The Changing Face of the Curriculum

The District's Strategic Plan calls for an ongoing evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that students are engaged in a curriculum that best meets their needs and prepares them well for the future. In this process, the District is examining research, best practice, and employment trends. One of the most obvious needs that show up time and time again is for students to have a strong background in technology. To address that specific need the District is shaping a new and more comprehensive technology curriculum.

Beginning next school year, students in grades K-6 will have technology every week. The students will be engaged in a curriculum called "Easy Tech" from the company Learning.com. The curriculum is aligned with the new academic standards, is self-paced, and prepares students to take the new state assessments online. The students will learn how to build and use: spreadsheets, data bases, graphic design programs, presentation programs, word processing programs, do appropriate web-browsing, and includes sections addressing online safety. The K-6 technology curriculum prepares students to apply technology in a variety of academic, personal, and work related settings.

The technology curriculum for grades 7-8 is built around the application of technology in the classroom with a focus on the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students will learn how to solve problems and use technology as a tool within a variety of settings (academic, personal, and work related).

By making students proficient users of technology in grades K-8, we will change the focus of the 9-12 curriculum from a basic knowledge curriculum to a more highly advanced one. Technology offerings at the high school will shift to programming and coding courses, graphic design courses, Advanced Placement Computer Science, and STEM classes. We are shifting our traditional Industrial Technology course offerings to courses that will require students to use technology to plan, design, engineer, build, and solve problems. Students will be expected to think about "real" problems and develop solutions to those problems.

The delivery of curriculum is also changing. Students at the high school will be able to select from six courses that are being taught in the high school and are simultaneously offering students college and high school credit. The District intends to add more of these College Credit Plus courses in the future. Online courses are becoming available to students in all academic disciplines. The offering of online courses will assist students in taking courses that the school is unable to offer. Additionally, the District is working with a consortium of districts and higher education partners to offer distance-learning classes in the near future. As mentioned above, even our students in the elementary and middle schools will be doing some course work online through the K-8 technology plan. Of course, students will still be able to take college courses on the campuses of area colleges as well as select from the traditional courses and electives offered in the schools.

Other curricular changes are in the works as well. Each student, beginning in the seventh grade will build a "Ten Year Plan." Students will work individually with their school counselor to build the plan and twice a year the counselors will meet individually with students to evaluate progress, make changes, and discuss next steps. The idea of the plan is not to "pigeon hole" students into a specific occupation; rather, the goal is to teach students the importance of planning, on-going evaluation of their plan, and to help them identify the value of their academic program. Students will use the website "Ohio Means Jobs" as they navigate through their plan. The site allows students to investigate specific occupations and occupational clusters so that they can become familiar with the expectations and demands that exist from one occupation to another. The "Ten Year Plan" is a dynamic process that will follow students throughout their educational experience in the Wickliffe Schools. The ten year plan will also coincide with the high school plan to create educational pathways for students. Students will be selecting from a variety of pathways, each one designed to be rigorous and challenging, and will emphasize college and career readiness.

The academic tools that students will be using are also changing. Online texts and resources are replacing traditional textbooks. The transition to online texts and resources is being phased in, for example, next year students in grades 7-12 will be provided with online math texts and resources. Over time, many disciplines will be eliminating traditional textbooks and materials all together in favor of free sources available online. Professionals in a variety of academic fields are building these sources. Such resources will be more up-to-date than the sources previously used and will contain a richer variety of resources and materials than were previously available. The District is also in the process of building a STEM Lab. The lab will include the latest software and equipment available. By next school year, students will be using 3D printers, CNC milling machines, laser cutters, and software that will engage students in engineering, robotics, mechatronics, biomedical technology, manufacturing technology, and data logging.

The face of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning is changing and we believe the changes will assist our students in becoming well prepared for the world outside of school. The Wickliffe City School District is truly "Inspiring Students to Learn, Lead, and Serve."