

Regional School Unit No. 18
Educational Programming Committee
March 8, 2010
6:00 p.m.
Central Office, Oakland

Call to Order 6:10 p.m.

Attendance: Gwen Bacon, Alan Derosby, Paula Callan, Stephanie Carter, Glen Davis, Lora Downing, Brian Fielding, George Kohl, Linda Laughlin, Dodie Leighton, Cheryl Mercier, Jon Moody, Becky Seel, Gary N. Smith and Laura Tracy

After Introductions Linda Laughlin introduced the Policy File: IKF, Graduation Requirements, and discussed the history of the graduation requirements policy. She shared that the intent of the State guidance in Maine statute and rule is that the high school diploma has common understanding across the State of Maine.

It was discussed that the current credit system is based on student seat time and is not a proficiency based system.

The Committee discussed multiple pathways, RTI and meeting graduation requirements by a combination of standards-based achievement and credit.

Policy File: IKF-R was reviewed. This policy is currently based on the SAD 47 philosophy, which may be revised with the RSU 18 vision process in late March.

It was suggested that the language be revised to reflect credits, not courses. Many offerings were discussed, with concern around the credit value of the courses. It was also noted that the credit requirement should read 23 credits, of which 17.5 are prescribed credits.

Three members of the Social Studies Department were present to share in the discussion concerning suggested changes in the social studies offerings. Currently the State of Maine requires 2 credits in social studies, and Messalonskee High School requires 4 credits in social studies.

Alan Derosby, Chair of the Social Studies Department, shared the options being considered as a 4th year elective. The Social Studies Department is suggesting dropping the requirement of 4 years to 3 years, with a 4th year elective menu. The Department feels that 3-year requirement will allow students fair opportunity to meet the Maine *Learning Results* standards. The Social Studies Department members present stated that they hope to not repeat what students had previously learned at K-8 but build on knowledge they had gained as they move through the system. The Advanced Placement offerings will still be in place, and perhaps new AP offerings could be delivered. The electives would be offered for all students, with the plan that students would see greater relevancy in the new courses. All of the elective offerings would include a research component. The plan is

that the core courses and electives would be designed with more real life applicable lessons. The goal is to offer semester courses, but some may be offered as quarter courses.

Linda Laughlin stated that we need to consider the staff capacity for offering the electives and to keep in mind that implementation will be based on a survey of student interests, available teachers and what learning standards can be met in each offering. We will not be able to offer the entire elective list in any given year.

Mr. Derosby and Ms. Laughlin discussed that it is planned that this will be a more skills-based approach to social studies, and that it is planned that these offerings will help develop greater critical thinking skills and writing skills.

Three social studies teachers have offered to put in time in the summer to develop the curriculum for the new offerings.

George Kohl stated that they are looking for collaboration with K-8. He also stated that they will be seeking more resources for students in specific social studies areas.

Comprehensive course examinations were discussed. There are some common exams being given with the reference to comprehensive, meaning all the material taught in the course being assessed at the end of the course. Currently there are common finals in freshman and sophomore social studies. Health Education also has a common final. Linda Laughlin stated that a final exam is not a comprehensive exam if it is just over the last chapter of the book.

The Curriculum Research Project was discussed. George Kohl stated that there is not a lot of integrity to this requirement at this time due to the many ways that teachers are able to vary their assessment of a student's work. A common rubric exists but it is very broad. The rubric needs to be more standardized for such things as the length of the paper and the standards for oral presentation. Paula Callan suggested that it be looked at more as a senior capstone, culminating the students' entire learning experience.

The Committee asked the High School administration to look at what "Capstone" means at other schools, to look at how it works and to assist in revising the policy after study by the High School and this Committee.

Student individual action plans were discussed in relation to a student's request for an Alternative Graduation Plan. Mrs. Bacon stated that only 1 or 2 students finish their high school program at the end of their junior year, but that 22+ students graduate in January of their senior year. A student's plan for early graduation is currently developed with guidance staff.

The Committee briefly discussed the Maine State diploma and suggested that this be added to our Web site so that students and parents could understand how a student might access this information.

Credit for activities outside of traditional coursework was discussed. It was suggested that the language to be used would be alternative methods of earning credits

Community Service credit is considered to be volunteer activity. There is no requirement for the number of hours served. Not all students engage in community service prior to graduation.

Policy File: IKF was also reviewed and discussed.

The Committee gave Ms. Laughlin guidance on drafting a new/revised graduation policy (IKF) using the Maine School Management Association policy.

Next agenda: The committee will review a draft of the proposed Policy Files: IKF, Graduation Requirements, and IKF-R, Graduation Requirements Guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora S. Downing, Chair
Educational Programming Committee