Upper St. Clair School District
Fall 2025
Curriculum Recommendations
January 12, 2026

Art

Rename *3D Studio Art*

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Rename 3D Studio Art to Sculpture Studio.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Mr. Matt Cosgrove	High School	Visual Arts	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. 3D Studio Art is considered to be the second level of the sculpture classes at the High School. Currently, Intro to Sculpture is followed by 3D Studio Art. In the other media areas, however, the titles are Intro to Ceramics, followed by Ceramics Studio, and Intro to 2D Art, followed by 2D Studio Art.

2. Art programs typically categorize classes by medium or discipline (Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, etc.). Sculpture Studio fits this structure, making it easier for parents, students, and counselors to recognize the course purpose.

3. Ultimately, this change in title will reduce student confusion when scheduling courses and make the course titles parallel across all art classes – intro courses followed by studio courses that contain the same medium names.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.

2. Update the *Program of Studies*.

3. Communicate changes to the NCAA in coordination with Counseling for approval.

4. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management.*

Cost
$0

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Ensuring that course titles reflect both the objectives and day-to-day student experiences is a helpful way to effectively communicate offerings in the department.

1 Year in Review

Business

Personal Finance Graduation Requirement

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
To implement the Pennsylvania Department of Education-mandated Personal Finance course beginning in 2026-2027.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Ms. Nikki Colella	High School	Business	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1) The State Board of Education approved new Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Personal Finance, along with updates to Chapter 4, which require instruction aligned to the new standards. The new standards go into effect on July 1, 2026.

2) Effective with the 2026-2027 school year, all Pennsylvania schools will be required to implement a mandatory personal finance course that students must complete during grades nine through twelve. This requirement is a result of Act 35 of 2023, which amended Section 1551 of the Public School Code of 1949 (Act 35). In addition, Act 91 of 2019 amended Section 1605 of the Public School Code of 1949 (Act 91), allowing students to apply credit earned in a personal finance course to other areas.

3) Based on a 2016 curriculum recommendation, Upper St. Clair High School developed and piloted a financial literacy (personal finance) course. Consequently, a curriculum/course that meets the new standards and corresponding state requirements has been developed. This recommendation takes an existing, approved curriculum and moves it from an elective course to a graduation requirement.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update the *Program of Studies.*
3. Develop units using *Atlas Curriculum Management*.
4. Revise all graduation requirements documents to reflect the Personal Finance requirement and updated credit counts.
5. Collaborate with K-12 leadership teams to ensure that personal finance and economics content is appropriately scaffolded across a student's school experience. Simultaneously, consider in what ways the personal finance requirement will support (1) continued development of the High School business courses and programs, (2) existing related content in mathematics and social studies/economics, and (3) career education and work (CEW) standards.

Cost

Summer workshop time for 2 teachers + 1 school counselor — 18 hours each x $36.33 = $1961.82

Administrative Reaction

Approved. It is commendable that USCSD is utilizing its established and Board-approved personal finance curriculum in response to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's new graduation requirement.

1 Year in Review

Pilot AP Business with Personal Finance

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Pilot a year-long AP Business with Personal Finance course offered to 9th and 10th-grade students.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Ms. Nikki Colella	High School	Business	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. Upper St. Clair High School has continued to explore opportunities to offer unique and career-preparatory courses in the area of business education. Based on the intended majors of USCHS graduates and current enrollment in business courses at the High School, a direct need is being served by this continued exploration. Specifically, cohort data from Naviance continues to indicate that 20% or more of Upper St. Clair High School graduates report that they would pursue a business-related major in college, and enrollment in the *CHS Marketing in an Interconnected World* and *CHS Financial Accounting* courses has proven student interest in business course offerings.

2. As part of ongoing research, AP Business with Personal Finance was identified and is a newly developed course by the College Board. In this yearlong course, students will explore fundamental principles of business, including how businesses create value and operate, how organizations compete in dynamic markets, and how leaders analyze situations and make decisions. The course also introduces students to the personal finance practices essential to making money and managing it, including earning income, spending and saving, investing, and managing credit and risk.

3. The objectives of the AP Business with Personal Finance course align with the district initiatives presented in the 2021 Fast Track Curriculum Recommendation to reimagine business course offerings at the high school to expose students to entrepreneurial skills, real-life problem-solving experiences, human-centered design thinking, innovation, and the exploration of market needs.

4. Students who choose to take AP Business with Personal Finance in 9th grade will be better prepared for additional AP coursework that is currently offered to upperclassmen.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.

2. Update the *Program of Studies* to include the new pilot course offering of AP Business with Personal Finance as an option for 9th and 10th-grade students.

3. Provide summer workshop time for the teacher to develop the AP Business with Personal Finance curriculum and materials.

4. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management*

5. Pilot the new course offering in the 2026-27 school year.

Cost
30 workshop hours @ $36.33 per hour x 1 teacher = $1,089.00

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Exposing students to rigorous coursework early in high school is a helpful way to support transition to upper-level classes. Ascertaining a full understanding of how this course does or does not align with PDE's personal finance graduation requirement should remain a key way to assess the pilot.

1 Year in Review

Adopt CHS Marketing in an Interconnected World

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
To formally adopt the Robert Morris University *CHS Marketing in an Interconnected World* course that has been piloted during the Spring and Fall 2025 semesters.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Ms. Nikki Colella	High School	Business	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. This recommendation is a result of the Spring 2023 curriculum recommendation to pilot two Robert Morris University Business Academy College in High School (CHS) courses with the intention of developing an Upper St. Clair High School Business Program for the spring of 2024.

2. The pilot of the CHS Marketing in an Interconnected World course, offered during the Spring and Fall 2025 semesters, resulted in 77 students enrolling in the course, with 57 choosing to earn credit from Robert Morris University. The pilot results show clear student interest.

3. Each of these Robert Morris University CHS courses transfers as three credits at RMU and many other colleges and universities. The RMU School of Business is accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). AACSB accreditation is nationally recognized as highly rigorous and is looked favorably upon by employers.

4. Per recent legislation, all public school districts are required to engage in dual credit agreements with institutions of higher education, and such agreements should serve a wide range of students and student interests. Dual credit coursework agreements will be reflected in the District's comprehensive plan, and such courses are required to be weighted as other higher-level (AP, IB) coursework. Students who engage in rigorous, college-preparatory coursework continue to demonstrate college perseverance.

Implementation Steps
1. Seek administrative approval.

Cost
None

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Enrollment during the pilot and the opportunity for students to earn college credit while in high school suggest that a full adoption of this course is appropriate and supportive of the Business Department's goals.

1 Year in Review

English Language Arts

Revision of English 9/MYP English 9 Nonfiction Unit

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
To revise the English 9/MYP English 9 Nonfiction Unit to include an optional text for students

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Melissa Tungate	High School	ELA	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. Currently, the nonfiction unit includes the study of *Bomb: The Race to Build –and Steal– the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin, which explores the true story of the creation of the first nuclear weapon. While this text is required reading, students are able to access the text independently without much additional direct support from teachers, allowing teachers to focus on the elements of nonfiction, including the structure of the text.

2. With the addition of *Radium Girls: A Young Readers' Edition* by Kate Moore, students will have a choice of texts in this unit. Offering two equally rigorous texts empowers students and gives them greater ownership of their reading. Text options support student engagement by allowing them to select a text based on individual cross-curricular interests, including history, science, innovation, ethics, and government.

3. Each text highlights the role of science and technology in shaping history, but from different perspectives—those leading nuclear development in *Bomb* and the labor force working directly with radioactive materials in *Radium Girls*. The addition of *Radium Girls* expands curricular diversity, ensuring all students encounter meaningful nonfiction while fostering critical thinking about the consequences of scientific progress.

4. Both *Radium Girls* and *Bomb* share the following pedagogically-relevant characteristics:
    - independent reading levels appropriate for ninth grade
    - narrative structure, weaving together multiple storylines and geographic locations
    - historical significance
    - themes around the varied outcomes of scientific innovation
    - developmentally-appropriate topics and content

5. Providing text choice in the nonfiction unit will help students develop critical skills in the core areas of English Language Arts: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
    - Peer-teaching opportunities: students who read different texts can present their findings to classmates, becoming the "experts" on their book and teaching others.
    - Student-led discussions: choice sets up natural cross-text conversations, encouraging students to generate questions, compare perspectives, and lead dialogue.
    - Authentic accountability: when students must share and explain their chosen text, they practice strategies to develop deeper comprehension and

take responsibility for mastering the material.
- Collaboration and independence: students develop independence in reading their selected text, while also collaborating by connecting themes and generating ethical questions across both books.

6. As with *Bomb*, *Radium Girls* has become culturally relevant as a modern classic.
   - Awarded "Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People" by the National Council for the Social Studies
   - Named "Notable Non-Fiction Book" by the American Library Association
   - A Junior Library Guild Selection
   - Adapted into a play, written by D.W. Gregory

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.

2. Develop new activities and assessments to align with the revised goals of the nonfiction unit.

3. Revise and update curriculum, including updating *Atlas Curriculum Management*

4. Offer option to read *Radium Girls* alongside *Bomb* in the second semester of English 9/MYP English 9.

5. Continue to review the nonfiction unit to consider additional optional texts for English 9/MYP English 9.

Cost

$20 x 110 books =$2200

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Integrating new non-fiction texts as a consequence of revision to a broader non-fiction unit ensures that essential questions and course objectives remain central.

1 Year in Review

Revision of AP English Language Synthesis Unit

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
To revise the AP English Language Synthesis Unit, including the adoption of *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Melissa Tungate	High School	ELA	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. Currently, the AP English Language Synthesis Unit does not have a core text. The unit focuses on the students' development of a synthesis argument, researching and creating an argument using primary and secondary source evidence to support a chosen topic. While students read and research short texts for evidence to support their argument, they do not read a full-length text that creates its own synthesis argument. Studying a text that incorporates sources into a narrative will help students understand the process of weaving sources together while creating a cohesive style.

2. In *The Devil in the White City,* Erik Larson retells the true story of the 1893 World Fair in Chicago, weaving together details from the architects and construction of the fair and including the parallel story of a serial killer lurking at the same time. Larson cites various sources in retelling these stories, supporting his claims with evidence. His story also references many other historical figures, including Buffalo Bill, Theodore Dreiser, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and others.

3. The study of *The Devil in the White City* will support students' work with synthesis skills because Larson threads sources together to tell his narrative. Studying this text will allow students to analyze how an author weaves together sources to support his overarching claims, modeling the process and product. Furthermore, the study of this text will meet the following AP English Language reading skills from the College Board:
    - **Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.**
    - **Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.**
    - **Explain how writers' stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.**

4. *The Devil in the White City* has won many awards, highlighting its significance as a nonfiction text:
    - **Finalist for the National Book Awards in 2003 for Nonfiction**
    - *Kirkus Reviews* **Best Nonfiction Book of the Century**
    - Los Angeles Times **Best Nonfiction Book of the Last 30 Years**
    - **Won the 2004 Edgar Award** from the Mystery Writers of America as that year's best fact crime book
    - **2003 International Horror Guild Award for Nonfiction**

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management.*
3. Purchase texts and begin teaching in the second semester of the 2025-2026 school year.

Cost

$27 x 40 copies = $1,080

Administrative Reaction

Approved. It is a worthwhile effort to revise a unit for the purpose of adding a full-length text. Additionally, providing students with a mentor text that exemplifies a particular writing style is a best practice.

1 Year in Review

Revision of Communications Pathway

RECOMMENDATION:
To revise the Communications Course Pathway, combining Multimedia Journalism with Intermediate Communication Arts, and allowing students to take Intermediate Communication Arts more than once.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Melissa Tungate	High School	ELA	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. This recommendation is the result of continued work to review, revise, and align course offerings in the Communications Pathway available for students. Currently, students who have taken an introductory level course (Mastering Media, Intro Communication Arts, or Intro Video) may take either Intermediate Communication Arts or Multimedia Journalism. With a spring 2025 curriculum recommendation, Multimedia Journalism moved from a year-long, independent study course to a semester course scheduled during the traditional school day.

2. With the changes to Multimedia Journalism and the implementation of the semester elective of Intermediate Communication Arts, the courses now have overlapping objectives, leading to a need to combine them into a single course: Intermediate Communication Arts. Folding these courses into one will give students a clearer, more consistent pathway to follow. Intermediate Communication Arts will continue to focus on the production of content for student publications, just as Multimedia Journalism has.

3. Intermediate Communication Arts will also use additional supplementary resources, including excerpts from texts such as *Mobile and Social Media Journalism: A Practical Guide for Multimedia Journalism*, Second Edition. Students will use supplementary resources as a theoretical groundwork throughout the semester as they also cover various practical guidelines for creating content.

4. The change enables students to enroll in Intermediate Communication Arts more than once since the focus is on the production of content and the ongoing study of ethical communication. This change also follows the same process that the video strand of communications follows; students take a semester of Introduction to Video and may then take a semester of Intermediate Video more than once.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update *Program of Studies* for the 2026-2027 school year.

3. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management.*
4. Continue to build community connections, including with local universities, businesses, and professionals in the field.
5. Begin using approved resources in Spring 2026.

Cost

Course resources: approx $1,000

Administrative Reaction

Approved. A coherent pathway allows students to build skills in a purposeful way. Identifying the right timing to further develop the communication pathway should be the result of careful consideration of enrollment data, student feedback, and staffing availability.

1 Year in Review

Revision to Creative Writing Resources

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
To supplement resources for the Creative Writing elective and adopt *Save the Cat! Beat Sheet Workbook (2022)*

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Melissa Tungate	High School	ELA	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. Currently, *The Creative Writer's Craft* (1999) does not include daily fiction (prose) writing prompts that establish a writerly practice.

2. *Save the Cat! Beat Sheet Workbook*: *How Writers Turn Ideas Into Stories* by Jamie Nash (2022) presents organized and guided prose prompts that help young writers develop plot or characterization for narrative fiction.

3. *Save the Cat! Beat Sheet Workbook*: *How Writers Turn Ideas Into Stories* is an individualized workbook for students to write in and take with them after completing the course. Therefore, as a consumable resource, it will need to be purchased every year for every student enrolled.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.

2. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management* to include daily practice exercises.

3. Purchase workbooks and begin using them in the second semester of the 2025-2026 school year.

Cost

$ 19.95 x 20 = $399.00

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Interactive and engaging resources that support learners' participation in a workshop-style environment fulfill course goals.

1 Year in Review

Pilot the novel *Force of Nature* in 6th grade

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Pilot the novel *Force of Nature* by Ann E. Burg

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Sherri Garvey	Middle School	ELA	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. The Middle School ELA Department has the long-term objective of continuing to improve novel selections at Boyce Middle School with the intent to provide students with exposure to a variety of genres, rigorous reading levels, and engaging and appropriate content. The ultimate goal of new novel selections is always to align with the curriculum and instruction, as well as to inspire a lifelong love of reading. Adjustments to the current pairings and/or sequencing of novels are needed to continue to meet these goals at the highest level possible.
2. To accomplish the goals above, *Force of Nature* was read and reviewed by a team of teachers and administrators. The consensus of the review team was that this novel meets curricular objectives, highly aligns with cross-curricular objectives, and increases student engagement.
3. *Force of Nature* is a novel written in verse that tells the story of Rachel Carson, a Pennsylvania-born scientist and writer whose groundbreaking work helped launch the modern environmental movement. The book traces her journey from a curious child exploring the woods and streams near her home to a determined scientist who used her love of writing to share the wonders of the natural world.
4. This novel meets the curriculum objectives of analyzing how particular lines, chapters, or stanzas fit into the overall structure of a text and contribute to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. The poetic structure of the text allows students to analyze figurative language, the author's purpose, and text structure through a unique style of writing.
5. The topics and themes presented in *Force of Nature* will offer opportunities for layering of non-fiction texts, as well as cross-curricular connections with 6th-grade STEELS standards, specifically focusing on environmental stewardship.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval
2. Develop an instructional unit, including assessments that are in alignment with the ELA curriculum for this grade level.
3. Conduct a 6th-grade pilot of *Force of Nature* by Ann E. Burg during the fourth quarter of the 2025-26 school year.
4. Complete an evaluation of the pilot, and if successful, consider adoption of the title.

Cost

$1560.00 for 120 hardback copies (each 6th-grade ELA teacher will get a class set of books)
5 substitutes for the 6th ELA team to work and create materials.

Administrative Reaction
Approved. The strategic selection of engaging, rigorous, and curriculum-aligned novels is essential for driving student achievement and upholding the ELA department's instructional standards.

1 Year in Review

Elementary ELA Curriculum/Assessment Tool Study: K-4

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct a comprehensive review of the current K–4 ELA instructional materials to evaluate their alignment with state standards and evidence-based literacy practices. Explore and compare alternative ELA programs that demonstrate strong research support and cohesive skill development across grade levels. In conjunction with this review, pilot a standards-based assessment tool that provides actionable data to guide instructional decision-making and improve student outcomes in literacy.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Dr. Lindsay Klousnitzer Mrs. Katie Cansick	Elementary	ELA K-4/Special Education	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. Ensure Alignment to State Standards and Evidence-Based Practices: A review of the current K–4 ELA materials is essential to determine whether instruction aligns with state literacy standards and reflects current evidence-based practices, including the science of reading. Alignment ensures that all students receive systematic and explicit instruction in foundational skills, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. By identifying gaps or redundancies in the current program, the district can strengthen instructional coherence and ensure consistent expectations across grade levels. This review is also timely given the passage of Pennsylvania Senate Bill 801 (Act 135 of 2024)—the *Literacy Achievement for All Pennsylvanians* legislation. Ensuring alignment will position the district to meet new state expectations, support teacher training in structured literacy, and improve literacy outcomes for all students through cohesive, research-supported

instruction. In addition, Pennsylvania Senate Bill 315 of 2025 has established new requirements regarding evidence-based reading instruction curricula and professional development.

2. Strengthen Vertical Articulation and Instructional Consistency: Exploring alternative, research-based ELA programs enables the district to identify materials that foster a cohesive, vertically aligned progression of literacy skills. A well-designed program ensures that instruction builds purposefully from one grade to the next, preventing skill gaps and promoting continuous growth in reading and writing. Greater consistency across classrooms and grade levels supports smoother student transitions and empowers teachers to plan instruction within a unified, standards-aligned framework. Additionally, as the middle level examines current reading supports to strengthen ELA outcomes, there is a timely and valuable opportunity to align instructional practices and resources across elementary and middle grades, ensuring a seamless and connected literacy experience for all students.

3. Align Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III ELA Supports for Cohesion: Reviewing and revising ELA materials provides an opportunity to align Tier I (core instruction), Tier II (targeted small-group support), and Tier III (intensive intervention) instruction within a unified framework. When classroom instruction and intervention resources share the same language, strategies, and skill progression, students experience seamless support rather than disconnected interventions.

4. Use Data to Drive Instructional Decisions and Student Growth: Piloting a standards-based assessment tool will provide teachers and administrators with timely, actionable data linked directly to ELA standards. This data can be used to monitor student progress, guide small-group instruction, and target interventions where needed. Implementing an assessment system connected to daily instruction will help educators make informed decisions that improve literacy outcomes and ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction for all learners.

Implementation Steps

Phase 1:

- Clearly define the purpose of the ELA program review, focusing on alignment to state standards, evidence-based literacy practices, vertical coherence, and the integration of Tier I, II, and III supports.
- Form an ELA Curriculum Review Committee (teachers K–4, special education, ESL, resource teachers, administrators).
- Hold an initial orientation meeting to review process, timeline, and evaluation rubric.

Phase 2:

- Research Potential Programs: Identify other ELA programs for in-depth study based on district needs, alignment to the science of reading, and successful implementation in comparable districts. Gather preliminary information from publishers and independent reviews to ensure programs meet the established evaluation criteria.
- Review independent research on each program's effectiveness and alignment.
- Conduct publisher presentations and committee review sessions.
- Schedule site visits to local districts currently implementing these programs.
- Begin potential pilot planning for Fall 2026.
- Provide a recommendation of findings in Spring 2027 and determine any additional implementation steps.

Cost
TBD for resources as reviewed for pilot
Final costs of programs and/or contracts will be provided to the Board for approval

Administrative Reaction
Approved. A focus on reading, programming, and assessment is key to student success. The vertical alignment with the middle school study also provides further rationale for this elementary study.

1 Year in Review

Mathematics

Rebrand and reorganize the Conceptual FST and Academic FST courses.

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Rebrand and reorganize the curricula of the Conceptual Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry, and Academic Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry courses into courses titled "Algebra 3 with Statistics" and "Precalculus", respectively.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Mr. Steve Miller	High School	Math	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. The reorganization of these courses establishes clearer academic pathways. The current course titles are vague. The new names, "Precalculus" and "Algebra 3 with Statistics," clearly communicate the purpose of each course to students, parents, and counselors. This ensures students are placed in the course that best aligns with their post-secondary goals, whether that is a 12th-grade Calculus course or a 12th-grade Statistics course.

2. The modifications to the content of these courses will make them more aligned with students' mathematical goals. The majority of students who complete the "Conceptual FST" course do not choose to take a calculus course, opting instead for a statistics course. By replacing that course with "Algebra 3 with Statistics" and removing the trigonometry content, which is not a prerequisite for statistics, students can dedicate more time to strengthening the algebraic and statistical reasoning skills they will need for success in high school or college-level statistics.

3. By reconfiguring these courses, students will be able to delve more deeply into mathematics that is relevant to them. The breadth of the current courses reflects a "one-size-fits-all" approach in an attempt to prepare every student for every possible future math course. This has had the effect of making the courses unnecessarily difficult while also not optimizing for students' needs. This proposal narrows the focus of each course to its essential purpose:
    a. **Precalculus** will focus entirely on the advanced algebra and trigonometry skills required for Calculus, removing the statistics and probability units.
    b. **Algebra 3 with Statistics** will focus on essential algebra concepts and an introduction to statistics, removing the trigonometry units. This focused approach will allow for greater depth of instruction and improved student mastery.

4. The name change from Academic FST to Precalculus will provide greater transcript clarity. "Precalculus" is a well-recognized course title that provides clarity to college admissions personnel reviewing student transcripts, accurately reflecting the course's calculus-preparatory rigor.

5. In order to maintain consistency and clarity across levels, a corresponding name change to the Honors FST to Honors Precalculus would also be made. No curriculum changes would be made to this course.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update the *Program of Studies*.
3. Provide the Counseling Department information and guidance about how these changes should affect students' enrollment decisions.
4. Communicate changes to NCAA in coordination with Counseling for approval.
5. Develop new course materials to enhance the depth of the curriculum in the existing units of study.
6. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management* with new course names and modifications to existing units.

Cost

1. Summer workshop hours for 2 teachers to develop new materials (30 hours x 2 teachers x $36.33 = $2179.80)

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Clearly communicating course objectives to families and postsecondary institutions, as well as articulating subsequent pathways within mathematics, supports a coherent approach to course planning. Ensuring that courses meet the needs of learners across a continuum of abilities is a laudable goal of this recommendation.

1 Year in Review

Wellness

Adopt the Glencoe Health textbook

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
As part of a multi-year revision of health and wellness curriculum and programming, a revision to the curriculum and programming will integrate health and physical education through a standardized wellness curriculum that includes a pilot of Glencoe Health 9-12 and supplemental materials.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Ms. Dana Mellinger	High School	Wellness	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. As identified in a Spring 2023 curriculum recommendation, the Upper St. Clair School District has recognized the need for enhanced and increased programming related to health and wellness. The landscape of student well-being, locally and societally, has changed significantly since the existing structure and curriculum were put into place. Since that time, extensive research has been completed to identify the best ways to provide high-quality and impactful curriculum and programming for students. This research included consideration of current programming, mandates, and standards.

2. The Pennsylvania State Department of Education is set to release updated Academic Standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education. Proposed Standards include outcomes in the following areas: Alcohol and Other Drugs, Nutrition, Personal Health, Mental/Emotional Health, Physical Health, Healthy Relationships/Sexual Education, Tobacco Education, Violence Prevention, and Safety/Injury Prevention. These nine areas provided a framework for considering course design and curricular resources. While specific Academic Standards are not official, these topics are recognized by the District as crucial components of responsive health programming for our students.

3. In order to ensure consistent and high-quality instructional experiences for students, research was done to identify a textbook that could be used as a primary curricular source. The textbook identified for piloting is Glencoe Health (2022), a market-leading textbook used by many peer districts and noted for its age-appropriate, standards-aligned content. A thorough review of this textbook revealed many strengths in terms of content, standards alignment, usability, and instructional resources. Teachers have begun to identify the content that will be used in each grade level and have identified topics that will necessitate the use of additional, supplemental instructional materials in alignment with the supplemental materials administrative regulation.

4. The Textbook Evaluation Form provides additional details regarding the selection of this text versus the other texts reviewed.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management.*

Cost:

- Textbooks were purchased during the pilot phase.
- Six digital licenses for instructors: $1,310.40

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Grounding health instruction in an updated core resource ensures consistency across instructors, alignment with state standards, and a contemporary context.

1 Year in Review

Music

Pilot a Prelude Ensemble course for the High School Orchestra Program

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Pilot the Prelude Ensemble Course in the High School Orchestra Program

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Dr. John Seybert	High School	Music	Fast Track Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. The High School Orchestra has traditionally operated as a single ensemble. However, as student enrollment has increased and achievement levels have broadened, it has become difficult for less experienced or developing players to perform at the rigor required. Offering two ensembles allows students to be placed according to their developmental needs and musical readiness, resulting in more appropriate pacing and a stronger overall learning environment. This structure mirrors successful models already established in the Band and Choir programs and provides a consistent approach to differentiation across the Performing Arts Department.

2. Student achievement data illustrate the need for a second ensemble to support the diverse learners in the program. For example, sight-reading abilities currently span from PMEA Level I to Level IV, and several students require direct support in technical areas such as tone production, bow hold, and instrumental fluency. At the same time, the program includes students who have been placed in the PMEA Honors Orchestra and are prepared for PMEA Level V–VI repertoire. A two-ensemble structure ensures that all learners—developing, intermediate, and advanced—have equitable access to instruction that meets their needs and supports their growth.

3. A two-ensemble structure enhances the student experience and contributes to stronger retention within the program. Prelude Orchestra will give developing players the time and support they need to build foundational skills with confidence. At the same time, the Orchestra will offer advanced students the rigor and challenge necessary for continued growth.

4. The Prelude Orchestra will serve developing musicians who need additional time for foundational skill development. The ensemble will perform PMEA MPA Level II-III literature and foster an encouraging environment where students can strengthen musical literacy, technique, and ensemble awareness. With an estimated enrollment of sixteen students, the course supports meaningful differentiation and responsive instruction.

5. The current Orchestra ensemble will serve advanced string musicians prepared to study more rigorous repertoire, chamber literature, and performance-based projects. The ensemble will focus on PMEA MPA Levels IV and V, with opportunities for small-group work, community performances, and preparation for school musical pit orchestra literature during class time. With an estimated enrollment of 21 students, the prelude ensemble will be well-balanced and capable of sophisticated performances.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.
2. Update the *Program of Studies*.
3. Revise/edit the course selection form.
4. Inform students and families who express interest in the pilot course about the course offerings in the USCHS Orchestra Program.
5. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management* to incorporate the course and its curriculum.

Cost

- Summer workshop project
- Course materials - TBD

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Systematic differentiation is a valuable way to support student growth while still promoting community across ensembles.

1 Year in Review

Remove Music Theory and Technology Course from the High School Program of Studies (course 811)

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Remove the Music Theory and Technology Course from the High School *Program of Studies*

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Dr. John Seybert	High School	Music	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. This recommendation reflects the district's commitment to providing relevant, research-supported, and student-centered music learning experiences. Given the addition of 812 Music Technology and Digital Groove Lab, the current 811 Music Theory & Technology course no longer aligns with contemporary practices in secondary music education.

2. Music Theory and Technology is not a prerequisite for AP Music Theory. Therefore, most students interested in a Music Theory course will take the AP Music Theory course, as evidenced by the low enrollment in the Music Theory and Technology course over the past five years.

3. Offering both course 811 and course 812 creates redundancy and confusion for students, families, and counselors. The 812 Music Technology and Digital Groove Lab will provide a modern, skills-based approach that includes current practices.

4. Research indicates that enrollment trends for non-traditional secondary music students gravitate toward classes that emphasize hands-on creativity, digital media production, and contemporary musical styles. The existing 811 course title no longer reflects the kind of music-making students expect; removing it will streamline course offerings. Additionally, the current 811 Music Theory & Technology course relies on traditional music-literacy skills, which may unintentionally restrict access for students without formal ensemble experience. The 812 Music Technology and Digital Groove Lab removes these barriers and creates equitable entry points for all learners. Consequently, students will be directed to a more engaging, research-based pedagogical approach that reflects 21st-century music learning.

Implementation Steps

1. Remove the 811 Music Theory and Technology course from the High School *Program of Studies.*

Cost:

None

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Consolidating and sunsetting courses in the name of establishing new, relevant, and engaging elective options is an important action.

1 Year in Review

Revise and rename *Music Technology and Digital Production* (course 812)

RECOMMENDATION:
Revise and rename the current 812 course title to Music Technology and Digital Groove Lab

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
John Seybert and Nick Deutsch	High School	Music	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

Overview: To reflect current practices in secondary music education and to expand opportunities for students who thrive outside of traditional ensemble settings, it is recommended that the course **Music Technology and Digital Production** be renamed to **Music Technology and Digital Groove Lab**. This updated title more accurately represents the hands-on, creative, and collaborative nature of the course, and aligns with the diverse pathways today's students use to engage musically.

Rationale for Course Name Change

1. Reflects Contemporary Musical Identity and Interests - many high school students connect with music through *beat making, sound design, electronic music, looping, remix culture,* and *Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)-based composition*. "Digital Groove Lab" communicates the rhythmic, creative, and experimental work students will actually experience in class, making the course more appealing and relevant.

2. Increases Access for Non-Ensemble Students - a portion of students seek musical experiences outside of band, choir, or orchestra.
The course name indicates that no prior performance experience is necessary, and creativity and personal expression are at the center. This aligns with current pedagogy emphasizing inclusive and differentiated musical pathways.

3. Aligns with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and Modern Music Pedagogy Standards. Contemporary music research advocates for: vernacular and popular music education, music technology literacy, student-driven creation and composition, and collaborative, lab-based learning. The new name better reflects these priorities and communicates a 21st-century approach to music instruction.

4. "Digital Groove Lab" stands out as energetic and modern. The title is relevant to student interest in digital media, supports program growth and diversity, and enhances a more contemporary identity for this aspect of the department.

5. Emphasizes rhythm-driven production, which is central to today's music. Most popular genres—hip-hop, EDM, pop, R&B, lo-fi, indie, and more—are groove-centered. "Groove Lab" highlights: beat-making, loop-based writing, digital drumming, sample manipulation, and groove layering. These are some of the core

competencies for emerging music creators.

6. This course supports career-connected learning. The updated course name aligns with rapidly growing music career pathways: audio engineering, Live sound, podcasting, film scoring, digital content creation, music production, and mixing. Students recognize the relevance immediately when the course title reflects current professional terminology.

Implementation Steps

1. Revise the course title and description in the *Program of Studies.*
2. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management.*
3. Review current enrollment trends and student needs to reflect standards-based 21st-century pedagogical practices in secondary music education.

Cost

None

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Ensuring that the music department offers non-ensemble courses that appeal in a contemporary context is a worthwhile way to support music appreciation at the secondary level.

1 Year in Review

Science

Revise the AP Biology curriculum to reflect College Board course revisions and framework changes

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Revise the AP Biology curriculum to reflect College Board course revisions and framework changes.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Colin Syme	High School	Science	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. AP Biology course revisions have been implemented by the College Board beginning the 2025-26 school year.
2. The course framework has been updated to provide a more comprehensive and accurate description of the essential knowledge students must demonstrate on the AP Biology Exam. These revisions will also help students engage with the concepts.
3. Amongst the changes are the following; (i) clarifying essential knowledge language, (ii) merging or moving some topics to provide a more logical organization of content, (iii) updating science practices to provide a clearer set of skills students will need for college courses, and (iv) reorganization of several units to create a clear logical sequence, enhance student engagement, and remove redundant content.
4. To reflect these changes, we will need to update our AP Biology curriculum to align accordingly.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative Approval.
2. Update *Atlas Curriculum Management* to reflect revisions.
3. Allot time for curriculum revisions during the spring semester 2026.
4. Provide Summer Workshop time to allow for revision of curriculum.

Cost

Summer workshop time: 1-2 teachers (12-18 hours x $36.33 = $435.96 x 2 = $871.92)

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Remaining aligned with the expectations of the College Board supports our students' postsecondary preparation and increases the likelihood of strong results on standardized assessments.

1 Year in Review

Special Education

Open enrollment for Partners in SHOP@USC class to students in grade 9

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
Open enrollment for Partners in SHOP@USC class to include students in grade 9.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Ms. Michelle Zirngibl	High School	Special Education	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. SHOP@USC (Showing How Opportunity Pays) is a longstanding, fully inclusive, student-run program. Taught by a special educator, this program brings special education and general education students together to design, produce, and market/sell USC-branded products to the student body and community at large. Now in its eleventh year, the program continues to grow.

2. Recently, Boyce and Ft. Couch Middle Schools have each implemented a SHOP program for students, allowing for program continuity and growth in grades 5 through 8.

3. At the high school level, this program is currently offered to students in grades 10-12. We would like to bridge the gap between the middle schools and the high school by opening enrollment to students in grade 9.

Implementation Steps

1. Seek administrative approval.

2. Update the *Program of Studies*.

3. Revise/edit the course selection form.

Cost
There are no costs for this recommendation.

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Providing a continuum of learning experiences across buildings is a helpful way to support both program development and student experiences.

1 Year in Review

World Language

w

MS WL Assessments, Portfolios, and Flow Chart for HS Course Recommendations

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION: To implement common proficiency assessments, rubrics, and portfolios in French, German, and Spanish courses in grades 6-8, to develop a flow chart for HS placement recommendations, and to begin collecting meaningful data to inform instruction.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
Angie Tena	Middle School	World Language	Fall 2025

Reason(s) for Recommendation

1. The Middle School World Language program has shifted to language acquisition-driven instruction in place of textbooks over the past 7 years. A new curriculum has been developed for all nine unique language courses in grades 6, 7, and 8.
2. While each language and grade level needs are unique, a common thread of instructional best practices and core curriculum customized by staff for our Upper Saint Clair programs has been piloted and established across all nine courses to include:
    a. Somos Units, from The Comprehensible Classroom (at least one unit per quarter)
    b. Storytelling (varied by language and year)
    c. Novel (one per year, per grade level)
    d. Weekly Routines (to enrich vocabulary and reinforce basic language skills)
    e. Write and Discuss (co-construction of language to build literacy)
3. While students continue to select their language of choice in sixth grade, a similar instructional experience can be expected across languages throughout Middle School.
4. Given time limitations in WL courses in grades 6-8 (every other day for 45-48 instructional minutes), it is essential that class time be maximized to ensure development of language proficiency prior to HS so that students are prepared to enter Level 2 courses. Compiling student proficiency data will help drive instructional best practices and pacing.
5. The commonality of experiences across languages and grade levels naturally leads to similarities in assessments and grading practices. These include:
    a. Comprehension (targeted with Quick Checks)
    b. Reading Proficiency
    c. Writing Proficiency
    d. Write and Discuss (formative for development of literacy skills)
6. Eighth Grade World Language teachers must make recommendations for each student for High School placement in either a 'Passport' or Level 2 language class. These recommendations are due in January. Evidence of student proficiency growth over time (grades 6-8), along with a defined flow chart for recommendations, will help clarify any rationale for placement for stakeholders, including staff, students, and parents. No objective artifact or data-driven assessment currently exists to help all stakeholders in course recommendations.
7. A cumulative portfolio from Grade 6 to January of Grade 8 is essential to provide data related to student proficiency development in World Language.
8. Common rubrics and assessments are essential to establish similar expectations and benchmarks for student proficiency gains across languages. These rubrics and assessments will be anchored around the ACTFL proficiency levels, which are the foundation of language acquisition programs in the United

States.

Implementation Steps

1. Identify at least 4 Reading Proficiency Assessments and at least 4 Writing Proficiency Assessments to be given quarterly in each language course.
2. Determine and adopt consistent rubrics for Reading and Writing Proficiency Assessments. These rubrics will be placed in Canvas courses and shared across all Middle School World Language classes.
3. Review and adopt a portfolio template using district technology to be kept by each student from sixth through eighth grade, with anticipated implementation in the 2026-2027 school year. Paper copies of assessments will be kept for the current school year.
4. Adopt standard proficiency targets (based on ACTFL guidelines) for each MS grade level as follows:
    a. Grade 6: Novice Mid / Proficient (using familiar language in context)
    b. Grade 7: Novice Mid / Proficient or Emerging Novice High /Advanced (using familiar language in context)
    c. Grade 8: Emerging Novice High / Advanced (using familiar language in context)
5. Create and implement a MS WL Proficiency Data Collection Worksheet to clearly show where students fall on proficiency scales at the end of each semester, to be shared within the department and with administration to help inform instruction and placement.
6. Provide the newly created WL Flow Chart for HS Recommendations draft to HS administrators and CL for feedback prior to implementation in January.
7. Continued professional development for staff during curriculum meetings, summer work, and in-service to allow time for the previously mentioned action steps, and also to:
    a. Calibrate the grading of Reading and Writing Proficiency Assessments
    b. Adapt and implement reading and writing proficiency assessments/rubrics
    c. Compare and discuss data as it is collected
    d. Identify strengths and areas of improvement within our programs and instruction

Cost

Professional development during the school year (one day per language teacher, pending substitute availability)
Summer workshop hours (FLEX or paid) in 2026 to finalize portfolios and curriculum prior to full adoption in Fall 2026.
12 hours for 7 teachers

Administrative Reaction

Approved. Common middle school world language proficiency assessments, rubrics, and portfolios can create consistency across languages, and course flow charts are essential tools for guiding academic decision-making and ensuring accurate student placements.

1 Year in Review

Other

Exploration of Personalized Learning Through Human–AI Collaboration at the Middle Level

UNITY SUCCESS CHARACTER

RECOMMENDATION:
*Conduct a study to determine the potential for emerging AI tools to support unique, personalized learning opportunities for students at the middle school level.

Name:	**Level**:	**Subject Area:**	**Curriculum Recommendation Period:**
*Brad Wilson	Middle School	Other	Fall 2025

Reasons for Recommendation
True personalized learning recognizes that each student brings a unique combination of interests, background knowledge, readiness levels, and learning gaps. Designing instruction that responds to that individual student's needs has been a central pursuit of the Upper St. Clair School District for decades — and emerging AI tools now provide a practical means of achieving this vision with greater precision, responsiveness, and scalability than ever before.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) allow teachers to better target individual student needs, provide timely and adaptive feedback, and identify learning patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. Importantly, AI is not intended to replace the teacher, but to amplify the teacher's impact — automating repetitive tasks and surfacing real-time insights that free educators to focus on the deeper, human work of teaching: mentoring, guiding, and connecting with students one-on-one.

To make personalization both meaningful and manageable, this study will focus on developing a learner profile (formal name TBD), a flexible record that shows each student's academic progress, personal growth, and skill development over time. The Strategic Initiative Data Team will be working alongside this effort, helping to create the shared systems and clear definitions needed to keep the profile accurate and useful. As the data team builds this foundation in step with the personalization work, teachers and AI tools will have a more reliable picture of each learner. This will make it easier for the district to understand students' needs and to design learning experiences that both support and challenge them.

The overall goal is to determine how to place teachers at the center of the human work of education — building relationships, understanding students deeply, and guiding their growth — while using technology in deliberate, practical ways. This includes using technology to identify each student's ideal point in the learning progression — the spot where they are ready for productive challenge — and to help connect learning to their interests and strengths. By supporting tasks like organizing information, tracking progress, and highlighting these patterns, technology can free teachers to focus on the insight, empathy, and professional judgment that only they can provide.

Implementation Steps
1. Convene a collaborative middle-level team (teachers, administrators, curriculum leaders) to design the study framework.
2. Begin development of a type of learner profile prototype that identifies key metrics for both academic mastery and personal growth.
3. Conduct an evaluation of current curriculum areas to determine:
    a. Where AI tools could effectively enhance differentiation, feedback, and mastery tracking.
    b. Which instructional components should remain explicitly teacher-led for relationship-driven instruction and deeper conceptual understanding.

4. Identify baseline data points and indicators that would later allow measurement of impact in a future pilot (e.g., instructional time use, student engagement, teacher capacity).
5. Consider potential for next step proposals in the spring 2026 curriculum cycle.

Cost
TBD

Administrative Reaction
Approved. With the rapid evolution of AI, it is essential to identify how it can be strategically leveraged to create adaptive, high-impact learning experiences that address the unique developmental and academic needs of middle school students.

1 Year in Review