

Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

4:00 p.m.

District Offices, Board Room

Attendees: Dr. Michelle Cardwell, John Lumia, Peggy Kelland, Jessica Turner, Adam Panzer, Helen Soyka, Flip Gertler, Dave Seipp, Ray Koretsky, Lauren Hernandez, Mitchell Manzo, Holly Siebert, Wendy Johnson, Tara Koehler, Mary Wexler, Jim Nurre, Nora Bitting, Cheryl Callaghan, John Sammon, Christine Barrack, Laurie Colantuono, Barbara Procario, Kerri Roger, Patricia Nardone

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Dr. Michelle Cardwell.

Mr. Lumia stated that the common core was poorly laid out. The WCSD has no control over the state standards and must conform to the standards by law. Parents have complained to the board about the state standards. He expressed that teachers shouldn't be afraid to speak up. This is the only way the Board can address any issues/problems. Teachers should never feel intimidated by the Board or administrators. We are in the business of helping students. Our goal is to make students better and make teachers' jobs easier.

Dr. Cardwell welcomed the teachers to the curriculum committee meeting. She encouraged them to answer the questions honestly and that their feedback would help to determine next steps of the curriculum committee.

Question: Which standards do you feel are not age appropriate for general education students?

- Science standards – A teacher stated that there are many misconceptions about the new science standards. Some students lack the requisite skills and background knowledge to be successful in the course. These skills have to be retaught to make sure the student understands the new material. Too much time is spent working on skills so the standards can be properly taught.

- A teacher recommended that we should scaffold learning across the grade levels for consistency. For example, the format of a lab report should be taught and consistent throughout the grade levels.
- A teacher stated that science vocabulary words vary throughout the grade levels. Need for consistency and reinforcement of vocabulary.
- A teacher stated that some high school science students cannot critically think to determine what went wrong with an experiment. The focus need to be on learning how to behave and think like a scientist.
- There are too many science standards and teachers feel pressure to rush through to meet the state testing deadline.
- A teacher stated that the Math standards are taught through the workshop model in grades k-6 and by using this model more math discourse is used. Students are better able to explain their reasoning, problem solving and do better at critical thinking.
- Additional use of makerspace and STEAM activities are needed.
- A teacher stated that some students cannot accurately compute multi step word problems. They don't have their times tables memorized and are fluency deficient.
- A teacher stated that there are too many math standards per grade level and students haven't mastered the basic skills.
- A teacher stated that the Math workshop model is efficient at using small groups and fluency stations.

Question: Does the present curriculum written by our teachers appropriately address the standards? If not, how would you tweak it?

- A teacher stated that the State test dates are too early. Teachers cannot cover all of the standards prior to the State test. Standards have to be taught in seven months instead of ten to meet the state testing deadline.
- Teachers need flexibility to teach the standards based upon the students' needs.
- Elementary math teachers have to go back to the previous year's standards to meet their grade level standards (Math in Focus).
- High schools need more chromebooks. There are not enough computer carts.

- Parents were trained for a different skill set. Today's jobs did not exist back then. They struggle to support their elementary aged children in math. They teach math incorrectly to their children.

Question: Do we have enough classroom time to appropriately address all of the standards?

- A teacher stated that Project based learning is too time consuming
- A teacher stated that class sizes need to be reduced. It is hard to do workshop model in large classes.
- Mini lesson can cover one learning standard. Small group can cover another learning standard.
- When teachers are out of classroom for training, etc., substitute teachers cannot adequately teach the subjects. Loss of instruction time occurs.
- A teacher stated that vertical articulation, time, scope and sequence are areas that the teacher needs time to do. During Summer curriculum writing teachers make adjustments to how much time a lesson takes and make modifications as necessary.
- A teacher stated that Radioactive decay in earth science is not age appropriate. Students do not have the skills to understand the topic.
- In science prep time for experiments is time-consuming. Experiments require time and equipment. More funds needed for supplies for science projects.
- Science specialist visiting classrooms could prove beneficial.
- Students need to make real world observations during their playtime.
- A teacher stated that one can combine some math and science units to cover more standards faster.

Question: Do any of you have any data to address whether the state standards are making students better critical thinkers? If you do not have data, can you professionally comment as to whether the standards are in fact making students better academically?

- Standards are hidden in four-part questions. Some students cannot read question to that level.

- Students want instant gratification. They don't want to take the time to do a multi-step problem.
- The question was asked, Are they critical thinkers or are they just memorizing facts to pass tests?
- A teacher stated, students need perseverance. They need to learn a process of how to get through a test and not give up.
- A course is needed to teach basic study and test taking skills. Different techniques need to be taught.

Question: Can any of you address whether our written curriculum addresses state standards and in fact makes students better prepared for college and life?

- A teacher stated that Common core demands the use of a calculator. Students don't understand math concepts without the use of a calculator.
- Students need access to more technology. Collaborate on the internet.

The question and answer session concluded at 5:20 p.m. The core members of the curriculum committee approved minutes from the December 5, 2018 meeting and the January 23, 2019 meeting. The last bullet of the January 23, 2019 minutes will be reworded for better understanding.

Special education teachers will be represented at future curriculum committee meetings. One teacher from each core subject should attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.