



U-46 Citizens' Advisory Council Curriculum Committee 2017 Report

Committee Members:

Lisa K. Hopp, Committee Chair - Otter Creek Elementary

Mary VanSlyck - Canton Middle School

Ian Horn - Elgin High School

Tracy Kelly - Tefft Middle School

Andrew Giza - Nature Ridge Elementary

Julie Winterhalder - Eastview Middle School

Karen Ladendorf - Otter Creek Elementary

Kim Zupec - Abbott Middle School

Trisha Shrode, U-46 Staff Liaison

***Special thank you to Full Day Kindergarten teachers who welcomed
committee members into their classrooms:***

Ms. Martha Mancera, Lowrie Elementary

Ms. Zahidee Marcano, Ron O'Neal Elementary

Ms. Jan Wilcox, Centennial Elementary

The Curriculum Committee began to meet in September, excited to continue the work of the previous year on the topics of Explore 2016, U-46 Science and Full Day Kindergarten. With new members we planned our year to include other topics of interest such as an update on the District's Technology Plan.

Explore 2016 (formerly, Curriculum Fair)

Several committee members attended and/or volunteered at Explore 2016. Afterwards, the committee reviewed the event and discussed areas of growth and improvement for the next year. We discussed that communication about the busing could have been better. Buses were offered from each middle school, but were not utilized regularly throughout the day. Passports were provided to encourage check-ins at each CTE Booth. Ideas were discussed about separate and/or color coded maps to help middle school and high school families navigate the event better. In addition, Guidance should be placed in space to allow for slide show.

School District U46 Technology

In November, the committee received an update on the District's Technology Plan from Dr. Jeff King. The committee learned that technology purchases were now being driven by curricular revisions. The technology plan also includes progress towards classroom standards across the district, providing professional development and excellent customer service.

K-6 Fine Arts

The committee received an update on revised curriculum for K-6 Fine Arts. Kindergarten does not presently have art and music, but curriculum was written if the Board of Education decides to support the addition of Fine Arts to Kindergarten. The committee was impressed with the Quaver Music resource which is a per building license and allows for use by all staff and students in the building. The committee fully supports the use of technology across content areas. Given the budgetary constraints faced by fine arts teachers, the committee enthusiastically applauds their efforts to create amazing works of art with our students.

(Student Achievement Priority 1: We will implement and support a challenging, standards based curriculum across all content areas.)

U-46 Science

In February, the committee received information on updated science proposals. The committee is very excited to see the fruition of this seven year odyssey towards a new hands-on curriculum for K-12. It was impressive to witness the responsiveness of administration to the teachers needs for particular resources aligned to their curriculum and the students served.

(Student Achievement Priority 1: We will implement and support a challenging, standards based curriculum across all content areas.)

U-46 Full Day Kindergarten

The Curriculum Committee had an opportunity to observe Full Day Kindergarten classes. In the fall, as we discussed calendar and location details, the committee was introduced to “Danielson Framework for Teaching”, a useful tool for observations.

Committee members visited FDK classrooms for a total of 17 hours. Three classrooms, both dual language and general education classes, were visited in the fall, and two committee members revisited a class months later. Committee members were able to witness hands on science lessons during visits and the general membership got to experience FDK-level science. The committee discussed the classroom visits and noted similarities and differences between the different classrooms.

The committee was impressed with how well students were behaved and were familiar and comfortable with classroom routines, how advanced students were in writing and literacy, and how learning centers were set up for success.

After discussion, the committee has questions they would like to explore further such as: How are word walls constructed? How are the words selected? How are they used as part of instruction? And noting the number of students, the committee would like to explore how additional support/volunteers can be recruited to support the play based model.

The committee suggests ongoing review of current best practices utilized by several schools and continued collaboration among FDK teachers. The committee believes that the play based model supports differentiation in the classroom.

Peggy Ondera, Director of Early Learning, attended our March meeting and presented information on data being collected as part of the evaluation of the FDK play-based program. She also shared information on the survey (created by Panorama) for parents to be given at the end of this year. The results will be presented to the BOE in July. The committee is glad that the district is supporting first grade teachers with ongoing professional development to continue the gains made with FDK. The committee is interested in seeing the data teachers are gathering on gains made this year in FDK.

(Student Achievement Priority 2: We will coordinate our efforts to provide a nurturing and safe learning experience and a flexible approach in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student.)

Thoughts for Next Year

The committee was very excited about the format used at general CAC meetings to present curriculum updates such as, Elementary PE, FDK Science and Study-Sync. The hands-on format was very well received by attendees, and the committee suggests continued use of these interactive presentations during general meetings. The committee is also interested in the long term review of data on the current cohort of FDK students as well as reviewing FDK programs in similar districts. And finally, the committee continues to remain interested in new developments in the high school Academies and CTE programming.