

THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST SCHOOL DISTRICT 67

Title: Education Committee Meeting
Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2017
Time: 8:15 a.m.
Location: West Campus, Seminar A
Participants: Beth Clemmensen, Jeff Folker, Suzanne Sands, Rebecca Jenkins, Susan Milsk, Tara Eggers, Carolyn Moore
Administration present: None
Staff Present: Judi Epcke, Renee Fitzsimmons
Approval of Minutes: Motion by Jeff Folker, Second by Carolyn Moore
Public Comment: None

DISCUSSIONS/PRESENTATIONS:

The Education Committee met on April 19th and was called to order at 8:15am. Minutes from the January meeting were approved, with Jeff Folker making the motion and Carolyn Moore making the second.

STEM Update – Judi Epcke

Judi Epcke provided an update on the STEM work being done across our elementary and middle schools. In our K-4 elementary buildings, there is no formal STEM or Maker Space. However, the libraries and librarians have stepped in to create STEM opportunities in three key areas:

- 1) Exploration and Challenges -- creating student activities such as a weekly Lego challenge or projects with the “Riga-ma-jigs”
- 2) Curricular-based projects -- partnering with teachers to reinforce academic units in the classroom, such as developing the “Cardboard Carnival” at Cherokee for their teamwork unit
- 3) Coding activities – supporting both the “Hour of Code” in December, as well as ad hoc coding activities

At DPM, both the East and West campuses have the Smart Labs to support STEM. These labs provide a variety of student-directed STEM activities where students follow three core steps regardless of the project: 1) trial/iteration; 2) document/reflect; 3) next steps. Students begin by developing a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goal around something they wish to explore further. They keep an e-portfolio with daily reflections to document their progress and setbacks, and then at the end of the project they present their findings to their peers. Student feedback on the STEM rotation has been very positive, with students especially liking the ability to choose their own projects and that it's OK fail and try again. Some of our 8th grade students have been inspired to do the Passion project in the STEM area, including one student creating a 3D-printed drone and another developing a gas-powered go-cart.

In addition to the STEM rotations, the Smart Lab materials are also sometimes used by the classroom teachers to support their in-class curriculum. While other classes are not able to use the STEM space because it is generally always in use, teachers may incorporate some of the materials in their own classrooms to support inquiry practices.

The STEM labs are also used outside of the classroom with periodic Brainstormer classes, a new Lego Robotics team (which placed 5th out of 15 teams and is being expanded to an additional team next year), and the Computer Club (being re-named next year to the STEM Club).

STEM plans for the future include adding a Spark Lab maker space adjacent to the STEM lab as part of the Haskins re-design. This space would have hand tools, vinyl cutters, and various found objects to complement the STEM work. The team is looking at creating “Maker Mondays” at DPM, developing challenge activities for the students.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) – Renee Fitzsimmons

Renee Fitzsimmons came in to talk about the Science Standards across K-8. All science curriculums in the State of IL must be NGSS aligned beginning with next school year. There has been a tremendous amount of work that has transpired this year to ensure the district is fully aligned.

The three core areas that the standards address are the Life, Physical, and Earth sciences. Within K-5, the standards touch on all three of these areas each year and have specific concepts that must be taught at each grade level. Within grades 6-8, the standards are not specific to a grade level, but are banded to ensure the core concepts are covered at some point during the 3-year period. Our students are assessed on Science on the PARCC test in 5th and 8th grades.

The team will continue to refine their work now that the standards are in place, incorporating more Inquiry-based learning into their lessons. They are also going to work to ensure there is strong articulation as students transition from elementary to middle to high school.

Math Update – Susan Milsk

Susan Milsk provided an update on the math curriculum across the district. As a reminder, the K-4 math curriculum changed to Bridges during the 2013-14 school year. The following year, 2014-15, Bridges was implemented for Grade 5. Last year, Grades 6-8 implemented the Connected Math Project curriculum. The math team also worked across the organization to ensure there was a clear and well-articulated course sequence to address student need at all grades and ability levels – even working with D115 to support a more seamless transition to the high school.

The opportunity now is to see how these important changes are working for our students. However, our current third graders are the first students to rise through the current curriculum, making meaningful analysis a bit premature. There are a few early takeaways from the data:

- 1) On MAP, achievement has stayed relatively consistent over the years since the shifts in curriculum. There was no dip for implementation of the new curriculum or a large increase in achievement.
- 2) One important note in looking at data over time is that prior to the 2015-16 school year, students in Grade 5 took the Reading and Math test for Grade 6, which may have depressed achievement.
- 3) Math scores for Grades 3-5 dipped significantly in 2015 as the State transitioned from ISAT to PARCC, but Grades 3 and 5 began to rebound in 2016.

The District is continuing to support our teachers with professional development in math and provide math specialists at all levels. The team will continue to analyze the data to determine the impact of these changes and if additional revisions need to be made.

Motion to adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am. Suzanne Sands made the motion and Carolyn Moore seconded it.

Next meeting:

This was the final Education Committee meeting for the school year. It also concluded the two-year terms for our community members, Tara Eggers and Carolyn Moore. Dr. Eggers and Mrs. Moore were invaluable members of our team, providing insight and perspective to our conversations. I would like to publically thank them for their service to the District. Applications for new committee members are due by Friday, April 28 and the Committee will be choosing two new community members for next school year.