

DAC—Sub-committee

Rich and Robust Learning Environments:

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What:

- What does a rich and robust learning environment mean for Manitou Springs School District 14?
- What are the current realities of instructional practices for MSSD?
- What are our best hopes for high quality teaching and learning practices in all aspects of our school district? What are we doing well? What are some areas of growth?
- What would it look like if 100% of students are growing and achieving academically and affectively?

When: It will be imperative that this work is ongoing and assessed regularly.

How: *(Process)*

We defined “a rich and robust learning environment for Manitou Springs School District” and then brainstormed components of the charge question that required further defining and investigation. We determined that the district does not have an existing vertically or horizontally aligned curriculum across all contents and grade levels. We also determined that, aside from the teacher professional practices rubric, we don’t have a consistent documented way to measure the quality of the instructional practices being utilized in classrooms. Finally we defined what it would look like if 100% of students are growing and achieving academically and affectively in Manitou Springs School District.

Proposal: *(Top 2-3 recommendations)*

1. Create and maintain opportunities for deliberately scheduled professional development and focused planning so that all staff will have access to a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum.
2. Ensure that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and instructional resources to implement highly effective instruction.
3. A staff involved review of the current licensed staff rubric(s) and weights to ensure alignment with our goals for a rich and robust learning environment, culturally responsive teaching practices, and trauma informed practices.

Story: *(What is the situation? What are the guiding questions?)*

This was a process to really lean into our values, goals, and beliefs about what it means to be a learner in Manitou Springs School District

- In this type of rich and robust learning environment, we want to focus on the:
 1. Development of the **Whole** Child
 2. Connections with Compassionate, Enthusiastic Teachers
 3. Environment where Students are Excited to Learn
 4. Opportunities based on Student Interests
 5. Collaborative Feedback Loop Between the Different Members of the Community

- 100% of students are growing and achieving academically and affectively:
 1. Every student reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade
 2. Students understanding what next steps to take in their learning
 3. Each and every student demonstrating social skills to be a positive contributing member of a community

Interests: *(What are the needs, concerns or desires underlying this issue?)*

We want the creation of a Community of Learners who are aligned around a shared vision, shared goals, and shared endeavors. The building of COLLECTIVE EFFICACY.

High Quality Learning Practices:

- To cultivate learners that are prepared to navigate the increasingly complex world as responsible global citizens, able to apply the learning practices inculcated during their time as students (i.e., critical thinking, communication, interpersonal skills, sensitivity to different points of view)

High Quality Teaching Practices:

- Taking time to build healthy trusting relationships
- Teaching skills that students will need in multiple contexts
- Able to adjust to different needs of students, in order to develop the whole child
- 100% of students are engaged in their own active learning

Research: *(What research was conducted? What are the current trends in research and practice?)*

- ❖ Identify high leverage instructional practices that:
 - Aligned to our district Core Values and current practices (experiential, AP, CTE, arts integrated, etc.)
 - Align to current research
 - Support the achievement of Colorado Academic Standards
- ❖ Gathered data to determine our current realities of instructional resource alignment to state standards.
 - Developed a survey
 - Explore resources that have been developed by others in the field
 - Data showed that there has not been a resource review in 8-10 years, some content areas have no resources, there is not a consistent writing resource
- ❖ Analyze data and identify key takeaways and suggested next steps
 - [Survey Results](#)

Options: *(Brainstorm and list)*

- There seems to be more disconnect between alignment and standards at the elementary level than at the secondary level.
- There is not a consistent standards-aligned writing resource
- IMPORTANT FOR TEACHERS: Maintain autonomy and creativity while moving together in the same direction (how do we define alignment)

Criteria: *(Pros and cons)*

The positive aspects of engaging in this work include but are not limited to:

- A common understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do at all grade levels
- An emphasising of the “Art” of teaching and learning
- A focus on continual growth as professionals
- Leadership density will increase across all schools

The challenges of engaging in this work include but are not limited to:

- To do these things well it will take buy-in from stakeholders at all levels
- This will be a multi-year endeavour
- This work will require various types of resources to be allocated

Suggested Implementation Models: *(Ideas or best practices for implementation)*

1. Create and maintain opportunities for deliberately scheduled professional development and focused planning so that all staff will have access to a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum.
 - Create a phased approach to training teachers on curriculum alignment.
 - Within Professional Learning Communities (PLC), institute specific frequency for members of each PLC to deeply explore and answer the question posed in tennant #1 (What do

students need to know and be able to do.)

2. Ensure that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and instructional resources to implement highly effective instruction.
 - Develop a resource review cycle for district-purchased universal materials to begin in the core content areas
 - School leaders create a regular professional development schedule that is focused on the key leverage points in their Action Plans

3. A staff involved review of the current licensed staff rubric(s) and weights to ensure alignment with our goals for a rich and robust learning environment, culturally responsive teaching practices, and trauma informed practices.
 - During the 2021-2022 school year, convene a representative group of staff members and school leaders to dissect our current professional practices rubric(s) paying close attention to the alignment between the written indicators and our goals for a rich and robust learning environment, culturally responsive teaching practices, and trauma informed practices.
 - The Evaluation and Feedback DAC subcommittee should engage in research around the current weighting of the five professional practice standards.

Additional Notes: *(Key ideas and discussions that were not part of the proposal but they should not be lost)*