

## **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **December 22, 2015**

**Attendance:** Laura Schulkind, Deirdre d'Albertis, Rick Walker, Joe Phelan, Marvin Kreps.

#### **ELA Curriculum Documents**

Joe noted that the BOE approved curriculum documents have been posted and are available online. A short statement will be crafted to introduce these materials to our community, ideally early in the new year.

#### **Innovation in Technology Explorations**

Marvin presented members of the committee with a charter for BMS's "Innovation in Technology Explorations," outlining how the project supports CDEP goals as well as key strategic objectives, namely to:

- retool the BMS Computer Lab to provide updated technology geared towards a more student-centered experience.
- restructure the middle school computer science curriculum to address 21<sup>st</sup> century technology competencies in a project-based approach.
- integrate technology seamlessly across the curriculum throughout the middle school.

This broad overview, which will be made available to all board members, includes a project description, desired outcomes, project deliverables, project organization, project risks, and a project plan/status update as of December 2015.

Marvin proudly noted that as of Dec 21, all the hardware and software goals in the BMS lab itself have been realized. Our students have a tremendous resource—perhaps one of the best labs now in the country—thanks to the generosity of the Rhinebeck Science Foundation. Curriculum development is still underway; there is no "perfect answer" to writing tech curriculum as it must be customized from a range of sources and over various platforms. He described a "fluid process" currently being used to individualize instruction according to student interest and capacity. Marvin advocates thinking carefully about building on such popular initiatives as "Hour of Code" to bring what is essentially a foreign language for many of our students that no one has been teaching or learning into the middle school curriculum--coding—and we want to do it well. Laurie Keating continues to work with our teachers in the area of computer science even as they work in turn with their colleagues across the disciplines to integrate tech into all subjects (the "bucket projects" model). Susan Van Vlack is also inviting parents into the lab for a session on internet safety: literacy, privacy, and data security are all important concerns.

#### **Review of Health Curriculum**

Members of the committee discussed the current health curriculum for grades K-12 in RCSD. As was mentioned in public session at our most recent BOE meeting, a specific query about this has been directed to the entire board. Members of the committee agreed that not only the request, but also a desire to strengthen this aspect of our curriculum should motivate us to review what specifically in the context of health and wellness is being taught with regard to prevention of sexual abuse. Marvin

counseled that we look at state standards, recommendations made by the Commissioner of Education, and best practices currently being advocated by state and national associations. He plans to reach out to his own professional contacts to gather information prior to our next meeting. So too, he is glad to perform an audit on our current health curriculum. New regulations for school psychologists encourage greater integration with teaching in classroom settings; training teachers yearly as mandated reporters is another trend. There are tools and techniques for recognizing the prevalence and impact of abuse. It is important, he pointed out, to raise awareness of the professional faculty in these matters to “protect kids” even as we “inoculate a population.” Unfortunately, as both state and federal authorities have put pressure on measuring education via test scores and narrow “academic” measures, there is less and less time to address the social/emotional or affective dimension of young people’s school experience. That is a great and serious loss. Our question is, “how should a progressive, caring district address these concerns and help to avoid them in future?” This is a long-range project—and one that we hope will find a place in the ongoing conversations taking place under the aegis of CDEP.

**Agenda:**

- Audit of Health Curriculum (prevention of abuse)
- How can this committee interface most productively with CDEP?
- In an extremely austere fiscal climate, how can the district preserve the academic program? Are there cooperative arrangements/practices that could be tried in Rhinebeck?

**Next Meeting:**

January 26, 2015 at 9:30 AM in the District Offices.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d’Albertis