

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 17
CURRICULUM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 11, 2007, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., **CENTRAL OFFICE**

Minutes taken by: Cindy Fetteroll

Members in attendance: 3:30pm Gary Mala, Corey Borzain, Sarah Neal, Tracey Saltus, Wendy Adamczyk, Charlie Macunas, Christina Roelofsen, Lew Traester, Kathleen Mozak-Pezza, Pat Muzzulin, Heather Ferrer, Jim Daniels, John O’Leary, Eric Larson, Lesley Betts, Debbi White, Eileen Mills, Linda Phelan, Eileen Blewett, Ed Goetz, Bob Baranoff

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
08-22 Introductions	All
08-23 <u>Presentations</u> Fathom Software Demonstration (Probability/ Statistics Textbook)	Wendy Adamczyk, Leslie Betts

Leslie Betts discussed and presented Fathom Software for use with the proposed addition of an AP and Honors level Probability and Statistics course at the High School. Leslie detailed the values of the Software, and demonstrated its ease of use, and its benefits to teachers and students alike. The ‘drag and drop’ capability of Fathom makes it very user-friendly. This Software permits a teacher to easily illustrate many previously difficult lessons, such as linear regression. It is also conceivable for this Software to be utilized by teachers in more than one department. Leslie explained that the binder used with the Software is an excellent teacher resource, and stated that she believes the teacher support associated with this Software is ‘amazing’.

Leslie discussed the differences and benefits of Fathom Software as compared to Minitab. Leslie stated that Minitab is a better business model program, but Fathom was a better teaching program. Leslie stated that there was a cost savings to using the Fathom Software as well. For the same price, Fathom provides the Text book and a 50-user license, while Minitab is only 30. In response to a question from Gary Mala, Leslie stated that there is no online training available with this program, but teachers would be trained during (perhaps) professional development, and would be set to offer the program to students next year.

Discussion ensued regarding the type of student that would be interested in the AP courses, and weather there would be enough interest in an AP course of this nature. The general consensus within the group was that there was not a lot of ‘overlap’ of the type of student that would wish to take an AP course as opposed to an Honors level course, and the general feeling was that there would certainly be enough student interest in this course offering.

All meeting attendees approved the motion for Leslie to begin writing the syllabus for the AP Probability and Statistics course.

Leslie stated that for those who were interested in reviewing the Software further, they could do so on line at www.keypress.com. Gary stated that he would contact Madison Public School to discuss the possibility of purchasing the textbooks which accompany the software jointly to receive significant savings on shipping.

Charlie Macunas stated that he wanted to publicly acknowledge the teachers presenting during this meeting of Curriculum Council. Charlie stated that each teacher was presenting topics that were of particular interest to them, as they saw the needs and desires of their students. Charlie emphasized that these teachers were not prompted by anything other than the good of the students that they teach and care about.

AP Environmental Science

James Daniels, Heather Ferrer

Heather Ferrer provided information on her desire to offer AP Environmental Science. Heather stated that she wanted to pursue a topic that has had the most interest from kids in her classes. Heather detailed her desire to offer students a course of study that will provide understandings of global interdependence. Heather presented a course description and a course syllabus, which detailed all concepts, which would be covered. These documents have been attached for your review.

Heather detailed her desire to permit students in an AP class to get out in the field to study their local environment. Heather reported that she has researched five (5) different available textbooks for such a course offering. Discussion ensued regarding the importance of the topic, and the need to expand our offerings for the subject. In response to questions regarding student numbers, Jim Daniels stated that as teachers review and then make recommendations for student course work, they would ultimately have a good idea of the number of students that would have the interest/ability for such a course offering. Charlie Macunas stated that he believes there would be enough student interest in this course, and that also this course would fit in 'perfectly' with the state Commissioner of Educations plans for High Schools. John O'Leary stated that he felt it would be important for a representative from the Guidance Department to attend/review meeting materials, as they would aid in the marketing of this course to students.

Discussion ensued regarding the necessity for this course to be offered as an AP course. Debbie White suggested that perhaps students that are not in honors classes might also be interested in the subject. Linda Phelan stated that there might be enough interest in an AP course of this type, as some students would prefer it to a course in physics. Eileen Blewett felt that offering an AP course is important as a means to provide students with greater leverage when applying to top rated/Ivy League colleges.

Amy Jacques-Purdy asked what the implications for staffing would be, and if perhaps it should be offered on alternate years. Jim Daniels stated that there are a variety of good courses offered for the hands-on learners, and that there would be no reason not to offer a college preparatory class.

There were no objections to offering an AP and an Honors level Environmental Science course. Heather stated that she would attend the next CC meeting to discuss the textbook selection.

Honors Psychology Curriculum

Tracey Saltus

Tracey detailed her desire to teach an Honors level Psychology course. She stated that she believes her experiences teaching standard psychology to seniors and some juniors have provided her with an understanding that there are a number of students that would benefit from this course of study. She discussed the large number of students that enroll in the psychology classes offered and that there are many that express and have expressed an interest in continuing the study of psychology in college. Tracey stated that she has reviewed and researched this idea for approximately three (3) years. Tracey reviewed the National Psychology standards for Honors Psychology when writing the standards for the High School. She stated that this course would provide the rigor needed for those students with the desire to further their study. The course would share connections to Probability & Statistics, in that data analysis and correlation coefficients would be included. Also, students would have the opportunity to read more authentic studies.

Tracey believes an honors course is the natural progression for students with an interest in psychology. Tracy reported that she reviewed ten (10) possible textbooks for such a course, but selected Understanding Psychology by Robert Feldman 6th edition. She believes that this text offers everything an instructor could need including interactive sites and tutorials and Tracey stated that she believes the text offers challenge and readability to High School students. There were no objections to offering an Honors Psychology course.

Latin I & II Curriculum

Kathleen Mozak-Pezza, Sarah Neal

Sarah Neal presented materials related to revising Latin I at the High School. Sarah provided information related to the reason for the requested curriculum change and the request for a new textbook, Ecce Romani. A detailed discussion of the benefits of offering Latin to students ensued. It was the general consensus of members that the course is extremely beneficial, and there were no objections to the motion to update the text for the course contingent upon the World Language Curriculum being revised by the end of the 20072-008 school year as delineated in the approved Curriculum Revision Schedule. It was noted that the Latin I and II course have completed, revised curricular as of this date.

Virtual High School

Charlie Macunas

Charlie reported on a visit he made to Hale Ray High School in East Haddam, in order to review that schools experiences with 'Virtual' classes. Charlie related student feedback and insight to virtual coursework. Offering 'virtual courses' is a great opportunity for any school wishing to expand and offer more selection to their students. Charlie was impressed with the program and believes it would be a tremendous asset to our students.

Charlie detailed the operation and cost of virtual classes, and stated that the profile of a student interested in a virtual course is one who is disciplined and detailed. Charlie noted that surveys indicate a satisfaction level of 92%. A site coordinator is necessary, but this coordinator can be anyone, a teacher, a counselor, a paraprofessional, etc. The cost of training a site coordinator is \$1,500. The total cost to run the program is \$10,000.

Charlie noted that the same selection process occurs for students recommended to this course. A student's current teacher would make a recommendation. In response to a question from Gary Mala, Charlie stated that he would review options for having a demonstration of this program at a future Curriculum Council meeting.

In response to questions from several meeting members, Charlie stated that 20% of students taking an on line courses at other high schools did not complete the course. Charlie speculated that the reason for that may simply be that those students didn't fully realize the rigors of taking an on line course.

John O'Leary suggested and asked if this program would be available to students in the Middle School. Charlie Macunas agreed, and stated that it would certainly be a way for Middle School students to have coursework with High School content.

Charlie further detailed the recommendation that no more than four (4) students from a single High School take the same course. The reasoning behind that suggestion is that it would then be more beneficially to offer a classroom course for a group larger than four.

In response to a question from Debbie White, Charlie stated that he was not certain how virtual classrooms are 'blended' with classroom teachers working on the same topics. Bob Baranoff suggested that it would be important to have clarification on that question.

The meeting Adjourned at 5:30pm

08-24

Next Meeting: January 15, 2008