

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM NEWS

FALL 2005

Vol 1 issue 1

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS- middle school curriculum 994-1682

Special Interest Articles:

- The news about each content area,
- Survival Vocabulary
- What makes a great middle school.

Individual Highlights:

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for additional information

Ann Arbor Public Schools

Instructional

Division

Copies of this newsletter

can be found at

www.aaps.k12.mi.us/aaps.forstaff



VOCABULARY FOR A STANDARDIZED WORLD

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND – has added a layer of vocabulary to our already cryptic educationalesse.

Make sure you can use these words as you talk to the outside world.

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress, the level of proficiency that a school must achieve each year to have 100% of its students proficient by 2014

GLCE – Grade Level Content Expectations – content area benchmarks assigned to specific grade levels

MEAP TEST – now given to all students in grade 3 –8 in math and language arts, to

grades 5 and 8 in science, to grades 6 and 9 social studies, and to grade 11 in all subjects.

LEXILE – a measurement of reading level. We measure this in grades 4 –9 with the SRI test.

SUB GROUP – income, special education, and non- English speaking groups whose performance must be monitored to meet the requirements of NCLB.

GAP SCORE – the difference in the percent of students meeting state standards for 2 sub groups.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many of you are wondering if you can count the department meeting in your building as professional development.

Any meeting that is counted for Professional development must address closing the Achievement Gap, Integration of technology & instruction or Curriculum Development –GLCEs.

Both the presenter and the audience should have a clear understanding how each workshop fits in the district goals and how the content of that workshop will be used in the classroom.

It is your right as a learner to ask for clarification of this.

(See PD offerings in each content article)



TEACHING, LEARNING STANDARDS

“The Formula is Well Known, Now WE Need to Follow It”

By Mike Schmoker.

“ There is substantial evidence that results are virtually inevitable when teachers, working in teams:

- **Focus** substantially - though not exclusively - on assessed standards
- **Review** simple, readily available achievement data to set a limited number of measurable achievement goals in the lowest scoring subjects of courses and target specific standards where achievement is low.
- **Work regularly and collectively** to design, adapt and assess instructional strategies targeted directly at specific standards of low performance revealed by the assessment data (e.g. measurement in math, voice in writing, sight reading in music)”

Don't forget the teaching standards as you integrate the GLCE's. Together they make an unbeatable combination.

Standards of Authentic Instruction

Higher-Order Thinking:

Instruction involves students in manipulating information and ideas by synthesizing, generalizing, explaining or arriving at conclusions that produce new meaning and understandings for them.

Deep Knowledge:

Instruction addresses central ideas of a topic or discipline with enough thoroughness to explore connections and relationships and

to produce relatively complex understanding.

Substantive Conversation:

Students engage in extended conversational exchanges with the teacher and/or peers about subject matter in a way that builds an improved and shared understanding of ideas or topics.

Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom:

Students make connections between substantive knowledge and either public problems or personal experiences.

SIXTH GRADE WRITING IN THE CONTENT

This summer several dedicated souls helped to produce the curriculum for the sixth grade writing in the content area class. This is the class that sixth grade teacher teach instead of an IDB.

Each content area has it's own set of lessons. Lessons cover about thirty days leaving 15 days for choice in each nine-week rotation.

Lessons on the SIX TRAITS OF

WRITING, fairy tales, and adventure stories are found in the ELA notebook.

The math notebook concentrates on writing a good reflection.

Science teachers will be using lessons on observation and lab reports.

Social studies will work on compare and contrast and position papers. Watch out seventh grade teachers, GREAT WRITERS ARE COMING YOUR WAY!

INTERSECTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND INSTRUCTION

The bond has provided us with many new instructional and assessment tools that you have been introduced to or will see shortly.

Science teachers have access to Science GIZMOS. If you don't have a

password, you will shortly.

SRI has been launched and we now are measuring student-reading scores twice a year. My Access will soon be seen in all the middle schools.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

Middle school math teachers worked hard last year. You accomplished much including setting the standard for BOE presentations.

The work is not done! This year we will be learning a new program, rewriting the parent handbook, and aligning the GLCE's to the new text materials.

Our first 2 curriculum meetings will focus on mathematics vocabulary. I have purchased copies of **TEACHING MATHEMATICS VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT, BY MIKI MURI**. We will use that to guide our discussion for the first two curriculum meetings.

We will be establishing a parent committee to guide us through parent reaction to CMP2.

CURRICULUM MEETINGS -

October 5
Teaching Vocabulary in Math
Tappan

December 7
Teaching Vocabulary in Math
Forsythe

Feb 1
Technology in Math
Scarlett

April 5
Assessing the year what needs to be fixed.
Scarlett

WARNING

CMP2 IS A RESEARCH BASED PRODUCT... YOU MUST TEACH IT AS IT IS WRITTEN TO SEE MAXIMUM RESULTS!!!

*"It boils down to this – if you can't talk about math, you are unlikely to do it well."
Pat Wingert,
Newsweek,
December 2,
1996*

ENGLISH – LANGUAGE ARTS

CURRICULUM MEETINGS-

Nov 3
The meeting will focus on classroom applications of the GLCE's. We will break out by grade level for sharing.

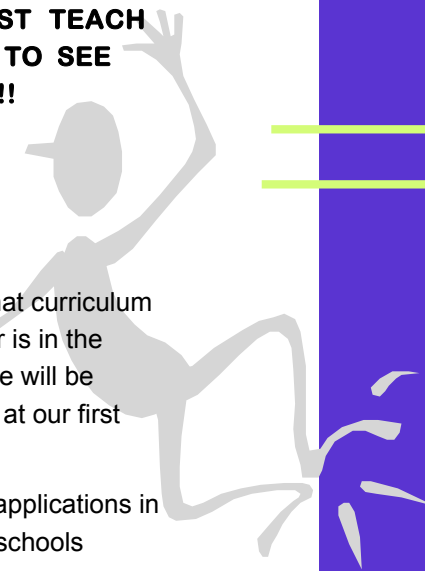
Dec 8
Genre studies in reading.
Forsythe

Feb. 2
Genre studies in writing
Scarlett

April 5
Technology in ELA
Scarlett

The alignment document that curriculum leaders worked on last year is in the office of every principal. We will be passing out teacher copies at our first meeting.

We will look at technology applications in the spring after the middle schools receive their new computers.



"When a superior man knows the causes which make instruction successful, and those which make it of no effect, he can become a teacher of others. Thus in his teaching, he leads and does not drag; he strengthens and does not discourage; he opens the way but does not conduct to the end without the learner's own efforts. Leading and not dragging produces harmony. Strengthening and not discouraging makes attainment easy. Opening the way and not conducting to the end makes the learner thoughtful. He who produces such harmony, easy attainment, and thoughtfulness may be pronounced a skillful teacher."

- Confucius, Book XVI
- Record on the Subject of Education,
13



Several middle school science teachers are part of an elementary process to review science curriculums. The expected outcome is a completely aligned k-8 curriculum that will address all the benchmarks before the MEAP in the eighth grade.

Although the state has not finished their GLCE document in science it is clear we will have to do something with the 8th grade science curriculum. We have many challenges ahead.

CURRICULUM MEETINGS

Oct 5

**First meeting will review Gizmos
8th grade CPO lab
6th writing lessons**

We will align our curriculum to the grade level content expectations and review new textbooks this year.

One of the issues that will be discussed in the sixth and seventh grade is following the state guidelines – Western Hemisphere in 6th grade – Eastern in 7th grade. There are numerous pros and con's to be considered. Think about your feelings on the subject and be prepared to share.

History teachers, be very sure you are teaching to the NEW history theme document found on the MDE website.

Geography Awareness Week 2005 is November 13-19.

This year's theme, Migration: The Human Journey encourages kids to explore and honor their diverse heritages.

SCIENCE

**7th Grade level review
Tappan**

**Nov 2
8th Heat Jeff Bradley
6/7 volunteers needed
Slauson**

**Jan 31
8th Light Ted Emch
6/7 volunteers needed
Tappan**

**April 4
Pressure Mike Lovelace, Vernier
Probes Keith
6/7 volunteers needed
Clague**

Please email prieskor@aaps.k12.mi.us if you are willing to take the lead on a 6th or 7th grade meeting

SOCIAL STUDIES

As they trace the migration stories of their communities, students will examine and photodocument distinctive features of their cultures, connecting their personal geographies to the greater history of human movement.

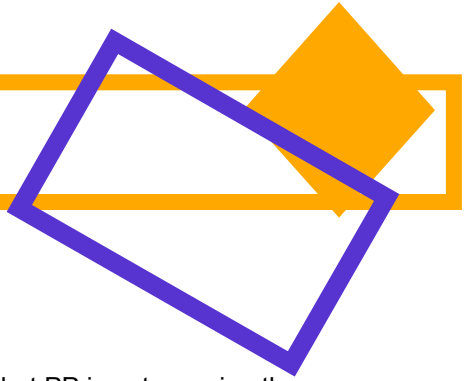
Check it out at

<http://nationalgeographic.com/geographyaction/>

Spend a few days documenting the face of movement in Ann Arbor.

Take some time to register at Ednet and receive benefits and resources for geography teachers.

<http://www.ngsednet.org/>



Professional Development not meeting your needs?

Design your own workshop. Send me I.Learner outcomes
Quality professional development increases capacity of the educator to improve student achievement.

II. Identify alignment
Quality professional development is aligned with identified building level achievement and/or improvement goals.

III. Evaluation
Quality professional development plans for on-going evaluation of learning and changes in practice.

IV. Follow-up
Quality professional development is a process that occurs over time with support for acquiring new skills and incorporating them into practice.

VI. District focus
Identify the relationship to one of the district goals



HEALTH

CURRICULUM MEETINGS

Oct 4 -ARENA Scheduling
Please call reps
Tappan

Dec 6 – Sex Ed Law
Tappan

March 7 – Replacing BARN
Tappan

May 9 – Sharing your Best Tech Tips
Tappan

Planned Parenthood presentations are not well received by some parents. Dr. Fornero has had several inquiries about our use of them as a speakers.

We know that PP is not crossing the bounds of the law, but we must accommodate parent needs. I will be sending you a form letter that must go home to parents prior to Planned Parenthood presentations. We will allow parents to withdraw students from these presentations.

With the new computers that will be arriving in the winter we will not be able to use BARN. Scarlett is already using a product that is OSX compatible.

We will look at that in March. If you read of any other products that we should consider please connect me at prieskor@aaps.k12.mi.us.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

CURRICULUM MEETINGS

Nov 1
Review of Barb Snyder's presentation and the 3M's
Tappan

Jan 17
Creating PowerPoint
Tappan

March 14
Using digital cameras
Tappan

May 9
Using digital video
Tappan

Our review of Barb Snyder will help us to develop activities that use our technology and hands on, learner centered activities to enhance student learning.

Barb's 3 M model consists of

Meaning – comprehension, creativity and context.

Message – exchange of previously unknown information

Motivation – the willingness to exchange a message and formulate a response.

How can we use technology skills to meet the 3M's?



WHAT MAKES A GOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL?

Three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools:

- They are **academically excellent** – these schools challenge all students to use their minds well.
- They are **developmentally responsive** – these schools are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.
- They are **socially equitable** – these

schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality

To achieve this level of performance, high-performing schools establish **norms, structures, and organizational arrangements** to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.

<http://www.schoolstowatch.org/criteria/excel.htm>

FINDING US

Now that our offices have all been moved to Balas 1, we are challenged to find workshop space. Make no assumptions this year: be sure to check workshop sites before setting out. Many workshops that occur during the day will be at WISD. After school

meetings will be in buildings most of the time.

On a related topic, in our need to be good stewards of the district's limited resources, you will find that workshop snacks will be less generous this year and most lunches will be on your own.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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NOVEMBER 15, 2005

3:30 - 6:30

SIX TRAITS EVALUATION

Are you looking for consistent evaluation of writing for the students on your team?

Bring your teammates to dinner and practice consistent evaluation using the **SIX TRAITS OF WRITING**.

Dinner will be served.

Register your team members at prieskor@aaps.k12.mi.us