



**To:** Board of Education

**From:** Michelle Hilla

**Re:** Curriculum and Instruction Update

**Date:** January 12th, 2026

### **> Grant Update**

- This time of year is particularly busy for grant-related work. We are finalizing current grant allocations, submitting amendments, and preparing applications for new funding opportunities.

In addition, we are beginning to explore applying for a Chelsea Community Foundation grant in February to enhance special education services and learning spaces at Beach Middle School. This potential project would focus on expanding life skills opportunities for students, including updates to the instructional space such as the addition of a washer and dryer, a stove, and new furniture and materials for the sensory room. These enhancements would support functional skill development while better meeting the diverse needs of our students.

### **> Y5s Pathfinder Project Planning**

- We have been working closely with the Young 5s team on the Pathfinder project to explore how the new instructional space can support early learners through flexible, developmentally appropriate instructional structures. This work has included rethinking daily routines, small-group and play-based learning models, and how furniture and learning zones can be intentionally used to promote engagement, independence, and collaboration. I have also connected with other districts engaged in similar work to learn from their experiences and gather insights related to space design, instructional practices, and implementation considerations. This ongoing work will help inform how the Pathfinder space is used effectively to support teaching and learning now and in the future.

### **> Student Support Meeting**

- Next week, Lisa Nickel and I will hold a student support data meeting to review special education and related student needs across all buildings. To support this work, we developed a districtwide data collection tool that allows teams to examine trends by building and grade level, including student service needs, intervention supports, behavioral data, and staffing allocations. The purpose of this meeting is to take a proactive, systems-level look at student needs and staffing structures to ensure adequate and appropriate supports are in place across the district. This review will help inform ongoing staffing decisions and planning to best meet the needs of all students.

Respectfully,  
Michelle Hilla  
Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Chelsea School District