

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 23, 2016

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

Data-Driven Decision Making? The committee asked when Marvin plans to make his annual report on state testing data. Due to an embargo on test results (at least until after 2/24), Marvin expects that the presentation will take place sometime in the next month or so. The district is now required to participate in "rolling reporting" to the state; Marvin reports thousands of lines of data every 2 weeks (upward of 22 times a year), a massive absorption of time and effort. It is not clear exactly how such "big" data collection informs policy and decision-making at the state level, but it would be helpful—all agreed—if this sort of tracking could serve us locally in our work. Unfortunately, "on the ground," practical classroom data is not made readily available to districts interested in improving instruction. Rather data reporting seems unidirectional, moving only from the local to the state level. That being said, Marvin agreed that we do possess the ability to track a few key indices (attendance, tardy rates, etc.) to help craft assessment of a SST pilot project, should the BOE decide to move forward. It makes sense for the district to "test its theory of action" with both quantitative and qualitative data; as Marvin observed, with a one-year pilot we should be able to identify say 5 key indicators to chart.

Superintendent's Conference Day: Marvin reported on the recent conference day with particular focus on the AM sessions. Dr. Jaeger engaged the faculty with Kennedy's "Moonshot" speech: what is our "moonshot" as a district moving forward? And how are we going to "engineer" our way there? By 2022 RCSD wants and expects to see all students truly "college and career ready." Using "pass rates" for the current state test regimen as a guide, we have a way to go (approx.. 60-70% meet the goal now). We have to build on our successes to get there.

Fourteen vertical teams met to discuss moving from Vision to Action, from Gaps to Goals. K-12 those groups were: mathematics, ELA, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Art, Music, Library, Technology, Foreign Language, AIS, Student Support Services, Special Education, Aides and Greeters. Next steps: the professional faculty will be asked to continue this process at the school level (there is a March 16 after-school session coming up). The plan is to identify 5 or 6 themes that emerge from the working groups and to create a document eventually to bring back to the CDEP team. Marvin and Joe expect for CDEP to meet at least two more times before the end of the school year.

Marvin noted that the afternoon teacher-led Tech workshops were also a big success (report from Communications Committee will touch on specifics of this half of the day).

Most Likely to Succeed: Laura shared with members of the group her thoughts on a new documentary directed by Greg Whitely about school reform. The film focuses on High Tech High, a charter school in San Diego, that has built its curriculum around project-based, cooperative learning. The group discussed the pedagogical value of such work while also recognizing, as Marvin puts it, how budgetary/regulatory inflexibility of NYS education (as overseen by the Regents) makes it a challenge fully to incorporate such an approach into the public system. He noted, however, that best practices in the classroom are informing development of Rhinebeck's middle school computer curriculum and can be found in the work of many of our teachers.

College & Careers: The committee asked for background on the development of this course—a local requirement—in relation to the overall program of study in the high school. C&C evolved initially as a complement to the Community Service requirement at RHS. That link is no longer visible, perhaps, or well understood. Joe noted that it could make a good summer curriculum project to review/update the course as well as to strengthen its connection to service. Joe explained a bit about the process of issuing the call for summer curriculum work (a major engine of development in the school) as well as Summer Study Grants.

On the Horizon:

The District's K-5 Math curriculum is under review and alternatives are being considered. It should be noted that SED has, yet again, indicated their intention to review and revise the math standards, curriculum and assessments, so it is important to be cautious until there is additional information.

Marvin will attempt to summarize for the committee what SED intends at our next meeting.

Agenda:

--Follow up on health curriculum, CDEP, K-5 Math Curriculum Development and summer development/study grants

Next Meeting:

March 29 at 9:30 AM in the District Offices.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d'Albertis