

[Link](#) to the Board Update from September 2023 that outlined the process originally

Important Links

- [Previous HGD Guide](#) that we will continue to follow for the remainder of the 2023-24 school year.
- Recommended [updated HGD Guide](#)
- Documentation of the [changes between the two versions](#)

Highlights

- The Human Growth and Development (HGD) Committee was composed of 27 members - 18 community members, 2 high school students and 7 staff members.
- The committee met 7 evenings for a total of about 14 hours to:
 - Review State Statutes, Board Policy and Board resolutions,
 - Review student data from the Dane County Youth Survey,
 - Hear from teachers about how HGD is currently taught K-12,
 - Revise our HGD mission, vision and philosophy statements to guide our work, and
 - Revise the HGD Guide.
- Several committee members will be present at the March 18 School Board meeting to share a summary of our work and to answer questions.
- Several revisions were made, but these are changes the committee particularly wanted to call your attention to
 - The guide has been streamlined in format to make it easier to read.
 - The language has been revised to ensure that the language has a natural progression across grades.
 - There are several topics that will be introduced to students earlier including:
 - Diverse family structures, gender identity and sexual orientation (through read alouds and with age-appropriate language) in Grades K, 1 and/or 2
 - Alcohol and drug abuse prevention and intervention in 5th grade
 - The sexual response cycle in 6th grade
 - The concept of informed consent for touch will be introduced as early as K-2. Currently we talk about the concept of consent at K-2, but haven't previously used the word. Now we will and that will continue to progress until 7th-12th grade where we will use the terms "clear, consistent, and enthusiastic consent" prior to any sexual activity.
- The committee does not recommend separating students by gender at any grade for human growth and development instruction. This is also our current practice.

More details

Committee meetings and process

The committee meetings were universally civil, respectful and included engaged participation from all members. Our first several meetings were intentionally about policy, data and current practices to allow committee members to meet each other and become comfortable in the group. We used a seating chart and placed people in the same groups each time so that they could build rapport with each other before

needing to discuss potentially controversial topics. Many of the decisions involved an extended amount of discussion including over 1 hour discussing when it is appropriate to introduce gender identity and an additional 1 hour discussing when it is appropriate to introduce sexual orientation. While the meetings did get a bit long, it was important that everyone who wanted to share a perspective had the opportunity to do so, and that we were able to reach a consensus. Through our discussions, several committee members ended up changing their minds, and several members shared personal experiences that enhanced our decision making.

Committee member reflections (a shortened version of this list will be a part of the Board presentation)

I asked committee members "What are the most important things for the School Board to know about our HGD Committee process?" They said (in no particular order):

- A very diverse group coming together and working together on very difficult topics. With a wide range of beliefs. The group was so engaged and wanted to be very thoughtful, that we extended the time on meetings to make sure all voices were heard.
- it truly is a collaboration of views
- I have liked our process.
- The committee was mindful in considering how decisions would impact our students and used data to inform recommendations.
- The Current committee structure results in an informative session and fosters collaboration. But may not welcome opposing opinions when presented to the group. Members of the group are knowledgeable and diverse. Meeting times should be made more specific and clear.
- The process was excellent. It gave all members an opportunity to safely share opinions and ask questions. Great collaboration between the community group.
- good supportive open discussion and consensus
- decisions are reflective of our community
- To emphasize that the language used will be appropriate for each grade level since a lot of people tend to jump to conclusions with these types of things
- The attention to detail in our dissection of the content. Leadership and dedication to Norms of Collaboration. This was not a group who always "agreed" but successfully found middle-ground.
- Ideas off the top of my head: Highlight 1) Organization and running of the committee, 2) significant/important changes to the curriculum (e.g. content, organization); 3) comparison of McF SD HGD curriculum (high level) with surrounding districts
- We were collective and worked well together and believe this is best practice for the success of our students and community.
- Collaborative discussion after hearing from the current Teachers that teach these topics.

At the conclusion of our work, I also asked for an anonymous evaluation of our work together. The 17 respondents included 13 community members and 4 staff members.

- Do you feel like our process was well organized?
 - 16 very well organized, 1 well organized
- Do you feel like information was shared clearly?
 - 16 very clearly, 1 clearly
- Do you feel like information was shared in a timely manner?
 - 15 very timely, 1 timely, 1 untimely (too soon or too late)
- Do you feel like your feedback was heard by the committee throughout the process?
 - 11 very well heard, 5 heard
- Do you feel like your feedback is reflected in our final product?
 - 9 very reflective of my feedback, 7 reflective of my feedback, 1 moderately reflective of my feedback

Reflections for next time

We should form a committee like this again in two to three years to continue our work. Next time, I will ask committee members to make a three-year commitment to the committee. The first year will have a process very similar to what we did this time, and then they will meet once a year for the next two years to consider any minor revisions. Committee members indicated that a three-year commitment would either have no change in the likelihood of participation on the committee or would increase the likelihood that people would like to participate.

When we convene this committee again, we will still begin with policy, statute and data review, but we will hopefully need to spend less time revising the guide itself. Ideally the committee would have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the instructional materials we use to reach the objectives in the guide and not just the objectives themselves.

Next Steps

If the Board acts to approve the recommended revised guide, Melissa Pfohl will work with teachers at each building to revise materials that we will begin using during the 2024-25 school year. This will include selecting updated read aloud books, revising slides and materials used to provide instruction, and revising the family communication that is sent out prior to the HGD unit in each grade each year. For grades that have new content, professional development for teachers delivering that instruction will also be organized and provided.