

# SCIENCE MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2005

**Members Present:** Victor Britton, Doreen Giamportone, Roberta Bloomer, Scott Stiverson, Carl Mayer, Laura DeWitt-Ebling, Marvin Kreps

The Science Vertical Team met to continue analyzing the district's K-12 Science program. The group began its discussion by reviewing the minutes of December 8, 2004. The group agreed on the following corrections:

## Regarding:

# 2: The **Elementary** and **High School** Special Education and 504 students require more support. The Middle School was not represented at this meeting to confirm.

# 4: The Elementary faculty requires time to collaborate on aligning unit and lesson plans with the District's prioritized Science curriculum. **This is not necessarily the case for High School Teachers, since they teach one isolated subject.**

# 5: Mr. Worrell's Science lab program is effective. However, it is perceived by the group as insufficient lab experience. **4<sup>th</sup> gr. ideally receives 8 labs per year; however, other grades fall short due to changes in the schedule (i.e. snow days, assemblies, etc.). Kindergarten currently is not scheduled for regular lab time.**

#6: Because of scheduling conflicts, Science is often **compromised** to allow for some other activity, **such as band and chorus. Grade 4 is given a priority in scheduling due to the State tests. Middle School students are often pulled out for 30 min. to attend band lessons. The pulling out of students has a tremendous impact on the consistency of science lessons at the Elementary level. 4<sup>th</sup> grade reports it is less for them.**

#11: **Laura Ebling indicated no lack of motivation in the Students regarding Science. Carl Mayer felt the Middle School students were seriously lacking motivation and needed real incentives to do well. Scott Stiverson felt 4<sup>th</sup> grade was the turning point for the Student, possibly due to a lack of confidence, developmental stages, the introduction of letter grades on report cards, and the amount of stress placed on the child by the parent's perception of those letter grades (not seeing "C" as an average grade, etc.). Bobbie agreed and added that the student will quit trying if they cannot buy into the process.**

#13: The issue of time to thoroughly teach Science needs to be addressed. **Reading, Writing, and Social Studies are given priority over Science when time is an issue.**

#14: It was noted that the Report Cards do not adequately reflect the knowledge and skills we expect our students know and be able to do. **Science is not indicated on the Elementary Level Report Card.**

The changes were made to the last meeting's minutes, and the team moved on to discuss some of these issues in more detail.

The team will research Catalog companies and the State Education Department for any resources which will support the Science Labs.

A goal of the team will be to create a report and analysis of the K-12 Science program with recommendations that can be brought to the CDEP committee meeting on February 10, 2005. The committee will need a clear and accurate overview of the District's Science program.

It was discussed that the Superintendent's Conference Day scheduled for February 18, 2005, can be utilized as an opportunity to work as a team on some of the identified goals. The focus of these goals will be how to make 90% of our students proficient in the area of Science.

The team discussed a District wide way of tracking the attendance of students, like they have in the middle school. This would help them pinpoint those students missing the largest amount of instruction time.

The Elementary teachers will work with Bill Worrell, Science Facilitator at CLS, to create a list of materials needed to provide necessary instruction based on our Prioritized Curriculum. Supplemental funds may be available to purchase some of these materials.

Carl Mayer suggested the need for a storeroom to keep the equipment in, with a sign out sheet for use. Laura Ebling stated that at CLS, they would find it easier to have a Science Center set up in the Classroom, but felt a storeroom would be useful for larger or more specialized equipment. (I.e. having one or two microscopes in each classroom, and storing class-sized sets in a storeroom with sign out sheet.)

The entire team agreed on establishing a “common language” when teaching science. The definitions and terms identified in the Prioritized Curriculum will be isolated and broken down by grade level. A more accessible document will be created by grade, and built upon each year to reinforce the “language”. This can be taken further by creating a Science word wall, color coded word cards, posters, and even lists to be sent home as resources for parents. Scott Stiverson discussed the success of this technique while teaching in another district. Carl Mayer shared an experience where he was even unfamiliar with some of the “new” terminology.

Marvin asked the group to make this a goal for implementation by next summer as a science resource.

The use of assessment tool indicating to what degree the skills are present (developing, secure, etc.) would be valuable. The team will explore Report Card options with this as an area to include.

The team felt it would be productive to use year end assessment guides based on the Curriculum, such as checklists, to be kept in the student file. This file would follow the student throughout his/her school career. This tracking would assist in the AIS Vertical Team’s belief that not enough information is available as to the student’s strengths and weaknesses.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Is the middle school curriculum on the server? If so, where?

Teachers need to have time for consistent planned activities. There should be a coordinated effort with all buildings to utilize District resources. These efforts should be made concrete and real. Staff can utilize other Science Educators to tap into unexplored resources.

Team will devise a large chart of goals- strand chart of skills. The Everyday Math chart is a good model.

**February 10, 2005 CDEP Meeting:** Marvin wants each vertical team to report to the Committee on the state of the Science program. Identify priorities regarding District needs, with documents to back up their requests.

Scott expressed concern in finding time to scope out grade levels before February’s CDEP. Is it possible to survey the teachers like the Social Studies team did? Time with the Elementary grade levels is needed in order to identify areas of concern.

Marvin recommended the grade levels, and Vertical teams meet for a brainstorming/work session on the next Superintendent’s Conference Day – February 18, 2005

A 2 year plan was discussed to inventory the District’s Science needs, and to prioritize District-wide Standards for teaching.

All team members will create a list of equipment currently owned by District, and that which is needed.

Should we look for options other than textbooks? Is a Science book fair a feasible option?

Consult with Bill Worrell regarding materials and trade books. Invite Bill to the next Vertical team meeting as a Consultant.

