



Lexington Public Schools

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Our Schools

Curriculum and Program Reviews

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Continuous improvement is one of the core values of the Lexington Public Schools. In order to ensure that our curriculum meets the highest local and national standards and to maintain Lexington's expectations for an excellent school system, we established a formal curriculum review process three years ago.

In the fall of 2006, the formal curriculum review process began with a focus on mathematics and physical education/wellness. The review team members include teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. Last year, we began the science curriculum review, and next year we will begin the review of the K-12 English/Language Arts curriculum. It is our goal to complete each curriculum review process within three years and complete all major curriculum areas during an eight-year cycle.

Curriculum reviews and the work of our curriculum departments ensure that the essential knowledge (standards) at each grade level are identified and articulated, K-12. The standards at each grade level are aligned with national and state standards. At the state level, these standards are called the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Teachers are trained in the content and pedagogy necessary for successful implementation of the aligned curricula, based on current educational research around "best practices" in education. If necessary, core and ancillary resources are purchased to implement the revised curriculum.

During the review process, the following questions are asked and investigated: Is the curriculum effective? If not, how does the curriculum need to be changed to meet desired results? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Does the curriculum meet its intended expectations for each constituency? Does the curriculum reflect current student needs?

Year 1 of the process includes a review of the research and a data analysis to assure K-12 curriculum alignment. Year 2 of the process includes pilot implementations, budgetary implications for full implementation of curriculum recommendations, and professional development. Year 3 of the curriculum review process includes system-wide implementation of the K-12 aligned curriculum, additional professional development, and funding (if needed) to assure smooth implementation.

Program and department evaluations are also a critical component of a successful school system. Each year, we examine several programs/departments to determine their effectiveness. During the past two years, we reviewed the following programs: financial operations reviewed by a local citizen financial review committee; special education, the English language learner program, food services, and the use of federal funds, reviewed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); and Lexington High School by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges as part of the ten-year accreditation process. Also, the METCO program will be evaluated by the Superintendent and principals during the winter of 2009 to find out how well Lexington is maximizing the use of METCO funding to provide needed academic and social support.

We recognize that in order to provide the best possible education for all of our students, we must be committed to continuous improvement. Curriculum and program reviews are two ways we can evaluate how well we are doing and make the changes students need.