

Proposal to incorporate Fast Track Learning Program into 4th-12th grade schooling

To Superintendent Jane Doe, Manager of all King County School Districts:

Curricula for the Future (CFF) is proud to introduce you to the Fast Track Learning Program. After 10 years of collaboration with state officials and educational research committees, CFF has devised a training program for students that satisfies both their thirst for knowledge and preparedness for their career. We hope that after reading further, you find this program to be an ideal investment in our future young adults.

Sincerely,

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We at Curricula for the Future (CFF) propose to incorporate the Fast Track Learning Program in all the King County School Districts to better prepare students for entering college and the workforce. Our curriculum offers real world skills that students would need to succeed upon entering the work force and higher education. We will implement fast track subjects for students that teach them skills relevant to their adult life and work. Starting in the fourth grade, your students will be exposed to vocational subjects in all fields and will gradually narrow down their interests into a few subjects of their choosing. When they reach their 9th grade, students can choose to complete between one to three vocational certificates alongside their core classes. Our organization is part of the Youth Preparatory Initiative by the government that allows schools to administer these vocational certificates. This allows students to skip their bachelor's degree and directly enter the workforce after the completion of their certificate. These vocational certificates require four years of study and function similar to a college degree. We believe this will help students experience a smoother transition to their career that prevents time wasted on unnecessary learning and confusion about job compatibility. Students are still welcome to pursue a bachelor's degree at a university, which we recommend for those who want to pursue more academic research. However, certain vocational certificates also prepare students for specific masters or PhD programs. Students will not be graded in any of these subjects except for an optional pass or fail competency exam during the 12th grade to earn their certificate. Only practice exams and quizzes would be provided to students in order for them to assess their personal standing and improve in these subjects.

BACKGROUND: CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

THE OFFICIAL GRADING SYSTEM IS PROBLEMATIC

To explain why we choose not to give official grades, our research shows that students are less scared of learning when they are not judged or graded. This allows them to be less inhibited in pursuing a topic that interests them and more likely to work hard in improving themselves. According to our survey, students from over 1000 schools reported that they associate good grades with inherent intelligence despite the fact that they were never explicitly told this. Research from the National Education Association showed that kids who were graded tended to avoid learning more challenging or intellectually stimulating material in order to focus on getting an A (Long 2015). Finland's students have some of the highest test scores in the world and they don't officially grade their students except for one standardized test at the end of their senior year (Singer 2018). The problem in our education system is that the grading policies shame and entirely push children away from learning subjects in which they were deemed unworthy by an objective exam. We believe that even without the motivational benefits of a grading system, students will still feel excited to learn knowing that the subject matter we teach is relevant to their life.

THE CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM IS INEFFICIENT

Another problem that youth face in their education track is that their middle and high school does not adequately prepare them for college and therefore college cannot prepare them for the workforce. Not to mention, even most college degrees only prepare their most successful students for a career of academic research and not how to survive in your average office job. Students who graduate with a bachelor's degree must invest in extra certificates in order to even qualify for an entry level, low-salary job. Even then, certificates do not provide the basic skills required to be successful in a job like computer skills, business savvy, and knowledge of the real world. Many jobs these days have to spend excessive time in training new graduates in order to reap any results, which discourages them from even hiring college graduates. Meanwhile, students who wanted to pursue the research track and not a standard office job are not mentally equipped to succeed in college as their intellectual curiosity is often corrupted by a motivation to prove their intelligence through grades. Instead of feeling accomplished in their prime adult years, these adults are scrambling for relevant job experience, confused about their interests, and struggling to pay off massive student loan debt. Our education system is not only causing an extreme lack of eligible job candidates, it is delaying the capability of our future generations to uphold the structure of our society. Curricula for the Future works to bridge the education gap between work and grade school by integrating the latest knowledge and skillsets required in college and the workforce into school curriculum. This gives students a head start in their career and saves money wasted on a college degree that doesn't prepare them for most real jobs.

PLAN OF ACTION

The plan is to introduce fast track career paths starting in the 4th grade. There will be tracks for finance/business, politics and law, social work, language, science, technology, and engineering. Each of these subjects will be taught for one hour daily by trained teachers with relevant work experience. When students are starting out, they will be offered education in all these subjects to allow them to explore their interests. The difference between our fast tracks and regular education is that we would specifically introduce certain topics that we feel current job candidates are weak in. For example, the fast track in finance/business would teach kids how credit cards work, how insurance works, and how money circulates in our society. They could learn real life skills like how an insurance agent would market their company services to client businesses. The fast track for social work would teach kids what types of problems underprivileged minorities and disabled people face in our society and how to go about helping them. This will involve real life skills like requesting grant money from state and local budgets to fund non-profit organizations and maintaining excel spreadsheets to track donation information. The science track would provide students with specialized math skills that they would need to quickly analyze scientific data. The technology track would teach students the basics of Unix to navigate file systems, programming languages and computer architecture to understand terms like CPU, processors, cache, memory, disk space and cloud storage. Starting from the fourth grade, students will simply be introduced to these topics. They will spend 2 weeks attending a full day set of classes to explore their interests. After that they can spend up to one to two hours per day in a particular set of classes. Until the ninth grade, students may choose to pursue continuous studies in a particular fast track or change their track multiple times. Upon entering the ninth grade, students can choose to start their vocational certificates that they will complete for the next four years alongside their core high school subjects. They can choose up to three vocational certificates from over two hundred types of available subject matter. Between their ninth to twelfth grade, students will be spending a majority of their time doing their vocational certificates. For other core subjects like Calculus, English or History, the homework load can be reduced or restricted to less frequent assignments.

4th-8th grade fast track subject schedule

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| finance/business | 7-8am | 7-8am | 7-8am | 7-8am | 7-8am |
| politics/law | 8-9am | 8-9am | 8-9am | 8-9am | 8-9am |
| social work | 9-10am | 9-10am | 9-10am | 9-10am | 9-10am |
| language (french, spanish) | 10-11am | 10-11am | 10-11am | 10-11am | 10-11am |
| LUNCH BREAK | 11am-12pm | 11am-12pm | 11am-12pm | 11am-12pm | 11am-12pm |
| science | 12-1pm | 12-1pm | 12-1pm | 12-1pm | 12-1pm |
| technology | 1-2pm | 1-2pm | 1-2pm | 1-2pm | 1-2pm |
| engineering | 2-3pm | 2-3pm | 2-3pm | 2-3pm | 2-3pm |

Vocational certificate subjects

| finance/business | politics/law | social work | language | science | technology | engineering |
|-------------------------|--|---|------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| accounting | domestic and foreign policy | physical and mental disability assistance | french language | organic chemistry and pharmacology | web development and UI/UX design | civil engineering |
| actuarial science | international relations and world politics | running non-profit organizations | spanish language | industrial chemistry | cybersecurity assistance and scripting languages | aerospace engineering |
| financial analysis | law school prep | social justice for underprivileged minorities | | forensic science | programming languages – java, python, c++ | aviation engineering |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| business administration | world history | therapy, counseling and psychology | | medicine and biochemistry | App development | product quality assurance engineering |
| marketing and sales | political campaigning and organizations | administrative work | | technical lab work | computer architecture and fixing hardware | |
| investment banking | | | | data science and big data analysis | software automation and scripting languages | |
| project management | | | | diet, fitness and lifestyle health | machine learning and neural networks | |

BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CFF is funded by state governments who want to participate in the Youth Preparatory Initiative. The extra funding to setup the Youth Preparatory Initiative was procured from the transfer of excess military funds. CFF has used this money to conduct extensive research on modern job skills and knowledge as well as to develop a curriculum that enriches students with preparedness for the real world. Not to mention, CFF spends less state budget money than AP and IB programs for running our education system while providing more long-term benefits to students. Therefore, schools can replace their AP and IB programs with the Fast Track Learning Program without cutting into state education budgets.

CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTING PROPOSAL

Some of the constraints in implementing this proposal are that students may need to forgo extra homework and elective courses to make time for their fast track courses. Another constraint is that it will take time—at least 2 weeks of full day courses—for a student to gain exposure to all courses and make decisions about what they want to continue learning. This means that teachers may need to eliminate two weeks worth of course material to make time for this. After these two weeks, students may miss 1-2 hours of their school day in attending fast track classes from their 4th to 8th grade, so both the student and teacher will need to meet halfway to allow the student time to makeup missed work. However, this is not an entirely new concept as students in gifted programs like Quest would miss entire school days to attend separate classes.

CONCLUSION

Overall, we at Curricula for the Future hope that the King County School District adopts the Fast Track Learning Program. We believe fast track learning will help produce a future generation of better thinkers and problem solvers that can confidently uphold and shape our society. For any questions or concerns, I, John Smith, am available via phone or email at all working hours. Feel free to reach out to me or one of our representatives for a chat session. Visit our website at www.curriculaff/home.com for more information on our policies and research.

REFERENCES

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- Singer, Steven. "Grades and Test Scores Don't Matter. A Love of Learning Does." *Common Dreams*, Common Dreams, 6 May 2018, www.commondreams.org/views/2018/05/06/grades-and-test-scores-dont-matter-love-learning-does.