

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Update and Evaluation June 2019

Program Update

The 2018-2019 school year has been a year of establishing new directions for many teachers. We started an emphasis on teaching math in a different way two years ago. We also adopted a new science curriculum that incorporates the Next Generation Science Standards. We focused on re-energizing the DRT process as well. Along the way, we have continued to focus on best practices in all classrooms. Teachers and principals have recognized these changes as positive and have worked hard to build these into our culture so they are second nature.

2018-2019 was the first year of implementation for our new coordinator structure for math, science, ELA and social studies. We've had positive feedback from having a building-level coordinator for elementary, middle, and high school. These part-time coordinators are supported by Tyler Britt, Alicia Wallace and Marilyn Cannon at the district level. This structure has allowed for increased collaboration among groups of teachers, quicker response time for assistance, and clear and coherent vision of math, science, ELA and social studies instruction PK-12.

The C&I team has made major changes in how we present the district curriculum to staff. We are currently housing the curriculum on the Curriculum Hub on Google Drive. However, we were not please with the lack of a cohesive look and presentation of the curriculum between content areas and levels. We spent most of this year developing a common template for all curricular areas and levels so that teachers can navigate the curriculum easily. We call these Curriculum Maps. We have also added to what we include in the curriculum. One major addition is Proficiency Scales. Proficiency Scales clearly define when a student has met a specific standard. We will write scales for each standard. The is a move toward the implementation of Standards Informed Instruction. We have also added a significant number of common assessments which will give teachers good feedback on how students are doing and will give our Data Review Teams specific data to discuss in their meetings. We will also add to some new areas in the future such as one area called Cross Curricular Connections which provides lessons that will help connect different content areas. We have invited teachers to come this summer to write curriculum for the templates. We anticipate having the templates mostly complete for math, science, ELA and social studies by the end of the summer.

Curriculum Content Updates

For the purpose of this update and evaluation, we will focus on the specific content areas on which we have spent the majority of our time and resources.

Mathematics: The Raytown School District employed ten full-time Math Specialists for the 2017-18 school year. The Math Specialists were able to really dig in during the 2018-2019 school year to move kids forward who exhibited specific skill deficits. The Math Specialists used various data points (STAR, MAP, and Bridges Placement Assessments) to identify students who were below grade level and needed small group instruction. The Specialists used the Bridges

Intervention Program which incorporates explicit small group instruction with the use of manipulatives to build a conceptual understanding.

We partnered with Greg Tang extensively again this year to help our teachers change the way we teach math. Our goal in math is to use instructional practices that focus on conceptual understanding and fluency in order to improve student mathematical reasoning. This is a monumental shift in math instruction. The emphasis in the past was more on computation. Teachers would use a formulaic approach to teach students how to answer a particular problem. Now we focus on helping students understand what is going on with the numbers. This deeper understanding helps students to advance further in math and retain more information.

All Math Specialists, Coordinators and secondary Math groups attended Greg Tang training along with a colleague and were asked to deliver professional development and support back at their building. The response to the Tang training has been very positive. Teachers are talking and trying his strategies. Opportunities for more professional development with Greg Tang for the Math Specialists and the elementary classroom teachers will continue for the 2019-2020 school year.

Middle School Mathematics adopted a new program, called Open Up Resources by Illustrative Mathematics for the 2017-2018 school year. We had a good implementation year last year and it became much more natural this year. We provided PD through the year to help teachers become more familiar with this resource. Students are better able to communicate their mathematical thinking with the adoption of this new program.

Thanks to the district's priority of the DRT process, we have been able to track the performance of our students better and have had necessary conversations to improve the learning environment for our students. The time dedicated to the DRT process has ensured that teachers know exactly where students are in their learning process and are ready for any and all assessments.

English Language Arts:

Elementary ELA completed a year of utilizing MAP like common end of unit assessments. These assessments were used to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit. Teachers used this evaluation to measure the mastery of learning expectations. Teachers also were able to use formative assessments in the areas of language, phonics, and vocabulary. Formative assessments were incorporated into classroom practice, this information was used by both teachers and students to aid in student understanding at a point when timely adjustments could be made to instruction. A clear picture emerges of where a student is relative to learning targets and expectations, when a comprehensive assessment program is used that balances both formative and summative student learning/achievement information. Elementary ELA focus in 2017-2018 had been on developing common end of unit assessments. Teams of teachers at each grade collaborated throughout the year to write assessments that target priority expectations. The questions were written as the units were being taught so that they could also be given to students in real time. This allowed teacher and student feedback to inform decisions for test construction. Fortunately, the assessments did provide a common goal for elementary teachers to plan strategic, targeted instruction with Wonders in 2018-2019.

Greater Kansas City Writing Project will provide 6 Trait Writing Instruction in all Content Areas beginning this summer 2019 and extending into the school year. Teachers will receive ways to improve writing and the teaching of writing. 6 trait writing is an approach designed to help teachers improve how they teach and respond to student writing in all content areas.

Also this year, the Elementary Reading Specialists have continued the work of reading improvement through the RTI process. Because the effectiveness of the RTI process depends heavily on Tier One instruction (regular classroom), much of the work with Reading Specialists this year focused on connections to the Wonders curriculum. The interventions used in Title One Reading were analyzed, and alignment to the general education curriculum was emphasized. Specifically, information about Wonders and WonderWorks was provided and implemented with greater intention. By providing continuity of instruction for students, teachers were able to see growth with the students serviced. Reading Specialist played a central role in identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia. This was a mandate from the state requiring that beginning in the 2018-19 school year, each public school, including each charter school, shall conduct dyslexia screenings for students consistent with the guidelines developed by DESE. Reading Specialists assisted with screening utilizing district benchmark assessments and diagnostic assessments. They provided targeted weekly intervention for these students as well progress monitoring to measure a student's response to the intervention and guide decisions about further intervention or assessment.

Reading Specialist attended workshops provided by the 95% Group Inc. This group provides workshops on improving reading instruction and ensuring success for struggling readers. The Reading Specialists received information on the following:

- Exploring a PA and Phonics continuum addressing skill deficits in a specific sequence
- Using manipulatives to engage students, explicitly teaching PA skills, and identifying word patterns
- Discovering the importance on Nonsense Word Analysis
- Effectively applying intensive phonics intervention plans and instruction
- Organize Tier 2 and Tier 3 instructional time for best results
- Critically analyzing diagnostic data to pinpoint and effectively address skill deficits
- Exploring a phonics continuum to sequence intervention instruction and align skill mastery
- Learning how to use phonics chips to engage students and identify word patterns
- Increasing student fluency by practicing a 5-minute multisyllable activity

This year middle school ELA has continued to utilize small group instruction within the ELA block in 6th and 7th-grade classrooms. This has allowed teachers more time to individualized their instruction to meet the needs of the variety of readers and writers in the classrooms. Additionally, all district common assessments were completed using itsLearning, the district learning management system. This allowed teachers to access their students' results tied to the Missouri Learning Expectations to use during DRT. Next year in 6th grade, several classrooms will add a second extended text in Unit 4. This will allow students to have exposure to novels before transitioning into 7th grade. 7th and 8th grade will continue to improve upon the district common assessments to match what students will be tested on in MAP. Additionally, 8th grade will adjust

the scope and sequence by only having two units in the first semester. With addition of a Reading Specialist to each middle school, students and teachers have had access to literacy support that was previously not available. This program will continue to develop and create an RTI model that will meet the needs of all students.

High school English has been actively implementing research-based argumentative writing instruction in a partnership with the Greater Kansas City Writing Project. Through three rounds of instruction, writing, analysis, and reflection, the program the department worked through called the College, Career, and Community-Ready Writers Program (C3WP) showed significant positive impact on student writing at Raytown High School. We are currently exploring options for bringing more of these techniques to more teachers throughout the district. The Greater Kansas City Writing Project will provide a session during Raytown's Curriculum Summit 2019 focusing on informal approaches to teaching argumentative writing in all content areas. Emphasis will be placed on our high school teachers collaborating and sharing valuable information on the teaching of argumentative writing in all content areas. Because argument appears in so many situations in life beyond school, it is important that students experience it not just as a separate skill in writing class but as a skill that is crucial to all content areas.

The C3WP breaks argumentative writing into discrete skills and provides frameworks for high-quality instruction that allows students to focus solely on those discrete skills. The most impactful piece of the program for RHS was what it calls "Creating a Culture of Argument." All teachers who participated implemented this work in their classrooms. It was the only common unit, and then teachers were able to choose different units after establishing this.

The activities and principles of this part were what made the rest of the units work. The activities engage students in informal argumentation and help to establish the open-ended nature of academic argumentation as well as laying the groundwork for respectful disagreement. It also de-emphasizes turning to the instructor for the "answer" to the dilemma, instead inviting students to support their own ideas and to synthesize the ideas they encounter in discussion and reading. It really underlined the idea that students used more time dealing with ambiguity and controversy in academic settings because they were so unfamiliar in dealing with the feeling that they had their own responsibility for the content of the argument.

We're currently considering ways of continuing this work now that the grant has finished. The benefits to be gained from spreading these practices and principles makes it worth trying to find cost-effective ways of moving this work forward.

Science:

Statewide assessment of science achievement entered its first "live" year this spring. Our students in grades five, eight, and Biology were assessed on the new, three-dimensional learning standards in May. While we do anticipate receiving achievement data, it will not come until the fall. The state BOE must first review and accept cut scores, which will be the result of standard setting to be done in the summer. The grade five and eight assessments continue to be a grade span test that assesses content from grades 3,4, and 5 (on the fifth grade assessment) and grades 6, 7, and 8 (on the eighth grade assessment).

As we transitioned to the new standards in science, we went through a new resource adoption process last spring. In 2018-2019, teachers in K-8 and high school Biology implemented our new units of instruction, based on the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HM) series, *Science Dimensions*. Teachers were onboarded during Back-to-School Week in August. Elementary school teachers had additional science professional learning during our half day PD in the fall. Middle and high school teachers worked on implementation during DRT meetings and on district department meeting days in August, November, and April. Moving deeper into the implementation of three-dimensional science standards, we've gone through another RFP process this spring to purchase new resources for three more courses: high school Physical Science, Geology, and Chemistry. These new resources will be implemented in 2019-2020. In all instances, teachers will have a cohesive, connected written curriculum to accompany their core textbook resource. This written curriculum is developed in collaboration with our teachers.

Late this spring, PK teachers received training on a resource from the Missouri Department of Conservation. The MDC's *Nature Revealed* is a set of materials and lessons available to us at no cost that will provide PK teachers with easy-to-implement ideas for helping our youngest learners access science and nature education. We are excited to use a few of these resources next year. Over this summer, we will gather teachers from elementary, middle, and high school to revise units for 2019-2020. This involvement of teachers helps ensure we are providing the tools teachers need. We are ready to see what year two of our HMH units bring, and look forward to pushing students deeper in their learning.

Curriculum, Instruction and Leadership Support:

Leadership Instructional Support:

For the 2018-19 school year, our building supervision was divided into 2 zones ~ North & South. Ms. Kim Bielawski and Dr. Anthony Moore provided the instructional support for Principals of our 20 school sites (10 elementary schools, 2 preschools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, 1 career center, 1 alternative school and 1 special needs school). Ms. Bielawski and Dr. Moore conducted numerous walk-throughs this school year. All of our buildings are focused on increasing fidelity of Data Review Teams (DRT). This was monitored by Principals, ILT members and Curriculum Coordinators and included effective feedback for growth. All Principals participated in a yearlong book study of Collaborative Leadership, with Dr. Huff. Learning that collaborative leaders find balance between leading initiatives and fostering cooperative learning between adults must be a priority in our leadership work.

Our Early Childhood Preschool program continues to grow. This year we had over 400 students ages 3 and 4 attend for a half-day, 4 days per week program. We spent the past 2 years studying the positive effects that Pre-K education provides for our youngest learners. With this knowledge, we are moving forward with offering a full day open enrollment preschool for all 4 year olds. This expansion will take place at both Three Trails and New Trails. We will also continue to offer Head Start and Special Education Services at this level. At this time we have over 350 four year olds

enrolled for our new Pre-K program and over 50 three year olds for our special education & Title I classrooms at New Trails.

At the elementary level there has been a strong focus on math this year. Partnering with Greg Tang for math strategies has had significant impact with teachers. Observing students using these strategies has been observed throughout the district. Data Review Teams are strong at elementary buildings. They are working at a high level of collaboration focusing on effective lesson planning, instructional strategies and ways to engage students in the work. Principals continue to be the instructional leaders of the buildings, focusing on effective feedback, high expectations for all students and a positive school environment.

Our secondary level continues to focus their efforts on non-fiction reading opportunities, increasing math achievement and DRT implementation. For nonfiction reading, the *Actively Learn* tool provides excellent resources for teachers to customize non-fiction reading pieces for our students. We continue to see an increase in usage of this tool within instructional planning. 6th grade math teachers were involved with Greg Tang professional development and are excited to have new ways to enhance their instructional practices. Data Review Teams continue to evolve at this level due to the complexity of secondary schedules and course offerings. We are working directly with Principals to increase our overall understanding of secondary DRT structure and realistic expectations at this level. Secondary Principals are passionate about having successful students and teachers. Each of them work hard at keeping high expectations and structure in the secondary buildings.

Special Programming:

Assessment:

We again offered 'Super Test Day' to all students in the district in grades 10 - 12. Sophomores completed the PreACT, juniors took the PRACT, and seniors were offered either the ACCUPLACER or ASVAB assessment. The testing offered to seniors is to provide them with more relevant data as they transition to their post-high school pursuits. The ACCUPLACER is offered to high school students only through collaboration with a post-secondary institution. During the 2018-2019 school year we partnered with MCC. However, other avenues will need to be pursued as MCC is uncertain whether they will be able to continue the type of partnership we have had in the past with regard to data sharing and student scores.

Overall, state testing went relatively smooth this year, even moving the EOC (End-of-Course) and GLA (Grade Level Assessment) back two weeks due to snow days. This shift in testing meant all of the state testing was condensed into a four week window, rather than spread out over six weeks. Technology, once again, did an excellent job ensuring our technology infrastructure was in place, software installed, and supporting software properly configured.



We also had 14 students participate in the College Board's AP Testing during the week of May 13. Students took AP Statistics, Biology, Calculus AB/BC, and Studio Art. The number of students testing has remained fairly consistent over the past five years. College Board is making major changes to the AP testing process next year, moving the ordering deadline to November. Their data indicates this earlier commitment to take the test results in more students following through with taking the exam and earning higher scores.

Budget:

We continue to focus our available funds directly to the support of curriculum, instruction and assessment used in the classroom. Additionally, we will support the ongoing process of data review and collaborative teaming. Therefore, funds are largely spent on teacher training, curriculum resource adoptions and materials and supplies that directly assist in instruction in the classroom. District Assessment is a large area and requires its own budget. All curricular materials and supports are funded out of the Curriculum and Instruction Operations budget. A review of those budgets is below (numbers are approximate):

District Funds

C & I Operations \$1,087,359.41 (includes salaries and benefits).

This budget is used to support instruction through curriculum, texts and materials purchases, supplies, teacher curriculum stipends, substitutes for building work and other supports. This is the financial base to curriculum and instruction for the district. This budget also pays for personnel costs associated with the maintenance of curriculum and instruction including stipends for curricular coordination.

Assessment \$404,070.00

This budget funds all district assessments and support (Assessments include EOC Spring and Summer, WorkKeys Spring, TSA, GLA elementary and middle school). This would include cost for testing, any scoring, technology support and training.

CPL \$365,000.00

CPL (Committee for Professional Learning) is our professional development budget. These funds are allocated for the professional development of certified and certificated staff. Each building develops a budget for their building CPL with specific activities related to the C&I Goals. The funds are also used for district activities like the summer Curriculum Summit.

Federal Funding

Title I: \$ 3,135,068.61 (includes carryover funds)

This budget is used to fund Title I Reading Specialists, Title I Math Specialists and Instructional Assistants in all ten elementary schools. A significant portion is used to fund the Title I preschool as well as other required set-asides for parent involvement, nonpublic, and homeless services.

Title IIA: \$500,939 (includes carryover funds)

This budget supports district improvement through professional development. Each of the twenty Title Specialists were paid in part with these funds due to the coaching nature of their

positions. Additional funding supported BIST training for new teachers, Greg Tang coaching, and other district initiatives.

Title III: \$92,587 (includes carryover funds)

This fund is specific to English Language Learning (ELL) that supports our preK-12 programs for these students. Supplemental supplies and resources were funded by this grant. In addition, we began a partnership with University of Central Missouri to start a cohort of teachers working to obtain English Language Development certification to serve our increasing ELL population.

Title IV: \$167,428

Title IV money is used to fund a Well-Rounded Education, a Safe and Healthy School Environment, and the Effective use of Data and Technology. During the 18-19 school year, these funds helped further our Project Lead the Way Programs at middle school, paid for our Signs of Suicide curriculum and Sprigeo reporting system, and funded technology professional learning.

Goals and Evidence for 2019-2020:

Goal 1- Use instructional practices in math that focus on conceptual understanding and fluency in order to improve student **mathematical reasoning**.

Action Steps:

- Continue and expand professional learning with Greg Tang and dedicate professional learning time for teachers to share ways they have successfully incorporated effective instructional strategies into their math lessons and units of instruction.
- All teachers responsible for teaching students mathematics will implement common structured models, language, tools, manipulatives, and applied mathematics into whole group Tier 1 instruction as well as in support classes and intervention services.
- Vertical team discussions and collaboration will occur consistently within buildings or departments and at district level to ensure vertical math model progression alignment.
- Incorporate opportunities for students to engage in “math talk”/academic conversations, explain their reasoning, and justify their answers.

Evidence:

- Students possess pre-requisite/requisite skills and deep conceptual understanding in mathematics as demonstrated by state assessment (MAP) performance, interim assessments (STAR) growth and curriculum based assessment (common unit assessments, formative assessments, and RTI benchmarks) progress.
- Students consistently engage in lessons focused on math reasoning and the use of models and manipulatives as demonstrated through walk-through and peer class visits.
- Teachers collaborate to develop meaningful lessons incorporating instructional strategies that promote fluency, conceptual understanding, and academic conversations for math reasoning.

Goal 2- Collaborate in **Data Review Teams (DRT)** to improve instructional practices and student learning.

Action steps:

- Focus dedicated professional learning time on instructional practice and improving student learning.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to assist staff with creating goals aligned to learning standards and instructional practices.
- Provide opportunity for collaboration within buildings, across district, and across content areas to set goals and use data to improve instruction.
- Create a common agenda form and process for saving and sharing the forms.

Evidence:

- Students demonstrate an increase in learning measured by state assessment (MAP), benchmark assessments (STAR), and curriculum-based formative and summative assessments.
- Improve DRT process as assessed on the Raytown C-2 Collaboration Data Team Scoring Guide.
- Unified implementation of the DRT Agenda/Meeting Summary Form as reviewed in the District DRT Drive folders.

Goal 3- Understand student differences through **cultural competency** so we can better meet the diverse needs of all students.

Action Steps

- Provide professional learning opportunities on cultural competency in order to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding, and culturally appropriate practices.
- Gather data from stakeholders on their understanding of cultural competency through surveys.
- Designate a cultural competency representative in buildings.
- Promote and brand cultural competency, by strategically communicating our cultural competency emphasis and vision throughout the district.
- Review current curriculum as related to issues of cultural competency and provide professional learning on culturally responsive pedagogy.

Evidence:

- Determine individual awareness based on cultural competency self-assessment surveys to staff.
- Building survey data will be collected and analyzed in order to assess awareness of cultural competency in individual buildings & departments.
- Implementation of cultural competency activities occur in every building and are reflected in the building CPL plans.

Goal 4- Include **non-fiction reading and argumentative writing** opportunities in all classes in order to improve students' reading and writing.

Action Step:

- Provide guidelines and professional learning opportunities for non ELA teachers in the areas of non-fiction reading comprehension and argumentative writing.
- Provide students the opportunity to orally explain/defend their position using text evidence and have developmentally appropriate discussions on argumentative topics across content areas.
- Establish and publish, by grade level, a PK-12 continuum of developmentally appropriate argumentative writing skills and expectations and grade level specific scoring guides for our students.
- Identify and supply quality non-fiction writing samples and high interest reading materials at all levels that connect to the curriculum and objectives.

Evidence:

- Score student argumentative writing samples in DRTs using district scoring guides to develop consistency in scoring and improve student writing.
- Use STAR results and classroom evaluation tools to show improved non-fiction reading performance.
- Improved student performance on constructed response items as demonstrated on classroom assignments and assessments.

Goal 5- Provide numerous high-level **questions** to students in formats that encourage active participation in order to improve students' depth of thinking in all classes.

Action Steps:

- Provide professional learning on questioning, critical thinking, and engagement strategies.
- During DRT, instructional planning, and collaboration, teachers will focus on high-level questioning and quadrant resources to formulate quality questions that increase critical thinking.
- Provide teachers the opportunity to observe in classrooms where high-quality questioning and instructional strategies are used as a part of the everyday culture in a classroom.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in academic conversations, explain their reasoning and justify responses to high level questions.

Evidence:

- Students consistently engaged in academic conversations in response to high level questioning as demonstrated through walk-through and peer class visits.
- DRT notes demonstrate implementation of instructional strategies and planning of questioning to reach higher levels
- Improved student performance on high-level questions as demonstrated in classroom discussions, assignments, and assessments.

Program Strengths:

A public education institution is only as strong as its leadership, its teachers and the supports provided for the classroom. A general survey of our teaching and learning process shows:

1. We have a process in place to collect student performance data that is specific to measure growth over time.
2. Our teaching staff is genuinely interested in quality instruction as evidenced by their continued participation in professional learning to improve their professional prowess.
3. Our school board fully supports the classroom teacher, the instructional process and the need for appropriate materials to the work asked of us to do. As a result, we have a partnership that has yielded significant results.
4. A specialized staff devoted to the complete success of quality instruction (including the District leadership and curriculum support personnel).
5. Students that work hard to meet and in many cases exceed the expectations set for them.

Date Reviewed:

June 2019

Program Personnel and Evaluators:

Brian Huff, Associate Superintendent
Instructional Leadership Team
Michele Eagle, Coordinator of Assessment

Dr. Brian Huff, Associate Superintendent July 2019