

## **I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education recognizes that a common Howard County Public School curriculum provides the foundation of the district's educational program and ensures that students, regardless of the schools they attend, receive the same content and are expected to achieve consistently at high levels of performance commensurate with local, state, and federal standards. The Board further recognizes the need and value of a systemic ongoing program of curriculum review and development. The Board also supports the concept of acceleration and/or individualization to ensure that all students meet or exceed these achievement standards in order to reach their individual potential.

The Board of Education will encourage and support the professional staff in its efforts to develop, refine and improve curricular programs, evaluate results and participate in professional development activities.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process to manage the curriculum by establishing the structure for curriculum design and implementation and a systematic basis for decision-making and standardized practice.

## **III. Definitions**

- A. Acceleration –The mastery of curriculum beyond what is expected, allowing a below-grade-level student to attain expected levels of performance and an on-grade or above-grade level student to progress beyond expected levels of performance.
- B. Curriculum – The prescribed elements of programs and courses which state clearly and specifically what students are expected to know and be able to do, how well they will be able to do it, how they will meet the learning objectives and by what means they will be assessed.
- C. Curriculum and Assessment Development – A process to develop and revise curriculum and curriculum-based assessments in accordance with local, state, and federal standards and laws through a partnership endeavor among all stakeholders: school board members, central office curriculum and instruction personnel, teachers and instructional staff, school administrators, students, parents, families, and community and business people.

- D. Curriculum Documents – Contain the essential curriculum and corresponding assessments and typically include rationale and purpose, scope and sequence of learning outcomes, instructional strategies, sample unit and lesson plan formats, adaptations for special populations, assessment procedures, and support materials.
- E. Essential Curriculum – The core goals and objectives for grade level programs or specific courses that define what students are expected to know and be able to do; reflect the best knowledge of growth, development and needs of learners; and comply with requirements from local policy and state law.
- F. Individualization – The process by which instruction and educational supports are modified to take advantage of student strengths to meet the unique needs of students and maximize their learning potential.
- G. Learned Curriculum – The attainment of curriculum standards as demonstrated by assessments of student performance.
- H. Taught Curriculum – Instructional methodologies designed to deliver the written curriculum.
- I. Written Curriculum – The essential curriculum and any appropriate extensions designed to meet the needs of learners who master the essential curriculum ahead of schedule.

#### **IV. Standards**

##### **A. General**

The Board of Education expects that a well designed curriculum:

1. Promotes continuity and cumulative acquisition and application of knowledge and skills from grade to grade and from school to school.
2. Is well balanced and appropriate for all students to meet needs of diverse learners.
3. Conforms to local and state requirements regarding essential knowledge and skills for program and course offerings.
4. Reflects current research, best practices, data, and technological advancements within and among disciplines and promotes congruence among written, taught, and assessed content.
5. Provides strategies for differentiation in instructional methodologies, pacing and resources for special populations and diverse learners.
6. Be regularly evaluated and revised.

B. Written Curriculum

1. The written curriculum shall provide students, teachers, administrators, parents, family and community members with the Board of Education's expectations of what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level and course.
2. Subject area written curriculum, scope and sequence, curriculum documents and written materials for parents and families shall be developed for every grade level and course.
3. All curriculum shall be documented in writing in a standardized format.
4. Each subject area curriculum will be reviewed and revised on a periodic basis.
5. Instructional staff shall have access to curriculum documents and use the standards to implement the essential curriculum.
6. School administrators, Instructional Team Leaders and central curriculum and instruction staff shall work with school-based instructional personnel (teachers, guidance counselors, instructional assistants, etc.) to maintain consistency among the written curriculum, the taught curriculum and what students have learned as measured by assessments.

C. Taught Curriculum

1. The taught curriculum shall be aligned with the written curriculum and the learned curriculum to bring about a high degree of consistency.
2. All programs for students shall be aligned to the systemwide essential curriculum and shall be integrated into their delivery.
3. Curriculum documents shall be used as a guide for implementing the curriculum.
4. Professional development shall be designed and implemented on an ongoing basis to prepare staff members to teach the written curriculum and shall use methodologies to ensure staff members have appropriate knowledge, skills, and practices to teach effectively.

D. Learned Curriculum

1. Assessments shall be used to evaluate the extent to which students meet or exceed curriculum standards (international, national, state, local) and the extent to which teachers enable students to meet those standards.
2. A variety of assessment approaches will be used to determine the effectiveness of the written curriculum, the taught curriculum and instructional programs and courses including pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

3. The assessed curriculum shall include the following components:
  - a. International, national assessments as appropriate
  - b. State-wide assessment as required
  - c. Local curriculum-based assessments
  - d. An electronic information management system at the classroom, school, and central office levels that will provide teachers, principals, central office, other instructional staff, and parents with regularly reported individual student data to support coordination of instructional planning, student assessment and placement, instructional delivery, and program evaluation.
4. Teacher assessment of students on the curriculum standards shall be ongoing. Teacher-made tests, as well as local assessments, shall be used to determine patterns of student achievement. Teachers and administrative and curriculum supervisors shall use test results to assess the status of individual student achievement, to continuously regroup students for instruction, to identify general achievement trends of various groups of students, and to modify curriculum and/or instruction as warranted by assessment results.
5. Principals and curriculum staff shall review assessments with teachers to ensure the assessments are congruent with the written curriculum.
6. A systematic process shall be in place for assessing/testing student performance. This process shall provide for the acquisition, analysis and communication of student performance data to:
  - a. Measure student progress and diagnose student needs
  - b. Guide teachers' instruction at appropriate levels
  - c. Guide students' learning
  - d. Guide systemwide improvement of curriculum alignment and programmatic decisions.
  - e. Communicate progress to parents to support learning.

## **V. Compliance**

- A. The Superintendent shall develop, implement and monitor a process for the development and review of the school system's curriculum and assessment programs that complies with state and local requirements and provides sufficient academic rigor for students.
- B. The school-based instructional staff and administrators are responsible for the delivery of the written curriculum in the classroom.
- C. The Superintendent will provide to the Board of Education each fall a summary of annual curriculum and assessment development activities for the Board's approval, including the addition and deletion of high school courses.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures for the implementation of this policy.

**VII. References**

- A. Legal  
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-111  
COMAR 13A.04, Specific Subjects
  
- B. Other Board Policies  
8040, Selection of Instructional Materials

ADOPTED: February 12, 2004  
AMENDED: June 9, 2005  
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I. General

- A. The Superintendent/designee is responsible for the development and implementation of an ongoing program of curriculum review and development.
- B. The Superintendent/designee will provide to the Board of Education a summary of annual curriculum and assessment development activities.
- C. The Superintendent/designee will communicate a process for addition/deletion of courses on an annual basis to school-based and central office staff.

II. Curriculum and Assessment Development

- A. Curriculum development will generally occur in three phases:
  - 1. Phase I – Writers will develop for the identified organizational or grade level, discipline or program, appropriate curriculum documents, including a rationale and purpose, as well as goals and objectives, based on state and/or national standards.
  - 2. Phase 2 – Curriculum and assessment writing teams (i.e., writers of a particular essential curriculum) will pilot the draft curriculum documents and collect feedback from administrators, teachers and students as appropriate.
  - 3. Phase 3 – The curriculum and assessment writing team will review collected input and make revisions as necessary in developing the final curriculum documents.
- B. The Superintendent/designee will collect data relevant to curriculum and assessment development activities each year and a summary to the Board of Education each fall. The report will include information on the curricular areas/courses addressed, their status, and any substantive recommendations for future direction.

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