

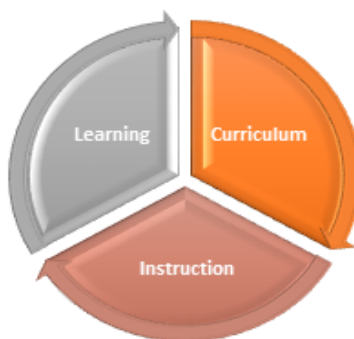


Academics Philosophy

It is the mission of Alvin ISD to be a dynamic learning organization committed to excellence for each student and every program. The Academics Department is organized with the belief that everyone in the district has a vital role in our students' learning and should be actively involved in the curriculum and instruction process to effectively ensure the written, taught, and assessed curriculum aligns to state standards. Alvin ISD curriculum and instruction is designed to challenge all learners and sets high standards for achievement.

In Alvin ISD, we believe that every student should have access to a viable, equitable, and standards-based curriculum. The curriculum provides clarity through concise language, clearly articulated content, and aligned resources. We believe that offering a rich written curriculum that promotes high expectations for teachers and students will ultimately lead to high-level learning for our students. In order for our curriculum to stay relevant for our students, a curriculum management plan is in place. This helps ensure a continuous improvement model for instruction.

We believe there should be an alignment between curriculum, instruction, and the measurement of student learning. The relationship between curriculum and student learning is cyclical in that curriculum makes a continuous impact on instruction and learning and, vice versa, students' learning acquisition has impact on curriculum.



Learning acquisition must be measured frequently in order to respond to our students' needs. Therefore, there is a consistent curriculum revision process that takes place to ensure student learning is happening at a high rate. This happens through the analysis of student data from numerous sources. Curriculum-based assessments, reading inventories, writing samples, as well as state and national assessments, give us information to evaluate our curriculum for effectiveness with students.

Curriculum revision is accomplished through curriculum writing teams consisting of campus instructional coaches, teachers and district curriculum coordinators. Curriculum mapping and vertical alignment processes are utilized to determine when specific standards should be

mastered by students. The curriculum mapping process aids in developing the scope and sequences for each content area by helping curriculum writers to identify timeframes needed for each set of standards.

Teachers are responsible for teaching the state standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, which are found in our curriculum scope and sequence documents. These documents guide teachers on when specific standards should be taught throughout the school year. Although the curriculum encompasses numerous instructional strategies and resources for each standard, teachers have choice in the “how” of teaching. Teachers are encouraged to use their pedagogical expertise and knowledge of their individual students to design lessons that engage students in the work. Mastery of the standards, through challenging and relevant work, is the desired outcome for our students’ learning.

Role of Campus Leadership

Curriculum and instructional leadership at the campus level is critical to overall student achievement. A district curriculum can only be successful with the support of campus leadership. Alvin ISD principals are expected to be instructional leaders who support teachers in designing their instruction while ensuring implementation of the district curriculum.

Working in conjunction and in support of district-level staff, principals are responsible for the following at the campus level in terms of instructional leadership:

- review the district academics philosophy with all campus teachers;
- set expectations with campus teachers for using the district curriculum when planning instruction;
- commit to supporting the fidelity of the instructional coaching model
- commit to supporting the use of campus teachers and instructional coaches on curriculum writing teams;
- engage in the continuous improvement cycle. Teacher collaboration and intentional learning will build the capacity for the staff as a professional learning community (PLC).
- support PLCs in adding instructional approaches that meet the needs of their specific students into their lesson design;
- ensure that teams will collaborate in adding instructional approaches that meet the needs of their specific students into their lesson design, intervention plans, and accelerated instruction plans. When teachers are in planning meetings, teachers are expected to use the curriculum scope and sequences to build grade level instructional calendars and campus based assessments.
- support campus teachers in participating in professional learning on the curriculum and instructional pedagogy.

Decisions regarding classroom instruction, as it relates to the curriculum, are essential in order for there to be cohesiveness across grade levels and across content areas. Setting the expectations for classroom instruction starts as a collaborative decision-making process between campus administrators and district leaders. However, ultimately, it is the campus principal who is responsible for establishing campus expectations and monitoring implementation.

Principals should set expectations regarding the time and location for collaboration to take place between teachers. Building staff collaboration time into weekly campus schedules is essential to teachers growing and learning from one another in that it increases the collective quality of their planning, instruction, and assessment. Principals should also participate in these collaborative meetings in order to give feedback to teacher leaders, be abreast of the conversations about students' growth, and to hold teachers accountable for the work accomplished in the meetings.

Alvin ISD teachers are expected to utilize the district curriculum to design their lesson plans. Campus principals are to set expectations as to what should be included in their teachers' lesson plans. This should be a collaborative decision between teachers and campus administrators. Monitoring of the alignment of teacher lesson plans to the district curriculum to classroom instruction is an essential piece of instructional leadership.

Professional Learning

Effective professional learning must be tied to district priorities, engages all learners, and allows opportunities for teachers to practice new skills and strategies. When creating professional learning opportunities, plans for monitoring new learning and offering feedback will be included as part of the professional learning plan. The most effective professional learning is focused on a need, driven by data, and in an area that will accelerate student learning. In order to provide an effective learning environment for teachers, instructional leaders will guide teachers through new learning, set expectations for implementation, and create systems to hold teachers accountable.

Alvin ISD believes the purpose of professional learning for teachers is to grow their craft in order to best meet the needs of their students. Our school board has given a tremendous amount of support to teachers and students by investing in campus instructional coaches. Each elementary school has two coaches; one for RLA and one for Math. Each of our secondary schools has four coaches; one each for RLA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Alvin ISD recognizes that student needs are ever-changing, and our professional learning strategy should be a reflection of this. In addition, the fast growth Alvin ISD has encountered has made it imperative that we change our overall professional learning strategy to be led by these campus instructional coaches.

The work between campus instructional coaches and district curriculum leaders is aligned through the district professional learning community and weekly meetings. This is an important commitment from the district and campuses to be able to come together with the coaches on a

weekly basis in order to carry out district-wide curriculum and instruction goals, equip coaches with tools and best practices for working with teachers to improve instruction, update and revise district curriculum, and to review district-wide student achievement data to make specific professional learning plans for teachers.

Throughout each school year and the summers, Alvin ISD offers numerous professional learning opportunities to teachers and paraprofessionals. Curriculum preview sessions are offered prior to each new grading period to support teachers in designing rigorous instruction aligned to the district curriculum. Student achievement data is analyzed frequently to design needed training sessions for teachers across each campus and the district. In addition, teachers set professional learning goals each year, through the teacher evaluation system, and are able to fulfill their goals through assistance from their campus instructional coaches and district curriculum leaders. Teachers are expected to seek out opportunities for professional growth and integrate research based best practices learned into instruction with their students.

Curriculum Management

The development and implementation of a district curriculum management plan for Alvin ISD is critical to the long-term success of our students. From having a shared vision and rationale for the plan to how it will be assessed and revised, all elements must work together to have an overall viable curriculum. Curriculum and instruction decisions are made daily by teachers in their classrooms. Having clear expectations about what is to be taught and utilizing strategies and resources that are aligned to the standards gives students excellent opportunities to master the standards at high levels.

In order to ensure that the district curriculum stays relevant to students, many stakeholders are involved in reviewing student data and assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum. These stakeholders include teachers, instructional coaches, campus administrators, and district leaders. Without this step, the curriculum becomes less effective and can lose relevance over time. For this reason, a curriculum must be a fluid document that adjusts to the needs of the students and utilizes effective instructional approaches.

Having a process for evaluating our curriculum in Alvin ISD gives us an avenue for determining if student achievement is being impacted in a positive way and in the way it is intended. Specifically, on an annual basis, we evaluate the curriculum goals, objectives, and implementation. We ultimately strive to answer the question “how do we know if our curriculum is successfully equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they need to have post-secondary success?”

Evaluating the effectiveness of a curriculum is a multi-layered process. Analysis of student achievement data from the following sources allows us to determine if our curriculum goals, objectives, and implementation are having a positive impact on student learning:

- local curriculum-based assessments;
- state assessments;
- PSAT, SAT and ACT assessments;
- AP exams;
- student work samples;
- grade distribution for each course per semester;
- failure rates for each content area per semester;
- CTE certifications;
- classroom observation reports;
- surveys from students, parents, teachers, and administrators;
- community college and university data on the number of students taking remedial courses;
- community college and university data on how many of our students graduate with a bachelor's degree; and
- local industry information on hiring of our former students in skilled trades.

Data driven evaluation and revision of written curriculum is a routine process facilitated by curriculum leaders. However, there are circumstances, outside of the regular revision cycle, that require immediate attention to the curriculum area identified. Any of the circumstances below will prompt immediate attention to the curriculum area identified:

- implementation of new state standards in a content area;
- a pattern of low student achievement in a specific standard or standards; and
- teacher feedback about the effectiveness of a specific curriculum being of concern.

The curriculum evaluation and revision process entails evaluation of each of the main curriculum elements (scope and sequence, instructional strategies, instructional resources, and assessments) for alignment to the state standards.

Curriculum revision will be led by each of the curriculum directors and coordinators for their specific content area. They will create curriculum writing teams consisting of master teachers and instructional coaches from across the district. The teams will participate in curriculum writing training prior to beginning the revision process. Training the team on developing quality curriculum elements is important to keeping everyone moving in the same direction with the work. In order for revision work to be uploaded to the curriculum in a timely manner, the coordinators of curriculum for each content area are responsible for setting deadlines for curriculum teams to complete their work. The coordinators are also responsible for vetting and evaluating all curriculum revisions prior to them being uploaded into Eduphoria/Forethought, our curriculum management system.

Curriculum assessment and revision are some of the most important elements of Alvin ISD's curriculum management plan. Implementing the plan is the responsibility of all personnel

involved in the learning outcomes of our students. Valuing continuous improvement, it is our goal to have a viable, rigorous curriculum that effectively prepares our students for any endeavors they choose to engage in after graduation. We are committed to our students' long-term success.

Translating the Academic Philosophy into Action

Alvin ISD is a dynamic learning organization committed to excellence for each student and every program.

1) Instructional Technology

The District uses funds to provide Elementary campuses with access to Imagine Learning and all High School Algebra classes access to IXL.

- a) These are programs that provide proven results
- b) Used to reinforce and fill in gaps
- c) Tracks data
- d) User friendly and engaging

Challenges:

- a) Training
- b) Availability of technology

Action Steps: Students should spend the following amounts of time in the appropriate resource:

- (Elementary) Imagine Math/Imagine Language and Literacy/Imagine Reading/Imagine espanol: For Tier 1 a minimum of 30 minutes per week (time should increase as appropriate for Tier 2/3)
 - Each campus will create an action plan for monitoring data and program usage
 - Data will be monitored every 6 weeks
- (High School Math) IXL: Tier 1 students will complete an average of 10 items per week
 - Each campus will create an action plan for monitoring data and program usage
 - Data will be monitored through IC meetings

Campus consideration

- Pathways created for students based on data and individual need
- How to monitor student progress and provide incentives for growth

Google Classroom: Every teacher will maintain a Google classroom and implement the District's Digital Milestone Continuum

- Accessible at anytime and particularly beneficial when students are absent, pulled out of class, ISS/OSS/ADAPT
- Provides students and parents with access to resources and classroom materials
- Easy for teachers to use and share with team members and students

Action Steps:

- Ensure teachers have established a Google classroom and shared it with students
- Monitor usage of Google Classroom throughout the school year
- Ensure students have multiple opportunities to use technology in all core areas
- District IC's will embed technology enhanced activities in the district curriculum

Campus Consideration:

- Professional development opportunities are provided for teachers on implementation of blended learning.

2) Implement Effective Schools Framework--Lever 1, Lever 3, and Lever 5

A clear vision for what schools/districts do to ensure an excellent education for all Texas students.

- Clear directions and expectations
- Data driven decisions
- Builds systems that are student driven and create success

Challenges:

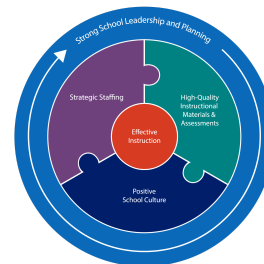
- Training for campus leaders
- Time

Action Steps:

- Procedures in place for Lesson planning and unpacking standards
- Systems in place for checking lesson plans
- Follow Scope and Sequence and Assessment Calendar
- Attendance at Curriculum Previews
- Campus-wide Behavior Management Plan

Campus Considerations:

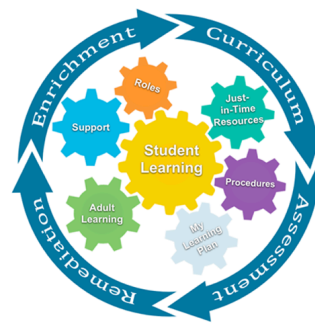
- Campus leaders provide clear expectations, training and support so that teachers implement best practices for establishing and maintaining a productive classroom learning environment throughout the school.
- Campus leaders monitor behavior management plan



3) PLC Implementation

Building campus culture that focuses on student learning at high levels and responding quickly when students aren't learning. When implemented correctly, PLCs

- Increase student growth
- engagement increases
- decisions are driven by current data
- professional learning is intentional and focused
- Campus culture of “they are all our kids”
- Teacher growth



Challenges:

- Time/scheduling/coverage
- Buy-in
- Lack of planning/poor planning

Campus considerations

- Calendar planning, data, professional learning meetings for each grading period
- Calendar intervention cycles for each semester
- Build intervention into the master schedule
- Build norms for the campus and grade level
- Connections between MTSS process, data meetings, and intervention processes and documentation in Frontline/eRtI

4) Reading and Writing in the Core

Professionals use reading and writing in their fields daily. In order to prepare students for college, career or military services, they need daily opportunities to read and write in all subjects. When students are able to express their knowledge through written expression they have a deeper understanding of the presented content.

Benefits of reading and writing daily include:

- Increases vocabulary and relevancy
- Authentic representation of what students know and their evidence to support claims and understandings
- Implementation of 7 Steps strategies

Considerations for campuses when reading and writing in core areas:

- Supporting writing instruction and assessment in all areas
- Monitoring reading and writing lesson plans
- Monitoring student writing progress

5) MTSS (formerly RtI)

MTSS is a multi-tiered systematic process of responding to the direct needs of the whole student through intervention. MTSS addresses the academic, behavior, and social/emotional needs of all students. The purpose of the MTSS model is to provide targeted interventions that are based on

priority standards and student needs. Students being serviced through MTSS must have a record of their interventions in Frontline/eRtI.

Things to consider:

- Students need at least 30 minutes per week of intervention. Will interventions be serviced through an intervention block or advisory period?
- Instruction must be supplemental and look different from Tier 1 instruction and Tier 1 instructional materials.
- Highly qualified personnel working with struggling students

6) Small group instruction

Small group instruction will be implemented to meet the individual learning needs of students. Teachers will use formative and summative assessment data to create groups, plan instruction and support student needs.

- The expectation is that small group instruction is incorporated into each lesson cycle and completed based on student need.
- Monitor and track student progress during small group instruction
- Monitor, provide feedback and support teacher implementation of small group instruction

7) Seven Steps:

- Effective monitoring and feedback provided
- Provide ongoing training and coaching
- Teachers are trained on 7 Steps Sheltered Instruction Strategies.
- Teachers include content and language objectives in their daily lessons.
 - Objectives align to standard (TEKS and ELPS)
 - Objectives include academic task (CO) and language task (LO)
 - Objectives are shared orally at the beginning and end of lesson
 - Terms related to objective are explained, clarified, or emphasized
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in structured conversations aligned to the objectives.