**CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION at ORE CITY ISD**

The key component to our district-wide efforts to consistently improve the education for **all** of our students is the absolute necessity for our teacher to have and use a “**guaranteed and viable curriculum**”.

**A GUARANTEED AND VIABLE CURRICULUM**

In researching What Works in Schools (Robert Marzano, 2003) there were five school-level factors which promote student achievement. Ultimately, **Marzano concluded that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is the most powerful school-level factor in determining overall student achievement.**

If we truly have a guaranteed and viable curriculum, it means that, in our schools:

* No matter who teaches a given course or grade level, we guarantee that topics identified in the curriculum will be covered every class.
* The content that teachers are expected to address can be covered in the time available.
* Every student, in every class, every day, will be taught the same essential knowledge and skills-The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Ore City ISD currently uses the TEKS Resource System (TRS), which is a systematic K-12 curriculum model, designed, maintained and continuously developed by various Education Service Center personnel along with district educator throughout Texas. The purpose is to provide a common language structure, and process for curriculum development. The curriculum model is designated to align the written, taught, and tested curriculum and is inclusive of research and best practices as mentioned in the work of Drucker, Demming, English, Wiggins, Erickson, Guskey, Marzano, Feurstein, Jacobs, and Schmoker. Each year the documents will continue to be aligned to the TEKS utilizing the continuous improvement process as a model for the resources offered to member districts.

According to Marzano, students have the opportunity to learn when they study a curriculum that clearly articulates required standards of achievements. The curriculum components Ore City ISD teachers use are based on best practice models from top researchers and enable teachers to align instruction to meet the rigor and complexity required the TEKS. Therefore, in order to ensure this alignment occurs, Ore City ISD teachers are required to use the Vertical Alignment Documents, the Year at a Glance, the TEKS Verification Documents, and the Instructional Focus Document all of which foster reflective practice and collegial, date-driver dialogue around curriculum.

**VERTICAL ALIGNMENT DOCUMENTS**

The Vertical Alignment Documents present clearly articulated and aligned standards among grade levels using the TEKS statements and student expectations (SE’s). According to Marzano’s framework, curriculum is guaranteed if districts give clear guidance to teachers regarding the content to be addressed in specific courses and at specific grade levels. Marzano (2003) is a strong advocate of a conceptually-organized curriculum that is clearly articulated within periods of time or across grade levels. He stressed that effective curriculum should emphasize key spiraling components. These

components represent the major competencies, ideas, and skills that student are expected to revisit within and across grade levels with growing levels of competence, proficient, and depth of understanding.

In addition, the specificity of the **Vertical Alignment Documents** provides a common language and delineation of skills, which enables building principals to meet their responsibility of ensuring that the curriculum is being implements accurately and consistently in every classroom.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**KEY POINT: Most textbooks are not designed effectively enough to be a stand-alone curriculum or to emphasize key spiraling components.** They present concepts by chapters, or in isolation, and often never revisit vital concepts. Textbooks may and should be used by teacher to support the teaching of the TEKS within the scope and sequence design of the TRS. In addition, if a teacher determines students may not have a concept mastered as well as they would like, the teacher can and should use lessons from textbooks to enhance the mastery of TEKS objectives.

**However, effective curriculum development helps educators avoid what Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) call “the twin problems” of textbook courage and activity-oriented teaching with no clear priorities or purpose.** They add that this design is directly ties to the following ideas:

* All learners benefit from clear priorities and purposes
* Struggling learners require focus on truly essential knowledge to move forward
* Advanced learners need challenge predicate on essential discipline knowledge in order to develop content expertise

**YEAR AT A GLANCE**

The Year at a Glance is designed to present a snapshot of the entire year’s instruction plan. The Year at a Glance is a map and pacing guide for units of student. It makes the curriculum viable by ensuring the teacher has adequate instructional time to present the required content.

**Curriculum Mapping** is a process for documenting the plan for curriculum delivery over a specified period of time. The current curriculum mapping mode is based on the work of Heidi Hayes Jacobs (2001). To gain insight into gaps, absences, and repetitions in a school or district K-12 curriculum it is critical to create quality maps. The Year at a Glance, as a curriculum map, provides a springboard for teachers and administrators to focus discussion on a comparison between what is planned and what is really occurring in individual classrooms.

**TEKS VERIFICATION DOCUMENT**

The TEKS Verification Documents is a combination with the Year at a Glance ensures that all TEKS are taught throughout the school year. The document lists all the TEKS and details the nine-week or six-week periods of the specific TEKS are solely taught or that it is taught in an on-going manner.

**INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS DOCUMENTS**

The standards should not be taught alone and should be logically bundled to maximize student learning. The IFD’s are used to group and specified standards from the Vertical Alignment Documents and the Year at a Glance into logical sequence for instruction to maximize student learning.

These documents present the standards that are taught in each block of instruction, the academic language of instruction, key understandings, guiding question, possible student misconceptions and performance indicator to ensure the standards are attained at the required level of rigor.

**HOW, THEN, CAN TEACHERS OFFER THE FULL CURRICULUM TO STUDENTS AT A RIGOR OUT LEVEL?**

The bundling of the TEKS in the Instructional Focus Documents addresses this issue so that skills are not taught in isolation; they are offered in rational and reasonable grouping and presented in a recursive manner so that skills are revisited, expanded, and applied in different contexts.

**SUMMARY OR CURRICULUM**

The Vertical Alignment Documents (VAD), Year at a Glance (YAG), TEKS Verification Documents and Instructional Focus Documents (IFD) comprise most of the Ore City ISD curriculum documents. These documents provide a consistent scope and sequence for instructional delivery and are the foundation for all instructional planning.

The curriculum itself is non-negotiable since we are legally bound as educators to implement the state standards. However, the actual journey the teachers plan with their students may look quite different in that it will be responsive to differing student interests, abilities, and teachers’ creativity.

