

Quincy Public Schools Curriculum Committee Minutes

Board Office Conference Room #214

July 8, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Debby Cashman, Stephanie Erwin, Lauren Kiest, Denette Kuhlman, Jan Leimbach, Jeff Mays, Jim Rubottom, Jan Zeidler.

Committee member(s) absent: Jan Cory, Cheryl Vogler.

Board members, staff and others: Sayeed Ali, Carol Frericks, Bob Gough, Ed Husar, Jeff Kerkhoff, Terry Meyers, Julie Stratman.

1. Call to order

Jeff Mays, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Information provided to Committee

A. Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Over the course of the coming months, the Committee will discuss more specific topics related to CCSS. An overview/general discussion about CCSS was held.

- ***What is not covered by the standards?*** The standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards do not dictate the curriculum, program(s), or materials to be used. Schools districts have complete leeway on what is taught and to determine the necessary steps so that students will meet the standards.
- ***What is covered by the standards?*** The standards are designed to be rigorous and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers.
- ***What will change as a result of the standards?*** Speaking on behalf of K-6, Julie Stratman noted that CCSS puts more emphasis on higher order thinking, text complexity, and opinion/argumentative writing. Subjects will be more integrated vs. being taught in isolation. Carol Frericks agreed and said that to her CCSS comes down to “fewer, higher, clearer.” The Illinois Learning Standards were broader, but had less depth.
- ***How will students be assessed?*** PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) is a multi-state consortium (including Illinois) that is working on developing a new assessment aligned with CCSS. For now, the ISAT (Illinois Standard Achievement Test) will continue to be administered. The state has already begun integrating CCSS into ISAT.
- ***How do you prepare students for even higher standards?*** Julie said a great deal of work was done over the past year at the K-6 level with grade level teams meeting in the English/Language Arts and Mathematics areas to delve into what is currently taught and make needed changes/adjustments to better align with CCSS. Additionally, all schools used SIP (School Improvement Planning) and institute days to do “deep readings” and other activities to prepare for CCSS. Debby Cashman said that Junior High included discussions in their PLC’s (Professional Learning Communities) throughout the past school year, and teachers have already begun incorporating in classrooms. Julie and Carol

agreed that ongoing professional development for staff would be essential, along with getting appropriate materials in teachers' hands.

- ***How is this being communicated to all schools and the community?*** In addition to the work mentioned above, the District, in a cooperative effort with the Illinois Federation of Teachers, received a grant from the Federation's innovation fund to educate all stakeholders about the importance of CCSS. Notification was recently received that the grant was funded for a second year.

B. Priorities for Committee.

Committee members provided input on topics they would like to see discussed.

- A written curriculum (direction) is especially needed at the elementary level.
- A plan for professional development is needed so that teachers are informed.
- Revisit the 80/20 or 90/10 grade weighting system issue (amount of grade that is weighted on tests vs. homework).
- Revisit Accelerated/TAG program, including how students are being prepared for the rigors of Junior/Senior High honors/advanced placement courses.
- Revisit the re-take policy – there seems to be inconsistency in practice.
- Report on how our students are performing on advanced placement exams, as well as enrollment data.
- Ensuring that teachers are experienced in teaching in the subject area for which they are hired.
- Examine the health curriculum – what is required vs. what is actually taught.
- Appropriateness of materials (concern about some of the dark themes of contemporary literature).
- Initiate a second semester curriculum night at QHS so parents can meet with teachers of single semester courses.
- Ensuring that homework assignments are based on skills/concepts that were taught in the classroom and that teachers are grading homework.
- Find out from teachers what is missing that keeps students from achieving; support whatever it takes to make teachers successful in the classroom.
- Addressing the needs of the majority of QPS students who are not in accelerated programs and not headed for a four-year college.
- As the Board is studying a reorganization plan, discussions that pertain to curriculum need to be addressed by the committee.
- Implement a financial literacy program.
- Evaluation of programs to be sure we are best utilizing our limited financial resources.
- Impact of technology on classroom teaching/learning.

3. **Recommend to the Board of Education for Action** – None.

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: 6:30 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 12, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.