

Worcester Public Schools 5-phase Curriculum Renewal Cycle

The Worcester Public Schools employs a 5- phase curriculum review process. Each phase of the Curriculum Renewal Cycle requires the completion of particular tasks that together are part of a sequenced process that leads to curriculum improvement. Representation from each constituency of the school community is important for the successful renewal of the curriculum. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members are involved as a team at each phase.

The Curriculum Renewal Cycle begins in Phase 1 by defining current curriculum standards and establishing student needs for the purpose of conducting a gap analysis that is framed by the district's mission. Current levels of student performance are important components for gap analysis. Curriculum goals specific for a discipline are identified from the results of this analysis.

District policies that support established goals are evaluated in the context of new curriculum goals. Curriculum content, scope and sequence are evaluated and adjusted to meet the new goals. Interdisciplinary connections are established and documented. An initial rubric is developed to guide the alignment of instructional materials / supports.

Phase 2 of the Curriculum Renewal Cycle begins with the evaluation of the district's instructional capacity. The initial rubric developed in Phase 1 is refined throughout Phase 2. Technology needs are integrated into the rubric to refine it for use in the alignment of instructional materials / supports.

Research-based instructional tools are selected for review based on the rubric developed in Phase 2. Once core materials / supports are selected for review, the curriculum team engages in current best-practice to align the program's core, supplemental, and intervention supports with student needs. Performance tasks for students are created following the alignment of resources. These performance tasks are aligned vertically across grade levels. Additionally, technology, instructional materials, and professional development are selected to support the implementation of new core, supplemental, and intervention instructional tools. By the close of Phase 2, a standards-based report system is created to meet the communication needs of teachers, students, parents, school administrators and the community.

Piloting and evaluating the renewed curriculum are the focus areas of Phases 3 and 4. Qualitative and quantitative data are gathered for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of new instructional tools and supports. Information is gathered from the three different levels of the educational system (classroom, school, and district). Teachers convey information about the success and challenges faced during the pilot. Principals report about the effectiveness of the new curriculum and instructional practices, and the district conducts an evaluation for the purpose of developing an effective project plan and leadership strategies to support the change process. Updates to the district professional development plan ensure adequate capacity of adults to engage students with the updated curriculum.

Phase 5 of the Curriculum Renewal Cycle is dedicated to implementation of a project plan to bring the improvements to scale. Supportive policy review is conducted. Value-added analyses are conducted using disaggregated impact and outcome data. Data analysis is used to ensure educational excellence and equity. Long-term professional development is formulated to ensure continuity of instructional capacity as new staff members are employed and experienced staff members require reinforcement.