

Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Committee Minutes

Board Office Conference Room #231

September 8, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.

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

Committee members absent: Stephanie Erwin

Board members, staff and others: Kim Dinkheller, Jeff Kerkhoff, Julie Stratman, Ed Husar, Michaela Fray, Carol Frericks, Joel Murphy, Nick Adams

1. Call to order

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

2. Committee Discussion Items

A. Grading Practices

Committee member Debby Cashman spoke to those present about the 80/20-90/10 grading practice currently in place in the district, as well as the re-take practice. She stated many parents and teachers have approached her asking that these practices be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. These practices were implemented in 2009. Currently, projects, papers, tests and quizzes account for 80 percent of the grade, while homework accounts for 20 percent. However, in Honors and Advanced Placement courses that are grade weighted, 90 percent of the grade is based on tests and quizzes and 10 percent is based on homework. Some students appear to forgo homework relying instead on their tests and quizzes to secure a high grade in their classes. It was pointed out that many of these same students take advantage of the district re-take practice, which allows them to re-take tests twice a semester in each class. The higher of the two grades, original test and re-take, is used. The re-take practice does require that students perform extra work for the class before they can re-take the test; however, Debby reported that this does not appear to be implemented uniformly across all courses. It was also noted that many times the students who would truly benefit from the re-take practice are not the ones who are using it. The inconsistencies in the number of tests across subject matter were also discussed. Carol stated she has historical communication relating to the implementation of the grading and multiple attempts at mastery practices from 2009 and will share with the committee. Debby asked that a subcommittee be established to look at the grading practices. The committee agreed and Jeff asked Debby and Loren Kiest to serve on the subcommittee with him. They will gather data for the next meeting for further discussion.

B. Accelerated Curriculum

Debby Cashman addressed the committee regarding the accelerated curriculum at Baldwin. She stated that there are currently multiple accelerated teachers, and the students transitioning into Quincy Junior High School are at different levels due to the fact that the accelerated curriculum is not aligned between Baldwin

and QJHS. Julie Stratman stated that a meeting with Baldwin and QJHS administrators has been scheduled for September 26, 2014 as a first step in addressing this issue.

C. 5Essentials Survey Data

Carol Frericks reviewed the 5Essentials Survey data gathered in spring of 2014. Jeff reminded everyone that this is just a snapshot; it does reflect the culture of the schools in our district; it is hoped it will give broader perspective over time with input from parents and teachers. Carol discussed the 5Essentials Survey Data Analysis. She stated that we are currently utilizing this survey as it is required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Quincy Public School District; it is hoped it will be used in the future to measure long term growth, gather feedback for continuous improvement, and provide direction for quality professional development opportunities. She reported that the district did not receive 30 percent parent participation for the survey so that data could not be used. She noted some schools in the district did have 30 percent participation, but it was not district wide. Carol stated that in 2013 the district data was compared to the 5Essentials research data; the data for QPS for 2014 will be compared to the 2013 state results. The state has found 3 other surveys that are available for district use, but at district expense. The state will continue to pay for the 5Essentials Survey. Loren asked what the state norm was on parent participation; Carol will check on that information and report back to the committee. The dominant causes for the current results of this data were discussed.

WHAT ARE THE DOMINANT CAUSES FOR THE CURRENT RESULTS?

| Essential Component | Current Results | Possible Solution |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Effective Leaders | Average | Improve teacher influence. |
| Collaborative Teachers | Average | Improve quality professional development. |
| Informed Families | Average | Improve communication. |
| Supportive Environments | Average | Improve school-wide future orientation. |
| Ambitious Instruction | Average | Improve quality of student discussion. |



Carol asked the committee members for input on practical actions to address the *Essential Components* listed above. Suggestions made included the following:

- Teacher Input on PLC topics
- Needs assessment for each area, and personalize to each school
- More time for teachers to implement and apply and drill down deeper for data
- More teacher influence on what they are doing in PLC's

Carol pointed out that the District Rising Star Continuous Improvement teams meet twice a month, which allows teachers the opportunity to provide input to building principals on what they would like to address in PLC's. Cheryl Vogler went over the PLC schedule for QJHS, and it was noted there was a similar schedule in place at QHS:

- 1st Wednesday-Culture Climate Meeting-Full Staff
- 2nd Wednesday-Teacher Led Grade level PLC, administrators visit the different PLC's
- 3rd Wednesday-Professional Development, ex. Close Reading or PLC if needed
- 4th Wednesday-Teacher Led 7-12 collaboration

D. Assessment Schedule

Carol and Julie discussed the Assessment Schedule handout that was provided to Committee Members. Members were pleased to see a district wide Assessment Schedule, noting that the schedule emphasizes the importance of technology for the district. There was discussion on the number of assessments, and were there too many? Carol noted that the Stanford Achievement assessment has been replaced by Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Julie pointed out the assessments inform instruction, and they help teachers to individualize instruction for their students. Julie also noted that the Fountas and Pinnell assessment was retained as teachers find it very useful. Fountas and Pinnell will be administered in April at the elementary level as a tool to help determine which students will attend summer school or possibly be retained. Carol stated that building leadership will add information to the schedule to note how much time is spent on the assessments.

3. **Recommend to the Board of Education for Action**

Committee members Jan Leimbach and Denette Kuhlman asked that the committee make a recommendation to the Board to make a decision on graduation honors. They noted that the community members on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) put a lot of time and effort into developing a recommendation for the Board on graduation honors.

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.

Jeff stated that this proposal will again be presented to the Board, at the September 24, 2014 meeting.

ISAT and PSAE data for QPS was distributed to the committee members for discussion and goal setting at the October Curriculum Committee meeting.

Jeff asked members for topics they would like to see discussed at future meetings. The topics mentioned were:

- Providing a copy of all district textbook to Quincy Public library to enhance community awareness of courses being taught in the district.
- Make School Board aware of the shortage of textbooks in classrooms, not all students have a textbook for each class because class sets were purchased for some courses.
- Time spent on assessments
- Online access to textbooks to allow for continued learning at home. How are book fees spent?
- Textbook Adoption Procedure
- Accelerated Curriculum- can students be dismissed from the program if they are not keeping up and can other students be added if they exhibit the skills and scores necessary?
- Retention, are students retained for the year, semester? Retention decisions are very individualized.

4. Recommend to the Board of Education for Action

- Graduation Honors Proposal

5. Consider any other matter relating to the Curriculum needs or concerns of the District

6. Questions and comments from the Public

7. Adjourn: 6:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, October 20, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.

