Wilmette District 39
Community Review Committee

A Year of Reflection
School Year 2015-16

PARENT/COMMUNITY MEMBERS. Julie Adrianopoli (Past President), Beth Alpert (Secretary), Erika Blake, Rebecca Boyd Nagel, Joe DiCamillo, Carolyn Gilbert, Kathryn Hartrick, Nicky Hilbert, David Lerner, Brooke North, Matthew Pietrafetta (Co-President), Mimi Rodman (Co-President), Andy Schaefer, Laura Smith, Libby Steigmann, and Erin Stone

FACULTY/ADMINISTRATIVE MEMBERS. Kristin Brown, Amy Fitzgerald, Melanie Horowitz, Kelly Jackson, Danielle Kalb, Ray Lechner, Katie Lee, Andy Pohl, Barbara Ungar, and Emily Wingels

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary

For more than four decades, the Community Review Committee (CRC) has united community volunteers and District 39 (D39 or the District) educators and leadership around an impressive and expansive set of initiatives to support the excellent instructional work performed in the district. From studying playground dynamics and the phenomenon of bullying, to evaluating teaching recognition programming and special education services and resources for parents, the CRC supports transformative growth of D39's mission and inspires its progress, reinforcing the impact on student achievement and wellness.

After so much valuable work over time, this year's CRC project was an audit of its own form and function. The 2015-16 the CRC embarked upon a year of reflection and fundamental questioning about the best stewardship of its time and thought power. These included essential questions such as:

- What is the purpose of the CRC?
- How has the CRC organized itself and its members?
- Has the CRC conducted its business effectively?
- How should the CRC select its research topics and over what time period?
- What are the best practices that define research reports of the type that the CRC generates?
- Does the CRC have a practice or protocol for self-reflection, and if not, should the group assess the success and impact of its own work?

During this journey, we categorized past CRC reports, selected three to audit this year, and identified both criterion and a recommended set of reports for future auditing. The results of these three audits and a guide for future audits are presented in this report.

Further, considerable energy was devoted to reflecting on the CRC's reporting conventions, protocols, and topic selection. These resulted in recommendations for (1) scheduling the monthly workflow of the CRC (including devoting an early meeting to training on the scope and best practices of a CRC), (2) organizing the CRC reporting cycle including audits, and (3) creating a new report template. This guidance will bring coherence to CRC reports and increase concise communication to the Board for the specific, high-impact recommendations proposed by future CRCs.

We also studied the purpose statement of the bylaws, voting to amend it to more accurately and succinctly reflect the work of the CRC.

We recommend that the 2016-17 CRC "road test" the recommendations in this report, with a return next school year to the more traditional CRC focus of advising the D39 Board of Education (Board) on specific strategies to support D39's mission.

II. Topic Selection and Methodology

An audit of the CRC -- its role, procedures, and bylaws -- has been suggested numerous times throughout its forty-three year history. The CRC chose to undertake such an audit for the 2015-16 school year, formally launching the effort at its June 2015 presentation to the Board.

A number of compelling factors drove the need for an audit, most relating to concerns regarding the effectiveness of CRC reports:

- The reports revealed a lack of uniform conventions (e.g., length, structure, research requirements);
- The impact of report recommendations was questionable or unknown;
- The time invested by members (estimated by some CRC members to be 2,000 people hours per year) was significant;
- The quantity of recommendations from CRC reports on an annual basis were potential obstacles for full Board implementation; and
- Some reports' topics and recommendations were seen as less relevant and less practical.

In response to these concerns, the CRC first defined its audit mission: *to determine the qualities of an impactful CRC that operates with efficiency and produces a report that supports D39's vision of "Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders."*

We established the 2015-16 broad goals to achieve that mission:

- Identify the qualities of a sound CRC report;
- Identify recommendations from prior CRCs that should be revisited; and
- Determine the role and structure of the CRC that best serves D39.

With a collection of approximately 130 reports to consider, the CRC first narrowed the field. Working with district leadership, the list was narrowed to a set of 30 reports through elimination of outdated reports (e.g., technology reports recommending the use of email for teachers) and reports too recent for assessing the extent of implementation and impact (generally five years or less).

Unsure of the time-intensity for auditing each report, the field was further narrowed to three, with the option to audit additional reports to advance our mission of determining the qualities of an impactful CRC. As the school year progressed, we determined we did not have the capacity or need to audit additional reports in order to achieve our mission and goals for this year.

The following reports were selected for the CRC audit:

- Gender Similarities and Differences in Learning, Development, and Performance (2005-06);
- Green Schools (2008-09); and
- Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders: Creative Learning Environments (2004-05)

These reports shared some important similarities and differences. The topics did not overlap with one another, yet each remains relevant to D39 initiatives and goals. They represented variable forms in length (from 27 to 97 pages) and in numbers of recommendations (from 5 to 90). These disparate forms provided a good range for our sample set to help us consider how best to bring more consistent form and convention to future CRC reports.

Three subcommittees formed. Each selected a dedicated individual lead, focused on one of three reports, and followed agreed upon a three-step evaluation procedure for the audits.

The first step in the evaluation procedure was for each subcommittee to complete an Audit Rubric template that the CRC created. (See Appendix A for a blank Audit Rubric.) The Audit Rubric helped capture details regarding the number and quality of the recommendations made in each report, comparing this data to interviews about the success of these recommendations. From these comparisons, the goal was to develop best-practice protocols for efficient, relevant, high-impact recommendations. (Appendices B-D

contain the three completed Audit Rubrics.)

Next, each subcommittee interviewed the following key stakeholders: Ray Lechner (D39 Superintendent), Melanie Horowitz (D39 Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction), Gail Buscemi (D39 Business Manager), Keith Dronen (former D39 School Board President and former CRC President), and Kimberly Alcantara (current D39 School Board member and former CRC President).

Finally, each subcommittee studied board minutes, superintendent reports, school improvement and other school-based reports, and numerous other relevant documents.

III. Audit Results

A. Gender Similarities and Differences in Learning, Development and Performance[1]

From the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, literature and research from reputable sources such as the American Psychological Association and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) addressed gender similarities and differences impacting learning, development, and performance in schools. This topic sparked the interest of members of the 2005-06 CRC, which formed a subcommittee to investigate the impact of gender similarities and differences in learning, development, and performance of D39 students. Within a total of 107 pages, the Gender Differences sub-team presented information detailing their research and findings through literature reviews, D39 student assessment data, and survey data to better understand the following:

- The extent (if any) boys and/or girls are underperforming in D39;
- The extent D39 policies or instructional practices contribute to gender-based differences in academic performance; and
- Possible levers used to address gender-based differences in academic performance.

As a result, the CRC made many recommendations, presenting nine main recommendations presented in its executive summary of that year's report. The CRC auditors found that almost all of the recommendations were implemented in subsequent years.[2] The recommendations are listed below with the CRC auditors' findings (in italics) about subsequent implementation:

1. "Adopt a mission statement regarding gender differences in learning. Educational literature states how boys and girls learn differently and our educational practice should reflect this belief."

   D39 fully supported and acknowledged that boys and girls learn differently and educational practices should reflect this belief. However, it is not the practice of the district to adopt mission statements.

2. "Build a database that would be a single repository for data on all tests and grades and that would permit longitudinal study."

   At the time, D39 embraced this recommendation and acknowledged the benefits of a database

---

[1] See Appendix B for the completed Audit Rubric.
[2] Documents reviewed by the CRC auditors included the 2006 Response to the CRC Reports, the 2006-07 Superintendent/District Goals, and 2006-07 School Improvement Plans.

serving as a single repository of data. While it was not feasible for the district to invest in this tool immediately, in the 2009-10 school year, D39 purchased INFORM, a single repository for student data, and has gradually implemented its use district-wide.

3. "Review teacher-hiring practices to ensure they are not biased against male applicants."

   A review of hiring practices was conducted immediately following this recommendation and the hiring rubric had been revised to reduce gender bias.

4. "Provide professional development as a means to encourage awareness of and support for the similarities and differences between genders across each area of development."

   (See #5)

5. "Educate the community on gender differences in learning."

   In regards to recommendations 4 and 5, professional development and community education during 2006-07 school year focused significantly on gender differences and similarities in learning and performance.

6. "Collaborate with New Trier on a K-12 study."

   Collaborations with New Trier do not focus specifically on gender similarities and difference. However, student information, including gender, is shared annually through avenues such as the freshman survey and transition meetings.

7. "Explore innovative classroom arrangements designed to support gender differences to learning and to increase classroom participation. Teachers need the information, freedom and support to make classroom adaptations that address gender. Changes that need to be made should assure teachers that flexibility, creativity, and unique methodology is encouraged to support both boys and girls in the classroom."

   (See #9)

8. "We recommend that School Impact Plan teams continue to address gender differences in learning in each school and compile hard data every year to measure progress. A team of SIP key persons might meet from all schools to share ideas and issues."

   (See #9)

9. "The D39 curriculum, and its delivery of instruction, should be carefully analyzed to see if gender differences are acknowledged and supported."

   D39 immediately implemented recommendations 7, 8, and 9 and continues to address them on a regular basis. The Board, Superintendent, administrators, and teachers continue to actively support and implement these recommendations.

In sum, the 2004-05 "Gender Similarities and Differences in Learning, Development and Performance" CRC report provided a clearly stated rationale for topic selection rooted in research. The sub-teams' targeted investigation into D39 data provided much evidence to support their findings. They reached conclusions and formulated recommendations based on relevant data derived from research displayed and

charts provided. The "big picture" recommendations proved to be highly feasible as noted by the district's follow-up response, the superintendent's goals, and the goals contained in the school improvement plans. In fact, the recommendations from this report continue to be implemented. The impact of gender similarities and differences on learning continues to be monitored and evaluated by D39 educators, administration, and Board of Education due to its relevance in today's educational setting.

B. Green Schools[3]

1. Report Overview

The 2008-09 CRC Green Schools Subcommittee identified the "Green" movement as being more than "kind to the Earth;" they perceived the need for future sustainability and "Green" practices that would be promoted through legislation. Re-evaluating common practices was required to ensure direction of funds toward sound environmental choices, rather than wasting money on destructive habits.

D39 already had a history of being a leader in environmental education, and in pockets throughout the district, teachers, parents and students were implementing "Green" projects and ideas. The mission of the Green Schools Report was to "highlight the strengths of the District and to recommend strategies, both fiscal and behavioral, to further drive the District toward authentic green practices. The subcommittee felt that the District was aware of the financial savings, and, additionally, had an obligation to prepare students for a "new model of how to live and work on our planet." Ultimately a "Green" committee with strategic plans was needed to achieve consistent efforts throughout the District.

The Green School Report is 193 pages long and examines ten key areas that can be leveraged for increased fiscal responsibility and sustainability, which include the following: Management Strategies, Energy Efficiency, Waste Management and Recycling, Purchasing and Green Cleaning, Indoor Air Quality, New and Existing Construction, Outdoor Air Quality, Landscaping and Gardens, Curriculum, and Communication.

Each of these sections includes an appendix with information guiding implementation of the recommendations, such as environmentally friendly products, websites, or examples of practices in other school districts. The report includes 200 recommendations, although some are duplicated or reworked for the different areas. The report's conclusion lists the following recommendations:

- Sign the Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact
- Hire or appoint a "Green Czar" for the district
- Change habits as the most economical way to achieve "green"
- Explore LEED recommendations
- Work together utilizing all members of the school and village community
- Conduct formal energy audits of both schools and administrative buildings
- Adopt official purchasing guidelines that reinforce the reduction of waste
- Commit to work together utilizing all members of the school and village community
- Create formal Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) requirements to use when making purchasing decisions, with oversight at the district level and clear recommendations
- Encourage less dependence on private vehicles
- Create a long-term District-wide sustainable landscaping plan
- Modify curriculum to include more environmental teaching criteria throughout all subject areas

---

[3] See Appendix C for the completed Audit Rubric.

- Develop a new curriculum with particular environmental themes as the focus for all learning areas, in essence making each school an environmental academy
- Institute annual professional development hours with a focus on gardening, environmental awareness, and sustainability
- Streamline communication

2.   Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation

A.   Superintendent's Report and District Performance Goals

On August 17, 2009, Superintendent Lechner shared with the Board his response to the Green Schools Report. An August 21, 2009 Action Item to the Board of Education summarizes the 2009-10 Superintendent/District Goals and are listed below.

Goal: Green Schools. The Superintendent will develop D39 Green Schools action plans, with short and long-term objectives to consider energy efficiency/consumption, waste reduction/reuse/recycling, landscaping/gardens, and school facilities, thereby reducing the overall carbon footprint on the environment.

Deliverables

1. Establish a District-level Committee:
   a. Review the CRC report during the fall of 2009;
   b. Review current district wide practices;
   c. Develop an action plan with specific deliverables and measurables; and
   d. Establish baseline data to measure improvement.
2. Establish School Based Action Plans in preparation for a "Biggest Loser Contest."
   a. Principals will agree upon "standard" measures and identify baseline data from the 2008-09 school year.
   b. Each school team will review the CRC report during the fall of 2009.
   c. Teams will document individual school data forming their 2008-09 baseline.
   d. Each school will review their internal school wide practices.
   e. Teams will develop an action plan including specific deliverables and measurables.
   f. Teams will identify ways to include students (e.g. student council or PTA/O club).
   g. The action plan becomes part of the School Improvement Plan for 2010-11.
   h. Biggest Loser contest will be held for 2010-11. The school with the greatest percentage decrease from 2008-09 baseline will win the contest.
3. Curriculum and Instruction will create guidelines for reviewing and formally embedding "green and environmental awareness themes" into standard curricula. These guidelines will be used during the typical curriculum review cycle. The first curriculum for formal review is Science, which is slated to begin in the fall of 2010.

B.   District Green Committee

The District formed a Green Committee in September 2009 which included seven parents, seven support staff members, and two administrators. Sub-committees studied the ten sections of the Green Report. To better understand the current energy use in all seven of its facilities, the District hired an energy consultant to perform an energy evaluation which was completed in March 2010. After studying and investigating the Green Report, and incorporating the findings of the outside energy consultant, the Green Committee presented the following action plan at the April 19, 2010 board meeting.

District Green Committee Action Plan 2010-11 Deliverables

1. Develop Energy policy to implement environmentally friendly practices.
2. Review energy building evaluation reports.
3. Reduce, recycle, and reuse the amount of waste from the buildings.
4. Develop purchasing procedures that promote the purchasing of green products.
5. Develop Indoor Air Quality policy and procedures to promote healthy educational learning environment.
6. Develop an environmental management dashboard to track carbon footprint on the environment.
7. Develop and implement a new communication plan.

Measures

1. Electricity usage will be reduced by 10% district-wide.
2. 95% of consumable products used to serve the food will be recyclable and\or compostable.
3. 90% of all indoor air quality tests will demonstrate clean air in-home buildings.
4. Dedicated webpage to support Green initiative on District/School websites, September 2010.
5. Environmental management dashboard will be on-line, December 2010.

C.   Board Recommendation

At the June 21, 2010 Board Meeting, the Board of Education approved the adoption of a resolution that solidified the District's commitment to promoting environmentally-friendly initiatives.

1. District 39 Board of Education recognizes the progress already made by the District's staff to incorporate sustainable design criteria into the District's capital improvements and renovations
2. The Board directs staff to expand this effort to ensure that every new addition and renovation project, from the beginning of the design process, incorporates healthy, high-performing design recommendations to the extent feasible; and that the focus be on criteria in the following priority areas:
    a. Operating cost minimization, through resource efficiency
    b. Minimizing the impact of District operations on the environment
    c. Taking advantage of financial incentive programs
3. The Board of Education endorses District's participation in and directs staff to pursue partnerships that further the goal of high-performance schools, including Federal, State and utility programs that provide sustainable design financial incentives
4. The Board of Education directs staff to report to the board annually

3.   Present Day Effects of the Green School Report

The District and Board of Education continue to make sustainability practices a priority in School District 39. The Superintendent's goals for 2015-16 contained a goal towards this objective.

A.   Superintendent's Report and District Performance Goals 2015-16

Goal: Identify areas to improve D39 sustainable practices through departments Business, Operations & Maintenance, Curriculum & Instruction, and Human Resources and for the Superintendent & building level administrators.

Deliverables

1. Evaluate current practices and identify a scope of potential sustainable practices and projects for the District
2. Identify and direct appropriate communication venues for information about sustainability efforts (such as data dashboard, newsletters, quarterly communiqués, board reports, principal email)
3. Review need for an additional C&I Coordinator Position, with responsibilities that includes environmental literacy education and sustainability (2016-17)
4. Collaborate with PTA/PTO leadership to develop a PTA/PTO enrichment newsletter that covers these topics: Enrichment opportunities related to sustainability, school garden activities and usage, and environmental awareness programming

Outcome

1. Report results of sustainability audit with recommended steps to the Board of Education (spring 2016)
2. Propose to the Board a long-term plan to increase sustainability throughout the District (spring 2017)

In conclusion, the District has implemented many of the suggestions, or elements thereof, over the past six years, beginning with hiring a consultant to conduct an audit. The consultant recommended not to pursue an initiative if the District could not save money by doing so within ten years of implementation. For example, installing new windows would have produced a savings over twenty years and therefore was not pursued. However, the District supported the spirit of the Green School Report in other ways by starting composting at several schools, integrating "green" into the curriculum, investigating "green" supplies, and changing to those supplies whenever possible. Recently, the District secured an outside agency to perform a subsequent audit, and a new Curriculum Coordinator position will include sustainability responsibilities.

In the future, the CRC does not need to revisit this topic. Sustainability is now a common practice for the District, in part thanks to the Green School Report. This particular report provides a model for "big picture" visioning for future CRC reports. Reports with operational recommendations are less helpful to the District. Further, a deeper dive into a narrowed topic leads to fewer concise recommendations, better organization, and better guidance for initial steps. For example, rather than including ways to perform an audit, the CRC should recommend implementing an audit, perhaps providing research about reputable companies to the Board.

C. Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders: Creative Learning Environments[4]

As D39 reviewed the 2004-05 Long Range Plan, it deemed it necessary to further research Tactic B to "define creative learning environments and research best practices." With this directive, the 2004-05 CRC researched and collected data for its report, *Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders*. That CRC conducted site visits, interviews, surveys, and focus groups to inform its work and foster the development of a twenty-seven page report (including ten pages of body text and seventeen pages of appendices.)

The *Teaching Tomorrow's Leader's* report presented to the Board of Education contained six recommendations. Following each recommendation is an overview of the Board's response to the proposal, the Board's suggestions for implementation, and an audit of the implementation.

1. Adopt Alan Bowd's Definition of Creativity.

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation

---

[4] See Appendix D for the completed Audit Rubric.

While the Board supported the definition, it did not have a formal process for adopting definitions. As a result, the Board recommended that during the 2006-07 school year, Bowd's creativity language be folded into student progress reports and pre-tenured teacher evaluations, and that it become common vocabulary for staff and parents.

Audit of Implementation
Looking back on this recommendation, more than ten years later, it is difficult to determine the evolution of implementation. However, Dr. Lechner believes that, in general, the current progress reports and pre-tenured teacher evaluations encompass the proposed definition of creativity.

2. Adopt the Crucial Elements of Creative Learning Environment and corresponding Evidence Table 1 as a model by which to develop teaching and classroom practices; structure building learning environments; and measure, assess and evaluate creative practices within the District.

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation
General Response: The initial response was to foster the development of creative teaching and learning environments by modeling, discussing, and supporting the continued development of the crucial elements highlighted in Table 1. Principals were encouraged to allow teachers opportunities to observe creative lessons in other's classrooms. Dr. Reardon, former Administrator for Human Resources, was expected to provide administrators with training on evaluating creative teaching in formal and informal observations.

Audit of Implementation
The table below contains the Board's response to each of the crucial elements necessary for creating a creative learning environment. In addition there are snapshots detailing how various schools implemented these practices. It would be remiss to assume that all methods of implementation are listed in the table.

2005 Board Response to Crucial Elements of a Creative Environment	Implementation Audit
Child Centered: This is the current expectation and is routinely communicated to staff by principals and should be shared with parents and teachers in a tri-fold report.	D39's program *Characteristics of Successful Learners* promotes the importance of respecting each child's unique contributions to the learning environment. On a whole, this element is addressed throughout all the provided goals and school improvement plans. Teachers are repeatedly given opportunities to learn about gender differences in the classroom. In addition during 2006-07 the **HMS** teachers participated in a professional development session on middle school students.
Learning Styles: This is the current expectation and is routinely communicated to staff by principals. Presently, the use of differentiated instruction is a piece of teacher evaluations. Principals should continue to emphasize the importance of this element crucial to	Analysis of the **Central** SIP for 2005-06 confirms that teachers are differentiating instruction specifically relating to gender. Teachers were also seen differentiating reading/writing instruction as necessary. SIP 2008-09 shows the use of continued instructional differentiation related to gender. The plan also confirms the evaluation of teachers to ensure the use of appropriate and varied academic and behavioral strategies.
	Analysis of **Harper** SIPS for 2006-07 and 2008-09 confirm that teachers made appropriate classroom and instructional adaptations to support gender differences. These adaptations were observed during principal evaluations.

developing creativity.	**McKenzie** SIP 2005-06 shows that teachers shared practices used to promote creativity and elevate levels of thinking during academic endeavors. In 2006-07 the SIP encourages the incorporation of varied instructional practices based on gender. A brochure was created regarding gender friendly classrooms. The School Improvement Plan for 2008-09 shows the use of continued instructional differentiation related to gender. The plan also confirms that teachers were evaluated to ensure the use of appropriate and varied academic and behavioral strategies.
	Romona SIP 2008-09 identifies the use of teacher observations and follow-up conferences to support instructional adaptations in regards to gender differences.
	Highcrest SIP 2007-08 addresses differentiated instruction specifically relating to gender differences. The SIP 2007-08 sets the expectation for flexible mathematics grouping.
	WJHS SIP 2005-06 addresses differentiated instruction specifically relating to gender differences.
Authentic Learning: This is currently addressed as a part of curriculum differentiation and should be apparent when looking at curriculum maps. Curriculum mapping should highlight strong examples of authentic learning opportunities and allow for district-wide sharing of these practices.	
Self-Advocacy Skills: Dr. Lechner and the Student Services team were charged with presenting to teachers how they could teach self-advocacy skills and organize effective student-led conferences.	On August, 22, 2008 the **District** offered an Institute Day with Jane Bailey: "Communicating Student Learning", "Grading Student Learning", and "Tools for Student-Led Conferences."
	Central SIP 2006-07 promotes problem solving, creative thinking, risk taking, adaptability, social responsibility, and communication in their student body. As noted in the 2008-09 District Performance Goals document teachers at **Central** were observed encouraging self-advocacy tools.
	As noted in the 2008-09 District Performance Goals document **WJHS** supported students in the learning of executive functioning skills and taught students organizational strategies. Students were also given time to monitor their progress.
Multiple Assessment Methods: This is the current practice in our schools. Curriculum mapping should help determine best practices and allow for district-wide sharing.	**Central** SIP 2006-07 encourages the use of multiple assessment methods to guide individual and group instruction.
	Based on the 2008-09 District Performance Goals document **McKenzie** teachers used performance-based assessments to expand ways students show what they know.
Integrated Curriculum: This is the current practice in our schools. Curriculum mapping should help determine further opportunities to integrate curriculum.	School Improvement Plans focus on integrating technology into the classrooms. Learning Commons are currently (2014) being rolled out into the D39 elementary schools over the next few years. These Learning Commons will serve as a dedicated space for the integration of technology and information literacy in an organic setting while also promoting creativity.
	McKenzie SIPs for 2005-06 and 2006-07 called for the integration of Spanish language and culture into K-4 curriculum. This goal was accomplished.

Leadership: The district will collect data from parents and staff to determine to what extent these parties believe that the district encourages and supports a creative, collaborative learning and teaching environment.	**Central** School SIP for 2006-07 highlights the successful development of a parent-staff book club to discuss *Transforming Schools* by Zmuda, Kulkas, and Kline and *5 Minds for the Future* by Levine—books that address the merits of creative thinking in a respectful learning environment. In addition, the school formed a Creativity Faculty Study group and established goals related to the promotion of creativity for the 2007-08 year.
	Analysis of **Harper** SIP 2006-07 shows that parents and teachers were educated through in-services, PTO meetings, school news, and books about the importance of differentiated instruction in the classroom.
	The **Romona** SIP 2007-08 identifies a planned staff development training to address teaching to specific genders and encourages teachers to make adaptations to methods, materials, and management strategies to support needs of boys and girls.

• Develop goals relating to creativity and to promoting and maintaining environments conducive to creativity as part of School Improvement Plans.

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation
Curriculum mapping took precedence at that point in time. The 2006-07 SIP plans will contain goals related to creativity.

Audit of Implementation
McKenzie SIP 2005-06 Goal #2: Identify and implement innovative teaching strategies to increase opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate creativity and critical thinking.
Central SIP 2006-07: Goal #1: Explore and share instructional strategies that foster creative thinking in students through Creativity Faculty Group.

• Include creativity as a professional development strand.

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation
Professional development had already been organized for the 2005-06 school year. Dr. Toni Shinners, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, led a committee that was tasked with weaving creativity into the professional development opportunities for 2006-07.

Audit of Implementation
- According to interviews with District 39 administrators, the D39 Foundation awarded a Gripp Grant to an educator for professional development related to creativity. This teacher disseminated the learned information to colleagues.
- August 22, 2008: Institute Day with Jane Bailey: "Communicating Student Learning", "Grading Student Learning", and "Tools for Student-Led Conferences."
- October 9, 2007: Institute Day Dr. Leonard Sax "Why Gender Matters: What Teachers Need to Know about Emerging Science and Sex Differences"
- Throughout 2008-09, Faculty Meetings and Professional Development opportunities were used to review and revise report cards and learn about grading practices related to differentiated work.
- In 2007-08 Romona School provided training about strategies for teaching different genders. ,
- In 2006-07, Harper teachers were educated about gender differences in learning and participated in workshops about best practices.
- Communicate to the District 39 community the findings of this report, including the

District's adoption of the definition of creativity, via new and existing venues (e.g. newsletters; parental participation in professional development, district and building meetings; district web page specific to creativity, etc.).

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation
In conjunction with the Technology Director, the Superintendent worked to summarize and disseminate the findings of this report for the staff and parents.

Audit of Implementation
It is not clear if this recommendation was implemented or not.

- Identify teacher-leaders in each school to develop strategies, and a field book of creative practices for use at each grade level.

Response to Proposal and Suggestions for Implementation
There is no official response recorded for this proposal.

Audit of Implementation
While there is no clear response to this recommendation, it appears that by analyzing the curriculum maps, strategies and best practices would be evident and accessible throughout the district.

In conclusion, the report, *Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders,* fulfills the Board's mandate to explore the nature of creative learning environments and researched best practices in relation to creativity. While we questioned the brevity of this report, clearly, the District embraced its content and goals. Of the six proposed recommendations, the Board embraced five of them. For the most part, these recommendations were implemented in various manners throughout the district. Because the report about gender differences immediately followed the creativity report, it appears creativity and gender were often seen collectively, rather than being viewed independently, which could cause some to argue that the creativity goals were not fully realized. However, according to those interviewed, creativity has been studied in different forms over the past ten years, showing the continued importance of circling back to this topic. Thus it can be concluded that the topic of creativity continues to carry weight in D39.

IV.   Recommendations for Improving the CRC and Its Reports

1. Revised Purpose

The last review of the CRC bylaws took place in 2013-14. Given the recent timing of that review and its focus on several operational suggestions to improve the CRC, this year's group decided to take a light-touch approach to the bylaws, focused on the central reason for the CRC's existence as reflected in the purpose statement of the bylaws.

After much thought and discussion from experienced and new CRC members, the group confirmed the accuracy of the existing purpose statement, noting that the CRC serves in an advisory capacity to the Board. However, there was consensus about the need for more concise language in the statement. Below are the existing and the refined purpose statements approved by vote of the CRC membership as required in the bylaws:

Existing Purpose Statement

The Community Review Committee (CRC) serves in an advisory capacity to the

Board of Education (BOE) for Wilmette Public Schools District 39 (District 39) to research specific topics that will lead to improvements in teaching, learning or managing the District's operations. The purpose of CRC shall be to: (1) research, study and discuss topic(s) under consideration by the BOE and/or of interest to the community and/or (2) help District 39 incubate, develop, and deliver a goal to which the BOE is already committed. Through the process of research and discovery, the CRC will also educate itself about educational issues that the CRC membership deems relevant to the annual topic selected by the CRC. At the end of each school year, the CRC shall produce a report, identify resources, and make recommendations to the BOE regarding the annual topic.

Refined Purpose Statement

The purpose of the CRC is to advise the Board on specific strategies that help fulfill District 39's mission. The CRC generally will select and research one topic of focus each year among suggestions solicited from District 39's Board of Education, faculty, staff, community, and CRC members. The CRC will also periodically audit past reports to assess implementation of recommendations by the Board. The CRC will present a formal report of its work and recommendations annually to the Board.

2. Research and Reporting: Timelines, Audits, Template Design, and Workflow

The Committee spent a significant time throughout the year considering both its reporting conventions and refining its protocols. Must discussion focused on the reporting cycle, whether it should be a one-year, eighteen-month, or two-year cycle. These discussions took into account the wide range of past CRC topics as well as the practicalities of having a volunteer-based entity. Conversations included a recognition that the CRC in any given year was of greater value to the Board, and hence to D39 and the community at large, when it was able to produce one quality report, as opposed to several reports across topics. We also felt that working more closely with the Board and District on topic selection beginning in the late Spring (instead of waiting until the summer as had often been the case) would make a big difference. Topic selection, in turn, would influence whether it would be best to use a one-year reporting cycle or a longer period of time. While the recommended "default" time period remains a one-year cycle, it is with the recommendation that there may very well be times when a longer cycle is needed for a given topic and that, in those instances, the Committee would make that recommendation the Board.

Drawing from our three auditing experiences this year, the CRC concluded that there is merit in future CRCs conducting audits. Doing so contributes to a sense of balanced accountability on the part of the CRC and the Board. Over time, audits theoretically will become easier to conduct as the institutional knowledge in the CRC becomes more ingrained and the methods for writing reports becomes more consistent. A set of several existing CRC reports remain good candidates for auditing, and that list is with the current Co-Presidents. As a general matter, we recommend a three-year auditing cycle to determine the impact of previous reports, according to the auditing protocol established in this report and using the rubric in Appendix A.

Based on what we saw in the wide range of approaches used in past reports, we prepared a set of criteria to help bring coherence to future reports. These criteria are embodied in a fill-in-the-blank reporting template that is in pdf format and can be modified to fit the selected topic. The full template is available from the Co-Presidents. We recommend that, during the 2016-17 school year, the template is road-tested with a goal of having a uniform format and length of future reports. (We recognize the irony of the fact that this year's report does not comply fully with the template; the template assumes a more traditional topic is selected than those tackled this year.)

The following is a summary of the actual template.

Cover Page	Title, Report Category, Date, Committee Members
Report Title	Indicates Research Focus
Table of Contents	Lists sections and subsections included with pagination
Acknowledgments	Cites contributions of non-committee members, if relevant
Executive Summary	No more than 3 pages. · States problem · Identifies research sources · Lists recommendations in order of priority
Research Summaries	No more than 15 pages Cites research to support recommendations. Research taken from · academic literature; · expert consultancy; · survey data All research sources in advance in consultancy with The Board to assure maximum validity, efficiency, and value in the research.
Recommendations	Summarized in Executive Summary No more than 10 included; prior to inclusion, considerations should be given to: · feasibility · alignment with teachers' contract · alignment with D39 priorities/vision · anticipated/reasonable PTA or community volunteer expectation level of volunteer expectation · action steps should allow for administrative discretion regarding implementation
Conclusion	No more than 3 pages. Rationale is revisited.
Post-report Audit: Review on a 3-year cycle	Built into each report is an anticipated audit cycle. ● Read Superintendent's response to the CRC Report for initial implementation intentions. ○ This report tells us which recommendations D39 did not implement. ● Read the Superintendent goals for the following academic year. ● Various schools strategic implementation plans ● Review each year as a CRC while faculty and staff are current to check implementation status

Finally, the Committee found it useful this year to track its work using a workflow chart similar to the one in Appendix E and recommends that future CRCs use a similar tool.

V. Conclusion

After so much valuable work over time, the 2015-16 CRC thought it best to reflect on its own form and function. With so much effort, time, and thought power dedicated to the CRC every year, this current committee took a year of reflection to pose many questions about stewardship and direction of important resources:

- What is the purpose of the CRC?
- How has the CRC organized itself and its members?
- Has the CRC conducted its business effectively?
- How should the CRC select its research topics and over what time period?
- What are the best practices that define research reports of the type that the CRC generates?
- Does the CRC have a practice or protocol for self-reflection, and if not, should the group assess the success and impact of its own work

We feel that the recommendations produced in this report will lead the CRC to a future of focused, productive, impactful work that can be measured and reflected upon with discipline and purpose.

Appendix A: Audit Rubric Template

REPORT TITLE: _____
NAME OF AUDITOR(s):_____
DATE (MONTH/YEAR) OF REPORT: _____
LENGTH OF REPORT (EXCLUDING APPENDICES):_____
NUMBER OF APPENDICES PAGES:_____
TOTAL REPORT LENGTH: _____
INCLUDES TABLE OF CONTENTS? Y/N
INCLUDES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY? Y/N
LISTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS? Y/N
REPORT CATEGORY: ___SEL   ___TEACHING & LEARNING
                     ___SCHOOL GOVERNANCE   ___OTHER: _____

Rationale for Topic Selection	1 No rationale provided	2 Rationale is stated but process is vague	3 Rationale is state and clear process for topic selection is delineated
Topic Description	1 Topic description is not succinct and includes no details	2 Topic description lacks pertinent details providing overview only	3 Topic is succinctly described and includes necessary details
Recommendations Locations	1 Recommendations are scattered throughout and difficult to find	2 Recommendations are included within each section of the report	3 Recommendations are summarized in one location for easy reference (and may also be included in each section of the report)
Recommendation Feasibility	1 Recommendation is unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (inc. staffing), and timeline	2 Recommendation is partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (inc. staffing), and timeline	3 Recommendation is realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing) and timeline
Recommendation Alignment with Teacher Contract	1 Would require a major change in working conditions	2 Would require a minimal change in working conditions	3 Aligns with existing contractual agreement
Recommendation Alignment with Existing District Priorities	1 Represents a totally new initiative	2 Partially aligned with current practices or recent initiatives	3 Completely aligned with current practices or recent initiatives
Recommendation Requirements for Volunteers	1 Requires high volunteer support	2 Requires minimal volunteer support	3 Requires no support from volunteers
Recommendation Action Steps	1 Does not provide for administrative decision-making regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	2 Provides some district discretion regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	3 Provides over-arching recommendation that requires district decisions about action steps and/or outcomes
Recommendation Implementation	1 Administration did not accept recommendation	2 Administration partially implemented recommendation	3 Administration fully implemented recommendation as stated in report

Appendix B: Audit Rubric for Gender Similarities and Differences
in Learning, Development, and Performance

Report Title: Gender Similarities and Differences in Learning, Development and Performance		Subcommittee #3's Recommendations for Components of a CRC Report	
Report Category: Teaching and Learning/Social Emotional Learning		Cover Page	Title, Report Category/District Priority alignment, Month/Date, Committee Members
Date (Month/Year)	June 2006	Table of Contents	Yes
# of Appendices Pages	64	Executive Summary	one-/two-page statement of the topic, the purpose of the communication, and a summary of the results, conclusions, and recommendations.
# of Recommendations	9 (Executive Summary)	Acknowledgements	If necessary, this would be a nice piece to highlight contributions of non-committee members.
Total Report Length	107	Research	Section should be "solid". (*the research in this report is great!*)
Table of Contents	Yes	Recommendations	No more than 10
Executive Summary	Yes		
Committee Members	Yes		

Rationale for topic selection	3	• Rationale is stated and clear process for topic selection is delineated
Topic description	3	• No comments
Recommendations location	3	• In Executive Summary and Section V of report. • All in one place and well organized, but quite a long list. • Clearly stated the main points in the summary and then included more detail in section 5. • I appreciated the overview in the summary.
Recommendation feasibility	3	• Feasible with many of them picked up by the Superintendent/District. • The info in section 5 was detailed and specific and I wondered if the timeline and initiatives should be set by the CRC

Recommendation alignment with Teacher Contract	**N/A**	• I agree that this should not be a factor in the evaluation of a CRC study/report. • I agree - but it may be nice to capture how the recommendations will affect teachers - does it require more of their time? will they need more professional development? • Should not be a factor, but noted to show changes will need to occur as that requires more work/time to implement • I agree with other's statements that this should not necessarily be a consideration. I would have to defer to others that are more familiar with teacher contracts. But do think it is worth considering how much of a 'game changer' is being suggested with the recommendations. are they totally new? Or do they build on existing ideas?
Recommendation alignment with existing district priorities	**3** **2**	• Very pertinent topic to instructional practices...topic continues to have relevance. • Believe it is relevant, but I feel this is particularly subjective. • Continues to be relevant • I cannot speak to the district priorities that existed at the time but think this is a relevant topic and would be interested to see how some of the thinking on the topic has evolved. I assume the district still considers the impact of gender on learning.
Recommendation requirements for volunteers	**No Score**	• I don't recall any references to volunteers. Cannot attach a numerical value to this one. It could be a good feature or an unnecessary feature. • Are we asking if it requires parent involvement or for parents to do something that would supplement what is being done in school? • I cannot speak to volunteers, but this long list of recommendations will most certainly require more man hours. • I didn't see anything asking for volunteers, but could require some for the recs to be carried out. • Not Sure
Recommendation action steps	**3** **1**	• Provides overarching recommendations that require district decisions about action steps and/or outcomes. • The recommendations were so specifically laid out, I felt there was not much left for administrative decision making as to how to implement them. • Leaves open for district/board to decide
Recommendation implementation	**3**	• Immediately after the report. Not sure about now…. HOWEVER, there are gender related efforts being made in the district currently. • I know there are current things around the district happening. Not sure what is a direct effect of the report.
What would be necessary to "assess implementation" of the report's recommendations?		• Read Superintendent's response to the CRC Report for initial implementation intentions. o This report would also tell us which recommendations the district did not implement. • Read the Superintendent goals for the following academic year. • Review each year as a CRC while teachers are current to check implementation status

Appendix C: Completed Audit Rubric for Green Schools

REPORT TITLE Green Schools

NAME OF AUDITORS: Amy Fitzgerald, Joe DiCamillo, Kathryn Hartrick, Kelly Jackson, Erin Stone, Libby Steigmann, and Emily Wingels

DATE (MONTH/YEAR) OF REPORT: 2008-2009

LENGTH OF REPORT (EXCLUDING APPENDICES): 62
NUMBER OF APPENDICES PAGES: 133
TOTAL REPORT LENGTH: 193

INCLUDES TABLE OF CONTENTS? Yes, poorly organized

INCLUDES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY? Yes

LISTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS? Yes

REPORT CATEGORY: ___SEL ___TEACHING & LEARNING ___SCHOOL GOVERNANCE _X_OTHER

EXPLAIN: Evaluates what makes a school district green, what SD 39 is and isn't doing, and how the district can strengthen and unify its commitment to being environmentally responsible.

IMPLEMENTATION RUBRIC FOR CRC TOPIC RECOMMENDATION				Unable to rate
Rationale for topic selection	1 No rationale provided	**1** 2 Rationale is stated but process is vague	**3** 3 Rationale is state and clear process for topic selection is delineated	
Topic description	**1** 1 Topic description is not succinct and includes no details	**2** 2 Topic description lacks pertinent details, providing overview only	**1** 3 Topic is succinctly described and includes necessary details	
Recommendations location	**1** 1 Recommendations are scattered throughout the report and difficult to find	**3** 2 Recommendations are included with each section of the report	3 Recommendations are summarized in one location for easy reference (and they may also be included in each section of the report)	

Recommendation feasibility	**1** 1 Recommendation is unrealistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline	**3** 2 Recommendation is partially realistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline	3 Recommendation is realistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline	
Recommendation alignment with Teacher Contract	**1** 1 Would require a major change in working conditions	2 Would require a minimal change in working conditions	**2** 3 Aligns with existing contractual agreement	**1**
Recommendation alignment with existing district priorities	1 Represents a totally new initiative	**1** 2 Partially aligned with current practices or recent initiatives	**1** 3 Completely aligned with current practices or recent initiatives	**2**
Recommendation requirements for volunteers	**3** 1 Requires high volunteer support	**1** 2 Requires minimal volunteer support	3 Requires no support from volunteers	
Recommendation action steps	**1** 1 Does not provide for administrative decision-making regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	**3** 2 Provides some district discretion regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	3 Provides over-arching recommendation that requires district decisions about action steps and/or outcomes	
Recommendation implementation	1 Administration did not accept recommendation	2 Administration partially implemented recommendation	3 Administration fully implemented recommendation as stated in the report	

Feedback regarding the Green Schools Report:

- Goals should have been prioritized/limited

To assess implementation of the Green Schools Report:

- Would need a list of goals – which has been started
- Determine which goals were adapted
- Ray Lechner
- Melanie Horowitz
- Current D39 facilities committee
- Follow-up Board of Ed reports
- Teacher and administration interviews
- Documentation in principal goals and building SIP plans

Creative Learning Environments

REPORT TITLE **Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders…"creative learning environment"**
NAME OF AUDITOR **Brooke, Nicky, Andy, David, Rebecca, and Laurie**

DATE (MONTH/YEAR) OF REPORT **June 2005**

LENGTH OF REPORT (EXCLUDING APPENDICES) **10**
NUMBER OF APPENDICES PAGES **17**
TOTAL REPORT LENGTH **27**

INCLUDES TABLE OF CONTENTS? Y/**N**

INCLUDES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY? **Y**/N

LISTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS? **Y**/N

REPORT CATEGORY: **X SEL** ___TEACHING & LEARNING ___SCHOOL GOVERNANCE
__OTHER
(EXPLAIN_____)

FINAL TOTAL SCORE FOR RUBRIC: 20

IMPLEMENTATION RUBRIC FOR CRC TOPIC RECOMMENDATION			
Rationale for topic selection	1 No rationale provided	2 Rationale is stated but process is vague	**3** **Rationale is state and clear process for topic selection is delineated**
Topic description	1 Topic description is not succinct and includes no details	2 Topic description lacks pertinent details, providing overview only	**3** **Topic is succinctly described and includes necessary details**
Recommendations location	1 Recommendations are scattered throughout the report and difficult to find	2 Recommendations are included with each section of the report	**3** **Recommendations are summarized in one location for easy reference (and they may also be included in each section of the report)**
Recommendation feasibility	1 Recommendation is unrealistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline	**2** **Recommendation is partially realistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline**	3 Recommendation is realistic in terms of finances, available resources (including staffing), and timeline

Recommendation alignment with Teacher Contract	1 Would require a major change in working conditions	**2** **Would require a minimal change in working conditions**	3 Aligns with existing contractual agreement
Recommendation alignment with existing district priorities	1 Represents a totally new initiative	**2** **Partially aligned with current practices or recent initiatives**	3 Completely aligned with current practices or recent initiatives
Recommendation requirements for volunteers	1 Requires high volunteer support	2 Requires minimal volunteer support	**3** **Requires no support from volunteers**
Recommendation action steps	1 Does not provide for administrative decision-making regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	**2** **Provides some district discretion regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes**	3 Provides over-arching recommendation that requires district decisions about action steps and/or outcomes
Recommendation implementation	1 Administration did not accept recommendation	2 Administration partially implemented recommendation	3 Administration fully implemented recommendation as stated in the report

COMMENTS ABOUT HOW TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION

• Determine if the topic was considered relevant and implementation was started/completed.

• Analyze minutes from the Board to gather basic information about the implementation of the recommendations.

• Determine multiple people, critical to the implementation, to interview about the process and outcome.

• Consider how cost, man power, and time impacted the implementation or lack there of.

• How/Why were the recommendations revised/rejected as the implementation unfolded?

Appendix E. Recommended Annual Workflow for Future CRCs

Assumes one report/year; should be road-tested in 2016-17 for usability.

June	July	August	September
Meeting: [insert date] Parent and at-large committee recruitment completed. New Executive Board begins its term. Topic is selected if possible after consultation with the Board and Superintendent. If not possible to select one, then a small set of candidate topics is identified and assessed for feasibility. Consider report for auditing.	No meeting Meeting schedule for upcoming year is set in consultation with the D39 office and a preliminary membership list is circulated. Topic selection for new report and scope of audit of past report confirmed. First update of CRC section of D39 website.	Meeting tbd. Superintendent presents at Board meeting his formal responses to CRC recommendations. CRC members encouraged to attend. Faculty recruitment completed.	Meeting: [insert date] Training session for CRC members: bylaws, templates, audit procedures Second update of the CRC section of D39 website; adds faculty members. Subcommittees formed.
October	**November**	**December**	**January**
Meeting: [insert date] Working meeting; specifics to be determined based on topic and audited report selected.	Meeting: [insert date] Working meeting; specifics to be determined based on topic and audited report selected.	Meeting: [insert date] Audits complete and audit report writing commences.	Meeting tbd. (If a December meeting, might not have a January one and vice versa).
February	**March**	**April**	**May**
Meeting: [insert date] Working meeting; specifics to be determined based on topic and audited report selected. Report writing commences.	Meeting: [insert date] Working meeting; specifics to be determined based on topic and audited report selected. Report writing continues.	Meeting: [insert date] Review first draft of report. Recruiting for next year begins, including providing job description of the position to VWPTO.	Meeting: [insert date] Complete report. Confirm current CRC members continuing on for the next school year v. cycling off. Start recruitment for next year's CRC. Solicit topics for next report. Final CRC report presented to D39 Board at its May meeting.