

THE CURRICULUM OF IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCE

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
& SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

***FROM EXCELLENT SCHOOLS TO AN
EXCELLENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:***

***THE VALUE OF CURRICULUM MAPPING AND
PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING COMMUNITIES***

Presented by: Bev Tarpley, Assistant Superintendent


**Cheyenne Mountain School District
Colorado Springs, Colorado**



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**FROM EXCELLENT SCHOOLS TO AN EXCELLENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:
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FROM EXCELLENT SCHOOLS...

- Six K-6 elementary schools that feed into one junior high school (7-8) which feeds into one high school (9-12). District = 4000 kids
- **Site-based:** 8 completely different sets of curriculum and instructional practices, different textbooks for math/reading, social studies, competitive not collaborative, no articulation among grades or between schools. They all "say" they are teaching to standards.
- **Islands of Excellence:** Consistently the top state testing performers for elementary and secondary, 2 National Blue Ribbon Schools, USA Today Award as one of Top 100 high schools in America, two Title I schools, numerous state championships in athletics, consistently state winners in band/chorus/show choir/drama, Colorado Accredited with Distinction, etc.


So... what's the problem?



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SEVERAL CONVERGING FACTORS:


- Colorado Growth Model emerges as 35%-65% of accreditation rating. (% Proficient/Advanced vs. Adequate Growth)
- Outstanding staff is aging and retiring
 - 55 new teachers entering 2007-2008
 - Bringing in 453 years of experience
 - 968 years are leaving with the retirees and departures
 - (Since 2007-2008, we have 40 fewer staff.)
- How do we continue this trend and tradition of excellence with the changing landscape?



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SUPERINTENDENT'S VISION:


"To build on Cheyenne Mountain's tradition of being a district of excellent *schools* and establish an excellent school *district*."



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EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Clearly defined student learning outcomes
- Fully articulated and aligned PK-12 curriculum
- Effective use of student achievement data
- Inherent culture of collaboration and inquiry about student achievement



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SOUNDS EASY...


Just tell them to get busy...

Give them the plan...

Define the outcomes and alignment from the district office...

Test the kids to death and hand in the data to someone...

Finish by May and move on to the next "Initiative du Jour".




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INITIATIVES DU JOUR DON'T WORK
TOP-DOWN DIRECTIVES DON'T WORK

- Teachers/staff need to know *WHAT* is being asked of them.
- Teachers/staff must see the *need* for what we are asking them to do and how it will make a difference for *them* and for their *students*. They need to care about the work and feel some sense of urgency. (*WHY*)
- Teachers/staff need to see a clear plan for the work (*HOW*)
- Teachers/staff need to know the timeline and the support and resources for attaining success.

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A WORD ABOUT THE TIMELINE...

Determine when you think you want the work to be completed and then...

DOUBLE IT !


(Buy lots of chocolate before you start!)

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Excellent work takes lots of time and leaders need **PATIENCE** because the staff doesn't have the same vision you do when they are just starting.

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OUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS


- Professional Learning Communities training for all teachers
 - *Four key concepts provided structure for conversations:*
 - *What do students need to know and be able to do?*
 - *How do you know they got there?*
 - *What do we do when they don't learn?*
 - *What do we do when they already knew the materials before we started?*
- Teachers trained in ways to talk about content and instruction and how to collaborate with each other on instructional planning. Teachers had TIME to meet.



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CURRICULUM MAPPING MADE THE WORK ACCESSIBLE AND USEFUL

- Conversations were held by grade levels at elementary level and departments at secondary level.
 - Each PLC day had a structured task to complete
 - Review your program and practices with each other
 - Articulate tightly within departments/grades what is actually happening with content and skills teaching
 - Determine and agree on proper sequence
 - Smooth transitions with grades before and after, prerequisite coursework, and at grades 6 and 9
- Teachers received training on the mapping tool and mapped every course at secondary schools and writing and special areas at elementary levels by grade level.



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- Mapping tool made revisions easy and quick so teachers were able to keep moving forward and spend no time reformatting.
- Teachers could look in the *Curriculum Mapper* at the maps above/below grade level or courses before/after the course in review. Conversations continued...and continued!
- MASTER MAPS were determined for each course and grade so all teachers could follow the same outlines. Old standards used at this point. (Will replace with CCSS and Colorado Academic Standards by summer 2012.)




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FOUR YEARS LATER...


- Teachers collaborate within and between schools easily.
- New courses are mapped upon approval and all teachers who will teach it have immediate access to it.
- New teachers to district/school have immediate access to their courses and the August-May progression of course.


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- Maps are used by administrators as a preview for observations and evaluation cycles-preconference tool.
- Special education staff and RTI teams can see all maps-useful for modifying curriculum and instruction.
- Special area teachers can see the connections in core content for interdisciplinary instruction opportunities.


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- No loss of students' time for teachers to figure out the content/skills/assessments/resources district requires.
- Teachers know what the school/department *values* in our instruction for students.
- Clarifies the *science of teaching* and leaves the teacher to use the *art of teaching* for instruction.
- Focuses the teachers on what needs to be taught and assessed and the timeline for that to happen.


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- Just completed Year One of a *district-wide* elementary math adoption...first one in district history. Math scores are highest in district history!
- *Followed program with fidelity.*
- *Pacing guides in place.*
- *No outside materials used*
- *Collaboration within and across grade levels was natural and expected. One annual PLC day is now always a grade level/department level day by request from staff.*


•Starting Year One of junior high math adoption...fully articulated and aligned with high school math program.



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**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS**


- Standards match will be easy as we actually know what our core curriculum and instructional practices are.
- Our mapping tool will show us where we have a match and will also reveal our gaps.
- Filling the gaps where they exist will be easy for us as we will insert them in each map where they make sense.
- No more "blue notebooks" on our shelves to gather dust.



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SPECIFIC EXAMPLES


**Maps
Changed
Our
Culture**



WHAT DID WE LEARN?


- Teachers need time to work together during the school day.
- Awarding in-service credit for the maps was appreciated-it honored the time teachers spent working outside the day.
- This kind of work needs structure for completing the tasks. You just can't turn them loose and say, "Get to work."
- Teachers need lots of TIME! This is not their only task.
- Leaders must be visible and involved!

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- Collaboration does not come naturally to all...plan for it.
- Chocolate and food are essential for success.
- Teachers must know why they are doing something and care about the outcome...intrinsic motivation! It cannot be "the district office wants this done".
- Maps must be used and referenced and reviewed and revisited and revised or your work has been in vain.

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Bev is glad her hair was this color before all this started!



EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Clearly defined student learning outcomes
- Fully articulated and aligned PK-12 curriculum
- Effective use of student achievement data
- Inherent culture of collaboration and inquiry about student achievement


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EXPECTED RESULTS ARE REALIZED RESULTS


- Clearly defined student learning outcomes (All new state and Common Core standards came on in December, 2009.)
 - Math 7-12, all courses 7-12, writing K-6, Art/PE/Music/Counseling K-12,
 - ELL Modifications and supports K-6
 - Math K-6 mapping this year after one year with new program
 - Science/Social Studies K-6 in summer 2012
- Fully articulated and aligned PK-12 curriculum
 - By summer's end 2012, all content areas will be completed, mapped, and aligned with Colorado Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards in Math/Language Arts). New state assessments in March, 2014.

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- Effective use of student achievement data
 - Use is 10-fold what it was in 2007-2008. Data conversations rich and focused. Teachers are talking about the "same thing". Formative assessment is more prevalent than summative assessment. Grading practices have transformed.
- Inherent culture of collaboration and inquiry about student achievement.
 - Collaboration is deeply established in all that we do.
 - As high as we perform, we never stop pushing forward.

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QUESTIONS?

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