

## **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **August 25, 2015**

Attendance: Laura Schulkind, Deirdre d'Albertis, Rick Walker, Joe Phelan, Marvin Kreps.

#### **ELA District Curriculum Review**

Marvin updated members of the committee on curriculum work undertaken over the summer with emphasis on preparation of ELA plans in CLS and BMS for eventual board approval this fall. Working from a 5 page spread sheet, he covered a wide range of projects.

1. **K-5 ELA should be ready for board approval in September.** Marvin (and the curriculum committee) will ask members of the BOE to review and approve the “front section” of these curriculum documents (leaving the balanced literacy planner and week-by-week plans as important supplements not requiring board action or approval to implement). The “front section” will include overview documents (“placemat”) with learning goals (in the form of “I can” statements) and cross-curricular connections outlined. Marvin pointed out how time-intensive the curriculum writing and revision process has been for Rhinebeck. Many districts simply buy curriculum “out of a box” to avoid the investment represented by the countless hours of work spent in Rhinebeck on developing our own “home grown” plan. Alignment is always a concern; what our teachers cover locally must prepare students for Common Core Learning Standards and state assessments, even as these standards and assessments are still being developed. Project Lead the Way, for instance, is a technology curriculum already adopted by RCSD; PLTW is aligned to “next gen” science standards but New York State has not yet adopted those standards. Adapting PLTW to align with Rhinebeck students’ particular needs is one example of the kind of customization undertaken by teachers and our director of curriculum development over the summer months. Marvin expects to share the K-5 ELA curriculum in “penultimate draft form” to the curriculum committee by Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> in preparation for our next meeting on Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>.
2. **Middle School ELA curriculum:** Marvin now has all units for grades 6, 7, and 8 in hand. If time permits, he hopes to share a revised draft document with the curriculum committee prior to our Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.
3. **Institutional Challenges:** Marvin observed that vertical conversations (for instance, across buildings within disciplines) are also important to foster in tandem with curriculum writing within grade-level teams or other working groups. It is not yet clear how such a “teacher-informed review process” of K-12 learning might best take place, but it is his fervent wish to support such

conversations across the school. Could the revived CDEP planning group consider how best to address such questions?

4. **A balanced literacy “operational manual” or appendix** outlining definitions, processes and procedures is being prepared alongside curriculum documents to support teachers as they work to implement new material in their classrooms.
5. **High School ELA:** all unit planners in draft form have just been submitted. Marvin will begin the review process with Ed Davenport soon. As the curriculum is being developed in grades 9-12 it will be being taught, so 2015-16 should be considered a “draft” year for curricular changes. There was some general discussion of how course sequences within a department are developed, revised, and altered over time.
6. **Additional Curriculum Projects include:**
  - a. Math/AIS alignment: Everyday Math curriculum reviewed in terms of deepening computational fluency and mathematical problem solving.
  - b. Review of PLTW launch curriculum for grades K-5.
  - c. Work with Specials teachers (Art, Music, Phys Ed, Library) at CLS to create integrated lesson planning or “connected practices” in relation to new curriculum at the elementary school.
  - d. Alignment of Geometry and Algebra 2 curricula in the high school.
  - e. Flipped Library Instruction in BMS/RHS library: development of imovies and screen casts to aid students step-by-step in learning NoodleTools, etc.
  - f. Principles of Engineering adapted to use Canvas Learning Management System for a “blended online experience.”
  - g. AP history revision for European and Global as well as revision of Regents Global, US History, Participation Government and Economics. A long-term goal is to see vertical integration between middle school and high school history curricula.
  - h. Alignment of Spanish curriculum across BMS and RHS.
  - i. BMS Computer Lab Project is underway since allocation of funds from RSF has been agreed upon—the equipment is arriving now. Students will work with the i-SAFE platform to learn about internet safety and digital citizenship; the Tinker platform will be used for programming units (based on Scratch coding software <https://scratch.mit.edu/>). Skills instruction will begin with self-assessment via survey monkey as students enter 6<sup>th</sup> grade: for the next few years we expect to see a wide range of comfort and familiarity among our students with digital tools. Finally, BMS will adopt “container projects” at each grade level to integrate technology learning with content in the disciplines. Over each of the three school years, students will be expected to create some sort of “Ken Burns style” multimedia project, a brochure using Publisher, and a presentation using digital tools such as Excel or PowerPoint. The lab will support the acquisition of skills needed to deliver information within the content areas.

Members of the committee commended both Marvin and the teachers in our district who have dedicated so many hours to curriculum work for their sustained creative effort and energies. Marvin agreed that curriculum writing and revision is “the engine of innovation” in our district, expressing his gratitude for budgetary support in order to accomplish this important work.

**Agenda:**

The committee meets again on September 15<sup>th</sup> to review the final draft of ELA curriculum documents.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d'Albertis