

EDUCATION COMMITTEE Minutes

Wednesday, November 2, 2011

In attendance: Maria Martorana, MaryAnn Spagnuolo, Harry Ruiz, Tammy MacKay, Jennifer Fano, and members of the public

Approval of Minutes

Education Committee: 10-05-11

Updates:

6th Grade Math Presentation – Emily Schaeffer, Tracy Silvershotz, Barbara Swanson, Alex Tyska, Sixth Grade Math Teachers and Luanne Budd, Math Supervisor

The sixth grade teachers, along with the middle school vice principal, attended a national conference on Differentiated Instruction in July and were invited to share their experience of teaching math in a heterogeneous group. Mrs. Budd provided a context for the presentation and shared that she has formally and informally observed each sixth grade classroom. She is pleased with the instruction, student engagement, and teacher enthusiasm.

Ms. Tyska began the presentation discussion evaluation of student progress. Evaluation throughout the year is centered upon a passport concept. The concepts for each country (or unit) outline the skills to be mastered by each individual student.

Ms. Schaeffer then spoke about assessments including pre-assessments, quizzes, tests, test corrections, and reflections. Flexible grouping throughout a unit changes based how the student achieves. Formative assessment is another strategy used to evaluate students' progress throughout a unit.

Next, Mrs. Silvershotz outlined the sixth grade math teachers approach homework. Homework is typically assigned nightly and varies based upon student achievement with the concepts presented in class. A self-reflection sheet accompanies homework after it has been reviewed to provide additional information to the teacher. Homework is planned to take about 10-15 minutes per night. Mrs. Silvershotz stated that she feels the students seem more relaxed this year without the stress of the level label.

Finally, Mrs. Swanson presented the concept of anchor activities. Anchor activities are used for exposure, remediation, and enrichment. These activities challenge students to explore new skills or apply previously mastered skills to complete a multi step activity.

Students work at their own pace and have access to anchors across units.

Each sixth grade student has an individual portfolio and assessment analysis sheet. These sheets outline the skills being assessed on an assessment and teachers analyze the data to guide and support the students.

In general, sixth grade math students are working in groups, not in rows and there is more cooperative work taking place daily. The students are achieving at a greater rate based upon the analysis of the data provided by fifth grade teacher and the sixth grade teachers reported that accelerated students are doing well and the use of anchors, Holt materials, and the course two book provide multiple opportunities for all students to explore and apply skills.

Study Island continues to be used to allow students to practice skills that will be assessed on the standardized assessment. Study Island provides excellent tutorials and examples before students are prompted to complete lessons online.

The sixth grade math teachers and supervisor are always available for questions. Look for another update from the sixth grade math teachers in the spring.

Curriculum Forum:

Course proposals were made available to all Board of Education members for the following:

REVISION: Science and Technology for the 21st Century, Grade 8– J. Cusmano

NEW: Sustainability, Grades 6, 7, and 8 – J. Cusmano

NEW: Principals of Engineering – Honors, Grades 9, 10, 11, & 12 – J. Cusmano

NEW: Architecture II – Honors, Grades 11 & 12, J. Cusmano

REVISION: Organic & Analytical Chemistry – Honors, Grades 11 & 12, J. Cusmano

REVISION: Advanced Organic & Analytical Chemistry – Honors, Grades 11 & 12, J. Cusmano

NEW: Forensic Science – Online, Grades 10, 11, & 12, J. Cusmano

PILOT: Curriculum for Engineering by Design, Grades 9, 10, 11, & 12, J. Cusmano