The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. The committee discussed three agenda items:

1. Request for funding from Instructional Trust for science materials

Superintendent Rath reviewed the purpose of the Instructional Trust, which was established in the late 1990s to enable the District to implement major new curriculum across the District. All curriculum changes and materials requests are reviewed by District curriculum committees. The Science Committee is currently in the process of reviewing topics and materials for various grades at the elementary level. The Science Committee is requesting the purchase of a new unit, Adaptation and Variation, for Grade 4.

Ms. Pigeon noted that the new unit spans 20 one-hour lessons and is designed for grades 3 and 4. There is another unit for grades 2 and 3 that spans 40 one-hour lessons, which is too much for one year. The committee asked whether that unit could be used half in grade 2 and half in grade 3 to provide continuity with the grade 4 unit. The Science Committee will evaluate the feasibility of using the grades 2/3 unit.

It was noted that the Board has put funds into the Instructional Trust when the unreserved fund balance is known.

The committee voted 4–0 to recommend to the full Board the purchase of the new unit for Grade 4, Adaptation and Variation, from funds in the Instructional Trust (motion by Clint Cogswell, second by Chris Casko).

2. Special educational manual

Assistant Superintendent Rob Prohl reviewed proposed Board policy #625 and the purpose of the special education manual. The manual was originally written by Department of Education staff and statewide special education administrators. One change was made to the draft policy on page 4, to insert language that changes will be “consistent with Department of Education changes in regulations.” Mr. Prohl also explained the requirement the District has before requesting a parent surrogate.
The committee voted 4–0 to recommend to the full Board the Policy #625, Special Education Manual (motion by Clint Cogswell, second by Chris Casko).

There will be a first reading of the Policy at the June Board meeting and the policy will be voted on at the July meeting.

3. Class size research

Committee members reported on the various articles on the effect of class size on student achievement at the middle and high school levels. A number of themes emerged from the research:

- There is not as clear a connection between small class sizes and student achievement at the middle and high school as there appears to be at the primary levels.
- There are many more variables “at work” at the middle school and high school (e.g. nature of content, different instructional practices, non-random grouping of students in classes) which makes the relationship between class size and student achievement much more complex.
- Where there was evidence of an impact of smaller class sizes, it appears the smaller class sizes positively impacts student/teacher interaction at the middle and high school teacher level, not necessarily achievement measured on a standardized assessment instrument.

The Committee discussed strategies other than class size to improve student achievement: extended day programs, extended year programs, teacher quality, leadership, specific instructional methods. It was suggested that teachers be surveyed to see what they consider the most effective strategy to improve student achievement.

No action was taken. These issues, along with the financial implications of a change in class policy for grades K-3 will be discussed at the June Instructional Committee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Williams, Chair
Chris Rath, Recorder