

RSU #38 School Board Curriculum Committee
October 28, 2020
Via Zoom 4:00-5:00

Present: Kim Bowie, Dwayne Conway (invited participant for #2), Dane Wing, Gary Carr, Patty Gordon, Cathy Jacobs, Nancy Harriman, Jay Charette

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Curriculum Committee

(3 Areas for Board Focus-excerpt from MSBA Handbook;
Policy ADF,
Policy BBA,
Policy IGA)

The Supt. and Curriculum Coordinator outlined key points in each document and members added to discussion. Key discussion included:

Approval of Courses of Study and overall Curriculum (i.e. scope and sequence of what will be taught K-12 in a content area; or the Course of Study in the Maranacook Alternative Program for 9-12) *YES – to be approved by the board*

VS a particular textbook or purchased “program” for a content area to guide instruction for a content area at a specific grade or grade span (i.e. new textbooks for Financial Literacy at the high school or a math series for K-5) *NOT to be approved by the board*

Evaluation of curriculum:

The Superintendent or designee is expected to develop plans and timelines as necessary for the development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum (under E. in Policy IGA)

Commitment to Maine’s Learning Standards

The superintendent pointed out that although the term “Proficiency” is no longer being used by the Maine Dept. of Education, districts are still obligated to ensure that students are “meeting” grade level and content area expectations outlined in standards. Our district does that by following progressions of learning within a standards-based curriculum.

Identify Spokesperson to Report to Board (OR Request a Staff Member be present to assist or answer questions about a specific topic)

Patty Gordon will serve in this role – unanimously approved.

2. Weighted Grades discussion

What is weighted grading at HS level?

Unweighted GPA doesn’t take the difficulty of a student’s coursework into account. Often unweighted GPA is reported on a 0-4.0 point scale.

Weighted GPA takes into account course difficulty rather than providing the same letter grade to GPA conversion for all students. Often weighted GPA is reported on a 0-5.0 point scale.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of weighted grades and the implications of those for Maranacook Community High School?

Discussion included:

MCHS currently uses unweighted grades. How long has this been in place? More than 8 years, but Dwayne Conway offered to research this question further to ascertain when weighted grading ended and unweighted started.

Advantages of unweighted systems: All students can seek the level of challenge appropriate to their learning and be graded on the same scale. Focus can be on individual accomplishments and learning versus the “highest score.” When applying for scholarships attributes like persistence, financial need, and commitment to an area of study are often weighted more heavily than GPA. For families of high achievers concerned about college admission, it appears that most colleges “unweight the grades” to even the playing field anyway.

Disadvantages of unweighted systems: Competing within a small high school for the highest GPA can be very different from competing within a large university, is it really preparing students for that? Does it offer students incentive to take more challenging classes?

Next steps...

Dwayne Conway will report back to Committee about when change back to unweighted grades was made.

After much discussion, members all were satisfied to leave the practice as is, with no further action.

Linked Resources:

Balingit, M. (2015, July). High schools are doing away with class rank. What does that mean for college admissions? *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/07/13/high-schools-are-doing-away-with-class-rank-what-does-that-mean-for-college-admissions/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92d4aceaf752

Clinedinst, M., & Patel, P. (2018). 2018 State of College Admission. National Association for College Admission Counseling. Retrieved from https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/2018_soc_a/soca18.pdf

Guskey, T. (2014, March 28). Class rank weighs down true learning. *Education Week*. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/03/01/kappan_guskey.html

[National Association of Secondary School Principals.\(July, 2019\) Class Rank, GPA, and Grading Position Statement.](#)

[SAT /ACT Prep Online Guides and Tips Jan 19, 2020. What's the Difference? Weighted vs Unweighted GPA](#)

3. Upcoming Agenda Items

Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum, K-12 Approval – Bring to Curriculum Committee first for a final review, then hopefully to the Board - Winter

Update from K-5 Math Curriculum Review Committee – Winter

Nancy will ask Donna Foster to reschedule the proposed Feb 24 meeting to an earlier date in late Jan ?

Revisit District Assessments – Commissioner has announced changes to the State Assessment System that will likely affect what achievement data we have access to for the next few years. For us that would include a more thorough review of use of the NWEA. Likely Winter or Spring (in time to inform district contracts and professional development for 21-22)

Join ZOOM Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89429735466>

Meeting ID: 894 2973 5466

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