

Manitowoc Public School District
Minutes of Curriculum Committee Meeting

June 16, 2020

Curriculum Committee Chairperson, Meredith Sauer, called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. Curriculum Committee Members Elizabeth Williams and Kathy Willis were present along with Jason Bull, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, and Pam Lensmire, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Also present were Superintendent Holzman, Lisa Johnston, Lori Williams, Lainey Longmeyer, and Jill DeRosier.

Middle School Math

In alignment with K-12 math continuous improvement conversations, Jason Bull raised the discussion of making a change to the middle school math model by eliminating compacted math at the 7th grade level for the 2020-21 school year while giving the option for current 7th grade students participating in compacted math to continue participation in it during 8th grade. All middle level math teachers will receive individualized and targeted high-quality professional development around best practices in math and differentiating instruction to engage all learners. The rationale for the change centers on providing all learners with the depth of mathematical knowledge and understanding of Wisconsin's more rigorous math standards; feedback from higher education that in-depth coverage of quantitative reasoning and statistics is more important than racing to get through math curriculum; and equitable access for all students to the depth of mathematical knowledge and understanding within the Wisconsin math standards. Presently, some key standards, including in the areas of quantitative reasoning and statistics, are skipped so that students can get through algebra in the compacted middle school math model.

The proposed change was shared with the Directors, Lincoln High School administration, Washington and Wilson Middle School administration, the middle and high school math Student Learning Liaisons, Board of Education President, Dave Nickels, and Curriculum Committee Chairperson, Meredith Sauer before being brought to the Curriculum Committee for discussion. If the Curriculum Committee members support taking next steps related to the proposed change, additional feedback would be sought from the full secondary math department, parents, and students about the potential change before moving forward.

Elizabeth Williams asked for clarification on the nature of compacted middle school math. Students complete all of 7th grade math and half of 8th grade math during 7th grade and then complete the second half of 8th grade math and all of algebra during 8th grade. Discussion from Curriculum Committee members centered on concerns that students would have to double up on math and science in high school if they are interested in a STEM career pathway, that it is challenging for teachers to differentiate when all students are placed together, and that this is not the appropriate time for a change of this magnitude. The criteria used for placement in compacted middle school math, the number of students that would meet the established criteria if it is enforced rather than students being added to evenly distribute course numbers, and the

long-term achievement data of students who participate in compacted middle school math may be brought forth for review at a future Curriculum Committee meeting.

Dean of Students/Student Support Leader Update

The Dean of Students and Student Support Leaders from across the district shared a presentation of their work with the Curriculum Committee ahead of this evening's meeting. Jason Bull introduced Lainey Longmeyer, Dean of Students at Lincoln High School, and Jill DeRosier, Student Support Leader at Franklin Elementary School, to provide a summary of the work they have been doing within their respective schools. Mrs. Longmeyer indicated that her work with students has allowed the administrators to be instructional leaders, engaging more frequently in classroom visits and conversations with teachers. She connects students with community resources, reaches out to families to engage them and address their needs, works on character development with students, monitors attendance and attendance systems, advocates for student needs, and intervenes on behavior issues. Mrs. DeRosier echoed the fact that her administrator and school counselor are able to engage in classrooms more frequently because she is there to support students. She makes home visits, addresses behavior issues, communicates with parents, monitors attendance and the implementation of the school's attendance protocol, coaches teachers on strategies to address student issues using tools learned from her professional development experiences, supports the implementation of a weekly social-emotional learning lesson, and supervises lunch and recess. Both leaders emphasized the importance of building relationships with students and teaching students the behaviors expected of them. They indicated that their work moving forward, along with the Student Support Leaders from Jefferson and Madison/Monroe and the Dean of Students from Riverview/Jackson, will be to expand their K-12 collaboration to include the creation of systems of support for attendance, character education, and implementation of the MPSD touchstones across all levels; continued engagement and communication with families; and the targeting of specific data points across all levels to address and monitor.

Achievement Gap Reduction Report

Pam Lensmire presented the required end-of-the-year Achievement Gap Reduction report from Franklin and Jefferson Elementary Schools. Typically the schools collect baseline data related to K-3 reading and math in the fall and set goals for the year. Benchmark data is collected at the mid-year point (end of January-early February) and final performance data is collected at the end of the year (May). The AGR strategies utilized include small class sizes and instructional coaching from reading teachers and math coaches. This year, given the shift to distance learning in March, the state waived the requirement for the end-of-year data and, instead, asked schools to report on their efforts to meet students' needs during the COVID-19 crisis. Both schools provided a written overview of the distance learning programming offered to K-3 students, including specific ways staff attempted to support student learning in the areas of reading and math.

Kathy Willis made a motion to adjourn the Curriculum Committee; Meredith Sauer seconded the motion. The Curriculum Committee meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.