

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

It is the intent of the RSU 13 Board to provide students with engaging learning experiences to prepare them for further education, careers, and participation as citizens in a democracy. This requires response to rapid social change, technological development, and the explosion of knowledge. The Board encourages and supports the professional staff in its efforts to develop and improve programs. Responsibility for compliance with this policy rests with the Superintendent assisted by the Director of School Improvement.

This policy assures quality control in four areas: curriculum, educational programs, assessments, and program evaluation.

Curriculum is the blueprint for what students need to know and be able to do. It exists in the context of State of Maine curriculum standards and standards from national content area organizations. It ensures that content is presented in a way that minimizes duplication as well as gaps in what is presented to all students.

Educational Programs organize curriculum into a framework for presentation to students. Programs may be broad, describing content areas for every student, such as “physical education.” They may be limited to just a few schools, such as “Expeditionary Learning.” This may be the result of financial limitations or school size, or due to the pilot status of a program.

Assessments are the tests to determine the value of a program based on its impact on student learning. When a new program is piloted the assessment to be used to determine its effectiveness will be identified. Assessments may be developed within the school system or adopted from other school systems or from commercial sources. In general, assessment requires more than one type of measure of student performance. Selected response assessments may be used only as a partial determination of learning, and only under the following circumstances:

1. When results are needed in a short time frame;
2. When a comparison to national student results is necessary; or
3. When it is determined that this is the best means to measure student learning, such as recollection of facts.

Program Evaluation is the analysis of assessment results for all students participating in the program. In addition to analysis of student assessments, it should include analysis of demographic data, attendance data, and teacher preparation data.

Program Change

The Board expects professional staff to maintain current knowledge of trends in these four areas and to continuously improve programs as necessary. Whenever a substantial change is recommended in any of the above areas, this will be presented to the Board’s Curriculum Committee for consideration. The Committee will determine whether full Board approval is required. The presentation to make the case for change will include the following:

- a) The impact on all four areas;
- b) An articulation of the intended and measurable outcomes that will benefit learning;
- c) A description of the intended impact on teaching;
- d) An explicit statement of the data that will be used to track and assess progress towards intended outcomes;

- e) The impact on equity for all students in the school system if the change is approved; and
- f) A timetable for progress reviews and at least one interim report to the Committee.

A change may be presented as a pilot, affecting a subgroup of the total population on a trial basis. In this case specifics will be provided regarding the process and timeframe to determine whether to continue with the pilot or abandon it.

The Committee will review proposed changes at its monthly meeting and may require more than one meeting to make a decision on a proposal. The Committee will determine whether other committees or the full Board will be involved in the final decision.

Program Review

The Committee will review all programs over time on a schedule to be developed by the Committee with advice from the Superintendent. This review will begin with a curriculum audit addressing all four areas. It will consider the following criteria:

1. Equity and quality for all students across the district in grades K-12;
2. Alignment with the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results;
3. Access to programs that challenge the unique talents of students;
4. Provision of interventions for students who fall below expected grade level performance;
5. Adequacy and accuracy of tools for diagnosis of individual needs of students;
6. Supporting data including but not limited to program cost, time since program adoption, number of affected students and staff, training required to implement and maintain the program; and
7. Identification of improvements to the program.

A routine program review will result in program enhancements and may cause a Program Change to be launched.

Other Implications

This policy is intended to provide a framework that allows discretion to professional staff in selecting instructional methods that best meet student needs. This policy has implications for selection of materials, professional development, and technological development, which will be conducted in accordance with policies governing these areas.

Approved: 4/1/10