

Curriculum Council  
Meeting Minutes  
September 6, 2011

Members present were Beth Yacobi, Julie Penrod, Rusti Merrill, Viodelda Burts, Kellie English, Deb Tamez, Carol Szynal, Deb Dilks, Barnetta Harris, Matthew Rusek, Chris McConnell, Deb Baska, Lynn Lund, Holly Grabow, Cindy Harris, Cynthia Somerville, Richard Jones, Nate McCue, Janet Martin, Matthew, Glenn, Shirley Bailey, Nika Smith, Shirlene Holden, Kim Graven, Jeanne Hatting, Joyce McGee, Aubrey Wilson, Sherry Spencer, Joe Fuhrmann, Deb Adams, Julie Wascesky, and Mary Kilbride

Beth Yacobi welcomed everyone to the 2011-2012 Curriculum Council and briefly explained that each member's main purpose on the council was participation and communication. She stressed the importance of reporting Curriculum Council news and issues back to buildings and bringing feedback to the committee.

A brief video was shown on differentiation. Members were encouraged to discuss, in small groups, the need for differentiation and whether or not we are differentiating across our current curriculum. Groups agreed that while differentiation is important, time and space issues often hinder the attempts within classrooms to apply the concept. Elementary feedback indicated that differentiation is usually found in reading, but difficult to implement or embed in other subjects due to time/space constraints. All agreed that teachers know what they have to do but lack the time to implement.

Each member should have a Curriculum Council binder to keep agendas, handouts and minutes for easy reference. New members will receive their binders at the next Curriculum Council meeting. Council members were reminded that they can claim CPDU credit for serving on this district committee. As explained in Activity 4 in of the CPDU Values for Professional Activities, which was distributed to members, you may claim CPDUs for serving on this committee with a the proper documentation as outlined in this handout.

Reports were made on the following summer work and programs:

**K-1 Literacy Summer Pilot Program** – Rusti Merrill reported that this pilot program was a huge success. Classes were filled to 20. Each class had a classroom teacher, special education teacher, and a reading interventionist. Rusti spoke to each child's parent prior to the start of the program. Contact was made with parents of absent students daily. Average attendance rate was 98% (18 per class daily). Weekly parent workshops were held. Students made gains or maintained their achievement levels. The students who participated will be monitored during the school year to see if the intervention was effective. This pilot program was offered as an alternative in lieu of retention for some students .

**Language Arts Curriculum Work** – Rusti Merrill reported that the Common Core Standards alignment continues to be a focus for curriculum work. The district began with realigning the K-6 writing curriculum, and this curriculum team is currently working on common assessments. They will continue to meet and share this information with teachers as it is developed.

Reading curriculum is the next step in aligning the ELA curriculum. The district started with 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The curriculum team began working last school year, and continued to work over the summer. The goal is to have 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading and writing curriculum integrated and completed by the end of this school year. The plan is to begin working on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade level curriculum in January.

**Algebra I Honors** - The high school Algebra teachers worked with teachers from the junior high to revise the Algebra I Honors course. This project began a year ago to improve rigor and conceptual understanding as outlined in the Common Core. The result of this effort allows junior high students the ability to earn a high school credit for taking this course in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Algebra I is a graduation requirement in the State of Illinois and must appear on the student's transcript.

Beth Yacobi added that with the implementation of the Common Core, schools are expected to not only raise the roof, but also to raise the floor of education. Eventually, Algebra will be the norm at 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The bar for achievement cannot be raised without additional supports for students. The assessment frameworks for both Math and ELA will be released by PARCC soon, and these frameworks will be used when creating common formative assessments in both areas,

Beth Yacobi congratulated everyone on the awesome start to the school year. She asked Curriculum Council Members to share her appreciation to all staff for the hard work and preparation taken to make this one of the best starts ever to the school year. PBIS Teams worked over the summer to come up with start of the school year plans that would reinforce PBIS at all grade levels through out our district. Teacher feedback was very positive.

Beth reviewed topics to discuss in the 2011-2012 Curriculum Council. The Common Core Standards are still a focus within the district, and work will continue to review curriculum and integrate these standards. Instructional Programs has broken the standards down by grade level and will have them posted to our district website by the end of the month. If you'd like a copy of your grade level prior to that, please e-mail Sue Goodrich.

Beth explained that we have been working on purposeful planning. Our first step has been to provide training in Understanding by Design (UBD) to our 7-12 staff. We will continue with this initiative again this year. This training will move down to the K-6 teachers once the 7-12 are trained. The next step is Assessment Literacy and Assessment of Learning.

Beth shared the current Tier I Response to Intervention (RtI) graphic that should be considered for all students (this includes students with IEP or that receive ELL services) when planning for instruction. Differentiation requires purposeful planning and takes time. Social and Emotional Learning standards need to be embedded into the curriculum as well. Initially, teachers need to focus on the skills and knowledge that our students should know and be able to do when working with curriculum. Next, assessments are used to gather data and utilized to plan for instruction. Using data to plan your instruction vs. just doing what the calendar says will yield considerably different results. Teachers need to use assessment outcomes to plan our instruction. After discussion, members agreed that this RtI chart should include planning as a key component into effective classroom instruction. Curriculum Council members agreed with Joe Furhmann when

he said “If you don’t plan, you plan to fail”. Beth will add this to the map, and we will e-mail the revised concept map to all Curriculum Council members so that they may share it with their faculty.

Pacing charts were brought up as an area of concern by all teachers in attendance. Beth stressed that pacing charts were never intended to take the place of lesson plans, or to be so strictly adhered to that we don’t have time to re-teach struggling students. Pacing charts are meant to be a map of where you are directing your class on any given subject. As curriculum is reviewed and revised to the Common Core Standards, new curriculum maps will phase out the traditional pacing chart. This will allow for more differentiation, and give the teacher discretion to set the pace as best fits the classroom from year to year.

At the early release on September 14, 2011 certified staff members will be give a presentation on Senate Bill 7 which speaks to some changes in teacher evaluation, including the addition of student achievement data. A group of teachers, principals, and district administrators are working to create an acceptable Teacher Evaluation Tool and process that is clear and effective. We currently have four principals participating in a pilot principal evaluation program that ties student and teacher performance to their evaluation. Curriculum Council members had questions on this legislation and were encouraged to hold their questions until a full explanation was given on September 14.

Julie Waskosky, our secondary education Curriculum Council Member from Kankakee Community College, advised the group that this was a coming trend. Colleges and universities will be performance based and funding will be based on student performance and not student attendance as it has been in the past.

Kellie English was introduced at the district’s new Instructional Technology Facilitator. Kellie’s primary job duty will be to work with buildings and teachers to integrate and embed technology into our curriculum and daily lesson plans. District technology was discussed at length. Frustration was expressed by many members of the Council regarding the inability to access websites to use during instruction. Teachers need to prepare our students to work with 21st century skills, and that requires exposure to technology. How can we embed technology when so much of what teachers want to use is blocked? Most of the group agreed that limited access for students is necessary, but expressed frustration with restricted access for adults in the district. Beth explained that she will continue to address this issue, and asked members to bring research and compelling articles that supports opening up web access to teachers to improve instruction. High school staff discussed the need for student e-mail accounts and the huge lack of technology in the 9-12 classrooms. Junior high members expressed concerns over lack of toner supplies and printers for teachers to use for instructional purposes.

PBIS and Project CHOICES have merged at the state level. Perceptions regarding Project CHOICES as merely a special education initiative need to be addressed. This program focuses on how to serve all students regardless of their needs by using differentiation. The merger at the state level will allow us to create one cohesive team at the building level that will focus on academic and behavior improvement that will drive student success.

Beth introduced Deb Tamez, one of two External PBIS Coaches that have been hired to support this initiative. Deb will work primarily with the K-6 buildings, staff, and students. A second PBIS External Coach will be hired and work with the 7-12 buildings. Both coaches will be attending a training later this month. The district is looking at the SWISS system for all buildings to help track discipline issues. Our External Coaches will train staff at the building level once this program is implemented.

Concern was expressed by council members at the lack of communication building administrators and PBIS teams had with building teachers regarding the school year kick off and PBIS plans. Many teachers use personal time during the summer to plan for the start of each school year, and many only learned of the PBIS activities and the building plans at faculty meetings on Monday, August 23. Beth acknowledged their concerns and assured all members that we would learn from this experience, and that she would address it at the next administrators meeting. Beth again expressed her appreciation for the last minute lesson plan changes and planning that took place to implement building kick-off plans set for by building PBIS teams.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Beth asked council members to pose this question to their faculty members:

*“Differentiation, is it a philosophy or a thing that you do in the classroom?”*

Beth reminded members to e-mail her anytime they had items they would like discussed at the Curriculum Council meetings. The next meeting will be on November 1, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.