

Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Committee Minutes

Board Office Conference Room #214

December 9, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Debby Cashman, Stephanie Erwin, Denette Kuhlman, Jan Leimbach, Jeff Mays, Cheryl Vogler, Jan Zeidler.

Committee member(s) absent: Jim Rubottom, Jan Cory, Lauren Kiest

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

1. Call to order

Jeff Mays, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Information provided to Committee

A. QHS Grading Practices

Graduation honors and grading practices were discussed. Danielle Edgar pointed out that many school districts are moving away from the process of selecting salutatorians and valedictorians. This is due in part to the practice of parents and students beginning at an early age to focus on grade weighted classes in an attempt to gain an advantage. QPS policy of allowing students to audit classes also plays a part in this scenario. The classes available for audit were mentioned, such as music, art, PE. The practice of allowing students to audit classes does not appear to be prevalent in the majority of schools, and does require some explanation on student transcripts, according to Danielle and Jody Steinke. It was pointed out that the quest to become valedictorian seems to have become more about grade point average than the learning process. The advantages of being valedictorian were also presented, these included admission points and scholarship money. Danielle discussed moving to a summa cum laude and magna cum laude system of recognition, while maintaining class rank.

Jeff asked how we should proceed and Carol said, in policy, a citizens advisory council can be established to meet and research this topic and bring their findings back to the committee. A recommendation can then be made to the School Board regarding graduation honors. Jeff asked Carol, Danielle, Jan Leimbach and Denette Kuhlman to head up the citizens advisory council.

Grading practices were discussed, and concern over the 80/20 policy, particularly with QJHS students, was mentioned. Parents have asked where the incentive is to do homework under the current grading policy, according to Dan Sparrow.

B. Drug Prevention Education Curriculum/Programs

Jeff said the Board feels we must have a comprehensive drug education program in place in order to address the problem of drugs in our schools. He surveyed those present on what is currently being used at each level. Julie Stratman said that in K-5 there are many programs in place, such as 2nd Step and Learn Not To Burn, but no uniformity. Many elementary schools use PLC time to address drug prevention with students. The 6th graders all participate in DARE. 9th graders attend a presentation by Judge Drummond on 7 Reasons to Leave the Party. 8th and 11th graders take a mandated health class

which addresses drug prevention and healthy habits aligned to the Illinois State Standards. Carol pointed out that from 1990-2003 there was a comprehensive program in place at all grade levels called, Here's Looking at You 2000. Jan Zeidler offered that the program was not updated and was no longer current, as an explanation as to why it is no longer being used. Jeff suggested that finding a drug prevention program that is current, aligned to required standards, and addresses all ages, would allow us to drop some of the other programs. The importance of finding a way to fit this instruction into the school day without adding to it was stressed. Carol and Julie will put together a list of programs currently being used in our district for the December 18th Board meeting, and review what other programs are available.

C. Proposal for Social Studies Coursework Grades 7-12-Changes for 2014-2015

Social Studies Course Sequence Proposal

	Current	Proposed
Total Graduation Credits	2	2.5
7 th Grade	Geography	Geography
8 th Grade	American History	American History
9 th Grade	U.S. History I	World History
10 th Grade	U.S. History II	U.S. History
11 th Grade		Government (.5)

Proposed Timeline

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
7 th Grade	Geography	Geography	Geography
8 th Grade	American History	American History	American History
9 th Grade	World History	World History	World History
10 th Grade	U.S. History II	U.S. History	U.S. History
11 th Grade			Government (.5)

Jody Steinke gave a brief summary of classes currently being offered, as well as the proposed offering of World History. He pointed out there is a gap that has become more apparent with College, Career, and Civics (C3) alignment. According to Jody other LUDA districts offer 2-3 years of World History. AP classes will continue with the possibility of adding an AP Government class at Quincy Senior High. Kim said K-12 is really what we are looking at; the work is just beginning at the 7-12 level. The changes will be made 7-12 and will filter down. Jody said they are proposing changing the requirement from 2 to 2.5 credits for Social Studies. Jeff voiced concern about adding the extra .5 credit; he asked if this will crowd out other courses. Danielle said many schools require less science and more history than we do. Danielle would like this proposal taken to the Board. Jeff made a motion to recommend to the Board to adopt the Proposal for Social Studies Coursework Grades 7-12-Changes for 2014-2015, and Debbie Cashman seconded it.

D. Illinois Pathways Update

Illinois Pathways is an Illinois-led STEM education initiative designed to support college and career readiness for all students. Danielle Edgar presented the 10 career pathways that they are working to develop, these include:

- Manufacturing
- Health Services
- Engineering
- Business/Financial Services
- Art, Audio/ Visual Technology, and Communication
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Architecture and Construction
- Human Services

Danielle said they hope to have these in place and begin enrollment in February. Danielle said this would improve the conversations between counselors and students on the importance of choices students make in high school. Jeff discussed the CompTIA program in place at Quincy Senior High, and its benefits to students. Carol stated that Career Cruising, a 21st Century Learning and Skills Agenda, is endorsed by the West Central Regional Office. Graduation requirements and electives as they relate to these programs were discussed. Carol commended the team, Danielle Edgar, Jody Steinke, Dan Sparrow and Kim Dinkheller on their commitment to this initiative, and the fact that they increased the pathways from 3 to 10.

E. K-6 Math Textbook Adoption

Julie began the discussion by stating that Everyday Math had been used for 16-17 years in the district, and stated that a K-5 updated version was on display in the back of the meeting room. The members were also given a handout on “Everyday Mathematics and the Common Core State Standards: Addressing the Shifts of the Publishers’ Criteria.” There was concern expressed from some members, about Everyday Math, particularly the spiraling approach of the curriculum. Julie pointed out that in the past lack of training had been a hindrance and this is being addressed currently by bringing in trainers for our District Math Implementation Team. The question was posed as to whether teachers would still be using Basic Facts with Everyday Mathematics, and the answer was yes. The importance of providing training for a required curriculum was stressed. Carol stated that Curriculum Connector which our District Math Implementation Team will receive training on in January, can be used as a resource. Jeff stated there needs to more clarity and focus with Everyday Math and that this will come from the Curriculum Directors.

Dan Sparrow brought up the subject of retaining students who are not meeting standards. Carol suggested aligning with efforts in our community such as Youth on Track and she said common assessments are currently being built for ELA and Math. Another suggestion was made to check students at the end of grades 3, 5 and 8 to see if they have met expectations. There was agreement that students should not be socially promoted. Carol suggested taking this topic to the administrative groups and start the discussion there. Jeff suggested we refer the matter to the policy committee. If our policy

is unclear, they need to recommend changes. If our policy is clear, but not being followed, corrective action from staff needs to be developed.

3. **Recommend to the Board of Education for Action** – The Committee recommends the proposed implementation of new Social Studies Coursework- Grades 7-12-Changes for 2014-2015.
4. **Consider any other matter relating to the Curriculum needs or concerns of the District** – Jeff Mays will refer the matter of retention to the BOE Policy Committee.
5. **Questions and comments from the Public**
6. **Adjourn: 6:43 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING: Monday, January 13, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.