Concord School District  
Instructional Committee Meeting  
May 11, 2015  

Committee members present: Barbara Higgins, Chair; Jennifer Patterson, Alana Kimball, Tom Croteau  
Other Board members present: Kass Ardinger, Clint Cogswell, Jim Richards  
Administrators: Chris Rath, Steve Rothenberg, Gene Connolly, Donna Palley  

1. CRTC Stagecraft proposal  
CHS Assistant Principal and CRTC Director Steve Rothenberg reviewed the proposal for a new CRTC course, Stagecraft, to begin as a small program in Fall 2016 (one section taught by .33 FTE teacher). Mr. Rothenberg described the committee that was formed to explore possibilities for theater arts classes. It was determined that the need was in the area of stagecraft, including lighting, sound, costumes and set design. Presently only one of our sending schools, John Stark High School, has a stagecraft class available to its students, yet the committee learned from post-secondary programs that this is a required component of post-secondary theater programs. These post-secondary programs were open to partnerships and dual enrollments.  
Tom Croteau asked about equipment needs. Mr. Rothenberg indicated that some equipment would be needed, but there is significant amount of equipment already in the district. For example, both Beaver Meadow and Concord High School have sophisticated sound and lighting equipment. Also, Mr. Rothenberg noted that strong partnerships with community agencies such as Capitol Center for the Arts will be needed.  
Alana Kimball asked about transportation costs. Mr. Rothenberg indicated that there would be little cost for transportation as students can drive to locations. There could be small costs for field trips.  
Kass Ardinger asked how this proposal arose. Mr. Rothenberg indicated it was actually not from students; that he was aware of a similar program in Brattleboro, Vermont.  
Mr. Rothenberg indicated that the CRTC would need to conduct marketing as many students want to pursue acting; but traditionally, not that many have been attracted to backstage aspects of theater arts.  
Jim Richards asked for a more complete picture of the costs associated, as the district has had to cut staff and costs in the past.  

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend to the full Board to approve the new Stagecraft class (motioned by Jennifer Patterson, seconded by Tom Croteau).  

2. Request for additional section of Information Technology for Fall 2015
Mr. Rothenberg reviewed the history associated with the CRTC Information Technology (IT) program, including reducing the program from full-time to part-time in the past. Over several years there has been increased interest in this course, and the additional requests/student numbers would cover the costs associated with the additional staff section. Business Administrator Jack Dunn has conducted a financial analysis to ensure that tuition from additional students would offset the additional .33 FTE teacher for this additional class. The Instructional Committee can approve the concept, conditional upon Finance Committee review and approval.

The Committee voted 4-0 to recommend to the full Board to approve the additional IT section conditional on Finance Committee approval (motioned by Jennifer Patterson, seconded by Tom Croteau).

3. New mathematics program, K-8

Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley reviewed the shifts that were represented in the new state standards, including more focus on prioritized concepts; stronger coherence; connecting learning within and across grades; deep understanding of mathematics; and more application of skills in problem-solving situations. Students must understand why math works and spend more time on fewer concepts and achieve better fluency. Ms. Palley noted the members of the MARC (Math Review Committee) and the work the committee has done over the past two years to review math programs that would better address the new standards than does our current program, Everyday Math. The committee initially developed a rubric for reviewing curriculum materials, which included a focus on math practice standards (e.g. make sense of problems and persevere in solving them) in addition to content. It was important to the committee that any new program would be K-8 and rigorous. MARC then reviewed materials being published by various companies. Toward the end of last year, the committee learned about Engage NY or Eureka Math, a math curriculum developed with NY Race to the Top funding.

Last spring the makeup of MARC was expanded, and teams of teachers at each grade level reviewed the modules in Engage NY. The committee identified a number of modules to be piloted in 2014-2015. Kindergarten teachers elected to replace all Everyday Math materials with Engage NY modules. After the pilot, MARC made the decision this spring to recommend that the district use the Engage NY material next year. This curriculum is closely aligned with the Common Core standards.

Barbara Higgins asked about the implementation plan and challenges for students and staff at the upper grade levels. Ms. Palley explained the way in which various grade levels piloted the program this year, noting that some upper grade levels used modules from the grade below. On May 12, 2015 MARC members will review in detail the modules at each grade level and make recommendation about the implementation plan. This summer there will be training by Eureka for teams from each grade level using a “train the trainer” model.
In response to a question about the supports and resources for students with learning disabilities and challenges in math, Ms. Palley explained that the committee includes special educators and tutors who have been looking at how the curriculum allows for differentiation. The curriculum is based on a universal design for learning model so that there are multiple ways in which students access and demonstrate understanding of math.

Given that this is a national curriculum, many resources are being produced which are available to teachers using this curriculum. The curriculum uses strong visual models, excellent formative assessment techniques (e.g. exit tickets), and is based on logical and coherent learning progressions, K-12. Board members want to ensure that the curriculum challenges all levels of students and focuses on ensuring that students acquire a deep understanding.

Ms. Palley directed Board members attention to the parent materials that show the repeated use of specific models (e.g. number bonds) over the grade levels. There are newsletters, videos, plans for math nights, and access to materials on the web.

Next steps:

MARC meets on May 12 to develop an implementation plan. This spring the administration will communicate with staff and parents, and will provide professional development in the summer and on an ongoing basis.

Ms. Palley closed with the beginning of a video put together by students at Broken Ground School. She will send the link to the committee to see the entire video.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Rath, Recorder