Concord School District  
Board of Education  
Instructional Committee

**Committee:** Instructional  
**Date:** October 19, 2016  
**Committee members present:** Barb Higgins, *Chair*, Jennifer Patterson, Alana Kimball, Maureen Redmond-Scura  
**Other Board member present:** Clint Cogswell  
**Administrators present:** *Superintendent* Terri Forsten, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley  
**Other staff present:** Principal Tom Sica (CHS), Principal Kathleen Riordan (ADS), George Golden (CHS), Lyn Vinskus (CHS), Wendy Harrison (BGS), Rebecca Malloy (CHS), LuAnne Pigeon (Elementary Science and Project SEE Coordinator)

Barb Higgins called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. noting that the agenda was a presentation on the pilot projects for Science instruction in the schools, and Elementary Report Cards.

Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley reviewed the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with their emphasis on focus, coherence and integration of content knowledge and practices. Throughout the standards, there are connections to Science and Engineering Practices (asking questions, analyzing data, etc.), Core Ideas (physical science, life science, earth and space science, engineering, technology and applications), and Crosscutting Concepts (cause and effect, structure and function, etc.).

District elementary schools are participating in a pilot of several programs to help determine which supplies and materials to purchase for science instruction for grades 1 through 5. Mystery Science, Pearson Interactive, Project Lead the Way, and Teachers’ Curriculum Institute (TCI) are the several resources being considered.

BGS teacher Wendy Harrison spoke about new ideas for integrating engineering and crosscutting concepts as a fifth grade teacher. She will implement TCI in her classroom this year ([https://www.teachtci.com/science/k-8-online-interactive-science-textbooks-and-notebooks.html](https://www.teachtci.com/science/k-8-online-interactive-science-textbooks-and-notebooks.html)). As an experienced educator, she is learning how to support students in scientific inquiry as they work to solve problems and explore a variety of scientific methods, including engineering concepts. She said that students struggling and occasionally failing as they encounter these thought processes is important for their learning. Elementary Science and Project SEE Coordinator LuAnne Pigeon spoke about connections to the new standards through Project SEE, and commented that it is important to consider what to maintain in elementary Science in the District (such as the Birds of Prey unit) while also integrating the NGSS.

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Jennifer Patterson commented that it is important for students to develop the skill of figuring out answers on their own, and equally important to support teachers. She asked how the committee will be making decisions about what materials to use going forward and what will be supporting the teachers.

Ms. Palley noted that this pilot was introduced in the elementary schools on October 7, a professional development day, and teachers were introduced to and began training on the new materials. Staff are being asked to complete two units using the new materials and standards starting in November. Abbot-Downing School Principal Kathleen Riordan noted that teachers appreciate the time throughout the year to review the materials in the pilot. She spoke to the assessment process teachers will use to consider which programs to select to support science instruction.

Rundlett Middle School intends to use an integrated approach to teaching Science – all grades will be instructed in all disciplines: physical, life, earth and space science, and engineering and technology. Engineering units have been built into every grade level. Ms. Palley shared the performance assessment that will be used with students this year at the middle school.

Ms. Palley described the performance assessments for the high school this year. CHS teacher Rebecca Malloy shared her experience engaging students in scientific discovery. CHS teacher Lyn Vinskus spoke about the performance assessment and how students learned through the scientific process, using a lab as a learning tool, and how teachers saw that opportunities need to be created for students to experience science independently. She noted that last year’s performance assessment experience has changed instruction and daily work in classes. She also noted that, as the District adopts and applies NGSS across the schools, she anticipates that elementary and middle school students will be better prepared for high school science studies. CHS teacher George Golden shared his work to connect students to local engineering business leaders so that students can see applications for their learning, and described a bridge-building project in which students are currently fully engaged. He also shared his work to engage students in engineering and design processes by visiting a local church that is being transitioned into condominiums; students can see the application of physics and sciences in real-life applications.

Ms. Palley transitioned from the science pilot to the elementary report card pilot.

Ms. Palley described how a large group of teachers and administrators spent considerable time beginning the end of last year to develop a new, common report card across the five elementary schools. Several key ideas agreed upon by this team include focusing on common expectations across the grades; using a 1-4 scoring system, with 3 indicating competency; expecting a demonstration of learning (performance assessments) and using evidence that students are applying their knowledge and skills within real tasks; keeping achievement and work habits separate; and making the report card parent-friendly.
She distributed copies of the new pilot report card and reviewed the “academic performance skills indicators” that are reflected therein. Three points of reporting will occur in November, March and June for each subject area: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Social Studies. Reading Text Level Progression will be noted using the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. The Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self-Control (CARES) “work habit” section addresses developing skills in these areas for each student using the markers “consistently,” “usually,” “occasionally,” and “rarely.” There is also a section for teachers to add comments.

Ms. Patterson asked about the process of grading students and in what ways the new grading system may be challenging. In response to a question from Clint Cogswell about how students with learning disabilities or educational disabilities would be assessed, Ms. Palley noted that students receiving support will have an additional Title I, ELL or other report. He commended Ms. Palley for coordinating this work in the elementary schools. Ms. Palley described teacher professional development on the new report card has occurred in a variety of ways: a video that District teachers have created, and face-to-face conversations with teachers. She noted that teachers are excited about the development and application of this new tool. In response to a question from Ms. Patterson about how this would be explained to parents, Ms. Palley noted that a one-page guide will accompany the report card, and a proposed short video for parents will be discussed at fall parent/teacher conferences. The pilot report card will be initiated this fall.

Ms. Palley noted that ConcordTV was extremely helpful in the production of the teacher video.

The Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn (motioned by Maureen Redmond-Scura, seconded by Ms. Patterson).

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, Chair

Terri Forsten, Recorder