

First Semester  
2007-2008

# Curriculum Update

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## Findlay City Schools Mathematics

This year the district began the implementation of a new math program for grades k-5. The program, Growing With Math, was selected in the committee process last school year. K-5 teachers received in-service on the new program in June (voluntarily) and during the district August in-service days. There are plans for further in-service from the company professional development reps for ½ days for each grade level in January. Additionally there are mentor teachers at each grade level who help support colleagues in the implementation. Early feedback regarding the k-5 program is positive. The teacher surveys collected suggest they are pleased with the resources and the structure of the program. Teachers seek more professional development in the areas of placing and management, as well as the concepts of a looping curriculum, which is different than the traditional "teach to mastery" philosophy.

The district also began implementation of a new 6-8 math program and course offerings. The middle school program chosen by the committee last year, Math Applications and Concepts, is in place and teachers are finding the resources with the program to be beneficial in instruction. The fast math track curriculum for 6-8. The fast math students in 7th now either take Honors Algebra 1 or Pre Algebra depending on their placement based on an entrance matrix. The fast math 8th grade students will have Honors Algebra 1 or Algebra 2 options for high school credit. All non-fast math students are now taking Pre-Algebra as 8th graders.

These new programs and courses, in addition to increased instructional time in math (60 min in the elementary and 76 min at the middle school level) were implemented in effort to raise math achievement levels, increase the rigor of FCS math curriculum and meet Ohio Core expectations.

## Technology To Enhance Curriculum

**SuccessMaker Math-** The teachers have begun using the newly implemented SuccessMaker Math Software. SuccessMaker Math is an individualized math software program that reinforces math skills, problem solving and concepts at each student's skill level. Each primary, intermediate and middle school building has access to 25 concurrent licenses to use with their students throughout the school day or in after school programs. Despite some early technology glitches throughout the district, this program has been successfully implemented and is up and running in all buildings. The mentor/teacher trainers have received 2 ½ day training sessions and have shared the knowledge and information regarding the program with their fellow colleagues in each building. There will be a spring training for the teacher trainers at which

time, they will learn how to close out reports and migrate students to the next school year.

**CPS/ExamView-** The train the trainer model was also used as the model for professional development in the district implementation of the CPS (a.k.a. clickers) and the ExamView software. Clickers were purchased for every building and teachers have been trained in the use of this tool for classroom instruction. Clickers allow for immediate individual response to questions posed to the class. Teachers can gather immediate feedback and assess student learning instantly through use of the clickers. When used in conjunction with the ExamView software, the teachers can create assessment questions directly linked to state standards and/or their textbook content. Additional spring trainings will be provided to the trainers to extend the implementation.

## FCS K-5 Literacy Committee

A committee comprised of k-5 teachers and administrators has been formed. The objectives of this FCS Literacy Committee include the review of current programs and practices related to reading and literacy in the district, and a search for new researched programs for adoption throughout the district. The committee's first meeting was held on December 7. Future meetings beginning in January 2008 are currently in the planning stages. The committee will determine the timeline for future adoption and implementation of a new

program for the district.

The elementary principals met in November to begin this process and to formulate their vision and philosophy of reading for the district. Principals as well as the teachers at the December meeting agreed that in search for a new program we must look for one that is based on principles of Balanced Literacy and incorporates the 5 big ideas of Reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary).

### FINDLAY HIGH SCHOOL TASK FORCE

Visit our FHS blog to share your thoughts regarding planning for FHS in the 21st Century [web.mac.com/keahana1/iWeb](http://web.mac.com/keahana1/iWeb)

## DataWerks Project

The curriculum directors and director of Student Services have been working over the last year to formulate a solution to the management of data, data analysis and data entry overload expressed by principals and teachers last spring. We have been working with, Todd Stark of Testing Werks, to develop a software/web based program that will meet our needs. The project is in beginning stages and an advisory committee comprised of teachers, principals, and central office representatives has been formed. This committee met in November to review the draft of the program. The committee had an opportunity to provide input and feedback in what concepts and information needed to be added or changed. The committee will meet in January again to see how their suggestions were

incorporated and will be provided with a demo of the program to begin to play with before more changes are made. This program will allow for easy, web based entry of our district common assessment scores and access to test data including local scores, OAT and CSI scores on students. Principals will be able to use FileMaker Pro program to run reports that include graphs and charts to help analyze and make correlations between the data points. Principals are meeting in December to get their first look and provide feedback to the developer on this exciting initiative. It is our hope to be able to pilot this program next school year.

## RSIT Partnership Agreement

Findlay City Schools did not meet all of our AYP targets and is considered a Tier I school district by the state. What that means to us is that we **must enter into a partnership agreement with our Region 1 State Support Team.** Our ODE State Support Team members that will be working with us are Brenda Cooper and John Swemba. The target areas of our partnership agreement have resulted from an in depth analysis of our district/building data and our CCIP. We have tried to focus our agreement to target initiatives we already have in place in the district such as CPS/Examview/SuccessMaker professional

development, honing our skills in functioning as a professional learning community, developing a K-5 Literacy team, systemic K-2 Dibels screening, continuing to look at best practices, creating a user friendly data warehouse, and piloting Positive Behavior Supports Model and SWIS at Glenwood. Your curriculum directors will provide the leadership in the implementation of this partnership agreement and we will try to make it as seamless with current initiatives, as possible. The goal of the agreement is to support what we have already identified as improvement strategies.

## Curriculum Writing

Many writing teams have been busy writing new curricula or revising existing curricula. The following courses of study have already been written during the this school year:

- CP Algebra II
- 11 Basic English
- Spanish II
- Latin II
- Honors Algebra I
- American Political Systems
- Probability & Statistics
- 12 Basic English
- French II
- German II
- Pre-Algebra

The following courses of study were revised:

- 9<sup>th</sup> American and World History
- 10<sup>th</sup> American and World History
- 9<sup>th</sup> CP English
- 10<sup>th</sup> CP English
- 11<sup>th</sup> CP World Literature

## All Day Kindergarten

This is the first year of all day kindergarten programming in FCS. All day Kindergarten is currently being piloted at two of our schools, Lincoln and Jacobs. Feedback from the principals, teachers and parents has been very positive. Some of the benefits of students attending all day kindergarten and its effect on student progress are already being noted. Teachers at Jacobs report that students seem to be moving farther earlier in the year in their writing and math skills. Teachers are able to devote an hour a day to the math program and instruction and dedicate the entire morning block of time to language arts and reading instruction. The teachers do indicate that by keeping class sizes as small as possible and continuing the practice of support from Title 1 teachers in these

classrooms, they would be able to provide even more intervention and individualized attention to the students who need it the most.

The Lincoln principal states, "I have been surprised at how well it has gone. The problems and issues I anticipated never materialized. The parents have been pleased and the teachers have taken full advantage of the extra time. The children have had a great start. My autistic student loves school and has made tremendous progress academically and socially. I do feel my numbers of 18 in a class have been significant factor in our success so far.

Currently, at Jacobs there are 5 sections serving 103 students. At Lincoln there are 4 sections serving 72 students.

## Standards Based Progress Reports 1-2

Last Spring a committee of 1st and 2nd grade teachers began work on revising the 1st and 2nd grade report cards. This committee worked hard to research and develop a standards-based progress report to replace the traditional grade cards used at these grade levels. The progress report created by the committee is now in the pilot stages. Various teachers at all buildings were given the option to pilot the new format if they desired to do so this year. The teachers who chose to participate in the pilot have been sharing the implementation successes and issues at grade level meetings. After the first round of progress reports went out this fall they reported positive feedback.

While the new format and the concept of progress toward standards rather than traditional grades did lead to added discussion with parents at conferences, the parents seemed appreciative and positive about the information this new report provides. Teachers who are piloting will continue to keep notes related to the details of the report as they use it this year. The teachers will meet in the spring to process feedback and make any needed changes before this new report goes into full implementation throughout the district for the 2008-09 school year.





## Findlay High School

Findlay High School has been given the charge to form a task force to explore how to address the Ohio Core and the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful in the 21st Century. The Findlay High School Task Force is comprised of membership that represents all content areas, parents, board and the community. The FHS Task Force will undertake an in-depth study of:

- The Ohio Core
- Knowledge and skills for the 21st Century
- Technology integration to enhance learning
- Our current policies, procedures and practices to see if they address our current needs
- What it means to be part of a global society and how that influences our high school.

This study will lead to a recommendation being submitted to Dr. Wittwer in the fall of 2008.

A FHS Task Force blog has been created so that everyone will be able to learn what key issues the task force will need to take into consideration. The blog will keep everyone updated on the task force's progress and will provide an opportunity for suggestions to the task force.

The blog address is  
<http://web.mac.com/keahana1/iWeb>



## Mission Possible Coming Soon

Mission Possible, the adult wellness program, will be returning second semester. Grant funding has been secured, but at a lower rate for 2007-2008. We will be able to continue with offering cholesterol/glucose screening, a walking program, and some support for YMCA classes. We will also be looking at offering other options. If you are interested in being

part of a planning committee, please contact Heidi Kiffmeyer. As each program is planned detailed information will be emailed to you.

The objective of Mission Possible is to make all of us more aware of our own health and how to make choices that will impact the quality of our lives.

