

Curriculum Review & Revision

Spring 2018 - Fall 2019

Curriculum Advisory Committee
October 4, 2018

Purpose of the Curriculum Project

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is in the midst of a philosophical and instructional shift in order to better meet students' needs and raise student achievement (Personalized Learning).

So how do we answer the questions that arise related to curriculum and instruction?

- **What expectations do we have for following adopted curriculum?**
- **Have pacing guides become obsolete?**
- **How do innovative teaching and new structures align with curriculum?**
- **How do we put the needs of the learner first and still exist as a system?**
- **Do our process and policies support what we're trying to do with teaching and learning?**

Understanding the Current State

In February and March of 2018, Teaching and Learning conducted research to better understand curriculum realities on the ground. These learnings inform our future work. Here is an outline of the approach:

1. Survey

- **200 Survey Responses**
- Sent to all teachers and building leaders
- Survey open from February 14-28

2. Interviews

- **34 conducted (50 requested)**
- Mix of district leaders, school leaders, teachers
- 45 minutes each
- Conducted by Teaching and Learning (Director, Coordinators)

3. Synthesis

- Each Teaching and Learning member reviewed all survey responses, open responses and 5-7 interviews
- **Open responses to survey and interviews were coded for trends**
- Trends were shared with the project team, discussed and **consolidated into key themes**
- **Key themes were discussed and translated into growth opportunities**
- The opportunities will guide the design of improvement and solutions

Recurring Ideas

1. Purpose and definition of curriculum and materials is unclear
2. Lack of philosophical and structural alignment
3. Processes are too slow, not responsive
4. Need for clarification of parameters for academic freedom and teacher autonomy
5. Teachers lack trust in the way curriculum and materials are managed
6. Communication related to curriculum is lacking
7. Non-negotiables are fuzzy

Recommendations

Opportunities based on current state:

Assure **baseline** + provide space for **autonomy**

Define, document and iterate on **processes**

Communicate key **curriculum information**



1. Define and share district's curriculum expectations and where there is flexibility for teachers
 - a. Set short, medium, long term desired states
 - b. Create and share curriculum blueprint framework
 - c. Revise, share, improve curriculum guides
2. Define, test and iterate on curriculum processes
 - a. Revise long-term curriculum adoption process, establish process to enable frequent + responsive improvements
 - b. Determine roles and accountabilities
3. Communicate key curriculum information
 - a. Set calendar for adoption, feedback, training
 - b. Capture support channels and resources
 - c. Define and adjust T&L strategic roadmap

Guiding Principles

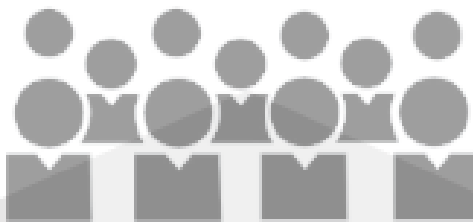
- **Students** and their needs must be **at the center** of learning and decision making around curriculum, instruction and materials
- Student centered learning happens through **personalizing learning**, with support of the Core 4
- Ultimately, the **teacher should decide** on the right mix of instructional practices and materials needed to facilitate learning experiences that meet students' needs
- **Equity is maintained** through teaching to the Alaska standards and maintaining a **baseline** for the quality of curriculum and instructional materials we use
- **Teachers are professionals with different needs**, styles and philosophies, therefore they need personalized support



**Curriculum
Blueprint**

Students

Students, their needs and the outcomes that we want them to reach are the primary influences on decisions related to what, how and why we design and use curriculum.



Prefer using adopted materials



Like foundation of adopted materials but may deviate at times



Prefer to design their own materials, lessons, and/or units based on curriculum standards

Teacher Preference

The Curriculum Blueprint offers flexibility to address different teacher preferences.

Prefer Structure

Prefer Flexibility

Teacher Practices

Teacher practice moves across a spectrum that may evolve over time or vary across content.

-Follow curriculum guide or scope and sequence from adopted materials
-Respond to student needs with adopted core and supplemental materials

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Baseline

Curriculum: All teachers are accountable for teaching to the Alaska state standards. Adopted standards and learning objectives are communicated through district [curriculum guides](#).

Assessment: PEAKs, MAP and AIMSweb are required for all [tested subjects](#).

Instructional Strategies: All teachers are expected to employ best practices (Core 4, Danielson) that personalize learning and facilitate deep mastery.

Instructional Materials: Teachers must use either district adopted materials or materials that meet these criteria: [\[add link/bookmark to supplemental selection criteria\]](#).



Curriculum Blueprint

To provide an equitable learning experience for our students, we also must set and maintain a baseline of expectations.

Resources

Standards + Curriculum	Assessment	Instructional Materials	Digital Content + Tools	Strategies + Models
Alaska Standards	Assessment Home	Adopted Core Materials (Textbooks)	Digital Content + EdTech Tools	Sample PL Models
Curriculum Guides	District Assessment Calendar	Adopted Supp. Materials	Guide to Selecting Supplemental Online/Offline Resources	Core 4 Tactics Bank
Achievement Level Descriptors	Sample PEAKS Assessment Items	Materials Selection Guide	Procedure for Adding Digital Content to your Device	
		Lesson Plan Templates		
		Sample Lessons		

Process

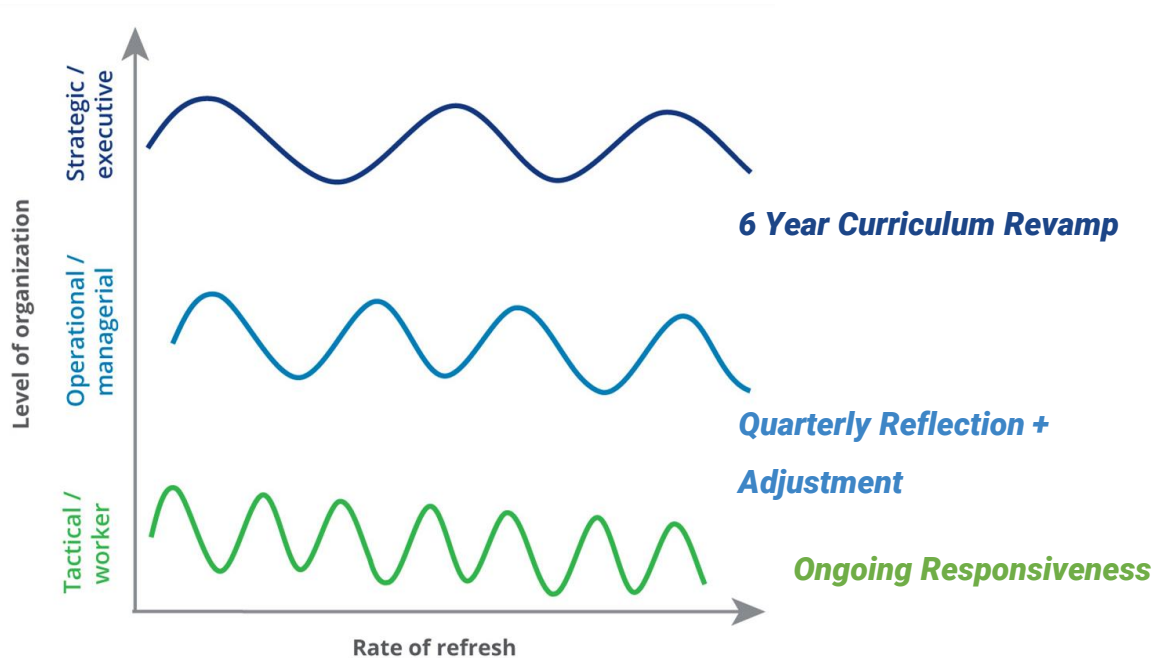
Three processes guide the way we manage our curriculum:

6 Year Curriculum Revamp - Are we going in the right direction? Why and in what ways should we change?

Fall + Spring Adjustment - Based on trends in the classroom experience, how should we adjust our plans and resources?

Ongoing Responsiveness - How do we respond and adapt to student and teacher needs on the ground?

3 Levels of Curriculum Management



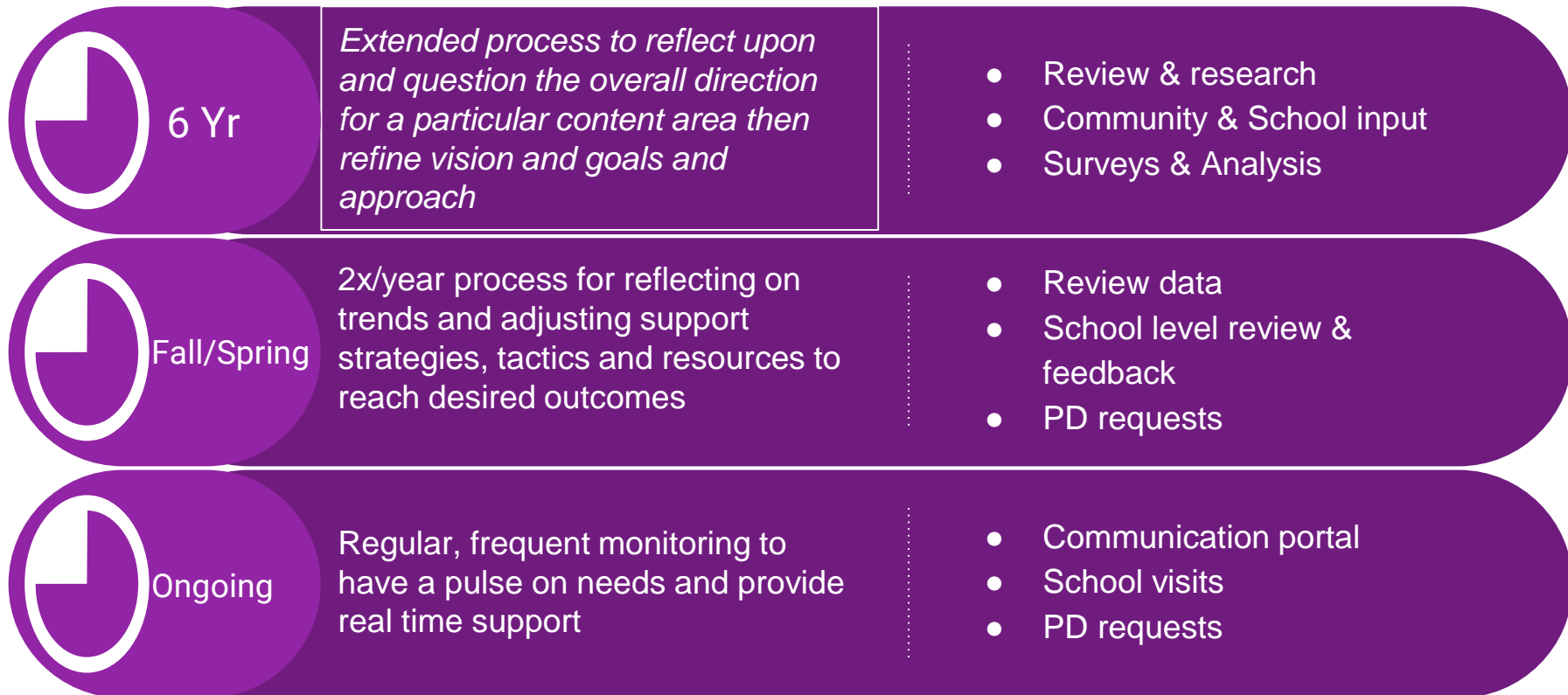
- Historically, the 6 year cycle has guided curriculum management
- Process is needed at multiple depths to be responsive at the philosophical, strategic and tactical levels
- More frequent interactions and adjustment help build trust and shorten gaps in time for identifying needs, responding and sharing

Source: Stanley McChrystal, in discussion with the author,
March 19, 2016.

Process Overview

Process	6 Year Curriculum Revamp	Fall + Spring Reflection and Adjustment	Ongoing Responsiveness
Purpose	<i>Extended process to reflect upon and question the overall direction for a particular content area then refine vision and goals and approach</i>	<i>2x/year process for reflecting on trends and adjusting support strategies, tactics and resources to reach desired outcomes</i>	<i>Regular, frequent monitoring to have a pulse on needs and provide real time support</i>
People	<i>Lead: Curriculum Coordinator, Director Support: Professional Learning Coordinator, LMS/IT Coordinator, Assessment + Intervention Coordinator, Curriculum Team (Teachers) Participants: Students, Teachers, School Leadership, District Leadership, School Board, Community</i>	<i>Lead: Curriculum Coordinator Support: Director, Curriculum Team (Teachers), Coaches, Mentor Teachers Participants: Teachers, Students, Principals</i>	<i>Lead: Coaches, Mentors, PL Teams Support: Curriculum Coordinator, Professional Learning Coordinator, LMS/IT Coordinator, Assessment + Intervention Coordinator Participants: Teachers</i>
Sample Activities	<i>Interviews, focus groups, surveys and analysis, researching best practices + developments in the field</i>	<i>Participate in and synthesize learning walk data, facilitate reflection conversations, promote and deliver training and resources</i>	<i>Observe classrooms, lead coaching conversations, review artifacts, co-plan lessons, share anecdotes/trends, share resources, connect teachers</i>

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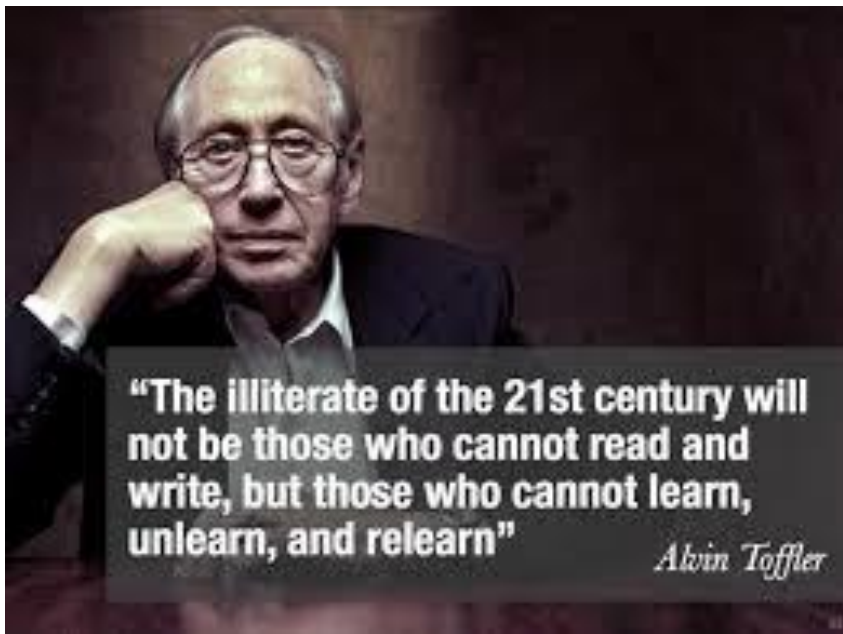


Next Steps

- Begin research & review process in January for secondary Language Arts and K-12 Social Studies.
- Draft and publish revised “curriculum blueprint” for elementary English/ Language Arts to consolidate information & resources
- Implement process for ongoing responsiveness (Let’s Talk)
- Begin revision of pilot course process.

Big questions:

- *How do we shift the process to get community / parent / stakeholder input at the **beginning** of the process? (Specifically as it relates to secondary ELA and social studies?)*
- *How should “curriculum” address non-academic or cross-content skills & expectations?*
- *What Knowledge/Understandings/Skills should a graduate of Fairbanks schools have and how do we build a series of requirements to deliver that graduate?*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpEFjWbXog0&scrlybrkr=6b443009>



"We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist . . . using technologies that haven't yet been invented . . . in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet."

RICHARD RILEY