

LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CURRICULA PHILOSOPHY & GUIDELINES

10/07
Reviewed by Instructional Council

LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRICULA PHILOSOPHY & GUIDELINES

REVIEWED BY THE LEDYARD INSTRUCTIONAL COUNCIL:

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REVIEWED BY THE LEDYARD ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL:

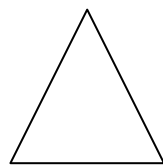
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Introduction

A curriculum is the cornerstone of the teaching and learning institution and reflects beliefs about what children at each grade level need to know and will be able to do with that knowledge. Knowledge is doubling every five years and is projected to escalate to doubling every seventy-three days by the year 2020. The information district personnel gather as they monitor and evaluate practices, track student achievement and study educational research will continue to be used to create a process for curriculum development.

In concert with the competencies articulated in Connecticut Common Core of Learning, Ledyard Public Schools Administrative and Instructional Councils regard the state of Connecticut Standards as a vital component of curriculum. Content standards identified in curricula link desired learning outcomes with performance expectations. Performance standards and learning objectives, written for each grade-level, link the course of study to daily lesson plans.

Just as the educational focus within the classroom has shifted from teaching to learning all curricula documents will reflect that change. All documents will reflect the learning triad:



Standards

Multiple Assessments

Teaching / Learning Strategies

District personnel will use backward planning, from expected outcomes (standards) and assessment to the strategic teaching / learning activities of the planned lesson.

District personnel recognize that student experiences and growth should be clearly reviewed over time. Therefore, whenever possible, curricula documents will be reviewed and revised. At each grade-level, objectives are reviewed, revised, and aligned with content

standards, and assessment benchmarks to allow educators to view the curriculum from a grade-level perspective or through a PreK-12 perspective.

Finally, the Connecticut State Department (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.” 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.

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 list of curriculum priorities subject to the approval of the Board of Education. Needs and priorities will be based upon the following:

- Changes in national, state, or local curriculum standards.
- Changes in national or state mandates.
- Advances in the technological capacity of the system.
- Analysis of national, state, and local student assessment data.
- Analysis of exemplary ideas, practices, and/or programs which experience and research has shown to be successful.
- Results of formal program evaluations such as accreditation reports and formal or informal needs assessments from students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
- The need to update or align existing curriculum guides with current practice.
- Availability of funding.

Curriculum Development Process

As the need for curricula review and revision is identified, curriculum committees will be formed by the Assistant Superintendent. Curriculum committee members will invite teacher and administrator participation, particularly those most directly affected by possible changes. 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, principal feedback, Instructional Council feedback and public sessions.

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

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

Curricula Revision Timeline Will be established by the Administrative Council and Instructional Council and subject to Board of Education approval.

Curricula Facilitators Membership will be designated. Facilitators and the Assistant Superintendent will provide training as appropriate.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

1. Initial Development Phase

Produce a draft curriculum document complete enough for system-wide field testing. The draft will include philosophy, course descriptions, benchmarks, instructional strategies, varied student assessment practices, suggested resources including technology and required professional development. The draft will be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent and subsequently by both the Administrative and Instructional Councils for review, feedback and approval.

Staff Development: A comprehensive plan for staff development will be developed by the curriculum committee members and forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent. The Instructional and Administrative Councils will review and make suggestions regarding staff development. Plans will include specific training including but not limited to peer collaboration and dialogue. Staff development will be an ongoing and systematic component of curriculum implementation.

Program Implementation: The program will be implemented in all classrooms in accordance with the adopted curriculum. Professional development will be available per Teacher and Leadership Evaluation Plans. As resources permit, the school district will provide the necessary training. Ongoing support will also be provided by committee members, district coordinators, content area specialists, building administrators, and other identified resources.

Program Evaluation: The program will be continually monitored through the collection of student assessment data along with feedback from teachers and students.

Ledyard Public Schools
Curriculum Document Format

Every curriculum document will include each of the following components:

- Philosophy: The philosophy reflects the district’s beliefs and guidelines and includes reasons for learning the content, beliefs about how children learn, beliefs about how student performance should be assessed, and beliefs about the role of technology in the teaching/learning process. The philosophy addresses national trends which research has validated and instructional practices shown to be effective. The philosophy also includes a general vision statement which links future needs of the children to the society in which they will live.

- PreK-12 Program Goals: These goals will be broad, overarching goals that relate to all students in the PreK-12 continuum within the curricular area. They are typically set forth in the PreK-12 State Frameworks.

- Content Standards: The content standards reflect what all students should know and be able to do in the specific curricular area. These standards should flow from the National Standards and State of Connecticut Frameworks for that subject area. The content standards should apply to all students, PreK-12.

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

- **Required and/or Recommended Strategies and Activities**: These are examples of instructional strategies to be used in the classroom. The focus should be directed toward

those activities that maximize student learning outcomes. The authors will keep learning styles and multiple intelligences in mind when developing strategies.

- **Resources and Materials:** These will include instructional materials including texts, literature, manipulatives, consumable materials, equipment, software, courseware, Internet sites, and other supplies. Specific resources should be cited in the bibliography.
- **Assessment:** These must include performance assessments that measure the stated benchmarks. Performance rubrics will be developed and/or adopted as a scoring technique. It is important that each teacher in Ledyard utilize a variety of student assessments and scoring rubrics.
- **Bibliography:** A listing of resources for teachers and students should be included. Technology resources and internet sites should be cited. There must be adherence to copyright laws.
- **Materials Adoption:** All instructional materials must be approved prior to use in 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 request for consideration of approval for materials before the draft curriculum document is finalized. New textbooks 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. Performance assessments and required/recommended activities may be included in the appendices.
- **Technology:** Curriculum committees will integrate PreK-4, 5-8, and 9-12 technology competency standards for students when generating performance assessments and classroom activities. It is expected that students will acquire technology skills by and large through the course of their regular studies. Student usage of technology is application-driven. The Connecticut Pre-kindergarten Through Grade 12 Computer Technology Competency Standards for Students is labeled as Appendix A of this document.

Summary: The stages of the curriculum program 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.

Creating a Usable Curriculum Guide on CD

Document Formatting

1. Set all margins, tabs, and font choices in the beginning of the document. Use the same style choices throughout the document.
2. All Curriculum Committees will routinely and electronically submit their most recent draft to the Assistant Superintendents of Schools.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Instructional Council

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 as they relate to curriculum development and professional development.

Membership:

The Instructional Council will consist of:

- Elementary educator from each school
- Middle school educator
- High school educators
- Special Education teacher, any level
- Building administrator
- Assistant Superintendent
- Superintendent
- Board of Education representative
- District level coordinators

Terms: Teachers and administrators will serve on a rotating basis. The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Schools are members of the 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 Council will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Education, Superintendent, and Administrative Council in establishing the direction for educational purposes.
- 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 building staff, the district, and community.
- The Council will remain current regarding educational practices and will make informed decisions based on current research and data.
- The Council will approve and recommend curriculum documents, and instructional materials to the Board of Education.
- The Council will identify and anticipate long-term trends that will impact the district.

Facilitator: The Assistant Superintendent will serve as the facilitator of the council.

Meetings: The Assistant Superintendent will forward to all faculty a schedule of meetings. An agenda and summary of meetings will be posted in a central location in all schools.

Role and Responsibilities of the Administrative Council in the Review and Implementation of Curricula Documents

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

Each building principal will provide their faculty on a regular basis with a synopsis of curricula and instructional initiatives. Outlined should be their role and support in district decision-making and how decisions are connected to mandates / policy / effective practice / student achievement.

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

I. Modification of existing Curriculum

Proposals for modifications to a district curriculum, which embodies a change in delivery of instruction and which is consistent with a current curriculum will be made in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Both the Administrative and Instructional Councils will make a recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent.

The proposal will include the following information:

What is the proposed difference?

What data supports the need for the proposed change?

How will the effectiveness of the change be evaluated?

What will the time line be for the proposed project?

What will the financial impact be, if any – give break down for costs such as materials, training, equipment, etc?

II. Recommendations for a new Curriculum

In the case of a recommendation for a totally new curriculum, it will be necessary to submit the following information:

A description of the initiative.

A description of the rationale, supporting data as to why the change is needed.

A timeline for research, training and implementation.

A description of the method of evaluation.

A statement of the financial impact in terms of the need for such things as staffing, training, release time, materials, equipment, etc.

A statement describing how the new program is congruent with the existing curricula and philosophy of the district, or, if different, how it is consistent with developmentally appropriate educational practice.

A proposal for the new curriculum must be submitted by October 1 for the

following year, to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Any recommendations for a significant curriculum change will be made as early as possible in the year and no later than October 1, of the previous year so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall of the following year and approval of the Board of Education, if required.

REQUESTS FOR CURRICULUM MODIFICATION

Please supply the following information. Completed information should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent as early as possible in the year and no later than October 1 of the previous year, so that it may be included for budgetary consideration in the fall of the following year.

TODAY'S DATE: _____

PERSON SUBMITTING REQUEST: _____

School: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR PROPOSED CHANGE: _____

IS THIS A:

- MODIFICATION TO EXISTING CURRICULUM**
- NEW CURRICULUM**

Please respond to the following questions (on separate paper):

1. Indicate the degree to which the new program is congruent with the existing curricula and philosophy of the district.
2. What is the proposed change?
3. What data supports the need for the proposed change?
4. How will the effectiveness of the proposed change be measured?
5. What will be the timeline for the proposed project?
6. What will the financial impact be, if any? Give a break down for such costs as materials, training, equipment, release time, etc.

REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PAYMENT

Request is being made by: _____ Date: _____

School: _____

Course: _____

Department or Grade Level: _____

Date / Time of Work: _____

Please describe the task and any support you will require:

Estimated number of hours required to complete work?

Amount requested for reimbursement?

The work has been recommended and approved by my curriculum facilitator?

Date of approval:

Principal approval:

Date:

Request Approved _____

Request Denied _____

Asst. Supt.: _____

Date: _____

If approval is granted, please submit in writing the dates and hours worked and the product to the Central Office (Belinda) for reimbursement.