

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

Minutes of October 3, 2024

Mr. Beam called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. in the FNSBSD Administrative Center boardroom, 520 Fifth Avenue, Fairbanks, AK. Committee members attended in person and via Zoom.

Members Present:

Jeremiah Bayles
Aaron Beardsley
Melanie Bieniek
Rachel Blackwell
Hannah Harp

Don Larson
Elisabeth Nadin
Suzanne Richards
Heather Stewart

Nonvoting Members:

Chane Beam
Bobby Burgess

Members Absent:

Joshua Peter
Alexis Walker
Courtney Young

Guests Present:

Tara DeVaughn
Mackenzie Staiger

Committee Support:

Jen Morgan

Members Excused:

Brook Freeburg

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Larson moved to accept the October 3, 2024 agenda; Ms. Bieniek seconded. Hearing no objection or comment, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Larson moved to accept the minutes from the September 5, 2024 meeting; Mr. Bayles seconded. Hearing no objection or comment, the minutes were approved.

CURRICULUM UPDATES

Music Curriculum – Draft 1

Ms. DeVaughn went over the curriculum revision timeline, reminding the committee that the process started with a community survey and with Music teachers meeting in 2023-24. She informed the committee that draft one of the Music Curriculum is available, and that the public comment period just ended. She went over some of the proposed changes in draft one. There was a structural change to the elementary curriculum. The curriculum writers created an ensemble course to encompass many courses. In both middle and high school, the new format includes key vocabulary and suggested resources. Beginning and Advanced Choir were also added to the middle school curriculum, and Concert Band, Concert Orchestra, Intermediate Band, and Varsity Band was archived. In high school, Varsity Band and Varsity Orchestra were changed to Beginning Band and Beginning Orchestra, to better reflect the level. Beginning Steel Pan Ensemble and Tenor/Bass Choir were added, and Men’s Ensemble, Show/Jazz Choir, and Steel Pan Ensemble were archived. Based on feedback from teachers and the public, there will be some changes in draft two.

Ms. Bieniek stated that she is mostly teaching choir this year, and with the new Elementary Ensemble course, she can continue to do this. Ms. Stewart commented that the proposed curriculum reflects what is being taught at Ryan Middle School. Ms. Richards asked about the difference between exploration and suggested activities. Ms. DeVaughn clarified that what is listed in the “must do” column are the items that need to be covered in each course, and the exploration column are topics that can be covered if there is time. Ms. Richards suggested changing “exploration” to “enrichment,” and Ms. Bieniek suggested changing the order of columns to topic, standard, must do, suggested activities, and then exploration.

Mr. Bayles asked how APS applies to the new music courses, and Ms. DeVaughn stated that it falls under the Fine Arts category and will be approved for APS. Mr. Bayles also asked why there are so many elementary courses on the archived list, and Ms. DeVaughn stated that most of these will now fall under the new Elementary Ensemble course, so they are not really going away.

Ms. Bieniek stated that in the beginning of grade 5 of the Music Curriculum (page 27), under Readiness Standards, it states that students will have experienced music from other cultures, including Alaska Native cultures. She pointed out that in grade four, this is under exploration and if students are expected to know this when enter fifth grade, it should be in the “must do” column.

Summary of Public Comment

Ms. DeVaughn provided a summary of public comment on draft one the World Language, Physical Education, and Health curricula. For World Language, there was one comment from the public in which they stated that all levels look great, but questions whether it will be a reality due to lack of resources and world language teachers. Also, one educator provided feedback, asking for Spanish vocabulary and expectations be placed in the appendix, which the curriculum writers will work on later.

A total of four people from the public and five educators provided feedback during the public comment period for Physical Education. There were also comments about the structure of the document, whether it should be skills based vs. game based, provide more focus on sportsmanship, add HIIT to high school suggested activities, and the course title of “Pool” needed to change so it isn’t confused with billiards. Based on feedback, the writers are making the following changes to draft two: 1. a statement about sportsmanship will be added to each course, 2. Pool will be changed to Aquatics, 3. HIIT will be added to suggested activities in high school.

Mr. Beam explained the Health Curriculum received the most attention with 25 people commenting on it. Feedback was split, with some people commenting that the district should not teach anything about sex, to others stating the district is not teaching enough on the topic. There were a lot of good suggestions. He also informed the committee that most items on the Supplemental Sex Education Materials list were sunsetted, meaning their approval for use has expired. Most of the items were websites that were added to the list in 2017-18, after the state passed the law stating Schools Boards had to approve materials. If teachers want to use the items that have expired, they will need to go through the approval process again. The only items that are remaining on the list for now are the Fairbanks Public Health nurses, which the Board approved last school year and the names are updated every year.

Ms. DeVaughn mentioned that the curriculum writers met to review all feedback, which included the suggestion to add specifics around recognizing and reporting grooming, addressing screen time and online safety, identifying all types of contraceptives, and adding the use of Naloxone to the high school curriculum. Someone also suggested adding the topic of consent to the curriculum, but this is already covered through annual lessons required by Erin and Bree’s Laws.

Ms. DeVaughn then went over the projected timeline for curriculum revision during the rest of the year, and when the committee can expect to view draft two of the Health and PE curriculum. The goal is to have a final draft in January and at that time ask the committee to make a recommendation to the Board. The committee will also look at CTE curriculum over the next few months. Ms. Stewart mentioned that she recently stepped in to teach a Health class, and noticed that there was content that was repeated from the year before or that information in the textbook that was too difficult for sixth graders. She mentioned they might need supplemental material for this. Ms. DeVaughn responded that the curriculum writers has discussed this concern.

GENERAL COMMENTS/ QUESTIONS

Mr. Burgess apologized for his tardiness.

Mr. Beam mentioned this might be Mr. Burgess’s last committee meeting. When a new School Board president is confirmed, they choose the chairs for each committee. While Mr. Burgess hopes to return, it is not guaranteed. Mr. Beam thanked him for chairing the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Bieniek moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Larson seconded. Hearing no objection or further comment, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.