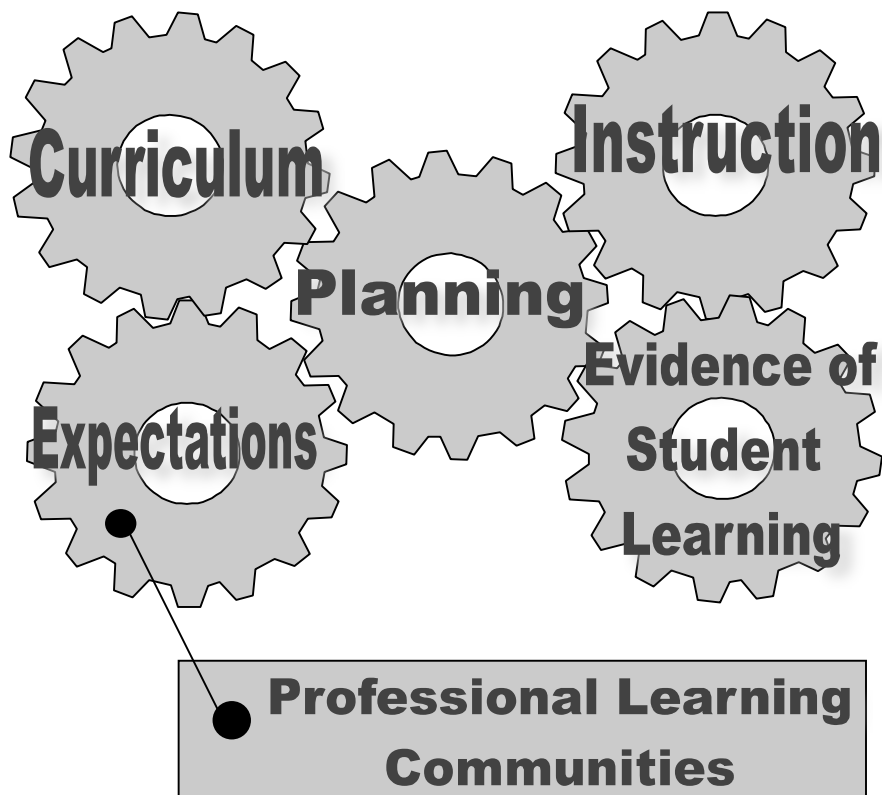


Framework for Improving Teaching and Learning

The purpose of this instrument is to provide a research-based framework for quality conversations around the practice of teaching for improved student learning





Instruction

How are instructional strategies matched to content and student needs?

- Alignment with standards and indicators is evident
- Teachers have a repertoire of strategies and know when to use them
- Teachers use previewing strategies and building prior knowledge
- Teachers can articulate how strategies match content and student needs

How do teachers check for evidence of student understanding?

- Appropriate frequency is evident
- Teachers check broadly across the class
- There are a variety of strategies for checking
- Teachers use the information to make dynamic instructional decisions
- Student thinking is visible, public and shared

How do students show they understand the learning goal/reason for the activity they are doing and what their work should look like?

- Students show understanding of lesson's purpose through many means: writing, articulation and actions
- Students can articulate quality work

What evidence do you have that students self-monitor their own learning and set personal goals?

- Students articulate goals and evaluate progress
- Students have access to personal progress
- Students show samples of work that have mastered criteria
- Students describe areas of mastery and areas of need
- Students provide non-judgmental feedback to their peers

How is time used to maximize student learning?

- Appropriate pacing and rhythm are evident
- Instructional time and time on task are protected in the classroom and in the school
- Instruction drives the schedule
- Maximum time is spent on academic engagement



Instruction (page 2)

How do teachers provide feedback to students about their learning and their work?

- Feedback is regular and ongoing
- Teachers use a variety of mechanisms

How do schools use resources to support teaching and learning?

- Non-classroom-based staff support teaching, learning and problem-solving
- Instructional materials are evident, adequate, relevant, and utilized appropriately
- School leadership teams are focused on instruction
- Time is organized to support student learning
- A feedback loop exists about adequacy and effectiveness of instructional materials

How do teachers communicate instructional goals and related assignments so students understand them?

- Teachers match communication to students' needs and learning styles
- A variety of effective approaches are used

Professional Learning Community

What are the elements/characteristics of highly productive conversations about teaching and learning?

- There is systematic examination of student work
- Non-defensive self-examination of practice exists
- Reaching out to the knowledge base is evident
- Experimentation, analysis, and self-critique occur in groups
- Knowledge-based decision-making occurs

How does collaborative decision-making occur about teaching and learning?

- Structures exist (e.g. faculty administration collaboration committees, quality management councils, instructional councils, etc.)
- Broad participation is evident
- Stakeholder involvement is evident
- There is a focus on evidence of student learning

How is time allocated for important conversations about teaching and learning?

- Time is honored
- Multiple options are available

How does staff share, encourage, listen, and act to examine teaching and learning?

- Conversations about expectations occur
- Experimentation is valued
- Teachers analyze evidence of student learning
- There is group critique
- Staff celebrate successes

How do we show shared responsibility for student learning?

- Reward systems encourage shared responsibility and community, not competition
- Multiple options for supporting students exist (e.g. community programs, mentoring, tutoring, after-school programs, etc.)
- Recognition of student learning across grade levels and across the curriculum is evident

What opportunities and resources are in place so that professional learning communities can thrive?

- Faculty meeting time, team meetings, leadership councils, etc., are used
- Space is provided for professional learning community work that is conducive to professional discourse
- Modeling by leaders is evident
- There is access to professional resources
- Peer visitation with reflection exists

How does your school plan for school improvement to create opportunities for student learning?

- The plan relates to data
- There is high involvement of representative faculty and external stakeholders
- All see themselves in the plan; it is meaningful to all
- There is clarity of purpose
- Regular reviews occur over time
- Professional development supports the plan
- Resources support the plan
- There are clear steps for mid-course corrections
- There is alignment with school system goals
- Shared decision-making exists

How do schools and teachers make students feel known and cared about and feel confident about their ability to learn?

- Staff makes appropriate personal connections
- The 3 Key Messages are evident

This is important.

You can do it.

I won't give up on you.





Planning

What is the evidence that teachers have addressed MCPS curriculum standards and indicators in lesson planning?

- Documents communicate that planning has occurred
- Planned activity is matched to the standards and indicators
- Planning is both long-range and short-range

What is the evidence of flexible, periodic, collaborative planning?

- Planning occurs across grade levels, departments, courses
- Planning occurs by grade levels and courses
- School organization supports time for collaborative planning
- There are common standards for student work

What evidence is there that teachers have planned for student engagement in active learning?

- Students participate in a variety of activities
- There is evidence of student work

How do teachers adapt the plans based on analysis of student performance?

- Evidence of student learning is used in planning, including intervention or acceleration



Expectations: Effort-based Intelligence

How does the view of effort-based intelligence appear in PRACTICES in the learning environment?

- Feedback on student work is frequent, specific, respectful and instructional
- There are flexible grouping practices
- There are provisions for re-teaching and extra help
- Student self-evaluation and goal-setting exist
- Grading practices and re-takes demonstrate this
- There is differentiation while maintaining standards
- Staff teaches students how to work smart

How does the view of effort-based intelligence appear in BEHAVIORS in the learning environment?

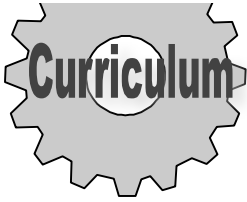
- There is a language of giving help
- Patterns of calling on students reflect this
- Responses to student answers reflect this
- Language of giving assignments reflects this
- Language of response to errors or below-standard work/ improvement or above standard work reflects this
- Staff shows tenacity to get students to meet standards
- There are opportunities for reciprocal feedback

How does the view of effort-based intelligence appear in STRUCTURES in the learning environment?

- There is a common understanding of high curriculum expectations
- There are common assessments of proficiency that embody high standards
- There are opportunities and access to learning

How does the view of effort-based intelligence appear in “STAFF TALK” within the learning environment?

- There is evidence of discussions about getting students to proficiency standards
- There is evidence of discussions about placement, assignment, and program (level to level and class to class)
- Staff is constantly challenging and re-examining beliefs about students' abilities



Curriculum

What is the evidence that the teacher is teaching the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) curriculum?

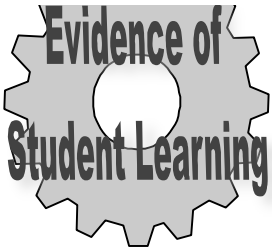
- Student learning experiences link to the MCPS curriculum
- Vocabulary of the curriculum is in evidence
- Exemplars and models of student performance that meet standards of proficiency are in evidence
- Resource materials support MCPS curriculum
- Student work and products can be tied directly to standards and indicators
- Teachers can articulate exactly what part of the curriculum is being addressed

What evidence is there that teachers are managing the curriculum?

- A plan for the year, semester or unit is used
- Instruction is paced so that all of the essential curriculum is taught

What evidence is there that the curriculum focus is maintained when adapting curriculum to student experiences and needs?

- Instruction of the curriculum is connected to students' real-world lives and experiences
- Individual learning experiences are based on student questions and ideas and are congruent with the MCPS curriculum
- Extended learning experiences congruent with MCPS curriculum are created for students who achieve early proficiency
- Instructional approach is modified while maintaining curriculum objectives when students need more time and support



Evidence of Student Learning

What evidence are you collecting that indicates students have made progress?

- There is a variety of student work that matches desired outcomes
- There is a variety of data sources and records used to show progress toward proficiency

What evidence is there that student progress is matched to curriculum?

- Student work is aligned with curriculum indicators
- Assessment measures are matched to curriculum indicators

What evidence is there that student progress is based on incremental rigorous goals set for students?

- Self-monitoring and goal setting are apparent
- Communication to parents and community about individual student progress exists in relation to goals
- Teachers communicate that, with effort, students can achieve these rigorous goals