

Franklin City Schools: Curriculum Council

Meeting: Nov. 18, 2008

Those present: Steve Buerschen, JoAnn Feltner, Dave Riegel, Jim Martin, Sherry Terrill, Dee Sellers, Michelle Cash, Tom Pecor, Arnol Elam, Meagan Engle, Heidi Fella, Peggy Darragh-Jeromos, Jim McFarland, Lisa Garlou

Mrs. Feltner thanked council members for their work and commitment.

Early Calendar Discussion: At previous meetings, members asked that the council examine a school calendar that allowed the first semester to be finished before Christmas.

Dr. Buerschen prepared five draft calendars of the 2009-2010 school year for the discussion and comparison: a traditional calendar; a late start (after Labor Day); and three versions of an early start calendar. The early start calendars had school begin in mid-August and end May 13.

Differences among the three early-start calendars included:

- Whether or not waiver days (days that the state may permit for professional development in lieu of early release and late start) were built in. In-service days may be waiver days, but are not identical.
- The number of in-service days prior to the start of school.

Council noted these **pros** for an early-start calendar:

- More instructional time before fall third-grade reading tests.
- More time before Ohio Achievement Tests and Ohio Graduation Tests.
- A better fit with the Advanced Placement testing calendar.
- Having first semester exams finished before Christmas.

Council raised these **cons** for the early start calendar:

- The perception that summer is shorter (as it would be the first year it was implemented)
- That there will be some negative reaction from staff, students, and parents simply because it would be a change.
- AC is intermittent in some high school rooms.
- Most junior high and elementary classrooms have AC, but some Title One instructional areas do not.
- Common areas such as halls, gyms, and cafeterias in the Middle School and elementaries do not have AC.
- Families who have children in another district on one schedule and parents who work in Franklin on another will have childcare issues and/or vacation scheduling issues.

The group concluded that:

- The calendar should be driven by what is best academically for our students
- Ensuring all classrooms and learning spaces are adequately air-conditioned is a condition of adopting an early start calendar. Mrs. Fella, who sits on the Facilities committee, said that the committee would do what was necessary to make sure that happened, that the Facilities committee's work is also driven by academics.

The group voted 12-1 that they could support an early start calendar. Support is contingent on several changes that Dr. Buerschen will draft into a new version for our review. (These dates are specific to the proposed 2009-2010 calendar only.) The changes are:

- Starting school on Aug.18 for students
- First semester exam days would be Dec. 21, 22, and 23
- Students would return to school on January 6
- Additional time would be built in for a weeklong spring break
- Last day of school would be May 19 for students.

Dr. Buerschen will also draft a 2010-2011 calendar to see how it would look.

Mr. Martin suggested that in making this decision, earlier is better for parent and staff planning. The calendar would be reviewed by the FEA also.

Mr. Elam also noted that he would like to see the conference schedule changed to allow both spring conferences and more evening conference periods to accommodate working parents.

Next Meeting: Dec. 9, 2008, 3 p.m., for the purpose of discussing the high school course of study. The meeting following that will be in January and the calendar discussion will be resumed.