

Curriculum Reviews

Self-study of curriculum and instruction, examining what we teach and how we teach it, in order to make recommendations for improvement

Review teams include K-12 educators as well as parent, student and school committee representatives

In process: Social Studies (complete before February) and Wellness (complete before June)

Up next: Math (spring) and Music (fall)



What we mean when we say “curriculum”



Not just a textbook series, web-based resource or binder of materials

Common experiences designed to help students gain new knowledge and skills

State frameworks - list of specific standards (skills and knowledge) that students in public schools are expected to learn each year.

Some content areas informed by national standards or other frameworks (e.g., AASL standards for library media or CASEL framework for SEL)

Helpful metaphor: standards are the destination, curriculum is the book of maps

Frameworks - two types of standards

Content standards - specific knowledge/skills that are focus areas for this year

“Analyze weaknesses of national government under the Articles of Confederation and describe the crucial events (e.g., Shays’ Rebellion” leading to the Constitutional Convention” (History and Social Science 8.T2.3).

“Understand independence and conditional probability and use them to interpret data from simulations or experiments” (GEO.S-CP.A)

Practice standards - habits we are working to instill over time

“Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact” (History and Social Science, PS4)

“Look for and make use of structure” (Mathematics, SMP7)

What does good curriculum include?

Units of study - big topic areas (e.g., Persuasive Writing; Comparing, Ordering, Adding and Subtracting Fractions; Development of US Government; or Atomic Structure)

Essential/guiding questions - designed to frame learning around themes that are open to exploration/discussion/debate (e.g., “Why do writers write and what are the tools they use?”)

Specific learning goals - rooted in standards

Common resources - mentor/full class texts, textbooks, primary sources, online materials designed to support learning

Common assessments - tests, quizzes, essays, labs, speeches, research projects or papers, other hands on or performance based measures

Where and why teachers have discretion

Lesson plans - series of activities designed to help student learn particular skills/concepts

Specific strategies and instructional methods (tasks, grouping, etc)

Supplemental and choice-based resources - images, maps, videos, articles, texts

Informal and formative assessments (checks for understanding)

Opportunities to practice (homework, classwork)

Good teachers choose resources and methods to meet the needs of their students

What is an equity audit?

An process designed to assess an organization's progress toward fair access and opportunity for all.

An audit will typically examine policies, processes and practices. The results of the audit can be used to prioritize improvement efforts.