

# **Curriculum & Instruction Department Update**

## **November 9, 2015**

**Submitted by Melanie Hadaway, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction**

The Curriculum Department has undergone quite a few changes this year, from adding new duties to a physical move to the second floor in the Administrative Center. This year the department's focus is on supporting the new teacher Educator Evaluation System based on the Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, which includes piloting Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for each teacher. All professional development and the work of Curriculum & Instruction Department staff is aligned to the Danielson's Framework, with specific attention to SLOs and supporting core classroom instruction.

### **Art Center**

The Art Center team continues to provide meaningful embedded professional development for all PreK-6 teachers, and engaging lessons for district elementary students. The school year began with scheduling challenges after the loss of one Art Specialist position. This year's approach for the Art Specialists is to teach model lessons that focus on the basic art elements and principles at every grade level. Each lesson builds students' knowledge and skills in a comprehensive and innovative format that includes APPS (Art Practice PageS), which provide students with art practice between visits. Teachers will be able to teach an art concept using only one kit that contains scaffolded, progressive lessons. Also, teachers will be able to use these lessons to measure student growth in a specific art concept over the course of three lessons.

Each fall the Art Center team meets with all school Art Liaisons, and provides support to teachers who have volunteered at their schools to assist with scheduling art lessons, managing supplies, and facilitating the Teaching Artists program with our partner organization, Fairbanks Arts Association. The Alaska Art Educators Association annual conference was held in Kodiak on October 2-4. The focus was on Art Therapy and Mindfulness, Painting, and Community Activism. One session included creating ornaments for the Alaska-themed National Christmas Tree in Washington D.C. Ornaments were created from marine debris that has washed ashore in Kodiak. The hope is to raise awareness of the harmful effects of ocean pollution through visual arts.

### **Assessment**

This year, assessment has moved into the Curriculum & Instruction Department. The District's comprehensive assessment schedule continues the College & Career Ready Assessment for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. All schools are providing the WorkKeys as the career ready assessment and the ACT as the college ready option for students. As was the case last year, the State pays for one administration for each senior during his/her junior or senior years. This school year the District will be using the NWEA/MAP assessment instead of the Terra Nova in grades 5, 7, and 9. District office staff attended training and teachers will be trained at the beginning of second semester.

The Department has focused on providing support to teachers and principals on the State Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) test. This support includes grade level breakouts of the test blueprints and the achievement level descriptors for the test claims. Mentor Teachers have also created documents to help teachers understand the test structures and alignment to state standards.

### **Career Technical Education:**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) continues to expand rapidly across the nation as public education works to help prepare students for employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our district's Strategic Plan addresses CTE with three main objectives, including the implementation of Career Exploration courses for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, while increasing both on-site and off-site CTE opportunities for high school students. Fields such as healthcare, information technology, transportation, and resource development offer thousands of high skill, high wage, high demand jobs right here in Alaska. Students often need both technical and academic skills to access these career opportunities. The mission of CTE is to help ensure that all students are college and career ready.

### **Health/PE/Science Revision**

The revision of these three curricula is in full swing. The second draft of each curriculum has been posted on the website and sent to district teachers, as well as principals, PTA's, community members and UAF faculty for comments. These revision groups have worked together as many of the topics are relevant to all three content areas. There are not many big changes to the content as compared to the current curriculum. The biggest changes are around alignment to the Alaska State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Although the State of Alaska has not adopted the NGSS, Commissioner Hanley has indicated that the State will begin work on new science standards within the next year.

### **Instructional Technology**

This quarter has seen the ITTs providing a variety of services to their assigned schools. The top areas they have been covering are:

- Support for new teachers
- Support and professional development for Canvas, Typing Agent, digital citizenship lessons, Envision Math, ThinkCentral, and Google Docs
- Modeling lessons in the classrooms based on identified needs of classroom teachers
- Support for Tanana's BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) pilot project through a 3-credit BYOD class utilizing the book *Power UP, Making the Shift to 1:1 Teaching and Learning*, attending Tanana's PLCs on Friday mornings, and providing targeted professional development based on teacher requests.
- Implementation of new to school devices: iPads and Chromebooks
- Ongoing AppTrack support
- Ongoing support for distance delivery including troubleshooting distance delivery equipment, professional development for teachers during their prep times and the two district inservice days, and ongoing support for students in utilizing their iPads or Chromebooks

- Targeting troubleshooting for devices such as iPads, Apple TVs, Reflector, etc.
- Providing sessions at the August and September inservice

### **Library Media Services**

Library Media Services (LMS) has been working through changes brought about from this department's move to the Curriculum & Instruction Department. As part of this shift, LMS has been working on streamlining the monthly report process from school librarians and library associates to principals and district staff. At the district level, LMS continues to support the thematic kits that are used to supplement curriculum, especially in science and social studies, and to promote a variety of media resources to schools, staff, and parents. LMS also provides oversight and management of the Destiny system, including the textbook system used by middle and high schools.

At the school levels, LMS supports school libraries at all levels. Monthly professional development for both elementary library associates and secondary librarians is provided, with strong support from the certified librarians themselves. At staff meetings, school library staff have given presentations on professional books (i.e Danielson Evaluation, Student Learning Objectives). High school library staff have also been helping to facilitate the Distance Delivery program within buildings.

### **Professional Development**

This year professional development focuses on two main areas: teacher evaluation using student data and good Tier 1 instruction. Since the beginning of this school year, teachers have had two districtwide inservices that supported these foci. On August 14, the morning time block was allocated for each school to discuss the new teacher evaluation process. In the afternoon, teachers chose from topics addressing classroom management, Student Learning Objective (SLO) support, and technology integration in classroom instruction. The districtwide inservice on September 28th hosted the Alaska State Literacy Association's annual conference. Sessions focused on literacy and student assessments, as well as math curriculum implementation, SLO support, and technology integration. Specific content areas including PE/Health, music, and world languages used this day to refine their SLOs and develop their year-long plans.

The Department also continues to support credit classes offered through UAF. These courses support the focus for this year and include classes on classroom and behavior management, implementation of the new math curriculum, STEM and technology in the classroom, kindergarten learner engagement, Thinking Maps to support all content areas, and differentiated instruction. During second semester, additional classes supporting effective core instruction will be offered.

### **Response to Intervention (RTI):**

The RTI department has changed this year with the reduction of some RTI-Aides and the addition of six, one-year only, Transition Facilitators who serve multiple schools within the district. The facilitators are working with principals and teachers to disseminate information about screening procedures and interventions, and implement training for

teachers and staff (SPED aides, ANE, ELL, etc) in Aimsweb universal screening and progress monitoring by the Spring Screening session. Their main focus is to help principals develop plans for implementation of effective intervention support for students in the case of reduced staffing support in the future. We currently have two RTI-Aides at each elementary school who provide support in the form of helping implement walk to interventions in 1st grade, assisting with introducing interventions to teachers, and providing support as teachers learn the Aimsweb system.

The fall screening in all schools was a success. Staff continues to prepare for the winter screening and is supporting student interventions, but is also reviewing efficacy of current models and looking for ways to improve student achievement.

### **Teacher Evaluation/ Student Learning Objectives**

The Department has made supporting teachers in the new Certified Employee Evaluation System a priority. Professional Learning has been aligned to the Danielson's Framework, and department staff is using the Framework as the basis for teacher and school-level support.

This year teachers are required to pilot the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) process. SLOs ask a teacher to identify a measurable academic goal based on baseline data for a specific group of students, and then monitor and assess students' progress towards that goal. The purpose of SLOs is to provide data that teachers and principals can use to discuss and reflect on student growth. There are a variety of ways of setting growth targets, and the final SLO is submitted by the teacher and approved by the building principal. The goal this year is for the teachers to learn the process of, and become comfortable with, SLOs as next year SLOs will be a factor in teacher evaluation. This first year many teachers don't have longitudinal baseline data, and available data varies according to the learning targets used by a teacher. However, as the SLO process continues, the baseline data becomes more focused and reliable. This year grant funding has provided a Student Learning Data Mentor to support teachers in this process. The curriculum department has provided recommended assessments and is also pursuing the use of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, which will provide a normed and valid assessment for use in SLOs.

### **Teacher Mentors**

This year the model for our grant-supported, Teacher Mentor positions has shifted to support the department's focus on teacher evaluation, implementation of Student Learning Objectives, and support of effective core instruction. There are three Teacher Mentors, each with a specific focus: New Teachers, Student Learning Data, and Literacy. There is also one unfilled position of a Teacher Mentor for Mathematics.

In addition to individualized support for classroom teachers, the Teacher Mentors have presented at staff meetings and schools' Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. Teacher Mentors provided sessions at districtwide inservices and are facilitating credit courses. The Mentor Teachers have created resources for teachers on the AMP assessment as well.