Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Review Process

Curriculum Review Cycle

The Purpose of a Curriculum Review Cycle

Our vision for curriculum in the Lincoln Public Schools is:

> *Teachers use high-quality curriculum that they have selected and honed or created collaboratively. The curriculum is standards-based, engaging, rigorous, and innovative; the curriculum is intentionally designed to foster Deeper Learning and AIDE for all students. Whenever appropriate, curriculum is shared across teams and campuses, including common assessments. Our curriculum is thoughtful, inclusive, meets the needs of our students, and its vertical alignment supports students as they develop from year to year. Our curriculum directly supports our students grow into and exhibit our Portrait of a Learner.*

In our district we have not had a formal curriculum review process in a long time. We do not currently have a shared approach to curriculum design, documentation, sharing, or revision, including yearly scope and sequences across K-8 as well as unit and lesson design, or strong common assessments embedded into the teaching and learning of each unit. This makes it difficult to develop strong horizontal or vertical alignment, does not easily allow collaboration in ways that could strengthen curriculum, and oftentimes forces teachers who are new to the district or their role to start from scratch creating a learning experience for students. Not only do we believe that curriculum is stronger when created in collaboration with others rather than in isolation, but teaching and learning is strengthened when we are able to document our work, share it with others, reflect on it together, and participate in continuous refinement and improvement. Without a curriculum review cycle and a set of common tools, we cannot share our practice in deep ways; we are forced to be reactive rather than intentional when addressing curricular needs, and in many cases, the fixes we put in place do not address core issues, or work cannot be done because of foundational gaps.

Objectives

The objectives of a curriculum review are to:
- review national, state, and district standards and benchmarks;
- review local and exemplary programs for comparison and inspiration;
- determine a logical scope and sequence for K-8 instruction;
- articulate K-8 programs with a vision to high school and beyond;
- identify program omissions and duplications;
- identify changes and trends in the school community and determine whether the program meets the needs of students;
- provide a basis for decision-making and long-range planning;
- inform the community of program goals and objectives;
- guide staff development;
- provide guidance for the selection of instructional materials based on research and best practice;
- identify where curriculum areas can be integrated;
- review materials for diversity and inclusion; and
- determine budget impact of programmatic changes and proactively plan the budget around curricular needs.

Curriculum Review Process

The Curriculum Review has four distinct stages including:

Phase 1	Foundation
Phase 2	Development of Scope and Sequence and Learning Goals/Benchmarks
Phase 3	Develop Recommendations, Implementation Timeline, Implementation Budget
Phase 4	Implementation of Revised Curricula and Recommendations, with ongoing Reflection

Curriculum Review Products

- State of the Content Area Summary Report
- Philosophy of the Discipline
- Learning Goals/Benchmarks
- Recommendations
- Timeline (for carrying out recommendations)
- Budget (aligned with timeline)
- Curriculum Documentation including Common Unit Plans, Common Assessments, and Lesson Plans

A school committee presentation is done at least two times during the curriculum review (once after phase 3 and once during phase 4) to provide the school committee with updates on the review and its progress.

Curriculum Review Committee

Each curriculum review is guided by a K-8 Core Committee led by the Assistant Superintendent or designee. For academic content areas that general classroom educators teach including Literacy, Math, Science, and Social Studies, the committee is made up of the Assistant Superintendent or designee, a principal, Content Specialist if one exists, two to four elementary teachers and two middle school teachers (including the Teacher on Assignment) representing a span of grades and campuses. Additional members such as instructional coaches, special educators, librarians, instructional technology specialists, etc. should be included as needed.

For content areas that are not taught by general K-5 classroom teachers such as Art, Music, Drama, Technology/Library, World Language, Science Enrichment, and Wellness, the committee will include the Assistant Superintendent or designee, and the entirety of the department. Additional members such as special educators, ESL teachers, the Director of Technology, etc. should be included as needed.

The role of this committee is to engage in and complete Phase 1 of the curriculum review process including establishing the philosophy for the discipline, developing the guiding questions for the review, and establishing ways of soliciting information needed to answer the guiding questions.

For content areas that general classroom educators teach including Literacy, Math, Science, and Social Studies, once Phase 1 is complete the committee expands for Phase 2 to include one teacher from each grade level, equally

representing each campus. Working in grade-level bands and as a whole, discussions take place about the current program and information that is available about best practices and exemplary programs. This expanded committee uses the information provided by the initial Core Committee to develop a scope and sequence for their grade spans. They develop the learning goals/benchmarks for each grade level and/or course, and report card descriptors. They develop recommendations for work to be done following the curriculum review such as further data collection and analysis, curriculum development, development of assessments, identification of professional development needed, etc. In addition, a timeline for implementing the recommendations is created as well as a budget that coincides with this timeline. Over the course of the next 4+ years, educators in all grade levels for whom the review impacts can engage in enacting the recommendations around developing curriculum, assessments, or other resources. For specialist departments the core committee, which includes all members of the department, will remain the same throughout all phases and will not expand beyond the department in phases 2-4.

Parent, student, and other faculty input should be solicited through surveys, focus groups, or other appropriate means.

Phase 1: Foundation

Part A: Develop Common Understanding of Current Trends and Best Practices

The Core Committee reviews national and state standards, reads relevant articles pertaining to best practices of the discipline, reviews programs of local districts and exemplary districts, and speaks with experts in the field, if appropriate.

Part B: Data and Needs Assessment

The team examines data of student learning through quantitative and qualitative measures including external and internal summative assessments such as common end of unit and/or end of year assessments or performances/demonstrations of learning, MCAS (if applicable), and other indicators of student learning. The team conducts a needs assessment by soliciting information about the program from faculty, students, and parents. This can be done with surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other appropriate means. Team members and others may participate in peer observations as well as invite external observers to gain additional insight into the department's strengths, areas of growth, and patterns in the lived curriculum for students. A critical area for examining within every discipline is the level to which AIDE and Deeper Learning are visible and experienced through the curriculum. The information obtained through all of these components should be used to guide decisions about next steps in the review, development of the scope and sequence, and identification of recommendations.

> **Products of Phase 1:**
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> - Guiding questions for the review
> - "State of the Content Area" summary report including analysis of needs assessment
> - K-8 philosophy of the discipline

Phase 2: Development of Scope and Sequence and Learning Goals/Benchmarks

Using the information and guidance provided by the Core Committee, the expanded committee develops the scope and sequence of the program. This is the heart of the curriculum review. The greatest value of the curriculum review

process is the opportunity it provides for faculty to engage in discussion about what should be taught, when it should be taught, why it should be taught, and how it should be taught. The outcome of these rich conversations is the development of the scope and sequence and learning goals and benchmarks.

Products of Phase 2:

- Scope and Sequence
- Learning goals and benchmarks for grade levels, courses, and units
- Report Card Descriptors

Phase 3: Develop Recommendations, Implementation Timeline, Implementation Budget

The expanded committee develops recommendations for work to be done over the next five years, including the plan to create or revise common unit plans, common assessments, and lesson plans. A budget is also provided for the next five years outlining the costs of implementing the curriculum review recommendations, i.e. additional curriculum writing time, materials, professional development, equipment, etc. This is an important aspect of Phase 3, since the recommendations will be presented in the operating budget as Improvement Initiatives or budget line items.

Products of Phase 3:

- Five-year plan for creation or revision of common unit plans, common assessments, and lesson plans
- Budget with five-year projections

Phase 4: Implementation of Revised Curricula and Recommendations, with ongoing Reflection

Educators in all grade levels for whom the review impacts may engage in enacting recommendations of developing common unit and lesson plans, common assessments, or other resources. All teachers for whom the review applies should utilize these plans and assessments as they teach students throughout the 4+ years of implementation, reflecting throughout on what aspects of the curriculum feel particularly strong and what areas need additional tweaks. Final approval of each aspect of the review process is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent, in consultation with the Superintendent.

Curriculum Review Cycle Process

Reviews are staggered so that no more than two reviews will begin in a given year. This ensures the district has the capacity for stakeholders to engage fully in the process including teachers, principals, and the Assistant Superintendent. For some content areas, particularly for those that do not have a Content Specialist, if the Assistant Superintendent is not co-leading the work directly with the Teacher on Assignment, an external facilitator may be hired to support a team's process. The table below shows the timeline for when content areas will be in phases 1-4. During Phases 1 and 2, benchmarks will be established for draft products to be shared with the principal team for

feedback and input. The Assistant Superintendent and the ToA or Content Specialist facilitating the Curriculum Review will determine appropriate dates for these benchmark sessions.

	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	34-35	35-36	36-37
Music	1-2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4
Social Studies	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4
Art	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4
Connections	1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4	4
World Language		1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4
Science Enrichment		1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4
Technology/Library		1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4	4
Math			1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4
Wellness			1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4
Preschool			1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4	4
Science					1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4
Drama					1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3-4
ELA							1	2	3-4	4	4	4	4	1

Table 1: Note that this timeline is subject to change based on DESE guidelines, requirements, framework updates, or other influential factors