

MINUTES

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joe Abbatiello, Julie Altman, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**Also Present:** Frank Barretta, William Blake, Charles Britton, Richard Dellinger, Kathleen Fuller-Cutler, Marianne Lippard, Mary Raiola, Sheila Wycinowski

---

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held in the Presentation Room of District Offices at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 23, 2011.

- 1. Call to Order:** Julie Altman called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
- 2. Approval of Minutes – March 7, 2011:**

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented (Ms. Crocco, 2d Ms. Gedansky).*

*Discussion:* None.

*Vote in favor of approving the minutes:* Joe Abbatiello, Julie Altman, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky

*Abstain:* Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola

*Motion passed.*

- 3. Presentation of STEM Committee – Highlights of School Year 2010 – 2011**

A packet addressing the accomplishments of the district-wide committee had been distributed to the Committee. Frank Barretta highlighted some of the STEM accomplishments for the school year.

In the area of Curriculum Connections, digital storytelling was developed into an elementary school graduation requirement. Mr. Barretta said that this requirement has resulted in some beautiful work.

A new robotics semester course also was developed at the High School. The middle school robotics programs will be expanding by adding a unit on underwater robotics. All eighth grade students had the chance to learn about, and practice, building and programming robots.

Mr. Barretta said that Infinite Possibilities is an area where young girls are being encouraged in science, math and engineering. All three elementary districts are encouraging girls to continue their studies in STEM fields in middle and high school. Girls from the High School have traveled to Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge six times this year to complete activities with all of the female students from the fourth grade class.

Activities involved chemical changes, genetics, interpretation and creation of graphs, and pi. The girls also completed problem solving brainteasers which tapped into the curriculum standards of the fourth grade.

Sheila Wycinowski noted that in summer professional development workshops in 2009 and 2010, science teachers Valerie Cournoyer and Deborah Best worked with scientists at Yale and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) lab in Milford. The teachers learned state-of-the-art biotechnology methods to restore the scallop population and had the chance to do research on Long Island Sound with the NOAA research scientists. After training, the teachers did their own dissections and DNA extraction of scallops. During the school year, students in the Marine Biology Club at Amity High School were able to observe and dissect bay scallops provided by the NOAA labs in Milford.

Kathleen Fuller-Cutler said that Amity Middle School in Orange had a CSI Day, where students worked on their skills with measurement. Ms. Wycinowski said that there is a lot of excitement created by this.

Ms. Wycinowski noted that two more sections of physics have been added next year. Students are having success in this area. She noted that Amity High School student Jenny Liu placed 9<sup>th</sup> overall in the 2011 Intel Science and Talent Search.

#### **4. Common Core Standards**

Ms. Wycinowski explained to the Committee what the Common Core Standards are. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) have produced the document on behalf of 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. The English language arts, literacy, and mathematics standards represent a set of expectations for student knowledge and skills that will result in high school graduates who are prepared for success in college and career.

The standards were developed by educators, content experts, researchers, national organizations, and community groups. Ms. Wycinowski noted that various criteria were used to develop the standards, including rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills. In Connecticut, the standards will be used to inform high school reform and standardized testing after 2012 (probably 2014 in the state). The standards will guide literacy initiatives and will be a basis for reform in the state in the areas of math and English.

Ms. Wycinowski said that the Literacy Common Core Standards across all content areas will continue to inform the literacy instruction at Amity, as well as assessments in reading, writing, media, informational, and digital literacy. She noted that the schools have been immersed in a district-wide and building based literacy initiative for five years and we are on target. All departments will align their content/courses to the Common Core using a drop down box on Atlas.

For 2012-2013 and beyond, Ms. Wycinowski said that in math and English, Amity will continue to address gap analysis in grades 7 – 12, and continue to hold 7 - 12 and K - 12 articulation sessions addressing Common Core Standards. In math, inquiry and problem-solving techniques for K – 12 will be shared. Also in math, critical thinking skills will be continually emphasized. In English, all aligned 7 – 12 curriculum will be uploaded into

Atlas. She noted that Amity is in great shape with literacy across the curriculum. She added that it is important that students are able to apply what they've learned.

Ms. Altman noted that the budget for professional development is very small. In some cases, faculty will be able to train other teachers.

Mr. Hurley said that with three districts entering into Amity, it would make sense to have methods in place for seventh graders to transition academically from their respective schools. Ms. Wycinowski said that information should be provided showing areas of student weakness. Efforts are made to know exactly where the students are when they enter middle school.

Charles Britton said that it is possible with Atlas to see course content for every course at the High School.

## **5. New Course Proposal – Math – High School**

A proposal for a Probability and Statistics course was presented to the Committee. The course is designed to introduce the major tools and concepts used in the study of the science of statistics. Students coming out of Algebra 2, Level 2 haven't many choices. Concepts and Theories is one option, but another option is needed. The course would be an elective. Some students would likely take the class along with AP Calculus.

Mr. Hurley questioned whether this would be a full-year course. Dr. Britton said that it is. Statistics is increasingly a requirement for college majors that are not math or science related.

*Motion to approve investigation of new course, Probability and Statistics (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).*

*Discussion: none.*

*Vote in favor: unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

## **6. Revision to Capital Plan for Technology**

Due to budget restrictions, computer replacements and the purchasing of iPad carts had been pushed back a year from the original plans. With \$115,000 allocated for technology, these items were brought back into the original timeline.

Ninety replacement computers will be deployed at the High School and 30 replacement computers will be deployed at each of the middle schools. At the High School, the computers in two of the Media Center labs, rooms 125 and 131, and computers in lab room 501 will be replaced with new computers with Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010. At the Middle School in Bethany, 30 computers will be replaced in lab room 21. At Amity Middle School in Orange, 30 computers in lab room A6 will be replaced this summer.

Mr. Hurley asked what is happening in terms of getting an iPad into the hands of every student. Ms. Wycinowski said that the administration will be examining how the technology is working in the hands of kids. More information should be in place by next year.

Mary Raiola said that applications for the iPads can be as little as 99 cents, or as much as \$300. It is necessary to control which applications are used.

Mr. Dellinger said that there is a tremendous amount of work that teachers can do with an iPad. Ms. Wycinowski said that we are in a transition period with the technology. More research is needed on applications for the iPad.

Ms. Altman said that oversight is needed. Supervisors should be aware of which applications are being used. Ms. Fuller Cutler said that the administration is still relying on a teacher's judgment.

William Blake said that timing is a consideration for planning purposes. The budget cycle begins early and the information needs to be presented by December for consideration in the next budget.

#### **7. Public Comment**

Mr. Blake said that the new biology course has been called a "biology lab experience" and not a course. He questioned whether the lab is a course, or an "experience." Ms. Wycinowski said that it is a full lab course. The lab was called an "experience" because it was not previously offered to students.

#### **8. Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. McNabola).  
Vote in favor unanimous; meeting adjourned.*

**Respectfully submitted,**

---

**Marianne Lippard, recording clerk**