

LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS



CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY & GUIDELINES

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Reviewed by Administrative Council 5/2017

LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULA PHILOSOPHY & GUIDELINES

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Introduction

A curriculum is the cornerstone of the teaching and learning institution and reflects beliefs about what students at each grade level need to know, and what students will be able to do with that knowledge. At one point in our history, knowledge showed a linear growth, doubling approximately every century. Beginning in the 1900s, the knowledge growth changed to an exponential model. By the end of World War II, knowledge was doubled every 25 years. At the start of the 21st Century, human knowledge is doubling every 13 months and projections indicate knowledge will reach a doubling rate of 12 hours.¹ While content knowledge will remain a foundational element of curriculum, explicit expectations of what students do with the knowledge is increasing in importance. The knowledge district personnel gather as they monitor and evaluate instructional practices, assess student growth, and study educational research will be used to create a process for curriculum development, revision, and review.

Ledyard Public Schools Administrative and Instructional Councils regard the standards adopted by the state of Connecticut Standards as a vital component of curriculum. These standards include, but are not limited to, the *Connecticut Core Standards*, the *Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks*, the *Next Generation Science Standards*, the *Connecticut Arts Standards*, and the *World Language Frameworks*.² Content standards and content practices identified in curricula link desired learning outcomes with performance expectations. Performance standards and learning objectives, written for each grade-level and generally organized by units of study, link the course of study to daily lesson plans.

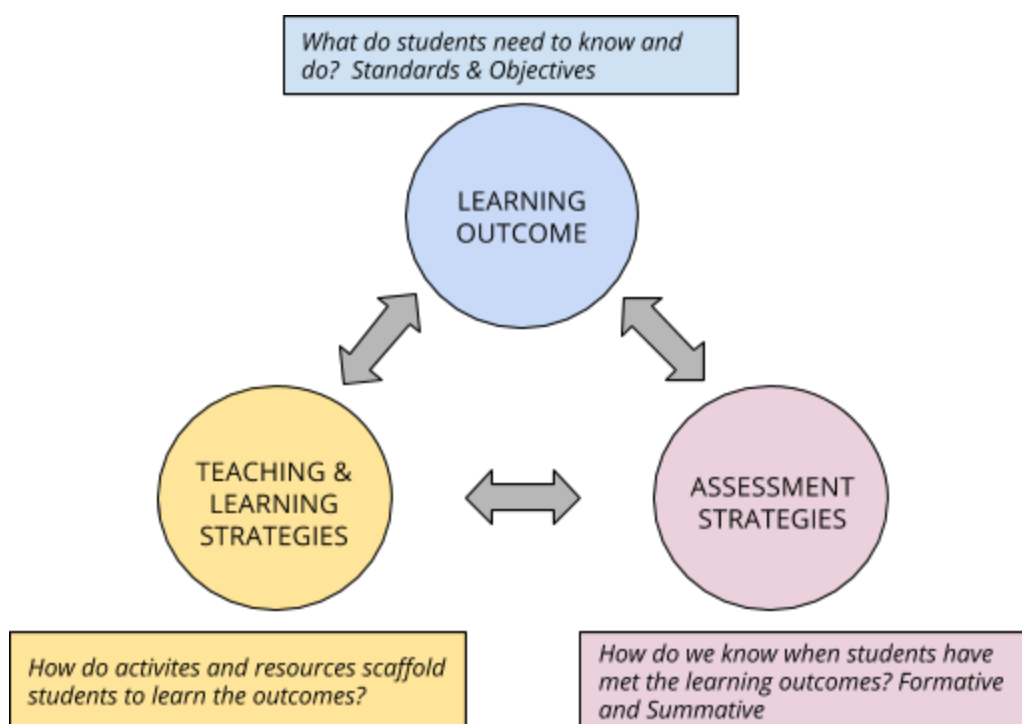
In addition to the curriculum standards, the Administrative and Instructional Councils also recognize the *Framework for 21st Century Learning* and the skills, expertise, and literacies the

¹ <http://www.industrytap.com/knowledge-doubling-every-12-months-soon-to-be-every-12-hours/3950>

² <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=320954>

framework identifies as critical for post-graduate success in our current global economy. These include, but are not limited to: interdisciplinary themes and literacies; learning and innovation skills; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills.³

The educational focus within classrooms emphasizes student-centered learning. Curricula documents will reflect the curriculum learning triad.



District personnel will use backward planning, beginning with identifying the desired student outcomes (standards), in order to what constitutes acceptable evidence that students have met the desired outcomes (assessments), in order to plan the learning experiences and instructional strategies to support students in successful achievement and mastery of the outcomes (unit and lesson planning).⁴

³ <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>

⁴ Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

District personnel recognize that curriculum development is an ongoing process. It is our practice to annually review student experiences, growth, and mastery. These reviews of student outcomes may suggest the need to revise and alter curricula. New evidence-based pedagogical practices, new resources, or changing emphasis on standards may also require curriculum revisions. When revision is necessary, objectives will be reviewed, revised, and aligned with content standards and assessment benchmarks at each grade level to allow educators to view the curriculum from both a grade-level perspective and with a vertical PreK-12 perspective.

Finally, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) indicates in its 2001 curricula document that “no guide will be perfect. No guide will ever be a finished product cast in stone. No guide will be free from criticism.”⁵ A curriculum guide is part of a sequential approach to curriculum development and implementation. All documents will be considered living documents which will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Curriculum is linked to teacher/administrator evaluation and professional development as outlined by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

⁵ http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/currigde_generic/curguide_generic.pdf

Determining Revision Needs

The Assistant Superintendent, the Instructional Council, and the Administrative Council will gather information to determine the curriculum needs of the district and will develop a 5-year plan of curriculum needs and priorities. This 5-year plan will be reviewed and adjusted annually.

Needs and priorities will be based upon the following:

- Changes in national, state, or local curriculum standards.
- Changes in national or state mandates.
- Analysis of national, state, and local student assessment data.
- Analysis of exemplary ideas, practices, and/or programs which experience and research have shown to yield higher student achievement.
- Results of formal program evaluations such as accreditation reports, or formal and/or informal needs-assessments from students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
- The need to update or align existing curriculum guides with current best instructional practice and pedagogy.
- The availability of funding to complete the curriculum work and support the implementation of the new/revised curriculum.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As the need for curricula review and revision is identified, curriculum committee leadership will be identified by the Assistant Superintendent. The committee leaders, with support from the Assistant Superintendent and school administrators, will identify members of the curriculum development committees. Curriculum committees will include teacher and administrator participation, particularly of those educators most directly affected by possible revisions. Experts and consultants from inside and outside the district may be invited to join the committee. Faculty and administration will have the opportunity to participate in the curriculum revision process through: committee participation, administrator feedback, membership on Instructional Council, and public meetings of the Board of Education.

The responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Council, Instructional Council, and Curriculum Committee will insure that curriculum documents will:

1. Reflect mission, vision, goals, and policies of the Ledyard Board of Education.
2. Reflect state and national standards and frameworks including content standards, instructional strategies, and varied assessment techniques.
3. Meet or exceed all federal and state statutory regulations.
4. Support high expectations of rigor and learning for all students.
5. Align PreK-12 for purposeful vertical coordination of student outcomes, practices, and programs.
6. Incorporate program changes required after reflecting on student achievement data.
7. Be explicit, keeping the novice teacher to Ledyard in mind.

Curriculum Revision Timeline

A curriculum revision timeline will be established by the Assistant Superintendent with feedback and input from the Instructional Council and Administrative Council. The timeline will take into account the curriculum review process, and will allow for sufficient time to present the curriculum to the Board of Education.

Curriculum Facilitators

Membership on curriculum committees will be designated annually. Curriculum committee facilitators and the Assistant Superintendent will provide training as appropriate.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Initial Curriculum Development Phase

The curriculum committee will produce an initial curriculum document for system-wide implementation and field testing. The draft will include philosophy, course descriptions, benchmarks, instructional strategies, varied student assessment practices, and suggested resources. During the writing process, drafts will be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent. The completed curriculum document will be presented to the Instructional Council for initial review and feedback. A second review by Instructional Council will occur prior to approval. The Board of Education will review the curriculum of all courses, as well as any major modifications, after the curriculum has been approved by the Instructional Council.⁶

Staff Development for Curriculum

A comprehensive plan for staff development will be developed by the curriculum committee members and forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent. The Instructional Council and Administrative Councils will review and make suggestions regarding staff development, which may include specific training, peer collaboration, and dialogue. Staff development will be an ongoing and systematic component of curriculum implementation.

Curriculum Program Implementation

Instructional practices and assessment strategies that are supportive of the curriculum will be implemented in all classrooms in accordance with the adopted curriculum. Professional development will be available per the Ledyard Professional Learning Plan, the Ledyard Teacher Effectiveness and Performance Evaluation Handbook, and the Ledyard Administrator Effectiveness, Professional Learning, and Performance Evaluation Manual. The school district

⁶ Ledyard Board of Education Policy 6140

will provide the necessary training, taking advantage of additional professional development as resources permit. Ongoing support will also be provided by committee members, district coordinators, content area specialists, building administrators, instructional leaders, and other identified resources.

Curriculum and Program Evaluation

The curriculum, including programs, instructional and assessment practices, and resources adopted to support the curriculum, will be monitored through the collection of student assessment data along with feedback from teachers, administrators, and students.

CURRICULUM DOCUMENT FORMAT

Every curriculum document will include each of the following components:

Philosophy: The philosophy reflects the district's beliefs about how students learn and how student performance should be assessed. It should represent a vision for the discipline spanning Grades K-12. The philosophy also articulates the reasons for learning the content and the cognitive practices connected to the content. National trends in research-validated pedagogy will be included, as well as a general vision statement which links the curriculum to future needs of the students and to the society in which they will live.

PreK-12 Program Goals: These goals will be broad and overarching, relating to all students in the PreK-12 continuum within the curricular area. The goals are typically set forth in the PreK-12 National and Connecticut standards and/or frameworks informing the curriculum.

Content Standards: The content standards reflect what all students should know and be able to do in the specific curricular area. These standards should come directly from the national and Connecticut standards and/or frameworks for that content area. The content standards should apply to all PreK-12 students.

Performance Standards or Learning Objectives: These will delineate exactly what students will know and be able to do with their knowledge to meet the content standard.

Required and/or Recommended Strategies and Activities: These are examples of instructional strategies and activities to address the individual needs of students to maximize student learning outcomes by incorporating multiple learning styles and intelligences.

Resources and Materials: These instructional materials could include texts, literature, manipulatives, consumable materials, equipment, digital media, and other supplies. Specific resources should be cited.

Assessment: These will include performance assessments that measure the standards. Assessments may be identified as required and/or suggested. Performance rubrics will be developed and/or adopted as a scoring technique for the performance assessments. It is important that each teacher utilize a variety of student assessments and scoring rubrics, including, but not limited to common rubrics, class specific rubrics, and student driven rubrics.

Sources: This will include a listing of resources for teachers and students with adherence to copyright laws.

Materials Adoption: This will include all instructional materials and must be approved prior to implementing the curriculum. The curriculum committee is charged with thoroughly reviewing all materials for direct instruction. An initial opportunity will be provided for teachers to submit requests for consideration of approval for materials before the draft curriculum document is finalized. New texts must be approved per Board of Education policy.

Appendices: These will include other information that will be helpful in the teaching of the specific curriculum and will be included at the end of the document. Assessments and accompanying rubrics, and required/recommended activities may be included in the appendices.

Summary

The stages of the curriculum process are all interdependent. The philosophy states the premises on which the curriculum is built. The content standards are consistent with the philosophy and provide the foundation for performance standards. The instructional strategies communicate the performance standards to students. Finally, the assessments are derived directly from the benchmarks/student objectives. In all cases, Curriculum Facilitators will discuss format with the Assistant Superintendent prior to initiating curriculum changes. Curriculum Committees will routinely submit their most recent draft to the Assistant Superintendents throughout the process of drafting the curriculum for feedback and review.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

Instructional Council

The purpose of the Instructional Council is to align curriculum development, professional development and evaluation with the mission of the Ledyard Public Schools by ensuring they are coherent, dynamic, and interconnected. The Instructional Council will consist of a representative group of teachers and administrators who will meet periodically during the school year to determine the priorities for the school system. Specific responsibilities include:

- The Council will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education, Superintendent, and Administrative Council in establishing the direction for educational programs.
- The Council will establish timelines and priorities for educational program improvement.
- The Council will develop procedures for program improvements.
- The Council will create ad hoc committees to assist in achieving the purpose.
- The Council will initiate and promote on-going two-way communication with the district and community.
- The Council will remain current regarding educational practices and will make informed decisions based on research and data.
- The Council will approve and recommend curriculum position papers, curriculum documents, and instructional materials to the Board of Education.
- The Council will identify and anticipate long-term trends that will impact the district.

Instructional Council Membership

The Instructional Council will consist of at minimum:

- Elementary educator from each school (1)
- Middle school educator (1)
- High school educator (1)

- Special Education teacher, any level (1)
- Secondary guidance counselor (1)
- Building administrator (1)
- Assistant Superintendent (1)
- District Content Coordinators
- Parent Representative and/or Board of Education Member (1)

Terms

Teachers and administrators will serve on a voluntary and rotating basis. The Assistant Superintendent and District Content Coordinators will be permanent members of Instructional Council. The Superintendent of Schools may join as an ad hoc member at any time.

Facilitator

The Assistant Superintendent will serve as the facilitator of the Instructional Council. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent to provide updates to the Superintendent and Board of Education as requested.

Meetings

The Assistant Superintendent will establish an annual schedule for Instructional Council meetings. Whenever feasible, a digital agenda and summary of meetings will be provided to Instructional Council members; hard copies of these meetings will be maintained at Central Office. Members are expected to provide updates to the faculty of their respective schools.

Administrative Council

The role of each district administrator is to ensure the alignment of curriculum development, curriculum implementation, professional development, and teacher evaluation in order to promote improved student achievement.

Each building principal will provide their faculty with a synopsis of curricula and instructional initiatives on a regular basis. This synopsis should outline their roles in district decision-making and explain how decisions are connected to mandates, policies, effective instructional practices, student achievement and outcomes, and district goals.

Principals will attend training regarding content and pedagogy as necessary to allow effective coaching and evaluation of staff within their school community.

Principals will target the professional development needs of faculty in order to improve student achievement.

INITIATING CURRICULUM CHANGE

Modification of Existing Curriculum

Proposals for modifications to a district curriculum will be made in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

The proposal will include the following information:

- Comparison and contrast of the new program with the existing curriculum and philosophy of the district
- The reason for the proposed change
- How the effectiveness of the change will be evaluated
- The time line be for the proposed revision.
- The potential financial impact, including a breakdown for costs such as materials, training, equipment, etc.

Both the Administrative and Instructional Councils may make a recommendation regarding the curriculum modification to the Assistant Superintendent. Recommendations for a significant curriculum change should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent as early as possible in the academic year and if possible, no later than October 31st, so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall for implementation in the following academic year.

Recommendations for new curriculum/course⁷

To propose a new course for the following school year, a teacher shall provide their Instructional Leader and/or building administrator a written proposal by September 30th of the current school year. The written proposal should reflect current research, best practices, and connections to 21st

⁷http://ledyard.ss7.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_111100/File/District/Board%20of%20Education/Policy%20Manual%2010.23/Instruction/6140-r.pdf

Century Skills, and shall include the following components:

- A course description appropriate for a Program of Studies
- Intended grade, pre-requisites, level, and department course falls under
- Rationale for the new course, including link to national or state standards
- Materials needed and anticipated short-term and long-term costs
- General overview of how students will be assessed
- Methods to evaluate course effectiveness

A proposal for the new curriculum must then be submitted by October 15th of the current school year to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. This proposal will be reviewed by the Instructional Council in November prior to presentation to the Board of Education. The Board of Education should receive new curriculum proposals no later than December 15th (or as scheduled Board meetings allow) of the academic year so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall for implementation in the following academic year. After Board of Education approval, the new curriculum may be included in a Program of Studies (when applicable) and the curriculum committee may begin work on the development of the new curriculum.

Timeline for New Course Proposals

Due Date	To Department
September 30	Building Administrator/Faculty Council
October 15	Assistant Superintendent
November 30th	Instructional Council Review
December 15th	Board of Education Discussion and Action for Approval

Appendix A: REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM MODIFICATION

Please supply the following information. Completed information should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent as early as possible in the academic year and if possible, no later than October 31st, so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall of the following academic year.

TODAY'S DATE:

PERSON SUBMITTING REQUEST:

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR PROPOSED CHANGE:

Please provide the following for consideration of a curriculum revision:

- Comparison and contrast of the new program with the existing curriculum and philosophy of the district
- The reason for the proposed change
- How the effectiveness of the change will be evaluated
- The time line for the proposed revision.
- The potential financial impact, including a breakdown for costs such as materials, training, equipment, etc.

Appendix B: REQUEST FOR NEW CURRICULUM/COURSE

Please supply the following information. Completed information should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent as early as possible in the academic year and no later than October 15th, so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall of the following academic year.

TODAY'S DATE:

PERSON SUBMITTING REQUEST:

TIMELINE FOR PROPOSED CHANGE:

Please provide the following for consideration of a new curriculum/course:

- A course description appropriate for a Program of Studies
- Intended grade, pre-requisites, level, and department course falls under
- Rationale for the new course, including alignment with national or state standards
- Materials needed and anticipated short-term and long-term costs
- General overview of how students will be assessed

All responses should reflect current research, best practices, and connection to 21st Century Skills.

Appendix C: REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PAYMENT

Date of Request:

Name:

Curriculum/Course being developed:

Proposed dates and time of work:

Estimated number of hours required to complete work:

Amount requested for reimbursement (please refer to the bargaining unit contract for the hourly curriculum development rate):

Please describe the specific tasks that will be completed. Identify any additional support (personnel, resources, materials) that you will require:

The work has been recommended and approved by the curriculum facilitator/instructional leader/district coordinator/building administrator

Name:

Title:

Date of approval:

Principal approval:

Date:

Request Approved

Request Denied

Assistant Superintendent Signature:

Date:

If approval is granted, please use a timesheet and submit in writing the dates and hours worked and the product to the Central Office for reimbursement.

APPENDIX D - Ledyard Public Schools Instructional Resource Adoption Form

Title of Resource:

Year for adoption:

Publisher and version:

Submitted by:

Course resource will be used for:

Date Submitted:

Please provide a brief rationale for the adoption of this new instructional resource:

Please respond to the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Aligned to student outcomes and learning objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aligned to national or state standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meets the needs of diverse learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advances 21st Century Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The most effective instructional tool to meet student outcomes and learning objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourages a high level of student interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides opportunity for feedback to student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes appropriate assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher support materials are clear and comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
User interface is age appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the digital component of the resource compatible with Chromebooks? Yes No

If no, what operating system(s) are compatible with the digital component of the resource?

Recommended by (where did you hear about or find this resource)?

Are there other resources that will need to be purchased in addition to this resource?

What other resources were considered for adoption?

Additional Comments:

Anticipated Cost of the entire resource purchase (attach quotes if available):

After a thorough analysis and evaluation of the resource the professional staff will submit their request to the principal for approval. The building principal will forward the request to the Assistant Superintendent, who will forward the request to the Instructional Council, the Administrative Council, and/or the Director of Instructional Technology as appropriate. Recommendations for new instructional materials constituting more than fifty percent of the course content will be subsequently forwarded to the Board of Education for approval.

Revised 12/18/01
LBOE Policy
6161.1(a)/6161.1(b)