a problem, but teachers are looking for alternatives to dealing with the issue.

Ms. Meyer said that the biggest problem the teachers have faced so far has been with Wi-Fi connectivity. If teachers are relying on materials and can't access them, it slows down the class.

Ms. Altman said that the Committee needs to hear about the negatives along with the positives.

Ms. Benton said that the teachers don't want students to lose traditional skills. She doesn't use the iPad exclusively. She has seen some great progress at times, but she has also noticed instances where progress leveled off. Ms. Wissink said that the teachers are looking at emerging resources.

Mr. Horwitz said that he is not an opponent of new technology, but read an article in the *New York Times* suggesting that students are losing their verbal skills. He worries about overreliance on this type of technology.

Ms. Wissink said that students won't e-mail her during class when they can ask a question directly. Kids still have to do presentations and participate in debate. She does not see herself speaking to students any less. Ms. Benton said that there is a great deal of roundtable discussion with her students.

A new group of students will receive these iPads next year. Ms. Wycinowski noted that the data collected this year will be examined as decisions are made on how to move forward.

4. Revised District Technology Plan

Ms. Wycinowski noted that the Amity Technology Plan 2012-2015 was e-mailed to everyone on the Committee. She will be highlighting aspects of the plan. The District received a template provided by the state. With a new superintendent coming soon, the plan can be evaluated to see where Amity would like to go. A number of technology meetings have taken place and good ideas have been shared. Consideration has been given as to how to realize the wonderful ideas put forth.

The vision for technology is that it should be ever present, almost seamless in how it is used. Students need to be able to think and collaborate. The vision is best supported by a one-to-one computing environment where each student has a device. There are issues of equity to consider and issues concerning teachers being able to use all devices. Amity needs to proceed in an organized fashion.

Ms. Wycinowski noted that page 25 of the plan addresses administrative needs. Learning and teaching are addressed in detail on page 27. Specific goals are outlined.

Ms. Altman said that a teacher's role appears to be changing to that of a facilitator. Ms. Wycinowski said that for years it has been said that a teacher's role is as teacher/facilitator. Ms. Altman asked if the teacher's union has been looking into this. It has big implications.

Ms. Wycinowski said that Amity would like all teachers to have experience in different teaching techniques. She noted that page 30 of the plan deals with assessment and evaluation.

Mr. Browe questioned whether students are tested on the iPad. Ms. Wycinowski said that they are. Teachers use rubrics. They had to decide on how to grade open ended assessments. Ms. Altman noted that the rubrics are impressive. Ms. Wycinowski noted that students will be creating success plans. Amity's science research program is very advanced. Amity is conducting yearly assessments. District pilots will be assessed. As a District, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) is the only affordable solution to fully implement 1 to 1 strategy/vision is these difficult fiscal times. Amity will proceed with one pilot at a time.

Ms. Wycinowski briefly reviewed the Districts goals for using technology for student achievement, assessing students, and connected teaching and learning. The iPad pilot will continue and teachers feel that they need to collaborate on

what works well. Amity also would like to continue to expand video production and robotics.

Mr. Palmieri discussed the infrastructure. Plans are to upgrade internet equipment to support a 10Gb backbone to the street with a 1GB handoff to the schools. The CEN CT education network will do this at no cost to the District. The District will continue replacing obsolete computer systems with new computers that have 1 Gb Ethernet Network Adapters.

Ms. Altman questioned what can be filtered out. Facebook and MySpace are filtered out. It isn't possible to prevent texting in class. Mr. Gohsler said that if a student violates the acceptable use policy, there are measures to limit access. Mr. Palmieri said that the reporting device can show problems. Ms. Wycinowski said that problems would be addressed by the administration.

Another goal is to restructure the Technology Committee by breaking into subcommittees. Ms. Cohen asked whether the Board should develop goals with respect to the plan. Ms. Wycinowski said that the Board should, as this technology plan is quite different than the last one.

The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that students don't lose important skills as technology is brought into the classroom more and more. Communication skills can be lost. It is importance to have balance.

Move to accept the revised District Technology Plan (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Crocco).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

5. Approval of Minutes – January 5, 2012

Motion to approve the minutes (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Mr. Hurley).

Vote in favor: Julie Altman, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley

Vote opposed: none

Abstain: Christopher Browe, James Horwitz

Motion passed.

6. Discussion on Full Tuition Students

A presentation entitled "Non-Resident Full Tuition Discussion" was distributed to the Committee. Mr. Hurley began by going over some recent history on enrollment. He noted that since 2009 there has been a drop in student population that appears to be continuing. Faculty benefits account for a large part of the school budget. At this rate, Amity is likely to lose the investment in the teaching staff because teachers will have to be laid off. He would like to talk about what is coming in the future.

Ms. Altman questioned whether it is appropriate for a member of the Board to make this presentation.

Mr. Hurley said that it is. One approach to this problem is to actively recruit tuition students. He noted that Amity would not have to take everyone who might like to become a tuition student. Certain criteria would be used to evaluate potential students. Assuming \$14,000 per student, 100 new students would result in \$1.4 million in revenue. Resident student losses are expected to be around 400 students by 2018 since the current staffing levels were established in 2009. While this tool would not be used in times of maximum student enrollment, it can be a very effective tool during contraction periods of enrollment. Class sizes can be stabilized. Work force can be stabilized. Staff reductions may be able to be met with normal attrition.

Ms. Crocco questioned whether many people would be willing to pay \$14,000 to attend Amity.

Mr. Hurley said that the intent isn't to bring 100 students into grade 7. He noted that 100 students is not a large percentage of new students and Amity would get to choose the students, so there would be some control in the process. It would open the door to diversity, offering a broader range of ideas and experiences. This type of diversity is common at universities.

Ms. Altman said that Mr. Hurley just said that Amity could pick and choose. She feels this is a very bad idea. University students are at a different place in life. There is an expectation of geographic unity here. There is already stereotyping.

Mr. Hurley said that he isn't looking to be prejudicial. He strongly disagrees. He grew up at the edge of an inner city and views cultural diversity as an opportunity.

Ms. Altman said that this is more of a plan to save money by bringing in money. She believes there are more options.

Mr. Hurley said that without this plan, staff reductions will lead to fewer opportunities and programs being offered to students. Staff reductions will be necessary and there will be other negatives. There is a real revolt going on in Orange right now.

Ms. Crocco said that she doesn't hear much of the negative talk Mr. Hurley is talking about in Orange.

Mr. Browe said that he has been thinking about this for some time and we owe it to the community to be proactive rather than reactive. This is something to consider.

Mr. Hurley said that the elderly are struggling. He has heard from a lot of people. He doesn't want teacher layoffs. This possibility already exists.

Mr. Horwitz questioned how many tuition students there are now. Ms. Raiola said that there are four or five. She does get inquiries from interested parents, but doesn't usually hear back from them once they learn of the tuition cost.

Some potential problems with tuition students were discussed. Mr. Hurley said that the problems being brought up were worst case scenarios.

Mr. Horwitz said that declining enrollment is an issue and Amity would have to think outside the box. The idea of bringing in tuition students should stay on the table. He thanked Mr. Hurley for sharing his research.

Ms. Raiola said that the schools tend to get new enrollments in the summertime and the numbers do change.

7. Other – none

8. Public Comment – none

9. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. (Mr. Horwitz, 2d Mr. Browe).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk