

GOVERNING BOARD AGENDA ITEM AMPHITHEATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10

DATE OF MEETING: **June 13, 2023**

TITLE: **Presentation on K-12 Core Content and Program Curriculum Work**

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Learning and Instruction recognizes the importance of providing all students equitable access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum. To obtain that goal, we must guarantee that students can access District identified essential learning outcomes, or grade-level content standards, regardless of what teacher they are assigned to.

A viable curriculum includes a well-articulated set of knowledge and skills that every child should learn in the instructional time allocated. This set of knowledge and skills is most always aligned to state content standards, is appropriate for the students' age and development and should afford opportunities to extend learning beyond grade level expectations when mastery is reached. This is a necessary goal and one that is worthy of the investment of time and resources it takes to accomplish it. These efforts would not yield success without the voice of those who are closest to the classroom learning environment.

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, K-12 Coordinators (Heidi Radtke-ELA, Math-Polly Kimminau, Science-Pam Vandivort and Social Studies-Elizabeth Jacome) have worked in collaboration with Amphi teachers to create K-12 curricular resources, to develop measurable criteria for determining mastery of grade-level standards, and to provide ongoing support through two-way communication to ensure consistent implementation throughout Amphitheater School District. These resources benefit teachers because they provide a clear picture of what must be accomplished within an academic year, and they provide students with continuity in their learning both horizontally (across schools and within a grade level), and horizontally (across the K-12 grade band). This continuity is key to ensuring students' academic success and readiness for college and/or the career of their choice.

The collaborative efforts of our Coordinators and our Amphitheater teaching staff have yielded significant progress in a short amount of time. The upcoming presentation will provide a clear understanding of what this on-going work entails and how it reflects our values for equity, rigor and relevance in all Amphitheater schools.

As we began a new school year in August of 2022 our team in the Office of Learning and Instruction finalized a multi-year plan to strengthen Tier 1 instruction. Tier 1 instruction includes the grade appropriate learning that is accessible to all students. Best practices in teaching and learning have shown us that a strong core of instruction provides the foundation students need to engage in rigorous tasks, allow students to apply their knowledge to real world situations, and open opportunities to accelerate their learning based on their individual strengths and interests. Coordinators for all major content areas (English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies) took on this commitment while partnering with Program Coordinators (REACH-Vanessa Hill, ELD-Shannon Langley), and Student Services Department to ensure a strong system of support for all learners in Amphitheater schools.

English Language Arts (ELA)

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Amphitheater School District adopted, purchased and implemented a comprehensive ELA curriculum for grades K-12. HMH Into Reading (K-5) and Into Literature (6-

8) are fully aligned to the AZ Academic Standards and reflect the rigor and instructional shifts associated with the standards (ex: balance of informational and literary text, opportunities for close reading and analysis of text, rigorous writing tasks aligned with rich texts); however, in spite of the quality of the adopted curriculum, implementation during the pandemic posed challenges that were more complex than a standard implementation might present. Once those challenges were eliminated, a second and more focused implementation effort was needed.

Elementary ELA:

Heidi Radtke, ELA Coordinator, brought together teachers from all elementary schools to support the implementation efforts. These committees included elementary teachers representing every grade (K-5) and every school met over the course of the year to develop Tier 1 instructional resources that included the following:

- Instructional time for English Language Arts (including reading and writing) is established for every school as a minimum of 90 minutes per day, with many schools extending that instructional time to 120 minutes where possible. A literacy framework was adapted from HMH Into Reading to assist teachers in planning for those minutes to adequately address each section of the state standards (reading foundational skills, text analysis, vocabulary development, comprehension, writing). This framework is not intended to dictate the instructional model to teachers, but rather provide a big picture view of how to ensure every instructional minute is leveraged for effective instruction, which supports the viability of our curriculum and ensures time for personalized, and targeted learning (see exhibit A).
- Teachers began the curriculum work by taking a deep dive into the K-5 AZ Academic Standards for ELA. They studied the vertical alignment (across the K-12 grade band) and developed an understanding of the continuity across the standards. Next, they selected priority standards that must have a heavy focus to ensure students gain proficiency each year and are ready to be successful in the next grade level. These standards must meet the criteria of readiness (provides essential knowledge for next grade), leverage (cross curricular application, interdisciplinary connection), and endurance (concepts and skills that last over time, see exhibit B).
- Scope and Sequence documents provide a road map of essential learning for every grade level. References to state standards and curriculum-based resources are embedded in the document for every module/unit (see exhibit C).
- Formative assessments were identified to provide teachers with tools that accurately measured students' progress toward mastery of our state standards. These included curriculum-based measures (assessments aligned with our curriculum) that are easily accessible and administered as part of routine instruction. Teachers now have access to formative data that can be used to personalize instruction to meet the diverse needs of students across our school system.
- Report card rubrics were developed to support standards-based grading practices for all students in grades K-5. These rubrics take into account the progression of skills that students develop across the course of the academic year. Each quarter, teachers are provided clear descriptors of "proficiency" toward mastery of state-standards and are provided with explicit information that can be shared with parents (see exhibit D).
- While supporting the implementation of our adopted ELA curriculum, Heidi Radtke also supported implementation of Foundations, and Wilson Reading Systems as our supplemental curriculum for early reading acquisition. We use Foundations to support our Tier 1 reading foundational skills instruction in grades K-2 because it is evidence-based and aligned with the science of reading. The Science of Reading is a comprehensive body of research that helps us understand how the brain learns to read and how to deliver effective instruction for reading and writing. It is also aligned with guidance from the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and addresses the explicit and systematic instructional needs of students who display characteristics

of dyslexia. To support a strong implementation across Amphitheater schools, Ms. Radtke has coordinated facilitator training that will build our capacity to train teachers with resources from within our own district. By August of 2023, Amphitheater School District will have Foundations trainers for grades K, 1 and 2 as well as 2 certified trainers for Wilson Reading Systems which is the supplemental curriculum for students receiving special education services.

Secondary ELA:

- The team in the Office of Learning and Instruction, drafted a 5-year plan that supports standards-based teaching and grading, consistent implementation of the adopted curriculum, common formative assessment that drives evidence-based instruction, and personalized competency-based learning. Department Heads from the 4 major contents (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) at every middle and high school met throughout the year to work toward the goals for year 1. They will continue to meet and communicate back to their colleagues about the progress toward the annual goals of this team.
 - Year 1 Goal: Establish a strong understanding of the grade 6-12 AZ Academic Standards, including the instructional shifts, and strategies that support rigor, relevance and promote college and career readiness. Identification of priority standards (those that require the most time and attention, are high leverage and allow crossover to other contents and interdisciplinary connections and include concepts that endure over time, see exhibit E). Develop scope and sequence documents that align with AZ Academic Standards, include the essential learning that all students must master by the end of each course, and provide guidance on the key ideas and vocabulary that students must learn to demonstrate proficiency in each subject (see exhibit F). Develop proficiency scales that include clear descriptors of what the progression of learning looks like. These proficiency scales will assist teachers as they transition to standards-referenced grading practices (see exhibit G). The curriculum committee, made up of Department Heads from the major content areas, were very committed to our collective goal and worked diligently to accomplish the assigned tasks. Their collegiality and professionalism were inspirational and was evidence that our collaborative work is necessary. While there is more refinement needed on ELA and Social Studies proficiency scales, a finalized artifact will be available for teachers' planning by August 2023.
 - Year 2 Goal: Professional development on the scope and sequence resources and proficiency scales for all secondary teachers (ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science). Obtain feedback from teachers that will guide refinement of the scope and sequence documents. Development of common formative assessments will provide a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a specified time of year. Implementing common formative assessments will help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand or have mastered, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, and new skills they are ready to learn so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support.
 - Year 3 Goal: Professional development and implementation of common formative assessments. Implementation of data study protocols that foster collaborative teaching conversations and drive student achievement toward mastery of content standards. Continued refinement of scope and sequence documents based on teacher feedback, student achievement data, and recent curriculum adoptions.
 - Year 4 Goal: Provide professional learning opportunities to support teachers in developing learning pathways that provide opportunities for personalized competency-based learning.

- Year 5 Goal: Systematic implementation of standards-based instruction, grading and personalized competency-based learning for all students.

Elementary and Secondary ELA:

- Beginning Fall of 2022, one teacher from every Amphitheater school (K-12) was identified as a Dyslexia Training Designee (DTD). This on-site support for professional learning is an additional strategy used to increase our district's capacity for supporting students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Ms. Radtke facilitated quarterly "turnkey" training for all DTDs that they were able to carry back to their schools to support all teachers across all subjects.

REACH:

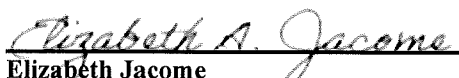
The REACH Coordinator, Vanessa Hill has partnered with colleagues in the Office of Learning and Instruction to further our commitment to personalized learning and support for gifted students in the Amphitheater School District. Her focus this year has been on implementation of the goals that were established in previous years to bring alignment to the services and opportunities accessible to gifted students. She has also focused on building the capacity of all Amphi teachers to better understand the gifted learner and to integrate effective teaching strategies in the general classroom.

- The elementary cluster model that includes assigning grade level groups of gifted students in the same classroom has been implemented across all Amphitheater elementary schools.
- Middle School Humanities classes are offered to all gifted students in our district. Vanessa will present information about the professional learning and support provided to teachers this year, as well as the curriculum work that those teachers have accomplished.
- Each High School piloted the English Honors 9 course for gifted students. English Honors 10 will be piloted in school year 2023-2024. These courses are a continuation of the preparation offered to gifted students for higher level courses and programs in 10th and 11th grade. Ms. Hill will present the status of this pilot and the next steps for support moving into the 2023-24 school year.


RECOMMENDATION:

This is presented to the Governing Board as an informational item.

INITIATED BY:


Elizabeth Jacome
Director of Curriculum and Assessment

Date: June 6, 2023


Todd A. Jaeger, J.D., Superintendent