



# Prospect Heights School District 23

## Board Memorandum

### Information Item

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**Date:** December 12, 2024

**Subject:** Curriculum and Instruction Update

**Prepared by:** Dr. Craig M. Curtis, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

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This update is provided to keep the board informed of the progress on the implementation of the curriculum, professional development, and assessments used in the district.

### **Curriculum**

#### ***Science Curriculum Materials:***

Our teachers are off to a great start using the newly readopted curriculum materials (Mystery Science and StemScopes). Implementation is well underway at all grade levels and teachers report strong engagement across the curriculum. Some of the successes of the new curriculum are highlighted by the level of student engagement, ease of teacher use, and teacher familiarity with the materials. Because of teachers' high level of familiarity with materials, we were truly able to hit the ground running with the curriculum this year.

This year's Science Committee continues to focus on ensuring our teachers are supported throughout their readoption and implementation of the curriculum. So far, the committee has convened for one meeting and we have one additional meeting scheduled in April. As a part of this process, we have scheduled several professional development sessions at the elementary level and collaboration time for our middle school teachers to review their implementation and any questions they may have thus far.

#### ***Early Childhood (EC) Curriculum Materials:***

The Early Childhood Team is to implementing their newly readopted Creative Curriculum for Preschool materials. They worked hard this summer to plan the scope and sequence of a 2-year track for the program and are working to establish consistency in navigating Creative Curriculum's online porta, Creative Cloud. This year, we have continued our committee from last year, and it will meet twice to monitor the status of our implementation and ensure our staff members are supported throughout the process. Thus far, the program continues to provide engaging, experiential learning for our youngest learners and has proven to be a beneficial addition to our district curricula.

#### ***Math Curriculum Investigations:***

This year, we have begun to review the district's math curriculum. We have formulated a committee to review the alignment of mathematical practices and curriculum across the grade levels. The goal is to ensure all students are well-rounded, knowledgeable about the world, and prepared for success in high school and beyond. The Math Curriculum Committee has met three times so far this year.

Currently, we are collaborating on several different math-related projects as a part of the committee. The middle school team is involved in a collaborative initiative with D214 and its feeder schools to align mathematical practices and mindsets around a common vision that promotes student engagement and discussion. At the same time, the coaches and staff within D23 are partnering with our colleagues at the North Cook Intermediate Service Center (ISC) on a similar project. The North Cooks ISC's Instructional Coach Coordinator, Carrie Clement has been partnering with our district coaches to visit D23 classrooms and observe math instruction around the district. She has also met with individual teachers and teams to receive feedback and discuss their views on mathematical practices. From this information, we will provide collaborative professional development opportunities for all District 23 staff members that enhance student engagement in

mathematics. Ultimately, these two initiatives will lead our committee to the alignment of mathematical practices across the district, which will increase student achievement in mathematics.

### ***Library Media Center (LMC) Curriculum Investigations:***

This year, we have formulated a Library Media Center (LMC) Curriculum Committee working together to review the current curriculum and pacing within our Library Media Program in District 23. The committee includes library media specialists, instructional coaches, principals, and teachers to establish a collaborative approach to our implementation. We believe it's important to work together to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students because the Library Media Center is such a widely visited location in our buildings.

This year, the Library Media Center Curriculum Committee will meet six times. We will review the Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Librarians (I-SAIL) Standards to ensure we are best meeting the needs of our students across all grade levels. In addition, we will collaborate with grade level teams to determine optimal methods of integrating library media skills throughout the school day.

### **Instruction & Professional Development**

Our district plans and provides professional development opportunities each year that are focused on the goals of our strategic plan which is to encourage a learning environment that emphasizes excellence and retains high-quality staff. We provide professional development in-house and we also send teachers and staff to conferences outside of the district.

This year, our district theme is "Educator Olympics". As you know, the Summer Olympic Games occurred at the start of this school year. To continue with the excitement this event brought to the world, we are focusing on the teamwork, competition, and community that go along with the games. Throughout the school year, staff members represent their school by competing in "Educator Olympic" games. While they are representing their school, they are also demonstrating their sportsmanship, competitiveness, and pride for District 23.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion continue to be integral as we focus on our strategic plan. To make this goal successful, we need to engage and unite all members of our school community and beyond. Our teachers have been learning about trauma-informed practices, restorative practices, and empathetic approaches. These approaches to teaching and learning, lesson planning, coaching, and leadership are helping us to form stronger connections and will lead us to a more collaborative future for our students and the district.

Sometimes, we are unable to provide professional development in-house. Below are some recent examples of professional development our staff attended outside of the district:

- Various Midwest Principals Center (MPC) offered workshops.
- Illinois ASCD's Early Childhood/Kindergarten Conference.
- ESSA Multilingual Illinois 2024 Conference
- Illinois Digital Educator's Alliance Conference (IDEACon)
- Virtual i-Ready offerings
- NSSEO trainings & workshops
- Workshops provided by the Illinois Resource Center (IRC)

### **Committee Reports:**

- **Professional Development (PD):** The District Professional Development Committee has already had two meetings. During the meetings, we discussed focus areas for the year. We also reflected on our first two Teacher Institute Days. [Click here to view a full copy of the District 23 Professional Development Plan.](#)

- **Math:** The Math Curriculum Committee has met three times so far this year. Currently, we are collaborating on several different math-related projects as a part of the committee. The middle school team is involved in a collaborative initiative with D214 and its feeder schools to align mathematical practices and mindsets around a common vision that promotes student engagement and discussion. At the same time, the coaches and staff within D23 are partnering with our colleagues at the North Cook Intermediate Service Center (ISC) on a similar project. The North Cooks ISC's Instructional Coach Coordinator, Carrie Clement has been partnering with our district coaches to visit D23 classrooms and observe math instruction around the district. She has also met with individual teachers and teams to receive feedback and discuss their views on mathematical practices. From this information, we will provide collaborative professional development opportunities for all District 23 staff members that enhance student engagement in mathematics. Ultimately, these two initiatives will lead our committee to the alignment of mathematical practices across the district, which will increase student achievement in mathematics.
- **Library Media Center (LMC):** The LMC Curriculum Committee is working together to review the current curriculum and pacing within our Library Media Program in District 23. The committee includes library media specialists, instructional coaches, principals, and teachers to establish a collaborative approach to our implementation. We believe it's important to work together to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students because the Library Media Center is such a widely visited location in our buildings. This year, the Library Media Center Curriculum Committee will meet six times. We will review the Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Librarians (I-SAIL) Standards to ensure we are best meeting the needs of our students across all grade levels. In addition, we will collaborate with grade level teams to determine optimal methods of integrating library media skills throughout the school day.
- **Science:** The Science Curriculum Committee continues to focus on ensuring our teachers are supported throughout their readoption and implementation of Mystery Science (K-5) and StemScopes (6-8). So far, the committee has convened for one meeting and we have one additional meeting scheduled in April. As a part of this process, we have scheduled several professional development sessions at the elementary level and collaboration time for our middle school teachers to review their implementation and any questions they may have thus far.
- **Early Childhood:** The Early Childhood Team is to implementing their newly readopted Creative Curriculum for Preschool materials. They worked hard this summer to plan the scope and sequence of a 2-year track for the program and are working to establish consistency in navigating Creative Curriculum's online porta, Creative Cloud. This year, we have continued our committee from last year, and it will meet twice to monitor the status of our implementation and ensure our staff members are supported throughout the process. Thus far, the program continues to provide engaging, experiential learning for our youngest learners and has proven to be a beneficial addition to our district curricula.
- **Tech Connect:** The Tech Connect Committee oversees district technology needs, tracks the progress of our technology implementation, and prioritizes initiatives. This includes monitoring and recommending classroom/district equipment, purchases, applications, software, student data privacy, cybersecurity, and communication needs.
- **Multilingual (ML):** Our Multilingual Committee has met several times already this year. We are always discussing how we can improve the programs for Multilingual Learners. This year, we have worked hard to focus our efforts on improving instruction, focusing on data conversations, and improving our community connections. As a part of our work, we continue to look for ways to provide equity around our communications, connection to resources, and family engagement events. Most recently, we hosted

our Winter Bilingual Advisory Committee (BPAC) event, la fiesta de invierno, and have begun planning for future events such as Heritage Night, which will occur in February.

- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** Now that the district has created and rolled out our MTSS Handbook, Dr. Sroka, Mrs. Guza, and I continue to facilitate the MTSS Committee as a part of our continued work. We continue to make strong progress in the areas of behavior and social-emotional support as we look to provide a full complement of support for the whole student. This year, we will be continuing to focus on Tier II and Tier III work. This means that we will be focusing on the work and strategies support targeted students and those with more intensive needs.
- **District Improvement Team:** The District Improvement Team (DIT) met several times over the last couple of months. This committee is the leadership team of teachers and administrators across the district who provide oversight for the assessment calendar, use of data, and program evaluation. This year, our focus has been on our District 23 Strategic Plan goals and indicators of progress. After all, it is the task of all our district's educators to carry out and own our strategic plan.
- **Equity Team:** The Equity Team is a volunteer, representative group of administration, staff members, parents, and community members who are working together to ensure equity within our district. The committee continues to assess district programs, events, communications, and more to consider areas of equity around all components.

## **Assessment**

As you heard in our November presentation, the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) results are in as well as our Fall i-Ready benchmark data. Prospect Heights District 23's data was fantastic once again this year. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Betsy Ross, Anne Sullivan, and MacArthur Middle Schools all received commendable designations. That means their performance was just outside the top 10 percent of schools, they had no underperforming student groups, and a graduation rate greater than 67 percent. Once again, our schools continue to excel!

The Winter administration of the i-Ready assessment is currently underway. This helps us properly place students within our core curriculum and gives us guidance on their overall strengths and challenges in reading and math. The i-Ready Diagnostic will not affect a student's grade in English/Language Arts (ELA) or Math but will place them on a path that provides additional support and enrichment based on students' strengths and challenges.

We have also completed the Fall administration of the Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk (SAEBR) Screener, which occurred in October. This research-based, universal screener is used to help identify students who may be at risk for social, academic, and emotional concerns. This screener helps inform our school support teams and ensure students are receiving appropriate services through our district's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process.

For a full list of the assessments given in the district, please refer to the [2024-2025 District 23 Assessment Schedule](#).