

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County recognizes that the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) curriculum provides the foundation of the district's educational program and ensures that students, regardless of the schools they attend, receive instruction based on the same curriculum standards and are expected to achieve consistently at high levels of performance commensurate with local, state, national, and international peers. 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 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

Within the context of this policy, these definitions apply:

- A. Acceleration – The mastery of curriculum beyond what is expected, allowing a student performing below expectations to attain levels of performance that match or exceed system expectations, and a student performing at or above expectations to progress beyond expected levels of performance.
- B. Assessment – An evaluation of what students know and/or can do.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

- E. Curriculum Resources – Electronic files that contain the HCPSS world-class curriculum and sample assessments. These files typically include background material on required content and suggested instructional strategies, sample unit and lesson plan formats, assessment procedures, and support materials.
- F. Curriculum Standards – The learning outcomes that students are expected to master, that reflect the best knowledge of the developmental needs of learners, and that comply with requirements from local policy and state law.
- G. 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.
- H. Learned Curriculum – The attainment of curriculum standards as demonstrated by assessments of student performance.
- I. Taught Curriculum – Instructional methodologies designed to deliver the written curriculum.
- J. Written Curriculum – The HCPSS world-class curriculum and any appropriate extensions designed to meet the needs of learners.

IV. Standards

A. General

The Board expects that a well-designed world-class 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.
6. Includes sample resources that illustrate multiple ways of representing information, multiple ways students can demonstrate what they know, and multiple ways to engage learners with the content of the unit or lesson.
7. Is regularly evaluated and revised.

B. Written Curriculum

1. The written curriculum will provide students, teachers, administrators, parents, family and community members with the Board'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 will be developed for every grade level and course.
3. All curriculum will 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 will have access to curriculum documents and use the standards to implement the curriculum.
6. School administrators, Instructional Team Leaders, and central curriculum and instruction staff will work with school-based instructional personnel (teachers, guidance counselors, para-educators, 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 will be aligned with the written curriculum and the learned curriculum to promote a high degree of consistency.
2. All student instructional programs will be aligned to the systemwide curriculum and will be integrated into curriculum delivery.
3. Curriculum resources will be used as a guide for implementing the curriculum.
4. Professional development will be designed and implemented on an ongoing basis to prepare staff members to teach the written curriculum and will use methodologies to ensure staff members have appropriate knowledge, skills, and practices to teach effectively.

D. Learned Curriculum

1. Assessments will 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 will include the following components:
 - a. International, national assessments as appropriate.
 - b. Statewide assessment as required.
 - c. Local curriculum-based tasks.
 - 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 will be ongoing. A variety of assessment measures will be used to determine patterns of student achievement. Teachers and administrative and curriculum supervisors will use assessment results to determine the level 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 these results.
5. Principals and curriculum staff will review assessments with teachers to ensure the assessments are congruent with the written curriculum.
6. A systematic process will be in place for assessing/testing student performance. This process will 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 academic progress to parents to support learning.

V. Responsibilities

- A. The Superintendent/Designee will 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 Superintendent/Designee will provide the curriculum standards online.
- C. The Superintendent/Designee will provide staff with access to all curriculum resources developed by HCPSS. In addition, identified staff will be provided with access, in accordance with purchasing agreements/licenses, to those resources purchased by HCPSS.
- D. The school-based instructional staff and administrators are responsible for the delivery of the written curriculum in the classroom.
- E. The Superintendent/Designee will provide to the Board 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. Board Policies
 - 8010 Grading and Reporting: Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade 8
 - 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School
 - 8030 Graduation Requirements
 - 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials
 - 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues
 - 8060 Resource Speakers
 - 8070 Religion and Religious Materials
 - 8080 Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media

8090 Non-School-Hour Curricular Programs
8100 Field Trips, Domestic
8110 Student International Educational Travel
8120 Testing: State and Local Responsibilities and Protocols

- C. Relevant Data Sources
Annual Performance Report on the Strategic Plan
- D. Other
Fall Curriculum Development Board Report

VIII. History

ADOPTED: February 12, 2004

REVIEWED: July 1, 2012

MODIFIED: June 12, 2014

REVISED: June 9, 2005

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2014

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 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 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 present a summary to the Board 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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