

THE MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Madison, Wisconsin

COPY

July 19, 1965

Professor J. Ben Rosen
3426 Lake Mendota Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Dear Professor Rosen:

In Professor Buck's last letter to me I was requested to respond to you in view of the fact that he and Professors Rudin and Askey would probably be out of the city. I am sending copies of this letter with the math committee's recommendations to others who have expressed an interest in this matter, together with the Board of Education members.

In a letter to Professor Buck dated May 12, 1965 and again at a meeting with him and several other professors from the University on May 25, 1965 in my office, I indicated I would ask the math textbook selection committee to review their recommendations with respect to the adoption of the ninth grade math books. It was also indicated that the recommendations of this committee would be followed. You will find attached a copy of that committee's final report.

Some concern has been expressed over our utilization of resources of the University of Wisconsin in the consideration of curricular problems. We have in the past, and it is hoped will continue in the future to take advantage of such resources. We appreciate the willingness of University staff members to be of assistance. This resource is unquestionably a valuable one. It must, however, be pointed out that decisions regarding the use of outside resources are an internal responsibility of this organization. Obviously we will not use the University or its personnel on all problems, nor will we be able to use everyone available when they are used.

We do hope that members of the University staff will be willing to work with us on further evaluation of our math program. During the last two years of using the Scott Foresman books in grades 7 and 8 our staff evaluations as well as test results have provided favorable data. We all recognize the importance of mathematics in the curriculum and would like further data upon which we can continue to base improvements in it.

We appreciate your interest and the time all of you have spent on this question. Mr. Losby will be in contact with you regarding our future study in the area of mathematics.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. GILBERTS (signed)

Superintendent

RDG:ker
Enclosure

June 29, 1965

Dr. Robert D. Gilberts
Superintendent of Schools
351 West Wilson Street
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Gilberts:

Enclosed is the final report of the 1964-65
Mathematics 9 Textbook Committee. The report is divided
into two parts as follows:

- A. Explanation of Committee's position
- B. Committee recommendation

We believe that the present textbook selections will
help us in developing a good junior high mathematics program.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Ted E. Losby, Chairman

June 29, 1965

REPORT OF THE MATHEMATICS 9
TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

A. Explanation of Committee's Position

The mathematics committee of the junior high schools of Madison has been meeting regularly for four years with one intention in mind -- to improve the mathematics program of the junior high school. After experimenting with three programs in the 7th grade, the Seeing Through Mathematics series, Books 1 and 2, were recommended for adoption and approved in May of 1963.

The committee continued its leadership role in implementing the new program and began evaluation of the 9th grade textbooks available. The committee recommended the adoption of Seeing Through Mathematics, Book 3, published by Scott, Foresman and Company, and Algebra: Its Elements and Structure, Book 1, published by Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, and the Board of Education adopted them on May 3, 1965.

A number of objections to the Seeing Through Mathematics textbooks were made by various University of Wisconsin professors. Dr. R. C. Buck, chairman of the University of Wisconsin Mathematics Department strongly criticized the series. A public objection to the adoption was made at the Board of Education meeting by Dr. Richard Askey of the University Mathematics Department. Later, a formal petition of protest against the adoption of Seeing Through Mathematics, Book 3, was sent to committee members.

The sincerity of the eminently qualified professional mathematicians under Dr. Buck's chairmanship was recognized by both the administration and the committee as calling for reconsideration of the committee's decisions over the

past three years relative to the choice of Seeing Through Mathematics 1, 2 and 3. Conversely, the support of the Scott, Foresman and Company mathematics program and its instructional philosophy, as evidenced by numerous adoptions throughout the country and the pilot studies carried out in the Madison Public Schools indicated that equitable treatment of those holding diametric viewpoints should be given. It was decided that the interests of the students to be taught would be best served through a hearing of both sides before reconsideration.

A special meeting of the Junior High School Mathematics committee was held on June 10, 1965.

Meeting 1. Presentations were made by Dr. R. C. Buck, Dr. Richard Askey, and Dr. Walter Rudin of the University of Wisconsin Mathematics Department, and Dr. J. B. Rosen, chairman-elect of the University of Wisconsin Computer Sciences Department.

The presentations emphasized the speakers' major criticism of the Seeing Through Mathematics series -- "that these books completely distort the ideas and spirit of modern mathematics, and do not give students a good preparation for future mathematics courses."¹ Examples were used to show that from the speakers' points of view the emphasis in Seeing Through Mathematics is wrong. They indicated they felt the language overly pedantic, and the mathematics of the textbooks was described as pseudo-mathematics. However, it was pointed out that the choice of topics was good, the content was acceptable (except for individual instances), and the treatment was consistent⁽³⁾. A question and answer session followed the presentations.

¹Dr. R. C. Buck

(*) e.g. At Central High the series was dropped after a one year trial.
 (2) but the presentation was bad
 (3) consistent but not the way that any sensible person would do it.

Meeting 2. Presentations were made by Dr. H. Van Engen, University of Wisconsin, Dr. H. C. Trimble, Ohio State University, and Ray Cleveland, Mathematics Supervisor K-12, Rahway, New Jersey.

The presentations emphasized and re-enforced their claim that the Seeing Through Mathematics books were both mathematically and pedagogically sound. The favorable results obtained in using the Seeing Through Mathematics materials in another school system were given as an example of supporting evidence. (14)
Follow-ups of these students' high school work in advanced mathematics and calculus indicated that their preparation had been as adequate as any others. A general discussion ensued concerning the relationship between the University and public schools in the procedure of textbook selection for public school use. (5)
A question and answer session followed the presentations.

B. Recommendation of the Committee

Committee Meeting, June 17, 1965. Superintendent Gilbers prefaced this final meeting with a statement setting forth the committee's responsibility to decide on a recommended program including textbook usage as well as procedures for continued evaluation and revision proposals. The committee then proceeded to discuss possible alternatives to the original recommendation and the effects which each might have on the mathematics curriculum.

The committee has encountered many conflicting ideas in listening to opinions from respected mathematicians⁽⁶⁾ and mathematics educators, reading book reviews of Seeing Through Mathematics, reviewing current literature and research on the modern programs of mathematics, examining teachers' opinions

- (4) I asked Losby about specific evidence of just this type and he denied knowing of any. This was after June 10.
- (5) In this context I feel that it is particularly inappropriate for the authors of a book to appear. If disinterested qualified people had appeared I would have felt much happier.
- (6) As far as I know no respected mathematician defended these books before the committee.

of the program here and in other cities, analyzing the city-wide test results, and re-evaluating their own experiences with the books in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade classrooms.

It is the recommendation of the committee, with all of these conflicting opinions, to set up with all concerned a research proposal which will give further evidence to judge the effectiveness of the series..

After careful consideration of all points of view, the committee unanimously recommended:

1. that the University of Wisconsin Mathematics and Education Departments be invited to participate with our Curriculum Department in developing and carrying out a program to evaluate the effectiveness of the Seeing Through Mathematics series and, if possible, other "modern" mathematics series in Madison and other school districts in Wisconsin;
2. that the committee reaffirm its decision to recommend the use of Seeing Through Mathematics, Book 3, and Algebra: Its Elements and Structure, Book 1, in grade nine with Seeing Through Mathematics, Book 1 and 2 in grades seven and eight, and that the Department of Curriculum Development of the Madison Public Schools continue its study, its evaluation, and its revision of the mathematics curriculum; and
3. that an in-service program be requested for all junior high school mathematics teachers. (Details to follow in a later bulletin).

The committee wishes to express its desire to work with the University Mathematics and Education Departments in planning and developing curriculum guidelines this summer to implement the junior high school program.

A cooperative spirit is necessary to insure a good educational program for our youth in the field of mathematics.

Respectfully submitted,

William E. Kuenzi, Jr.
Robert L. Cleveland
Ray C. Clausen
Mrs. Paula Suomi
Pete Sufka
Ronald A. Gray
Barbara Norene
Rick Habermann
Allan J. MacDonald
Linda Thompson
Gertrude Anderson
David B. Steinbring
Ted E. Losby
Hazel McFarland
Marguerite Wojta