

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy #603: INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR PROGRAM REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to parents, students, staff, and interested members of the community for involvement in the continuous review and improvement of District instructional and curricular programs.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Minnetonka School District's curriculum focuses instructional practices on challenging and supporting all students in the pursuit of their highest academic and personal achievement. The Minnetonka curriculum shall provide teachers with a framework for reaching world-class excellence by defining the alignment of rigorous standards, grade-level benchmarks, instructional strategies and resources, and assessments. To reach these world-class expectations, the District is committed to a continuous curriculum review and improvement process. This process shall be research-based and systemic, and include the collaborative involvement of teachers and administrators, along with input from parents, students and the community.

III. DEFINITIONS

Curriculum: a written plan including standards, benchmarks, essential questions, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

Instruction: a teacher-led process, which transforms well-planned curriculum into student learning. Instruction is standards-focused teaching for the purpose of providing meaningful learning experiences that enable all students to master academic content and achieve personal goals.

Assessments: multiple tools used to gather information about the student's performance on the standards taught.

Evaluation: the process of making judgments about the level of students' understanding or performance.

Standard: a statement of what the student will be able to know, understand and do.

Benchmark: a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

Core Instructional Materials: Resources that are part of the District's standards and curriculum adoptions which are approved by the School Board for District-wide use as the primary means to assist students in attaining expected learning outcomes. These materials should be comprehensive enough to enable teachers to primarily use this resource in most instruction.

Supplementary Materials:

- Resources that are selected to complement, enrich and/or extend the curriculum and provide enrichment opportunities to expand students' interests and contribute to their lifelong learning. Examples include local school library collections, District video collections, licensed databases, resource center collections, teacher-selected resources for individual classes, and student resource lists.
- All Supplementary Materials, however, must be selected for the purpose of supporting the standards and curriculum of the given course or class and must be compatible with the District's Vision, goals and expectations.
- Many valuable materials become available continually, and the Board recognizes that extensive processes for approval of evolving materials would be cumbersome and not in students' best interests in some cases; therefore the Board allows teachers to use materials that have not been approved by the Board but fit all of the criteria for selection of materials that have been approved by the Board. If the material is intended to be required reading for all students in the class, approval shall be required by the principal. The materials so identified and used, if intended to be used more than one time, will be subsequently submitted to the principal for submission to the Superintendent, who will inform the Board and periodically request approval of such materials.
- The Board further recognizes that many valuable resources to supplement student learning can be found on the Internet, in periodicals and pamphlets, and in other non-published formats, and permission to use such resources is extended to teachers and building administrators without seeking Board approval; however, it is fully expected that teachers using such sources of materials will use their professional judgment in their selections. It is advisable for teachers to consult with the principal if they have doubt about the appropriateness of the material.

Differentiation: the process teachers use to plan learning experiences, which intentionally respond to learner differences. Students would have opportunities to work at their levels of readiness (assessed levels of skills and knowledge), in preferred and varied learning modes/styles, and engage their interests in order to achieve curricular goals.

IV. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Board is accountable, in its governance capacity, for all standards and curricula. The system for defining the District's curriculum, and assuring excellence in curricular and program improvement will include the following components:

- A. The Superintendent, or designee, shall be responsible for development and implementation of procedures, which guide the Instructional and Curricular Program Review and Improvement process. These procedures will reflect the Vision, Strategic Plan, and research-based practices in the field of instructional program improvement and curriculum development. They shall comply with Board policies, as well as federal and state law and rules. The Superintendent shall submit recommendations to the Board for adoption of Minnetonka Standards, instructional and curricular program improvements and instructional materials.
- B. Principals are responsible for assuring implementation of and adherence to the District's adopted instructional and curricular program and instructional materials. They shall be part of the committee making recommendations for standards and curriculum.
- C. Teachers, under the supervision of Principals, are responsible for implementing the District's adopted instructional and curricular program and instructional materials. They shall be part of the committee making recommendations for standards and curriculum.
- D. District advisory committees are established to review and provide feedback on proposed instructional and curricular program improvements and instructional materials. The advisory committees shall be a reflection of the community and to the extent possible shall reflect the diversity of the District, and shall include parents, teachers, support staff, students, administrators and community residents, as determined by the Superintendent, or designee.

V. REVIEW AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

The goal of the instructional review and improvement process is to advance the quality of curriculum and instruction and to promote excellence in student performance using the best possible instructional practices, curricula, and materials.

The following steps address a research-based program improvement cycle. Meaningful professional development is an important component of each step.

- A. Committees of teachers, administrators, and parent/community members shall examine current Minnetonka practices, study Minnetonka student achievement results, and review staff and student surveys.
 - 1. Review District Vision and Goals and department goals.

2. Conduct a review of current curriculum and instructional practices, including the level of technology integration.
 3. Review course/program offerings.
 4. Review and analyze Minnetonka student achievement on local, state, national, and international assessments.
 5. Review parent, teacher and student surveys.
- B. The committees shall examine external research and data.
1. Review literature on research-based practices, including optimal use of technology.
 2. Review national and international assessments.
 3. Review state, national and international standards.
 4. Review information on development of reading, writing and study skills in the content area.
 5. Visit exemplary programs in the subject/program; attend conferences when relevant and feasible.
- C. The Committee shall develop and communicate improvement recommendations.
1. Develop findings based upon the information analysis conducted in A and B above.
 2. Develop and prioritize recommendations for program improvement based upon the findings. A complete recommendation must show evidence of meeting the following:
 - meets local, state and federal standards,
 - facilitates subject-to-subject articulation,
 - provides meaningful assessments,
 - facilitates curriculum development,
 - details “total cost of ownership,”
 - provides evidence of thorough assessment of alternatives, and
 - provides research indicating effectiveness for a wide variety of students.
 3. Submit recommendations to the Superintendent for review and submission to the School Board for adoption.
 4. Develop a communication plan for stakeholders to insure implementation.

- D. The Department of Teaching and Learning staff and teachers shall develop proposed Minnetonka academic standards.
1. Develop articulated E-12 Minnetonka Standards, based on a review of national and state standards and local professional expertise.
 2. Present a draft of the standards at a public hearing for review.
 3. Submit the final draft of articulated E-12 Minnetonka Standards to the Superintendent for submission to the Board for adoption.
- E. The Department of Teaching and Learning staff and teachers select proposed core and supplementary instructional materials. (For greater detail see Policy #606, Instructional Material Review and Selection.)
1. The Department of Teaching and Learning staff and teachers conduct a materials review and selection process, using selection criteria referenced in Policy #606.
 2. Materials under consideration are made available for public review and comment.
 3. The recommendation for materials is presented to the Superintendent for submission to the Board for approval.
- F. The Superintendent, or designee Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, supervises the development of curriculum, using the Curriculum Framework to align standards, benchmarks, instruction and assessments.
1. Develop or revise curriculum and plan any needed pilots and assessments.
 2. Develop an implementation timetable, plan, and cost estimate for any needed training on new materials or instructional strategies.
- G. The Superintendent, or designee Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, supervises the implementation of adopted curriculum and materials.
1. Principals are responsible for assuring successful implementation of and adherence to the adopted materials and curriculum.
 2. Academic progress subsequent to implementation will be measured and reported to the Board.
 3. Refine and modify based on the outcome of performance measurements.

VI. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

Program and/or subject areas will be systematically evaluated using the Program Improvement Process. For planning purposes, the process will be charted on a multi-year cycle; however, modifications may be made yearly as required by state-mandated changes or local determination.

VII. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving professional expertise. The curriculum plan provides the framework around which teachers determine their methods of delivery, based on student differentiation needs. Curriculum development includes:

- A. Development of Curriculum Framework (grade, course).
- B. Alignment of E-12 Minnetonka Standards.
- C. Development of Essential Questions.
- D. Identification of Grade Level/Course Assessment Benchmarks.
- E. Identification of Instructional Strategies and Resources.
- F. Identification of Pacing through Emphasis/Range of Time.

Cross Reference:

Policy #C-6, Controversial Issues Policy

Policy #M-3, Multicultural, Gender Fair, Disability Sensitive Education

Policy #601, District Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Policy #606, Instructional Material Review, Selection and Use

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