

**From:** [Pollak, Nancy](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Curriculum Alignment Question  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 12:32:59 PM

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Dear [REDACTED]

At the May 6th BOE meeting there was a comprehensive presentation on the Strategic Plan which is listed under agenda item 4.1. Unfortunately this is not available in video format due to a technical problem with live stream. The minutes, as always, are available in Board Docs. During this presentation Dr. Baker discussed the status and timing for the implementation of goal 1: Student Growth and Achievement which curriculum alignment is a part. While we are in the process of a massive overhaul of all curriculum work, it will never really be completed because it is a continuous improvement model. Upon completion of this current initiative all curriculum will be put on a cadence and will be examined, evaluated, and updated if appropriate on a regular basis. However, it is truly unique that we are tackling all departments at the same time.

To be clear, the BOE adopted the strategic plan in May of 2018. Curriculum alignment was always part of that plan and it was always intended to be a 5 year implementation. The previous BOE wanted an aggressive, accelerated implementation timetable. This, however, was an impossible goal for several reasons:

1. The 2018/19 school year BOE meeting agenda was filled with questions. Questions about what leadership structure was best. About what cuts we had to implement if the second referendum failed.
2. The implementation of our strategic plan was paused for all 5 goal areas. That isn't an excuse. It is the reality.

Once the referendum passed in April the BOE had yet more questions in front of us:

1. New BOE seated 4/24
2. New Superintendent 4/24

It was at this point we hit pause to determine our path forward. It was clear after meetings with teachers and receiving feedback via prep periods and a BOE survey that this accelerated timetable would not work. In order for this work to be successful we must have our teachers as an integral part of this process. This work requires an intensive amount of teacher voice and teacher participation at the table. Further, we wanted to engage our Feeder Districts. This pause has enabled our Administrative team to reach out to our Feeder Districts and for the very first time partner with them around both mathematics and world languages curricula.

I can assure you that work is and has been occurring. Science is the first content area being studied.

The first thing that had to be determined was the sequencing of science courses. Late spring there were community focus groups around this work, it has continued this summer, and staff is returning this fall to be updated. The science sequence report is slated for the October BOE meeting. Spoiler alert. The recommendation to the community last spring was a physics first curriculum at both schools.

**Please understand just because we are working on alignment doesn't mean students won't continue to receive an exemplary education at both D86 schools. Any good organization like ours is always striving for internal review and continuous improvement.**

In regards to your question about graphics, I spoke with Mr. John Madden, Department Chair for both schools. The introductory course in both the Art Department at South and the Technology Department at Central focuses on introducing the student to the Adobe Creative Suite. This is similar to a few years back when photography was in the Art Department at South but the Technology Department at Central. This has since changed and photography currently resides in the Art Department at both schools. My guess is the Central graphics program will move to the Art Department after the alignment, but that is only a guess. Mr. Madden is happy to work with you to explain the program and discuss options for your daughter to ensure she has the opportunities she desires at Hinsdale South. He can be reached at [jmadden@hinsdale86.org](mailto:jmadden@hinsdale86.org).

Enjoy the last few days of summer. If you would like to discuss this further, please reach out to me and we can schedule a time to meet.

Nancy Pollak  
Board Member  
HTHS D86

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 6, 2019 4:32 PM  
**To:** Walsh,William <[wwalsh@hinsdale86.org](mailto:wwalsh@hinsdale86.org)>; Pokorny Lyp,Arwen <[apokorny@hinsdale86.org](mailto:apokorny@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Message from [REDACTED]

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**From:** Camden,Kevin <[kcamden@hinsdale86.org](mailto:kcamden@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 6, 2019 1:36 PM  
**To:** Prentiss,Tamara <[tprentis@hinsdale86.org](mailto:tprentis@hinsdale86.org)>; Pollak,Nancy <[npollak@hinsdale86.org](mailto:npollak@hinsdale86.org)>; BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Message from [REDACTED]

I'd also like some explanation for the disparity in AP scores between the two schools. If 70% of HC is getting 4 or 5 on the AP exam, but only 22% at HS in AP Biology, and similarly for AP Chemistry, there is a major problem in my opinion.

"Serving the students in the schools" sounds a lot like leave the white kids at HC get 4 or 5 on AP classes and "those kids" at HS can do what they do. I called it separate but equal at the last board meeting and I will stand on that, with both the historically accurate definition and the connotation.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** Prentiss,Tamara <[tprentis@hinsdale86.org](mailto:tprentis@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 6, 2019 12:52 PM  
**To:** Pollak,Nancy <[npollak@hinsdale86.org](mailto:npollak@hinsdale86.org)>; BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Message from [REDACTED]

I already forwarded to the team (API, Principals and Science DCs).  
Tammy

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**From:** Pollak,Nancy <[npollak@hinsdale86.org](mailto:npollak@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 6, 2019 12:47 PM  
**To:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** Message from [REDACTED]

Tammy,

Can you please get responses to all of [REDACTED] points below. This is what we are getting hammered with out in the community and we need a response other than you're wrong.

**From:** "Hanson,Cynthia" <chanson@hinsdale86.org>  
**To:** "[REDACTED]"  
**Cc:** "BOE" <boe@hinsdale86.org>, [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 27, 2019 8:43:03 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central

[REDACTED]

Wonderful! I am glad you were able to review the presentation and material and appreciate your thoughts and interest. I will defer further discussion of your concerns and ideas to our Superintendent and Science Committee. I am certain they can speak to their process, data and research on these issues better than I can for them, as well as your request for a meeting with the individuals you mentioned. If one is arranged, I promise to try my best to organize my schedule so that I can attend.

Thank you again for reaching out!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hanson  
Board Member  
Hinsdale TWP High School District 86

On Oct 27, 2019, at 4:28 AM, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] wrote:

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Dear Mrs. Hanson.

I was not able to attend the meeting and have reviewed the documents posted on your website before writing your email out of concern for the preparation of the students in the Hinsdale District. The course being proposed as the only physics class most students will take is "at best" an 8th grade class and is not appropriate as the primary physics class taught in a tier one high school district such as Hinsdale. I would appreciate a

meeting where we could discuss this with the curriculum committee, the board, the two science department chairs, and possibly even physics teachers. I would also ask that the board keep open the choice for 4 to 5 years (like at New Trier) where families can choose the right course of action at both schools for their children. After a 5 year period, the two options can be evaluated and further decisions can be made. We are blessed to have large numbers of students in our district and allowing students to make a choice BCP or PCB would be better than the proposed course of action. Parents are the primary educators of their children and keeping choices available allows parents to make decisions in the best interest of their children. Sincerely, [REDACTED]  
Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 26, 2019, at 11:56 PM, Hanson,Cynthia  
<[chanson@hinsdale86.org](mailto:chanson@hinsdale86.org)> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. Were you able to attend our Board meeting last week Wednesday when the D86 Science Program was presented? If not, you can find the presentation and information on the District 86 Science Program on our district's homepage. You will find that at the Freshman level in the D86 Science Program there are two Physics placement options. Placement in Honors will be determined by math placement (mastery of Algebra I). You can also find details on the process of the Science Committee and their vision for this program. It is unclear to me why you are under the impression that the new sequence would be less academically rigorous or would not prepare students interested in a career in physics, chemistry, engineering, quantitative business, info tech and medicine. Hinsdale South has been using the P-C-B sequencing for quite some time with the same placement criteria for Freshmen Physics Honors. Their science program has successfully prepared any student interested in pursuing the aforementioned academic areas thoroughly and very well. A number of those students have been admitted to and/or attend a number of elite universities across the nation. In addition to strong academic preparation for these students, I think it is equally as impressive that since the sequencing has been flipped, there has been an increase in the number of students enrolling in AP science courses as well as an increasing number of students earning a 3-4-5 on their AP science exams. It is a strong accomplishment to be able to offer a program with strong academic rigor for high performing students while also supporting

and encouraging those students who are interested in exploring their potential to succeed in AP courses.

You will also find in the presentation that the process to arrive as the D86 Science Program has been thorough and impressive with full input from a D86 Science Committee. That committee has thirteen members that includes our Chief Academic Officer and Assistant Superintendent for Academics, the Assistant Principals for Curriculum and Instruction from both Hinsdale South and Hinsdale Central, the Department Chairs of Science from both Hinsdale South and Hinsdale Central, and several of our science teachers from both Hinsdale South and Hinsdale Central.

As an individual board member, I found the collaboration of the administration and science professionals in our buildings inspired, thoughtful and conscientious. We are so fortunate to have two very strong high schools in our district and that we are able to attract such talented professionals. I believe they did a wonderful job sharing their best practices and experiences to culminate in a science sequence and curriculum that will move our District 86 Forward and continue to support our students in Defining Excellence. I think it is so important to celebrate and support the work and process of our administration and teachers when it is so well researched, analyzed, discussed and vetted.

Thank you again for your email. If after you review the presentation on the webpage you want to learn more about the successes of Hinsdale South after their implementation of the P-C-B sequence or details on the new D86 Science Program, I am sure you can be connected with the proper people from our administration and D86 Science Committee.

Sincerely,

*Cynthia Hanson*

Board Member, Hinsdale TWP High School District 86

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[Redacted signature block]

**From:** [Hanson, Cynthia](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central  
**Date:** Monday, October 28, 2019 10:32:32 PM

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Thank you very much for your communication.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hanson  
Board Member  
Hinsdale TWP High School District 86

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 27, 2019, at 9:47 AM, [REDACTED] wrote:

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Hinsdale D86 System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's email and know the content is safe.

Dear Mrs. Hanson,

My name is [REDACTED] and as my [REDACTED] mentioned in her letter am a Clarendon Hills resident, supported your referendum all 3 times, and have taught Physics for 45 years including AP Physics C (that is the Calculus based course and the only one that universities will accept for credit for students of Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, and certain other fields). I have had experience with colleagues of mine who have been asked to implement Physics First. Some were positive and some were negative.

The negative experiences involve several schools that implemented Physics One using Paul Hewitt's "Conceptual Physics" with very little problem solving. The end result was that AP Physics C was eliminated from the curriculum with a optional Honors Physics offered in senior year with the possibility of taking an AP B level exam at the end of the course. (That exam would not gain any credit for students in the hard sciences and now has been replaced by the Physics 1 exam that only carries 3 hours credit).

The positive experience involved [REDACTED], my long time friend and colleague who taught at New Trier Township High School in Wilmette-Winnetka. There Physics first is an option along with Biology first. Physics First uses a variety of Physics text books and problem solving is an integral part of the course. Almost all students coming into New Trier have completed Algebra and Geometry and are thus currently enrolled in Algebra II and some even in Precalculus. This particular alignment of Physics and Mathematics seems at least to me to be useful to both disciplines. For reasons I believe are obvious this approach has enhanced the entire science curriculum.

I am hopeful that you might also forward my input to the appropriate individuals and would appreciate being kept in the loop if you think this might be helpful.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns About The Science Curriculum Proposal  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2019 9:25:57 AM

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Thank you for your comments. I appreciate the civility.

For your bullet points, do you have data supporting the claims? For example, "overall body of research" regarding the success of the curriculum--is there an article or study you can point me to?

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 10, 2019 6:52 PM  
**To:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** Concerns About The Science Curriculum Proposal

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Dear BOE and Superintendent Prentiss,

In BOE meetings that I have attended or watched, I have always been confident that each member takes their responsibility to the students and the community seriously. I appreciate that you all explain your rationales honestly and demonstrate a strong commitment to the students and families of D86.

I am disappointed that while the BOE was fully transparent with the public in the last meeting, D86 was not transparent with the BOE or the public. D86 presented its recommended change in the science sequence while omitting material information the BOE and the public need to make an informed decision.

D86 failed to disclose to the BOE and the public that:

- HC is currently using the accepted best-practice science sequence for non-selective public schools that are so highly ranked (#224 nationally in Newsweek among STEM schools).
- There are reasons why almost no non-selective public schools ranked so highly exclusively use the approach D86 is recommending which center around the lack of evidence that this approach is effective at consistently improving student outcomes when used exclusively in high performing public schools that have a broad range



of students. D86 implied this evidence does exist, but it does not.

- The proposed change is essentially experimental, and not a best practice, when used as an exclusive track for a non-selective, highly ranked public schools with a wide range of students like HC.
- The overall body of research does not show that this curriculum is consistently successful in improving student outcomes when implemented in schools like HC. Ms. Hirsman asked about this specifically and D86 remained silent.
- Although D86 discussed a 200% - 300% immediate improvement in AP outcomes at HS to imply an expectation of fantastic success for HC at the BOE meeting and now in its FAQ to the public, it failed to disclose that D86 does not expect to achieve that at HC, and in fact, has not established any defined improvement expectations at all.
- Proposed reduction in the number of tracks is more risky in high performing districts with a wide range of students like D86, and may result in a decline in student outcomes as similar changes did in D181. Detracking is more effective when implemented in lower performing districts, with a narrower range of students, and when changes are implemented in elementary school before the range of student knowledge becomes hard to manage. D86 discussed no risks at all.

I am asking the BOE to provide governance and oversight to D86 to ensure that The Board, and the public, are fully and fairly informed. I am also asking The Board to delay this proposed program change to conduct an objective, comprehensive, and transparent assessment of this recommendation. I believe that is needed for the BOE to have a reasonable basis for this decision and fulfill its fiduciary obligation to the students and the community. I know that the BOE strives to make informed decisions and employ research-backed best practices for the benefit of D86 student outcomes at both schools; I hope you will continue to do so now.

I realize that you may not be receiving an overwhelming amount of email about this issue, and that BOE members naturally prefer to support the decisions of D86 staff. In D181 the BOE decided to defer to staff and implement a similar change to the math program over parent objections. That decision was disastrously damaging to a large cohort of students and test scores fell broadly. Please, make sure that this decision is thoroughly considered and safeguards are in place to prevent that from happening again here.

Thank you for all that you do for the children and families of this district.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns About The Science Curriculum Proposal  
**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 9:46:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)

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Thank you, [REDACTED] I will share this with the board.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 8:01:18 PM  
**To:** Camden, Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Concerns About The Science Curriculum Proposal

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Thank you for your response. I do have support to provide you.

I realize that it is natural for the BOE is strongly inclined to trust administrators. However, while the administrators have presented to the BOE and the public with conviction, their story is not objective, transparent, or supported by substantial facts and evidence.

As you know D86 has very high levels of test scores and achievement already at both schools. What administrators assured the BOE and the public in the Board presentation, FAQ, and information meetings that that administrators is truly remarkable. They have claimed or implied that their science curriculum proposal will result in significant improvements in science AP and SAT Subject Test scores and numbers of tests taken in every subject, that this is what top peers schools do and it is supported by research. They have explained that what D86 has to achieve this is flip the science sequence, lower course content, reduce rigor and detrack G level students. They also shared at the information meeting that they don't see any risks that this will not work.

We all wish this were true, but on its face, this makes no sense, and they have not been able to provide substantive facts and evidence to support their claims. In reality, they have not presented information objectively to the BOE or the public. Below I have listed each bullet point and support.

**First bullet. "HC is currently using the accepted best-practice science**

**sequence for non-selective public schools that are so highly ranked (#224 nationally in Newsweek among STEM schools)."**

Bullet Support:

The administration gave the impression that this is the program that 3/5 or 4/10 top schools use. That is not an accurate picture. In reviewing the top 500 schools in the Newsweek STEM rankings, there are four non-selective IL public high schools in the Newsweek STEM rankings, that are in the top 500 schools, and all four of them are Bio First science programs: Libertyville, New Trier, Hinsdale Central and Stevenson. New Trier does have a Physics First option for top students, but it is for top students and is not like the D86 recommendation at all. and they use it in the same way selective schools do, freshman physics has both algebra and geometry as pre-requirements, and the students are enrolled in physics and algebra II/Trig concurrently. The highest ranked Bio first program in a non-selective IL public school in the Newsweek ranking is ranked #887, not close to HC at #224. If this change is well tested and makes STEM outcomes soar, why are the four IL high schools in the top 500 not using it? And why aren't other high schools using physics first to shoot past those schools outcomes?

**Note:** The reason to exclude selective schools is that they often use Physics First because their freshman students have typically already completed algebra and geometry. That allows them to put physics first without reducing the content of the course. That makes sense for selective schools but that is not what is proposed for D86.

<https://www.newsweek.com/americas-best-stem-high-schools-2020>

**Second bullet. "There are reasons why almost no non-selective public schools ranked so highly exclusively use the approach D86 is recommending which center around the lack of evidence that this approach is effective at consistently improving student outcomes when used exclusively in high performing public schools that have a broad range of students. D86 implied this evidence does exist, but it does not. "**

Bullet Support:

Top schools don't change programs that are working well unless something else is clearly shown to work better. For top ranked schools, there is little upside and a lot of downside in doing that. Maintaining D86's lofty outcomes is difficult. When major changes are made, it is important to have good evidence from peer schools and buy-in from teachers and parents. Getting it right is more important than rushing.

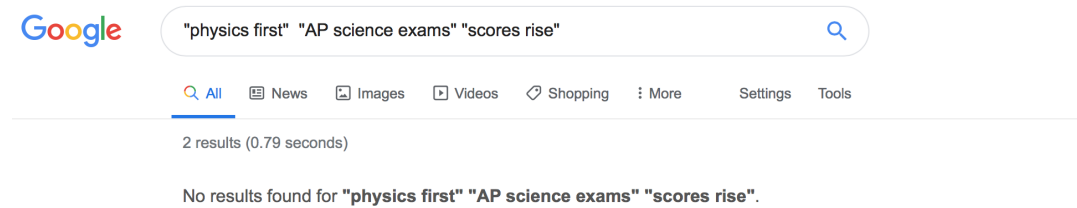
**Third bullet. "The proposed change is essentially experimental, and not a best practice, when used as an exclusive track for a non-selective, highly ranked public schools with a wide range of students like HC."**

Bullet Support:

First, the recommended curriculum is experimental because it is new and unproven. In particular it is not proven to effectively and consistently raise student outcomes/scores in non-selective, high-performing public schools like HS and HC.

For example, I googled "Physics first" "AP science exams" "scores rise" and there

were no results.



Second, while explained with passion, the recommendation was based on anecdotes and opinions related to goals the team established. The plural of anecdote is not data. I can flip a coin 10 times and provide 5 anecdotes that it comes up heads. That doesn't mean it always comes up heads. The main goal parents care about is improving student outcomes. They want to select a program that will achieve the best student outcomes at both school.

Currently, both HS and HC are achieving excellent science outcomes for their students, and engaged parents at both schools are resistant to give up their programs without compelling evidence that administrators either don't have. A dual track would be more of a blend/combination of the HS and HC models and be much easier to get critical buy-in from STEM parents and science teachers that the administration does not have now.

**Fourth bullet. "The overall body of research does not show that this curriculum is consistently successful in improving student outcomes when implemented in schools like HC. Ms. Hirsman asked about this specifically and D86 remained silent."**

Here are two quotes from pro-physics-first sources who like getting physics in front of more students but also acknowledge that it isn't inherently more successful as it is being sold to the BOE and parents in D86.

- <https://www.aapt.org/aboutaapt/updates/upload/physicsfirst.pdf> "Much of the information about these schools is anecdotal at this point with little hard data to evaluate the effectiveness of Physics First."
- <http://discussionphysics.blogspot.com/p/physics-first-resources.html> "Though data on the efficacy of Physics First is scarce, it's clear that the physics-chemistry-biology sequence is not inherently more successful than a traditional sequence."

Third, here is another pro physics first source. It discusses physics first as a way to get more students into physics, but notably is claims nothing about improving scores, as the administration does.

- <https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/200907/physicsfirst.cfm>

Fourth, Here is the recent letter from OPRF explaining why they are detracking. It explains that they are detracking because of racial concerns "Freshman honors classes contain predominantly white students, and college prep classes disproportionately comprise students of color." Clearly, this is primarily a decision that

is driven by the goal of addressing social justice issues and isn't claiming that the purpose is to improve student outcomes/test scores. Detracking and increasing rigor tends to work better for students in the middle of the pack, because in detracking you are focussing more on the average student, and reducing the priority on outlying students. That puts the most outlying students at risk: IEP/504 students and top students.

The reason people believe HC is a special place and more people are realizing that HS is too, is that unlike most districts HS and HC are able to provide appropriate levels of challenge to students at all levels of ability. Very few schools can effectively support IEP/504 and top students the way that D86 does. That is why parents are willing to pay a lot to live in a district that fully supports their children. Detracking is a step away from that. Again, it isn't right or wrong to make this decision, what matters is that important information and details that deserve thoughtful discussion were not conveyed clearly to the BOE or the public.

- <https://www.oprfhs.org/news/1664620/letter-regarding-freshman-curriculum-restructuring>

**Fifth bullet: "Although D86 discussed a 200% - 300% immediate improvement in AP outcomes at HS to imply an expectation of fantastic success for HC at the BOE meeting and now in its FAQ to the public, it failed to disclose that D86 does not expect to achieve that at HC, and in fact, has not established any defined improvement expectations at all."**

Bullet support:

At the information meeting, administrators expressed confidence that this program would improve science AP exam numbers and scores, and also SAT SMT exam numbers and scores at both schools. They did not suggest any specific targeted percentage of expected improvement they expected and certainly not 200-300%.

**Sixth bullet: "Proposed reduction in the number of tracks is more risky in high performing districts with a wide range of students like D86, and may result in a decline in student outcomes as similar changes did in D181. Detracking is more effective when implemented in lower performing districts, with a narrower range of students, and when changes are implemented in elementary school before the range of student knowledge becomes hard to manage. D86 discussed no risks at all. "**

**Bullet support:**

Below is a link discussing detracking and written by people who are strong supporters of detracking as you can see from the title, "What Tracking Is and How to Start Dismantling It." As you scroll down a bit, you can see a heading called, "Begin Where Tracking Starts." The first sentence explains that, "Detracking should begin where tracking begins. If your elementary school tracks, that is the place to start. If tracking is delayed until the middle school years, begin there." The reason for this is intuitive. The wider the range of student knowledge and abilities that a teacher has to manage,

the more difficult it is to teach them all effectively and improve student outcomes.  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108013/chapters/What-Tracking-Is-and-How-to-Start-Dismantling-It.aspx>

In D181 they tried to move to one track, the range was too wide, and student scores fell broadly. I don't know how manageable the range is in D86's proposal. I do know that they did not explain this as a risk and assessed it to decide it was manageable while also increasing student's average scores. Detracking is also more difficult in complex subjects like science.

I asked at the information meeting Monday about risks to achieving the improvements in outcomes at both schools, and administrators were clear that they see none. In my experience, people who know what they are doing know the risks, and actively manage and avoid them. They don't try to convince you there are none.

#### Summary

I recognize that as a BOE member watching the science presentation, it seems as if administrators have identified an outstanding solution and parents are still unhappy, even when a proposed science curriculum is a no-brainer that is great for all students and was chosen by a unified committee of knowledgeable teachers and administrators. The BOE naturally wants to support the administration, and it seems as if parents are never happy, so why bother to investigate this further? I get it. I would ask that question too. In this situation, what is raising parent concerns is that they see confident administrators are presenting this change to the BOE with promises that the districts already very high outcomes and be further raised significantly without risks or drawbacks. The parents know that if it seems too good to be true, you need to ask a lot of detailed questions because although the administrators recommend these programs the parents and families bear the costs when they fail, as they did in D181.

Concerningly, when asked detailed questions by parents, the administrators have repeatedly failed to support their recommendation and claims with clarity, details, data, research and logical explanations. This was even apparent in the BOE presentation. When asked about teachers who don't agree, a knowledgeable presenter would demonstrate a clear understanding of the specific reasons for those disagreements and explain why the details of why they are comfortable that those the concerns can be managed. Instead, the presenters claimed that people who don't agree are "against change." In my experience, people only use this type of ad hominem attack as a last resort when they know the facts and evidence are not on their side, and they need to redirect the conversation away from something they wish to conceal. Another red flag.

Furthermore, parents are reporting that having failed to get comfortable with the administration's selling approach, they have begun privately asking science teachers to help them understand how lowering content, reducing rigor, and detracking will be effective in raising AP and SAT subject test numbers and scores in science for all types of students. Parents are reporting polite but vague responses from multiple D86 science teachers such as, "We support our administrators, but we don't know

the details. You will have to ask Dr. Baker, and Ms. Prentiss." Another red flag.

The desire to push this ahead without that is another red flag. People who are being honest, transparent, and have facts and evidence on their side are patient and willing to explain in endless detail, and don't need to push ahead without buy-in. This gives parents the impression that was presented to the BOE and public as strong unity and consensus among staff was misleading. Parents have the impression that school employees being told to get in line or else from the top.

To be successful, in decision making for the benefit of the district, it is critical that complete objective information is conveyed to the BOE and the public objectively and transparently with clarity about alternatives, the pros and cons of those alternatives, why the recommended option was selected, and what could go wrong. When only the recommended option is presented, and information is presented to drive a certain conclusion, and concerns are deflected and the process is being rushed without buy-in from constituents, something is very wrong. Another red flag.

I have attempted to provide support for the fact that the administration is misleading the BOE and the public. Additionally, and perhaps most obviously, it is clear that if their claims were true, it would be on the cover of every education journal, and every top school would be switching to it or being passed up by schools who did, but that isn't happening.

I appreciate you taking the time to investigate these claims and protect the district from being misled. I hope you and the BOE will act to ensure that the administration stops trying to sell its recommendation to the BOE and the public and begins sharing objective information, and engaging in honest dialogue, before real harm is done to this district.

[REDACTED]

On Mon, Nov 11, 2019 at 9:25 AM Camden, Kevin <[kcamden@hinsdale86.org](mailto:kcamden@hinsdale86.org)> wrote:

Thank you for your comments. I appreciate the civility.

For your bullet points, do you have data supporting the claims? For example, "overall body of research" regarding the success of the curriculum--is there an article or study you can point me to?

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 10, 2019 6:52 PM  
**To:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>

**Subject:** Concerns About The Science Curriculum Proposal

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Dear BOE and Superintendent Prentiss,

In BOE meetings that I have attended or watched, I have always been confident that each member takes their responsibility to the students and the community seriously. I appreciate that you all explain your rationales honestly and demonstrate a strong commitment to the students and families of D86.

I am disappointed that while the BOE was fully transparent with the public in the last meeting, D86 was not transparent with the BOE or the public. D86 presented its recommended change in the science sequence while omitting material information the BOE and the public need to make an informed decision.

D86 failed to disclose to the BOE and the public that:

- HC is currently using the accepted best-practice science sequence for non-selective public schools that are so highly ranked (#224 nationally in Newsweek among STEM schools).
- There are reasons why almost no non-selective public schools ranked so highly exclusively use the approach D86 is recommending which center around the lack of evidence that this approach is effective at consistently improving student outcomes when used exclusively in high performing public schools that have a broad range of students. D86 implied this evidence does exist, but it does not.
- The proposed change is essentially experimental, and not a best practice, when used as an exclusive track for a non-selective, highly ranked public schools with a wide range of students like HC.
- The overall body of research does not show that this curriculum is consistently successful in improving student outcomes when implemented in schools like HC. Ms. Hirsman asked about this specifically and D86 remained silent.
- Although D86 discussed a 200% - 300% immediate improvement in AP outcomes at HS to imply an expectation of fantastic success for HC at the BOE meeting and now in its FAQ to the public, it failed to disclose that D86 does not expect to achieve that at HC, and in fact, has not established any defined improvement expectations at all.
- Proposed reduction in the number of tracks is more risky in high performing districts with a wide range of students like D86, and may result in a decline in student outcomes as similar changes did in D181. Detracking is more effective when implemented in lower performing districts, with a narrower range of students, and when changes are implemented in elementary school before the range of student knowledge becomes hard to manage. D86 discussed no risks at all.

I am asking the BOE to provide governance and oversight to D86 to ensure that The Board,



and the public, are fully and fairly informed. I am also asking The Board to delay this proposed program change to conduct an objective, comprehensive, and transparent assessment of this recommendation. I believe that is needed for the BOE to have a reasonable basis for this decision and fulfill its fiduciary obligation to the students and the community. I know that the BOE strives to make informed decisions and employ research-backed best practices for the benefit of D86 student outcomes at both schools; I hope you will continue to do so now.

I realize that you may not be receiving an overwhelming amount of email about this issue, and that BOE members naturally prefer to support the decisions of D86 staff. In D181 the BOE decided to defer to staff and implement a similar change to the math program over parent objections. That decision was disastrously damaging to a large cohort of students and test scores fell broadly. Please, make sure that this decision is thoroughly considered and safeguards are in place to prevent that from happening again here.

Thank you for all that you do for the children and families of this district.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Hanson,Cynthia  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central  
**Date:** Monday, October 28, 2019 8:57:41 AM

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Dear [REDACTED];

I am certain your input will be forwarded on, thank you very much for sharing your concerns and experience, it helps very much so that our Science Committee can provide the specific data you seek. I will temper my enthusiasm because I know you will be excited to see the data of how successful the PCB program at Hinsdale South has been, but I only think it is fair to give Dr. Gaubatz the opportunity to

*Cynthia Hanson*

Board Member, Hinsdale TWP High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 27, 2019 9:47 AM  
**To:** Hanson,Cynthia <chanson@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central

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Dear Mrs. Hanson,

My name is [REDACTED] and as [REDACTED] mentioned in her letter am a Clarendon Hills resident, supported your referendum all 3 times, and have taught Physics for 45 years including AP Physics C (that is the Calculus based course and the only one that universities will accept for credit for students of Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, and certain other fields). I have had experience with colleagues of mine who have been asked to implement Physics First. Some were positive and some were negative.

The negative experiences involve several schools that implemented Physics One using Paul Hewitt's "Conceptual Physics" with very little problem solving. The end result was that AP Physics C was eliminated from the curriculum with a optional Honors Physics offered in senior year with the possibility of taking an AP B level exam at the end of the course. (That exam would not gain any credit for students in the hard sciences and now has been replaced by the Physics 1 exam that only carries 3 hours credit).

The positive experience involved [REDACTED], my long time friend and colleague who taught at New Trier Township High School in Wilmette-Winnetka. There Physics first is an option along with Biology first. Physics First uses a variety of Physics text books and problem solving is an integral part of the course. Almost all students coming into New Trier have completed Algebra and Geometry and are thus currently enrolled in Algebra II and some even in Precalculus. This particular alignment of Physics and Mathematics seems at least to me to be useful to both disciplines. For

reasons I believe are obvious this approach has enhanced the entire science curriculum.

I am hopeful that you might also forward my input to the appropriate individuals and would appreciate being kept in the loop if you think this might be helpful.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]  
also a Clarendon Hills resident

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**From:** "Hanson, Cynthia" <chanson@hinsdale86.org>  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** "BOE" <boe@hinsdale86.org>, [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 27, 2019 8:43:03 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central

[REDACTED];

Wonderful! I am glad you were able to review the presentation and material and appreciate your thoughts and interest. I will defer further discussion of your concerns and ideas to our Superintendent and Science Committee. I am certain they can speak to their process, data and research on these issues better than I can for them, as well as your request for a meeting with the individuals you mentioned. If one is arranged, I promise to try my best to organize my schedule so that I can attend.

Thank you again for reaching out!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hanson  
Board Member  
Hinsdale TWP High School District 86

On Oct 27, 2019, at 4:28 AM, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] wrote:

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Dear Mrs. Hanson.

I was not able to attend the meeting and have reviewed the documents posted on your website before writing your email out of concern for the preparation of the students in the Hinsdale District. The course being proposed as the only physics class most students will take is "at best" an 8th grade class and is not appropriate as the primary physics class taught

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Saturday, October 26, 2019 3:38 PM

**To:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Concerns about changes in the science curriculum at Hinsdale Central

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Dear sir or madam:

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a concerned parent of a 1st Grader and 5th Grader in District 181. I am also a physics teacher and a reader for the College Board AP Physics exam. [REDACTED], who is also a Clarendon Hills resident, was a physics teacher for over 40 years, most of those years spent teaching Honors Physics, CP Physics, and AP Physics C at Glenbard South High School in Glen Ellen. Both of our families supported the referendum for D86 and had signs on our lawn.

We are very concerned about the elimination of algebra-based physics for the vast majority of the students at Hinsdale central in favor of a less academically rigorous conceptual geology/physical science course required for freshmen students. We are concerned about how this will impact the students hoping to be well prepared for a career in physics, chemistry, engineering, quantitative business, information technology, and medicine. When would the best opportunity be to meet with the board to express our concerns?we are hoping that meeting would also include the department chairs for the Hinsdale central and Hinsdale south science departments Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]  
Clarendon Hills resident

**From:** [Chval,Keith](#)  
**To:** [Pollak,Nancy](#); [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Curriculum Alignment Question  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 3:34:14 PM

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Thank you for the explanation, Nancy. I find it's generally much more productive to ask, and wait, for information and explanation to first seek understanding before arriving at conclusions and making public pronouncements.

I am very pleased with the District's revised approach on this under the leadership of Superintendent Prentiss. Even greater things ahead for the District and its schools!

Regards,  
Keith

Keith Chval, Member  
District 86 Board of Education

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**From:** Pollak,Nancy <npollak@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 12:32:53 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Curriculum Alignment Question

Dear [REDACTED],

At the May 6th BOE meeting there was a comprehensive presentation on the Strategic Plan which is listed under agenda item 4.1. Unfortunately this is not available in video format due to a technical problem with live stream. The minutes, as always, are available in Board Docs. During this presentation Dr. Baker discussed the status and timing for the implementation of goal 1: Student Growth and Achievement which curriculum alignment is a part. While we are in the process of a massive overhaul of all curriculum work, it will never really be completed because it is a continuous improvement model. Upon completion of this current initiative all curriculum will be put on a cadence and will be examined, evaluated, and updated if appropriate on a regular basis. However, it is truly unique that we are tackling all departments at the same time.

To be clear, the BOE adopted the strategic plan in May of 2018. Curriculum alignment was always part of that plan and it was always intended to be a 5 year implementation. The previous BOE wanted an aggressive, accelerated implementation timetable. This, however, was an impossible goal for several reasons:

1. The 2018/19 school year BOE meeting agenda was filled with questions. Questions about what leadership structure was best. About what cuts we had to implement if the second

referendum failed.

2. The implementation of our strategic plan was paused for all 5 goal areas. That isn't an excuse. It is the reality.

Once the referendum passed in April the BOE had yet more questions in front of us:

1. New BOE seated 4/24
2. New Superintendent 4/24

It was at this point we hit pause to determine our path forward. It was clear after meetings with teachers and receiving feedback via prep periods and a BOE survey that this accelerated timetable would not work. In order for this work to be successful we must have our teachers as an integral part of this process. This work requires an intensive amount of teacher voice and teacher participation at the table. Further, we wanted to engage our Feeder Districts. This pause has enabled our Administrative team to reach out to our Feeder Districts and for the very first time partner with them around both mathematics and world languages curricula.

I can assure you that work is and has been occurring. Science is the first content area being studied.

The first thing that had to be determined was the sequencing of science courses. Late spring there were community focus groups around this work, it has continued this summer, and staff is returning this fall to be updated. The science sequence report is slated for the October BOE meeting. Spoiler alert. The recommendation to the community last spring was a physics first curriculum at both schools.

**Please understand just because we are working on alignment doesn't mean students won't continue to receive an exemplary education at both D86 schools. Any good organization like ours is always striving for internal review and continuous improvement.**

In regards to your question about graphics, I spoke with Mr. John Madden, Department Chair for both schools. The introductory course in both the Art Department at South and the Technology Department at Central focuses on introducing the student to the Adobe Creative Suite. This is similar to a few years back when photography was in the Art Department at South but the Technology Department at Central. This has since changed and photography currently resides in the Art Department at both schools. My guess is the Central graphics program will move to the Art Department after the alignment, but that is only a guess. Mr. Madden is happy to work with you to explain the program and discuss options for your daughter to ensure she has the opportunities she desires at Hinsdale South. He can be reached at [jmadden@hinsdale86.org](mailto:jmadden@hinsdale86.org).

Enjoy the last few days of summer. If you would like to discuss this further, please reach out to

me and we can schedule a time to meet.

Nancy Pollak  
Board Member  
HTHS D86



**From:** [Pollak, Nancy](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Curriculum Alignment Question  
**Date:** Thursday, August 8, 2019 3:27:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)  
[Screen Shot 2019-08-08 at 3.09.38 PM.png](#)

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Hi [REDACTED],

The powerpoint presentation is in Board Docs and I've included a screen shot of a couple of pages relative to your question in regards to curriculum alignment.

The entire presentation was approximately 40 minutes in length and included overviews of each goal area of our strategic plan.

Hopefully you've had the chance to reach out to Mr. Madden with your questions regarding graphic arts. If there are any other specific questions relative to curriculum please let me know and I will work to get you to the correct person for answers. As always, Principal Pokorny Lyp and the entire Hinsdale South team stand ready to answer your questions as well.

Best,

Nancy Pollak  
Board Member  
HTHS D86

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: D86 Science Sequence  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:19:33 PM

I do not agree that the intent of the science curriculum is to better prepare “Central students for success in AP science courses”. In fact, I may argue that if that is the unintended consequence of the current science curricula at the two district schools, Central is being given preferential treatment, which should not be the the case.

Kevin P. Camden  
 Hinsdale Township High School District 86

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 22, 2019 11:04 AM  
**To:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** D86 Science Sequence

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Hi all!

I am usually very proud of our district, but I am really concerned with the lack of transparent process to the Science curriculum changes. Communication has already gone out to 8<sup>th</sup> grade families stating changes in science will be made before their children enter high school. When do stakeholders get to weigh in?

While D86 told me the science task force including teachers, parents, and students that met last Spring enthusiastically support the Physics First sequence – D86 data does not support the change.

AP TEST RESULTS for SCIENCE	TOTAL CENTRAL	1	%	2	%	3,4,5	%	TOTAL SOUTH	1	%	2	%	3,4,5	%	Delta
Tuesday, May 1, 2018 ALL SCIENCE	381	6	2%	37	10%	338	89%	314	18	6%	65	21%	231	74%	15%
BIOLOGY	82	1	1%	4	5%	77	94%	155	3	2%	37	24%	115	74%	20%
CHEMISTRY	53	1	2%	1	2%	51	96%	40	1	3%	4	10%	35	88%	9%
PHYSC-EM	29	1	3%	2	7%	26	90%	43	2	5%	11	26%	30	70%	20%
PHYSC-MECH	31			2	6%	29	94%	38	3	8%	4	11%	31	82%	12%
PHYSICS-1	157	3	2%	17	11%	137	87%	38	9	24%	9	24%	20	53%	35%
PHYSICS-2	29			11	38%	18	62%						NA		
	14%							23%							

Looking at the Science and AP Science data at Central and South tells a story about Science success:

- Taking Science 97% Central compared to 90% South.
- Taking AP Science exams 14% Central compared to 23% South
- Taking high school science courses 83% Central compared to 67% South.

To evaluate success, you have to look at outcomes from each school’s sequence.

Central's Biology First (Earth Science First) sequence: At Central, freshman can take either Biology or Earth Science (GEN, Regular, Honors), but only around 20% take Honors Level.

- At Central 24% students take HS Biology with 3% in AP Bio compared to South with 12% in HS Bio and 10% in AP Bio
- Looking at AP Bio pass rates 94% at Central and 74% at South suggests Central's Bio First program prepares students for success in AP Bio. This 20% difference in pass rates cannot be overlooked.

South's Physics First sequence: At South 65% freshmen take Physics First and 35% take Honors Physics. Exposure to Physics would suggest greater high level physics success, but that isn't what the data show.

- At Central 13% take high school physics (at Pre-Calc+ math level) and 9% AP compared to South with under 2% taking HS Physics (with math) and under 4% taking AP Physics. The difference with 22% Central taking real Physics vs. 6% at South cannot be overlooked.
- At Central 85% (88% without Physics 2) pass AP Physics (most without prior exposure) compared to South where only 68% pass AP Physics after physics exposure. This 17-20% difference in pass rates cannot be overlooked.

Since AP requires specific material to be mastered, AP course outcomes should be consistent from school to school and class to class. At Central, 89% students who take AP Science Exams pass (Score 3, 4, 5) compared to 74% South. NOTE: If you remove AP PHYSICS-2, Central's AP Pass rate rises to 91%.

- This difference in Pass Rates reflects a significant difference in access to AP Courses. Where Central has strict parameters for entry to assure success, South encourages students to stretch and try an AP course. What is the impact of pushing students ahead who aren't ready?
- This 15% difference in AP Pass Rates would mandate either or both loosening the qualifications for AP Science at Central or tightening them at South.
- Since competitive colleges only accept 4s and 5s, D86 need to dive deeper into AP score distributions to truly identify the number of students prepared for AP Sciences.

In Conclusion, Why would D86 adopt a South's Physics First science program when Central's Bio First better prepare students for success in AP Science courses?

- What data from similar districts shows the Physics First sequence will improve outcomes at Central? Although New Trier introduced Physics First, it maintained a more rigorous traditional Bio First sequence.
- I read the APS Physics Publication mixed reviews on Physics First which states "With regard to the 'Physics First' movement, the lack of a relationship between the previous study of physics and later chemistry performance, or the previous study of chemistry and later biology performance, casts doubt on the impact of changing the traditional high-school science sequence."
- While the American Association of Physics Teachers' Physics First pamphlet suggests Physics First better prepares students for Real Physics, South's data shows the opposite with only 5% taking Real Physics compared to 21% at Central.

D86 data does not support this change. Please do not approve any changes without solid supporting data from similar districts.



**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [Prentiss, Tamara](#); [BOE](#); [Pokorny Lyp, Arwen](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Message from [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Thursday, November 7, 2019 11:46:32 AM

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Inasmuch as I expect the false narrative the parent created is being shuttlecocked back and forth between parents opposed to the change, it may be worth publicly posting a response so that those who are buying into the self-serving commentary may be educated? Food for thought.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** Camden, Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 7, 2019 11:34 AM  
**To:** Prentiss, Tamara <tprentis@hinsdale86.org>; BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>; Pokorny Lyp, Arwen <apokorny@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Message from [REDACTED]

Great work, thanks! I think we need to, despite it making the accuser of such false information uncomfortable, call out falsity AND present the facts. Additionally, the true comparison shows the success of the program at HS, which is helpful to extinguish other false narratives we have heard.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** Prentiss, Tamara <tprentis@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 7, 2019 8:06 AM  
**To:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** FW: Message from [REDACTED]

Here is the info regarding the [REDACTED] email. I will copy you on my response to this parent.  
Tammy

---

**From:** Pokorny Lyp, Arwen <apokorny@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 6, 2019 9:46 PM  
**To:** Prentiss, Tamara <tprentis@hinsdale86.org>; Walsh, William <wwalsh@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** Gaubatz, Julie <jgaubatz@hinsdale86.org>; Martzolf, Eric <emartzolf@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** FW: Message from [REDACTED]

Hi Tammy and Bill,

**From:** [Chval,Keith](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [Camden,Kevin](#)  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 5:43:31 PM

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[REDACTED] the point of it, and my note, is simply that the topic of science sequencing is not new to the board, and that, as I recall, that we have actually heard quite a bit about it, including with respect to how students perform in the two different sequences that have been relevant to us. And, with respect to my note, I'm looking forward to hearing further yet about it tonight, including specifically as to what the educational professionals and leaders in our district have been working on. Both schools have done extra-ordinarily well in this area, and I put a very high degree of trust in their guidance and opinions. So, excited to hear first-hand facts and opinions re our district and its plans tonight.

Regards,  
Keith

Keith Chval, Member  
District 86 Board of Education

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 5:28:46 PM  
**To:** Chval,Keith <kchval@hinsdale86.org>; Camden,Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

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Keith: If a presentation on Physics First was presented at HSHS in 2018, that was well before any discussion or mandate by Dr. Law or the full BOE on aligning the curriculum. At the time of that presentation, as I recall, there were cries of curriculum inequity which were denied by the Administration and the BOE. Then as you may recall, in the winter, Dr. Law informed the BOE that in fact curriculum inequity did exist between and within each school that needed to be corrected. I believe it was Mr. Camden who expressed outrage with this new admission by the administration. It was this "admission" in late winter 2018 that has led to the curriculum alignment work. Regardless, the BOE has not had a public presentation or discussion of Physics First, based on DATA, in the context of which Science Sequence the BOE should approve as the district wide/aligned curriculum.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Chval,Keith <kchval@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:58 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] Camden,Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

I do generally recall the presentations and discussion that we had on this some time ago, as Mr. Camden pointed out, and I'm looking forward to hearing the professional educators share further on their views and plans on this regard tonight.

Keith Chval, Member  
District 86 Board of Education

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:40:18 PM  
**To:** Camden,Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

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Kevin: Thank for your response. Respectfully, I think you are missing my main points:

1. Until the BOE decides what to approve, the administration should not be telling anyone that Physics First is a done deal.
2. When and if the BOE votes on changing the curriculum at either school, it should present data to the BOE of a comparative analysis of both Science sequences and the BOE should make decisions on DATA, including student performance data of students within D86 and from comparable high schools that have implemented the proposed curriculum.
3. The teachers who will be tasked with implementing the chosen curriculum at both schools should be surveyed anonymously so that they can candidly and without fear of retribution (which is in fact their fear) give their opinion on the proposed elimination of G-level classes.

You claim that my "discounting" Physics First as a social justice issue is misplaced. I disagree and I believe if you ask and get answers to my questions, you will realize that this is in fact one of the drivers behind pushing the Physics First curriculum on Central.

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Camden, Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:15 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

[REDACTED] a substantive presentation was made publicly about Physics First at HSHS, perhaps last spring (2018), so the concept is not new, at least to me. Thank you for your comments.

I think discounting Physics First as "social justice" is wholly inaccurate. From my personal research, this is the curriculum that many science educators, including the likes of Nobel laureates, recommend.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 2:17 PM  
**To:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

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Dear D86 Board of Education:

I am writing to express my concern with the Physics First Science Curriculum alignment proposal the D86 Administration will be presenting at tonight's board meeting. I am asking that you not make the mistake the D181 BOE made seven years ago when it approved a social justice driven curriculum change with implementation of a program called Learning for All.

That program pushed all students up a full year in math and as data was collected over the next several years, it was proven to have failed miserably, hurt student performance and as a result it has taken years by the current administration to unravel and repair the damage done to students.

With respect now to D86, my understanding from information that has been provided to 8th grade families and individuals in the community who have had personal conversations with Assistant Superintendent Brad Verstein, Superintendent Tammy Prentiss and Jessica Hurt (amongst other D86 administrators) is that Hinsdale Central will, starting in the fall of 2020, be rolling out the Physics First Science sequence currently used at Hinsdale South and phasing out the traditional Science sequence offered at Central. Furthermore, community members have been told that G-level classes at Central in the Physics First sequence will also no longer be offered (already eliminated at South) and students will be placed in either Regular or Honors classes.

What this means is that the "floor" will have been raised for all students, with G-level students being pushed up one level, and some (maybe many) Regular Ed students being pushed up to the Honors level. The purpose of this change will be so that Central is "aligned" with South, as the Administration attempts to implement the "Curriculum Alignment Mandate" the Board directed last winter. Some parents have also been told that MAP Placement scores for entering freshmen are being lowered to accommodate these changes.

To date, the Administration has not presented this specific proposal to the BOE, nor has it been discussed or approved by the BOE -- at least not in OPEN session. I do not believe there is any exception to the Open Meetings Act that would allow the BOE to discuss proposed curriculum changes in closed session or outside of a publicly noticed meeting so I am assuming that tonight will be the first time the BOE members will be discussing this specific Science alignment proposal.

I am deeply troubled that any D86 administrator -- and in particular the Superintendent -- has told community members that the Physics First sequence WILL be rolled out starting in the Fall of 2020, before the BOE has substantively discussed it or reviewed supporting DATA from comparable school districts that show proven success with elimination of G-level classes.

Further, the BOE has not yet voted to implement this curriculum change as it is required to pursuant to Board Policy 2.20(9) and it is premature for any administrator to assume that the BOE will do so. (Note: Comparable school districts are not MAGNET schools where all students are high achievers who have to take a test to place into the school)

[REDACTED], I am particularly concerned because this proposal sounds ominously like the failed social justice Learning for All program that was approved by the D181 BOE and that unraveled as data was collected that showed that student performance across the board declined, The decline, as D86 Board Member Turek (who was



on the D181 BOE during the entire "life" of the Learning for All program) may remember, was due in part to lower achieving students struggling to keep up in an accelerated level and higher achieving students not being taught at the appropriate higher, more rigorous level due to the watering down of the curriculum at the high end in order to accommodate the average learner who were pushed into the highest level rather than remain in a lower tier. While teachers in D181 were expected to differentiate to the needs of each learner, in practice this did not work since there were too many levels of learners in the now accelerated classes that all students were pushed into.

██████████ that approved the Learning For All Program, and at the time I voted yes, I did so with stated reservations on the record, because teachers in an anonymous survey had expressed concerns that lower achieving students would struggle unnecessarily and the highest achievers would suffer as the curriculum was watered down. Nevertheless, the Administration claimed it would be a success and recommended the program and so I voted unanimously with the majority of the ██████████ who believed that we needed to trust the administration. When I voted yes, I asked that data be collected and analyzed and I remember Mr. Turek personally thanking me for my yes vote and stating during the meeting that he would make sure that the data was collected and analyzed. When the data was finally collected and analyzed over the next few years (but only after parents of struggling students stepped up to complain about the problems), the data proved what the teachers had feared would happen.

It is my concern that now D86 is going down this social justice driven path to align South to Central and implement a Science sequence that may not meet the needs of the students at Central, especially if G-level courses are eliminated.

I expect that the BOE will make it clear tonight that the administration cannot continue to inform the community that the Physics First sequence will be implemented at Central BEFORE the BOE actually votes to approve it. I would ask that as the BOE considers the propriety of implementing Physics First at both schools -- with no G-level courses offered -- that it direct the administration to present data to support such a change at Central AND that it ask for the following questions to be answered. In addition, please treat the following questions (in RED) as a formal Freedom of Information Act Request filed on 10/23/19 (with the data to be produced in PDF form):

Prior to South switching to the Physics First model, it followed the traditional science track that is currently offered at Central and for each science course - e.g. biology -- there were Honors, Regular and G-level classes offered. There are criteria that students must meet to enroll in Honors, Regular and G-level classes -- regardless of which Science sequence is followed.

**Question 1. At South, what is the criteria (entering Math level and/or test score cut-offs based**

on MAP and/or other test scores or any other criteria) needed for Freshmen to enroll in Honors Physics versus Regular Physics. Please provide the criteria for the last five years.

Question 2. What percentage of freshmen students at South are enrolled in Honors Physics versus Regular Physics. Please provide the data for the last five years.

Question 3. Has the Science Curriculum Alignment Committee or anyone in the D86 Administration analyzed -- using available past test data -- what percentage of Central freshmen would be enrolled in Honors Physics and what percentage would be enrolled in Regular Physics if Physics First was implemented at Central? If so, what are the percentages.

Question 4: How do the percentages in response to Questions 2 and 3 differ between the schools? If different, has the Science Curriculum Alignment Committee or anyone in the D86 Administration analyzed why they are different? If so, what did the analysis conclude?

Question 5. At Central, what is the criteria (entering Math level and/or test score cut-offs based on MAP and/or other test scores) needed for Freshmen to enroll in G-level, Regular and Honors Biology, Chemistry and Earth Science (which are the three freshmen courses that are currently offered at Central)? Please provide the criteria for the last five years.

Question 6. What percentage of freshmen students at Central are enrolled in each level: G-level, Regular and Honors Biology, Chemistry and Earth Science courses? Please provide the data for the last five years.

Question 7: Has the Science Curriculum Alignment Committee or anyone in the D86 Administration analyzed what percentage of South students would qualify for G-level versus Regular versus Honors freshmen science classes if the Central traditional model was re-adopted at South? If so, what are the percentages.

Question 8: How do the percentages in response to Questions 6 and 7 differ between the schools? If different, has the Science Curriculum Alignment Committee or anyone in the D86 Administration analyzed why they are different? If so what did the analysis conclude?

Question 9. How do the criteria to get into the Honors Bio/Chem/Earth Science at Central differ from the criteria to get into Physics Honors at South? Why are they different?

Question 10: Has the Science Curriculum Alignment Committee or anyone in the D86 Administration analyzed whether the percentage of Freshmen students at South would be lower than the percentage of students at Central that would enroll in the Freshmen science Regular and Honors classes if the entire district implemented the Science sequence currently offered at Central? If so, is the percentage at South lower than at Central?

I would respectfully request that before the BOE makes a decision on how to align the Science Curriculum that you drill down into all available data on the existing Science Sequences offered at BOTH schools, including what percentage of freshmen at EACH school would be in each level if the District implemented a Physics First sequence (currently offered at South) OR the Traditional Science Sequence (currently offered at Central). I would also urge the BOE to ask the following tough questions:

1. If the percentage of freshmen at South that would enroll in Regular and Honors level science classes would be lower than at Central if South was aligned to Central's Traditional Science sequence, is that one of the reasons why the administration is recommending the Physics First program instead?
2. Is the proposed change to adopt Physics First at Central all being done in the name of social justice?

I would also request that you direct the Administration to conduct an anonymous survey of all D86 teachers and ask them for a NARRATIVE answer to the following question: Do you support implementing the Physics First curriculum across the district AND eliminating G-level science classes. If not, why not? If yes, why yes?

Please do not make the mistake the D181 Board did when it ignored teacher concerns and did not demand proven data that supported the social justice driven curriculum change the administration was recommending. It has taken years to undo the damage to the students.

They are now the same students who are and will be enrolling in D86. Please do not subject them to the same "raise the floor" to "raise the ceiling" failed experiment that they were subjected to in D181. You have a chance to do things better than the D181 BOE did BEFORE you approve any curriculum changes. Demand data from comparable school districts. Ask the D86 teachers for their input -- anonymously so they will not fear retribution if they disagree with the administration's recommendation. And LISTEN to the teachers who will be on the front line in teaching to ALL students.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting  
**Date:** Saturday, October 26, 2019 12:50:36 PM

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Thank you for your communication. The premise of your email is that the administrative team does not place students into the appropriate grade level, a premise which I completely dismiss. Our team has done a very good job of making sure no student gets left behind and I have no reason to believe changing to the PCB curriculum at Central, already successfully implemented at South, will change that.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 23, 2019 4:59 PM  
**To:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Science Alignment Discussion at Tonight's BOE meeting

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Dear D86 Board of Education:

[REDACTED] was kind enough to share her concerns about the curriculum alignment proposal that is on this evening's agenda. I can't add to her comments, but I can tell you about my memories of my high school experience. My school had no equivalent to a G-level course; the only option was special education and used as a dumping ground for profoundly impaired children. I was a low achieving student, and the best grade I could hope to achieve was a "C" though worse grades were possible. I was slotted into regular class offerings, and my teachers never had time (or perhaps desire or tools) to intervene because they were busy with their students that understood the class material. Their refrain to me was the instruction to re-read chapter so and so, and somehow, that was to become the path to achieving educational excellence. This left me more confused and isolated to the extent I shut down and did not participate in class for fear of ridicule. How different my experience might have been had there been a class targeted to my skill set where I would have felt safe to ask the very same question that would have resulted in ridicule in the regular class environment.

I closing I support [REDACTED] concerns, and additionally, I ask each of you to consider the impact of placing students not prepared into regular level classes. I can tell you from experience the outcome will not be beneficial.

**From:** Held,Erik  
**To:** [Prentiss,Tamara](#); [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#); [Jasculca,Chris](#); [Walsh,William](#); [Pokorny Lyp,Arwen](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Science Sequence  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2019 10:08:31 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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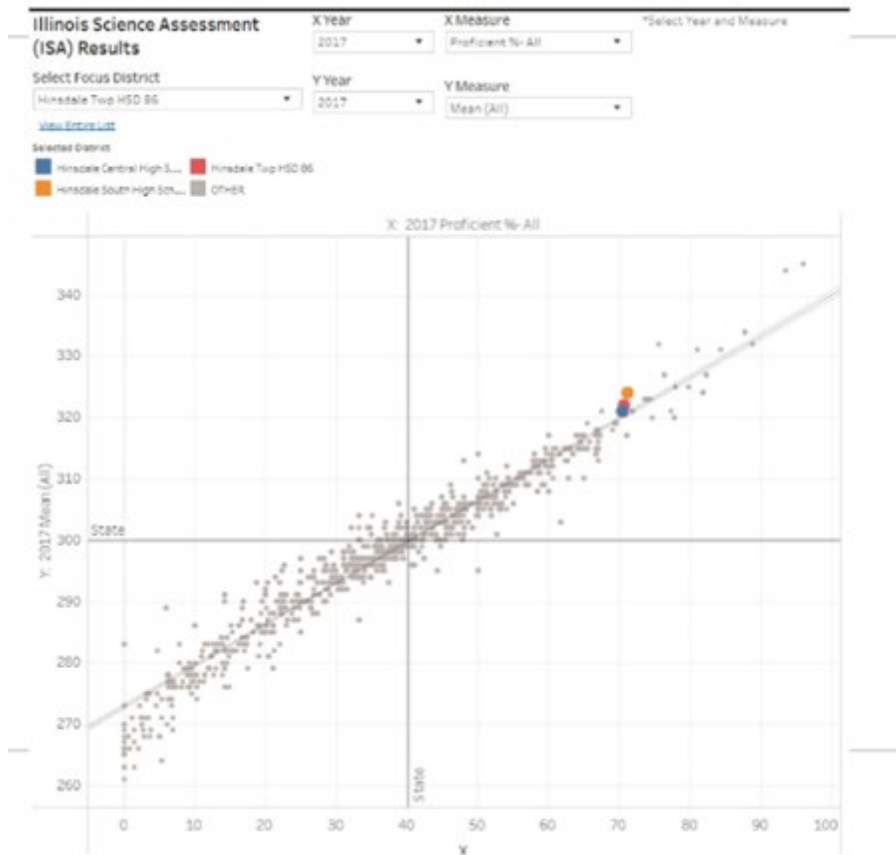
**From:** Prentiss,Tamara <[tprentis@hinsdale86.org](mailto:tprentis@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 9, 2019 8:22:20 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>; Jasculca,Chris <[cjasculc@hinsdale86.org](mailto:cjasculc@hinsdale86.org)>; Walsh,William <[wwalsh@hinsdale86.org](mailto:wwalsh@hinsdale86.org)>; Pokorny Lyp,Arwen <[apokorny@hinsdale86.org](mailto:apokorny@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** Science Sequence

[REDACTED],

Thanks for writing - let me see if I can answer some of your questions and respond to some of your ideas.

Here's a big picture view: D86 is moving the D86 Science Program forward based on a few prompts, including these three: 1) The origination of this program began with Strategic Plan, Goal 1 which calls for curriculum alignment between our two schools; 2) based on this goal, a committee of educational leaders (teachers, department chairs, administration) studied curriculum alignment options for our science departments; 3) the program recommendation by this committee was revised based on feedback from teachers and from a focus group of students and parents. This process required hours of gathering internal and external information, discussion, analysis, and consultation. The committee decided on a sequence of courses that combines the best options for our students in D86, and all of these courses, based on currently existing courses, will be re-designed by combining teachers' best ideas, examples from other schools, researched best practices, and professional standards such as the NGSS.

- Central (Bio First) outperforms South (Physics First) on the IL Science Assessment taken after Biology. Central takes Bio frosh/soph year, and South takes Bio Junior year so there is added maturity.
  - The term "Physics First" references a program that often implies conceptual physics. The current physics courses for freshmen at SHS are algebra-based, as will be the physics courses in the new D86 Science Program.
  - Both schools score well on the ISA, and they score very close to one another. For the past four years, both schools have scored in the top 10% of schools taking this exam; in three of those years CHS out-scored SHS (one of those years only by one point out of 357), and one years, SHS out-scored CHS. As you can see in the chart below, our scores are so close that "our dots touch."



- More students at Central take 4 years of science than South so it won't improve participation.
  - There are many goals set by the committee for the science program, however, increasing student participation from current levels is not one of them. Both schools currently have high participation in science courses throughout their four years. It is a goal to continue with this trend.
- Central (Bio First) outperforms South (Physics First) on AP Science exams. AP Test scores show accelerating more students actually hurts the outcomes for the highest achievers, because the courses are water down. South's success on AP Science exams dropped when they implemented Physics First. The data also shows that a few more students at Central could be accelerated.
  - Central does not have a sequence of science courses; they are not a Biology-First campus. Freshmen can begin with Biology, Earth Science, or Chemistry. Students do not have a pathway to follow, but choose which course to take each year based on prerequisites and their interest.
  - Our philosophy aligns with that of the College Board: *"The College Board's Advanced Placement Program enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both — while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. A score of 3 or higher on an AP Exam can typically earn students college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college."* - The College Board.

- Both schools do exceptionally well on AP exams.
- Our data over many years indicate that there is a higher probability that a student at SHS will experience and pass a Science AP test than at CHS.
- You can view that data here: [D86 Advanced Placement Science Data 2016 - 2018](#)
- AP Biology: 70% Central students vs 22% South students taking the exam get 4s or 5s. That suggests you need a high school biology class before a college biology class. Please look at the textbook Campbells Biology - it is designed for Pre-Med students, not high school students.
  - Our philosophy aligns with that of the College Board, therefore we focus on student experiences with science and exam scores of 3, 4, and 5: *"The College Board's Advanced Placement Program enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both — while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. A score of 3 or higher on an AP Exam can typically earn students college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college."* - The College Board.
  - Although the College Board lists textbooks that meet their audit requirements, their requirement does not include that they should be designed for pre-med students: *"The school ensures that each student has a college-level biology textbook (in print or electronic format) published within the last 10 years for individual use inside and outside the classroom."*
  - The Campbell series includes five different textbooks. CHS and SHS use the same textbook for AP Biology: Campbell [Biology in Focus 2nd ed.](#),
- AP Physics 1, which D86 is eliminating: 53% Central students vs. 5% South students taking the exam get 4s or 5s. That suggests that the Physics First class actually negatively impacts success in real physics.
  - Based on professional best practices and the College Board philosophy, we do not remove the 3s from our data.
  - AP Physics 1 is a first-year physics course. Students who have taken a first-year physics course, like Physics or Physics Honors, can take AP Physics C as their second-year physics course or other science electives or AP courses.
- AP Chemistry: 80% Central students vs 51% South students taking the exam get 4s or 5s. That suggests that accelerating more students actually leads to holes in their science education.
  - Based on professional best practices and the College Board philosophy, we do not remove the 3s from our data regarding AP pass rates.
  - Our data over many years indicate that there is a higher probability that a student at SHS will experience and pass an AP Chemistry exam than at CHS.

- Physics in the Universe is not what South teaches now - and South's Honors Physics will not be the honors track.
  - Correct. The D86 sequence is not South's current sequence.
- Looking at the populations, they are not the same!
  - Calculus: 14% Central and 5% South
  - Physics with Math: 21% Central v 5% South
  - SHS Physics Honors course is a fully algebra-based physics course for first-year physics high school students. Approximately 30% of South freshmen take and succeed in this course each year.
- The impact of Physics First as curriculum alignment disproportionately hurts Hinsdale Central. Eliminating AP Physics 1 removes a course taken by 151 students at Central and 19 students at South. Eliminating Biology Honors removes a course taken by 82 Central Students and Earth Science Honors removes another course taken by 55 students. These classes successfully prepare Hinsdale Central students for STEM careers,
  - Students who traditionally have taken the classes you listed will be able to take AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, AP Physics C, AP Physics C-M, Anatomy & Physiology, or Earth Science Capstone — all of which are aligned with College Board standards and/or the NGSS and focus on preparation for college and STEM careers.
- Teachers at Hinsdale Central will need to be certified to teach Physics First, a physics class without high-level math.
  - The physics courses for freshmen in the D86 Science Program will be algebra-based and will use math extensively.
  - Teachers need to be properly endorsed by the ISBE in order to teach various science courses. The majority of District 86 teachers are endorsed to teach multiple science disciplines.

Respectfully,  
Tammy

Tammy Prentiss, Ed.S.  
Superintendent  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86  
630-655-6110



@SuptPrentiss

**“Remember, happiness is not just a mood- it’s a work ethic”**



~Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*

**From:** [Camden, Kevin](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [BOE](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Science sequencing changes  
**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 6:19:13 PM

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Maybe the unanswered questions will be answered tonight, but if not, I know staff have been addressing individual questions and I anticipate that could be arranged for you, too.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 4:43 PM  
**To:** Camden, Kevin <kcamden@hinsdale86.org>  
**Cc:** BOE <boe@hinsdale86.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Science sequencing changes

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Keith / BOE,

Thank you for the reply. I was able to attend Monday night, but not Wednesday as I work downtown. I'm sure you get many tomes from residents so will try and keep it brief.

While I was able to get some comfort on some of my questions, others I did not. I don't profess to know the right answer and I'm not as knowledgeable about curriculum nor STEM as some of the residents in attendance that asked the preponderance of the questions - just looking for the district to make the right decision for the right reasons and outcomes, and I certainly see and am thankful for the passion that the panelists have for this subject. My primary outstanding questions, corresponding to my original questions below:

1. Peers: No success stories from top ranked non-selective schools mentioned including post implementation results. Answer from admin was that while South has a PCB sequence, the classes/curriculum is not the same and has not been written yet, and we are going to be pioneers. Multiple paths like New Trier (or other sequences analyzed) not an option because they wouldn't meet the goals - not clear which goal(s) would not be achieved. Do we want to be pioneers? Isn't there another way to align curriculum, over time, while assessing results from other districts' actual implementations?
2. Same as South: still not clear to me whether this is the same curriculum as at South last 10 years. On the one hand, success at South was pointed to as reason this will work; on the other hand, it was mentioned that curriculum has not been written. I assume it is the PCB sequence that has been the success, but curriculum (integrating earth science

throughout?) is different.

3. ...
4. ...
5. Multiple tracks/paces within courses: still some concern here. Admin noted it is very difficult differentiating within sections, and with fewer sections (2) this will be difficult. I am concerned how it will affect attention teachers can provide individual students.
6. Measures of success: only metric emphasized that I recall was participation rate in AP tests. I assume we're not only interested in the number of 3s, 4s, and 5s combined going up but that we also want absolute number and percentage of 4s and 5s to go up, meaning there are more students taking AP and doing better on the exams. Do we want our national STEM and overall rankings to go up? And importantly, there seems to be some very real difference between the value of a 3 vs. a 4/5 - I used the tool provided in the FAQ and there are many Big 10 and other top universities that do not take 3s for credit, and some that only take 5s. Don't we want to measure and report those separately (even if you're only required to report 3-5 combined)?
7. ...
8. Risks: no Plan B mentioned. Do we have an option to delay a year or two if we haven't written the curriculum or hired appropriate teachers, or can we not go back?
9. ...
10. Willing to speak via phone to board member on my perspective of tutor necessity

Regards,



On Mon, Nov 11, 2019 at 9:28 AM Camden, Kevin <[kcamden@hinsdale86.org](mailto:kcamden@hinsdale86.org)> wrote:

Thank you for your communication. I anticipate we will be addressing at least some of the questions you raised during the meetings tonight at HS and Wednesday at HC. I believe there will also be written materials addressing some purported facts being circulated on social media.

If you find your questions are not answered with these materials and meetings, please let us know.

Kevin P. Camden  
Hinsdale Township High School District 86

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 10, 2019 9:11 PM  
**To:** BOE <[boe@hinsdale86.org](mailto:boe@hinsdale86.org)>  
**Subject:** Science sequencing changes

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