

**Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Curriculum Advisory Committee**

Minutes of November 7, 2019

Ms. Hadaway called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m. in the Administrative Center, Curriculum Library, 520 Fifth Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Members Present:

Patrick Frymark
Earnest Kincade
Earl Peterson

Graham Storey
Sue Wilken

Nonvoting Members

Melanie Hadaway

Members Excused:

Aime Hart
Sharon Hildebrand
Allyson Nicholson
Deborah Rinio
Christina Sinclair
Chrya Sanderson

Members Absent:

Christian Bolton
Michael Campbell
Maxine Dibert

Staff Present:

Michelle Daml
Jennifer Morgan
Kristina Roehrig

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Storey moved to accept the November 7, 2019, agenda; Mr. Kincade seconded. Hearing no objection or comment, the motion was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Frymark moved to accept the October 3, 2019, minutes; Ms. Wilken seconded. Members reviewed the minutes. Hearing no objection or comment, the motion was approved.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Ms. Daml and Ms. Roehrig updated the committee and summarized feedback received during the public comment period. Ms. Hadaway informed the committee the curriculum writers will meet on November 13 to work on competencies, and again on November 22 to review comments and start draft two.

K-12 Social Studies

Ms. Daml informed the committee that several comments mention materials, especially the lack of materials for Alaska studies. This often comes up and will be addressed later in the process. She also stated the district wrote *Picturing Fairbanks* and Anchorage wrote *Picturing Anchorage* in response to the lack of materials. Currently, the Anchorage museum is working on an Alaskan textbook that will be sent to the district when it is ready for review.

Ms. Daml stated most think the proposed K-3 is fine. However, the overarching theme for elementary is there is a lot of content to cover and only so much time in the day. One way to address this is to integrate social studies content into language arts and science lessons. Also, the writing group has already tried to cut back on the fifth grade content. Some people commented they want specific objectives listed in the curriculum, while others only want broad topics. The goal is to find a happy medium. Also, the 4th-6th grade writers focused on timeline of events (e.g., the Revolutionary War happened before the Civil War which occurred before WWI), rather than the memorization of facts such as dates. When students move on to middle and high school, the goal is they will understand the sequence of events and how each impacted the U.S.

Ms. Roehrig mentioned some think the high school pathways needs updated. There are other comments about particular high school courses, such as economics and the LGBTQ+ strand in the *U.S. Civil Rights Experience*, and a suggestion to add an African American studies course to the curriculum. Also, some of the comments showed an appreciation for the numerous options in world history and government, and requested more options for U.S. history.

Ms. Hadaway explained an economics course is required to graduate, and the adopted curriculum has *Principles of Economics*, *General Economics*, and AP courses. However, *Principles of Economics*' description states it is for

students who struggle in reading and is only taught at one school. There is a question of whether this course is needed, or if students can be accommodated in *General Economics* (new title – *Economics and Financial Literacy*).

Mr. Frymark highlighted the polar region section in seventh grade, stating changes were made in response to Ms. Wilken's comments at the previous meeting. The number of objectives were doubled and the writers specifically added comparing and contrasting cultures on the same longitude and latitude, and explaining how and why environmental changes in the polar region effect the climate and environment in other regions. Ms. Hadaway mentioned the curriculum writers will also talk about the polar region when they revise *Alaska Studies*.

Ms. Hadaway announced the district is looking into how students can received credit for cultural experiences outside a traditional school setting, and has discussed this with the Fairbanks Native Association and the Tanana Chiefs Conference. She explained the district currently offers Work Experience for Credit where students can receive high school credit for documented work hours and an evaluation from a supervisor. The district is looking into using a similar process for cultural, educational experiences. The question of how to quantify and document this for elective credit is something that will be introduced to the writers soon.

Mr. Storey stated some of Lathrop's staff are concerned about the courses removed from the proposed curriculum. He explained that part of their argument is the demographics of this school are unique, and the need for these courses still exists. He proposed leaving the courses (e.g., *Principles of Economics*) in the curriculum, pointing out other schools do not have to teach them. Mr. Storey also stated draft one lists the United States as a democracy several times; instead, it should be listed as a republic or constitutional republic.

7-12 English/Language Arts

Ms. Roehrig summarized the comments received about ELA draft one. Some like the numerous options, while others think not all will be taught and are not viable. One particular comment stated a parent moving to the district might look at the curriculum and be excited by all the options, but then become disappointed when presented with the reality that not all courses are offered at schools. Ms. Roehrig also mentioned there were some concerns about the *LGBTQ+ Literature* course, as well as the proposal of adding honors courses while removing courses for struggling learners.

Ms. Hadaway stated some courses have great descriptions, but are not often offered at schools. For example, since 2004 *African American Literature* has only been taught four times. One way to address this issue is to have one course with multiple strands, such as the proposed *U.S. Civil Rights Experience*. She plans to discuss this option with the ELA writers.

Ms. Hadaway then informed the committee the *Alaska Watchman* recently featured an article online about draft one of the curricula titled "Explicit LGBTQ Courses Planned for Fairbanks Students," which was then shared with the Fairbank Facebook page. This generated a lot of feedback, with varying opinions. Ms. Daml also pointed out that every comment submitted to Teaching and Learning is responded to and documented.

Mr. Storey stated there are several options in the ELA curriculum, some of which will not often be taught. He asked why it does not have 11th grade English and 12th grade English courses, both with multiple strands. Ms. Hadaway pointed out that in draft one the competencies and objectives are the same for all literature courses.

While the time needed for revision is unknown, Ms. Hadaway stated the goal is to present a final draft to the School Board in the spring. She mentioned there is money budgeted for materials, but this might not be the case next year.

CTE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Roehrig informed the committee the Information Technology (IT) writers met, and are looking at several IT pathways, one of which allows students to earn an associate's degree in high school. They are also looking at courses that lead to certifications in high school, and are discussing creating IT courses at the middle school level.

DECEMBER MEETING

Ms. Hadaway explained the December meeting is typically scheduled as tentative. She reminded the committee that the writers will begin the second draft on November 22, with the goal of releasing it in mid to late December. So, there will be nothing new to place on the December agenda.

Mr. Storey moved to forgo the December 5, 2019 meeting; Mr. Frymark seconded.

Mr. Peterson remarked that the committee should hold the meeting as scheduled. His reasoning was the district is late getting the first draft out, with it typically released at the end of summer. Also, he pointed out we cannot predict if there will be more snowy nights; some members missed this meeting due to the weather and will not have the opportunity to meet and provide input until January. He stated canceling the December meeting denies them this opportunity, and the five present members are making a decision for a committee of fifteen.

Mr. Storey pointed out every member had the opportunity to be at this meeting, and they will have further opportunity to provide input through the comment form. He stated the curriculum writers will not have completed a lot of work before the next meeting, and to only hold a meeting so those absent can discuss the same topics reviewed at this meeting is not the best use of time.

Ms. Hadaway called for a voice vote on the motion to cancel the December 5, 2019, meeting, with a vote 3 to 2 in favor. To confirm, Ms. Hadaway asked for voting by show of hands, again with a vote of 3 to 2 in favor. **The motion carried. The December 5, 2019, CAC meeting is cancelled.**

GENERAL COMMENTS/ QUESTIONS

Mr. Peterson is unable to attend the January 9, 2020 meeting. He strongly opposes eSports becoming part of the curriculum. He also stated it was good to see the issue raised by the *Alaska Watchman* was touched on during this meeting. He listened to the previous School Board meeting and there were similar comments. He pointed out this will be on the minds of the Board when they consider the committee's recommendation, and they will look at whether what is reflected in the curriculum is appropriate.

Mr. Frymark stated that with such things as the *Alaska Watchman* article and the recent plantation project at one of the schools, things can seem like it is going well and there are the best of intentions and then people will take small segments out of context. He watched a recap of the Board meeting on the news where they highlighted a comment stating the LGBTQ course is proposed as an elective and no one will be required to take it. He has thought about how things are package or taken out of context, and wonders if whether we can do a better job of messaging.

Mr. Storey shares Mr. Peterson's opinion on eSports. He also worries about doing the curriculum revision in a vacuum without looking at the larger district goals and personalized learning.

Ms. Wilken is excited about the polar region section on page 59 of the Social Studies curriculum, so much so that she took a picture and sent it to Washington, D.C. She also shares Mr. Frymark's concerns with things taken out of context, and pointed out when watching the news, the inflection, innuendos, or accent placed on things can affect the message. She thinks the committee is doing a great job. She loves the process and the opportunity to participate.

Ms. Hadaway reminded the committee this is a very different revision process from previous years. The group started with what we want graduates to know and worked back from there. She also highlighted the following:

1. As mentioned earlier, there was a reference to the LGBTQ+ courses in the *Alaska Watchman*. She pointed out the committee's names are public information and if they are contacted with questions about the draft, they are welcome to respond but are not obligated. She encouraged them to feel free to forward such requests to her. She thinks it is important that everyone is heard, whether they agree or disagree.
2. The district is trying to increase options for students, and she announced the plan for a middle college pilot next fall. This would allow students to take courses at UAF for a large portion of their day, with the courses counting for high school and university credit. The district currently offers concurrent enrollment of English 111 and most likely will soon offer economics. The plan is to build on this to create a middle college option. The advantage to students is the district pays their tuition. Ms. Hadaway also stated research shows if we can get students to take even one university course, especially for first generation or nontraditional students, their chances to complete a post-secondary education is higher. She is excited about this opportunity for kids.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kincade moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Peterson seconded. Hearing no objection or further comment, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.