



East Lyme Public Schools

Curriculum Writing Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to the Curriculum Writing Handbook, a comprehensive guide designed to support educators in developing high-quality, student-centered curricula that align with the core beliefs and values of East Lyme Public Schools. At East Lyme, we firmly believe that a well-crafted curriculum should be identity affirming, recognizing and celebrating the unique strengths and diversity of all learners. Our curriculum serves as a roadmap that vertically and horizontally aligns to rigorous standards, focusing on essential content while prioritizing the development of transferable skills outlined in our vision of the graduate.

Rooted in Research & Best Practice

Central to our curriculum development approach is the Understanding by Design (UbD) model, pioneered by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. This research-based framework places a strong emphasis on promoting deep understanding and long-term retention of knowledge by designing learning experiences that engage students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The UbD model ensures that curriculum design is driven by clear learning objectives and essential questions, guiding teachers in crafting coherent and purposeful units of study.

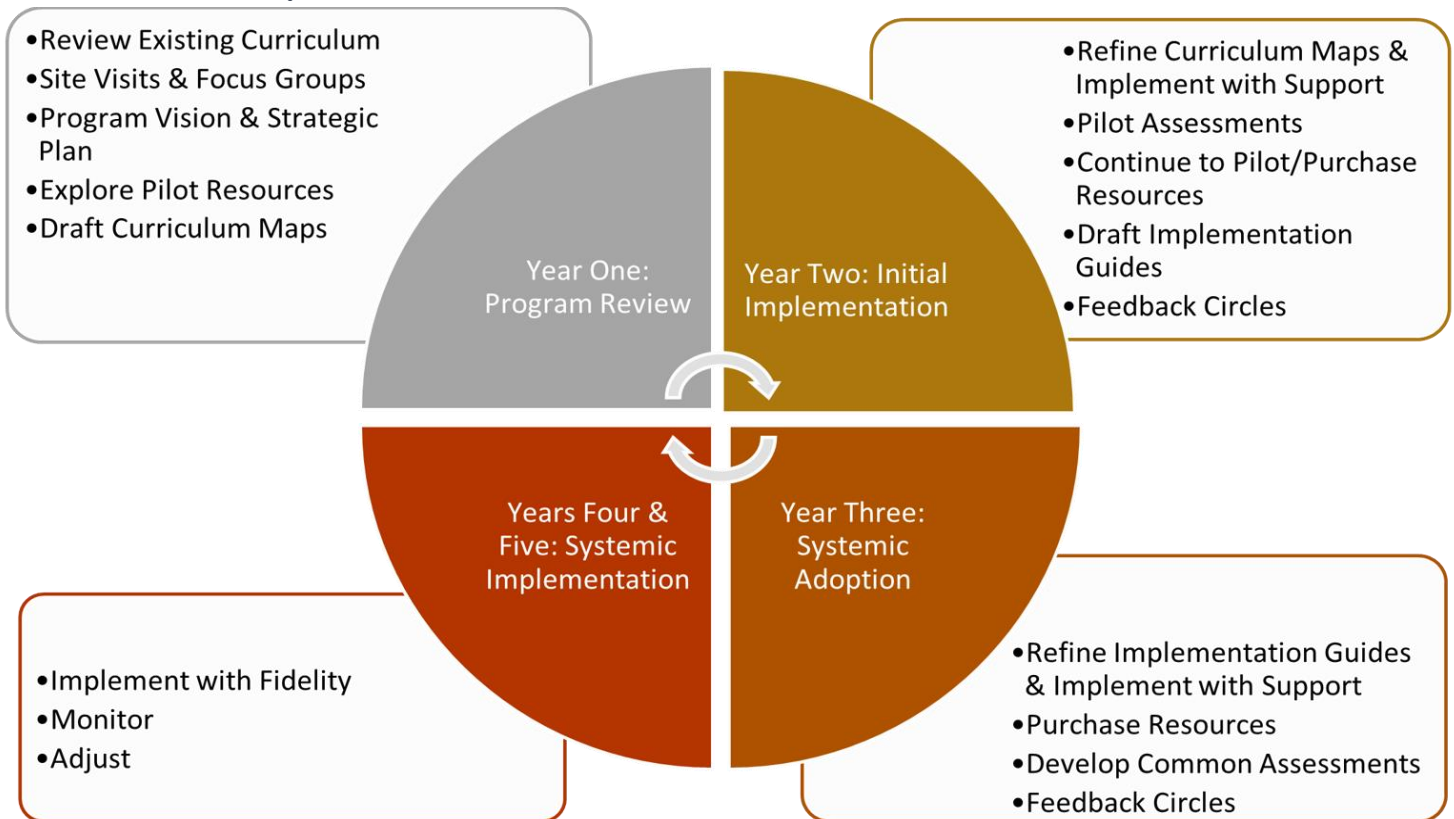
Additionally, our High Impact Teaching (HIT) instructional model is driven by John Hattie's most impactful instructional strategies and Anita Archer's explicit instruction model. We believe that a rigorous high-quality curriculum, coupled with research based instructional practices will result in our ability to unlock the full potential of every student and nurture their growth, quipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to success in an ever-changing world.

Curriculum Revision Process

This comprehensive process spans across five years, each year serving as a critical phase in crafting a student-centered and identity-affirming curriculum that aligns with the core values of our district. In year one, we embark on program review, diligently examining our existing curriculum and gathering insights through site visits and focus groups to pave the way for the department's broader vision and strategic plan with the goal of completing curriculum map drafts by the end of the year. In year two, we work to refine the curriculum maps and implement them with support, leveraging feedback and piloting assessments to fine-tune our curriculum's effectiveness while

providing teachers the necessary resources and guidance. Moving forward, year three marks system adoption, where we finalize performance tasks, common assessments, and implementation guides to foster seamless and consistent curriculum delivery. Years four and five encompass systemic implementation, as we embrace data-driven approaches to monitor student response to the written curriculum and adjust our resources to maximize its impact on student growth. Through this process, we remain dedicated to the Understanding by Design (UbD) model.

Curriculum Revision Cycle



Year One: Program Review

- Review Existing Curriculum
 - Familiarize yourself with the current curriculum in use and identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.
 - Collaborate with other teachers, curriculum coordinators, and administrators to understand the rationale behind the existing curriculum.
- Site Visits and Focus Groups
 - Conduct site visits to other schools or institutions that have successful curriculum models.
 - Organize focus groups with teachers, students, and parents to gather diverse perspectives on the curriculum's effectiveness and relevance.
- Program Vision and Strategic Plan
 - Define a clear vision for the curriculum development process, keeping in mind the school's mission and educational goals.
 - Develop a strategic plan outlining the steps and timeline for the curriculum development process.
- Explore Pilot Resources

- Identify potential resources, textbooks, online materials, and other supplementary resources for piloting.
- Consider open educational resources (OER) and technological tools that align with the curriculum goals.
- Draft Curriculum Maps
 - Make a copy of the curriculum map & implementation guide template and name it using the ELPS curriculum naming protocol.
 - Develop curriculum maps with the following elements:
 - Essential Questions & Enduring Understandings.
 - Standards: Content Standards, SEL Competencies, ISTE Standards, and Social Justice Standards.
 - Key Vocabulary
 - Critical Content & Key Transfer Skills: What students will know and what students will be able to do.
 - Assessment: Performance Tasks & Other Assessments.
- Share the drafted curriculum maps with CILs/CFs & curriculum feedback team to receive and respond to feedback.

Year Two: Refine Curriculum Maps and Implement with Support

- Refine Curriculum Maps
 - Revise and improve the curriculum maps based on the feedback received.
 - Ensure alignment between Performance Tasks, Standards, & Enduring Understandings/Essential Questions.
- Pilot Assessments
 - Develop formative and summative assessments to evaluate student progress.
 - Administer pilot assessments to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- Continue to Pilot/Purchase Resources
 - Continue piloting new resources and materials identified during Year One.
 - Purchase the most effective and suitable resources for full implementation.
- Draft Implementation Guides:
 - Develop implementation guides for each unit or subject, including the following elements:
 - Background Knowledge
 - Anticipated Misconceptions
 - Learning Activities
 - Unit Specific Teacher Resources
 - Unit Specific Student Resources
 - Unit Specific Consumable Supplies
 - Learning Environment Considerations
 - Instructional Technology Integration
 - Unit Reflection

- Share the implementation guides and pilot assessments with teachers and administrators to receive feedback for further improvement.

Year Three: System Adoption

- Refine Implementation Guides and Implement with Support:
 - Revise the implementation guides based on feedback and best practices.
 - Provide professional development and support for teachers to ensure successful implementation.
- Adopt Primary Resources
 - Select and officially adopt the primary resources for the curriculum.
 - Ensure teachers have access to the necessary materials and training to use them effectively.
- Finalize Performance Tasks and Common Assessments
 - Develop performance tasks and common assessments aligned with the curriculum goals.
 - Implement these assessments to measure student progress and curriculum effectiveness.
- Receive Feedback on Curriculum Documents
 - Continue to seek feedback from teachers, administrators, and students on the curriculum.
 - Use the feedback to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

Years Four and Five: Systemic Implementation

- Implement Curriculum with Fidelity
 - Ensure that all teachers are following the finalized curriculum consistently.
 - Monitor and support teachers to maintain fidelity in the curriculum implementation.
 - Monitor Student Response to Curriculum Through Data Analysis:
 - Analyze student performance data regularly to gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum.
 - Identify areas of improvement and success to inform future revisions.
- Adjust Accordingly
 - Use the data analysis to make data-driven decisions on curriculum adjustments.
 - Continuously improve the curriculum based on insights and feedback.
 - Continuous Professional Development:
 - Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to stay updated on curriculum changes and best practices.
 - Encourage collaboration and sharing of successful strategies among educators.
- Engage Stakeholders
 - Keep parents and the broader school community informed about curriculum changes and progress.
 - Encourage open communication and address any concerns that arise.

Curriculum Writing Phases

The curriculum revision cycle consists of several phases: Planning, Writing, Feedback, Revision & Publication, and Implementation. The responsibilities of the curriculum writing team vary depending on each phase of the process.

Planning Phase

Curriculum Implementation Lead (CIL) or Curriculum Fellow is responsible for developing and communicating the

working dates and timeline for completion to the Assistant Superintendent. They set up meetings, establish a plan for writing, and schedule professional learning sessions to introduce Curriculum Writing.

Writing Phase

The CIL/Curriculum Fellow guides the team in using updated ELPS Templates to create new Curriculum Maps and/or Implementation Guides. The team members communicate with each other to ensure consistency in the content, grammar, and spelling. All work is completed on original document formatting and saved locally in the CIL/CF's folders, and Assistant Superintendent is added as the "owner/editor." The final products are submitted by linking documents and/or folders in the Curriculum Work Spreadsheet by agreed-upon due dates.

Feedback, Revision & Publication Phase

The Assistant Superintendent and curriculum feedback team reviews all submissions and provides feedback to the writing team if needed. The team makes any suggested changes and all approved submissions are posted on the T&L Hub.

Implementation Phase

The curriculum writing team works collaboratively with the CIL/CF at the beginning of the school year to update progress and make necessary adjustments. They utilize professional learning calendar and department meeting time to update colleagues on new changes or adjustments and monitor the implementation of the revised curriculum, making further adjustments as needed.

It is important to note that the responsibilities outlined above are not exhaustive, and additional tasks may arise as the curriculum revision process evolves. Throughout the cycle, the curriculum writing team collaborates closely to ensure that the curriculum is high quality, student-centered, and aligned with the school district's vision.

Primary Resource/Textbook Adoption Protocol

The adoption of primary resources and textbooks plays a vital role in shaping the learning experiences of our students, providing them with essential knowledge, skills, and opportunities for growth. As we embark on this process, we are committed to selecting resources that are developmentally appropriate, ensuring that they meet the diverse needs of all learners in our community. It is of utmost importance that the resources we adopt are accessible to every student, fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Moreover, our primary resource and textbook adoption process is firmly anchored in the priorities outlined in our carefully crafted curriculum maps and implementation guides, ensuring seamless alignment with our curriculum's vision and objectives.

Protocol for Textbook/Primary Resource Adoption

- Needs Assessment
 - Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify gaps in the current curriculum and determine the specific subjects or grade levels that require new textbooks.
 - Ensure that the identified needs align with the goals outlined in the Curriculum Handbook and are based on student learning needs and desired outcomes.
- Curriculum Alignment

- Review the curriculum maps and implementation guides outlined in the Curriculum Handbook to establish the specific content and learning objectives that the new textbooks should address.
- Ensure that the textbooks align with the essential questions, enduring understandings, standards (Content Standards, SEL Competencies, ISTE Standards, and Social Justice Standards), and key transfer skills defined in the curriculum maps.
- Quality Evaluation
 - Form a textbook adoption committee comprising teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators, and other relevant stakeholders.
 - Utilize the ELPS district criteria/rubric for evaluating the quality of textbooks, considering factors such as accuracy, relevance, comprehensiveness, accessibility, and alignment with the curriculum.
- Piloting
 - Pilot potential textbook options in select classrooms to gauge their effectiveness and suitability for the curriculum.
 - Gather feedback from teachers, students, and administrators during the piloting phase to inform the final decision.
- Stakeholder Input
 - Seek input and feedback from parents, students, and the broader school community on the textbook adoption process.
 - Provide opportunities for stakeholders to review and offer insights on the proposed textbooks.
- Decision-Making
 - Evaluate the data collected during the piloting phase, considering feedback from stakeholders and the alignment with the Curriculum Handbook.
 - Select textbooks that best meet the needs of the curriculum, learning objectives, and student diversity.
- Professional Development
 - Plan and provide comprehensive professional development sessions for teachers to effectively integrate the new textbooks into their instructional practices.
 - Offer ongoing support and training to ensure teachers are well-equipped to use the textbooks to enhance student learning.
- Implementation and Monitoring
 - Implement the adopted textbooks across the identified grade levels or subjects with fidelity.
 - Continuously monitor the effectiveness of the textbooks through data analysis, student performance, and teacher feedback.
- Evaluation and Review:
 - Periodically review the adopted textbooks to assess their impact on student learning and alignment with the Curriculum Handbook.
 - Seek opportunities for improvement and make necessary revisions to the textbook adoption process based on lessons learned.
- ELPS Textbook Adoption Criteria/Rubric/Text Complexity Rubric
 - Text Complexity

- Consult with the building-based literacy consultant on identifying the appropriate level of text complexity for the for which the course is being considered for.
- Accuracy
 - The information presented in the textbook should be factually accurate and free from errors.
 - All data, statistics, and historical facts should be supported by reliable sources.
- Relevance
 - The content should be directly related to the subject matter and learning objectives outlined in the curriculum.
 - It should be applicable and relatable to the students' experiences and interests.
- Comprehensiveness
 - The textbook should cover all essential topics and concepts specified in the curriculum.
 - It should provide a balanced and thorough treatment of the subject matter.
- Accessibility
 - The textbook should be designed to be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.
 - Consideration should be given to font size, readability, and the availability of alternative formats (e.g., audio, digital, large print).
- Alignment with Curriculum Standards
 - The content should closely follow the curriculum standards set by the educational board or district.
 - It should address the specific learning outcomes and competencies outlined in the curriculum.
- Engagement and Clarity
 - The language should be clear, concise, and appropriate for the target grade level.
 - The textbook should include engaging narratives, examples, and activities to maintain student interest.
- Diversity and Inclusivity
 - The textbook should represent a diverse range of perspectives, cultures, and experiences.
 - It should avoid stereotypes and present content that is inclusive and respectful of all backgrounds.
- Pedagogical Value
 - The textbook should include a variety of instructional strategies, including activities, exercises, and assessments that promote active learning.
 - It should encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent exploration.
- Assessment Tools
 - The textbook should provide both formative and summative assessment materials, including quizzes, tests, and practice questions.
 - Clear answer keys and grading rubrics should be included where applicable.
- Flexibility and Adaptability
 - The textbook should allow for customization to meet the specific needs and teaching styles of individual educators.
 - It should provide opportunities for teachers to supplement or modify content as necessary.
- Ethical Considerations
 - The content should adhere to ethical guidelines, avoiding any form of discrimination, bias, or offensive material.

- It should promote positive values and respect for diverse perspectives.
- Supporting Resources
 - The textbook should be accompanied by supplementary resources, such as teacher guides, workbooks, and online resources, to enhance instruction.
- Longevity and Durability
 - The physical quality of the textbook should be durable enough to withstand regular use over several years.
 - The content should remain relevant even as curriculum standards evolve.

Curriculum Feedback Process & Resources

Revision Calendar 2021-2029

East Lyme Public Schools Curriculum Revision Calendar PK-12

| Elementary School | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 | 25-26 | 26-27 | 27-28 | 28-29 |
| PK | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Science | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 |
| Math | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 |
| Social Studies | Y2 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 |
| ELA | Y1 | Y1 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 |
| PE | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y3 | Y1 | Y2 |
| Health | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y3 | Y1 | Y2 |
| LMS | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| Art | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Music | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Middle School | | | | | | | | |
| | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 | 25-26 | 26-27 | 27-28 | 28-29 |
| Science | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| Math | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 |
| Social Studies | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 |
| ELA | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| ELA Electives | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 |
| PE | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y2 |
| Health | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| LMS | Y2 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y2 |
| Art | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Music | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| FACS | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| World Language | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 |
| School Counseling | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| TEC | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| High School | | | | | | | | |
| | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 | 25-26 | 26-27 | 27-28 | 28-29 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Science | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y3 |
| Math | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Social Studies | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 |
| ELA | Y1 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y3 |
| PE | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| Health | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| LMS | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Fine Arts | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| World Language | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| School Counseling | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Computer Science | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Video Production | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 |
| Engineering/CAD | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |
| Business | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| Construction | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
| FCS | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 | Y4&5 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4&5 |

***Key:** Y1 (Program Review) Y2 (Initial Implementation) Y3 (Systemic Adoption) Y4/5 (Systemic Implementation)