

## Franklin City Schools: Curriculum Council

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Meeting: Oct. 7, 2008

**Those present:** Steve Buerschen, JoAnn Feltner, Dan Darragh, Sherry Terrill, Jim McFarland, David Riegel, Michelle Cash, Gloria Williams, Paula Ruppert, Dee Sellers, Jim Martin, Tom Pecor, Arnol Elam, and Peggy Darragh-Jeromos

**Agenda Items I, II, and III:** Group members introduced themselves and confirmed contact information. Dr. Buerschen and Mrs. Feltner reviewed the purpose of the Council, the items on which the Council has worked, and recommendations it has made since it was established.

**Item IV:** Peggy Darragh-Jeromos agreed to continue as recorder for the group.

**Item V:** Dr. Buerschen explained the district's curriculum review cycle for 2008-2009.

**AP Classes:** Last year, the Council had discussed AP courses offered at the high school. Mr. McFarland shared the spring 2008 exam results of the AP US History class. Franklin students exceeded the national scores significantly. Mr. Riegel shared the same info for last year's AP English class. The district currently has three AP classes and Mr. Riegel said he planned to bring the group a proposal to add more next year.

**Item VI:** The group discussed Efficient Instructional Delivery. Mr. Elam raised the topic of whether our resources were aligned to best educate our students. Both he and other group members raised a number of questions on this topic for the group to explore.

- How can we align resources to best serve students?
- Is a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school the best configuration? What about grades 6-8 together?
- Should high school students be sitting in study hall—are there enough high-interest classes that would be valuable to them?
- Is the high school curriculum sufficiently aligned with the Ohio Graduation Test?
- What are the pros and cons of grade-level versus neighborhood elementary buildings?
- What would be the benefits of having one or two big elementary buildings?

Questions about the elementary buildings in particular spurred extensive discussion. Some comments included

- There is educational benefit to grouping students by grade to ensure that all students in the same grade are receiving the same instruction.
- Teachers benefit by being able to collaborate.
- Housing all students together from the beginning of their school careers would help eliminate the perception that the elementary buildings are unequal because they have varying demographic make-ups.
- Housing students by grade helps balance class sizes, teaching staff, and resource/Title I staff.

- Our students whose families move a lot would benefit by not having to change schools just because they move.
- The group agreed that there were benefits to being able to show the public how the district has been a good steward of their tax monies and that decisions have been made that are in the best interests of educating our students.
- The group commented on the need for clearly communicating with the public.

The group will continue this discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Riegel will bring proposals about high school curriculum to the next meeting. One thing that the group will continue to consider is the early and late classes at the high school and also the idea that Mr. Darragh suggested of opening some courses to members of the public.

**Item VII:** Last year, Mrs. Feltner asked that the group consider a school calendar where first semester was finished by Christmas break. Mrs. Feltner said that one reason behind this was that some teachers give exams before Christmas anyway. Dr. Buerschen sketched out what this year's calendar would look like if it were set up with a before-Christmas finish. Classes would have started the first week of August and the last day of school would be mid-May.

The group offered a number of pros and cons for the proposal. **Pro:** It fits well with state testing schedules. It fits well with the AP test schedule. **Cons:** It eats into prime family vacation time. The AC in several buildings is not up to task of cooling on hot August days. It would be difficult for some students' work schedules. It would affect football practice schedules.

**VIII:** The group agreed that the bulk of its focus for 2008-2009 would be to work on Efficient Instructional Delivery and the School Calendar. We agreed that we don't need to see the work done by the various curriculum review committees, as they have the needed expertise and we can't add much.

The group will plan to be ready to present recommendations on these topics to the Board in the spring. We suggested that the Finance and Facilities Committees be aware of what we are doing, as our group's focus will be the educational aspects only and not issues of costs, transportation, etc. which would fall to them.

Mrs. Feltner said that the district is still looking at the year round school option and the next step is a survey. If we have items to include in a survey, e-mail them to her.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, Nov. 18, 3 p.m., HB Board Room. (Note: This is a change from what was decided at the meeting.)

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Darragh-Jeromos  
October 9, 2008