

Instructional Materials Committee Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Time: 8:00 am

Present (via Microsoft Teams):

Darcy Brixey, Chair

Caleb Perkins

Jen Beatty, Parent Representative

Kyle Wang, Parent Representative

Andrea Young, Notetaker, Instructional Materials Specialist

(4 members of IMC present for a quorum)

Manal Al-ansi, presenter

Absent:

William Jackson, Principal Representative

Charmaine Marshall, Principal Representative

Agenda:

1. Brief overview of Superintendent Procedure 2015B and draft, Darcy, 8:00-8:15
2. Upcoming pilot, Black Studies class, Manal Al-ansi, Director of Racial Equity Advancement 8:15-8:40
3. Future courses and adoptions, Caleb, 8:40-8:45
4. Questions?
5. IMC Vote on Black Studies class, Everyone

Minutes

Darcy Brixey called the meeting to order and asked to note that there was a quorum with at least four IMC members present. Darcy briefly went over the new version of superintendent procedure 2015B (referred to as 2015SP.B) and read through the relevant and improved sections. The legal department is routing the new version of 2015SP.B for approval signatures and she anticipates it being approved as early as Thursday January 28th.

The current procedure (2015SP.B) allows the IMC to use an alternative process for courses involving less than 1,000 students. The Black Studies class will be less than 1,000 students. She talked about the 'relevant instruments' recommended in the policy and clarified that it means the anti-bias checklist.

Darcy then discussed the "Alternative Processes" section of the current draft (currently being approved/signed) of 2015SP.B, and the section called "Field Testing". "Field Testing can occur absent an Adoption Committee for various reasons, such as "rapidly changing circumstances",

and “new course development, and other various situations”. This is relevant because the course materials are being “field tested” in this new course that starts at the end of January.

Kyle Wang asked if there will be assessments in this course. Darcy said Manal will cover that in her presentation, but there will be assessments of the materials, at least. Kyle asked if it’s a mandatory course or an elective and Darcy replied that it’s an elective.

Caleb Perkins then welcomed Manal Al-ansi, the Director of Racial Equity Advancement, to discuss the process that the curriculum would be chosen in this district planned Black Studies course. Andrea asked to clarify — the IMC is not approving any specific materials today, but will be approving the process by which Manal and her team will choose content and curriculum for the course. Caleb and Darcy confirmed that this is correct.

Manal explained that SPS is starting an 11th grade Black Studies course and said the district is hiring people with expertise in Black Studies to develop materials for 11th grade level. She explained that since current curriculum literature is directed at college level and above, they need to collect and develop curriculum materials appropriate for high school students. At the time of the meeting, 45 students have registered in the 2 weeks the course has been open for registration, and students have also been involved with the organization and development of content for the course, starting with the state social studies standards alignment. There’s a curriculum specialist being hired, and they’re also working with the NAACP Youth Council and other groups.

Caleb explained that the Black Studies course is being developed per a resolution by the board last June. The course is slated to launch on Friday, January 29th. A question was raised about why the IMC was looking over the Black Studies course when they haven’t been involved in elective courses in the past. Caleb explained that SPS is working on a process so all courses with instructional materials will receive attention from the IMC, especially for courses that are considered district wide.

Jen Beatty asked for clarification on the timeline. Caleb said that the board passed a broad resolution in June with no specifics, but Manal and CAI have been working on developing the course since then. The course went through formal course review and was approved by the board. (Having a course approved for teaching is a separate process and does not fall under duties of the IMC). Usually, courses have a longer time period after review and before launch. Darcy asked Manal to go over their partnerships (such as with the Africana Institute). Manal mentioned the UW, local historians, Jesse Hagopian, CAI (SPS). Manal asked for clarification about the differences between approval of curriculum for a course involving more than 1,000 students, and this process, which is for less than 1,000 students. Darcy talked about how in her own educational experience, Black Studies courses often don’t have a single ‘text’ for use in the course, but usually involve a collection of materials put together by the course organizers, including articles, etc. She clarified that state requirements must be met, that Manal had mentioned following social studies standards, and asked Manal how piloted materials will be assessed/measured for effectiveness.

Kyle asked for clarification on whether the IMC would be approving the specific materials and seeing the specific materials before they use them. Darcy clarified that in a regular district-wide adoption, the Adoption Committee reviews and approves the materials, and the IMC approves the process. Since this course has less than 1,000 students, they're following the piloting model and using an alternative process for approval, per board policy. Manal asked about alignment with approval of Asian American literature, etc., i.e. why is Black Studies curriculum going through this process, but other similar courses have not? Caleb said that the purpose of the IMC is for approving the procedure/process, which has changed (2015SP.B), and the district has added other courses to the course catalog that haven't gone through this process, but because the central office is involved with the course development, the legal department thinks the district should go through this process. He said it's not intended to micromanage the process. Manal read some of the social studies standards they are using for approving the course content/curriculum and explained that they're easily adoptable and logical.

Jen asked where the course is being offered, and Caleb said it's being offered district-wide because of remote learning but at the time of the meeting, 8 high schools had interested students. Kyle asked what kind of assessments will be in the course, and Manal said there will be a variety of assessments, including the students assessing the teacher and the course, assessing course engagement, etc.

Kyle asked how long the pilot will be. Darcy said the pilot can be anywhere from a semester to an academic year.

Caleb asked for the minutes to take note Manal's point that she felt like this course is being micromanaged versus other similar courses that did not go through the same process (see notes above). Caleb mentioned that there are other new courses that are going to go through a similar process. Some of this has to do with a prior science adoption that received increased scrutiny.

Caleb went over the other new courses that, per legal's guidance, require the IMC to be aware that work is starting, absent a full adoption. Per a separate board resolution to explore a new course relating to LGBTQIA+. Three related courses went through course board approval process at the same time as the Black Studies, but these courses aren't going to start until fall. These courses will be World History 3, ELA 9 and ELA 11. They need IMC approval to start reviewing and testing course materials (at Nova, for example) in existing courses this spring. Darcy added a point — in talking to legal, they talked about creating a form for smaller courses/alternative processes for adoption (similar to the racial equity tool).

Darcy called for a vote: Vote yea if the IMC is in favor of approving the process for choosing materials for the Black Studies course. Kyle, Jen, Caleb, Darcy, and Andrea voted yes. Darcy said if there are no further questions, she moved to adjourn, Kyle seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 am.

