CONSORTIUM FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Audit Report

West Northfield
School District 31
February 11, 2021

Shared by:
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District/School Information

District: West Northfield School District 31

Date of Review: February 2, 2021

Grade Levels Served: K-8

Student Enrollment: 868 Students

Evidence Presented or Collected for Report

Bold the evidence utilized for the report.

- **Board of Education Policies for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Learning**
- Budget Allocations (curriculum development, resources, assessments, professional learning)
- **Curriculum Review Process**
- Curriculum Review Calendar
- **Curriculum Documents**
- Assessment Results (NWEA, Organizational Health)
- Instructional Frameworks
- Curriculum Maps
- Communications with various stakeholders regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning
- Walkthrough data collected around curriculum and instructional framework implementation
- Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Committee agendas
- Professional Learning Committee agendas
- Building Staff meeting agendas
- **Administrative Council agendas**
- Board of Education agendas
- Grade level/department/PLC agendas
- New Teacher Orientation Materials
- CEC System Assessment Reports (if applicable)
- **Public** and Internal **websites**
- **Interviews/Focus Groups:**
  - Superintendent and Cabinet/Executive Leadership Team
  - School Administrators
  - Teachers, Specialists and Support Staff
  - Students
  - Parents
- **Classroom Observations** (limited to one elementary school visit during 2019-20 school year)

Focus on Learning – Audit Report

The fundamental purpose of a school district is to help all students achieve high levels of learning. Therefore, we must be willing to examine all of our practices, actions, and procedures in light of their impact on learning. The audit information documents how systematically each practice or action is evidenced in the district in the following categories: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum; System of Assessments; Interventions and Enrichments; and Policies and Procedures to Support a Focus on Learning.

CIA Audit Process

- District Staff complete a self-assessment on the continuous improvement framework criteria
- The Audit Team reviews district documents, holds stakeholder focus groups and conducts classroom observations to gather data aligned to the continuous improvement framework criteria
- The Audit Team reviews and analyzes the collected data, rates the district/school in each component of the framework

Ratings System Explanation

RATING	RATING DESCRIPTOR
1	There is no evidence that this practice or action is in process. **(AWARENESS)**
2	There is evidence that this practice or action is in process, discussion, or limited pilot/testing. There may be planning or studying of the practice or action. The organization has decided to address the practice or action. **(PLAN)**
3	There is evidence that the practice or action has moved beyond small scale planning or pilot/testing to larger scale pilot or testing. The practice or action will become a consistent expectation within the organization. **(DO-STUDY)**
4	There is evidence that the practice or action has support for systematic implementation within the organization. Evidence indicates stakeholder support from all levels of the organization. Evidence indicates systematic implementation is present in at least 50% of the organization and stakeholder groups (Board, administration, teachers, support staff, parents, and students). **(ACT)**
5	There is evidence that the practice or action is systematically implemented and supported within all levels of the organization and stakeholder groups. Evidence indicates systematic implementation is present in at least 80% of the organization and stakeholder groups (Board, administration, teachers, support staff, parents, and students). **(SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURE)**

Rating Table Highlight Key

- **GREEN** cells on the rating table for each area indicate the mode of self-assessment responses received from **staff**. When two modes were present the highest of the two is indicated.
- **BLUE** cells on the rating table for each area indicate the overall rating for that area from the **audit team**.

Summary of Review: Focus on Learning - CURRICULUM

A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum		1	2	3	4	5
A.	**Establishing the Curriculum:** We ensure and have evidence to show that student learning outcomes and common success criteria have been articulated across all classrooms to build shared knowledge regarding state standards, district curriculum guides, trends in student achievement and outcomes for the next course or grade in all subject areas.		■	■		
B.	**Executing the Curriculum:** We ensure and have evidence to show identified learning outcomes have been prioritized to guarantee each student has equal access to instruction that addresses those learning outcomes in all classrooms for the grade level or course in all subject areas.		■	■		
C.	**Clarifying and Communicating the Curriculum:** We ensure and have evidence to show every teacher has assisted all students and their families in how to understand and use essential learning outcomes so they can monitor student performance.		■			

Curriculum STRENGTHS:

- The district is in the process of building a standards-based written curriculum that will eventually be in place for all grade levels with unit plans, pacing guides and common assessments.

- Curriculum coordinators have been hired to support teachers and students and are developing curriculum maps.

- Some grade level teachers (and co-curricular teachers) feel good about the work they have done. These teachers report that their instruction is more aligned with their grade level teams.

- Teachers in the grade levels where the maps are further along believe they flow better and are more user-friendly than the old ones. It is easier for those not teaching the particular subject/grade level to see what is being taught.

- Arts Plus/Co-Curricular/Algebra Classes that are taught by the same teacher over multiple years seem to have spiraling curricula that build upon previously taught concepts.

- Some teachers communicate frequently through e-newsletters, including the use of recordings to show parents what and how their children are learning.

- Staff members recognize that the district's curriculum development process is heading in the right direction with qualified support personnel in place and it's just going to be a matter of time.

Curriculum OPPORTUNITIES for Improvement:

- There is little to no consistency with how the Curriculum Maps are designed and vary between subjects and grade levels.

- There isn't a cyclical process in place for curriculum review.

- Curriculum Maps/Units of Study aren't formally shared between grade levels and across schools so vertical alignment can take place.

- Specialists/Support Personnel find it challenging to push into classrooms when they don't know what the teacher will be teaching and each teacher is at a different place teaching different things.

- It is more challenging for parents to know what students are doing in certain subjects.

Summary of Review: Focus on Learning - ASSESSMENT

	System of Assessment	1	2	3	4	5
D.	***Defining the Assessment System:*** We ensure and have evidence to show alignment and balance between common, standards-based formative and summative assessments whose data is used to reflect on teaching, programs, interventions and periodic student progress in all subject areas.		■			
E.	***Assessing What Each Student Knows and Needs to Learn Next:*** We ensure and have evidence to show each teacher is implementing the common assessment system to monitor the learning of all students to identify what each student knows, is able to do and needs to learn next in all subject areas. We ensure and have evidence to show that students self-reflect on what they know, are able to do and need to learn next in all subject areas.		■			
F.	***Providing Frequent and Timely Descriptive Assessment Feedback:*** We ensure and have evidence to show frequent, timely, descriptive and actionable feedback regarding the performance of our students on classroom, team, school, district, and state assessments.			■		
G.	***Using Assessment Data and Information to Drive Instruction:*** We ensure and have evidence to show teachers regularly use assessment data, aligned to student learning outcomes, to determine how instruction and groupings have been modified, adjusted or changed in order to effectively respond to individual student and/or group learning needs.		■	■		
H.	***Using Assessment Data and Information to Recognize Growth and Achievement:*** We ensure and have evidence to show recognition and celebration of individual and collective student growth, mastery and success that has been aligned to unit-based learning outcomes and other normed ***and*** state assessments.		■	■		

Assessment STRENGTHS:

- Students report that their teachers make sure everyone understands the concepts before taking the test.

- Some teachers use a variety of methods including study guides, polling of the students, reteaching of the whole class or in small groups to determine what students know.

- Prior to COVID, there were scheduled Data Days and there was an on-going effort to teach teachers how to interpret data.

- Prior to COVID, practices were in place to use assessment data to identify students who needed additional supports or enrichment.

Assessment OPPORTUNITIES for Improvement:

- There are limited to no common assessments or individual goal setting.

- General assessment data is used for initial placement but ongoing formative assessments are not used throughout each unit of instruction.

- There are limited conversations between teachers and with students about their assessment results and growth targets.

- Parents understand letter grades on the report cards more than the standards-based descriptions. They believe that almost all students receive "Meets Expectations".

Summary of Review: Focus on Learning - INSTRUCTION

Differentiation: Instruction, Interventions and Enrichment		1	2	3	4	5
I.	*Differentiating Instruction:* We ensure and have evidence to show that instructional activities are engaging and differentiated to meet individual and small group needs for a minimum of 80% of the students within the classroom, utilizing instructional models such as co-teaching, cross grade instruction, push-in instruction, flexible grouping, etc.		■	■		
J.	*Aligning Interventions:* We ensure and have evidence to show that teachers have access to a comprehensive, tiered system of interventions through collaborating and communicating with a school-wide intervention team of support specialists that guarantees each student will receive differentiated time and support within and outside of the classroom if he/she has not demonstrated mastery of grade level or course unit-based learning outcomes.		■	■		
K.	*Aligning Enrichments:* We ensure and have evidence to show that teachers have access to a comprehensive, tiered system of enrichments through collaborating and communicating with an enrichment team of support specialists that guarantees each student has received differentiated time and support within and outside of the classroom if he/she has already demonstrated mastery of grade level or course unit-based learning outcomes.		■	■		

Instruction STRENGTHS:

- Prior to COVID, students were placed into higher level/fast-paced classes for math in the elementary school.

- Some students use Khan Mappers that correlate to their MAP scores for extra help.

- There are many physical resources available.

- Students and parents expressed positive feelings toward the teachers and school.

- Curriculum coordinators meet with grade level teams to improve instruction and work on curriculum and assessment.

- Meetings are held at the beginning of the year where individual 'IEPs-at-a-glance' are shared to help co-curricular/Arts Plus teams learn about students who have IEPs or 504s.

- Prior to COVID, interventionists were used to support students' learning in the classroom through a push-in/co-teaching model.

- An awards program is in place at the middle school (LEAF) to recognize student's academic, growth, effort, and/or leadership accomplishments.

- Some teachers believe their students' scores went up as a result of team collaboration and analysis of assessment data to create student goals and adjust instruction.

- The Rotation Schedule of teaching the same group of students in art, music, STEM and Family/Consumer science for a consecutive number of days/weeks seems to help with instructional continuity and relationship building.

Instruction OPPORTUNITIES for Improvement:

- Differentiation of instruction is not systematic to address the needs of all learners and the understanding of whose responsibility it is, varies between teachers.

- There are limited enrichment opportunities within classes.

- It is difficult for teachers to plan together since the curriculum maps, pacing guides, common units or assessments are not defined for all grade levels.

- Specialists do not have collaboration/common planning time with classroom teachers so it is difficult to support instruction effectively and/or efficiently.

Summary of Review: Focus on Learning - SUPPORT

Ensuring a Focus on Learning		1	2	3	4	5
L.	***Providing Conditions for an Optimal Learning Environment:*** We ensure and have evidence to show all learning environments are safe, respectful and engaging while supporting a climate of high expectations for social emotional learning. We ensure and have evidence to show we develop confident, self-sufficient learners who demonstrate both growth and proficiency. We ensure and have evidence to show student satisfaction data as one type of evidence source to assess and improve learning conditions.			■	■	
M.	***Examining Learning Practices:*** We ensure and have evidence to show that teachers have examined homework, grading, report cards, etc. to provide organization-wide clarity and common expectations regarding judgments of student performance. We ensure and have evidence to show consistency in these areas across all classrooms, teams and ***all*** other organizational levels.			■			
N.	***Judging Quality Work:*** We ensure and have evidence to show that all teachers have established the criteria by which they determine that student work is of a prescribed level of quality and practice, applying those criteria until they can do so consistently. We ensure and have evidence to show students articulate the criteria for success.			■			
O.	***Providing Training and Support:*** We ensure and have evidence to show that professional development is job-embedded and ongoing in addressing the alignment of assessments and instruction within a standards-driven curriculum, has met the needs of our staff and achieved our mission and vision.				■	■	
P.	***Organizing and Allocating Resources:*** We ensure and have evidence to show that the allocation of resources (people, time and money) has aligned to meeting the needs of students and staff, achieving our mission and vision and is focused on learning as opposed to teaching.				■		

Note: There was no self-rating for N.

Support STRENGTHS:

- A range of topics and presenters are used during early release times. These include SEL as well as academic professional development opportunities.

- A portion of time is allocated (during early release Mondays) for teams of teachers to plan together.

- The district recently hired a director of curriculum and instruction to facilitate curriculum development and the work of the curriculum coordinators.

Support OPPORTUNITIES for Improvement:

- Time is not designated for all teams of teachers to work with the curriculum coordinators to develop curriculum and assignments.

- Initial training is given for new programs or resources but ongoing systemic support for curriculum, standards and assessment does not appear to be present.

- PLC time is scheduled by the district but most teachers don't meet on their own to support grade-wide needs, review data, plan instruction, etc.

Suggested Next Steps

While this report is not intended to be prescriptive, this section provides some suggestions for addressing key opportunities for improvement. It provides possible suggestions which could serve as next steps. Next Steps are framed by the experiences and opinions of the review team.

- **Identify a common Curriculum Map template to use across subject areas. Include common vocabulary, identified assessments, differentiation strategies for struggling/advanced students and pacing guides for each grade level /subject area.**

- **Create an on-going schedule for implementing a cyclical process for curriculum review. Prioritize the content areas by need (e.g. from achievement data, progress status, etc.).**

- **Prioritize the Professional Development topics (i.e. use of curriculum maps, differentiation, assessment results, meaning of performance levels of standards-based grading, SEL needs, behavior trends, etc.). Focus on a small number that will be revisited throughout the year with the possible use of a menu approach so that PD opportunities are applicable to all staff members.**

- **Look at scheduling options to include time for teachers to collaborate and have common plan time during the week in addition to the Monday PLC times. Include scheduled time for curriculum coordinators to attend some of these meetings.**

- **Create a transition plan (with academic and SEL considerations) to help students return to full-time in-person learning, especially those who have been remote learners this year.**