The Curriculum Audit

A look at Queen Anne’s County Public Schools

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The Curriculum Audit: What is it?

- An independent, third-party, unbiased view of how well the district is delivering their goals and mission to the students.
- We ask “What is it you are trying to do?”
Foundation of the Model: Alignment of the Written, Taught, Tested Curriculum

Curriculum

Teaching

• Curriculum—the work plan
• Teaching—the work
• Assessment—the work measure
ALIGNMENT: Quality Control

• ALIGNMENT is the key to assuring improved achievement.
• ALIGNMENT must be supported and facilitated at the district level.
• ALIGNMENT must be realized by teachers and principals in the schools.
• Everything taught in the classroom prepares students for ANYTHING they may encounter on any assessment (no surprises!!)
Design Alignment: DISTRICT

The relationship between the Curriculum (the work plan) and the Test (work measurement).

Curriculum

Quality Control

Delivery

Design

Taught

Delivery

Assessed

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The relationship of what is *Taught* to (a) the Test and (b) the Curriculum
Alignment in Delivery

• As much about WHAT is taught (curriculum) as it is about HOW (teaching/learning that occurs in the classroom), and with what kind of COGNITION.

content – context – cognitive type
Breaking the Cycle of Socioeconomic Determinism with Curriculum Alignment

- Socioeconomic Level
- Test Scores

- Socioeconomic
- Effective Schools
- Curricular Alignment
- Test Scores

Curriculum Management

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The Curriculum Audit

• Examines how well different departments and levels of the system are working to manage curriculum design and delivery to achieve and maintain alignment—in all three dimensions.

content – context – cognitive type
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIGHTLY HELD</th>
<th>LOOSELY HELD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(System-based)</td>
<td>(School-based)</td>
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<td>• ENDS</td>
<td>• MEANS</td>
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<td>• MISSION</td>
<td>• INSTRUCTION</td>
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<td>• GOALS STANDARDS PRIORITIES</td>
<td>• STRATEGIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>• STUDENT OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>• GROUPINGS</td>
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<td>(What students are walking away with--</td>
<td>• STAFFING</td>
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<td>mastery!)</td>
<td>• PROCESSES</td>
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<td>• STUDENT ASSESSMENTS</td>
<td>• RESOURCES/MATERIALS</td>
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The 5 Review Standards

I. Governance and Leadership (Control)
II. Curriculum and Learning (Direction)
III. Equality, Equity, and Connectivity
IV. Feedback and Assessment
V. Productivity and Resource Use
Ask: What is Queen Anne’s County Public School District trying to accomplish?

> What written documents support this?

1. Do written documents exist?
2. Are they any good?
3. Are they being used?

Not being compared to any other school district.
The Curriculum Audit: Process

• Findings are supported by triangulated data; at least 2 of the following data sources
  - Written documents: Polices, Improvement Plans, Curriculum documents, handbooks, PD, etc.
  - Conversations with personnel
  - Auditor observations; Building tours, Classroom visitations
The Curriculum Audit: Result

A written report that contains:

- Findings covering all five Standards
- Recommendations that include all the Findings

Recommendations are directed to the Board of Education and the Superintendent
District STRENGTHS

• Individuals in schools and at central office are committed to supporting and improving instruction and serving students.
District STRENGTHS

• Building and facilities remodel, redesign and construction to meet district needs.
• Test scores exceed state averages in many areas.
District STRENGTHS

• Recent efforts to write and align curriculum.
• Availability and use of data.
STANDARD ONE: Control

- Governance
- Effectiveness
- Follow-through
- Accountability
- Mission
Standard One Findings

- **Finding 1.1**: Board policies are inadequate to provide local curriculum management direction and to establish quality control of the educational program and organizational functions.

- **Finding 1.2**: Effective organizational management criteria were not reflected in the administrative structure depicted in the table of organization, and some critical positions for quality control were absent. Job descriptions, where available, generally met audit standards.
• **Finding 1.3:** Board of Education disharmony has compromised the board’s ability to provide clear direction and focus for the management and operation of the school district.

• **Finding 1.4:** District-wide and school-based planning is not of sufficient quality to lead the district toward achievement of intended goals and to accomplish desired improvements.
Standard Two

• Direction:
  – Curriculum Management Planning
  – Existence of Curriculum (Scope/coverage)
  – Quality and Specificity of Curriculum
  – Consistency/alignment of Curriculum, Assessments, Resources
STATE STANDARDS

• The Maryland standards are *not* at the level of specificity required to direct articulated (spiraled and sequenced) instruction.

• Need for a curriculum that refines and connects the student expectations—the work *plan*.
WHAT CURRICULUM MUST DO IN SCHOOLS (at a system level!)

• FOCUS—to identify what is essential and significant—beyond state/common core standards.

• CONNECT—to reinforce complex *learning* leading to mastery within and across grade levels and schools.

• EQUITY—to ensure that *every* student has access to the curriculum—their right.
Standard Two Findings

• **Finding 2.1:** The district has no comprehensive curriculum management plan in place to guide the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of curriculum. Current curriculum management practices do not meet audit criteria.

• **Finding 2.2:** The scope of the written curriculum is not sufficient overall to provide direction for teachers; however, some content areas and grade levels have adequate coverage of written curriculum documents.
Standard Two Findings

• **Finding 2.3:** Overall, the quality of curriculum documents is inadequate to direct teaching and maximize student achievement, although mathematics curriculum guides are adequate in kindergarten through grade 8. Basic components of the written curriculum are inadequate to provide direction for teaching and to ensure consistent delivery of the state content standards across the system.
STANDARD THREE: Connectivity and Equity

- Equity and Equality
- Alignment and Consistency: in delivery, among written/taught/tested, among departments in the district
- Instructional Expectations
- Staff Development
- Monitoring
Standard Three Findings

• **Finding 3.1:** Teaching strategies observed during classroom visits were not consistent with expectations expressed by district and school leadership and stated in the district and school improvement plans. Varied curriculum monitoring approaches at schools have contributed to inconsistent curriculum implementation across the district.

• **Finding 3.2:** Professional development to support the implementation of curriculum delivery and instructional practices has not been systematically planned or implemented to increase the likelihood of student success in meeting district expectations.
Finding 3.3: Disparities, inequities, and inconsistencies exist among schools, programs, and services. Staff demographics do not reflect student demographics despite district attempts to rectify the situation.
STANDARD FOUR—Feedback

Design
What is tested?
What kind of assessments are used?
How long have tests been used?
What do the results indicate?

Delivery
Who uses the data and how?
What decisions are made with the data?
Standard Four Findings

• **Finding 4.1**: The district lacks a comprehensive student assessment plan to support sound curricular decision making and to improve student achievement.

• **Finding 4.2**: The scope of student assessment is inadequate to monitor student learning and provide valid feedback to inform curriculum evaluation and quality.
Standard Four Findings

- **Finding 4.3**: The district has an effective database for collection, analysis, and dissemination of assessment trend data and related disaggregated reports for district, school, and classroom use. Effective use of data is a developing practice. Student performance data exceeds state averages in some areas, however increasing achievement gaps are evident in certain populations.
STANDARD 5

• Budgeting practices
• Programs and Interventions
• Facilities
• PRODUCTIVITY—doing more with the same (or less!)
Finding 5.1: District budget development and decision making are not aligned to curricular goals and priorities, nor are there adequate cost-benefit analyses within the financial network to assure maximum productivity.

Finding 5.2: Schools vary in the use of academic interventions with no systemic process to determine program or intervention effectiveness.
Finding 5.3: The facility planning process is rated adequate and is being actively utilized to help guide major renovation, remodeling, on going maintenance in the district, and to address future facility needs.
Recommendations

• Eight recommendations.
• Our best advice for addressing the gaps and issues in findings.
• Recommendations are not a “quick fix.” There are no magic programs or tools—just hard work focused on putting structures in place aimed at improving student learning for everyone.
• Suggested timeline: 3-5 years to put in place; longer to institutionalize.
Global themes in recommendations

• Vision
• Mission
• Philosophy/Beliefs
• Policy
• Plans
• Systems/Structure
• Redefining roles
• Rebuilding trust, integrity, sincerity, and transparency, through increased reliability and accountability
Recommendations

• **Recommendation 1:** Adopt and implement updated, revised, or new board policies to provide clear direction for the educational program and operational functions and to clarify expectations regarding organizational coordination and decision making. Redesign the organizational chart to comply with the audit principles of sound organizational management. Strengthen and update job descriptions to support curricular linkages and reflect impending organizational changes.
• **Recommendation 2:** Develop and implement a curriculum management plan that establishes an aligned curriculum available to all students and supports attainment of student learning goals. Design a comprehensive K-12 curriculum for all subjects that is aligned vertically, horizontally, and deeply aligned to the state standards and assessments.
Recommendations

• **Recommendation 3:** Ensure clarity through consistent district, school, and departmental planning. Develop cohesive written plan documents that meet audit criteria, have a reasonable number of achievable outcomes, and are communicated to all stakeholders. Ensure that departmental plans for professional development, interventions, program evaluation, an instructional technology are aligned to district and school improvement plans and the curriculum management plan. Use system performance data to identify gaps between the current status and desired outcomes.
Recommendation 4: Develop and implement standardized instructional models for curriculum delivery to align classroom practices with system expectations and state standards and tests, and strengthen unity in monitoring practices for the supervisory role of principals in improving achievement of students.
Recommendations

• **Recommendation 5:** Develop a district staff development plan that incorporates an emphasis on growth in curriculum design and delivery, effective classroom strategies that align with district expectations, and ongoing professional development among all employees focused on annual district student achievement goals.
Recommendations

• **Recommendation 6:** Develop and implement a policy and procedure that standardizes intervention and program selection based on diagnosed needs, and design and implement the evaluation of program objectives with feedback linked to student achievement. Decision making on the initiation, modification, continuation, or termination of programs and interventions must be based on valid and impartial knowledge of potential value and measured results.
Recommendations

• **Recommendation 7:** Design and implement a program evaluation system that meets audit criteria and provides ongoing student formative and summative assessment data, is linked to other district planning documents, and, ultimately, monitors and measures student success. Align student and program assessment with the curriculum management system, and support long-range planning. Provide support to under-represented groups in order to equalize participation in specialized programs.
• **Recommendation 8:** Develop and implement a three-year plan that fully aligns district resources to curricular goals and strategic priorities and that includes systemic cost-benefit analyses to assure that expenditures are producing desired results and are directed to the area of greatest need.
What’s next?

1. Receive the report

2. Ask the superintendent to prepare a response:
   a) Prioritize the areas needing attention: which conditions most adversely affect students?
   b) Which findings most adversely affect the system?
   c) Develop a board of education/central office/district plan to address the recommendations
NEXT STEPS....

• Assemble a task force for each standard; charge each task force with developing an action plan for the next three years based on suggestions in the recommendations that address that standard.

• Each action plan must have measurable objectives or tasks with clear evidence of completion, with the key personnel assigned to each.

• Estimate a due date for each action, with benchmarks noted on a project timeline
Final Thoughts...

• Get in the schools as often as possible.
• Recognize effort.
• Communicate and be transparent.
• Remember, process is sometimes as important as the product.
• NOTE progress.
• Celebrate milestones and benchmarks!
Final Questions?

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