A Blueprint for Student Success: Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, Professional Development & Assessment

Introduction

"As the world moves forward into the 21st century, information access is growing exponentially; demanding jobs are requiring more education and knowledge of technology than ever before; and teachers are being bombarded by an overwhelming number of textbooks that contain more information than can possibly be covered in a single school year. As they think about the plan for their classes and lessons, educators need to focus on this question: What do students need from my class to be successful at the next level in their lives? At the same time, educators must realize that this question cannot possibly be answered in isolation, because a good education is the composite effort of an entire series of teachers a student meets from the first day of pre-kindergarten to graduation day years later. No teacher acts alone; every teacher plays some role in preparing a child for the future. To unify and focus their efforts, therefore, they need to communicate." (Hayes Jacobs, 2006). When examining principles of effective change with respect to curriculum revision that works, the work of Johnson (2001) indicates that the curriculum revision process must be a team approach. As a result of her study, the first recommendation provides indication that both administrators and teachers must be directly involved in the curriculum revision processes. "Administrators must maintain on-going involvement in the revision process. Teachers must have strong support, consistent feedback, and continual opportunity for professional discussion." (Johnson, 2001)

The advent of the standards movement introduced a different approach to curriculum design and development within all subject areas; teachers began to look at curriculum revision more dynamically, adjusting curriculum in all areas each year. Of the research conducted by Kercheval and Newbill, (2001) the most successful districts committed to a three to five year cycle of curriculum alignment specific to each content area . Best practice supports a curriculum development and alignment framework that allows focus on a few subject areas each year.

As indicated in the work of Jerald and Haycock (2002), aligned curriculum is necessary to maximize student performance. This belief is further supported by the work of Marzano (2003) who synthesized research data that identifies twelve key factors that have been shown to impact student achievement. The most influential factor within the school setting is a guaranteed and viable curriculum. The guaranteed curriculum, according to Marzano, is what the district identifies as imperative to teach. A viable curriculum is that which can realistically be taught during the time available within a school year.

Moving to a curriculum development and alignment blueprint will allow the district to conduct audits of current programs, research the best materials and curricula, professionally develop teachers effectively, implement and support research-based approaches to teaching and learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts. The blueprint also incorporates the analysis of student assessment data for the purpose of informing curricula. Grounded within research examining curriculum development and management (Hass, 1979; Jacobs, 1997, 2004; Marzano, 2003; Tanner & Tanner, 1995) the process articulated within this document 1) is flexible and allows for continuous updating based upon data specified needs and changing assessments or standards, 2) utilizes technology as a means to facilitate the openness of the process, as well as warehousing the curriculum documents and resources 3) engages and empowers teachers as instructional leaders.

Our Blueprint for Student Success establishes a collaborative process and engages teachers and administrators across the system in dialogue and lays the foundation for the establishment of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. A district must organize and sequence the curriculum to focus on what is essential vs. supplemental to teach in a school year. Focusing on a limited, but planned, number of areas each year, teachers should experience a manageable amount of change, and will be provided with the time to

reflect upon program implementation for the purpose of identifying areas for refinement and revision. Technological resources will be vital to the process of engaging many teachers and administrators across the district in this work. Wherever, and whenever possible, all resources capable of inviting more communication and involvement should be explored. We will initiate this process through the use of curriculum mapping software in order to:

- Determine what is taught, as it actually occurs in the classroom.
- Better understand how students are being taught.
- Make appropriate, immediate modifications to the curriculum.
- Determine "why" certain performance results have been achieved.
- Provide parents a larger view of what their children are experiencing in the classroom and the requirements needed to excel.

As indicated throughout this document, tremendous work is planned for our district! The Blueprint work produces detailed plans of action which in turn will yield greater levels of success for our students.

Description of the Blueprint for Student Success

      The Cherry Hill Blueprint for Student Success will include a multiple year cycle that allows each content area to experience six components incorporating a needs assessment, external program review, curriculum development, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation and revision where each component is accompanied by criteria identifying the product(s) to be created as a result of the work in order to proceed to the next component. The typical time period for each component of the system will be one year; however, that may vary for some disciplines. Such disciplines may move through the first component in a shorter time period. The action steps provided within each component are intended to provide a clear picture of the scope of work to be undertaken. Given the discipline, the Curriculum Committee may need to sequence the action steps within a component. The six components must remain in sequence as presented.
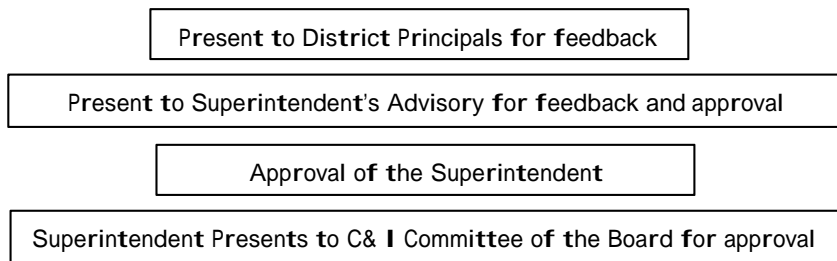
      Each discipline will be treated as a whole and developed with PreK-12 articulation with one outcome being a clear and seamless scope and sequence chart for each subject area. The flow chart on the following page identifies a typical committee structure which will be instituted across the district to support the District's Blueprint for Student Success.

Blueprint for Student Success Flow Chart

<u>(Discipline)</u> Curriculum Committee*
Comprised of approximately 20 teachers and 4 administrators to undertake the
work of Component One - Form additional sub-groups for Components 2 through 5

Curriculum Development 5 members of the above committee and # teachers	Resrce Alloctn & Init Imp 5 members of the above and # teachers	Evaluation & Revision 5 members of the above committee and # teachers	Full Implementation 5 members of the above committee and # teachers

The work of all of the above noted committees will be brought back to the <u>(Discipline)</u> Curriculum Committee. All work approved by the <u>(Discipline)</u> Curriculum Committee is reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction before moving forward in the following manner:

Present to District Principals for feedback

Present to Superintendent's Advisory for feedback and approval

Approval of the Superintendent

Superintendent Presents to C&I Committee of the Board for approval

Monthly communication from the office of Curriculum and Instruction will keep all staff informed of work underway and opportunities for staff input. All recommendations for changes will be brought to the Superintendent for consideration and approval.

*The <u>Discipline</u> Curriculum Committee will remain in place upon the completion of the process for the purpose of communicating best practice and current research within the discipline.

Components of the Blueprint for Student Success:

Needs Assessment/External Program Review Component:

A curriculum committee comprised of teachers and administrators is formed to review the current educational program in light of the latest research, best practice, and current trends and will include the following actions:

- Analyze the existing PreK-12 curriculum to identify the current degree of horizontal and vertical articulation, as well as the consistency of format existing within all current curriculum documents
  - o Curriculum maps/Scope and Sequence documents
  - o Common assessments (formative and summative)
- Review test specifications for all designated assessments
- Analyze all available assessment data
- Survey certificated staff (the use of technology will enable all certificated staff to have opportunity for input and feedback) to help ascertain needs relevant to curriculum and professional development.
- Analyze the interrelationship between the content area under revision and other content areas for the purpose of identifying cross-curricular needs.
- Prepare the research questions and related documents for the external program evaluation team who will audit the curriculum across the district and provide feedback to the curriculum committee and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. At a minimum the team should prepare:
  - o All documents analyzed, reviewed, and studied above
  - o A report of the survey results
  - o Questions for an external review team
- Prepare a Needs Assessment External Program Review Report (following the Component 1 Criteria) recommending to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction the standards, research, and instructional practices that will be used to guide the curriculum development work undertaken in the next Component.

Curriculum Development Component:

The curriculum committee will write the curriculum, clarify staff needs to be incorporated into the district's research-based professional development plan, recommend resources, and create an assessment system to measure student achievement. Their work will include the following actions:

- Propose a District Curriculum Map along with recommendations for new courses or the elimination of old courses to the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
- Present any new courses or the elimination or modification of any courses approved by the Superintendent to the Curriculum & Instruction Committee of the Board and finally to the full Board
- Prepare a curriculum guide that includes the requirements defined in the Component 2 Criteria document
- Identify the materials that need to be created to effectively implement the curriculum articulated in the curriculum maps
- Identify or design the assessment tools that will be used to measure student achievement
- Communicate the curriculum to teachers, parents, and the Cherry Hill School District Community
- Design and communicate a plan for program implementation and the distribution of resources to staff

Resource Allocation Component:

Within this component all resources: human, time, and material are identified and an on-going acquisition plan is prepared.

- Recommend to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction materials/programs for purchase (beyond the initial year of implementation)
- Present to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee of the Board materials and/or programs for purchase
- Recommend to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction the professional development needed to support staff in effective implementation (beyond the initial year).

Initial Implementation Component:

Within this component research-based professional development begins and the committee receives feedback from teachers involved in initial implementation. This work will include the following actions:

- Research-based professional development is provided at a variety of times throughout the summer and school year
- Time is provided to support teachers in their implementation
    o Faculty meetings, department meetings, grade level meetings, inservice days
- Additional methods of support offered may include but are not limited to:
    o Eboards, coaching, collaborative time
- Regularly scheduled meetings of teachers will be conducted to review lesson and unit plans for the purpose of supporting colleagues throughout the initial implementation
- Designated times will be identified for the curriculum committee to receive implementation feedback from teachers
- Assessment results in the aggregate will be examined by the curriculum committee to identify any realignment that may need to occur.
- An Initial Implementation Report outlining suggestions for research-based professional development and/or realignment of curriculum will be prepared and submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Evaluation and Revision Component:

Within this component adjustments will be made to the implementation based upon the feedback provided during initial implementation. This work will include the following actions:

- Suggestions for improvement approved during initial implementation will be communicated with all teachers and administrators
    o The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Superintendent will recommend to the board the purchase of additional materials/resources
- Research-based professional development should continue as originally planned, or as redesigned based upon feedback garnered throughout initial implementation
- A review of the student assessment results is conducted for the purpose of refinement of the assessment documents and for the purpose of identifying needs across the district
- A program evaluation is conducted.
- Results of the program evaluation are shared with teachers and administrators, the Board, and the public. The curriculum committee will use the evaluation to identify:
    o Beneficial instructional practices
    o Any remaining adjustments that are needed to support full implementation of the curriculum

Full Implementation Component:

Within this component the program is completely implemented. This work will include the following actions:

- Reporting methods and products (report cards) are analyzed and aligned
- Building principals and supervisors examine the taught and assessed curriculum to assure for alignment to the written curriculum
- Professional development continues to address identified areas of need
- New teachers are provided multiple opportunities through the Induction process to become knowledgeable of the curriculum and facile with instructional strategies used to support teaching and learning
- Formal opportunities for reflection and feedback are maintained
- Data are continually collected and analyzed at both the building and district level
- Teachers are observed to ensure curriculum implementation and to identify best practice.

Preparation begins for the Needs Assessment/Program Evaluation Component to be initiated. This enables the Blueprint for Student Success to provide a mechanism for continuous improvement.

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*Select areas of the educational program, e.g. Character Ed, Instructional Technology, will be addressed by each discipline in order to assure for integration throughout the curriculum.

Addressing On-going needs

In order to address needs prior to the scheduled work for each area, discipline specific curriculum committees will meet three to five times throughout the school year to:

- Articulate curriculum across levels
- Identify professional development needs affiliated with curriculum and instruction within the discipline
- Keep abreast of current approaches, trends, and practices associated with the field/discipline
- Prepare for the first component of the Curriculum Development & Alignment System.

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