



# Kenilworth School District No. 38

## Educational Delivery Audit

### *Part 1*

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Presented: 12/10/18

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## Introduction

This audit was prepared by the Administrative Cabinet as a way to capture the information we are gathering about the school, its history and its current reality. This information will be useful for the team in terms of goal setting and informing our work around accomplishing the long-range goals identified by the Board of Education in the Strategic Plan. The information contained here has been ascertained through existing documentation, personal conversations and interactions, focused question and answer sessions with various stakeholders, as well as, our own professional observations. The recommendations have been derived from our experience in education and best practice research. This audit in no way captures every facet of the organization, and is not meant to be taken as anything but our observations, perceptions and recommendations.

## Strategic Plan

All decisions made in a school district should be guided by the existing Strategic Plan. Set by the Board of Education with input from the administration, teachers and community, this guiding document outlines the desired outcomes for the entire school and district community, in particular, its students. The new administrative team has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the plan as it exists now. While the plan has taken some time for the Board of Education to develop, and while they continue to gather community feedback and refine the Vision, the parts of the plan which have already been adopted are being utilized to guide the work of planning for the current school year for staff and students.

## Objectives and Indicators

### **Student Advancement**

*Provide students with curriculum, instruction and assessment that fosters growth and challenges them in keeping with the mission and educational philosophy of The Joseph Sears School*

The administrative team is recommending utilizing data from the 2018-2019 school year as a baseline for improvement in this area.

Indicators which have been accomplished in this area as of December 2018:

- The Profile of a Sears Graduate has been developed in conjunction with the Community Advisory Committee and the Administrative team and has been presented to the Board.

- The jointly produced educational delivery audit has been produced and delivered to the Board of Education
- The culture and climate perception data from past surveys has been analyzed and included in the audit.
- The administrative team has included a recommendation on a survey instrument for staff and community which captures expectations for operating in accordance with the district mission and philosophy

## **Mission/Vision and Educational Philosophy**

The Mission and Educational Philosophy indicate the Board’s wish to provide a personalized learning environment that supports a student’s individual passions and curiosity. In reviewing current documented curriculum and practices/traditions, there is evidence of personalized learning practices and traditions that inspire curiosity and high student engagement. In particular, the concept of differentiation has had a prominent place in the school. Liz Gordon, our differentiation coach, has taken the lead on developing the competencies of our staff with regard to these practices. Through coaching cycles, book studies, online and in-person professional development, teachers have had many and varied opportunities to dive into the work of making instruction meet students at their individual achievement and ability levels and incorporating their interests.

The majority of professional development in the recent past, however, has been voluntary. Therefore, in order to fully reach the goals outlined in the strategic plan, the administration recommends a focus on deliberate planning for the incorporation of these facets for all staff:

- Personalized learning
- Exploration of individual student talents and abilities
- Creative thinking
- Pursuit of individual passions toward the desired outcome of courageous advocacy on the part of students themselves and others

The recommended focus is to first begin to document where these items are currently happening in our curriculum and where there are gaps, to incorporate these ideals into the documented curriculum of the district. The goal of the administrative team will be to systematically review existing curriculum documentation with each department and team to ensure alignment with the above outcomes as well as mandated standards of learning and best practice standards by discipline. New curricular areas may be explored in light of the ideals outlined above. For example, the expansion of the PE curriculum to incorporate more dance, or the incorporation of drama into related arts may be ideas to explore. In the areas of literacy and/or social studies, we may need to look at more opportunities for advocacy in relationship to service learning.

Parent and community input should be gathered proactively on curricular outcomes, as well. The Joseph Sears School Community Advisory Committee (JSSCAC) can be a vehicle for discussion and feedback sessions regarding how our parents and community view the outcomes being accomplished for our students and their experiences transitioning from our school to the high school level. Incorporating feedback into the review of our curriculum will support increased parent and community engagement and should be done periodically to ensure that the administration has a pulse on the feeling of its stakeholders.

The current curriculum should also be organized into a common conceptual framework that supports critical thinking and connections between content for all students. The recommended curriculum framework is *Understanding by Design*. This backward design philosophy focuses the teachers on the outcomes first, then the assessments and finally the learning experiences in order to ensure alignment with our outcomes. This framework mirrors the processes of MTSS and Responsive Teaching and Learning communities which are recommended for strengthening, as well. Documentation should utilize the current best practices organized into a common language across grades and disciplines to support collaboration and seamless instruction for all students regardless of educational program (general education or special education). The documentation of the curriculum should be done online and portions (desired results, knowledge and skills, standard alignment and big ideas and questions, etc.) should be made public for parents and community to see.

## Curricular Areas

In order to provide some evidence toward the recommendation cited above to create a common language across the curriculum, each content area has been reviewed and the elements of curriculum design which have occurred and recently referred to by teachers have been included in this audit. It should be noted that each curricular area currently utilizes different terms and includes different components in the design of their program. This is prohibitive to vertical alignment (JK-8) and is difficult for related service providers and teachers instructing multiple content areas to support. The different types of plans have been identified in this audit as close to the category they represent as possible (Curriculum maps, units of instruction, scope and sequence documents, etc.)

## English Language Arts

### Philosophy

“The Joseph Sears School faculty and staff work to provide each of our students with a core body of knowledge in the related language arts disciplines of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The fully integrated language arts curriculum is constantly examined through a variety of lenses. These include 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Common Core State Standards, best practice and social-emotional learning, all rooted in what current research and experience suggest lead to effective learning and teaching. The goal of

providing a rich and rigorous language arts curriculum for our students is embedded in the context of leading our students to develop ownership, an emotional connection and a love of reading and writing. This allows students to not only communicate their own ideas and learning, but also to understand, analyze and relate to the ideas and learning of others.”

### **Summary**

Discussions about English Language Arts in the school focus on authentic literature, providing age appropriate and appropriately leveled and challenging texts for students, and instructing to big concepts. Our teachers focus on the four core ELA components every day: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Various strategies are being utilized in classrooms from guided reading, to word study, to reading and writing workshops. These are best practices and teachers are eager for more support to continue to enhance their instructional techniques.

The current drafts of ELA units include grade clusters and identification of guiding principles and practices and needs related to those principles (K-4, 5-8) in the area of reading. The latest curriculum map for K-2 includes:

- Common Core standards
- Student-friendly learning targets
- Key vocabulary
- Assessment tools
- Instructional resources
- Trimester identification

The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade maps from 16-17 are broken into months of the year with these facets identified:

- Reading strategy focus
- Reading deep structure skills with a rubric
- Literature and reading genres
- Living language skills, assessments
- Strategy mentor texts
- Writing alignment with resources (Being a Writer and 6 Traits)
- Grammar skills
- Other areas of focus (math, science and social studies)

The 4<sup>th</sup> grade map from 15-16 includes:

- Assessments
- Reading standards
- Texts
- Writing standards
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Other focus areas

There is a working draft of 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA plans with unidentified years. The draft elements of the units included:

- Unit themes
- Number of weeks
- Unit descriptions
- CCSS standards.

The 18-19 6<sup>th</sup> grade overview for ELA includes:

- Unit purpose and overview
- Learning targets for reading
- Materials
- Writing
- Grammar

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade plan includes:

- Essential questions
- Short texts
- Novels

The four core areas of English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) are not always identified and the documentation for each grade is incomplete. Resources were not identified at the time, however, Schoolwide is now the foundational resource for K-5. A philosophy update and full unit development is recommended.

At this time, core instructional time for ELA is 60 minutes per day at the middle school level and in grades K-5 the minutes vary from 50 to 150 minutes per day. The core instructional minutes have not been identified recently, however, gathering evidence on this was difficult as the core instructional practices have not been defined, therefore teams had a hard time calculating how many minutes per day/week encompass the area of ELA. We will need to come to consensus on those items and document that for the future.

## **Mathematics**

### **Philosophy**

“The math program at The Joseph Sears School begins in junior kindergarten with number sense and spatial reasoning and continues through 8<sup>th</sup> grade with logical reasoning and algebra. Concepts are introduced, practiced, applied, and reviewed in a curriculum that is closely aligned to the Common Core Standards for Mathematics as adopted by the state of Illinois and enriched with opportunities for creative thinking and real-world problem solving. The curriculum is continually evolving to meet the needs of our individual students and to prepare them for high school mathematics and for life after Joseph Sears School.”

### **Summary**

Our mathematics teachers incorporate the mathematical practices outlined in the CCSS into their instruction and utilize various techniques to support conceptual and procedural understanding of math. Guided math has been a focus of instructional improvement in the early grades and teachers are moving toward more consistency with that practice.

The math K-5 curriculum map has identified a scope and sequence for the Common Core State Standards. There is accompanying alignment documentation breaking the standards into units and identifying the Math in Focus (foundational resource) units and the standards each addresses. Learning outcomes and example problems are identified on a different document.

A Junior High Mathematics description document has outlined the storyline of the standards through the three grades in a narrative format (similar to the storylines identified in the documentation of the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards front matter) and then outlines each unit, with objectives, math practices and content standards identified. Materials have also been identified in the documentation.

Currently we have two levels of math beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. New Trier math could be considered a 3<sup>rd</sup> level, however that process is not managed by our district. Other township districts are not consistent in their policies and procedures regarding acceleration and tracking, some accelerate prior to us and some after us. All township schools have only two levels of math. We have a similar process to one other district in the township.

Based on the new Accelerate Placement Program Policy, we will need to develop a philosophy on acceleration and a fully articulated procedure which is communicated to the community and supported by the Board of Education and Administrative Team, which contains at least the following:

- Assessment and matrix
- Process for decision-making
- Appeals Process and Procedure

There is another option for looking at math acceleration which is more in line with the Board's emphasis on personalized learning. We could consider removing the levels and moving to a competency-based model of instruction. This model would require teachers to personalize the instruction for students and allow for self-pacing. In this model, our goal would be to move students through the continuum of JK-8 math standards at their own pace, as they demonstrate high levels of proficiency and well-being. This fully articulated system of formative and summative assessments, as well as a protocol for administering instruction in this manner, would fulfill the requirements for the Accelerate Placement Program.

This is a process that is in place in many districts (however not in the Township). This would eliminate our math matrix and placement process and simply require of students that they demonstrate their understanding in order to move on to additional content. This

is the recommended option as it is most in line with the Board’s Mission and Vision statements.

A philosophy and unit development is recommended.

## Science

### **Philosophy**

“The Joseph Sears School science curriculum promotes lifelong learning and responsible citizenship by developing students' investigative skills and habits of mind. Students collaboratively engage in scientific inquiry and explore scientific principles through a variety of learning experiences.”

### **Summary**

Three science units of instruction have been outlined for each grade (Physical Science, Earth Science, Life Science) and each unit includes:

- Essential questions
- Next Generation Science Standards alignment
- Performance expectations
- Learning targets and key vocabulary

Science has the most consistent documentation across the grade levels. The science team has been working on incorporating the practices outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards with fidelity since the standards were adopted.

## Social Science

### **Philosophy**

“In accordance with the C3 Framework for social studies state standards, we believe that the social sciences are integral to sustaining a Democratic Republic in which citizens are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; and act in ways that promote the common good. The mission of the social science program is to provide all students with rigorous and authentic learning opportunities that ignite their passions for learning and enhance their abilities and motivations to contribute as citizens in their community.”

### **Summary**

The social science program incorporates Document Based Questioning (DBQs) and inquiry. All teachers incorporate ELA standards into their social science instruction.

The Junior High Social Science Department has identified course overviews which include:

- Driving questions

- Unit descriptions and titles
- Writing rubrics

A syllabus has been developed for 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

JK-5<sup>th</sup> grade social science maps are not evident at this time.

Full unit development is recommended for elementary, as well as, an update to social science resources.

## World Language

### Philosophy

“In accordance with the ACTFL, The JSS World Language Department believes that language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The US must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language.”

### Summary

The World Language department is currently aligning their units of instruction and instructional and assessment practices to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages from the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) organization. One to three units of instruction have been outlined by theme for each grade. Information about content has been assigned to each unit. Some novels have been assigned to certain units. Some units have yet to be developed and the all need to be fully fleshed out, which is in progress this year.

The reduction of the Latin program to a two-year program has been under review as well. It was difficult to discern the reasons for moving to from a five-year to a two-year program. The world language department believes and the administrative team agrees that the Latin program should be in line with the Spanish and French program in terms of time spent on the first year high school curriculum. In order to do that, the Latin program should begin in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, when Spanish and French make the transition to the high school content. We are recommending that shift for the 2019-2020 school year. That would entail giving 5<sup>th</sup> grade students the option to begin Latin at the end of their 4<sup>th</sup> grade year (2018-2019).

In the past, the Latin teacher would also support word study beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The administrative team would like to take more time to review this in light of the ELA unit development process.

Continued full unit development for French and Spanish is recommended, as well.

## **Library Technology Center**

### **Summary**

The Library Technology Center is an integral component of the Joseph Sears School. All students spend time in the LTC each week. In grades JK-5, students come to the library for a lesson once per week and in the Junior High the LTC is integrated into the curricular areas with students often coming to supplement the work they are doing in their core classes. The standing desktop lab offers an opportunity for robust tech projects and exploration and 21st century components like coding and 3D printing have been integrated into the curriculum.

The Library Technology Center learning plan is broken down by grade (K-8) with these elements identified for each:

- Library tech skills focus
- Goals
- Example activities
- LTC standards
- National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) emphasis and the applicable goals and example activities for the NETS
- Internet safety lessons have been identified for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades.

A philosophy update is recommended and a unit development that is in line with the core curricular areas.

## **Social Emotional Learning**

### **Summary**

Information on SEL on our website begins with: “Second Step is a universal classroom-based program for grades K-5 that helps students develop early learning and social-emotional skills to set them on the path for social success and academic readiness. This curriculum is scientific-based and research-validated. The units in the Second Step curriculum focus on early learning skills (listening, focusing attention, following directions, self-talk for staying on task and being assertive), empathy (how to identify feelings, and caring and helping others) impulse control and problem solving (how to control impulsive behaviors and how to solve a problem in five steps), anger management (how to manage emotions) and bullying. Second Step is used in conjunction with the Heartwood character education program for Joseph Sears School students.”

A critical part of any comprehensive educational system in 2018 is a strong social emotional component. Schools and districts should determine the type of school environment that is desired, and strive to utilize common language with the entire community to describe “school-ready behaviors.” The culture of the school should lead to student independence in the competencies described by CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning). Strength in these areas will lead to a more seamless transition between Sears’ small school environment and the larger and more diverse environment of our sender high school, New Trier Township.

Currently, Second Step is utilized for 40 minutes per week in the K-5 program. The program is supplemented as teachers see a need. The recommendation is to outline how the above competencies are scaffolded through our curriculum in order to make additional connections throughout the day and year. A core curriculum for social emotional learning like this should also provide intervention support when necessary as part of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

In addition, fully articulated advisory programming for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade needs to be developed in alignment in conjunction with a commitment to a philosophy for those grades (Middle school V. Junior High).

## **Physical Development and Health**

### **Philosophy**

“The Joseph Sears School Physical Education and Health curriculum is a skills-based fitness program that allows students to work at their own level of proficiency, while working towards mastery of skills. The Physical Education and Health department incorporates fitness on a regular basis in order to empower all students to sustain regular, lifelong physical activity as a foundation for a healthy, productive and fulfilling life.

We believe...

- That daily physical activity and health literacy are essential to the whole child.
- Each student has differing abilities and aptitudes for learning motor skills. The rate and style at which motor skills are mastered also differ among students and within each student from time to time.
- In the value of fitness practices to increase lifetime activity and reduce sedentary behaviors.
- That by integrating physical fitness into the broad range of activities that children enjoy, a bond is established between gaining and maintaining fitness and having fun while playing alone or with others.
- In the importance of demonstrating sportsmanship, teamwork and cooperation while participating in Physical Education and Health activities.
- In providing an active, caring, supportive and non threatening atmosphere in which every student is challenged and successful.
- That all children can improve their health thereby enhancing their ability to learn and be successful in school.

- That physical activity provides the opportunity for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.
- That assessment must be continuous and is a vital part of the Physical Education/Health program.
- A variety of evaluative techniques will be used for determining individual differences and needs of students.
- Parents and community members are vital components for the success of the program.”

### **Summary**

The PE/Health Department is aligning their instruction with the Illinois Physical Development and Health standards and performance descriptors. The team has been working on the incorporation of activities which will be more appealing to students who are not typically involved in athletics, in order to give them strategies to be physically fit. An emphasis on choice and options in the program has also been a focus. There is documentation of activity themes for all grades including:

- Fitness components
- Game play and skill theme activities
- Team building/cooperative development expectations and activities

A philosophy update and full unit development is recommended.

## **Music Education**

### **Philosophy**

“The Joseph Sears Music Department believes that music is an integral part of every student’s overall education, JK-8. The music program strives to establish a lifelong relationship with music that provides satisfaction, enjoyment, and personal growth. Students will be given a wide variety of opportunities to create, perform and express themselves through music, including: responsive listening, singing, movement, dance, improvisation, composition, choir, recorder, band, and orchestra.

Through participation in music, our programs reinforce problem-solving, grit, and perseverance, to give students a more creative perspective on the world as they journey forward into various life experiences. Like all successful teams, our classes encourage a culture of creative collaboration to work well within a high functioning organization. From junior kindergarten, culminating to ‘The 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony,’ Joseph Sears students express themselves with unified voices in the hope that they will continue to learn to live in harmony with others.

- The purpose of our program is to nurture a lifelong appreciation for The Arts.
- All 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students will become literate in the language of music; to understand musical notation; and to be able to interpret and perform various genres and styles of music through a musical instrument of their choice.

- Student musicians are expected to be willing to try new things and to give their best effort; to learn, understand and apply appropriate technical skills; to listen attentively, follow directions, and to take pride in their work.
- At the junior high level, in grades 6, 7, & 8, the complexity of musical performance and technical demands increases with each grade level.
- Diverse repertoire will be selected to allow the students to apply prior knowledge to new, more technically challenging compositions.
- Precise mathematical rhythms, intonation, dynamic range and articulations are clearly defined, yet music allows each individual performer to express their own uniquely personal and meaningful ideas.
- Students not only learn to identify and apply the principles of good musical concepts, they also develop valuable ‘*Habits of Mind*’ to help them succeed beyond the classroom.”

### **Summary**

The Music Department is aligning their instruction with the Illinois Arts Learning Standards for Music (2016). There is some information on the website regarding the philosophy of the department and methods. The vocal music program has outlined knowledge and skills for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in chorus and general music. The band program has identified specific skills by instrument group as well as some district level performance assessments and extension activities. The most recent version of a scope and sequence is from 2013. Our music department is very passionate about ensuring a high level of appreciation for the arts and also supporting students who study music outside of school.

A philosophy update and full unit development is recommended.

## **Visual Art Education**

### **Philosophy**

“The complexity of the projects and techniques increases with each grade level. All projects are intended to allow the students to apply prior knowledge, to learn new techniques and vocabulary, to develop skills and apply principles of art and composition. Each unit is designed with clear objectives for learning but also with room for self-expression. Some lessons involve drawing from life and having real objects to look at, some rely on photo references, and some depend completely on the memory and imagination of students.

Students not only learn to identify and apply the elements of art and principles of good composition in both 2- and 3- dimensional artwork, but they also develop valuable *Habits of Mind* that help them succeed beyond the art classroom. Art students routinely create, imagine and innovate. By engaging in art making, students learn to persevere as they work on complex, multi-stage projects such as ceramics (they may be faced with challenges ranging from dealing with the force of gravity, drying clay, and occasional accidents). Such obstacles become great opportunities for learning, as they cause students

to re-think their designs or processes. Students are given opportunities to take risks and are encouraged to work through various challenges on a regular basis. The art room is a safe environment to try new things and to try them multiple times.

Other *Habits of Mind* our students practice include thinking flexibly, as they generate various ways of approaching a subject matter, and applying past knowledge to new situations, as they learn principles such as linear perspective. Students respond in wonderment and awe, as they learn to closely observe the world around them and to translate it into pictures and sculptures. The art classroom proves to be a valuable place for students to acquire a myriad of life skills, including creative problem solving, critical thinking, fine motor skills, communication, planning and craftsmanship.

Joseph Sears School artists are expected to be willing to try new things and to give their best effort; to learn, understand and apply appropriate art processes; to listen attentively, follow directions, and to take pride in their work.”

### **Summary**

The Art Department is also very passionate about appreciation for the arts and is working on aligning their instruction with the Illinois Arts Learning Standards (2016). There is some information about how art lessons and projects are designed on the website. Units of instruction are being developed at this time.

Both music and art have worked in an interdisciplinary capacity with core academic areas in order to design units of instruction which address concepts in multiple academic areas. This is a best practice and should continue to be scaled up in the school.

A philosophy update and full unit development is recommended.

## **Practical Arts (Outdoor Classroom) and Industrial Arts Education**

### **Philosophy**

“The Joseph Sears School Outdoor Classroom provides students with an outdoor space for hands-on exploration, inquiry, discovery and garden-based learning in all grades K-8 in areas of practical arts, core subjects, social emotional, and health. Surrounded by native plants, butterfly and rain gardens, vegetable and herb beds, fruit bushes and trees, students develop an understanding and curiosity about the natural world. In addition during practical arts classes, students develop an understanding of where our food comes from with the farm-to-table concept - plant, harvest, eat (and enjoy!). Farm-to-table lessons also increase students’ making healthier food choices.”

### **Summary**

The Practical Arts curriculum has been organized into one unit per grade which is aligned with a science unit. These units include:

- alignment with a FOSS module
- science topic/concept
- activity idea
- NGSS alignment
- time frame for the unit.

The Industrial Arts curriculum has identified 5 main opportunities offered to students through this program:

1. The acquisition of lifelong safety skills in the handling of woodworking tools.
2. Practice in designing simple projects in wood.
3. Insight into the methods and problems of woodworking in the shop
4. Further development of a student's understanding of drawings and their ability to interpret them.
5. Developing time management and self-motivational skills during the construction of their project.

An overview of projects and scope and sequence of quarter or semester rotations have been developed with lesson plans and project plans.

Both courses are highly engaging for students and offer an opportunity to learn skills for life.

Philosophy updates and full unit development are recommended.

## **Teacher as Designer**

It is imperative that we understand that teachers are designers of curriculum every day. Our documented curriculum should be coherent and organized, however, it should offer enough flexibility for our teachers to meet the needs and interests of their students. The above recommendations are all given with this emphasis on “teacher as designer” implied. The teachers at The Joseph Sears School are impressive in their ability to use “programs” as a jumping off point while supplementing with materials that are appropriate for the students in their rooms. Our educators embrace the concept of being designers of curriculum and assessments and this is a rare quality. The results of teachers taking ownership of their curriculum and not just following programs is evident in the high achievement of our students. Teachers continuously look to improve the curriculum and learning experiences for our students and our school community should be proud of their work in this area.

## **Curriculum Renewal Process**

The JSS has traditionally had a 5-year curriculum renewal cycle which is the minimum mandated by school code. The process has consisted of 4 steps: Review and Research,

Writing, Implementation and Monitoring. The following indicates the step of the process for each curricular area:

Review & Research	Writing	Implementation	Monitoring	Not Defined
Math – E/JH	Reading – E/JH	Writing – E/JH	Science – E/JH	Technology
	World Language – E/JH Spanish French Latin	Social Science – E/JH		LTC
	PE – E/JH			SEL
	Health – E/JH			
	Applied Music – E/JH			
	Practical Arts – E/JH			

It is our recommendation that we revisit the idea of a 5-year curriculum review cycle. This is a long cycle to wait to review and revise curriculum and goals. As we have a new strategic plan, we should be looking to align our curriculum at this time in all areas, and each year should be looking to improve. As new sets of standards are released, we should address them. Data should drive our decision-making process around our curriculum and if adjustments of units, assessments or materials need to take place based on the evidence of student growth and achievement, we should look to make those adjustments.

### **A Note About Materials v. Curriculum:**

In all three tiers of a strong MTSS system, any materials utilized should be aligned with the desired outcomes for students as outlined by the team of educators. Curriculum should be customized to include the standards we are accountable for, as well as, the community’s desired outcomes based on the strategic plan and account for the different learning styles and demographics represented in the community.

Teachers should continue to have access to a variety of materials to address the needs of their students in relationship to the outcomes they have identified and should not be mandated to use any particular resources in order to achieve their desired results. There is no one foundational resource which is made to meet the needs of the students at the Joseph Sears School. Materials should continue to be chosen based on the abilities, interests and skill levels of the students in each class and should be updated regularly.

However, the materials used in a classroom should never be referred to as our “curriculum.”

## **District Assessment Map and Profile**

Assessment portfolios, whether for a student or a district, should be balanced. There should be a combination of various types of assessments each with a different purpose, in order to gather the most complete “picture” of competencies, student academic achievement and growth possible. A good analogy is the idea of a photo album versus a snapshot. When reflecting on a year of a child’s life, it is difficult to capture everything that happened in one snapshot. However, looking at photo album of pictures, more can be concluded about the year and what a child has experienced.

## **Universal Screeners**

Schools and districts are required to screen students in order to ensure that no children who need specialized support are missed. An assessment map which includes universal assessments given to all students in a particular grade is mandatory in the areas of English Language Arts, Math and Social Emotional Learning. Currently Sears utilizes MAP, AIMSweb Plus and Review 360 (BESS) for these universal screeners.

Decisions should not be made about a student’s program of instruction based solely on a universal screener. Rather, if a student is identified as an outlier (on either a local or national norm) more evidence (other assessment data, teacher recommendation, work samples) should be gathered to determine what level of support the student would need in order to be successful. Local versus national norms are a district decision and affect the types of programming offered, as well as, the criteria for receiving specialized support.

In a community like Kenilworth, local norms must continue to be considered when evaluating a student’s achievement as well as evaluating our core programming. National norms are helpful to support an understanding of a student’s performance were they to reside outside of our community. National norms may also help evaluate our programs of instruction and efficacy outside of our community and township.

## **Summative Assessments**

Part of a strong assessment portfolio are summative assessments, or assessments of learning. These could be end of unit assessments (for example, at the end of a science unit of instruction) or they could be end of year assessments (for example, PARCC). These would indicate the level of proficiency a student can demonstrate on a set of skills or concepts. These would not necessarily indicate growth over time, as they would only

be measuring a student's capacity to demonstrate their learning after instruction has been delivered during a standardized period of time.

These types of assessments can also be helpful in determining programmatic efficacy. For this reason, there should be some summative assessments tied to the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, as well, in order that the system can communicate its progress on the community's objectives for its students, above and beyond academic achievement and growth.

## **Learner Profiles**

Although how a student learns may not be quantitative data, teachers and schools should be documenting information on these in order to enhance a student's portfolio. These data can be gathered in a variety of ways from observational protocols, rubrics or interviews and conversations. This information is important to minimize transition time between grades and teachers as well as inform a student of their own learning preferences. Ultimately, self-awareness as a learner is paramount in order for children to become adults who are effective independent learners and collaborators.

## **Formative Assessments**

This type of assessment is supportive of teachers making instructional decisions on behalf of their students. They are only useful for a short period of time, and typically measure a student's proficiency one or two specific skills during instructional time on those skills. These should only be used to tailor instruction (as opposed to informing a grade) and should in some way, get students to show their thinking. Only in this way, can a teacher diagnose any issues with understanding and remediate or enrich, whichever the case may be.

Our recommendation is that through the curriculum and unit development process, assessments in each of the areas above be reviewed and revised or added into the assessment profile of the district, as needed.

## **Data Driven Decision Making**

As indicated above, a strong assessment system includes a broad range of assessment types for a variety of purposes. How to store this information is an important decision and indicates the level of importance each type of data carries in the system. Ultimately, a data storage solution should be able to house many unique types of data. This should allow for students themselves to contribute reflection and their own work to demonstrate their learning.

When making decisions based on these data, not only is the data access and storage a consideration, but also the system for looking at the data. Student learning teams (inclusive of teachers, parents and students) should be active participants in analyzing and reflecting on student data in order to make the best educational decisions on behalf of students. A system for storing the data which protects student privacy, but also allows for quick access to student data and trends is helpful to an effective process.

Teaching teams and administration should be consistently and systematically analyzing data in order to inform all aspects of decision making at a school level. Our recommendation is to purchase an online system for storing various types of data that will be supportive of teacher conversations around student growth and achievement. Additionally, we are recommending that a system for communicating about and reviewing data should be developed which is consistent across the school in order to support vertical articulation on programs and individual students.

## **Trends in the Data**

The Joseph Sears School consistently performs above the state and national averages and our students are well prepared for high school, according to our discussions with New Trier staff. Articulation between our staff and the high school staff are ongoing.

We are looking to improve on the number of students who are able to reach their personal growth goals, as well as, expand our definition of academic excellence to include more than the traditional test scores that we have utilized in the past, as referenced above. This will require the Board and administration to work together on visioning for that concept and the staff will need to work on developing the assessments which will capture that information.

## **Achievement Gap**

The only subgroup that exists at the Joseph Sears School is students with IEPs. It is highly recommended that we begin systematic professional development in the area of inclusive education practices for the entire community, especially in the area of mathematics where we have seen our achievement gap grow.

Our students with IEPs will benefit from discussions around inclusive practice (keeping all students together in the core programming for as much time during the day/year, as possible) and disability awareness. While our students with IEPs are performing at or higher than Non IEP students across the state, the discrepancy between these two groups in our district deserves attention and intentional planning.

## **Responsive Teaching and Learning Teams**

The focus of professional learning in any school or district should be how to increase achievement and growth for our students toward our desired outcomes. In order to accomplish this, many schools organize themselves into smaller teacher collaboration groups in order to:

- Analyze data and look at student work
- Design effective lessons and observe each other/provide feedback
- Collaborate on the selection of appropriate materials and resources

These groups can be organized around content area or grade, or both. Teachers can be members of more than one group. For example, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher may be a part of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade team which includes all content areas responsible for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. This group may look at social emotional learning for 6<sup>th</sup> graders and analyze data regarding such. The same teacher may be a part of a 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA group in which the group discusses data regarding student achievement in junior high ELA, data coming back from the high school in the area of ELA and the materials and novels which are selected for a student to engage with during those years.

Both types of teacher collaborative groups are important and every teacher should have an opportunity to engage in this type of learning. Necessary to having this type of professional learning are the following components:

- Common Planning Time for Discussion
- Common Curriculum Documentation (Scope and Sequence and Desired Outcomes)
- Common Assessments
- Differentiated Instructional Strategies and Materials
- A Culture of Trust and Professionalism

By controlling for some variables (Scope and Sequence, Desired Outcomes by course and common assessments) teachers can do action research on what works best for the students at Sears, if they engage in differentiated practices and with differentiated materials. Only if some variables are not controlled, can we look at student work and data and determine what works best for our students. This work can be difficult and requires a culture of trust in order for teachers to feel comfortable discussing their data and student work with other teachers.

Generally, protocols for discussing the items outlined include these four questions:

1. What do we want students to know, understand and be able to do (at the end of this lesson, unit, year...)
2. How will we know they've learned it?
3. What will we do if they struggle?
4. What will we do to extend the learning?

Our recommendation is to extend the focus of these questions to incorporate student voice and interest and to ensure that our students are more actively engaged in the learning process:

1. What do we want students to know, understand and be able to do (at the end of this lesson, unit, year...)
2. Within that framework of outcomes, what do our students want to know, understand and be able to do or think about?
3. How will we know they've learned it?
4. How else can our students' demonstrate their learning?
5. In what ways would they like to showcase their new learning and understanding?
6. What will we do if our students struggle?
7. What will each student's plan be when they are struggling with material?
8. How can we work with each student to identify their strengths and capitalize on them in order to succeed with higher levels of material?
9. What will we do to extend the learning?
10. What is each student's plan to extend the learning to gain deeper levels of understanding on the content and processes that are at the heart of our curriculum plan?

Embedded within this structure is eliciting student thinking and partnering with our students in the planning process. Active participation from students in this process is critical to supporting high levels of student interest and engagement and supports the goal setting and monitoring process which we know has been proven to increase student achievement and growth.

## **Instruction**

While differentiation has been a focus for our Differentiation Facilitator and some teachers have been able to take advantage of these opportunities to improve their practice, whole group direct instruction is still a widely used practice. Student interaction can be limited at times in this framework and at times by the physical arrangement of classrooms. The role of teacher as facilitator of learning can be expanded. Student directed and interest-based learning expansion will also support more active learning from students.

Student thinking should be elicited on a more regular basis so that teachers can intervene and extend the learning quickly and efficiently. Rigorous instruction is at times confused with additional work where activities and outcomes should simply be adjusted to ensure that higher level thinking is being exposed.

Relationships between teachers and students need strengthening in some places and we should remain focused on ensuring that learning experiences are meaningful and relevant to students' lives. Authentic challenge and learning experiences aligned with our strategic

plan will ultimately lead to higher levels of student engagement and joy in the learning process.

In this area, as well as in other areas of the school, we should be looking to gather feedback from our students on what instructional strategies they feel are most effective for them. We can use this information to better guide the professional development offerings and foci of the school.

Professional development through our coaches and coaching through the evaluation process (the Danielson model) are recommended to support this work. We are confident that our staff will be excited about these opportunities and have consistently expressed a desire to continue to learn more and expand their practice. We have an extremely dedicated group of teachers. They are all passionate about making sure that all of our students achieve and grow each year and actively work on learning about their students. The recommendations above are intended to support growth for our faculty in the area of differentiated instruction and personalized learning as outlined within our new strategic plan.

## **Positive Behavior/Restorative Justice**

In analyzing trends in disciplinary data, the current disciplinary process, and examining the current implementation of SEL and Restorative Justice practices, here are our findings:

The current disciplinary system features a Google Doc powered disciplinary documentation system which requires teachers to document all instances of student misconduct. Once a disciplinary infraction is documented, a notification goes out to all teachers of the same the grade level as the student, all administrators and administrative liaisons, and all specials teachers. Additionally, all discipline data is assessable for all staff members to view.

Once a student has been deemed a “frequent violator of rules and policies,” a team of teachers including specials teachers, grade level teachers, social workers, and instructional support staff members convene during an RtI meeting, discuss the student, and devise a plan to support the student, which often results in a request for administrative consequences (detention, in-school suspension, out of school suspension).

We are recommending a more streamlined process with clear policies for teacher interventions, prerequisite actions prior to escalation to administration, restorative practices, and student privacy would provide better teacher support, increase parent support, and mirror updated township practices (Evanston, Wilmette).

- Eliminate public access to confidential student records, eliminate grade level and specials notification of student disciplinary infractions.

- Create a menu of prerequisite actions which require teachers to implement restorative practices and communicate via phone or in person before an student behavior is escalated to administration for harsher consequences (unless it is an emergency).
- Clearly identify which behaviors are mild and can be handled by the classroom teacher, and which behaviors are serious enough to elicit an administrative response.
- Eliminate the escalation of multiple minor tier 1 behaviors into an automatic detention, and multiple detentions into an automatic ISS or OSS.
- Once a behavior is escalated to the Principal/Principal Liaison, the Principal/Liaison uses his/her judgment to determine appropriate next steps based on the behavior, the response to interventions, and best practice regarding the proper restorative response. The Principal/Principal Liaison will not be required to implement a specific response.

## **MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support)/RtI (Response to Intervention)**

Support for students who are struggling to reach grade level expectations is the focus of MTSS or RtI. These programs are a result of No Child Left Behind legislation and continue under the Every Student Succeeds Act. The philosophy of the program is to get students support prior to needing a different program of instruction from their peers (IEP).

Structures for meetings need to be put in place which outline the amount of time which should be set aside for this work.

A strong MTSS system consists of three tiers of support for students:

Tier 1

### **Core Curriculum**

The core curriculum for every content area in a given school consists of the outcomes and expectations of the content for each grade, chunked into sections of time for the school year which are realistic and delivered in a differentiated way to support all students to reach those expectations. The core curriculum should also include common summative assessments to ensure that we are measuring all students progress on the common outcomes. The core curriculum is what all students experience at a specific grade (Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum).

Tier 2

### **Targeted Support**

When a student is not meeting the expectations outlined by the core curriculum and limited progress has been measured and documented, students should participate in additional time and targeted support on that particular content. A plan should be made by the student's team for the additional time and intensity (to be delivered outside of the core curriculum time by the classroom teacher with support from intervention specialists when necessary) and the plan should be shared with the students and parents. Progress in that intervention should be monitored on at-least a bi-weekly basis and the intervention should occur regularly for at least 6 weeks prior to being re-evaluated by the student's team. If a student continues to not make progress or progress is slow and could benefit from additional time and intensity, the student should be moved on to Tier 3.

### Tier 3

#### **Additional Time and Intensity of Targeted Support**

Tier 3 intervention plans should be developed and monitored in the same way as the Tier 2 plans, however, should offer additional time and intensity either in place of, or in addition to the Tier 2 support delivered by intervention specialists. If a student is not progressing after 6 weeks, or is progressing but needs to sustain that level of support in order to close the gap with their peers, the team should convene again and invite support from the Student Services Team in order to assess whether an individualized program of instruction is necessary (IEP).

At The Joseph Sears School, the student services team staff have been heavily involved with the MTSS (RtI) process. Clear processes, procedures and documentation are being developed as we look to clarify all roles and responsibilities in regard to MTSS and RtI.

## **Student Services at The Joseph Sears School**

The Student Services Team (SST) at The Joseph Sears School consists of the following: Seven special education teachers, four interventionists, two social workers, one school psychologist and speech pathologist, twelve instructional assistants, some serving as a classroom aide, and 1:1 aide positions. Caseloads range from anywhere from 5-10 students. Our social workers' caseloads are currently over 50 students, which include students with IEPs, 504, and general education. We have a total of 70 students with Individualized Education Plans and 60 students with 504 plans.

The SST is a robust team with the high qualifications to support all types of learners. Unfortunately, as has been found across the school, instability has created a lack of systems and cultural strength in this department, as well. Support from Mrs. Knicker last year has provided the new administrators with a perspective on the issues which existed prior to our arrival. While some items were able to be worked on through consultation last year, there was not enough time (or in-district leadership) in order to affect large scale change.

The student services department is currently working to create systems in regards to articulation about student needs, problem solving, and streamlining the identification process itself in regards to students that need an IEP or 504. In addition, we will revisit the special education continuum of supports at Sears. Currently, we have a push in and pull out model. In grades, K-5, students are can be pulled out for a resource period. In grades, 6-8, students do not have an enrichment period. They are then pulled out from PE, World Language, or Specials. If students need more support indicated on their IEP they typically have been placed in our NSSSED programming.

## **Role of Student Services in MTSS**

At this time, the SST is providing the bulk of the tiered interventions in the school. Best practice in MTSS systems would have general education teachers providing Tier 2 interventions and literacy and math specialists reserved for the most struggling students at either end of the spectrum.

Protocols for meetings, professional development on the process, documentation of tiered interventions and data team meetings are all areas for improvement. An audit of interventions being used with students and their efficacy can be started this year, but will take some time to develop.

## **Student Services/General Education Coordination**

There is a disconnect between the general education teams and the SST in regards to a systematic way to address student concerns and making decisions based on student data and need. We are working currently on creating consistent policies and procedures to guide the effective functioning of the RtI grade level teams, Problem Solving Team and the role of MTSS. (This will require the collaborative efforts of Student Services, Curriculum and General Ed. Administrators to develop the most efficient and effective inter-related model.)

## **English Language Learners**

Currently, The Joseph Sears school has twelve students that receive English Language Learner services. Our EL supports have increased from a .3 to a .5 FTE. Supports vary from pull out to push in where needed. The students are identified as EL after our EL teacher gives them a screener. These students are required to take an Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test in the January and February months. We are currently developing the system around the identification process and supporting students with EL supports.

## **Gifted Education**

Currently, there is not a gifted program at The Joseph Sears School. Students in need of more challenging activities and experiences receive differentiated support from the homeroom teachers as well as interventions on a case by case basis. The same testing which is conducted in order to identify students for the “core plus” track in math is at times utilized in order to support decision making efforts in this area.

Personalized learning is the recommended way to reach all students needs at The Joseph Sears School, as referenced above. The Board has outlined this in the Mission and Vision of the district, and providing instruction in this way, through competency based instruction, will guarantee that every student will receive content and instruction at his/her level throughout the core and related academic areas.

## **Nurse/Health Office**

Our Health office is staffed with one full time nurse. The nurse is responsible for attendance and nursing duties and reports to the staff in regards to immunizations. The health office does not have policies in regards to protocols/procedures for concussions, diabetes, seizures, and allergies. In addition, students that have medical conditions do not have Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) or 504s. Moving forward in is important to streamline health policies and systems schoolwide and for individual students.

## **NSSSED**

The Joseph Sears School belongs to the Northern Suburban Special Education District NSSSED provides a wide variety of supports including: coaching services, OT/PT/APE Integrated Technology, health and nursing services, visions programming, early childhood programs, and NorthShore Academy schools and Arbor Academy’s SAIL program. The JSS currently uses coaching services and Occupational Therapist supports. In addition, we have students utilizing the different schools through NSSSED. The JSS also uses the North Suburban Special Education Organization for hearing itinerant services only.

## **Student Growth and Achievement Communication**

Part of parent communication is also parent/teacher communication of student growth and achievement. Parent/teacher conferences are an important part of the school year, allowing the student’s team to get together to discuss student strengths and weaknesses. From survey data, there have been some adjustments to this process in order to account for a more balanced discussion (standardized assessments, work habits and school behaviors, and grades). Student led conferences can be a benefit in order to support

students' taking more ownership of their work in school, however, many parents prefer to have this as one part of the conference, while they also have time to speak alone with the teacher. Again, a balanced approach is the best one. Our recommendation is to continue to look for ways that we can incorporate student voice into our parent/teacher conferences. We have moved our conferences from November to October in the recent past and this change has had a positive impact on the participation rate as well as the focus on the conferences.

Report cards are also a part of the communication system between parents and teachers and should align with the instructional program of the school. In grades JK-4, parents of the Joseph Sears School are provided with skill driven report cards, which are aligned with the content of that grade level. In the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, parents are given traditional letter grades to indicate progress.

Many JK-8<sup>th</sup> grade districts (and some high schools) have found that letter grades are not indicative of academic achievement as much as standards-based report cards which report separately on behaviors and achievement. Oftentimes parents are concerned that not issuing grade consequences for behaviors (not turning in homework, not participating in class) will result in lower motivation for learning. There is much research to support the opposite. In fact, high grades tend to only motivate traditionally successful students. Students who are struggling with behaviors in school, or with content, are typically not motivated to behave differently or work harder when they receive low grades. Grades can increase anxiety for both groups of children, though. In addition, grades reflective of behaviors do not indicate clearly to parents what skills and concepts students have mastered and which they need to continue to work on.

A concern about standards-based grading and reporting can be the absence of a Grade Point Average or GPA. Again, there is little to no evidence that a GPA is an effective motivator for students. The high school placement does not incorporate grades, as they are quite subjective and also don't separate behaviors from actual knowledge and skill. They are much more reliant on standardized or adaptive test scores from certain content areas, or placement tests that they design based on content expectations.

Many of our teachers have participated on report card committees in the past and have discussed the idea of standards-based grading and reporting and are eager to move ahead with this work. Our recommendation in this area is to research and develop a standards-based grading and reporting system with teacher and community input.

## **Homework**

At its core, homework is a contract between home and school. Homework at the Joseph Sears School is currently part of the instructional design of our courses at this time. Our policies indicate that students should have approximately 10 min. of homework per year in school (10 minutes for 1st grade, 20 for 2nd, etc.). Our teachers regularly inform parents and students that if the time to complete homework exceeds those guidelines,

they can inform the teacher and not complete the homework. It has been reported that this can at times increase student anxiety about not being prepared for class or how that can affect a child's grade.

Parent input on this matter is inconsistent. There are parents in the community that feel too much homework is given, and some parents consistently ask teachers for additional homework. Our teachers feel that homework can be beneficial for supporting a student's ability to manage their time, as well as, practice skills they have learned in class and prepare them for their next level of education.

Currently, research can be found on both sides of the homework debate. There is research that indicates that homework can improve study skills for students and can provide reinforcement for skills learned in school. However, there is little research to support that homework correlates with improved student achievement for students prior to the junior high school years. It is recommended that we begin a formal discussion with our community about homework in the 2018-2019 school year and use theirs and teacher input to revise our homework policies to be in line with current research, as well as, our personalized learning philosophy.

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Charlotte Danielson:

Charlotte Danielson, a former economist, is an internationally-recognized expert in the area of teacher effectiveness, specializing in the design of teacher evaluation systems that both ensure teacher quality and promote professional learning. She advises State Education Departments and National Ministries and Departments of Education, both in the United States and overseas. She is in demand as a keynote speaker at national and international conferences, and as a policy consultant to legislative and administrative bodies.

Ms. Danielson is a graduate of Cornell University (history), Oxford University (philosophy, politics, and economics) and Rutgers University (educational administration and supervision.) She has taught at all levels, kindergarten through university, has worked as a curriculum director and staff development director, and is the founder of The Danielson Group. Her *Framework for Teaching* has become the most widely used definition of teaching in the United States, and has been adopted as the single model, or one of several approved models, in over 20 states.

Richard DuFour, Ed.D.:

Rick DuFour was a public school educator for 34 years, serving as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. During his 19-year tenure as a leader at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, Stevenson was one of only three schools in the nation to win the United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon Award on four occasions and the first comprehensive high school to be designated a New America High School as a model of successful school reform. He received his state's highest award as both a principal and superintendent.

Michael Fullan:

Michael Fullan, O.C., is the Global Leadership Director, [New Pedagogies for Deep Learning](#) and a worldwide authority on educational reform with a mandate of helping to achieve the moral purpose of all children learning.

A former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto, Michael advises policymakers and local leaders around the world to provide leadership in education. Michael received the Order of Canada in December 2012. He holds honorary doctorates from several universities in North America and abroad.

Howard Gardner:

Howard Gardner is the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is also an adjunct professor of psychology at Harvard University and senior director of [Harvard Project Zero](#). Among numerous honors, Gardner received a MacArthur Prize Fellowship and a Fellowship from the John S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 1981 and 2000, respectively. In 1990, he was the first American to receive the University of Louisville's Grawemeyer Award in Education. In recognition of his contributions to both academic theory and public policy, he has received honorary degrees from thirty-one colleges and universities, including institutions in Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, South Korea, and Spain. He has twice been selected by *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines as one of 100 most influential public intellectuals in the world. In 2011, Gardner received the Prince of Asturias Award for Social Sciences, and in 2015, he was chosen as the recipient of the Brock International Prize in Education. He has been elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Education, and the London-based Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. He serves on a number of boards, including New York's Museum of Modern Art and the American Philosophical Society. The author of thirty books translated into thirty-two languages, and several hundred articles, Gardner is best known in educational circles for his theory of multiple intelligences, a critique of the notion that there exists but a single human intelligence that can be assessed by standard psychometric instruments (please see [multipleintelligencesoasis.org](#)). Since the middle 1990s, Gardner has directed [The Good Project](#), a group of initiatives, founded in collaboration with psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon, that promotes excellence, engagement, and ethics in education, preparing students to become good workers and good citizens who contribute to the overall well-being of society. Through research-based concepts, frameworks, and resources, the Project seeks to help students reflect upon the ethical dilemmas that arise in everyday life and give them the tools to make thoughtful decisions.

Thomas Guskey:

Thomas R. Guskey is Professor Emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky where he served as Department Chair, Head of the Educational Psychology Area Committee, and President of the Faculty Council. He has been a Visiting Professor at ten universities in the U.S. and a Visiting Scholar at universities in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he began his career in education as a middle school teacher, served as an administrator in the Chicago Public Schools, and was the first director of the *Center for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning*, a national research center.

Dr. Guskey is the author/editor of 24 award-winning books and more than 250 book chapters, articles, and professional papers on educational measurement, evaluation, assessment, grading, and professional learning. His articles have appeared in prominent research journals including the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Educational Researcher*, and *Review of Educational Research*, as well as practitioner publications such as *Education Week*, *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and *The Learning Professional*, and *School Administrator*. He served on the Policy Research Team of the

*National Commission on Teaching & America's Future*, on the task force to develop the *National Standards for Professional Development*, and was featured on the National Public Radio programs *Talk of the Nation* and *Morning Edition*.

In recognition of his contributions, Dr. Guskey was named a Fellow in the American Educational Research Association, the Association's highest honor, and also received the Association's prestigious *Relating Research to Practice Award*. He was awarded the *Distinguished Contributions to the Field Award* by Learning Forward, *The Millman Award* by the Consortium for Research on Educational Assessment and Teaching Effectiveness, the *Distinguished Achievement Award* by the Association of Educational Publishers, and the *Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award*. Perhaps most uniquely, he is one of only three individuals in the 150 year history of his undergraduate institution, Thiel College, to receive the *Outstanding Alumnus Award* and be inducted into the *Athletic Hall of Fame*.

His work is dedicated to helping teachers and school leaders use quality educational research to help all of their students learn well and gain the many valuable benefits of that success.

Heidi Hayes-Jacobs:

**Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs**, creator of Curriculum21, is also the founder and president of Curriculum Designers, Inc. and Executive Director of the National Curriculum Mapping Institute and Academy. Heidi has served as an education consultant to thousands of schools nationally and internationally. She works with schools and districts K-12 on issues and practices pertaining to: curriculum reform, instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking, and strategic planning. Numerous articles have appeared in professional journals. Heidi is the author of many books, including [\*The Curriculum Mapping Planner: Templates and Tools for Effective Professional Development\*](#), co-authored with Ann Johnson; and [\*Curriculum 21: Essential Education for A Changing World\*](#), which was selected as the worldwide member book by ASCD.

Jim Knight:

Dr. James Knight is a senior research associate at KUCRL and director of the Kansas Coaching Project. He has spent close to two decades studying professional learning and instructional coaching. He has served as the principal investigator of grants and contracts totaling nearly \$30 million all devoted to the study of professional learning and instructional coaching. He has written or co-authored several books on the topic including *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* published by Corwin and Learning Forward (2007) and *Unmistakable Impact: A Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction* (2011). Knight co-authored *Coaching Classroom Management* (2006) and also edited *Coaching: Approaches and Perspectives* (2008). Knight has authored articles on instructional coaching and professional learning in publications such as *The Journal of Staff Development*, *Educational Leadership*, *Principal Leadership*, *The School Administrator*, and *Kappan*.

Dr. Knight earned his PhD in Education from the University of Kansas and has won several university teaching, innovation, and service awards. Knight also hosts Talking About Teaching on the Teaching Channel.

Robert Marzano:

Robert J. Marzano, PhD, is cofounder and CEO of Marzano Research in Colorado. A leading researcher in education, he is a speaker, trainer, and author of more than 30 books and 150 articles on topics such as instruction, assessment, writing and implementing standards, cognition, effective leadership, and school intervention. His books include *The Art and Science of Teaching* and *Effective Supervision*. His practical translations of the most current research and theory into classroom strategies are internationally known and widely practiced by both teachers and administrators.

Dr. Marzano received a bachelor's degree from Iona College in New York, a master's degree from Seattle University, and a doctorate from the University of Washington.

Dr. Jacqueline Thousand:

Dr. Thousand is Professor Emerita at California State University San Marcos and Vice President of Bayridge Consortium. She has developed and coordinated Education Specialist credential and Master of Arts programs and spearheaded the establishment of co-teaching as the clinical practice paradigm for all teacher preparation programs in the School of Education. She is a noted inclusive education advocate who has co-authored 21 books and numerous research articles and chapters on issues related to culturally proficient inclusive schooling, co-teaching, organizational change strategies, differentiated instruction and universal design, cooperative learning, collaborative teaming and creative problem solving processes, student self-determination, and discipline with dignity. She is actively involved in international teacher education and inclusive education endeavors and serves on the editorial and advisory boards of several national and international journals and professional organizations.

**Carol Ann Tomlinson:**

Carol's career as an educator includes 21 years as a public school teacher, including 12 years as a program administrator of special services for struggling and advanced learners. She was Virginia's Teacher of the Year in 1974. She is currently Professor of Educational Leadership, at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education and serves as a Principal Investigator for the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and as Co-Director of the Summer Institute on Academic Diversity. Special interests throughout her career have included curriculum and instruction for struggling learners and advanced learners, effective instruction in heterogeneous settings, and encouraging creative and critical thinking in the classroom.

She has served as President of the Virginia Association for the Gifted, Chair of the Virginia Advisory Committee on Gifted Education, and on the board of The Association

for the Gifted, Council for Exceptional Children. She is currently President of the National Association for Gifted Children.

Carol is a reviewer for eight journals and a section editor for one. She is author of over 100 articles, book chapters, books, and other professional development materials. For ASCD, she has authored *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms* (now in its second edition), *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, a professional inquiry kit on differentiation, the facilitator's guide for two video staff development sets on differentiating instruction, and (with Susan Allan) *Providing Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms*. For NAGC, she co-authored (with Sandra Kaplan, Joe Renzulli, Jeanne Purcell, Jann Leppien, and Deb Burns) of *The Parallel Curriculum Model: A Design to Develop High Potential and Challenge High Ability Learners*. She works throughout the U.S. and abroad with teachers whose goal is to develop more responsive heterogeneous classrooms.

Jay McTighe:

Jay McTighe brings a wealth of experience developed during a rich and varied career in education. He served as director of the Maryland Assessment Consortium, a state collaboration of school districts working together to develop and share formative performance assessments. Prior to this position, Jay was involved with school improvement projects at the Maryland State Department of Education where he helped lead Maryland's standards-based reforms, including the development of performance-based statewide assessments. He also directed the development of the Instructional Framework, a multimedia database on teaching. Well known for his work with thinking skills, Jay has coordinated statewide efforts to develop instructional strategies, curriculum models, and assessment procedures for improving the quality of student thinking. In addition to his work at the state level, Jay has experience at the district level in Prince George's County, Maryland, as a classroom teacher, resource specialist, and program coordinator. He also directed a state residential enrichment program for gifted and talented students.

Jay is an accomplished author, having co-authored 14 books, including the award-winning and best-selling *Understanding by Design* series with Grant Wiggins. His books have been translated into ten languages. Jay has also written more than 35 articles and book chapters, and been published in leading journals, including *Educational Leadership* (ASCD) and *Education Week*.<sup>6</sup>

Jay has an extensive background in professional development and is a regular speaker at national, state, and district conferences and workshops. He has conducted workshops in 47 states within the United States, in 7 Canadian provinces, and internationally to educators in 35 countries on six continents.

Jay received his undergraduate degree from the College of William and Mary, earned his Master's degree from the University of Maryland, and completed post-graduate studies at The Johns Hopkins University. He was selected to participate in the Educational Policy

Fellowship Program through the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C., and served as a member of the National Assessment Forum, a coalition of education and civil rights organizations advocating reforms in national, state, and local assessment policies and practices.

Grant Wiggins:

Grant Wiggins earned his Ed.D. from Harvard University and his B. A. from St. John's College in Annapolis. Grant is perhaps best known for being the co-author, with Jay McTighe, of Understanding by Design®, the award-winning and highly successful program and set of materials on curriculum design used all over the world; and of Schooling by Design. He was also a co-author for Pearson Publishing on more than a dozen textbook programs in which UbD™ is infused. His work has been supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

Grant worked on some of the most influential reform initiatives in the world, including Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, the International Baccalaureate Program, the Advanced Placement Program; state reform initiatives in New Jersey, New York, and Delaware; and national reforms in China, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Grant is widely known for his work in assessment reform. He is the author of Educative Assessment and Assessing Student Performance, both published by Jossey-Bass. He was a lead consultant on many state assessment reform initiatives, such as the portfolio project in Vermont and performance assessment consortia in New Jersey and North Carolina.

His many articles have appeared in such journals as Educational Leadership and Phi Delta Kappan. His work is grounded in 14 years of secondary school teaching and coaching. Grant taught English and electives in philosophy, coached Varsity soccer, Cross Country, JV Baseball, and Track & Field.