

Curriculum Committee Meeting

September 30, 2015

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

“Penultimate” K-8 ELA curriculum documents were provided to the rest of the Board Members for their review at our September 22, 2015 Regular Meeting. **If our colleagues have any questions or concerns, please provide those prior to the meeting so we can best address those questions during our October 7 meeting.**

K-8 ELA Curriculum

The goal of these documents is to teach students:

- How to think independently
- How to build strong content knowledge
- How to respond to various audiences, tasks and disciplines
- How to comprehend and critique what they read
- How to value evidence
- How to use technology strategically
- How to understand other perspectives and cultures

The committee asked about the place for enrichment. In re-designing lesson plans, teachers were tasked with reviewing their enrichments programs with an eye toward how these connect back to curricular goals. In the past, Marvin has spoken about the rigor of our new curriculum and stressed that the “best” of what Rhinebeck teaches remains today. The focus may be adjusted in some cases, but there are still Field Trips, Arts-in-Ed programming and performance in the new curriculum.

The committee is gratified to see the role of imagination and literature firmly embedded within these documents allowing students to explore varying opinions through the lens of their own experiences and beliefs while learning how to articulate and defend a position.

It is also important to note that despite the whims of the State Ed Department and NYS government, the curriculum developed for Rhinebeck is based on solid pedagogical principals and will continue to be valid regardless of potential policy changes.

Dissemination of Curriculum

Once the Board has approved these documents, they will be made available on the District website in a 2 tiered format. Tier 1 will include the documents approved by the Board with links to the tier 2 collateral material including Balanced Literacy Plans and Assessment documents. As soon as Marvin is able to upload these pages, Joe will send a District-wide email with a direct link to all.

RHS English Curriculum

The committee reviewed the draft documents developed over the summer and is equally impressed with the level of thoughtful planning that has gone into this work. Discussion turned to the topic of managing differentiation in these classes. It was noted at our last meeting that “Modified classes” were no longer the norm in Rhinebeck, but we are concerned that every student receive appropriate levels of instruction. Marvin shared some historical perspective on the elimination of “M-classes” in the sciences and reported that the concerns raised about students not being able to keep up were unfounded. In fact, students who had previously not been eligible to sit for Science Regents exams performed very well once they were integrated into the Regents courses. They were successful specifically because wrap-around supports had been put in place to address each student. At this point, the extent of the supports that will be required is to be determined, but the Writing Lab and Resource Room continue to be available. Additional support requirements will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in the monthly Child Study Group meetings.

What’s Next - Math?

Currently, the curriculum is aligned through Algebra II/Trig. Chancellor continues to work with Everyday Math 2012 which is aligned with the Common Core. It will need to be reviewed for alignment with state assessments however, as the pacing of the program doesn't necessarily line up with what students will be tested on in May.

Marvin's goal is to develop consistency both vertically and across grade level. This will require additional professional development and curriculum writing. During summer 2015, most of the CLS teachers began to review their program to look for inconsistencies. A consultant will be brought in to assist in aligning the entire program. At this point, it is still unknown whether Everyday Math sufficiently prepares students for the middle school.

At BMS, the focus begins to shift toward preparing students for Regents-level coursework. Teachers are using a combination of modules from engageNY, text from Houghton Mifflin and teacher-created material. Lessons were developed as they were being released from the State and will continue to be reviewed.

At RHS, Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II/Trig have been built off the engageNY modules. Teachers spent a year reviewing and fixing answer keys while ensuring that they were covering all the material students were expected to know for the Regents assessments. The 2016 Algebra II/Trig Regents will be the first to be aligned with the Common Core standards. Marvin has asked the teachers to keep notes on their classes, how they are teaching, what they are teaching and best practices so it can be memorialized in some sort of formal curriculum document. He is hopeful that this work will be concluded during the summer of 2016.

What's Next - Science & Social Studies?

The Next Gen Science Standards are still being reviewed at the state level. Until we have received final approval of the standards, we will not begin a re-alignment project. Science has been integrated into the K-5 ELA documents up for approval.

In June 2018, students will sit for the new Social Studies Regents (Global Geography and American History). Last summer, the social studies department reviewed and revised their lessons to shift the focus toward "inquiry based" learning. In this way, students will be asked to review original documents, historical arguments and the social sciences in order to put history into context. Instruction will not be based solely on recall but on deeper reading, analysis and writing.

Agenda - Next meeting tentatively scheduled for October 30

- Ed Davenport will report on the 5 year history of RHS Electives.
- Explore ways the work of the CDEP Committee should and will interface with the Curriculum Committee
- Update on BMS Tech curriculum
- Forward planning for projects in the works

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Schulkind