



## **Curriculum Council Meeting Minutes**

**March 9, 2023**

***Present:*** Julie Dill, Rick Briggs, Don Brady, Susan Jones, Bryan Ashby, Nicholas Thompson, Ruby Brown, Lori Bock, Renee Hall, Lisa McKinnon, Karen Hitch, Andrew Todd, Christine Bryson, Hema Bhaskaran, Tara O'Barsky, Allen Brown, Kristen Hazel and John Palmer

Julie welcomed everyone on the council and stated that we have three items on the agenda for today.

She turned the meeting over to Hema Bhaskaran to present Biology and Environmental Science Curriculum.

***AGENDA ITEM I and II: Biology and Environmental Science Curriculum, Presented by Mrs. Hema Bhaskaran, Supervisor of K-12 Science***

Hema shared a PowerPoint presentation and passed out a handout to the Council. ***(All handouts are included in the folder)***

She began by giving some background on the Next Generation Science Standards. She stated that it's the foundation that this curriculum is built on. All documents have been shared with the Council through a link sent to them in the email prior to the meeting. ***(Please refer to that link to review all documents.)***

She went over the vision for science education how it will evolve. This gives a timespan about what science will look like in the United States for the next 30 years.

She talked about unpacking the Standards and that the process requires a lot of time.

She presented the biology curriculum document. There are 25 Life Science Standards in Biology, and all of our students have to take this course. It is organized by the evidence statements that the units are broken down into topics and for each topic you see the evidence statement. She asked the Council to please look over and review these documents.

The unpacking of the environmental science is very similar to biology science. A majority of our freshmen take environmental science which is unique in that it has the life science standards and earth space standards. A goal of this course is to address some of those practices and the concepts needed to get our students ready for the life science and the biology courses.

We do have funds for instructional materials and supplements to actually make sure that these curricula are working and the reason we have these two presented right now is because all the other courses' curriculum development are in the works for high school.

*Julie asked for a recommendation that these two curriculum documents move forward to the Board for 1<sup>st</sup> reading. It was recommended and seconded to move forward. No objections or concerns were noted by any member of the council. These curriculum documents will be included on the March 14<sup>th</sup> Board agenda.*

**AGENDA ITEM II: K-5 FishTank ELA Curriculum, Presented by Dr. Renee Hall, Supervisor of Elementary ELA/Media**

Dr. Hall began by talking about the science of reading. She wanted to clarify so that everyone understands that the science of reading is referring to the research of reading experts especially the cognitive scientists, so those looking at our brains have conducted research on how we learn to read. Through the advancement of technologies, we have studied brain scans so we have been able to actually watch how students' brains work as they are reading and where they might run into a little trouble. *She shared a presentation, which can be accessed through the link that was provided in the email sent prior to today's meeting.*

She introduced two of her coaches, Kim Johnson, and Stacy Wheeler. Kim is the second-grade curriculum writer and literacy coach at Delmar and Chipman Elementary, and Stacy is the third grade curriculum writer and represents the intermediate coaches. She gave some background knowledge and stated that they have a Literacy Vision team that consists of 11 teachers, 6 administrators, 3 reading specialists, 3 coaches, 2 supervisors and 1 Director. The Core Literacy Vision team consists of 2 teachers, 3 coaches, 1 administrator and 2 supervisors.

Wicomico County Public School's literacy instruction is relevant, purposeful, and ***explicitly taught*** with ***high expectations*** for all students. Each student is provided the opportunity to develop ***foundational skills***, build ***knowledge and vocabulary*** through interacting with ***complex texts***, and engage in ***evidence-based writing*** to become lifelong readers, writers, and communicators.

She shared the ELA Framework for Primary and Intermediate. The ELA block lasts for 140 minutes. Primary is broken down as follows:

- Foundational Skills – 45 minutes
- ELA – 45 minutes
- Small Group – 45 minutes

Intermediate:

- ELA – 60 minutes
- Phonics – 45 minutes
- Social Studies (MWF) – 30 minutes

Small Group (TR) – 30 minutes

The current programs being used are Fountas & Pinnell Classroom and Lucy Calkins Units of Writing. These programs do not align with the Science of Reading and are not meeting the standards (as noted in EdReports) that are required to be acceptable resources that local school systems can use.

She shared the Plan of Action including the examination of programs, pilot programs, Literacy Vision Team decision and the Curriculum Team meeting on January 30, 2023, where they did a thorough examination of the FishTank units.

The ELA Units Suggested Combined Scope and Sequence for all elementary grades, 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> as well as the units that would be covered in each grade, Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade was included in the presentation.

She talked about the *Cocoa, Cookies and a Good Book* event that had been held at different schools in which all the books that were to be used in this program were available for review by all. There will be one more night for parents to attend to view the books. It will be on Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at James M. Bennett High.





Parent, teacher, and student feedback was included in today's presentation. A sample of a student's writing with this program was also shared.

The core books would be purchased with the MD Leads Grant funding source. Independent reading collection books will be purchased with any remaining funds. The books would be purchased from a vendor called BookSource. Dr. Hall has all the information ready to make the purchase upon approval from the Board.

***Julie asked for a recommendation from the Council. It was recommended and seconded that it moves forward to the Board for consideration. No objections or concerns were noted by any member of the council. This curriculum resource will be included on the April 11<sup>th</sup> Board agenda for First Reading. The delay is to allow more parents to opportunity to provide feedback during the March 14<sup>th</sup> event at JMB.***

Our next Curriculum Council meeting will be Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> in the Delmar Room in Human Resources due to there being more room.

Our next agenda items will be the following:

-  K-2 Social Studies Instructional Resources, presented by Lori Bock
-  Financial Literacy – presented by Lisa McKinnon
-  Piloting Achieve 3000 Reading Intervention – presented by Lisa King
-  Piloting Read 180 Reading Intervention – presented by Lisa King

The meeting was adjourned.

*Next meeting:*  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2023**  
**LOCATION: NORTHGATE DELMAR ROOM**  
**(Located in Human Resources)**  
**2:00 P.M.**

