



**Curriculum Committee Report
Spring 2015**

Committee Members

Nadia Attia – Hawk Hollow Elementary

Brock Friedman – Laurel Hill Elementary

Lisa Hopp – Otter Creek Elementary

Ian Horn – Hilltop Elementary – Co-Chair

Pat Kressin – Kimball Middle School

Melissa Lane – At Large - Chair

Seth Rindner – Hanover Countryside

Suzie Sias – Liberty Elementary

Julie Winterhalder – Eastview Middle School

School District U-46 Liaisons

Trisha Shrode – Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Suzanne Johnson – Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

The committee sincerely thanks Trisha and Suzanne for their cooperation
and assistance during the school year.

Report approved by CAC Executive Committee – April 23, 2015

Report approved by the CAC General Council –

Report to be presented to the Board of Education - School District U-46 –

In previous years, the Curriculum Committee has explored both suggestions from the School Superintendent and topics of interest to parents who serve on the committee. This year, the topic of Eureka Math – our first focus point - touched upon both of those criteria.

EUREKA MATH

The K-12 math curriculum was presented to the board on May 5, 2014 and was approved on May 19, 2014. This curriculum is aligned to the new Illinois State Learning Standards. The adoption of this curriculum followed the steps outlined in the curriculum cycle. For details on that process, please refer to the U-46 web page, at http://www.u-46.org/pages/SDU46/Departments_Programs/Curriculum_Instruction/CurrCenter/Curriculum_Cycle.

Eureka Math, formerly referred to as Engage NY, is the mathematics resource that has been selected by the Curriculum Writing Committee and adopted by the school board for grades K through 6.

During school year 2014-2015, 42 early implementers began to use Eureka Math in their classrooms. These early implementers were distributed throughout the district at 38 elementary schools, representing all grade levels and several school-level programs.

Many parents were surprised by the change in the math program, felt frustrated by a lack of parent resources to help their children, and angered at the inconsistencies in communication from the schools and the district about the change. The frustration and communication lapses led to several parents joining this committee to learn more, and to hopefully prevent other parents feeling the same frustrations for the next school year, when Eureka Math will be implemented district wide.

The committee's education process began with presentations from Kevin Wiland – U-46 Coordinator of Math and members of his team. Committee members were pleased with the passion and energy shown by these presenters, and felt more comfortable with the rationale behind the switch to Eureka Math. Based on the first meeting, the committee felt that the issues were not so much a result of the curriculum or the selected resource but rather due to the implementation and communication process.

Several questions and discussion points were raised by parents that the U-46 team used in their preparation of a rollout plan to prepare for school year 2015-2016. Kevin Wiland and his team made a return visit to the committee, to share the “parent piece” of the communication plan that will be implemented. This plan should meet the goal of improved communication for parents as U-46 implements Eureka Math district-wide in the 2015-2016 school year. The math team also solicited feedback on parent newsletters, asking the committee's opinion on various formats and styles.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

The Committee also wished to learn more about the CTE offerings available throughout the district. What we thought might be a brief presentation, became an eye-opening program with teachers and staff from all of the CTE offerings. Staff shared their stories of students, and the advantages available from these class offerings. U-46 truly has some great offerings for our students. With a few specific exceptions (e.g. Precision Machining), the 5 high schools offer all CTE programming, and Gifford Street High School offers several selections of CTE programming. All classes are well-equipped with up-to-date and state of the art materials. Close to 5,000 students are enrolled in CTE electives.

A disappointment arises from the fact that even some experienced parents were not aware of the scope of programs available to their students. How can the district better market these programs so that a student can find a fit for their interests and abilities?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information provided by District U-46, the education we received from staff members, and our discussions, the committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Follow through with the Eureka Math implementation plan presented by Kevin Wiland and his team. This plan was shared with the committee on February 9, 2015. This plan has the advantages of using consistent resources, with some slight tweaking available so it can be individualized for a specific school. Key points of the plan include:
 - a. The PowerPoint presentation for parents
 - b. The program will be shared by EVERY elementary school in the spring of 2015.
 - c. Program dates should be gathered and shared in a central location on the district website, so if a family cannot attend one specific date, they can select another date that is convenient for them.
 - d. The early implementers at each site should be available so that parents can ask questions of the “resident expert” in that location.
 - e. The presentation should be translated to the languages that may be needed throughout the district.
 - f. The PowerPoint presentation should have a home on the U-46 district website.
 - g. The District website should have a link to the parent resource section of the Eureka Math information page. This link should be on the front page of the website, at least for this next school year, 2015-2016.

2. The Eureka Math implementation plan was developed through exemplary cooperation from the U-46 District team and members of the CAC Curriculum Committee. The district should leverage the curriculum committee for their insight into the parent

component of any curriculum adoption. The committee believes the early implementer model can be even more effective with improved parent communication.

3. Students should be made aware of the many offerings available to them as they begin middle school in the district. U-46 currently does not have guidance counselors on staff in the middle schools. This could be offset by:
 - a. Provide training and professional development to 6th grade teachers about the middle school class offerings. These 6th grade teachers are in a unique position to offer guidance to their students.
 - i. They are familiar with the students' progress through their elementary years of school.
 - ii. They have a small caseload of 25-32 students whereas the typical counselor caseload at the high school level is 300+ students.
 - b. The online Course Guide, which currently outlines course offerings in grades 9 – 12, should be expanded to include course offerings for grades 7 – 12.
 - i. In addition to course offerings, requirements for graduation, recommendations/requirements for academy admission, and other necessary information should be outlined in this document.
 - ii. Course offerings should be shown in a flow-chart type pattern, to help a student and parent understand the course sequence that commonly occurs.
 - c. The middle school registration and course selection process should be standardized across the district. Parent and student informational sessions should occur well before course selection, so that decision makers have ample opportunity to discuss the offerings. This will aid in a seamless transition to middle school.
 - d. In the event that families are unable to attend a middle school informational session, assemblies should be held for all 6th graders during the school day, to learn about course offerings.
 - i. Parents and families should be invited to attend.
 - ii. Information should be sent home, with a requirement for a parent signature, to verify that the information was received.
 - iii. Information for parents should be translated as necessary.