



DARTMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Teaching & Learning

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Curriculum, Instruction & Student Achievement

Catherine Pavao, Director of Teaching and Learning/Elementary Level

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The Office of Teaching and Learning is committed to supporting high quality instruction across Dartmouth Public Schools, Pre-K through Grade 12, for all learners. Toward that end, a number of improvement initiatives were successfully implemented across the district during 2023. Such initiatives included professional development and implementation of a new phonics curriculum, Foundations in grades K-2, the development of an initial draft of a Portrait of a Learner which will serve as the district's north star and provide direction for strategic planning work that will be completed in 2024, the revision and implementation of an updated District Curriculum Accommodation Plan to better support all learners, the establishment of a district curriculum revision cycle and the pilot of instructional materials in Algebra 1 and English 9 at Dartmouth High School. Additionally, the district underwent a Tiered-Focused Monitoring review conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Office of Language Acquisition which reviews the district's practices related to supporting multilingual learners. This routine, five-year review, highlighted the district's full compliance on most standards and identified three areas for improvement which were addressed throughout the summer and fall of 2023. Finally, in the fall of 2023, Dartmouth Public Schools was selected to participate in the Playbook Initiative, a collaborative partnership between the Boston Celtics, Project 351, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents aimed at building more inclusive communities by empowering students to take an active role against hate and discrimination.

Implementation of Foundations

As we continually analyze student achievement data, a trend across the Commonwealth in post pandemic testing revealed that reading achievement continued to be an area of need. In looking at local data and programming, the elementary L3 team (Leveled Literacy Leaders) identified a need for revision of the phonics curriculum. To that end, a group of teachers from that team piloted Foundations, which utilizes a structured literacy approach grounded in the science of reading to make learning to read fun while laying the groundwork for lifelong literacy. The program's research-based approach allows teachers to present a carefully structured reading, spelling, and handwriting curriculum using engaging, multisensory techniques. Foundations is aligned with the science of reading and guides teachers to provide effective instructional practices which occur in a systematic, cumulative, explicit, diagnostic, and integrated manner, allowing students to experience greater gains in the skills required for independent reading and spelling. After a successful pilot, all teachers in grades K-2 implemented Foundations in their classrooms for the 23-24 school year with a grade 3 implementation planned for the fall of 2024.



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Portrait of a Learner

Dartmouth Public Schools partnered with Envision Learning Partners to develop a draft Portrait of a Learner throughout 2023. The first step in the development process was to form a District Strategic Planning Team (DSPT). Team members included administrative and teacher representation from each building across the district. Members of the DSPT included the following Dartmouth Public School educators:

- Rachel Chavier, Associate Principal Dartmouth High School
- Justine Dale, Early Childhood Director Cushman Elementary School
- Sarah Decas, Associate Principal Dartmouth Middle School
- Dana Doucette, Mathematics Instructional Coach Potter Elementary School
- William Garcia, School Social Worker Dartmouth Middle School
- Bonny Gifford, Superintendent of Schools (retired March 1, 2023)
- Wilbur Higgins, English Lead Teacher/Instructional Coach Dartmouth High School
- Adam Hill, Assistant Principal DeMello Elementary School
- Dan Lefebvre, Literacy Instructional Coach Dartmouth Middle School
- Melissa McHenry, Assistant Principal Potter Elementary School
- Lori O'Neil, Literacy Instructional Coach Cushman Elementary School
- Catherine Pavao, Director of Teaching and Learning Elementary Education
- Jessica Pratt, ELA & Social Studies Teacher Dartmouth Middle School
- June Saba-Maguire, Superintendent of Schools (July 1, 2023)
- Janine Tavares, Literacy Instructional Coach Quinn Elementary School
- Ross Thibault, Director of Teaching and Learning Secondary Education
- Liz Voci, Instructional Technology Specialist DeMello Elementary School
- Stephanie Yermalovich, Assistant Principal Quinn Elementary School

The process of developing the Portrait of a Learner included collecting input from a variety of stakeholders across the Dartmouth community. Parents, community members, elected town officials, and Dartmouth High School students were all surveyed in order to prioritize the skills and competencies that the Dartmouth community believe are important to providing a quality education for all students. In December of 2023 the DSPT completed its initial draft of the Dartmouth Public Schools Portrait of a Learner which centers around supporting Dartmouth learners in becoming effective communicators, collaborators, critical thinkers and problem solvers, continuous learners and contributing citizens.

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

The Curriculum Council, with input from members of the Dartmouth District Leadership Team, reviewed the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) throughout the winter and spring of 2023. Required by Massachusetts General Law, all school districts must have a DCAP which outlines the district's commitment to supporting all students in accessing the curriculum in the general education setting in addition to outlining a systemic approach to reading instruction. The newly revised and implemented DCAP is modeled



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after the Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) identifying effective strategies to support all learners in the general education setting. Additionally, the DCAP details the Student Support Team structure employed throughout the district and will serve as a roadmap for future work to strengthen the systems of support available to ensure all students are able to meet rigorous grade level expectations.

District Curriculum Revision Cycle

The Curriculum Council also engaged in the development of a curriculum review cycle during 2023. The curriculum review process is designed to ensure that the district has a clearly articulated curriculum that is well coordinated PreK-12 resulting in improved instruction that will elevate the student experience. A consistent curriculum review:

- Provides for an ongoing review and revision of curriculum
- Supports the ongoing use of assessment data to inform and improve curriculum and instructional practices
- Ensures that revisions and updates to curriculum, instruction, and assessment take place to maintain adherence to changes in state and federal mandates, as well as MA Curriculum Frameworks
- Ensures that curriculum is culturally responsive, unbiased, inclusive, and promotes a sense of belonging for all students and staff
- Outlines a planned approach towards researching and budgeting for expenditures in curricular materials and professional development
- Evaluates potential needs for curricular or programmatic changes to support student learning The curriculum review cycle is comprised of 4 main components in a cyclical nature as outlined below.

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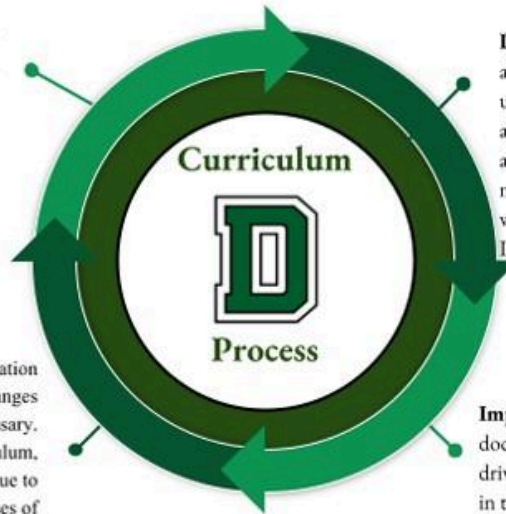
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Dartmouth Public Schools
A Community of Learners

Reviewing the Curriculum: Educator teams review various data sources, including educator reflections documented in Google Drive.

Monitoring the Curriculum: Monitor the implementation of the curriculum and its scope and sequence. Minor changes to documents or assessments are made as necessary. Professional development offerings related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and instructional materials continue to be provided. Data is continually collected for purposes of evaluation and to ensure equitable access for all students.



Developing & Revising the Curriculum: In order to ensure all students are future ready, curriculum is developed/revised using the Understanding by Design Framework to clearly articulate desired learning outcomes, resources, and assessments. District adopted curriculum and instructional materials¹ are documented in Google Drive, published on our website and include Course Scope & Sequence, Unit and Lesson Plans.

Implementing the Curriculum: Educators deliver the documented curriculum with integrity. Educators use data to drive all instructional decisions and document any adjustments in the reflection section.

¹The district has a [defined process](#) for adopting textbooks, instructional, and supplementary materials related to the district's curriculum.

Instructional Materials Pilot at Dartmouth High School

During 2023, two pilots were launched to introduce and determine the effectiveness of high quality instructional materials at Dartmouth High School. Those pilots included the College Board's Pre-AP English 1 materials as well as HMH's Into Algebra 1. In each case, collaborative teams of educators and administrators worked throughout the early months to ready for implementation in the fall of 2023. At present, both pilots remain in full-swing and will be evaluated to determine whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon the implementation and adoption process.

The Playbook Initiative

Thanks in part to the excellent work of Dartmouth High School students Tia Raad and Jesse Walker, Dartmouth Public Schools was selected in November of 2023 to participate in the Playbook Initiative. The Playbook Initiative is a curriculum that empowers middle school students to address issues of hate and discrimination related to race, ethnicity, culture and religion, gender and orientation. Dartmouth's Playbook Initiative Team includes Dartmouth High School World Language Teacher Ms. Lili Chamberlain, Dartmouth High School students Jesse Walker and Tia Raad, and Dartmouth Director of Teaching and Learning for Secondary Education Mr. Ross Thibault. The team attended a day-long training in Boston led by Project 351 and the Boston Celtics. During the training students had an opportunity to share their reason for wanting to be part of the Playbook Initiative and got to meet members of the Boston Celtics as well as the Lieutenant



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Governor of Massachusetts as they learned about ways to build more inclusive communities. Jesse and Tia will apply their training when they lead two workshops for 30 Dartmouth Middle School students in February of 2024.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2024, the Office of Teaching and Learning is excited to continue leading the District Strategic Planning work as we thoughtfully plan to move from prototype to practice with respect to embedding the Portrait of a Learner throughout our district. Additionally, as part of the budget process, additional funds have been requested to support the implementation of high quality instructional materials as research demonstrates the connection between high quality instructional materials and student achievement. We remain appreciative of the support the town has continued to provide to allow teaching and learning to thrive within the Dartmouth community.