

INSTRUCTIONAL COUNCIL: PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR COURSE PROPOSALS

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: Approval of a proposed course of study or the elimination of an existing course must be secured from the RCAS Board of Education (BOE) no later than the first BOE meeting in November for implementation the following August. New courses may not be commenced before the approved implementation date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Announcements about new courses and the elimination of a course require BOE action.

ACTION: BOE action on a given course for approval or elimination must follow approval by: Instructional Council (I.C.), Superintendent, and Cabinet. BOE action may take one of four forms:

- A. approval,
- B. conditional approval,
- C. rejection, or
- D. deferral.

COURSE DEFINED: A course is defined to include any studies, activities, or experiences which lead to a unit of credit (73 hours per semester for 1/2 credit).

COURSES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL: New courses requiring BOE approval are those that differ from currently approved courses in level of instruction or content, as reflected in the school's registration book and the district's inventory of instructional programs, subject to the following provisions.

- A. **Name changes.** Renaming an existing course requires BOE approval; planned major curriculum change in a program without a name change requires BOE approval.
- B. **Reconfigurations.** A reconfiguration of existing courses without an essential change in the originally approved curriculum and without a net gain in the number of courses (e.g., a consolidation of two programs into one) requires BOE approval.
- C. **Units of study.** Deletions and revisions of units of study within a course without an essential change in the originally approved curriculum do not require BOE approval.
- D. **Notice.** Before school consideration of the changes described above, notice should be given to the Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction. In the event the Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction interprets the proposed change as one requiring BOE approval, prompt arrangements will be made to discuss the proposed change with the school for a determination of applicable requirements.

COURSE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES. The criteria set out below will generally be used in reviewing new course proposals. However, the stringency of individual criteria will depend on the specific course, and, in particular circumstances, other criteria may be added.

- A. **Alignment with District Mission and Goals.** Does the course adhere to the district mission, philosophy, and instructional program standards as approved by the BOE? Is the course consistent with the school's plans and goals? Does the course serve a clear and appropriate purpose? What is the course's school priority as indicated in its long-range plan? Does the course proposal reflect inter-school cooperative planning? For those courses needing the cooperation of other institutions (including government, education, health, and business), evidence of the willingness of the other institutions to participate is required.
- B. **Curriculum.** A course description, course outline, curriculum materials, standards for passing, and evaluation criteria must be submitted with the new course proposal. Is the course adequately structured to meet its stated objectives? Does the course reflect breadth, depth, theory, and practice appropriate to the subject area and the level of instruction? How does the course integrate appropriate instructional technology? What is the relationship of the course to other courses in the same subject area in the district? In other subject areas? Does the district have strong elementary, middle school, and high school curriculum in related subject areas? What course(s) have been eliminated to offer this course?
- C. **Academic Standards.** Are course prerequisites, participation expectations, and achievement standards clearly stated, compatible with existing school and Board policy, and designed to encourage high quality? Does the course include a rigorous, final integrating experience? Is the course compatible with state curriculum standards and accreditation requirements? Does the course meet other subject area or professional standards?
- D. **Assessment.** New courses need to be evaluated after one full cycle of implementation (one semester or one year). Course curriculum and assessment may be adjusted based on evaluation feedback.

Once a course has been evaluated and modified it becomes part of the content area curriculum for revision purposes.

Any new course that has been approved with "Pilot" status needs to be brought forward to I.C. after it has been evaluated and modified. With the approval of the I.C., the Pilot course will become part of the content area curriculum for revision purposes and will no longer be referred to as a pilot.

If extension of Pilot status is considered appropriate, I.C. may grant additional piloting time. At the end of the extended pilot period, evaluation and modification should follow with a re-presentation to I.C. to gain inclusion in the content area curriculum.

E. **Evidence of School Readiness.** Will the current and/or anticipated faculty resources ensure a course of high quality? Do the number and qualifications of the faculty meet existing school standards and are they consistent with external standards where appropriate? Do current and/or anticipated library and technology resources meet recognized standards for study at a particular level or in a particular subject area where such standards are available? Are all other support resources---existing and/or anticipated---adequate to support a high quality program? Include clear statements of other personnel needed, equipment needed, and arrangements for learning service or other affiliations necessary for the course. Are existing and/or anticipated facilities adequate to support a high quality course? New and/or renovated facilities required to implement the course should be clearly outlined by amount and type of space and the costs identified. Are resources likely to be available in future years?

F. **Administration/Organization.** Are the organizational placement and the administrative responsibility for the course clearly defined and designed to promote success of the course?

G. **Cost of the Course (Preliminary Budget).** Include the following estimates:

- Textbooks
- Other Instructional Materials
- Salary
- Staff development

Please note: Instructional Council does not have any funding authority.

H. **Identification of the Student Population and the Geographic Area the Course Is Designed to Serve.** What is the proposed student population and area of the city to be served by the course?

I. **Justification for Implementation of the Course.** What is the rationale for the course? Is there a valid intellectual need for the course? Do developments in the subject area justify the course? Why is a new course needed in a subject area where it was formerly not required? Are enough potential students interested in the course? Evidence of student demand, normally in the form of surveys of potential students and enrollment in related courses at the school, should be adequate to expect a reasonable level of productivity. How does the course interface with college curriculum? Is there sufficient employer demand? Evidence of sufficient employer demand, normally in the form of anticipated openings in an appropriate service area (which may be national, regional, or local), is in relation to existing production of graduates for that service area. Evidence may include employer surveys, current labor market analyses, and future manpower projections. Where appropriate, evidence should demonstrate employers' preference for completers of the proposed course over persons having alternative existing course work and employers' willingness to pay higher salaries to completers of the proposed course.

J. **Endorsements.** Statements of support should be submitted as appropriate from the following: department teachers, counselors, principals, and, if appropriate, advisory committee or parent organizations.

ELIMINATION OF A COURSE. A proposal to eliminate a course should include a rationale explaining the circumstances that have reduced the need for the course and its role in the overall curriculum.

EARLY CONSULTATION: It is expected that schools should notify the Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction as soon as possible (in building plan generally one to three years prior to implementation) of their intent to propose a new course of study. This requirement does not wholly preclude the submission of proposals with less advance notice if justified by the opportunity and/or need.

TIMELINE: The I.C. will normally consider proposals for new courses of study at its September meetings. However, in special circumstances, consideration may be given at other I.C. meetings. Proposed courses need to be brought forward to Instructional Council for reading and discussion at a minimum of two separate, consecutive meetings. Once I.C. recommends approval, it needs to receive recommendations of approval from the Cabinet and the Superintendent. Final approval needs to be obtained from the BOE in a timeframe that allows for BOE approval no later than the first meeting in November of the year prior to course implementation.

INSTRUCTIONAL COUNCIL: COURSE PROPOSAL CHECKSHEET

See Procedures and Criteria for Agenda Item Proposals for additional information.

- I. Informal Review and Approval of Appropriate Principals and the Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

- II. Formal Proposal to Instructional Council--Format
 - A. Rationale (include following as appropriate)
 - 1) Growth of Program / Updating / Need
 - 2) Student Survey / Research
 - 3) Staff Survey
 - 4) Job Market / College Curriculum Interface
 - 5) Other

 - B. Administrative Consideration
 - 1) Alignment with District Mission and Goals
 - 2) Costs / Start up and on-going / Grants
 - 3) Impact on Existing Programs
 - 4) Staffing
 - 5) Courses eliminated to offer this course

 - C. Request for Addition of Course
 - 1) Course Description – to be included in High School Course Handbook
 - 2) Course Outline
 - 3) Curriculum including alignment to available standards
 - 4) Curriculum Materials / Textbooks Budget
 - 5) Standards for Passing
 - 6) Evaluation Criteria

 - D. Endorsements
 - 1) Department / Grade-level Teachers
 - 2) Counselors / Principals / Assistant Superintendent
 - 3) Advisory Committee (if applicable)
 - 4) Parent Organizations / Parental Involvement

- III. Endorsement of Instructional Council
- IV. Endorsement of Superintendent / Cabinet
- V. Endorsement of BOE