

HANDBOOK 2: Organizing and Planning for the Curriculum

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This handbook is one of a series published for the project Collaboration for Excellence: The North Dakota Curriculum Project.

The publication is free to public school educators in North Dakota, who may make copies without permission.

These handbooks represent a team product. A major contributor was Ann Clapper, who was previously Director of the Office of Curriculum Leadership and Improvement. Numerous educators in North Dakota reviewed all these materials and made valuable suggestions. Especially helpful were the following North Dakota educators: Janet Edlund, Dakota Prairie High School; Cheryl Kuhas, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction; Karen Nelson, Hettinger; Sandra Willprecht, Forman. Allan A. Glatthorn, Distinguished Research Professor at East Carolina University, served as consultant to the project.

It should be emphasized that the processes suggested here should be seen only as recommendations, not mandates. The authors value the ability of North Dakota educators to develop their own processes that reflect the needs and resources of their schools.

1. ORGANIZING FOR CURRICULUM WORK

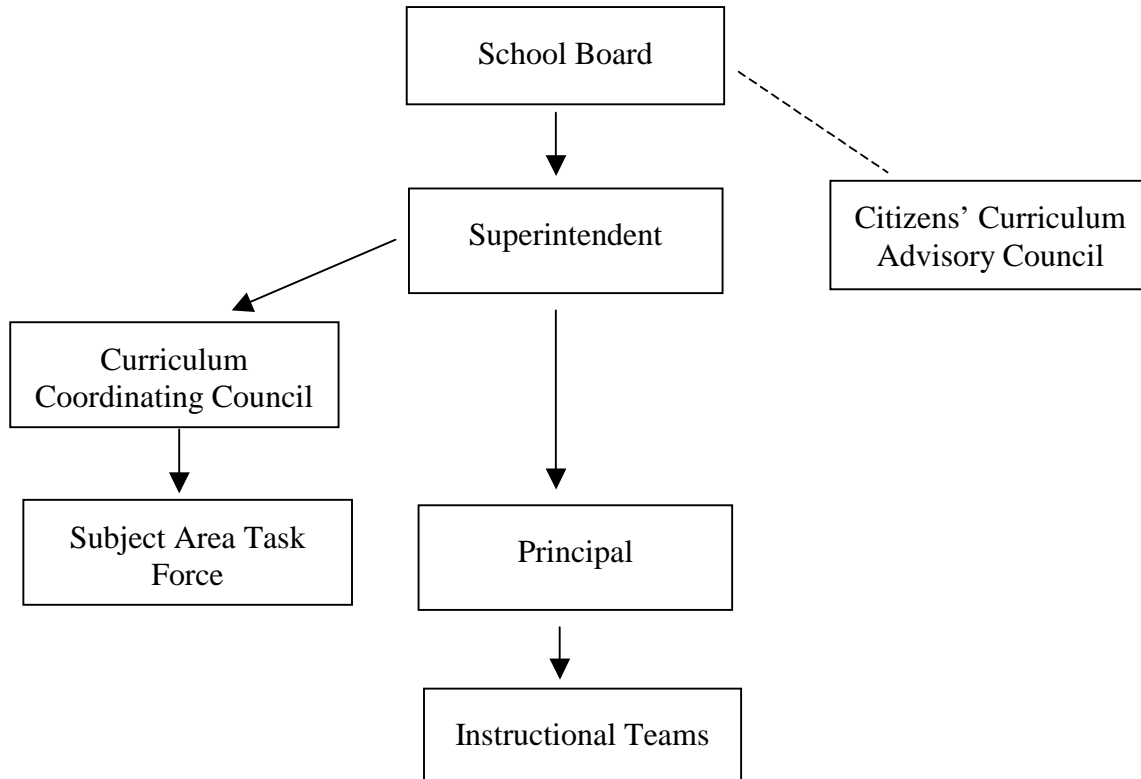
Efficient and effective curriculum work requires an appropriate organizational structure. In the proposed structure (see Display 2-1), three curriculum groups are recommended:

- ! Curriculum Coordinating Council
- ! Subject Area Task Forces
- ! Citizens' Curriculum Advisory Council

However, leaders are encouraged to modify the proposed organizational structure to one that best fits their existing structures and district size.

In this chapter, each of the three curriculum groups is described.

Display 2-1
Recommended Committee Structure



Curriculum Coordinating Council

One of the most important groups in developing the curriculum is the Curriculum Coordinating Council (CCC). The CCC provides general oversight and planning for the entire curriculum development process.

Member Appointment

The superintendent (or the assistant superintendent for curriculum) should appoint the members of the CCC. All constituents should be represented; however the size of the council will vary with the size of the school district. The make-up of a typical council:

- 1 assistant superintendent for curriculum
- 3 central office supervisors
- 4 principals
- 6 classroom teachers
- 2 parents (or 1 parent and 1 high school student)

Some school systems have found it helpful to appoint members to three-year terms, replacing two each year.

Member Qualifications

CCC Members should

- ! have in-depth knowledge of the community;
- ! understand curriculum work;
- ! be respected by their colleagues;
- ! be known as effective leaders; and
- ! have excellent planning and evaluating skills.

Functions

The specific functions assigned to the CCC will, of course, vary with the school system. Here is a comprehensive list of their responsibilities.

- ! Formalize the process to be used in developing curricula.
 - " A detailed explanation of one possible process is in Handbook 8. However, school systems are encouraged to modify that process to suit their own situation. Also as districts gain more experience, their knowledge will increase, and the process should be revised accordingly.
- ! Submit budget recommendations for curriculum work.

- " Funds will be needed for substitutes to release teachers, summer stipends, professional materials, consultant fees, staff development.
- ! Provide leadership training for administrators and supervisors with respect to their roles in curriculum development.
 - " The CCC should organize and deliver effective staff development for these leaders so that they can achieve two goals: improve their performance as curriculum leaders and train teachers at the school level.
- ! Provide staff development to teachers.
 - " Teachers will need continuing assistance to enable them to perform their role successfully. While the CCC should organize plans for such development, it should be carried out at the school level.
- ! Identify a standard format for curriculum materials.
 - " While this is not an essential task, a standard format has several advantages: it systematizes the contents; it ensures that the guide provides the full information needed; it standardizes terms.
- ! Plan for and administer a comprehensive program to evaluate the curriculum.
 - " A comprehensive evaluation program is explained in Handbook 3.
- ! Identify processes to be used in monitoring implementation of the new curriculum.
 - " Monitoring is a process for determining how effectively the new curriculum is being implemented. While each school may vary in the specifics of how the curriculum is monitored, the CCC should provide some general guidelines. Handbook 6 explains several processes that can be used in monitoring.
- ! Conduct a needs assessment and use those data to develop a long-term plan for curriculum work.
 - " The discussion in the next chapter of this handbook explains how to develop such a plan.
- ! Appoint, train, and monitor the work of the Subject Area Committees (SACs).
 - " The SACs are responsible for developing the guides for a specific subject area. The CCC should appoint members to the SACs who understand curriculum work, are task-oriented, write well, and have the respect of teachers. The CCC should provide appropriate training to the members and monitor the progress of each committee to ensure that they are on the road to success. Handbook 8 explains the work of the SACs in more detail.

Subject Area Committee

The SAC develops curriculum in one subject area, grades K-12.

Member Appointment

The CCC should appoint subject matter specialists and classroom teachers to the SAC.

Member Qualifications

SAC members should have experience in supervising or teaching for that subject.

Functions

Subject Area Committees have two main responsibilities:

- ! Produce the Scope and Sequence Charts.
- ! Produce the Curriculum Guide.

Citizens Curriculum Advisory Council

The Citizens Curriculum Advisory Council (CCAC) is appointed by and reports to the local school board. Its chief purpose is to advise the board about curriculum issues. It can also serve to communicate with the community and the professional staff about potential curriculum controversies.

2. DEVELOPING THE LONG-TERM PLANNING CALENDAR

The first task of the CCC is to develop a long-term planning calendar for curriculum. Display 2-2 suggests the form it might take.

Observe that it provides for five years, with the expectation that it will be reviewed each year. Some districts prefer a three- or four-year cycle. Note also that it provides for four phases for each project. Evaluation should take place during each of these phases.

- ! **Plan**
 - " Develop a schedule for the work
 - " Secure resources
 - " Develop the knowledge base
 - " Orient teachers
 - " Secure teacher input
- ! **Produce**
 - " Produce the curriculum documents--the Scope and Sequence Chart and the Curriculum Guide.
- ! **Pilot**
 - " Conduct a field test of the new curriculum documents.
- ! **Implement**
 - " Arrange for the full implementation of the new curriculum.

The best way for the council to establish priorities in its calendar is to conduct an initial needs assessment. Here are the issues to be addressed in such an assessment.

- ! Which subjects involve large numbers of students?
- ! In which subject area have the greatest changes taken place?
- ! Which existing Curriculum Guide is the oldest?
- ! Which subjects are involved in the state's testing program?
- ! In which subject is student achievement most in need of improvement?
- ! How does the textbook adoption cycle affect planning?

Display 2-2
Example of Long-Term Planning Calendar

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Arts	Plan	Produce	Pilot	Implement	
World Language		Plan Produce	Pilot Implement		
Health/Phys Ed				Plan Produce	Pilot
Math	Plan	Produce	Pilot	Implement	
Reading/Lang Art		Plan	Produce	Pilot	Implement
Science			Plan	Produce	Pilot
Social Studies					Plan

After developing an initial draft of the calendar, the CCC should review it with the following questions in mind.

- ! Does the calendar reflect the district's priority needs?
- ! Has enough time been provided for each subject?
- ! Are needed resources available?
- ! Does the calendar reflect an appropriate pace of change?
- ! Does the calendar avoid over-loading elementary teachers with too many new curricula to implement?
 - " As a general rule, elementary teachers should not be asked to implement more than two new curricula in any given year.

Project Planning Calendar

It would be helpful if each SAC were required to submit a very detailed planning calendar of its own, accompanied by a deployment chart. Display 2-3 shows what this might look like.

Display 2-3
Example of Planning/Deployment Chart

Task	Responsible	Deadline
1. Search knowledge base	Walker	10/1
2. Synthesize knowledge base	Walker	10/15
3. Develop comprehensive list of standards	Nordstrom	1/15
4. Survey teachers to prioritize standards	Jorgensen	2/15
5. Use results of survey to develop scope and sequence framework	Martin	3/15
6. Survey teachers to identify and place benchmarks	Parpart	3/30
7. Have teachers review initial draft of Scope and Sequence Chart	Nordstrom	4/15
8. Review and revise Scope and Sequence Chart	Johannsen	4/30
9. Use Scope and Sequence Chart to develop Curriculum Guides	Hamilton	7/15