Concord School District
Instructional Committee minutes

Date: April 15, 2013

Committee members present: Jennifer Patterson, Chair, Clint Cogswell, Barbara Higgins (will be late), Tom Croteau

Other Board members present: Kass Ardinger

Administrators and school staff present: Chris Rath, Superintendent; Donna Palley, Assistant Superintendent; Gene Connolly, Concord High School Principal; Denise Fournier, Stacy Boyajian, Lise Bofinger, Tammy Hatcher

Committee Chair Jennifer Patterson opened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Concord High School Principal Gene Connolly introduced the facilitators who were going to present.

Mathematics
Tammy Hatcher reviewed the Algebra I program in which all students are taking Algebra or Geometry; use of competency scoring and competency mastery; extended classes; two Explorations classes which are four 45-minute groups co-taught by an algebra teacher and a special education teacher; flex teaching with three classes and four teachers; flexible groupings based on concept scores; concept recovery afterschool workshops; review and enrichment workshops; informal in-school and afterschool opportunities; 21C homework help and an extra assessment opportunity offered the last week of each quarter. Tammy explained how the 1 to 4 competency scale translates into grades according to the percentage of competencies mastered. Clint Cogswell asked for the actual numbers of students in each group, not just percentages. Ms. Hatcher reviewed the areas of strength of the program, including: raising the bar for all students; students being clearer about what concepts they have mastered; higher levels of participation; concepts that are better interconnected and continuously revisited; and more enrichment opportunities.

Credit that is solely based on competency mastery means teachers must be accountable for the success of their students, and students need to take ownership of their grades. The areas that still need to improve include the need to collaborate with teachers in the middle school; flexible grouping only during period 5; identification of students who need support earlier; finding spots in the schedule; balancing mastery with the requirements of common core and math practice standards. 80% of students passed Algebra I in the first semester.

English FLEX Program
Denise Fournier reported on the approach of the English department: using two sections of FLEX; Period 1 with three classroom teachers and a FLEX teacher; Period 6 with one classroom teacher and a FLEX teacher. Ms. Fournier reviewed the goal for
FLEX: that students be more engaged and more successful. FLEX teachers have been responsible for collaboration and curriculum alignment; classroom visits; conducting mini-lessons; developing common assessment for units, midyear and final; providing individualized instruction (skill-based); conducting 21 student interviews; facilitating competency recovery; and conducting reading test makeups.

The English department wants to offer book club extensions; develop common final exam elements; implement a Socratic Seminar discussion; follow up on student interviews; and integrate Common Core reading standards. The teachers want to focus on more assessment, using time to examine student work, and develop common understanding of different levels of performance.

One of the challenges is access to reliable technology. Another challenge is “moving the middle,” as well as balancing opportunities for advanced work with the need for re-instruction and recovery.

Social Studies
Stacy Boyajian co-teaches the ACE Social Studies Extended Learning Class with special educator Sara Bickford. The students in the class were recommended by freshmen teachers. The classes meet three times per week for 45 minutes. ACE teachers focus on concept attainment, skill building, and executive functioning. They implement pre-teaching, skill building and class discussions. The grade in this class is pass/fail; students can earn ¼ credit per semester. The first semester results were positive, as 13 of 16 students passed US History. One of the challenges is attendance; students also struggle to complete homework and fail to make up assignments they miss due to absences. Mr. Cogswell asked how many students are taking the class the second time.

Science
Lise Bofinger described the extended biology and the extended chemistry classes. Both operate in two 45-minute blocks with two different groups of identified students. Bio Recovery includes students who failed biology but are able to recover their credit by receiving instruction from a Biology teacher to develop necessary competencies. The teacher uses four periods during the day to work individually with students who are recovering credit. Seven to eight students have recovered credit and Ms. Bofinger predicted that another seven to eight will recover by the end of year. The curriculum is well-aligned, which enables teachers to provide assistance to students from different classes and teachers.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Instructional Committee Chair
Chris Rath, Recorder