

History and Development of the Model Curriculum for Learners in School Libraries

The Genesis of The Model Curriculum for Pennsylvania School Library Programs, 2012-14

The original *Model Curriculum* of 2012-14 was developed as a result of a recommendation made by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education in its *Pennsylvania School Library Study: Findings and Recommendations*, which the Board adopted in October 2011:

Spearhead a working committee of Pennsylvania Department of Education staff, school librarians, and officers of state professional associations to develop a model information literacy curriculum for school library programs to align the 2007 *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* of the American Association of School Librarians with the 2010 PA *Core Standards*. (p. 29)

As the PA Core Standards were developed, approved, and implemented in 2010 and 2011, teams of teachers developed curriculum to support these Standards. In the spirit of collaboration, school librarians developed an information literacy curriculum to align with the PA Core Standards, as these standards were then named.

To accomplish the recommendation of the State Board of Education and to develop curriculum that supported the PA Core Standards areas, a committee, the Office of Commonwealth Libraries of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) appointed a project director and committee to develop *The Model Curriculum for Pennsylvania School Library Programs*, with funding provided through a Library Services and Technology Act grant.

Understanding by Design as the Framework for *The Model Curriculum*

Using the Understanding by Design (UbD) conceptual framework, *the Committee* developed *The Model Curriculum* in three stages: Stage 1 Desired Results in 2012; Stage 2 Assessment Evidence in 2013; and Stage 3 Learning Plan in 2014. The UbD curricular model is used by the Standards Aligned System (SAS) Quality Review Team of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The UbD framework supports curriculum development, instruction, and student assessment and was first designed for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

The Model Curriculum was constructed following the Understanding by Design (UbD) model that emphasizes learners achieving deep understandings of content and provides a plan for educators to identify what learners should know and be able to do. To implement the UbD model, educators begin by formulating what the desired results should be for learners—what should they understand and be able to do. Understanding by Design is sometimes called “backward design” because in the first stage educators identify the desired results they want their learners to achieve. For the second stage, educators determine what assessment evidence is necessary for the learners to produce to demonstrate that they have achieved the desired results. Only when educators identify the desired results and determine the assessment evidence do they develop the learning plan, Stage 3. (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005, 17-18)

Updating the Model Curriculum

To update and expand Stage 1 of the Model Curriculum to include AASL and ISTE standards, the Model Curriculum Update Committee reviewed the *PA Academic Standards*, including the new *Career Education and Work Standards* and the *PA Career Ready Skills Continuum* to determine which of these Academic Standards school librarians could take primary responsibility for teaching and which school librarians could partner with educators to teach. Following the UbD framework, the Committee formulated four long-term transfer goals for learners based on the four domains of Think, Create, Share, and Grow of the *Framework for Learners* of the National School Library Standards. From these long-term transfer goals, the Committee used the six Shared Foundations of the *Framework for Learners* to establish priorities for what is most important for learners to learn, what big ideas the learners should grapple with, what essential questions help learners explore these big ideas, what library and information concepts flow from these big ideas, and what competencies learners should build (i.e., what key skills they should demonstrate and what they should be able to do).

To develop Stage 1 Desired Results, the Committee first reviewed each of the individual standards in the *PA Academic Standards in English Language Arts, Reading; Reading and Writing in Science and Technology/Technical Subjects; Reading and Writing in History and Social Studies*; and the *Business, Computer, and Information Technology Standards*. The Committee identified 43 of the 157 Academic Standards for which school librarians--based on their expertise in information literacy--can assume primary instructional responsibility for teaching and assessing whether learners have demonstrated proficient levels of meeting the related competencies. The chart below displays the representation of these identified standards among the five groups of Academic Standards and the Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills Continuum. In addition, school librarians can partner with classroom teachers to support an additional 14 standards.

The Model Curriculum Aligns with the PA Academic Standards

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| <p>PA Academic Standards English Language Arts 17 of 59 standards (29%)</p> | <p>Standards for Which School Librarians Can Take Prime Responsibility</p> <p>43 of 157 Standards (27%) + 7 Career Ready Skills</p> | <p>PA Academic Standards Career Education and Work 4 of 23 standards (17%)</p> |
| <p>PA Academic Standards Reading & Writing in Science/Technology 6 of 19 standards (32%)</p> | | <p>PA Academic Standards Business, Computer & Information Technology 9 of 37 standards (24%)</p> |
| <p>PA Academic Standards Reading & Writing in History/Social Studies 7 of 19 standards (37%)</p> | | <p>Pennsylvania Career Ready Skills Continuum 7 of 11 skills (64%)</p> |

In November of 2017, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) published the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. With the publication of these two sets of standards from professional associations and the publication of two new sets of PA Academic Standards in the area of career education, it became necessary to update *The Model Curriculum* to align with these new standards and to determine the concepts learners should understand and the competencies learners should be able to demonstrate. The AASL and ISTE standards support and reinforce the PA Academic Standards and identify the information and digital competencies that learners need to develop to demonstrate their mastery of the PA Academic Standards.