



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY

Curriculum Advisory Committee

SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

6:00 p.m. – Training Room D

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Donna Butts, Barbara Chapin, Kathleen Cherasia, Patsy Howell, Susan Jacobse, Patti Lochner, Alicia Reyes, Charles Spire, John Traube, Karen Wood

Committee Members Absent: Connie Dennis, Lois Redmond

Recording Secretary: Sherry Pearsall

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Donna Butts, Vice- Chairperson. Mrs. Butts apologized for cancellation of the August meeting due to Tropical Storm Fay and acknowledged the informed absence of Connie Dennis, Chairperson. Mrs. Butts welcomed Sharon Vandeventer, District Math Coordinator as guest presenter for the evening.

Review & Approval of Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Traube raised two issues of concern that he asked be included regarding the minutes of the June 10th meeting: 1) He felt that the chairperson violated the Sunshine Law; and 2) The issue of bullying he brought up at the last meeting was appropriate. After a review of taped minutes, these additions will be included to amend. A motion to accept the minutes was made by John Traube and seconded by Kathleen Cherasia. The motion carried.

Board Member's Report

Mr. Chilmonik reported on the following items:

- Thanked committee members for allowing him to work with them as his term for serving on this committee comes to an end.
- Shared a worksheet on the Lee County Schools Report Card. In the past ten years we have not improved our SAT scores. This needs our attention and also needs to address the needs of our community. Brevard County (with demographics very similar to ours) has one of the highest SAT scores consistently and out performs State scores. Mr. Chilmonik would like to challenge everyone to work toward beating their scores in the next four years.
- Graduation rates have to improve-only half of our minority students are graduating. Sixty-nine percent of our students graduated in 2003, only seventy-one percent are graduating now.
- Asked that we continue to work to improve 11th grade FCAT reading, math and science scores

A motion to allow 5 minutes for follow-up questions with a 15-second limit to Mr. Chilmonik was made by John Traube and seconded by Karen Wood. The motion carried 8-1 in favor.

Mrs. Jacobse asked Mr. Chilmonik for clarification on a statement to the News Press regarding attracting new industry to the area if our SAT scores don't increase.

Mr. Traube asked where we rank in regard to the rest of the State and nationwide in our graduation and SAT scores. Forbes has an article that states we rank 83 out of 100.

Mr. Spire stated that good teachers provide good students. Mr. Chilmonik stated we need a strong diverse business base to bring money into our schools.

Mrs. Butts thanked Mr. Chilmonik for his participation on this committee.

New Business

New Math Standards – Ms. Sharon Vandeventer

Ms. Vandeventer, District Math Coordinator, stated that we are moving into the next generation of math standards and that these standards were completed last year and are not being revised. Showing trends over the last six years, students in levels 3-5, had a 16% increase, while the number of level 1 students continues to decrease. 8th grade level 3-5 students showed a 10% increase in scores, while the number of level 1 students decreased by 10%. We are making progress. High school 10th grade students showed an 11% increase, while the number of level 1 students decreased by 7%. In 5th grade, the minority/majority gap has decreased 6% while all students have significantly increased in achievement. In 8th grade, the gap has closed 11% with minority students increasing from an average of 26%-60% in achievement. The difference in minority and non-minority scores is attributed to the large number of students coming into our district performing below grade level. While math scores continue to increase across the county, the number of lower performing students continues to have an effect. Annually we have had a 15,000-18,000 student turnover. There does not seem to be a pattern when comparing comprehensive high school academic programs test scores with regular education high school programs test scores. Standardized curriculum alignment does attribute to our gains.

Over the last ten years, the 1996 standards were found to have no logical progression of topics, repetition with little depth year to year, low cognitive complexity, and low priority of expectations. Florida has the largest number of benchmarks of any state. Mastery is rarely attained because it is only being touched on each year. The number of new benchmarks has significantly decreased. The recommendations for change included: decreasing the number of topics per grade and increasing the cognitive level. The emphasis now is on automatic recall of basic facts that previous standards did not emphasize. These computational fluency and conceptual understanding are also being emphasized. The focal points contain 3 big ideas, 3-5 supporting ideas per grade level, and will require mastery of the content at each grade level. It was decided in Tallahassee that the new K-8 Sunshine State Standards would be based on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) focal points. The five strands: number sense, measurement, geometry, algebra and probability have been changed to what is now being called “Bodies of Knowledge.” Math will now be taught in greater depth with conceptual understanding. Students will now have the time to spend working on appropriate practice to increase long term memory. A cohort of teachers, educators and mathematicians (43,025) from across the state and country worked together to frame, write, review, and revise the 2007 math standards. The District implementation process will be challenging because the FCAT will not change until 2010-2011. Even though the new standards are law, we do have 2 years to successfully implement them. We are presently trying to prepare students for the new standards while still addressing the current assessment. This year the new standards have been incorporated into Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grades. Third Grade is also implementing the new standards and using “TRANSITION” standards aligned to the original test. This year 4th & 5th grade is using the old standards and the old academic plans and they will gradually be stepped into the new standards over the next two years. The same thing is happening with 6th, 7th & 8th grade students. 6th grade is being taught the new standards this year, 7th grade next year and 8th grade the following year. At the high school level, all course descriptions have changed. Teachers are using the new course descriptions relating to the ten “Bodies of Knowledge.” Academic Plans have been changed to reflect the new standards in grades KG, 1, 2, 3 & 6th grades. In middle school, we now have different courses for regular and advanced students. We have not had that in the past. Teacher committees developed pacing guides for grades K-3 and 6th grade and these were used to revise their academic plans. There is a plan to move lesson plans into a standardized template and contribute lessons to a bank along with common assessments quarterly that will be able to monitor progress. Outcomes expected from these changes in standards include:

- fewer standards being taught,
- increased time for practice
- implementation of higher level questions
- greater conceptual understanding
- greater mastery of content at every level
- improved critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Teaching in depth is an expected challenge. Teachers will be receiving communications and support to assist them. Textbooks are a resource for teaching the standards. Professional development needs and aligned resources are high. An important resource we have not had before is the www.fldoestem.org website. Ms. Vandeventer’s power point presentation will be available for viewing on the Curriculum and Staff Development Center web page <http://curriculum.leeschools.net>

Due to time constraints, Dr. Tihen volunteered to postpone his presentation until the October meeting. A motion to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes was made by Pat Lochner and seconded by John Traube. The motion carried unanimously.

Good of the Order

Donna Butts informed members that at the October meeting, nominations and election of officers will take place for the 2008-2009 year. Board Members will approve new committee members on September 23rd. Orientation for advisory committee members will take place on September 30th. The next meeting of this committee will take place on Monday, October 20th as long as Dr. Jane Kuckel, the new Board liaison, is available. If she is not available, the meeting will move to Monday, October 13th.

Mrs. Butts proposed appointing Mrs. Lochner, Parliamentarian, for the upcoming year regarding Robert’s Rules of Order as a way of dealing with out of order issues. Personal attacks are not productive. Further discussion will take place at the October meeting.

Mrs. Butts asked that Dr. Jones bring to the next meeting information on “What is Curriculum?” What has been this committee’s definition in the past?

Mrs. Butts requested copies of the current mission statement be available at the October meeting for each member for discussion and possible changes. It was suggested that the mission statement be printed on the back of each month’s meeting agenda. Another suggestion for the next meeting was to set an outline of topics to focus on for the next year.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

The next meeting of the Curriculum Advisory Committee is scheduled for: **Monday, October 20, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., at the Lee County Public Education Center, Board Annex – Training Room D, 2855 Colonial Blvd., Ft. Myers, Florida.**