

STATE SUPERINTENDENT RECEIVES COMMENTS REGARDING "PASS"

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■ (GIT) In an announcement during Thursday's meeting of the State Board of Education, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sandy Garrett advised pursuant to 70 O.S. Section 11-103.6(a) the State Board of Education is required to review the core curriculum every three years and implement "any revisions in such curriculum deemed necessary to achieve further improvements in the quality of education for the students of this state." Garrett said, "The core curriculum was implemented during the 1993-94 school year, therefore, we will be reviewing the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) this year."

Garrett said the goal is to complete the process by January so that an updated curriculum can be delivered to every public school teacher no later than April 1997. School districts need time to review and make local instructional changes Garrett said.

"As you recall," Garrett said in her November 21, letter to the Board, "I initiated this process last spring by asking Oklahoma Futures to review the state's core curriculum."

Oklahoma Futures organized the Futures Workforce Training Task Force led by Greg Main. Other members of the committee included Dick Rush, Bill Harrison, Dr. James Halligan, Wayne Rowley, and Dr. Joy Reed Belt.

Team Leader of Effective Schools/Curriculum, Martha Michael, has also been collecting information from state curriculum associations and expects to have proposed document changes ready for the State Board's review later this month. Briefly, Michael has received the following remarks:

- Health, Safety, and Physical Education committees have proposed no changes to their curriculum areas.

- Only minor changes have been suggested for kindergarten, language arts, languages, mathematics and science.

- Social studies and technology education/hands-on career exploration educators are finalizing their proposed edits this week.

- Instructional technology, information skills, and the arts sections have proposed changes that are consistent with technological advancements, current research information and/or concerns.

- Student Assessment section has been updated by removing all references to the Literacy Passport and reflecting the legislative changes made in 1995 and 1996 to the

Oklahoma School Testing Program.

Comments from educators across the state were provided to the members of the Board regarding the PASS program.

Linda Bailey, Mathematics Coordinator for Putnam City Schools, said in comments provided to the Board, "The Mathematics PASS objectives have served my district as a framework for our curriculum. The document outlined the skills needed at each grade level and set benchmarks for the students to achieve at those grade indicators." Until there are changes in the NCTM "Standards," Oklahoma needs to keep the PASS objectives.

"I believe defined skills reflect much thought on how students learn mathematics and sound educational decisions on the minimal mathematical competencies all students should possess," Pat Morgan, Mathematics Coordinator for Moore Public Schools said. "We must strive for continued improvement in the success rate of our students in attaining the standards described in the PASS document."

Laura Barlow, Coronado Heights Elementary School, said she felt there should be development of the sense of number value. "The students need to go beyond rote memorization and algebraic equations and have the ability to develop an understanding of the value of a number," Barlow said.

Linda Atkinson, Science Director of Norman Public Schools, said science curriculum development has been a major priority

in both time and financial commitment in the Norman Public Schools since the late 1960s. "When the Oklahoma State Department of Education provided the school systems with PASS, we began teacher inservice to integrate the PASS into our curriculum," Atkinson said. First teachers identified areas of the curriculum that addressed the PASS document. Next, we listed the PASS areas in which we needed additional curriculum. Finally, the teachers added objectives and activities to our curriculum to address these areas. Our curriculum document now lists our objectives and which portion of the PASS document is emphasized, Atkinson said.

"This has been a valuable educational process," Atkinson said. "The teachers have had opportunities for discussions with their peers and through these discussions the curriculum has been improved."

"I have been involved in arts education in the Oklahoma Public School System for twenty-six years," Jo Ellen Crow, Fine Arts Coordinator for Broken Arrow Public Schools said. "I was very pleased to see a document that included the fine arts as core curriculum." Our students will have great educational opportunities because of your commitment to the arts Crow said.

Core curriculum review is important because it allows us the opportunity to continue to update and clarify the skills and knowledge that educators, parents and businesses want all of our students to learn Garrett said.

