

Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Committee Minutes

Board Office Conference Room #231

April 14, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Debby Cashman, Denette Kuhlman, Jan Leimbach, Jeff Mays, Cheryl Vogler, Jan Zeidler, Jan Cory, Lauren Kiest, Jim Rubottom

Committee member(s) absent: Stephanie Erwin

Board members, staff and others: Anne Cashman, Kim Dinkheller, Danielle Edgar, Carol Frericks, Ed Husar, Jeff Kerkhoff, Jody Steinke, Julie Stratman, Dan Sparrow, WGEM reporter, Sheldon Bailey, Julie Ross, Mark Pfeleger

1. Call to order

Jeff Mays, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. Information provided to Committee

A. Graduation Honors Task Force Report

Curriculum Committee Task Force Members Denette Kuhlman and Jan Leimbach reported on the graduation honors review process. They reported that the task force formed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to review current graduation honors practices with representation of parents from all QPS schools, QPS administration and the community at-large. The committee reviewed our current policy and practices, as well as policies and practices of other Illinois schools. In addition, the CAC researched and reported the criteria universities are looking at in their admission decision-making process. There was much discussion and research during the process. At the 5th and final Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting, members reported back to the committee on the feedback they had received from parents, teachers, students and the community for whom they represented regarding graduation honors.

The 3 options for awarding graduation honors were:

- Continue to name a valedictorian/salutatorian based solely on GPA.
- Continue to name a valedictorian/salutatorian based on GPA and the number of credits earned.
- Adopt a Summa Cum Laude/Magna Cum Laude system.

Consensus of the Task Force:

- Adopt a Summa Cum Laude/Magna Cum Laude system. Increase the minimum GPA required for each award so that it truly reflects the students who are doing the outstanding work.
- Graduation speeches to be submitted and selected from Summa Cum Laude graduates.
- This practice will start with the 2014-2015 freshman class.

Danielle addressed the issue of students taking correspondence courses; she stated the district must accept those courses as they are accredited. There was discussion on how class rank and graduation honors are calculated. Class rank is determined by GPA in all classes, whereas graduation honors are calculated on GPA in core courses, Danielle stated there is rarely a difference. Informing all students and

their families on the opportunities available to enhance the student's GPA's was again discussed. The choices students make in regard to grade weighted classes and the impact on their GPA was discussed. Danielle stated that re-evaluating the grade weighed courses that are offered is being considered. Jan Leimbach pointed out that the GPA's for the top students many times differ by only a few hundredths of a percent, so adopting a Summa/Magna Cum Laude system would recognize the highest achieving students. Also, it is hoped that the use of OVERGRAD beginning in the 9th grade will impress upon the students the importance of rigor in their course selections, as a means of preparing for admission to college.

Carol Frericks commented on the genuine interest of the Citizen's Advisory Committee members in the graduation honors review process. She stated that we are all much more knowledgeable about the system because of the committee's efforts. Jeff Mays also congratulated the committee on a job well done.

Denette and Jan will present the Citizens Advisory Committee's recommendation on graduation honors to the School Board at its April 23rd meeting.

B. Mission and Vision Statements

Committee members were given a handout which contained the top choices for our mission and vision statements as decided by the Rising Star Continuous Improvement Team (RSCIT) members at the district and building levels. There were recommendations to shorten the mission statement to make it more concise. The suggestions by committee members on revising the statements that were presented will be taken back to the RSCIT teams at the district and building levels for further discussion.

Carol described the vision statement as a tool we use to set goals, at the district and building levels, to determine the direction of the district. It was suggested that the mission statement should bring everyone together for a common cause, while the vision statement is used to make choices and decisions and does not need to be as brief as the mission statement.

C. Course Proposals for 2014-2015

QJHS/QHS: Science Course Alignment Proposal

Quincy Junior High School/Quincy Senior High School

2014-15 Science Course Sequence Proposal

	Current	Proposed
Total Graduation Credits	3	3
7 th Grade	Life Science	Life Science
8 th Grade	Physical Science	Physical Science
9 th Grade	Environmental Science or TAG Biology	Biology or Honors Biology
10 th Grade	Biology or Honors Chemistry	Chemistry; Fundamentals of Chem/Phys; or Honors Chemistry
11 th Grade	Fundamentals of Chem/Phys;	Physics; Chemistry; AP Physics;

	Chemistry; Physics; AP Physics; or AP Chemistry	or AP Chemistry
12 th Grade Electives	Physics AP Physics Human A & P Microbiology Zoology Forensics	Physics AP Physics Human A & P Microbiology Zoology (PLTW Biomedical Strand)

Proposed Timeline

	2014-15	2015-16
7 th Grade	Life Science	Life Science
8 th Grade	Physical Science	Physical Science
9 th Grade	Biology or Honors Biology	Biology or Honors Biology
10 th Grade	Biology or Honors Chemistry	Chemistry; Fundamentals of Chem/Phys; or Honors Chemistry
11 th Grade	Fundamentals of Chem/Phys; Chemistry; Physics; AP Physics; or AP Chemistry	Physics; Chemistry; AP Physics; or AP Chemistry
12 th Grade	Physics; AP Physics; Human A & P; Microbiology; Zoology; Forensics	Physics; AP Physics; Human A & P; Microbiology; Zoology; PLTW Biomedical Strand

Jody Steinke gave a brief summary of the Science Course Alignment Proposal. The sequence of classes would be rearranged. Biology would be offered in 9th grade to align with many districts in the rest of the state. QPS requires 3 science credits to graduate, and the state requirement is 2. It was pointed out that colleges are looking for 9th graders to take biology. Biology would be offered to both 9th and 10th graders next year as the transition is made. There was discussion on Project Lead the Way classes and the overlap in the current curriculum. It was mentioned that Science for Life Kits are still being used in elementary and junior high. It was noted that Project Lead the Way- Introduction to Engineering, is the only grade weighted course offered in 9th grade. The *QJHS/QHS: Science Course Alignment Proposal* will be presented to the School Board for approval at its next meeting on April 23, 2014.

QAVTC: Diesel Equipment Technology Proposal

Jeff asked if there were any questions for Mark Pfeleger pertaining to the *QAVTC: Diesel Equipment Proposal* that Mark presented at last month's meeting. Mark stated he had surveyed counselors from 3

high schools and he presented data that confirmed a solid interest in this type of program. He noted Carl Sandburg is introducing a similar program at the college level, which would allow students to continue on, post-secondary in a related program. Jeff asked for a recommendation to move forward with the proposal. Lauren Kiest recommended the *Proposal to Establish a Technical Program in Diesel Equipment Technology* be submitted to the School Board for approval at its next meeting, on April 23, 2014.

Mark stated that he wanted to recognize Curriculum Committee member Lauren Kiest for his financial commitment to QAVTC for the purpose of procuring “Solidworks” software for teaching this state of the art 3D computer aided design software program in the QAVTC Computer Aided Design/Drafting program, starting next year. This gift also includes cost for training the CAD instructor for this program.

QJHS: Project Lead the Way Proposal (PLTW)

Dan Sparrow and Kim Dinkheller presented the proposal to offer PLTW Gateway to Technology (GTT) foundation courses at Quincy Junior High as 7th and 8th grade elective course options.

PLTW GTT Course Information:

PLTW’s Gateway program is a strong foundation for further STEM learning in high school and beyond, challenging students to solve real-world challenges, such as cleaning oil spills and designing sustainable housing solutions. Using the same advanced software and tools as those used by the world’s leading companies; students learn how to apply math, science, technology, and engineering to their everyday lives. (www.pltw.org) The Gateway to Technology (GTT) program grows student interest in Project Lead the Way’s Pathway to Engineering, Biomedical Sciences and STEM careers. QHS/QAVTC currently offers courses in PLTW’s Pathway to Engineering and will be offering courses in the Biomedical Pathway in the future. PLTW courses are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (recently adopted in Illinois) and the Common Core Standards for English and Math are included in the frameworks for each module. The courses are geared toward 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.

The foundation courses, *Design and Modeling* and *Automation and Robotics* must be offered to some group of students within 2 years. QJHS wants to implement the foundation courses over the course of two school years (2014-15 and 2015-16). Next year QJHS will shorten classes by 4 minutes in order to allow for a 9 period school day, all 7th and 8th grade students will have 9 hours in their regular school day schedule. The change will allow for “team planning” for teachers during the day and to expand exploratory arts opportunities for 7th and 8th grade students. The Quincy Public Schools Foundation has agreed to fund the startup costs for the program dependent on the Curriculum Committee’s and the School Board’s approval. Jeff reiterated the Curriculum Committee’s support for PLTW GTT. Loren Kiest recommended that the proposal *To Offer Project Lead the Way Gateway to Technology Foundation Courses at Quincy Junior High School as 7th and 8th Grade Elective Course Options*, be submitted to the School Board for approval at its next meeting on April 23, 2014.

Dan Sparrow presented a handout on, *What is Teaming and Why is it Important at Quincy Junior High School?*, for discussion at the next Curriculum Committee meeting on May 12, 2014. This will also be sent via email to committee members.

Julie Stratman addressed Curriculum Committee Debby Cashman’s questions regarding grammar at Baldwin and if they are using it with fidelity? Julie stated Baldwin has begun using Right Source this

year, it has been added into units of study in all sections. She will provide more information on Talented and Gifted (TAG) fidelity and curriculum as she receives it.

Julie Ross, from Quincy Public Schools Foundation, stated they will have a representative present at Curriculum Committee meetings going forward.

3. **Recommend to the Board of Education for Action –**
 - Citizens Advisory Committee’s proposal on graduation honors
 - QJHS/QHS: Science Course Alignment Proposal
 - Proposal to Establish a Technical Program in Diesel Equipment Technology
 - Proposal To Offer Project Lead the Way Gateway to Technology Foundation Courses at Quincy Junior High School as 7th and 8th Grade Elective Course Options
4. **Consider any other matter relating to the Curriculum needs or concerns of the District –none**
5. **Questions and comments from the Public**
6. **Adjourn: 6:50 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 12, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.