

# **UPPER MERION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT A ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE**

**THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

UPDATED JUNE 2015

*The mission of the Upper Merion Area School district is to inspire  
excellence...in every student, every day*

To achieve our mission, we believe:

- Our school district provides opportunities for every student to be a contributing member of a community – a member who: works collaboratively with others; makes decisions; solves problems
- Manages conflict; treats others with dignity and respect
- Each student feels a sense of belonging through participation in a wide and diverse choice of school sponsored extra-curricular activities
- Students and their families are supported by exemplary, comprehensive intervention services
- Students are exposed to appropriate, challenging and enriching experiences that guide their post secondary decisions
- Structures, procedures and programs are in place to ensure the safety of our students and staff

The Upper Merion Area School District School Board of Directors has adopted local board policies that govern curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These policies can be found on the District Website.

This guide provides procedures for curriculum development. Such procedures include:

- A curriculum framework
- Academic standards
- Activities and strategies for instruction
- Assessments
- Materials and Resources
- Interventions

Additionally, procedures are identified for curriculum review and revision.

In order to inspire excellence in every student...every day, Upper Merion Area School District recognizes the importance of alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and professional development. As the world moves forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, administrators and teachers must ask these questions:

**What is at the heart of curriculum?**

**What do our students need from their educational experiences in order to be successful in their on-going endeavors?**

**What do our teachers need in order to provide these experiences?**

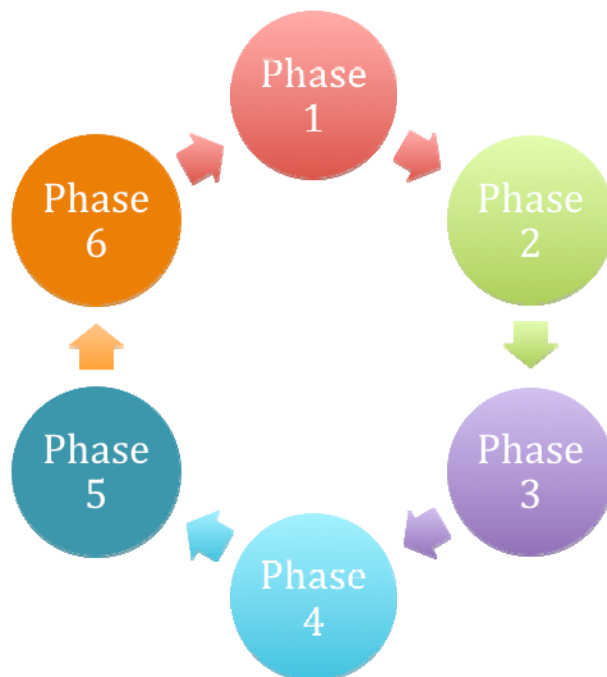
Outlining a roadmap for student learning will establish a collaborative process for engaging teachers and administrators in dialogue as we create our own understandings and beliefs about the importance of schooling through curriculum development. According to the work of Marzano (2003), who synthesized research data to identify key factors that have been shown to influence student achievement, one of the most influential factors within the school setting is the curriculum. The district curriculum is the blueprint followed by all teachers as they plan, organize and guide student learning and achievement. We believe that it is essential to recognize curriculum as a design for instruction and learning that reflects both the needs of the learner and the needs of society. Our vision for the learning experiences that will be provided to our students is based on a belief that excellence can be inspired in every student, every day and that it is our job to create the framework for that excellence through curriculum that is rich with rigor and educational opportunities that cultivate our students to achieve their greatest potential.

For schools to adequately respond to the changes and challenges of education for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and achieving, curriculum must be dynamic and must be viewed as a “living document” that is continually reviewed and revised. The changing needs of our students due to the continuously changing pace of educational research, technology, and a global society creates a need for readiness...readiness to respond in a timely manner to the curriculum needs of all students. In addition to viewing curriculum as a living document under continual review, the curriculum will undergo an in-depth evaluation as part of a multiple year curriculum cycle.

## Curriculum Evaluation, Review, and Development

Through Board Policy #105, the board of school directors acknowledges the educational value of curriculum development as an integral part of the instructional program. Curriculum is defined as a series of planned instruction that is coordinated, articulated and implemented to result in achievement of specific knowledge and skills, and application of such knowledge by all students. Curriculum will be reviewed and revised regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners as well as state and national standards.

### Curriculum Review Cycle:



**Phase One: Assess, Research and Development**  
**Phase Two: Curriculum Development, Identification of Resources/Materials, and Pilot**  
**Phase Three: Professional Development and Begin Implementation**  
**Phases Four and Five Full Implementation**  
**Phase Six: Monitoring and Evaluation**

The following process will be used

## **I. Study and Research - Phase One**

- Organization
  - A. Committee Structure – A study and research committee will be selected and, if possible, will be composed of the following:
    - a. Technology person/Keystone
    - b. Librarian
    - c. Special Education representative
    - d. Administrator from each level
    - e. Teacher representatives
  - B. Committee Protocols, Roles and Responsibilities
    - a. Communications are a key ingredient to success. A structure for communications will be developed and all work will be posted electronically.
    - b. An agenda will be established and distributed prior to each meeting by the committee chair to committee members and building principals.
    - c. Minutes will be taken for each meeting.
    - d. Follow-up reports will be presented by committee members to buildings via faculty meetings.
    - e. In addition to standing curriculum committees, various advisory and ad hoc committees may be created as sub committees to work on special projects under the direction of the appropriate curriculum supervisor.
  - C. The work of all of the committees will be brought back to the administrative team and IAC.

## **II. Curriculum Review - Phase One**

UMASD curriculum will be developed through a consistent, logical progression of thought and action and may consist of several of the following steps:

- Needs Assessment/District Survey
- K-12 curriculum mapping
- Data review and analysis
- Review of Trends and Issues
  - A. Trends: regional, national, international
  - B. National documents and reports
  - C. State and national standards documents
  - D. Site visits
- Identification of work to be done and creation of timeline

### **III. Curriculum Development – Phase Two**

Curriculum will be developed within a framework that will include a scope and sequence appropriate to subject and grade, further defined by enduring understandings, essential questions, competencies, resources, assessments and standards (PDE/Common Core)

#### **Frame The Curriculum**

- A. Write Enduring Understandings (using the SAS if available) – these are the expectations for what students will know and be able to do at the end of a unit/grade/course
- B. Write Essential Questions.
- C. Determine the sequence of the competencies that will support the exploration of the essential questions and ultimately the enduring understandings and big ideas. This will drive unit development.
- D. Determine acceptable evidence of student understanding to be used in all classrooms (The definitions for each type of assessment should be taken from the PDE Standards Aligned System)
  - a. Formative
  - b. Benchmark
  - c. Summative
- E. Plan learning experiences and instruction
  - a. Identify/develop activities and instruction that are aligned to the competencies
  - b. Eliminate content that does not provide such support
  - c. Learning experiences should be differentiated in order to meet the varied needs of students
- F. Identify instructional materials
- G. Commit curriculum to written format as per UMASD template
- H. Determine and list resources/materials and develop budget
- I. Arrange for presentations from vendors
- J. Select pilot programs and submit to School Board for approval of pilots
- K. Identify pilot teachers and communicate information regarding the pilot to all stakeholders
- L. Pilot chosen programs, collect and maintain data
- M. Evaluate pilot materials
- N. Present final documents and materials to the Board of Directors for approval

As per Board Policy #106, Guides for Planned Instruction should be prepared for every course taught in the district. Every planned course of study/curriculum document should:

- A. Be aligned to PDE and common core standards with standards not simply listed but integrated to support connections
- B. Reflect standards for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>)

- C. Wherever possible integrate with other content areas
- D. Identify enduring understandings and essential questions
- E. Identify core competencies, resources to be used, instructional strategies, activities and assessments
- F. Include performance assessments and scoring rubrics
- G. Assessments should include writing pieces and scoring incorporating PDE writing domains
- H. Reflect needs of multicultural learners
- I. The guides should reflect spiraled competencies

Through Board Policy #107, the board of school directors acknowledges that no planned instruction should be taught in district schools unless it has been adopted by a majority vote of the full board. The following process should be followed:

- Planned Instruction guides should be submitted to the following committees for preliminary review:
  - IAC
  - District Administrative Team
  - Curriculum Committee of the Board
- Following review by the Curriculum Committee of the Board, planned instruction documents should be presented to the school board for adoption.
  - E. Submit revised curriculum documents to IAC
  - F. Submit revised curriculum documents to the Curriculum Committee of the Board
- Determine and list resources/materials and develop budget
  - A. Arrange for presentations from vendors
  - B. Select pilot programs and submit to School Board for approval of pilots
  - C. Identify pilot teachers and communicate information regarding the pilot to all stakeholders
  - D. Pilot chosen programs, collect and maintain data
  - E. Evaluate pilot materials
  - F. Present final documents and materials to the Board of Directors for approval
- Plan for professional development
  - A. Identify professional development needed to implement curriculum
  - B. Develop a written plan and budget for professional development to include:
    - a. On-Going curriculum revision
    - b. Instruction
    - c. Assessment
  - d. Review professional development plan with Act 48 committee
  - C. Make recommendations to the District Administrative C & I Team
  - D. Make recommendations to the Instructional Advisory Committee
  - E. Make recommendations to the School Board

#### **IV. Implementation - Phases Three through Six**

Implement new curriculum

- Monitor curriculum annually
  - a. C&I/building principal responsibility
  - b. Establish how the curriculum will be monitored; develop walkthrough tools for monitoring curriculum
- Reflect and revise as needed
- Evaluate assessments and revise as needed
- Evaluate materials



## Curriculum Documents

### ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

Checklists:

#### Study and Research

- ☐ Initiate Committee
  - ☐ Committee Structure
    - ☐ Technology Person
    - ☐ Librarian
    - ☐ SPED representative
    - ☐ Administrator from each level
    - ☐ Building level representatives, one from each grade from each building
    - ☐ Teacher of the Gifted
  - ☐ Committee protocols, roles, and responsibilities
    - ☐ Agendas
    - ☐ Minutes
    - ☐ Monthly reports (committee member to buildings)

#### Curriculum Development

- ☐ Curriculum Mapping
- ☐ District Survey
- ☐ Review Data
- ☐ Research trends and issues
  - ☐ Site visits

#### Framing the Curriculum

- ☐ Identify 1 to 3 Big ideas/enduring understandings
- ☐ Determine essential questions
- ☐ Determine the sequence of the development of knowledge and skills
- ☐ Determine evidence of student understanding
- ☐ Specify formative and summative assessments with rubrics
- ☐ Identify/develop activities and instruction that supports the big ideas and essential questions
- ☐ Commit curriculum to written format as per UMASD template
  - ☐ Subject
  - ☐ Grade Level
  - ☐ Course title (High School)
  - ☐ Number of credits (High School)
- ☐ Aligned to standards, include learning objectives, resources used, core content, instructional strategies, activities and assessments
- ☐ Submit revised curriculum documents to Administrative C&I
- ☐ Submit revised curriculum documents to IAC
- ☐ Submit revised curriculum documents to the curriculum committee of the Board

## Curriculum Documents

### **Determine and list resources/materials and develop budget**

- \_\_\_ Arrange for presentations from vendors
- \_\_\_ Develop and use an evaluation tool to choose pilot programs.
- \_\_\_ Identify pilot materials and pilot teachers.
- \_\_\_ Pilot chosen programs
- \_\_\_ Evaluate pilot materials
- \_\_\_ Present resources/materials to the Curriculum Committee of the Board
- \_\_\_ Present adoption to the Board of Directors for approval

### **Plan for professional development**

- \_\_\_ Identify professional development needed to implement curriculum
- \_\_\_ Develop a written plan and budget for professional development to include:
  - \_\_\_ On-Going curriculum revision
  - \_\_\_ Instruction
  - \_\_\_ Assessment
- \_\_\_ Make recommendations to the District Administrative C & I Team
- \_\_\_ Make recommendations to the Instructional Advisory Committee
- \_\_\_ Make recommendations to the School Board

### **Implementation**

- \_\_\_ Implement new curriculum
- \_\_\_ Monitor curriculum
- \_\_\_ C&I/building principal responsibility
- \_\_\_ Establish how the curriculum will be monitored
- \_\_\_ Evaluate materials

## Curriculum Documents

### Curriculum Quality Checklist

*Although not all of these attributes may apply, quality is assured when these are taken in consideration.*

	<b>Essential Questions</b>
	Essential questions are directly aligned to the curriculum, the standards and benchmarks for the grade level
	Essential questions are driven by major tenets of the subject area
	Essential questions have no simple “right” answer
	Essential questions raise other important questions
	Essential questions effectively provide and sustain student inquiry, while also focusing the learning and final performance
	Essential questions require students to interpret, evaluate, reflect, explain, and/or synthesize information, as reflective of the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy
	Essential questions are framed to provoke and sustain student interest
	There are no more than 3-5 essential questions for the unit
	<b>Content and Skills</b>
	Content and skills are directly aligned with the essential curriculum (the standards and benchmarks)
	Content and skills are not so numerous that they interfere with depth
	Content is written in noun form
	Skills are written in verb form
	Skills should be behavioral, measurable and demonstrable
	<b>Assessments</b>
	Multiple indicators of assessment, both summative and formative are included as well as multiple types (examples: performance assessment, student self-assessment, student exhibits or models, observations, interviews with students, written products in response to prompts, dramatization)
	Students are provided with extremely clear expectations for meeting or exceeding the standards via identified criteria in student friendly language (rubrics and models)
	Assessments must directly align to essential questions. Assessments will provide evidence that the students have rigorously grappled with the essential questions
	Assessments must directly align with the standards and benchmarks
	Assessments are reflective of higher order thinking skills
	Assessments should provide challenge for all students, including those who master material quickly
	Consideration is given to students who may need multiple opportunities to reach the standard
	Opportunity is provided for quality student self-assessment

## Curriculum Documents

	<b>Instructional Lessons and Activities</b>
	Targeted learning objectives are clearly defined, well articulated and aligned with the unit's standards and benchmarks
	Includes well defined accommodations for how the objectives can be both extended and supported (differentiated)
	Activities noted for high student engagement
	Lessons and activities must directly align with the standards and benchmarks
	Activities help students address the essential questions in meaningful ways
	Lessons and activities should be closely aligned with the assessments
	Activities make use of high quality, supportive materials
	Technology is integrated when appropriate and serves to advance the learning

## **Lesson Planning**

Guidelines for the development of lesson plans

Lesson plans must include:

An alignment to PDE/Common Core Standards

- Standards must be stated

A specific objective or learning intention that makes clear what students should know, be able to do, and understand.

The big idea(s) of the lesson

Essential questions, which will drive the lesson

Any interdisciplinary connections

A Time Frame

Learning Activities

Resources and Materials

Assessments (Formative and/or summative)

## Proposal For A New Course

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Course Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Anticipated Implementation: \_\_\_\_\_

Rationale: *(Describe how this course will assist Upper Merion Area School students in achieving academic standards and preparing for 21<sup>st</sup> century success)*

Course Description:

Outline of the Course:

Materials Needed:

Other Useful Information: (additional pages may be attached)

Proposal Originator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Change in Course Request Form

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Course Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Change:

Rationale: *(Describe how this course will assist the Upper Merion Area School students in attaining the academic standards)*

New Course Description: (If applicable)

Proposal Originator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Course Approval Process Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Teacher completes new course proposal form
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Proposal is submitted to and approved by the Building Principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Subject Area Leader takes proposal to department chair meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Subject Area Leader sends proposal to Director of Curriculum
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Director of Curriculum submits proposal to Administrative C&I and IAC as information
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Director of Curriculum shares proposal with Superintendent
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Proposed course is presented during the December, March or June Curriculum Committee meeting of the BOE
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Proposed course is included in the draft of the Program of Studies. This draft of the Program of Studies is presented at the June Curriculum Committee meeting of the BOE
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Curriculum department facilitates full curriculum writing
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Curriculum department submit curriculum to Curriculum Committee of BOE by the December meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Full board approval



**Upper Merion Area School District**  
**Selection Procedures for Supplemental Instruction Materials**

***Instructional materials shall include reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia materials, maps, library books, software and instructional materials***

**Procedures:**

1. A New/Supplemental Material Proposal Form should be completed and submitted to the District Administrative C & I Team or designee
2. The teacher:
  - a. Provides copies of two independent and professional reviews of the book/instructional item
  - b. Obtains the endorsement of two teachers at his/her grade level within the building
  - c. Submits the proposal to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction or designee
3. Director of Curriculum and Instruction or designee assembles a review committee which may be comprised of some of the following:
  - a. A building level administrator
  - b. Department Subject Area Leader
  - c. A student
  - d. A parent
  - e. Another teacher from the department
  - f. A teacher from a different grade level and/or content area
  - g. Building Librarian
  - h. Reading Specialist
4. If the committee is familiar with the title/item and if the title is a canonical text/item that regularly appears on elementary, middle or high school curriculum documents/reading lists, the committee may approve the title/item upon reviewing the Proposal.
5. If the committee is unfamiliar with the title/item and if the book/item appears to fill a need in our District, the committee will begin the review process:
  - a. Committee members read or review the book/item
  - b. A readability analysis may be completed for materials to be used by students and the results are summarized.
  - c. Each committee member evaluates the title/item using the Approval Rubric.
  - d. The teacher proposing the title may/item be invited to attend the committee meeting to discuss the rationale for adding the title/item and to explain how they would use the title/item as an instructional resource.
  - e. The committee discusses the book/item and its appropriateness as an instructional resource in the grade for which it was proposed. The committee must reach consensus agreement in order to approve the title.
  - f. If the committee recommends approval, the recommendation will be forwarded to the District Administrative C & I Team.

**Upper Merion Area School District**  
**King of Prussia, PA 19046**  
**Book Selection Proposal Form**

Requester \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course name and grade \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_ ISBN \_\_\_\_\_

Reading Level \_\_\_\_\_ Digital Version \_\_\_\_\_

If this selection has a reading level more than one year greater or lesser than the grade for which it is being recommended, please give your rationale for selecting the book.

Type/Genre of Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

Universal Themes:

Describe the relation to curricula including grade-level content area application.

Will the selection be used for:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Whole Class Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Small Group Study (e.g., Literature Circles, Guided Reading, Independent Study)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Read-aloud or Audio Tape Selections: Whole Group or Small Group
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Independent, Self-selected Student Book Choice

*\*Note: For improved vertical alignment and to avoid repeated study of a single title, book selections will not be approved for more than one course or grade.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of hard copies requested

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of digital copies requested

Briefly, and in general terms, describe the primary instructional methodology you plan to use to bring this selection into your curriculum. (i.e., independent reading with reciprocal

teaching, independent reading with journaling and reader response, oral discussion, whole group reading etc.)

Does the selection provide non-stereotypical presentation of diverse racial, ethnic, gender and ability groups?        \_\_\_\_\_ NO        \_\_\_\_\_ YES

Describe how the book will broaden our understanding of our diverse community.

Please list at least 2 other titles you considered for use in this course.

Supplementary materials that raise extraordinary concerns regarding community standards must have significant redeeming value to warrant their use. Does this selection contain potentially inflammatory examples of profanity, graphic sexual incidents, gratuitous violence, questionable moral issues or value judgments, or controversial ideologies or philosophies?        \_\_\_\_\_ NO        \_\_\_\_\_ YES

If yes, please explain the value of including the selection in this course.

Briefly, why does this selection rise above the other considerations?

Please provide the names of alternative selections, should parents prefer that their child not read this book.

Signature of Requesting Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Endorsing Teachers (same grade level and building) who have read the book.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_