

## **Standards Based Philosophy and Practices**

### **Vision:**

- Develop and implement with fidelity and accountability a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is standards-based.
- Increase student achievement by focusing on what students need to know, understand, and be able to do at each grade level and how it is measured.
- Empower teachers with research-based instructional strategies and resources.

Develop a plan and systematic process to be implemented simultaneously with Colorado Department of Education's release of state standards in December of 2009.

Begin with Language Arts, Reading, Writing, and Math K-12 and then add other subjects.

District Standards will be in alignment with preschool standards, post-secondary expectations, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

Use backwards planning as the norm in this planning process.

Collaboratively design a District-wide plan, create documents, and communicate about the process.

All work will need to be supported by a comprehensive professional development plan.

1. Determine a clear direction for standards-based education (SBE) in St. Vrain Valley School District and identify a common vocabulary and philosophy.
2. Provide teachers with clear, detailed, and specific grade level descriptions of what students need to know and be able to do (grade level expectations).
3. Develop District-wide common pre, mid, and post benchmarking and summative assessments, that report both growth and achievement, and correlate with the Colorado content standards, CSAP, District grade level expectations and evidence outcomes, ACT, and CBLA requirements.
4. Identify and/or develop common progress monitoring/ formative assessments (multiple types available).
5. Identify and/or develop rubrics for assessments.
6. Ongoing collaboration and timely communication among teachers, SVVEA, building administrators, District staff of purpose and development of program.

Adapted from:

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7. Develop or identify efficient and effective scoring methods for data analysis to inform instruction.
8. Professional Learning Communities will use data discussions to inform instruction.

## Philosophy

**Standards Based Education:** Ongoing learning cycle that ensures that all students learn and can demonstrate mastery in the district's adopted content standards and associated grade level expectations and evidence outcomes. Becoming standards based means that every teacher, in every classroom, through this learning cycle, ensures students learn the district's standards, expectations, and outcomes to mastery (automaticity and fluency of grade level expectations).

In its simplest terms, a standards-based teaching/learning cycle continually answers four critical questions:

1. What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do?
2. How do we know that students have learned?
3. How do we teach effectively to ensure students learn?
4. What do we do when students do not learn or do not reach mastery before expectation?

## Vocabulary

**Curriculum:** A curriculum is an organized plan of standards, grade level expectations, interventions, and instruction or experiences that engages students in learning. A curriculum designs and communicates the scope and sequence of concepts and skills students should master within a course or grade level.

**Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum:** A curriculum is **guaranteed** if it gives clear guidance to teachers regarding the content (standards and grade level expectations, evidence outcomes and 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts, and skills) to be addressed in specific courses or at specific grade levels. It assures that processes and personnel are in place to ensure there is monitoring of the curriculum and delivery. A **guaranteed** curriculum ensures all students receive an effective education based on adopted curriculum standards and grade level expectations regardless of who is teaching the class. A curriculum is **viable** when there is sufficient time, materials, and instructional tools for teachers to teach the curriculum so students learn that content and perform at a proficient level (Marzano, 2003).

- Fidelity - Fidelity of implementation is the delivery of curriculum and instruction in the way in which it was designed to be delivered. Fidelity is the

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extent to which a curriculum or program is delivered in accordance with the intended design.

- Implementing a program with fidelity means that the program is delivered the way it was implemented in the research that provided evidence of effectiveness for that program.

**Curriculum Map:** Course of study usually linking learning objectives and targets with a designated time through unit and/or lesson plans. A curriculum map has also been defined as a real-time collection of information about what is actually taught in classes at specific points during the school year (Jacobs, 2004).

**Backward Design** – An approach to designing a curriculum or unit that begins with the end in mind and designs towards that end. Backward design (Wiggins and McTighe) advocate starting with the end (desired results) and then identifying the evidence necessary to determine that the results have been achieved (assessments). With the results and assessments clearly specified, the designer determines the necessary (enabling) knowledge and skill, and only then, the teaching needed to equip students to succeed.

**Prepared Graduate Competencies:** The Prepared Graduate Competencies are the overarching Preschool through Grade 12 concepts and skills that all students leaving the Colorado education system must have to ensure success in a post-secondary and workforce setting.

In *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe propose that understanding (concepts and skills) can be thought of in two basic ways. We understand when we (1) learn to use powerful ideas to make schoolwork connected and meaningful and (2) are able to transfer our learning thoughtfully and effectively to novel situations and problems.

**Content Standards:** State academic standards are the expectations of what students need to know and be able to do. They also stand as the values and content organizers of what Colorado sees as the future skills and essential knowledge for our next generation to be more successful. State standards are the basis of the annual state assessment.

Standards are not the same as lesson plans or curriculum. They are the content understandings and abilities that lead a student to success beyond school.

**Grade Level Expectations:** The articulation of (at each grade level), concepts and skills of a standard that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for high school.

**High School Expectations:** The articulation of the concepts and skills of a standard that indicates a student is making progress toward being a prepared graduate.

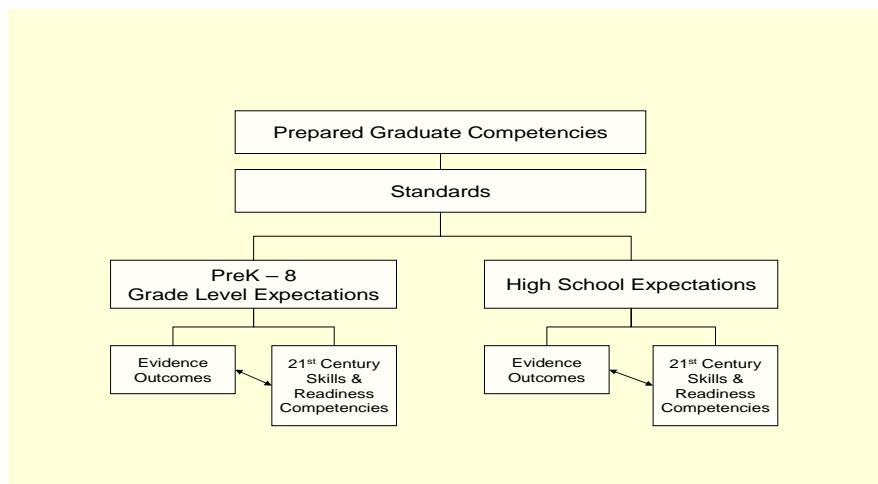
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**Evidence Outcome:** Each expectation also has an evidence outcome for a student to make meaning of the knowledge and prove how they know it. This is intended to engage the student and help them find relevance in the study. The 21st Century skills are a part of this evidence element. This is an indication that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level.

**Inquiry Questions:** A question that lies at the heart of a subject or a curriculum and promotes inquiry and uncoverage of a subject. These questions do not yield a single straightforward answer but produce different plausible responses.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:** - This is a term that most commonly resonates as a way to describe the skills necessary to respond and lead well in a globally based culture. Research (21st Century Partnership, SCANS report, EPIC, College Board, etc.) points to the importance of five essential skills. **These five include problem solving/critical thinking, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and innovation.** These skills are prominently embedded in the new Colorado standards and change the original version from academic content standards to essential concepts and skill standards.



**Assessment:** An appraisal or evaluation. The process of quantifying, describing, gathering data, or giving feedback about performance (Carr and Harris, 2001). In education, assessment is a process of measuring, evaluating, or testing student competency in concepts or skills and determining the progress of a student toward meeting academic standards.

- **Formative assessment – assessment for learning:** Assessments used to monitor or adjust instruction in order to improve learning for current students, i.e., to inform instructional decision-making. Formative

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assessments can be pre-tests to determine current level of knowledge or skill before instruction, used to gauge progress during instruction, or used at the conclusion of a lesson or unit to determine the effectiveness of instruction. (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). These can be created by teachers, grade-levels, departments, or other teams of teachers or specialists.

- **Progress monitoring** - Progress Monitoring is the ongoing process that involves collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward specific skills or general outcomes. Progress monitoring generates the useful data for making instructional decisions based on the review and analysis of student data. Monitoring student progress, through collection and analysis of data, is an effective way to determine if the instruction being delivered is meeting the needs of the student and to determine a student's rate of progress as compared to peers.
- **Summative assessment – assessment of learning:** Assessment that provides summary information about what students have learned. Summative assessments tend to be more formal and are usually given at the end of a grading period, course, or annually to evaluate what students have learned at the conclusion of that time or course. Both formative and summative assessments are important, provide different opportunities to measure, and understand student learning

**Exemplar:** Example that illustrates the knowledge or performance characteristics of a concept or skill. Exemplars provide students with a model of an expected level of learning or a performance. The most common exemplars are samples of student work provided to students as an example of what they are expected to know or perform. Exemplars can also help teachers (and students themselves) to evaluate student work.

**Proficient performance/proficiency:** Commonly defined as being skilled or able to do something very well. In education, this represents the level of performance that is accepted as sufficient for meeting the requirements of a content standard or grade level expectation, usually at various points of time in a student's career.

**Rubric** – A rubric describes levels of knowledge or skill that can be demonstrated in some type of performance task. Scoring guides or rubrics utilize a clear set of criteria that describe the expected learning and quality needed to achieve a specific level of performance or grade. They describe levels of performance and usually assign some type of descriptor (e.g., no progress – fully accomplished) and/or a numerical rating (e.g., 1 – 5) to that performance.

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## **Standard-Based Description of Practices**

### **What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do?**

As a standards-based district, we need to identify specifically and clearly the standards, grade level expectations, and evidence outcomes that all students should learn. In order to address this question we need to ensure that the following practices are in place.

1. Standards in all academic disciplines or content areas, along with grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills, are identified and adopted at the district level.
2. Grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills, expected for all students are identified and described.
3. Grade level expectations are articulated (aligned) within, among grade levels, and across the district to ensure there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps.
4. Adopted curricula provide a scope and sequence of essential expectations and outcomes (sometimes-called curriculum objectives or targets) that engage students in learning standards in all content areas.
5. Curriculum maps or other curricular tools are produced at the district level to assist teachers to plan effective instruction that focuses on grade level expectations, outcomes, concepts and skills.
6. Descriptions of proficiency are created to describe the types and levels of performance expected for all grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills in all content areas and grade levels.
7. Exemplars of proficient student work are created and distributed to teachers to provide models of learning and performance expectations for all grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills.
8. Adopted or purchased instructional programs and materials are intentionally articulated and aligned with standards-based curricula.
9. Grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills are communicated effectively to students and parents.

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### **How do we know that students have learned?**

In order to ensure students learn the grade level expectations, evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills identified in district curricula, districts and schools must regularly monitor student learning through a variety of assessment strategies. In order to address this question, the district and schools need to ensure these practices are in place:

1. Assessments to measure proficient student performance are tightly aligned with evidence outcomes, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts and skills, curricula and instruction.
2. All educators understand the multiple purposes of assessment, particularly the difference between summative assessment (assessment of learning) and formative assessment (assessment for learning).
3. A variety of methods and strategies are available and used to continuously measure student achievement and **ensure** learning.
4. Common assessments are developed and administered for similar courses or grade levels.
5. Common scoring rubrics are used to consistently and reliably measure proficient performance on evidence outcomes.
6. Students receive guidance and feedback in order to develop understanding of their own performance on assessments, monitor their own progress and identify individual goals for learning.
7. The District and schools use reporting systems that identify student proficiency levels in evidence outcomes, and the progress students are making in reaching proficiency over time.
8. The District and schools continually collect and analyze student-learning results in multiple fashions.
9. Multiple sources of assessment data are used to guide district, school, grade-level, department and individual classroom decisions.

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### **How do we teach effectively to ensure students learn?**

Effective instruction is what causes students to learn. In standards-based district and schools, research-based instructional methods and strategies are used to deliver standards-aligned curricula and ensure students have adequate and equitable opportunities to learn. In order to address this question, the district and schools need to ensure the following practices are in place:

1. Teaching strategies are derived from a set of sound learning principles about learning for understanding.
2. Curricula (aligned with standards and grade level expectations) are consistently and equitably taught across the district.
3. Research-based instructional methods are implemented to engage students in learning by providing them with strategies to learn grade level expectations. Students receive timely feedback about their performance and have adequate opportunities to learn and perform at mastery.
4. Teachers engage in ongoing, collaborative work to develop units, lessons and instructional strategies focused on the district's grade level expectations.
5. Lessons and units are developed using a backwards design process, i.e., beginning with the end in mind along with an ongoing or assessment for students to demonstrate what they have learned.
6. Instruction is continually informed by the ongoing assessment and analysis of student learning using multiple formative assessments (assessments for learning).
7. Instruction supports equity with multiple opportunities to learn through individualization and differentiation.
8. Ongoing training, coaching, monitoring and feedback regarding instructional practices are provided to teachers to ensure effectiveness in teaching standards and benchmarks.

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### **What do we do when students don't learn or do reach mastery before expectation?**

In standards-based districts and schools, students are provided multiple opportunities to learn, both in the classroom and beyond the classroom, through interventions, supplemental programs or other support systems. Such supplemental learning opportunities are provided both to students who are not reaching proficiency and/or who are performing above proficiency. In order to address this question, the District and schools need to ensure these practices are in place:

1. The District and schools ensure that students who do not learn through Tier I instruction in their classroom have multiple opportunities to learn, both in the classroom and beyond the classroom.
2. Tier II instructional interventions beyond the classroom are provided for students performing below proficiency as well as acceleration and enrichment opportunities are made available for students performing above proficiency.
3. Intervention models, programs or strategies are research based.
4. The District has a defined system of interventions (called a pyramid of interventions).
5. Problem Solving teams support teachers in designing individual interventions for students.

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