



Gardner Public Schools

Curriculum Review Plan & Cycle



2021-2026

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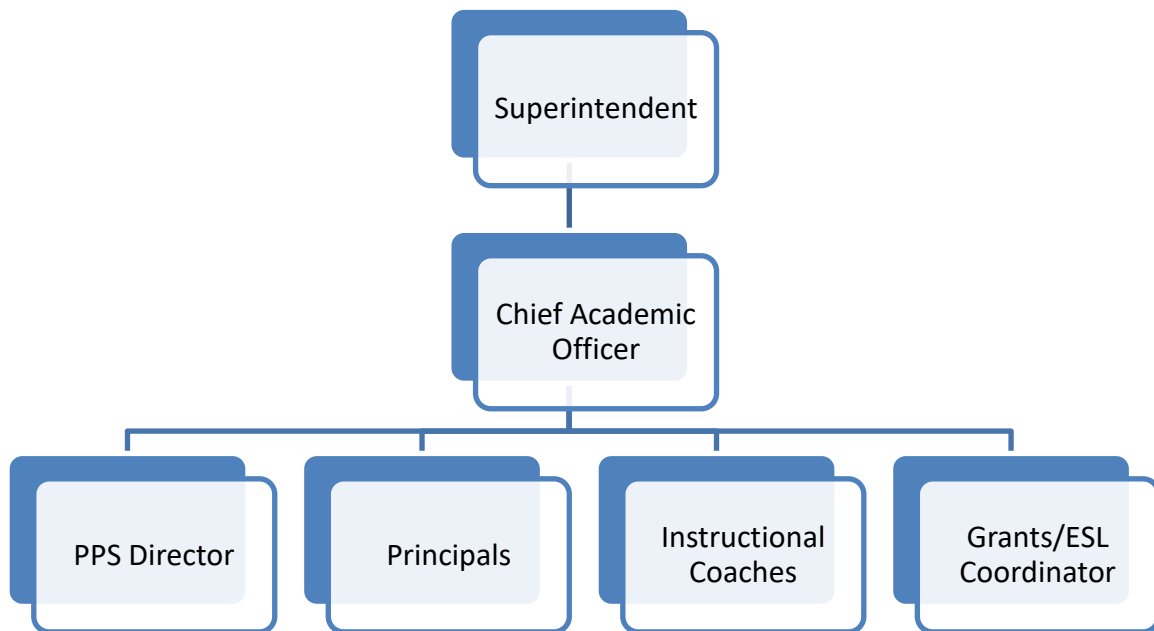
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Introduction

Gardner Public Schools provides continual curriculum review that involves staff members from each of the District’s learning communities in a collaborative effort to evaluate, revise and redefine curriculum and instruction District-wide. Curriculum is not only the organization of courses offered by Gardner Public Schools, but also the plan of delivery which guides instructional pedagogy, choice of materials, and assessment.

The curriculum will never be “completed”; it is continually reviewed utilizing a five year cycle overseen by District Instructional Coaches, Principals, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and the Chief Academic Officer. The charge of this group is to provide leadership; develop policy and standards to guide the work; stay abreast of cross-disciplinary trends; and to insure alignment to State standards and to the stated mission of the Gardner Public Schools.

Curriculum Leadership and Oversight Structure



The District’s current Curriculum Leadership structure is comprised of the Superintendent of Schools who oversees the Chief Academic Officer at the district level. The Chief Academic Officer oversees the curriculum work of the Principals, the PPS Director, the Grants/ESL Coordinator and the Instructional Coaches. The Principals and Instructional Coaches oversee the curriculum work of each building’s staff.

The Curriculum Review Team is fluid depending on the grade level and content area of the curriculum to be reviewed. Each review team consists of instructional coaching staff in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics if appropriate; a Special Education leader who helps to coordinate inclusive practices and curriculum modifications to ensure equitable learning experiences for all learners; the ESL/Grants Coordinator; selected teachers; and at least one building administrator. Building and district leaders collaborate during each phase of the Curriculum Review Cycle to ensure consistency and quality of practice.

It is recognized that developing and maintaining a viable curriculum is the shared responsibility of all

educators in the Gardner Public Schools. Each staff member has an opportunity to guide decision making as it relates to curriculum and instruction. By increasing participation in shaping the curriculum, and engaging all stakeholders in the design process, we strive to create a living document that meets the philosophical beliefs outlined in our Vision/Mission statement, and the ever changing needs of our students.

Curriculum Review Cycle Focus

The focus of the Curriculum Review process is guided by four essential questions:

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know that students have learned?
3. What will we do when they haven't learned?
4. What will we do when they already know it? (Dufour, 2008)

Review Phases

Phases of the Curriculum Review Cycle are described below:

	Curriculum Review Cycle Phases
Phase I Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening a Curriculum Development Committee • Identifying Key Issues and Trends in the Specific Content Area • Assessing Needs and Issues <p><i>Review and gather information on the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, state, and local assessment results • Current scope and sequence • MA Curriculum Frameworks/National Frameworks • End of year expectations • Current textbooks and resource materials • Evaluations by regional accrediting associations or the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Phase II Articulating/ Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating a K-12 Program Philosophy • Defining K-12 Program, Grade-Level and Course Goals • Developing and Sequencing of Grade-Level and Course Objectives • Developing and/or Identifying Assessment Items and Instruments to Measure Student Progress • Grade level curricula and courses are rewritten or revised in accordance with state frameworks, national trends and current best practice. • Curriculum is written by grade level/content area teams and reviewed by instructional coaches, the Literacy Coordinator, Principals and the Chief Academic Officer. • Resource materials are identified, piloted and acquired in preparation for Phase III. (See Appendix A for Curriculum Selection Regulations/Recommendations and Appendix B for Curriculum Selection Criteria)

Phase III Implement & Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or revised curriculum is implemented district- and/or school wide. • Monitor the implementation of the curriculum and its scope and sequence. • New materials and programs may be implemented. Professional development on new materials and programs may be provided. • Curriculum will be implemented for two years before it moves to Phase IV.
Phase IV Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers evaluate strengths/weaknesses in their curriculum and/or newly adopted materials and/or programs. • Prepare to begin a new curriculum study next year.

Review Cycle Plan:

2021 – 2026*

Elementary Grades Review Cycle

Subject Areas	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
English/ Language Arts	Phase IV	Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Math	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II
Science	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase IV	Phase I
Social Studies &	Phase III	Phase III	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV

Secondary Grades Review Cycle

Subject Areas	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
English/ Language Arts	Phase II	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I
Math	Phase II	Phase III	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV
Science	Phase II	Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Social Studies &	Phase II	Phase III	Phase III	Phase III	Phase IV

* Throughout 2017-2022, the Curriculum Review Plan may need to be amended due to state and district curriculum as well as assessment guidelines and revisions.

Individual Curriculum Review

It is an expectation of the District that all individual staff members, when selecting curriculum materials for classroom lessons and units, will review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation; and that appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials. All staff members are expected to use the tools in the Appendices of this document to appropriately select all instructional and curricular materials.

Appendix A – Regulations For Selection of Curriculum

Regulation/Recommendations

State law: The principal at each school, subject to the direction of the superintendent, shall, at the expense of the school district, purchase textbooks and other school supplies, and consistent with the district policy, shall loan them to the pupils attending such school free of charge. Said purchases shall be made in accordance with chapter thirty B and within the purchasing guidelines adopted by the municipality where such purchases are made if such guidelines exist. (G.L. c. 71, [section] 48)

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommendations: The principal, under the direction of the superintendent, is responsible for selecting and purchasing textbooks and other educational materials and supplies to be used by students in the school. The superintendent's involvement in the process is to ensure that the books and materials selected for any particular school are consistent with the educational goals and policies established by the school committee. The school committee, in approving a budget for the district, establishes the budgetary limits within which the principal and superintendent must operate.

G.L. c. 71, [section] 50 A change may be made in the school books used in the public schools by a vote of two thirds of the whole school committee at a meeting thereof, notice of such intended change having been given at a previous meeting. The District interprets this law as applying only to a textbook change that constitutes a significant shift in educational direction for the district. As a general rule, the school committee does not approve or reject textbooks and educational materials.

Appendix B – Curriculum Selection Criteria

Adoption of curriculum materials is one of the most important decisions a teacher, school, or district can make. While state standards describe what students are expected to learn and be able to do, what is taught in classrooms—the implemented curriculum—is heavily influenced by textbooks and other instructional materials. The instructional materials affect lesson content, depth and duration of instruction for particular topics, and topic sequence. So, while we may talk about curriculum materials as just "resources," the fact is that they strongly influence classroom instruction—for better or worse.

Review Criteria and Process: Top Lessons Learned

1. Focus on the central evaluation question: What curriculum materials best support students' learning of the standards?
2. Remember that content analysis is much more than alignment. Alignment of content with standards is often represented through "crosswalks" that connect the two, indicating where and when content addresses particular standards.
 - a. Look for the following:
 - i. The treatment of content is consistent with that described in the standards.
 - ii. The development of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and applications is balanced, with explicit connections among the three ("rigor" in CCSSM).
 - iii. The development of content reflects what is known about how students learn that content most effectively.
 - iv. The materials are focused. Curriculum materials should give sufficient attention to the critical topics identified in the standards for each grade (in CCSSM, the "major work" of the grade), so that students have the time and support to develop the identified proficiencies.
 - v. Content treatment is coherent. The content is effectively organized so that students can clearly see how ideas build upon, or connect with, other ideas both within and across grades.
3. Analyze the nature of the instructional tasks and activities. This analysis examines how the materials support students' learning through opportunities to engage in tasks that promote reasoning and problem solving.
 - a. What is the quality of these tasks? Do they permit multiple entry points and approaches? To what extent do they address the learning goals of the lesson?
 - b. Do the tasks constitute a coherent series designed to address specific goals across lessons?
 - c. What supports do the teachers' editions provide for effective implementation of these lessons? Do they provide, for example, information about likely student

solutions, questions to support students as they work on tasks and in subsequent debriefing discussions, and suggestions about ways to structure the summary discussion?

- d. Understanding the intended instructional model is essential for this analysis. Be sure to read the teacher's edition or other explanatory materials, view supporting webinars, etc., that describe the instructional model and where particular supports are located.
4. Focus initial reviews on student materials and teacher editions of the materials. These have the primary influence on classroom teaching and learning. Analyze ancillary materials and other supports for effective teaching and learning—such as assessments, technology integration, additional practice, and professional learning—after you have narrowed your choices to materials that adequately meet the content and instructional support criteria. All the flashy supplementary materials in the world won't make up for flawed content or lack of high-quality instructional activities.
5. Consider equity, diversity, and access. High-quality content and instructional practices are critical for the success of all students; therefore, reviews of these aspects are essential first steps in addressing equity and access. After narrowing your choices, however, consider specific ways in which materials promote equity and access. To what extent, for example, do they:
 - a. provide teachers with strategies and materials for meeting the needs of a range of learners, including both struggling and advanced learners?
 - b. suggest accommodations and modifications for English language learners that will support their regular and active participation in learning mathematics?
 - c. provide a balanced portrayal of various demographic and personal characteristics?
6. Recognize that all omissions or gaps are not the same. No materials are perfect. Inevitably, an evaluation process will uncover gaps, omissions, or inadequate treatment of some content. The key question is how easily teachers, the school, or the district can fill the gaps.
7. Recognize that additional content is less problematic than gaps that are difficult to fill.
8. Request all series and materials produced by each publisher. When you call for materials to review, remember that some of the large companies publish more than one program, so you may have to ask to see them all. Also, request programs from smaller, alternative publishers and developers as well as the large publishers. You want to review all the options, not just the traditional best sellers.
9. Allocate sufficient time for your review process. Thoughtful analysis of the content, instructional activities, and other features of curriculum materials described above takes time.
10. Use a "narrowing choices" strategy to make the review process as efficient as possible. Clearly, thorough content analyses are time-consuming—and may seem

overwhelming. To make the process manageable, first review all materials for their treatment of only one or two key content domains. Retain for further review only those materials that give adequate treatment to those domains. Then make a second cut based on your evaluation of the nature of the instructional tasks and support for effective teaching practices within those domains. After these cuts, you're likely to have a manageable number of materials for further review. For example, to review middle school materials with respect to CCSSM, you might first review all materials for their treatment of ratios and proportional relationships (grades 6 and 7) and functions and expressions and equations related to proportional relationships (grade 8). Then review materials that treat that content well from the standpoint of the nature of their instructional tasks, and so on, for that content. Submit the materials that adequately address both criteria to additional review, starting with the remaining content domains, instructional tasks, and other review criteria such as equity, diversity, and access, ancillary materials, and so on.

11. Rate and discuss rather than score. Analysis of materials is qualitative, rather than quantitative; that is, reviewers are judging the quality of content treatment, instructional activities, and so forth, in different materials. Consequently, qualitative rubrics with categories such as "Not Found," "Low," "Marginal," "Acceptable," and "High" can be more useful than numeric scales. Qualitative ratings also provide useful guidance for subsequent within- and across-grade discussions of the quality of different materials.
12. Provide adequate professional learning for the members of the review team. It is essential that all reviewers both understand the standards, and are knowledgeable about the effective teaching practices for implementing them.
13. Try out your top choices in the classroom. The real test of the quality of any materials is the learning that they support in the classroom. If at all possible, try out at least a unit or two from the materials under final consideration in several classrooms.

Selection Tools

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3-12 by StudentsAchieve.net, 2015

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades K-2 by StudentsAchieve.net, 2015

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)
Mathematics, High School by StudentsAchieve.net, 2015

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)
Mathematics, Grades K-8 by StudentsAchieve.net, 2015

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Guidelines (See below)

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Curriculum Review Checklist

Curriculum Area Evaluated: _____

Resource/Company Evaluated: _____

Date Evaluated: _____

Focus on the central evaluation question: What curriculum materials best support students' learning of the standards?

Rate and discuss rather than score. Analysis of materials is qualitative, rather than quantitative; that is, reviewers are judging the quality of content treatment, instructional activities, and so forth, in different materials. Qualitative ratings also provide useful guidance for subsequent within- and across-grade discussions of the quality of different materials.

In the Rating column, use the comments:

"Not Found,"

"Low,"

"Marginal,"

"Acceptable," and

"High"

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Rating	#	Evaluation Indicator
	1	The treatment of content is consistent with that described in the standards.
	2	The development of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and applications is balanced, with explicit connections among the three ("rigor" in CCSSM)
	3	The development of content reflects what is known about how students learn that content most effectively
	4	The materials are focused. Curriculum materials should give sufficient attention to the critical topics identified in the standards for each grade (in CCSSM, the "major work" of the grade), so that students have the time and support to develop the identified proficiencies
	5	Content treatment is coherent. The content is effectively organized so that students can clearly see how ideas build upon, or connect with, other ideas both within and across grades
	6	Analyze the nature of the instructional tasks and activities. This analysis examines how the materials support students' learning through opportunities to engage in tasks that promote reasoning and problem solving.
	7	What is the quality of these tasks? Do they permit multiple entry points and approaches? To what extent do they address the learning goals of the lesson?
	8	Do the tasks constitute a coherent series designed to address specific goals across lessons?
	9	<p>What supports do the teachers' editions provide for effective implementation of these lessons? Do they provide, for example, information about likely student solutions, questions to support students as they work on tasks and in subsequent debriefing discussions, and suggestions about ways to structure the summary discussion?</p> <p>Understanding the intended instructional model is essential for this analysis. Be sure to read the teacher's edition or other explanatory materials, view supporting webinars, etc., that describe the instructional model and where particular supports are located.</p> <p>Focus initial reviews on student materials and teacher editions of the materials. These have the primary influence on classroom teaching and</p>

		learning. Analyze ancillary materials and other supports for effective teaching and learning—such as assessments, technology integration, additional practice, and professional learning—after you have narrowed your choices to materials that adequately meet the content and instructional support criteria. All the flashy supplementary materials in the world won’t make up for flawed content or lack of high-quality instructional activities.
	10	<p>Consider equity, diversity, and access. High-quality content and instructional practices are critical for the success of all students; therefore, reviews of these aspects are essential first steps in addressing equity and access. After narrowing your choices, however, consider specific ways in which materials promote equity and access. To what extent, for example, do they:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provide teachers with strategies and materials for meeting the needs of a range of learners, including both struggling and advanced learners? 2. suggest accommodations and modifications for English language learners that will support their regular and active participation in learning mathematics? 3. provide a balanced portrayal of various demographic and personal characteristics? 4. review all educational materials presented in the classroom for consideration of simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation and that appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials