

School Committee Curriculum Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

4:30 PM-6:30 PM

School Committee Room, Town Hall

Curriculum Subcommittee Members Present: Barbara Scotto (Chair), Helen Charlupski, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and Jennifer Monopoli.

Other School Committee Members Present: Sharon Abramowitz and David Pearlman.

Staff Present: Ben Lummis, Nicole Gittens, Mary Brown, Meg Maccini, Robin Coyne, K-12 Visual Arts Curriculum Coordinator Alicia Mitchell, Director of Professional Development Michelle Herman, K-8 English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator Joanna Lieberman, K-8 World Language Coordinator Tanya Alvarado, K-8 Math Coordinator Kathleen Hubbard, K-8 Science Curriculum Coordinator Emily Speck, K-8 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator Gabriel McCormick, Coolidge Corner School Principal Jen Buller, Lawrence Principal Monica Crowley, Lincoln Principal Brian Denitzio, Baker Principal Torrance Lewis, Brookline Early Education Program (BEEP) Interim Principal Regina Watts, Pierce Principal Lesley Ryan-Miller, and Pierce Vice Principal Jamie Yadoff.

Others Present: Andy Liu, John VanScoyoc, Arthur Conquest, Meghna Chakrabarti, Mike Offner, Norma Gordon, Miriam Fein, Jay Kim, and Rachel Goldman.

1) Approval of Curriculum Subcommittee Minutes

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski and seconded by Ms. Monopoli, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2020 Curriculum Subcommittee meeting.

2) Time and Content across the Public Schools of Brookline - a Conversation with Coordinators and Principals

Dr. Gittens gave a presentation on Time and Content in the Public Schools of Brookline (Attachment A), which provided context for Curriculum and Time Allocations in Brookline and described district-wide work, content areas, school level work, and next steps. The purpose of establishing Essential Curriculum is as follows: make it clear to educators and families what content students will learn and skills students will develop during the course of a year; make sure what is asked of educators and students actually fits within a school year; make sure the content is accessible to teachers, e.g., teachers will have all necessary materials; and that all lessons and units are accessible to all students because they have been planned with all learning styles and needs in mind. Current challenges include the following: teachers unclear about required curriculum; not enough time in a day/week/year for all that the Brookline community wants to see happen in schools; unclear what to do and what not to do; and shared document repositories in the Portal can be overwhelming for teachers. Next steps include the following: work with stakeholders to create a common vision of scheduling in the schools; continue to gather feedback and input from Teachers, Coordinators, and Principals to affirm or adjust time allocations; most discrepancies occur at the middle school level, address these challenges through collaborative work with teachers and administrators; continue “Essential Curriculum” work to ensure that curriculum is clear, accessible, and fits into the school year.

The administrators present addressed several questions:

- Provided examples of inter-disciplinary and project-based learning and how it is represented in scheduling blocks;
- Provided background on past discussions regarding scheduling/time allocations for science, social studies, and other subjects (at one point there was discussion of reflecting what was actually happening in classrooms in the schedules, but this did not happen) and steps that have been taken to protect time for science and social studies;
- Discussed past additions to the school day, e.g., additional teacher prep time, guidelines for lunch and recess, Elementary World Language;
- Discussed how the schools attempt to reflect the district's values in scheduling and where there are challenges, e.g., need to accommodate schedules of staff shared across schools;
- Discussed the challenges relative to making sure curriculum is aligned and up-to-date and that staff has the necessary training and support.
- Described district work on equity and scheduling, noting the importance of teacher input and feedback.

School Committee/Subcommittee Member Comments:

- Need to consider ways to solve the time issue.
- Each student is an individual and should not have to fit into a district's pre-conceived notion of what a graduate should look like.
- Need to ensure that parents/guardians and staff have opportunities for meaningful input into these discussions.
- Should take a more holistic approach and consider how the district could reconfigure the available time, e.g., providing longer time blocks where teachers can work together, and ensure that students are engaged and able to learn and gain the skills the district deems important.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Time & Content in PSB

— March 3, 2020 —

Agenda

- Context for our Curriculum & Time Allocations in Brookline
- District-Wide Work
- Content Areas
- Schools Level Work
- Moving Forward

Commonalities Across PSB

- **Equity:** Time allocations and some general content should be coherent across all schools. *To promote equitable outcomes, there must be equitable opportunity.*
- **Time:** Offer some longer blocks of time for teachers to do more project-based learning and integrated units.
- **Support:** Provide opportunities for intervention, practice, and extension

Essential Curriculum

Essential curriculum: our path to excellent and equitable student outcomes

Make it clear, make it fit, make it accessible!

Rationale:

As we work to create equitable outcomes for all students, it is important that we provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum to each and every student across the district. Teachers and students deserve to have access to curriculum that makes sense and can fit into the school year. Our students must have access to our best and most challenging curriculum and the opportunities necessary to master that curriculum so that they are prepared for success in school and beyond.

Purpose of Essential Curriculum

- **Make it clear** to educators and families what content students will learn and skills students will develop during the course of a year
- Make sure what is asked of educators and students actually **fits** within a school year
- Make sure the content is **accessible** to teachers (meaning they can get their hands on all necessary materials, etc.) and that all lessons and units are **accessible** to all students because they have been planned with all learning styles and needs in mind

Components of the Essential Curriculum Project

1	Portrait of a Graduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine skills, habits, dispositions for graduates of Brookline• Initial survey all professional staff
2	District T&L Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop District Philosophy in line with Portrait of a Graduate and Brookline core values.
3	Department Philosophies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop unified K-12 department philosophies of teaching and learning to support the work
4	Scope and Sequence Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft curriculum scope and sequences for K-9• Inventory current curriculum and weed outdated items
5	Curriculum Revision Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publishing revised/new curriculum• Align summer work to the Essential Curriculum Project• Develop common unit and lesson design templates• Update BHS course syllabi
6	Future Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to curriculum and resources• Revise report cards, progress reports,

Portrait of a Graduate?

In the Fall of 2018, the Office of Teaching & Learning began to survey teachers in all of our schools to learn what they believed to be important skills/knowledge for ALL PSB students to have for school and beyond. We are still in the very beginning stages of this process.

The following slide shows our educators' top responses.

One next step (of many): Gather similar input from families and community members. In order to do this, we need to develop a systematic process to collect this information.

Portrait of a Graduate Pillars

ANSWER CHOICES	CURRENT RANK	PREVIOUS RANK(S)	RESPONSES	COUNT as of Sept 2019
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	1	1	72.07%	498
Empathy	2	3 5 8	62.23%	430
Social and Cross-Cultural Skills	3	3	57.74%	399
Communication	4	2	57.60%	398
Flexibility and Adaptability	5	5 6	54.41%	376
Personal Responsibility	6	5 7 9	53.84%	372
Collaboration	7	4	52.97%	366
Resilience	8	9 7	47.90%	331
Creativity and Innovation	9	6 8 5	47.47%	328
Metacognition / Learning How to Learn	10	9 10	39.80%	275
Conflict Resolution	11	8 10	38.35%	265
Initiative and Self-Direction	12	New	34.59%	239

Key	No Change	Up	Down	New
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Current Challenges

- Teachers unclear about required curriculum
- Not enough time in a day/week/year for all that the Brookline community wants to see happen in schools
- Unclear what TO do and what NOT to do
- Shared document repositories in the Portal can be overwhelming for teachers

Current Examples of Time on Learning

Current Challenges: Time Allocations Across the District

ELA: Grade 6

School A	225 weekly minutes
School B	240 weekly minutes
School C	480 weekly minutes

Math: Grade 6/7/8

School K	225 weekly minutes
School L	235 weekly minutes
School M	240 weekly minutes

WL: Grades 7 and 8

School X	180 weekly minutes
School Y	225 weekly minutes
School Z	240 weekly minutes

Current Challenges: Time Allocations Across the District

Primary Grade Classes Across School 1:

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	255
Writing	185
Word Study	80
Math	210
Science/Social Studies	100

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	270
Writing	220
Word Study	20
Math	185
Science/Social Studies	115

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	0 - 175
Writing	0 - 195
Word Study	0 - 175
Math	120 - 150
Science/Social Studies	0 - 355

Current Challenges: Time Allocations Across the District

Primary Grade Classes Across School 2:

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	90
Writing	35
Word Study	unclear
Literacy	290
Math	310
Science/Social Studies	125

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	60
Writing	50
Word Study	90
Literacy	390 - 490
Math	170 - 270
Science/Social Studies	95

Content/Skill	Minutes/Week
Reading	unclear
Writing	unclear
Word Study	unclear
Literacy	480
Math	330
Science/Social Studies	135

Next Steps

- Work with stakeholders to create a common vision of the scheduling we want in our schools (Example: Opportunities for Project-based learning?)
- Continue to gather feedback and input from teachers, coordinators, principals to affirm or adjust time allocations
- Most discrepancies occur at the middle school level. Address these challenges through collaborative work with teachers and administrators
- Continue “Essential Curriculum” work to ensure that curriculum is clear, accessible, and fits into the school year