

Curriculum Development

Using *Understanding by Design*

1. Review your school mission and vision statements. What do they reveal about the systemic principles and values that should be reflected in your curriculum documents? *To what extent do our mission and vision guide and inform our curriculum decision-making and development processes?*
2. Based upon the analysis of your mission and vision statements, how can you articulate the “meta-skills” and competencies that will guide and inform your educational program (e.g., communication skills, reasoning skills, decision-making skills, ...)? *To what extent have we articulated long-term school educational goals?*
3. As we frame our school-level learning goals, how can we “unpack” them into overarching enduring understandings and essential questions? *How can we communicate these enduring understandings and essential questions to such stakeholder groups as administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members?*
4. How well delineated is each of our instructional programs (e.g., social studies, science, theology, etc...)? *To what extent have we achieved and communicated consensus about the big ideas and spiraling skills and competencies students will revisit as they move within and across grade levels?*
5. How can we articulate and communicate the enduring understandings and essential questions students will revisit within each of the instructional programs? *How can we use these understandings and questions to frame the programs and ensure horizontal, vertical, and spiraling alignment within and across grade levels?*
6. How can we map our course curriculum designs for each content area? *How can we identify and articulate the following key elements: (a) content and performance standards for each course; (b) enduring understandings for each course; (c) essential questions for each course; (d) knowledge and skills for each course; and (e) benchmark assessments for each course?*
7. How can we “map” our course curriculum designs into units that provide a “fleshed-out” scope and sequence of recommended desired results (*Stage One*), balanced assessments (*Stage Two*), and teaching-learning activities (*Stage Three*)?
8. How can we “field test” (teach) units and modify them based upon practitioner use? *This step involves teaching the unit, peer review, editing and professional development to ensure that all educators understand how to use various units in relationship to each course.*