

**BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**DATE:** August 9, 2011

**TO:** **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**FROM:** Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** **CONSIDERATION OF THE ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC ISSUES  
(EPI) CURRICULUM**

**ORIGINATOR:** Dr. Renee A. Foose, Deputy Superintendent

**RESOURCE  
PERSON(S):** Roger Plunkett, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction  
Sonja Karwacki, Executive Director, Liberal Arts  
Rex Shepard, Coordinator, Secondary Social Studies

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board of Education approves the Economics and Public Issues curriculum.

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Attachment I – Executive Summary  
Attachment II – Curriculum Pilot Evaluation  
Attachment III – AIM Objectives  
Attachment IV – Phase III - BCPS Course Request

## **Executive Summary** **Social Studies, *Economics and Public Issues***

During the 2006-2007 school year, all social studies curriculum guides were reviewed by auditors from Phi Delta Kappa (PDK). The audit report was presented to the Board of Education of Baltimore County in February 2007. The overall ratings for the social studies guides ranged from one to eleven points. The auditors' scores were derived by reviewing five criteria: Objectives, Assessment, Prerequisites, Resources, and Strategies. Curriculum personnel from the Offices of Elementary Social Studies and Secondary Social Studies reviewed the PDK audit findings carefully to determine the areas for each curriculum guide that needed to be strengthened or supplemented. These findings guided curricular revisions so that all components identified as receiving a score less than maximum were addressed. This revision of *Economics and Public Issues*, which received a score of fourteen, will complete one step in the planned response to audit findings. The Maryland State Board of Education now requires that students in elementary, middle, and high schools meet the *Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Standards*. Upon completion of a gap analysis and consideration of the publication of the current curriculum guide, it was determined that a major curriculum revision was needed. The revision is being completed following guidelines established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

*Economics and Public Issues* is a ½ credit course and meets the ½ credit graduation requirement for economics. Typically, over 90% of seniors enroll in *Economics and Public Issues*. The course is offered at the standard and honors level. GT Level students take *AP Macro and Micro Economics*. This course has existed for more than ten years and the text materials that support it are dated.

The revised *Economics and Public Issues* includes opportunities for students to reflect upon and take responsibility for their learning, apply higher-level thinking skills to evaluate and propose solutions to real-world problems, employ college preparatory strategies, address recurring themes that provide a framework for studying economics, and apply meta-cognitive skills. Instructors are provided with teaching suggestions that address a variety of learning preferences and offer alternatives for purposes of differentiation. In support of the Articulated Instruction Module (AIM), *Economics and Public Issues* will specifically provide teaching and assessment suggestions at the Acceleration, Instruction, and Mastery levels for each Knowledge Skill Indicator (KSI) for each objective. This affords teachers with the opportunity to provide differentiated instruction in the most rigorous context possible.

Upon completion of *Economics and Public Issues*, students will have acquired and processed knowledge regarding personal financial decision making, market operations, economic roles assumed by government, and the global economy. They will have also mastered the high school requirements of the *Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Standards*.

The Office of Secondary Social Studies is seeking approval for the implementation of the revised *Economics and Public Issues* guide to ensure alignment of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum, and to provide support for a high-quality social studies program for all students in Baltimore County Public Schools.

The following schools and teachers piloted the revised guide during the spring semester, 2010-11 school year:

Kenwood High, Michael Hopkins  
Loch Raven High, Joan McMahon  
Parkville High, Katherine Case  
Patapsco High, Andrew Minisky  
Pikesville High, Michael Barberesi  
Western School of Technology, Jonathan Richmond  
Woodlawn High, Adam Sutton

Each teacher and the principals of their schools agreed to participate in the pilot of the revised curriculum, and Ms. Barbara Walker, assistant superintendent of high schools, approved the selection of the pilot schools.

The Office of Secondary Social Studies met on a monthly basis with the pilot teachers to obtain feedback. Based upon the pilot experience, revisions to the *Economics and Public Issues* curriculum were implemented. In addition, based upon recommendations from the Board of Education Curriculum Committee, a curriculum-writing workshop will be conducted during the summer of 2011 to enact changes that further differentiate the honors level guide. These changes will include an increased pace for the financial literacy activities, and more rigorous activities in subsequent units.

Following a final review and approval by the Board of Education Curriculum Committee, the revised curriculum guide will be fully implemented during the 2011-12 school year, ensuring compliance with the COMAR requirement for the Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Standards for high school students.

Baltimore County Public Schools has recently purchased classroom sets of texts and has access to ancillary materials at no charge. Other free supplemental materials have been disseminated by the National Council on Economic Education. The most recent editions of these materials are available on the *Virtual Economics* CD ROM, which was distributed to each high school in August 2010. Other supplemental materials that support the current *Economics and Public Issues* curriculum are now in the high schools and available for teachers.

Economics and Public Issues  
Curriculum Pilot Evaluation

**Research Questions:**

1. To what extent did the pilot curriculum support The Maryland State Curriculum for Personal Financial Literacy Education?
2. How did the pilot curriculum impact the approach to content instruction?
3. What was the impact of the pilot curriculum on student achievement?

**Research Question 1**

To what extent did the pilot curriculum support The Maryland State Curriculum for Personal Financial Literacy Education?

Outcome	Criteria	Measures Used
Teachers will complete the Personal Finance Unit.	Teachers will describe successes and challenges of meeting indicators and objectives.	Teacher Feedback  Teacher Focus Group

Findings:

- Teachers reported that students readily identified the relevance of the content and skills within the course. Consequently, students were engaged and interested.
- Teachers reported that students were highly responsive to scenarios that required decision-making skills, opportunities to compare products and services, opportunities to calculate the costs of borrowing, and role playing such as determining credit worthiness. Students found the examples of contracts they are likely to see in the near future as especially useful.
- Teachers reported that some links did not connect properly.
- Overall, teachers reported that the content was relevant and supportive of the financial literacy standards. They did report some connection problems with several Internet sites. Teachers agreed that the number of activities could be reduced without losing any effectiveness of the program. They also agreed that some activities would clearly distinguish an honors level class from a standard level class.
- Teachers suggested that the study of international trade should be used to distinguish the honors and standard levels. Honors students would address more challenging issues and concepts of international trade through a full unit of study. Standard students would analyze basic issues of trade within the study of government influence and control of the economy.

**Research Question 2**

How did the pilot curriculum impact the approach to content instruction?

Outcome	Criteria	Measures Used
Teachers will implement teaching suggestions and assessments as written in the pilot guide.	Teachers will evaluate effectiveness of teaching suggestions and assessments.	Teacher Feedback  Teacher Focus Group

Findings:

- Teachers reported that the activities required students to apply thinking skills to authentic, real-world problems.
- Teachers reported that the text and most supplementary readings appropriately support coursework.
- Teachers reported that students consistently applied higher-level thinking skills and sought enrichment through student-generated questions.
- Overall, teachers reported that the teaching suggestions supported effective implementation. Teachers did identify minor issues regarding sequencing of activities and suggested elimination of some activities.

**Research Question 3**

What was the impact of the pilot curriculum on student achievement?

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Measures Used</b>
Students will satisfy the requirements of course indicators and objectives.	Students will demonstrate success on assessments.	Teacher Feedback Teacher Focus Group Final Examination Data

Findings

1. Teachers reported that the assessments were aligned to the course objectives.
2. Teachers reported that there were ample opportunities within the guide to administer formative and summative assessments.
3. Teachers reported that there were a variety of assessments, but several teachers questioned the frequent use of essays.

## Final Exam Data

Indicator	Items	% age of students responding correctly
1. Fundamental economic concepts	16, 20	78%
2 & 3. Earning potential and financial decisions	6, 11	88%
4 & 5. Money management	17, 18, 19, 27	57%
6 & 7. Credit	2, 3, 25, 30, CR1	71%
8. Economic systems	10, 15	61%
9 & 10. Market forces	1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 28, 29	63%
11. Economic growth	4, 22, CR2	70%
12. Fiscal and monetary policy	8, 9	41%
13. Substance abuse	23, 24	51%
14. Trade	12, 13, 14, CR3	60%

Final exam data demonstrates that students more successfully acquired and processed knowledge related to personal financial literacy as demonstrated by scores for indicators 1, 2, and 3. The next highest sets of scores appear in topics that demonstrate real-world applications of economic concepts such as credit and economic growth. Students were relatively successful with abstractions such as economic systems, market forces, and trade, probably due to the ability to relate those abstractions to economic behaviors. Students struggled with fiscal and monetary policies which require complex understandings of marginal analysis and the dynamics of supply and demand.

**Next Steps:**

The revision of the curriculum guide for the standard level of *Economics and Public Issues* will be guided by:

- Peer review of pilot teacher comments on the Pilot Evaluation Form and corresponding modifications within the curriculum guide.
- Reduction of activities to support completion of the entire program of study.
- Eliminating or providing substitutes for Internet sites that did not correct properly.
- Embedding concepts related to trade within the unit, “Managing the Economy”.
- Modifying instruction related to fiscal and monetary policy.

Revisions to the guide were completed by teams of pilot teachers and curriculum writers in June 2011.

**Articulated Instruction Module  
Objectives List (2010 - 2011)**

Subject Area : Social Studies  
Course : ECONOMICS&PUBLIC ISSUES (1515000)

Last Revised : 07/12/2011  
Report Date : 07/13/2011

**Objectives / Knowledge and Skill Indicators**

- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-1 Students will examine fundamental concepts of economic thinking in order to determine their impact on decision making.  
KSI-A describe the role of scarcity and opportunity cost in personal economic decision making  
KSI-B create short and long term personal economic goals  
KSI-C , apply marginal decision making in developing strategies to achieve personal economic goals
- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-2 Students will explain how values, skills, education, career choice, and economic conditions influence earning potential and personal satisfaction in order to relate personal financial decisions to the quality of life.(1 of 2)  
KSI-A examine how one's interests, skills, values, education, and the prevailing economic conditions contribute to success in possible career paths  
KSI-B identify the advantages and disadvantages of being an entrepreneur  
KSI-C contrast possible career paths in terms of their potential income and level of personal satisfaction  
KSI-D categorize employee benefits  
KSI-E evaluate the use of budgeting
- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-3 Students will explain how values, skills, education, career choice, and economic conditions influence earning potential and personal satisfaction in order to relate personal financial decisions to the quality of life. (2 of 2)  
KSI-A evaluate how one's personal financial decisions contribute to personal wellbeing, community development, and the quality of life
- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-4 Students will investigate effective money management in order to apply financial strategies to personal goals.(1 of 2)  
KSI-A explain how the use of financial institutions impacts individuals  
KSI-B examine the effects of saving and investing  
KSI-C determine strategies for saving and investing  
KSI-D compare the level of risk and the potential rate of return of various investment alternatives  
KSI-E analyze factors to consider when purchasing insurance
- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-5 Students will investigate effective money management in order to apply financial strategies to personal goals. (2 of 2)  
KSI-A determine the impact of personal income tax on financial planning
- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-6 Students will assess the use of credit in order to recommend sound financial decisions and strategies to maintain financial health. (1 of 2)  
KSI-A compare various payment methods and options  
KSI-B examine legally binding contracts  
KSI-C evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of credit  
KSI-D summarize the process and responsibilities of acquiring credit and maintaining credit worthiness  
KSI-E calculate the cost of borrowing money

**Articulated Instruction Module**  
**Objectives List (2010 - 2011)**

Subject Area : Social Studies  
 Course : ECONOMICS&PUBLIC ISSUES (1515000)

Last Revised : 07/12/2011  
 Report Date : 07/13/2011

**Objectives / Knowledge and Skill Indicators**

- Unit: Personal Financial Decision Making
- O-7 Students will assess the use of credit in order to recommend sound financial decisions and strategies to maintain financial health. (2 of 2)
- KSI-A explain the consequences of not meeting credit obligations and the significance of credit reports and credit scores
- KSI-B determine strategies that consumers can use to protect against fraud
- Unit: Marketplace
- O-8 Students will examine the degrees of freedom and control within various economic systems in order to evaluate the impact on personal choice within the American economy.
- KSI-A evaluate the efficiency of each economic system
- KSI-B compare the advantages and disadvantages of the American economic system
- KSI-C determine how public programs affect personal choices
- Unit: Marketplace
- O-9 Students will examine market forces in order to determine their relationship to economic decision making. (1 of 2)
- KSI-A investigate the role of the factors of production in the marketplace
- KSI-B apply the circular flow of products and factors in the market economy
- KSI-C explain the effect of demand on decision making in the marketplace
- KSI-D determine the effects of supply on decision making in the marketplace
- KSI-E assess how demand and supply interact to determine prices in the marketplace
- Unit: Marketplace
- O-10 Students will examine market forces in order to determine their relationship to economic decision making. (2 of 2)
- KSI-A evaluate the effects of differing market structures on demand, supply, and pricing
- Unit: Managing the Economy
- O-11 Students will examine ways the economy is measured and assessed in order to apply criteria of economic growth.
- KSI-A describe the business cycle and its depiction of changes in economic variables
- KSI-B apply stock prices and other leading economic indicators toward economic forecasts
- KSI-C determine the impact of inflation
- KSI-D determine the relationship between economic growth and standard of living
- KSI-E explain the impact of international trade on the United States economy
- Unit: Managing the Economy
- O-12 Students will analyze fiscal and monetary policy in order to evaluate government's management of the economy.
- KSI-A examine the role of government as a taxing and spending agent
- KSI-B investigate Federal Reserve's control of the money supply
- Unit: Managing the Economy
- O-13 Students will examine the economic consequences of drug abuse in order to evaluate United States drug policies.
- KSI-A identify and categorize the social and economic consequences of drug abuse
- KSI-B analyze data to determine costs of drug abuse
- KSI-C conduct an issue analysis on the United State government policy toward illicit drugs



# PHASE III - BCPS COURSE REQUEST CHANGE/TERMINATE APPROVAL FORM\*

*Executive Director >>> Associate Superintendent >>> Executive Leadership Team >>> Board of Education >>> Office of Student Data*

1. **BEGIN HERE** Before completing this form, verify that the course whose number you are seeking to change is in the Master Course List for Baltimore County Public Schools.
2. **PRINT** a hard copy of this form for future reference and then **SAVE** this form using the following format: "Course Request Change Terminate Approval Form\_<<Curricular Office>>\_<<Originator's name>>\_<<Proposed course name>>\_<<Date submitted>>" (ex: **Course Change Terminate Approval Form World Languages Peggy Johnson Chinese4 July 2014.**)
3. For **course content changes requiring a new course number**, DO NOT continue with this form. Instead, complete the "Phase I-BCPS Course Concept Review and Approval Form." For **course content changes** with the original course number, complete **sections 1, 2, and 3**. For **course termination**, complete **sections 1, 2, and 4 only**. For **course number changes**, complete **sections 1, 2, and 6**. For **all other changes** (including renaming a course, changing a course's credits, and identifying restrictions on course offerings), complete **sections 1, 2, and 5**. Once the required sections are complete (including the approval signature lines), forward to Frank Curnoles, manager of the Office of Student Data.
4. Need **HELP** completing this form? Call the Office of Student Data (OSD) at #7846.

## Section I: **Course Information**

Course Number	Course Name	Master Course File <small>(Ex: 2013-2014, v1)</small>
1515000	<i>Economics and Public Issues</i>	2011-2012, v2

## Section II: **Date to be instituted**

2011-2012

## Sponsoring Office:

LIBERAL ARTS-Social Studies, Secondary

## Section III: **Request to Change Course Content with the Original Course Number**

*Complete this section only if you desire to change the objectives and/or KSIs for a course number that currently appears in the Master Course File.*

The Maryland State Board of Education now requires that students in elementary, middle, and high schools meet the *Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Standards*. Upon completion of a gap analysis and consideration of the publication of the current curriculum guide, it was determined that a major curriculum revision was needed to satisfy the requirements of personal financial literacy at the high school level. Additionally, the course was last revised in 2002. The course revision will support the use of current resources and engage students with more contemporary real-world problems and issues.

## Section IV: **Request to TERMINATE Course**

*Complete this section only if you desire to remove a course number from the Master Course File; from STARS, and from AIM. For all other changes, proceed to Section V.*

*Rationale (Be specific):*

**Section V: Request to Change School Type, Number of Credits, Course Name, or Course Availability**

Rationale (Be specific):

- SCHOOL TYPE change desired

No change

- NUMBER OF CREDITS change desired

No change

- COURSE NAME change desired

Type desired 30-character course name here

- COURSE AVAILABILITY change desired

<b>Systemwide:</b> All schools within the "School Type" identified above may offer course.	YES
<b>Specific School(s):</b> Only school(s) within the "School Type" identified above and listed below may offer course.	NO
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**Section VI: Request to Change Course Number**

Rationale (Be specific):

Original Course Number	New Course Number	Course Name
Type original course number here	Type new course number here	Type 30-character course name here

<b>For Approval Use Only:</b> Executive Director...Associate Superintendent...Executive Leadership Team...Board of Education...Office of Student Data		
<b>Executive Director</b> After obtaining required signatures, forward this form to Frank Curnoles, manager of the Office of Student Data.		
Executive Director's Approval:	Date:	
Assistant Superintendent of C&I's Approval:	Date:	
Superintendent's Approval (In accordance with the Executive Leadership Team's review):	Date:	
Board of Education's Approval: (if necessary)	Date:	

<b>For Office of Student Data Use Only:</b>		
Course details revised in SILK MAIN district course.	Type date here	OSD staff name
Parent course deactivated in STARS course maintenance for desired school year, if applicable)	Type date here	OSD staff name
Course deactivated in Data Warehouse for desired school year.	Type date here	OSD staff name
Course removed from AIM for desired school year.	Type date here	AIM staff name