Concord School District
Instructional Committee Minutes

School Board Committee: Instructional Committee

Date: July 6, 2011

Committee Members present: Eric Williams, Chair; Jennifer Patterson, Clint Cogswell, Chris Casko

Other Board Members present: Kass Ardinger and Jack Dunn

School Staff: CHS Principal Gene Connolly, Asst. Principal Steve Rothenberg, Special Education coordinators Meeta Brown and Sherry Burbank; RMS Principal, Tom Sica

1. RMS Participation in NEASC
   Principal Tom Sica explained the purpose of NEASC as an accrediting agency, the history of Rundlett’s participation, the changing circumstances that have led to our recommendation that Rundlett suspend its membership in NEASC at this time, while it is engaged in intensive work under the District in Need of Improvement Plan and the school’s Improvement Plan. This decision would be revisited in two years.

   The Committee voted 4-0 to approved this recommendation and revisit this decision in two years. There is not a need for the full Board action on this issue.

2. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)
   Principal Tom Sica reviewed the purpose of PBIS for Rundlett, the process the school staff used to arrive at a strong consensus (83%) that Rundlett begin the implementation process for PBIS with the formation and initial training of the leadership team this summer. The school will be working with a consultant from the Institute on Disabilities at UNH.

3. Tom also briefly described a process he used this spring with staff to connect the budget process with the implementation of a unit of instruction for the coming year.

4. Special Education Study at CHS
   Principal Gene Connolly reviewed the purpose of the study which was to get an “outside look” at the ways in which the high school was implementing programs and supports for students with disabilities at the high school. Two consultants from Southeast Regional Educational Services conducted the study this past winter. Their report included thirteen commendations for the high school and five areas in which they made recommendation. Special Education coordinator Meeta Brown and other members of the team described the actions taking place at the high school that address each of the five areas.
a. Class Composition
The high school has been working with guidance to hand schedule students into specific classes where there would be the appropriate supports. Their intention in the future is to do the special student placements before the computerized scheduling. This year the staff at the high school and middle school worked together to improve the balance and composition of the freshman teams for the fall.

b. Number/percentage of special education students at CHS
The identification process for students begins in Concord in the preschool years so impacting the number of students at the high school level begins much earlier than high school. The district’s work with increasing interventions for students from the earliest grades should impact this number. Improving the transitions between 5th and 6th and 8th and 9th will also impact this number. This year there were increased efforts to make these transitions more successful for students.

c. Programming
The report’s recommendation to reorganize the high school into four smaller schools and place one of the four programs in each of the commons was not adopted by the high school at this time. The administrators and coordinators have initiated changes in programming for the fall designed to address issues raised in the report. The PREP model is being modified with the introduction of Assisted Studies for those students needing homework support. The credit bearing PREP classes will include more direct and remedial instruction. Two PREP teachers will continue to work closely with the Math department, offering Math PREP classes and co-teaching a yearlong class. Two special educators with particular expertise in reading work closely with the English department, offer direct reading instruction to students with reading difficulties.

To improve coordination of programs, and reduce the “silo” effect described in the report, Meeta Brown and Sherry Burbank are realigning their responsibilities with Meeta supervising direct instruction programs and compliance issues; Sherry will supervise transition issues and at risk programs.

The high school also described the Bridge Academy which they offered last summer for 19 incoming freshmen and will offer again in August for 38 incoming freshman. The high school will offer a mentoring program for freshman in the fall.

d. Staffing
Teaching assistants will be assigned to case managers in the fall who will be responsible for their assistants’ schedules and responsibilities. Teaching assistants are being trained this summer to work with all the students on the case manger’s case load.

Some of the teachers do not have the “secondary endorsements” in the specific fields of special education programming (e.g. mental retardation, emotional disabilities.) These teachers will be supported to obtain these certificates. The
teachers, however, do have the “highly qualified” status required by No Child Left Behind.

e. Use of Data
The administrators felt that the consultants did not fully understand the extent to which the high school staff is using the increasingly accessible data on students with disabilities. All staff were trained to use the state’s Performance Tracker which enables a staff member to see all of a student’s standardized and district assessments. The high school has a very active Literacy Intervention team which uses data on specific students to review progress and programming. This began this year and is one of the activities associated with the District in Need of Improvement plan.

The Committee thanked the high school staff for its report and its work addressing issues raised in this study

5. Calendar
It was agreed that the administration will conduct a survey of parents about the possibility of eliminating the April vacation in order to end the year earlier in June. The survey will also look at the accessibility of our families to the Internet to determine whether on-line options are available to eliminate the need for snow days due to winter storms, as has been implemented successfully in the Kearsarge School District.

6. Upcoming Agenda Items
The Superintendent reviewed agenda items for August, September and October, including:

- Transportation routes and school starting and ending times for the fall of 2012
- Implications of these routes and time changes for the high school schedule and number of credits required for graduation
- Curriculum changes including the American History course at CHS, ELL Civics and an Earth Science course required by state regulations.
- Review of the model and data associated with the elementary Student Support Rooms

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Williams, Chair
Chris Rath, Recorder