Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2015

Members Present: Deirdre d'Albertis, Laura Schulkind, Rick Walker, Marvin Kreps, Joe Phelan
Invited Guest: Steve Jensen

Technology Plan C
Steve Jensen was asked to join the meeting to discuss the proposed changes for the BMS Technology courses. Initial meetings with the teachers, Marvin and Steve have been positive, but this represents a change to the original plan for technology infusion in all K-12 classrooms. For the near term, we acknowledge the diversity of tech skills in the students coming up from the Elementary School and the needs of the teachers in supplementing coursework with the use of technology. At this point, we need to level the disparity in knowledge through lab-type courses so that the core teachers are able to use technology without slowing down to teach *how* to use technology. Discussions are happening both in the Middle School and High School about how to bring younger students up to speed and ultimately what will be required once students reach the High School level.

Not only are Marvin and Steve recommending coursework in Digital Safety and Citizenry and Keyboarding but would like to include coursework from Microsoft's IT Academy and possibly a Coding/Gaming unit. The IT Academy is self-paced and will allow for both an online and blended learning format. The 6th -8th grade students could never complete all that is offered by the Academy, but at minimum, benchmarks will be established for end-of-year goals for each grade level. This also offers the opportunity for highly motivated students to move beyond the annual benchmarks.

In order to provide collaborative learning, the current lab configuration doesn't work with its single learner/isolation design. Steve outlined potential workspace layouts that would create modular spaces that could easily be reconfigured for any particular class.

The group had thoughtful discussions around vertical articulation of the potential course offerings. Marvin is mindful that we include programs that support the larger curriculum and not fall into the trap of choosing strands that are "current" or "cool." If the 6th -8th core teachers don't incorporate the skills being taught in the lab, then our students will not have gained in their digital literacy. He feels strongly that the value of these courses should be proven. If they don't enhance the body of knowledge that students need, they should not be included. Our Administrative Intern, Molly Albrecht is working on polling the Middle and High School teachers about what the staff needs to deliver instruction.

However, in our current budget situation, there is no extra money for this plan. Marvin and Steve are hoping to pull together a grant application for RSF by the end of April. If it is approved, the final curriculum and professional development will be framed in May, and the summer would be spent with Sheldon's team and BOCES reconfiguring the space, equipment purchases and PD/curriculum work. It is an ambitious timeframe but Marvin is hopeful that we could have this plan in place for September.

Long form text vs. E-reading
Deirdre has been sharing articles with the committee about the efficacy of e-reading and anecdotal evidence of its shortcomings in her classrooms. There are certainly subjects that lend themselves to this platform but students seem to suffer in their ability to think critically when reading solely online. Marvin and Steve both agree that critical thinking is the key to student success and that we are not in the business of innovation for innovation's sake. We will employ technology where it supports our teachers and enhances their teaching and student learning.

Scarsdale Center for Innovation
Marvin and Steve visited the Scarsdale Center for Innovation in mid-March. Marvin spoke of the many similarities between the Scarsdale and Rhinebeck School Districts both operationally and in student outcomes. Both districts have achieved such success, the obvious question became, "After having done so well, why change what's working?" Scarsdale's Superintendent charged the Curriculum and Technology Directors to "re-write the

narrative" around public education. Accordingly, leading education researchers were brought to Scarsdale to speak to the future of education with students, faculty and the Board of Education.

The Scarsdale Teacher Collaborative grew out of these discussions and created a space for teachers to collect ideas and provide a forum for collaboration. Essentially, the district has given their teachers permission to innovate where previously they felt inhibited by the structure of school culture. Teachers have the full support of the Board of Ed who charged the staff to take risks. By granting this permission to be innovative, the Teacher Collaborative has made progress in "changing the conversation" in Scarsdale.

Excerpted from the Scarsdale Public Schools Website:
> Scarsdale teachers have designed and implemented many innovative projects in recent years, but the district does not have a formal way to encourage and showcase innovative instructional projects. In addition, the District has been hosting conversations about system-wide innovation, asking questions like:
> - What will schools look like in the future?
> - What kinds of spaces do we need to support instruction and collaborative work in 5-10 years?
> - How will technology transform curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
>
> This Center would showcase the work of teachers who are interested in using leading edge technology to improve instructional practices and reimagine teaching and learning.
>
> The purpose of the Center is:
> - to re-imagine teaching and learning, develop new models of instruction, and explore the role of technology in transforming instruction
> - to foster widespread change, beyond a single classroom or teacher
> - to learn how other organizations foster innovative practices and possibly replicate their techniques and structures in Scarsdale
>
> The 2012-13 projects funded through the school district and Scarsdale's education foundation included the creation of Maker Spaces, Learning Spaces, Service Learning and Global Awareness:
> http://www.scarsdaleschools.k12.ny.us/Page/12918
>
> The 2014-15 projects were "designed to develop curriculum, instructional strategies, and authentic assessments... under the umbrella of STEM/STEAM:
> http://www.scarsdaleschools.k12.ny.us/Page/18906

Marvin was most taken by how they were able to "seed" innovation and wondered about leveraging our in-house expertise to promote this model of "exposure to ideas." The Committee referenced the work being done with the Extended Response grant and is hopeful that these types of programs will continue to foster and promote innovation in Rhinebeck.

Budget Considerations
Beyond the needs for the BMS computer lab, the committee was assured that summer curriculum work was appropriately funded in our current draft budget. Most of our monies will be spent with the HS English Department and the BMS/RHS Social Studies departments.

The Next Generation Science Standards are on a 5 year development plan from the State, and we do not anticipate seeing any change recommendations until Fall of 2015 at the earliest.

April 28 Agenda
CLS Curriculum update
Tech Plan C update

Submitted by: Laura Schulkind