

Questions and Answers from the Tuesday, April 12, 2011 Meeting of the KUSD Curriculum/Program and Personnel/Policies Committees

We have received over 200 questions on topics related to our Graduation Requirements proposal.

These questions have been reviewed and a Frequently Asked Questions list has been created.

This list is intended to answer all of your questions and help you better understand our intent. Specific questions that request research and statistical data that is not available will not be on this list. We appreciate your input and encourage you to attend our upcoming budget meetings. These meetings are open to the public and will help you to understand our Graduation Requirements proposal as it relates to our preliminary budget proposal.

The questions fell into seven categories:

- Service Learning/Seminar
- AP/Honors
- Course Offerings
- Implementation of Proposed Changes for 2011-12
- Budget
- Request for Information
- Other / Comments

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did this happen so fast and why weren't we told about the changes earlier?

The Budget Repair Bill and State of Wisconsin budget were introduced and adopted only two months ago. Both of these are having a significant impact upon our budget as the amount per student from the State is being reduced by \$557.84. Because of these items, we have had to move very quickly in order to incorporate changes in our preliminary budget assumptions for the 2011 / 2012 school year.

2. What is happening with the Honor Classes?

Honor classes are not being eliminated

3. Why have students been asked to select only seven classes next year?

We are currently scheduling for next school year and we need to offer the courses that students have the greatest interest in from which a student's schedule will be created.

4. Are we cutting electives?

No electives are being cut. The same process that we use each year is being followed.

5. Explain the Service Learning requirement.

Students wishing to earn the optional Service Learning Diploma with distinction must complete the one credit Service Learning Course.

Service Learning is a teaching and learning method that fosters civic responsibility and links classroom learning and applied learning in communities. An example is a student in a marketing class who learns the basic principles of marketing. Her assignment is to

apply her new knowledge in a way that benefits the community. The student reads in the newspaper that the local food bank is running low on donations. Putting the theories of marketing into practice, the student organizes a marketing campaign using digital media to increase food donations. She puts theory into action and internalizes and reinforces the concepts of marketing.

The recommendation is all high school students complete community service hours.

Community service is an individual or group providing needed services to an organization or the community at large. An example is a group of students who decide to go after school once a week to help sort food donations at the local food bank and solicit donations outside the local grocery store.

6. What is a Seminar class?

Seminar is an opportunity for personalized inquiry based learning experiences for students. Examples include academic and fine arts enrichment, goal setting and study skill development, career and college planning and preparation, credit recovery, interpersonal and online collaboration, leadership opportunities, club activities, guest speakers, peer remediation, intramurals, book clubs, educational games, and mentoring.

7. Why are we not offering summer PE?

Summer PE classes were originally offered as a response to overcrowding. It was not intended as a permanent part of summer school. It has become a popular course and many students use it as a way of getting more classes during the school year. Because of the current budget crisis we are not offering it at this time.

8. Will I be prepared for college if I only get to take 7 credits a year?

Entrance into college will not be hindered in any way with a course of study that is restricted to 28 credits. Colleges focus on the rigor of courses taken not the quantity of courses taken.

9. Will class size increase?

Yes, there will be a slight increase in class size. Some classes may experience an increase based on student requests.

10. Can I take more academic classes if I want?

Students are not restricted in taking as many academic classes as they would like. They will only be limited to take a total of 28 credits. Current high school students could exceed the 28 credit cap as this plan is phased in.

11. What is happening with the Honors Diploma?

The Honors Diploma will be replaced with a diploma of academic distinction. The new standard will focus on the number of AP courses taken as opposed to the number of Honor Classes taken.

12. What exceptions are you making for current students as it relates to the proposed changes?

As always, we will create a transition plan for students that are being affected by this change. School administration will develop a plan for each cohort group.

13. Can a sport replace the PE requirement?

No. The State of Wisconsin does not allow for this.

14. Are you getting rid of Block Scheduling?

There are no plans to eliminate block scheduling at this time.

15. If I currently have 26 credits as a junior will I still be allowed to take classes?

Every student, regardless of how many credits they currently have, will be able to take 7 credits next year.

16. Can I audit a class?

Yes. A procedure will be developed for this option.

17. Will I still be able to take classes at other schools?

Yes

18. How will this change affect a school like Indian Trail Academy?

Indian Trail Academy will have the same credit standards as other schools and each Academy course sequence will adhere to these new standards. There will be some modification in scheduling.

19. Can we pay tuition for classes?

No. We do not charge fees for taking classes and have no plans to do so at this time.

20. Why is PE required?

The State of Wisconsin requires 1½ credits of PE.

21. What will happen with Youth Options?

Nothing will be done differently with Youth Options. The credits taken for Youth Options will be counted against the credit limit of 28.

22. Will there be summer school for students that are not credit deficient?

We are limiting summer school for credit deficient students at this time.

23. What is the plan to implement the 23 credit graduation requirement?

We are developing a plan to phase this in for each cohort group.

24. What are the graduation rates and ACT and WKCE scores for schools with 23 credits?

Information pertaining to graduation rates and ACT and WKCE scores is available to the public on the DPI website for individual schools. <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/index.html>

25 What are the specific courses needed to graduate?

The only changes in the graduation requirements reflect reduced credit requirements in Math, Science and Social Studies. The other requirements are the same.

26. Can I get detailed budget information? This would include salaries and benefits for employees?

April 20th will be the preliminary budget meeting. We invite everyone to come.

27. Will we be updated on the negotiation with the teachers' union?

Negotiation updates are communicated through the Board of Education meetings.

Many questions were asked regarding specific curriculum content areas. These questions can be directed to the following coordinators and Assistant Superintendent:

Susan Mirsky, Coordinator of Literacy	smirksy@kUSD.edu
Geraldine Santarelli, Coordinator of Mathematics	gsantare@kUSD.edu
Christine Pratt, Coordinator of Science	cpratt@kUSD.edu
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Dave Tuttle, Coordinator of Talent Development	dtuttle@kUSD.edu

Many questions were directed specifically to a student's schedule. Please contact the school's administrator or counselor for specific questions.

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"Every Child Matters"

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