1

An Introduction to Teacher-Led Curriculum Processes

The DAILY Curriculum System

WHERE WE ARE IN THE CURRICULUM PROCESS

Foundations: The introduction and setup of the DAILY curriculum system

---

INCLUDED IN THIS CHAPTER:

- Curriculum overview
- Curriculum phases
- The DAILY curriculum system
- Critical factors
- Key roles
- Connection to school improvement
- Definitions

Looking at curriculum implementation as a system helped my teachers see the big picture of curriculum while breaking it down into usable components for both classroom instruction and standardized testing.

—George, elementary school principal

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

Simply stated, curriculum is what an educational community determines that students should know, understand, and be able to do. For example, let's take the teaching of simple addition. What do we want students to know? How to add numbers up to 10. What do we want them to understand? Place value—when any combination of numbers becomes 10. What do we want them to be able to do with it? Solve problems of simple addition, such as, "If Sam has four apples and Jake has six apples, how many apples do Sam and Jake have?"
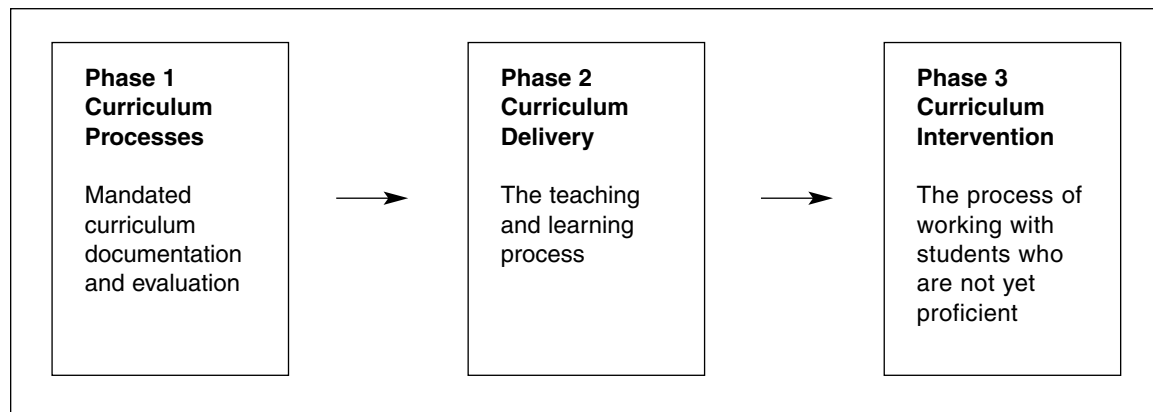
Curriculum is currently driven by state standards, benchmarks, and expectations. So curriculum processes are the steps used to establish how teachers or districts will determine what is required of them at each grade level in all subjects. However, how will districts implement, monitor, and be self-accountable for the standards by which they are measured? How will teachers and teacher teams integrate these standards with what is actually happening in the classroom? How do we keep teachers in control of student learning, leading their own teaching, yet on course with state expectations?

To help teachers and districts understand curriculum and its related processes, I use the example of the composition of the human body. The skeletal structure that builds the shape of the body represents curriculum expectations and processes. The muscles are what teachers use to give form to the body, or curriculum, such as textbooks and teaching and learning strategies. The features that give a body its personal look (skin, hair, eye color, etc.) are all the extra things that teachers and districts do in their classrooms or communities that make the teaching or student population special (projects, field trips, community activities, ethnic celebrations, etc.). Through layering, we have a complete and unique body with consistent functioning. Through layering, a school can have a complete and unique curriculum with consistent student achievement.

In my experience working with districts, I find that they are having difficulty in sequencing curriculum processes. Districts typically do not plan out their curriculum work, nor do they have the tendency to develop a clear and focused sequence of curriculum documentation. This lack of planning could result from the fact that it is difficult to understand what curriculum is and how it relates to data, instructional expectations, teaching and learning, and interventions. In general, there is a need in the educational community to help teachers and districts not only learn the *what* and *how* of curriculum, but also base that curriculum within a sustainable, adjustable system. Therefore, the creation of good curriculum foundations must include practitioner knowledge, understanding and involvement, and the ability to visualize and build systems.

SETTING UP A SYSTEM OF CURRICULUM

One way to help teachers and districts understand curriculum is by organizing it into three phases, or pillars. Doing so breaks it down into understandable and doable chunks. These three phases include all the components of a total system of curriculum (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1   The Three Curricular Phases

Phase 1 Curriculum Processes		Phase 2 Curriculum Delivery		Phase 3 Curriculum Intervention
Mandated curriculum documentation and evaluation	→	The teaching and learning process	→	The process of working with students who are not yet proficient

In my experience, districts tend to jump from one phase to another without a plan or conscious thought of the interrelationships between the phases. For example, they may align the English Language Arts curriculum, then buy a new textbook for sixth-grade math, then try a new reading intervention for second graders—without connecting these actions or focusing on glaring data inefficiencies or inequalities in student achievement (Wahlstrom, 1999). I am not negating what districts have done, as each action is an attempt to improve their system; however, without creating a big-picture plan or road map for curriculum, teachers and districts might tend to take a piecemeal approach, leaving gaps in specific skills and/or for groups of students.

Districts must have a road map for both horizontal (all teachers in one grade or subject) and vertical (from one grade to the next) alignment, and it must be based on data (Jacobs, 1997; Wahlstrom, 1999). In a curriculum, as in organizational learning communities, it is necessary to look at the big picture, break that down into smaller components, and then look at the assembled pieces of the big picture again and again (Senge, 1994). As we will discuss later, the continuous view of the system, in whole and in parts, is integrated with the district or school improvement and/or accreditation process.

WHAT FIRST?

Using the previously mentioned breakdown, a district would start with Phase 1, Curriculum Processes; move into Phase 2, Curriculum Delivery, through teaching and learning; and finally address Phase 3, Curriculum Intervention. As a district builds each subsystem—processes, delivery, and intervention—it weaves a solid curriculum base that will not be disrupted by changing personnel, funding, or boards of education. The system becomes solid and can then be adjusted at the needed places, as indicated by data, without toppling the structure. If a district completes Phase 1 first, it will have built a stable system from which to work, adjust, readjust, and keep connecting to annual student achievement data.

Of course, it is best if these three phases follow one another, but school districts are very complex systems and most have already been doing some type of work in curriculum

processes, delivery, and intervention as the learning process is continuously taking place. In essence, what I am suggesting is to design and repair the plane while it is in flight. Examining, designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum is a complicated and difficult task for any district. These are steps in a continuous improvement cycle of an organizational learning community.

Remember, we are talking about building teacher knowledge and systems of curriculum within each phase. This does not mean that a district or school cannot address critical concerns that are happening "right now." For example, if a district's data shows that a majority of the third-grade boys are not learning the concept of number notation and place value, administrators would not say, "Well, we are not at the intervention phase yet, so we will have to let that one slide for awhile." We must be realistic and understand that we cannot let those young learners falter. A district deals with such a problem the best that it can and continues to build the foundation of each phase while folding in the problem and solution related to the third-grade boys. As the district may find, once it aligns the second-grade curriculum and implements a place-value manipulative within instruction, the need for intervention at the third-grade level will dissipate.

THE DAILY CURRICULUM SYSTEM

A research group investigated which standards were actually taught in hundreds of schools and compared the list against the state-assessed standards. There was almost no correspondence.

—Mike Schmoker (2006, p. 37)

Phase 1: Curriculum Processes

Curriculum processes are designed to bring consistency and stability to a district or school curriculum. Based on standards and data, this book focuses on how administrators and teacher teams can build and sustain a Phase 1 system. For purposes of common language and recognition, I have labeled this the DAILY curriculum system (see Figure 1.2). The acronym reflects two concepts: that we must be aware of our curriculum processes daily as we teach and as students learn and that the letters stand for the processes themselves.

In this fashion, when talking to each other about the DAILY curriculum system, everyone is on board with what is being referred to and why. It is important to note that the DAILY system is embedded in educational standards; each of its processes is based on the standards or state expectations upon which district or school student achievement proficiency is measured. This will be explained and demonstrated in more detail as we proceed through each step.

Although the Phase 1 categories are listed linearly in Figure 1.2, the entire Phase 1 process is

**Figure 1.2**   The DAILY Curriculum System

Curriculum Documentation Steps

D = Data analysis

A = Alignment of standards (with goal setting and curriculum mapping)

I = Instructional pace guides

L = Local common assessment

Y = Yearly documentation review

more precisely played out as a cycle of steps or tasks, with each step connecting to the next. The process always begins and ends with data analysis, and each step or task is supported by a curriculum document.

As demonstrated by the cycle in Figure 1.3, it is important to remember that teachers are always at the center of the DAILY curriculum system and the process is supported by administration and facilitation. However, these steps are done in teacher teams and are not meant for the isolated teacher. Each step brings the teacher team back to the connection between curriculum standards, classroom instruction, and the district's accountability testing. (The schematic in Figure 1.3 will be placed at the beginning of each of the how-to chapters in Part II to indicate which task we are completing as we go through the process.)

Also, note the placement in Figure 1.3 of the development of local common assessments. It is important to be aware of this placement because it can cause confusion in the DAILY system for people who are committed to developing assessment before instruction. This model does not disrupt that flow; it is understood and accepted that developing assessment before instruction is a research-based educational best practice (see Chapter 9). What it does do is put the development of the local common assessments at the end of the

Figure 1.3   Phase 1, Curriculum Processes, Steps in Action
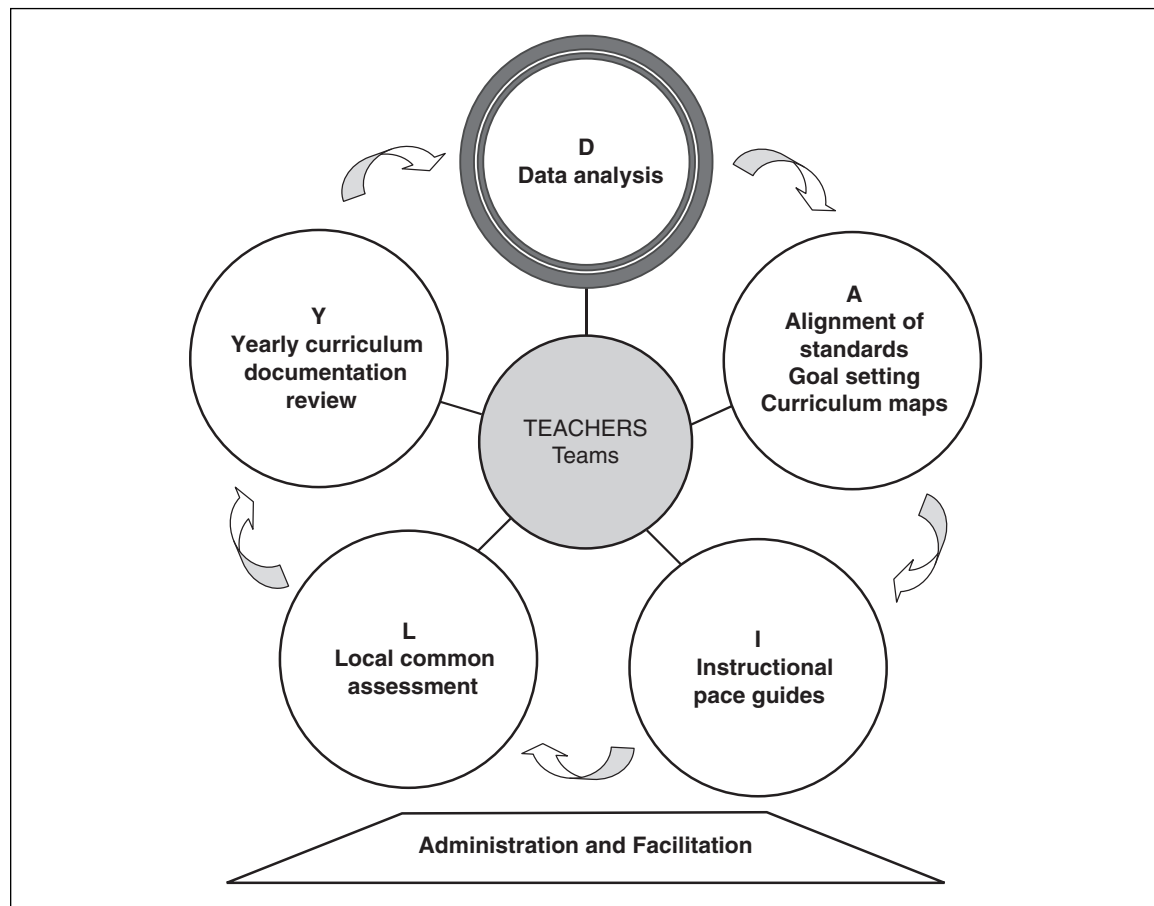
curriculum documentation process but before curriculum delivery. In this way, when the assessments are developed, the teacher teams know the timing of instruction through their maps and pace guides. This facilitates the creation of tests that are focused on measuring accountability standards.

As mentioned earlier, to document, systematize, and make the curriculum steps easy to implement and review, each step produces a curriculum product. These products can be used by district personnel such as administrators and teacher teams to implement, monitor, adjust, and discuss the curriculum system. Table 1.1 indicates the curriculum documents generated by the completion of each step.

Phase 2: Curriculum Delivery

Curriculum delivery constitutes the teaching and learning process—the teaching and learning activities of the curriculum standards that were documented in Phase 1. It can consist of teaching techniques and strategies; best practices such as differentiated instruction and cooperative learning; reading, math, or writing programs; textbooks, projects, and activities; and so forth. Even when concentrating on Phase 1, it is important to have the road map at the forefront of the curriculum work. Continuous discourse needs to be taking place between teachers, curriculum personnel/facilitators, and administrators on what needs to occur after Phase 1 is complete.

Once curriculum processes near completion, the natural progression is to move into Phase 2 and begin examining, discussing, and making decisions about curriculum delivery and the teaching and learning process. Whenever I facilitate teacher team curriculum processes, I always assign a note taker or lead teacher to write down ideas, concerns, and connections that surface while we are working together. In addition, teachers and districts must answer questions such as the following:

- What teaching strategies are needed?
- What types of writing, math, science, or social studies programs or material would be beneficial and would fulfill our curriculum needs?
- What textbook(s) would best help us implement the curriculum and goals?

Table 1.1   Phase 1 Curriculum Documents

Curriculum Process	*Product*
Data analysis	Data summaries
Alignment	Alignment document by standard
Goal setting	Recommended grade-level or subject goals
Curriculum mapping	Curriculum maps
Instructional pace guides	Instructional pace guides
Local common assessments	Local common assessments
Yearly curriculum documentation review	Revisions and updates of all documents

When answering these questions, teachers will be at an advantage if they have on hand all of their baseline curriculum documents such as curriculum maps and common assessments. Teacher teams can then begin to build a systematic delivery of instruction based on their knowledge of and expertise in developing their curriculum system.

Phase 3: Curriculum Intervention

In Phase 3, this question emerges: What do we do when students aren't learning the curriculum? In this arena, districts need to examine, discuss, and make decisions about building a system of interventions both in the classroom and for individual students. These are usually research-based interventions for core subjects, especially in reading and mathematics.

How the Process Works

When presenting curriculum issues to teachers, administrators, parents, boards of education, and laypersons interested in education, the reaction I commonly get is that I have some understanding of voodoo or magical phenomena. To these stakeholders, the word *curriculum* typically conjures a black hole of endless and meaningless words and phrases that many times, even as practitioners, they cannot connect to practice.

Because people see curriculum as being complicated, disconnected, and overwhelming, they have a tendency to "correct" the problem by taking one of two paths. First, they may choose to ignore the curriculum issues and do their own thing (closing the classroom door and teaching what they want to teach or always have taught), usually using their textbook as their curriculum. Second, in an attempt to have someone else solve their problems, they may choose to purchase a prewritten or "canned" curriculum (Jacobs, 1997). The latter is often a misfit to the district's curriculum needs, thus complicating current problems and perhaps alienating teachers. By implementing a curriculum that is not known, understood, or wanted by the practitioners—the teachers themselves—a district creates a vicious cycle. This cycle then leads back to the first coping mechanism, teachers doing their own thing without connecting their curriculum to what other teachers may be doing, what is being tested, or what students may need. In my experience, pre-scripted curriculum from other districts or publishers is a simple answer to a district's woes, but an answer that most often sidetracks a district's actual problems and is counterproductive to teacher confidence. Teachers' combined knowledge, understanding, and ability to build a curriculum system is a more inherent, sustainable, and effective answer. This does not mean that what other districts have done or what publishers offer cannot be utilized, but it must be utilized within a district's own plan.

KEY ROLES FOR CURRICULUM PROCESS SUCCESS

Teachers

The DAILY curriculum system is based in the work of teacher teams. Since everything that is done in a school district is in support of student learning, teachers are the people who are directly fulfilling the purpose of the institution. Therefore, teachers must be the foundation of all curriculum work. As practitioners, they need to have knowledge of the school's instructional vision, curriculum, and curriculum processes (Jacobs, 1997; Senge, 1994). This

includes input into how standards are taught, the materials used, and the timing of instruction (Marzano, 2003). Teachers must have an understanding of how their local common assessments both match and predict state and national assessments and how data is related to what they do every day. This includes being able to envision and have input into the big picture in order to effectively carry out their required piece (classroom instruction).

However, it is important to clarify what teacher-led processes in the DAILY system are and are not. The teacher-led processes do *not* involve teachers building the curriculum from the bottom up. The skeleton or outline of the curriculum has already been set through pre-scripted standards and expectations. What teacher teams *are* doing is determining instruction's best fit for assigned standards and expectations. The following is a conversation that transpired among a teacher team regarding their understanding of teacher-led curriculum after having completed the DAILY system.

Justine (third-grade teacher):	I think a teacher-led curriculum starts with a common set of goals and expectations that a group of teachers are working from and then they pull the best of what they have and design what they are going to use to teach those common goals, rather than having a textbook that says "This is what you are going to teach to accomplish something." Teacher-led is where the teachers would decide by themselves as to how we are going to initiate and maintain the curriculum standards—plus we have ownership of it.
Valerie (fourth-grade teacher):	Teacher-led means that we worked together and we're the driving force behind having that curriculum happen. But then teacher-led also allows for individuality, because then I can take that curriculum and individualize it to match my own teaching style so that we can all have the common goal in mind, but . . . I need to accomplish that goal in my own style. It allows for flexibility and freedom. We are losing our freedom because we are being told more and more that we have to look exactly alike. It comes to that assessment test. We can all give that test and be so comfortable with it because we have taught our structured material in our own given way and our own strength. We are all administering the same tests, and hopefully we're getting the same results. With teacher-led curriculum it allows for each one of us to teach through our strengths. I'm going to get it across in the way I can do it in the best way [for me].
Diana (teacher leader):	Teacher-led curriculum actually developed a common goal with common learning expectations, but then gave us the freedom to lead our own art of teaching and the interaction with children, but we have a common goal and a common outcome.
Johanna (second-grade teacher):	It gives us a solid base to do "your crafting"—what you do best. This has helped us on sustaining the curriculum through many recent changes.

Teacher teams and committees are the foundation on which the DAILY system works within a district. As one can gather from this conversation, the DAILY system allows

for achievement of common goals through standards as well as individual freedom in the classroom. (Chapter 3 goes into more detail on how to build teacher teams for curriculum processes.)

Administrators

Principals and other district administrators as instructional leaders has been an emerging theme in educational data and research (Cotton, 2000; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Reeves, 2006). Aspects of strong administrative leadership are directly related to principals getting involved with the instructional program, including ensuring that the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned (Cotton, 2000). Also, shared decision making and distributive leadership among administrators and teachers strengthen the emphasis and focus on instruction (Cotton, 2000; Spillane & Sherer, 2004).

In *School Leadership That Works,* by reviewing long-standing research in education, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) verified a number of key components that connect school leadership and behaviors to successful school practices, many of which directly relate to integrating teacher involvement in the curriculum process:

- Focus on change efforts that are aimed at clear, concrete goals
- Getting teacher input by involving them in the design and implementation of important instructional and policy solutions
- Intellectual stimulation for faculty and staff
- Involvement in and knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Monitoring and evaluation of data
- Resources (especially in the form of professional development opportunities)
- Willingness to be a change agent and "temporarily upset a school's equilibrium" (p. 44)

These constructs are demonstrated in such behavior as helping teachers design curriculum activities and address assessments and instructional issues (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). For there to be a true system of curriculum, there has to be a merging of leadership and teacher development and ownership of the curriculum, as evidenced by the following comment:

Carolyn (elementary school principal): I like working with our documented curriculum processes. Once a year, I sit down with each grade-level teacher team and we review the documents. We look at our most recent data and compare it to our maps, pace guides, and common assessments. If our data says we are having trouble with inference or prediction, I can ask "Where is this skill being taught and assessed?" Through their documents, my teachers can show me when and where teaching and assessment are taking place—or if they are missing. We can then talk about what we are using to teach that skill and how we are approaching instruction. We have a venue to adjust and talk about. With that stability and understanding of our common goals and learning expectations, we can concentrate on instructional practice and student proficiency. We know where everything is in the curriculum!

In working with any district on curriculum processes, it is best to always, without exception, meet with the administrative team first and discuss their commitment and goals. It is imperative that this be done before the district or school begins the process. Principals and/or administrative teams must have a long-term commitment to and understanding of the process (including time and resources) for the process to be successful. Discussions must include decisions about the administrator's anticipated involvement. Such decisions include how often the administrator wants to be at the teacher team meetings, how he or she will be kept informed, and his or her role in shared problem solving as conflicts arise.

Principal or administrative roles include setting the foundation for teacher teamwork, keeping lines of communication open with teacher team leaders and/or facilitators, supporting the concepts of the process, and monitoring its implementation in classroom instruction. Even if administrators cannot be active in development of the curriculum processes or visible on a regular basis, their support and willingness to monitor implementation will guarantee the success of the curriculum work. Without this critical support and help, the district will be unable to have a solid Phase 1 base, which means that, in the end, there will not be a true curriculum system.

Curriculum Facilitator

Curriculum processes must be facilitated by a central person. The facilitator's role is such a key to the success of teacher teams and the end curriculum products that it is imperative for a district to be selective in who will coordinate the curriculum process efforts. Most often, this person cannot be the principal because of the many other duties principals must perform on a regular basis. However, facilitation must be conducted by a person who is well versed in curriculum issues and in the district or school's history; this includes knowledge of achievement data and scores. The facilitator could be the curriculum director/coordinator, a lead teacher given release time for curriculum work, or an outside consultant. The facilitator must be given secretarial support for document preparation, although many outside consultants have the means for producing their own curriculum documents for a district. It is also important to note that because of the time and commitment demands, it is never a good idea to add this responsibility to someone's already full plate. (Both the role of the facilitator and document preparation are addressed in full detail in Chapter 3.)

CONNECTING CURRICULUM WORK TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School improvement, as well as accreditation models, is all about building continuous improvement methods into the district or school purpose. As educators, our purpose is the same across states, populations, and philosophies: successful learning for all students. School improvement is based on ensuring student learning through a continuous improvement process and on maintaining a comparatively standardized formula. State school improvement documents represent a written plan that identifies student performance goals, supporting data for the goals, assessment, research strategies, professional development, resources, timelines, and persons responsible for implementing the action identified with the plan (Michigan Department of Education [MDE], 2006).

School improvement plans are an expansion of the continuous quality improvement and monitoring systems that emerged in manufacturing during the 20th century. In school models, continuous improvement is defined as a process by which staff engages in collaborative inquiry focused on consistent assessments—monitoring, adjusting, implementing, and evaluating to increase student achievement (MDE, 2006). The challenges of 21st-century schools, including closing the achievement gap and providing quality education amid changing economic times, will only increase our need for building continuous quality improvement models. Sustainable curriculum will remain a stable component of such systems.

These principles are embedded in the three phases of curriculum and bring the district's curriculum work and school improvement efforts together into one course of action. Most school improvement frameworks will cover the basic strands of teaching and learning, leadership, personal and professional learning, school and community relations, and data and information systems (MDE, 2006). State school improvement documents and mandates will center on the learning standards or results that they have set forth. Therefore, as a district or school completes its Phase 1, Curriculum Processes, it will continue to stay aligned with state standards and use state data as one of the key indicators of student achievement.

Merging school improvement plans and continuous improvement concepts with curriculum processes will give districts a comprehensive plan and help them meet school improvement mandates. Addressing specific instructional goals using curriculum processes will ensure the relationship between identified goals and the ability to report an ascending trend line in student achievement data. What gets identified and measured gets done! The keys to using Phase 1, Curriculum Processes, with school improvement or accreditation plans are as follows:

- Use the data analysis to understand what is being measured and how students are performing.
- Use the alignment to match dictated standards and expectations with what is being taught in the classroom, examining where data and instruction are misaligned.
- Use instructional goals that are created from the mismatch of data with instruction.
- Use mapping process to benchmark the teaching of standards and to be sure that all standards are taught.
- Use the instructional pace guides to deepen instruction by adding key concepts and essential questions that can connect to the common assessments.
- Use the common assessments as predictors of student performance in terms of established standards, expectations, and skills.
- Use the common assessment data to support the accomplishment of goals.
- Use the teacher teams as the avenue for goal development and implementation.
- Use the administrative team to monitor goals.
- Use the goals and curriculum processes to integrate school improvement goals across the school improvement strands (such as teaching and learning, leadership, professional learning, school relations, and data and information management).
- Use Phase 2, Curriculum Delivery, to create the next set of instructional goals.
- Use Phase 3, Curriculum Intervention, to continue the process.
- Use the annual review of the curriculum, whatever phase you are at, as the continuous improvement review.

Since school improvement plans are written for a three- to five-year period and are reviewed or adjusted annually, districts must be sure to set realistic time frames and goals

considering the challenges demonstrated by their data. It is important to remember, Rome wasn't built in a day—take the time to create a solid plan with a realistic timeline. The DAILY system processes fit well into a three-year school improvement timeline. (Developing a timeline is addressed in Chapter 3.)

CLARIFYING DEFINITIONS

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to include definitions of key words used in the DAILY curriculum system. Curriculum vocabulary is often used differently by different people and educational groups when being applied to curriculum and school improvement. These standardized definitions provide a common language that schools will need in order to implement the content and curriculum processes presented in this book.

Curriculum	What an educational community wants a student to know and be able to do; most often based on a state's standards, benchmarks, learning results, or expectations.
Phases and Pillars of Curriculum	I have used these terms interchangeably. They include the three pieces of curriculum: processes, delivery, and interventions.
	Curriculum processes: The steps used to establish how teachers or districts will determine what, when, why, and how students will know and be able to do what is required of them at each grade level in all subjects. These processes are data analysis, goal setting, alignment, mapping, creating instructional pace guides, and creating local common assessments.
	Curriculum delivery: How one approaches the teaching and learning process; it is the actual classroom instructional piece and can include teaching strategies; best practices; differentiated instruction; textbooks; and reading, writing, and math programs.
	Curriculum interventions: The provisions that are put into place to help students who have not shown proficiency. These provisions can include reteaching, one-on-one tutoring, parent support programs, peer coaching, small-group instruction, and targeted materials and programs.
Curriculum Processes	*Data analysis:* Factual information, including student achievement, demographic, and alignment data, that is organized for analysis or used to reason or make educational decision (MDE, 2006; Wahlstrom, 2002).
	Alignment of standards: Examining the standards agreed upon to be taught (usually state standards or expectations) in relation to what is currently being taught among and across grades and subjects. Data analysis is then laid over the comparison, and discrepancies in curriculum surface.
	Goal setting: Developing instructional decisions or priorities based on data analysis.
	Curriculum mapping: Creating a visual representation of what is being taught in a grade and/or subject. Maps are set up on a time frame such as months, marking periods, or classroom assessment periods. Maps place in front of a teacher the activities they do to meet a standard and ensure that all standards are included in the appropriate grade or subject (Jacobs, 1997).

(Continued)

(Continued)

	Instructional pace guides: These are an extension of the curriculum map. They extract and classify the standards, highlight the key concepts and essential instructional questions being addressed, and identify whether the standards are targeted for the local common and state assessment. Pace guides are usually set by marking periods or a district's local common assessment periods.
	Local common assessments: These teacher-designed classroom assessments follow the alignment, maps, and instructional pace guides. They are local because they are specific to a district or school. They are common because all grade-level or subject teachers use the same assessments at the same time. Common assessments are used as predictors of how students will perform on standardized tests and give information that can be used immediately to adjust or enhance classroom instruction. These assessments also give students experience in taking standardized test with actual materials used to teach the skills, all within the safety of their classrooms.
Standards-Based Education	The use of a set of standards, usually designated by state departments of education as the basis for state assessments. Standards are also referred to as *learning results, grade-level expectations,* and *educational benchmarks.*
Student Achievement	Focused measurement on a district's state and other standardized achievement data; can also include local common assessment scores, student grades, diagnostic testing, student work, and teacher observation.
Sustainability	The curriculum system's ability to uphold itself over time. This includes changes in leadership, funding, teachers, student populations/subgroups, board members, and curriculum leaders/facilitators.
Teacher Learning	In terms of curriculum, this takes place through team learning, reflection, and decision making that involves teachers, in a team, exploring, discussing, and making curriculum decisions, including design, implementation, and evaluation decisions. The learning, discourse, and team decision-making process takes place on a regular basis in a concrete time, place, and venue. For example, curriculum councils, grade-level teams, content teams, school improvement and accreditation teams, and staff meetings all serve as avenues for teacher learning and team decision making. Teacher team decision making is then defined as teachers in a designated capacity being given, within the structure of curriculum (e.g., mandates from the state or board of education), the ability to make and implement decisions regarding curriculum and curriculum processes.
Teacher Discourse	Teachers' conversations with each other; structured conversations that take place among teachers in a given setting to examine, design, and implement curriculum. Teacher discourse is a prerequisite and avenue to teacher learning, team learning, and decision making. These conversations may extend to other key persons in the educational process, including principals, superintendents, and board and community members, but the essence of teacher discourse occurs among teachers.
Educational Improvement and Accountability	Improvement and accountability is most often focused only on student state achievement data, which is very important to the definition of what constitutes improvement in a school. However, I extend this definition to include how teachers feel about having control over and input into curriculum processes and delivery, the culture and morale of a school or district, and other perception data such as the view of leadership and colleagues.

CHAPTER 1 IN REVIEW

✓ Curriculum is what educational communities want students to know, understand, and be able to do. Curriculum is most often dictated by state departments of education in the form of educational standards.

✓ For ease of understanding, curriculum can be divided into three phases or pillars:

  ○ Processes
  ○ Delivery
  ○ Interventions

✓ These phases constitute a system of curriculum.

✓ Curriculum systems work best when they are teacher based and administratively introduced, supported, and monitored.

✓ Phase 1, Curriculum Processes, include the following:

  ○ **D**ata analysis
  ○ **A**lignment of standards (with goal setting and curriculum mapping)
  ○ **I**nstructional pace guides
  ○ **L**ocal common assessments
  ○ **Y**early documentation review

✓ Although local common assessments are developed at the end of Phase 1, they are still designed before instruction.

✓ Curriculum systems work best if there is a natural flow from Phase 1, Curriculum Processes; to Phase 2, Curriculum Delivery; to Phase 3, Curriculum Intervention.

✓ The easy flow of curriculum phases is not always possible in systems as complex as schools; therefore, districts will find that at times they may have to pull together isolated pieces.

✓ These are the key roles in developing curriculum processes:

  ○ Teachers
  ○ Administrators
  ○ Facilitators

✓ Curriculum systems designed by teacher teams need to be integrated with a district or school's improvement or accreditation process.

✓ Key definitions used in curriculum work need to be standardized for all persons involved.

SELF-REFLECTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1

Note: While some people may find this activity helpful after reading Chapter 1, if you are not ready to complete the self-assessment, it can be done at any time during or after you have read the book.

Where Are We in the Curriculum Process? A Self-Reflection Activity

Directions: Answer the following questions, and graph them on the next page. In the box below the graph, write a quick summary of your findings and the first three steps you would take for your school in implementing a DAILY curriculum system.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you analyzed your data and created data summaries for instruction?
   No   Some   Yes

2. Have you aligned what you are teaching to your mandated standards?
   No   Some   Yes

3. Have you set goals using your data and/or alignment information?
   No   Some   Yes

4. Have you connected your curriculum goals to both instruction and the school improvement process?
   No   Some   Yes

5. Have you mapped the curriculum to mandated standards (expectations)?
   No   Some   Yes

6. Have you developed instructional pace guides (aligned to mandated curriculum)?
   No   Some   Yes

7. Have you developed local common assessments (aligned to mandated curriculum)?
   No   Some   Yes

8. Have you involved teachers in the curriculum process and/or teacher-led curriculum committee(s)?
   No   Some   Yes

Directions: Graph your responses here using the answers from Questions 1–8. The numbers on the graph correspond to these questions.

DAILY Curriculum Process Self-Reflection Graph

	1 Data Analysis	2 Alignment	3 Goals	4 School Improvement Connection	5 Mapping	6 Instructional Pace Guides	7 Local Common Assessment	8 Teacher Involvement
YES								
SOME								
NO								

Directions: Summarize your findings.
Here is a brief summary of what our graph data indicates about our curriculum process:

These are the first three steps I would take in developing a solid curriculum process system:

1.

2.

3.