

Curriculum Council

November 18, 2008

Minutes

Comprehensive School Counseling Model:

- Jim Downey provided an update
 - Liz Young and Jim Downey visited Guilford
 - Team is working on a set K-12 Scope and Sequence
 - Stacey Rossignol has written lessons which she used last year in the elementary schools
 - Used state guidelines which provides for a comprehensive program
 - On November 4th Professional Development- each level worked on their piece
 - Understanding by Design will be the format used
 - Mary Ann Grimaldi provided an example for what it will look like
 - There are 3 main standards: Academic, Personal & Social, Career
 - Three tier model will address RTI- interventions will occur in different places

Class Size:

- Concern about class size came up last year
- Overarching issue for grades K-12
- Research is not conclusive
- There is not a class size BOE policy
- Mr. Mala asked for thoughts on this issue: responses below
 - Physical classroom space limitations- elementary classrooms
 - Monitoring and getting work for students- elementary teachers struggle with getting student work back for immediate feedback
 - Call on rate in class- cannot always get to everyone
 - Treating kids as individuals gets lost
 - Some students with special needs struggle due to classroom limitations- crowded with twenty-four desks
 - Kids are more willing to take more risks in smaller classes
- Question was posed: How do we do it? Responses below:
 - Possibly use the math and reading support teachers to teach regular classes by pulling students from the large classes and creating additional classes
 - Differentiated Instruction- should make it easier and provide more time for teachers to work with students needing support
 - Creation of learning based centers- cooperative groups will free teacher to provide student support
 - Best discipline in a classroom is good program- way lesson plans are developed
 - Planning, preparing and delivery- a lot of time and effort go into this however students benefit and teachers have time available to work with students

- Been shown that cooperative groups/teaching allow students to expand and learn on their own
- Question was posed: At what number does the complexity go away?
 - Elementary level the feeling was twenty- allows teachers to get work back to students for immediate feedback, able to move around in the room and work with students
 - Mr. English stated that with the SRBI model kids will be pulled out for additional math and reading. Staff will be needed to target Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Concern will be who will be teaching the additional classes.
- Mr. O'Leary shared info which he collected from Madison
 - Each classroom has a paraprofessional in their room
 - In most cases the paraprofessionals are certified teachers
 - There is a requirement for a certain number of hours of training for being in the classroom and knowing kids
- Mr. Baranoff asked three questions:
 - Does the teacher make a difference for how things work?
 - Does it make a difference with the make-up of the kids?
 - Did anyone consider heterogeneous vs. homogeneous groupings?
- Question: What does a typical student look like?
- Question: What is class size like in the high school?
 - Some classes larger than others for several reasons: course registration, sections available, offerings, AP offerings
 - Not all students take all of their classes at the high school- some go to Wesleyan, use Virtual High School, etc.
 - Generally classes range from mid to high twenties
- Question: Should we be preparing our students for the large classes that they will encounter at the college level?
- Question: What is the responsibility of the parent?
- Question: Do we retain students?
- What can we do to break the cycle?
 - Students not completing homework
 - Students being absent from school frequently
 - Lack of student responsibility
- Question: What is the function of homework?
- Question: What is the purpose of attendance?

Mr. Mala provided a brief update of the following:

- Next Curriculum Council meeting December 9th
- BOE created a subcommittee to address student dress code- November 25th first meeting
- On-line math assessment- Ken Talbott will present at next Curriculum Council meeting
- Discussion of 21st Century Skills