

Curriculum Committee Minutes

September 30, 2014

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

Curriculum Development Work

Marvin Kreps provided a general history of the Standards Movement in education as a framework for discussing our District's summer curriculum development work. The District's philosophy is to apply best practices of the National Councils of Math and ELA professionals to inform the work we do in developing appropriate units of study that adhere to the standards and mandates imposed by NY State.

In developing the latest curriculum documents, Rhinebeck chose not to adopt the EngageNY modules wholesale. Over the past 10-15 years, the district has worked to develop rigorous unit plans so that no matter what happened with standards and testing requirements down the road, we would be in a strong position to adjust the units as necessary.

Chancellor Livingston Elementary

Each Grade Level Team in the elementary school worked over the summer to create new unit plans broken down by grade level and timed based on academic quarters. All of these units and lesson plans were defined and mapped to the standards. Guidance documents were developed so that a shared understanding of the lessons was clear across grade levels. Classroom coverage can also be more easily managed if and when a substitute is required.

The committee is keenly aware of the many hours of hard work and dedication these professionals put in to create curricula documents that are distinctly Rhinebeck's and appropriate for Rhinebeck's students. Teachers identified materials required to deliver instruction and resources were made available to provide for those needs. The goal has been to create flexibility within the structure to allow for personal teaching styles to come to play in the classroom while being mindful that too much flexibility can produce inconsistency in instruction.

During a recent Superintendent's Conference Day, the Chancellor faculty was able to present their plans to their colleagues so that each grade level had a better appreciation of the work of each teacher K-5. Marvin reported that it was a great way for our teachers to begin developing a community of practice, and build greater understanding of the strengths of their colleagues. The general feedback Marvin has received is that the teachers were happy for the chance to collaborate with their colleagues in ways that had never been possible before. Teachers are also impressed that the students have responded so favorably to the rigor of the new lessons.

Right now, Marvin, Brett King and our AUSSIE consultant are reviewing each aspect of the elementary plan including instructional supports & scaffolding, pre- and post-test data alignment and developmental appropriateness of lessons among other components. Once this checklist has been reviewed, the teachers will be given a chance to adjust their lessons as necessary before final documents are generated.

The target distribution date of the curriculum documents to the Curriculum Committee is mid-November. We have scheduled a special meeting on December 1st to meet with Marvin & Joe to ask questions and

provide feedback. Once this first batch of documents is reviewed and accepted by the full Board, we will move on to the Middle School and High School curricular documents.

Bulkeley Middle School

The Middle School summer work included a variety of approaches to curriculum design as there are many units already aligned to the standards. There is some instructional material from Expeditionary Learning (EngageNY) that the Middle School team modified for Rhinebeck's purposes. The Math curriculum has been fairly closely adhered to as the Math textbooks are very closely aligned to the standards.

Rhinebeck High School

In the High School, Mr. Randall continues to develop the Geometry curriculum while the Integrated Algebra material was developed over the course of the 2013-14 school year. The English Department initiated a review of the high school ELA courses in light of the new ELA Regents exam. Over the summer an outside Consultant was brought in to work with the department to review not only reading lists, but writing protocols, grammar usage and vocabulary instruction. The need to articulate and align each high school ELA course with the common core standards and new Regents exam was identified. The consultant's work with the department has provided a platform for positive discussions and change. The goal is to have the high school ELA courses articulated and aligned with the new standards in time for the rollout of the Common Core English Regents exam in 2016.

Yearlong Agenda

- Ric Campbell Grant - how will this work become practice, not parallel project?
- Curriculum Governance Council - framework and implementation
- Comprehensive Health Plan - Health, Wellness, PE curriculum review
- New Curricula Review - K-12
- Instructional Technology Plan - digital learning platforms and plan for what "technology instruction" looks like going forward (Dec/Jan meeting)
- Social Studies framework
- Next Gen Science Standards
- Potential ELA adjustments

Submitted by: Laura Schulkind