

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING/WORK/STUDY  
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD  
SCOTTSDALE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 48**

January 31, 2008

A Special Meeting/Work/Study on Math of the Governing Board of the Scottsdale Unified School District, #48, Maricopa County, was called to order at 4:40 PM, at the Scottsdale Unified School District Education Center Board Room, 3811 North 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Ms. Beckvar called upon Jennifer Petersen to lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members in attendance were Karen Beckvar, President; Dr. Eric Meyer, Clerk; Jennifer Petersen; and Dieter Schaefer. Molly Holzer arrived at 4:42 PM. Superintendent John M. Baracy was also present. A quorum was present.

Ms. Beckvar thanked the staff present at the meeting for all their hard work in preparing the data for this Work/Study. Ms. Beckvar also thanked the community members who were in attendance for their participation

Dr. Baracy introduced Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Katy Cavanagh. Mrs. Cavanagh thanked the Board for the opportunity to have meetings that center on teaching and learning of 100% of SUSD students and to have meetings where ideas and opinions can be shared.

Math Work/Study

Dr. Jackie Olson, Director of Curriculum, began the presentation by reviewing what has been occurring over the last eight years in regard to the mathematics curriculum in the State. Math has changed every year since 2000, either with new requirements from the State, or new curriculum, or new tests (AIMS). In 2003, SUSD implemented its new Math textbook adoption; in 2004 the Math placement matrix was implemented; in 2005 Galileo Benchmarks were implemented; and in 2006 Middle School Math Certification was required. Currently, in the 2007-2008 school year, the State has changed the Math requirements for graduation beginning in 2009. They are also changing the Math curriculum, which will necessitate the District to change all of its curriculum and assessments in Math. On February 25, 2008, the State Board of Education will be releasing, for the first time, Algebra II curriculum and will be adjusting all other Math curriculum. As SUSD is planning for the new State graduation requirements of four years of Math and the challenges of what might be included in the new curriculum, SUSD is working with Northeast Valley Education Consortium (NVEC) partners, representing several cities in the valley, looking at proposals for other Math courses that might combine Career/Technical Education (CTE) or Fine Arts with Math to make Math more engaging for some students. The next Math adoption will begin in 2009. Susie Fischbein, Secondary Math Specialist, continued the presentation with a review of how SUSD students progress through Math courses from fifth grade through high school as well as how complex the Math curriculum really is. Mrs. Fischbein displayed a "Math Course Tree" which generally begins with a student who starts their high school Math with Algebra I, the typical first course of Math for high school students. The following year, the student has three course choices, Geometry, Geometry Basics, and Geometry/Trig Honors. Thereafter, in subsequent years, the choices branch out with many possibilities.

Review of Math  
Curriculum Since 2000

Dr. Olson shared data to show how SUSD students were progressing through the Math courses in High School. The chart showed that of the 1200 students analyzed who took Algebra II (the typical junior level Math course), about 70% of the students are seniors who took a fourth year of Math; 27% are juniors taking a fourth year of math.

Mrs. Fischbein continued with a review of new course offerings that are being proposed due to the new State changes. Decisions cannot be made before the State releases its new curriculum on February 25<sup>th</sup>. One of those new courses for 2008-09 would be Finite Math, a course that follows Algebra II that is college level material. Another option for students just finishing Algebra II is two single semester courses, Trigonometry and Probability and Statistics. Once the new standards are released, SUSD will be working on another course, tentatively called "Quantitative Literacy." This is a prep class based on standards, with the intent to make it available, if possible, for the 2008-09 school year. Also, once the new standards are released, the District will be working with NVEC to design alternative courses to Algebra II and beyond. Continuing, Mrs. Fischbein stated that there are two issues surrounding Algebra I in Middle School. There have been discussions about giving credit to students who take Algebra I in the Middle School. With the new four year math requirement for graduation (effecting current seventh graders)

Review of New Course  
Offerings

Administration is working on a plan to implement giving high school credit to those students enrolled in Algebra I in eighth grade for the 2—8-09 school year. The other issue is who should take Algebra in eighth grade. Mrs. Fischbein believes that a student who shows readiness on SUSD's Algebra prognosis test should be taking Algebra in the eighth grade. In light of the Governor's P-20 Council recommendations, the doors will be kept open for all who can, as well as all who want to, take Algebra in the eighth grade. It must be assured that all students leave that course with enough concept knowledge to be successful in their next levels in Math. Once the State standards are released on February 25<sup>th</sup>, it may be possible that Algebra will become the normal course for eighth graders. If the State does not change the curriculum sufficiently in eighth grade to include Algebra, SUSD would still like to prepare its students to take Algebra in eighth grade. SUSD Math Department will compact and combine the sixth and seventh grade curriculum allowing for pre-Algebra for all students in the seventh grade. The District believes that there will need to be consistent practices and expectations in middle school and high school Algebra I courses in order to accomplish the goal of high school credit for Algebra I in Mmiddle school.

Cathy Sherry, Desert Mountain HS Math Department Chair, reviewed recommendations and enhancements the department would like to see implemented. The Math Department chairs believe that the most appropriate delivery system for math instruction should be direct instruction in the classroom with a certified math teacher. They would also recommend that the District continue to design math courses to help AIMS at-risk students at 20 students per section, keeping those students in smaller classes. The Math Department chairs also believe that a chain of command for student Math course placement disputes should be developed with the culmination of final committee review and decision. The committee should have at least two professional members past the teacher level, including the department chair, guidance counselor, or curriculum specialist. A building level administrator is strongly encouraged to sit on this committee as well.

Recommendations and Enhancements

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Petersen discussed placement disputes and stated that she would be hopeful that counselors would be involved. Mrs. Fischbein responded that the parent would go to the teacher making the recommendation for placement and at that point it would be possible, after discussion between the parent and teacher, for the teacher to change the recommendation for placement, thereby preventing any further dispute. If the parent is not happy with the teacher's recommendation, the parent would go to the department chair or the Math lead teacher. If the dispute is not worked out at that point, a committee of professionals would review the recommendation. The Math Department is recommending a protocol for disputes. Ms. Beckvar stated that the District does have policy that outlines that process of working disputes through the chain of command. The existing policy could be used. District level Administrators, Dr. Althe Allen and Cathy Rivera, could work with principals to implement the policy. Dr. Meyer asked what grades would be involved in this protocol. Mrs. Fischbein responded that the department would like consistency for all grades, K-12. Ms. Beckvar stated that some adjustments to the procedure could be made by Administration to facilitate the process for disputes.

Placement Disputes

Mrs. Holzer commented that she is happy to hear that middle school students will be offered pre-Algebra and Algebra; the District needs to offer that opportunity to all students. Mr. Schaefer asked why Algebra is not offered to sixth or seventh graders. Beatrice Cohen, Chaparral HS Math Department Chair, responded that not every child is conceptually ready to take Algebra at that age. Mr. Schaefer also inquired as to what process was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher who is instructing students in Math concepts and skills on a day-to-day basis. Mrs. Cavanagh responded that there are a number of processes in place, including classroom walk-throughs. Annie Preston, Principal of Saguaro HS, added that there is also a very close collaboration between principals and department chairs to discuss specifics seen in classrooms. Department chairs are encouraged to observe classrooms as well. Also, teachers observe other teachers. There are checks and balances in place that allow teachers to reflect and grow from conversations on what has been observed. Anne Marie Woolsey, Principal of Arcadia HS, responded that the data shows that the smaller AIMS support classes do work. Mary Lou Muccino, Principal of Chaparral HS stated that students also learn math in other contexts.

Middle School Students Offered Algebra and Pre-Algebra

Mrs. Holzer stated that she was concerned that with the new State requirements, some of the students who are not taking a full four years of Math now will not have a choice of Math courses to complete the State requirements. Dr. Olson responded that once the State requirements are known after February 25<sup>th</sup>, the Math Department will be able to build creative classes into the planning guide. They will be meeting with NVEC partners to discuss how Fine Arts, CTE, or

other interesting elements could be incorporated into new courses. So much depends on the new State standards; the processes have not been put in place as yet. Dr. Olson agreed that more classes are needed for the middle-range student. The State has never provided Algebra II curriculum to districts; SUSD has its own curriculum, but it is not known if that will align with what the State is going to require. Administration is also looking at classes that won't require Algebra II as a pre-requisite, but will have the Algebra II elements in it for other course progressions as well. Mrs. Holzer asked, with the potential for another 1000 students taking Math, is the Administration looking at more teachers or classroom space? Mrs. Cavanagh responded this is a State challenge as well as a national challenge for education.

Mr. Schaefer stated that he totally supports the efforts made to increase the Math curriculum. He also encourages Administration to go beyond that and measure itself against schools throughout the United States. Mr. Schaefer referred to a desk top guide used by Laguna Elementary teachers, outlining what is expected from core curriculum teachers, especially in Math, stating that he felt it was essential for all math teachers throughout the District to be consistent in what was being taught. Mrs. Cavanagh responded that those guides have been used for many years and have been frequently updated and changed as necessary.

Discussion was held regarding the High School Planning Guide. The High School Planning Guide lists all classes that could be offered; however, if there are not enough students to justify establishing a class, that course would not be offered. Mary Lou Muccino explained that the High Schools provide a reference sheet that states that the courses listed are only some of the courses that are offered for a particular grade level.

High School Planning Guide

Dr. Meyer stated that he sees this Work/Study as a celebration of where the District has come from over the last three or four years. There are increased numbers of students taking honors classes and increased numbers of eighth grade students taking Algebra. Also, integration has taken place between Elementary, Middle and High Schools on the Math curriculum. Dr. Meyer asked about Algebra I for eighth graders and if middle school teachers will now have high school certification. Mrs. Fischbein stated that she was told by the ADE that issuing high school credit does change the picture; the teacher must be high school certified, or a K-8 teacher who passed the high school AEPA test. Jeff Thomas responded that Human Capital will have to perform a certificate review and may find some teachers out of certification compliance in HQT which might cause some staffing changes.

Mrs. Cavanagh stated that the District is on a journey of change for Mathematics. Dr. Laczko-Kerr stated that one of the benefits that teachers have now is seeing multiple years of student data that show that the student's level of mastery on the standards on all of the grade level content standards that have been assessed for many years in a row. Mrs. Petersen asked if Administration is sure that Galileo is the best measurement tool. Dr. Laczko-Kerr responded that Administration acknowledges that this is a continuous learning process and the implementation of Galileo is part of a continuous quality improvement model that is constantly evaluating the performance objectives that teacher committees have identified annually to make sure that the District has chosen the right measurement to help predict performance on AIMS. What has been found is that despite valid concerns, the District is able to have highly predictive performance information about SUSD students' success on AIMS based on what have been developed as benchmarks in the District. Also, SUSD is setting the standard for using data across the state.

Ms. Beckvar summarized what had been discussed at the meeting:

Summary

1. On February 25, 2008 the Board of Education will release their edicts.
2. Based on those edicts, it would be helpful for the Board to see a timeline on what the future development plans are for the District and provide that timeline to the Board.
3. The budget impacts are critical; everyone knows that the "pie" is not getting very big, and there will not be additional monies to do the other things the Math Department would like (their "dreams"). We need to think how we can do things most efficiently.
4. Administration will provide the Board with some firm numbers associated with the recommendations the Math Department brought forward.
5. Administration will provide the Board some feedback on Technology and Math.

Ms. Beckvar stated that there is consensus that the District does want to move forward with offering high school math credit to students that have achieved an appropriate level. If they haven't reached that level and are not ready for the next level, they shouldn't be receiving credit. It needs to be decided by the Math Department what that level is.

Ms. Beckvar thanked everyone for their work and for being present at the meeting.

At 6:40 PM, Mrs. Petersen moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Schaefer seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with a vote of 5 – 0.

Dated this 31<sup>st</sup> day of January 2008.

**The Governing Board of the Scottsdale Unified School District #48**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Beckvar, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Meyer, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Molly Holzer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Petersen

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dieter Schaefer

Motion #64  
Adjournment