

STAKEHOLDER GUIDE TO CURRICULUM REVIEW

Prepared for Eau Claire Area School District

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In the following report, Hanover Research reviews the purpose and process of curriculum reviews. The report also discusses the roles of various stakeholder groups during reviews.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the following report, Hanover Research reviews the purpose and process of curriculum reviews, with a particular emphasis on the roles of different stakeholder groups throughout the review process. The report is intended to inform Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD)’s multi-stage review of the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in 2016.

Viewed as the heart of instruction, curricula structure what and how students learn material in and outside of the classroom. Consequently, educators argue that reviewing curricula is crucial to ensure that the curriculum’s design and implementation support learning that is cohesive, sound, and well-aligned with the community’s larger goals.

To inform the curriculum review process within ECASD, this report proceeds in two sections:

- **Section I: Curriculum Review Purpose** details the definition of curriculum, common curricular concepts—such as explicit and implicit curriculum—and the purpose and goals of curriculum reviews.
- **Section II: Curriculum Review Process** summarizes the steps involved in the curriculum review process and discusses the role that various ECASD stakeholder groups play in the ELA curriculum review process.

KEY FINDINGS

CURRICULUM REVIEW PURPOSE

- **Some argument exists over the definition of the term “curriculum.”** Specifically, both researchers and educators acknowledge the difficulty of deciding what types of materials qualify as the official curriculum, such as content area standards by grade and unit, curriculum maps, the courses offered in a course catalog, lesson plans, student assignments and projects, reading lists, quizzes, and tests.
- **Regardless of the ambiguity surrounding the definition of “curriculum,” the literature emphasizes the importance of conducting periodic curriculum reviews.** Reviews are viewed as a means to ensure that the curriculum effectively and efficiently supports the district’s learning goals despite environmental or institutional changes, such as the introduction of new standards, the introduction of new technology, or the introduction of new research on best practices in learning.

- **Curriculum reviews typically assess curricula from one (or more) of four perspectives: as *intended* curricula, as *enacted* curricula, as *assessed* curricula, or as *learned* curricula.** The intended curriculum comprises the static materials that describe the content students are meant to learn. In contrast, the enacted curriculum composes the content students are actually taught. Likewise, the assessed curriculum is the content on which students are assessed, whereas the learned curricula compose the content students actually acquire.

CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

- **The cumulative literature on curriculum reviews, program evaluation, and project management suggest that reviews like ECASD’s have six main steps.**
 - *Step One: Set the Scope of Review*—School leaders and evaluators collaborate to determine what they would like to learn about the curriculum, consequently setting the scope, cost, and timeline of the analysis.
 - *Step Two: Establish Stakeholder Roles*—School leaders and evaluators outline and communicate stakeholder roles for the review, as failing to include stakeholders appropriately may damage the review’s progress and legitimacy.
 - *Step Three: Collect Relevant Data*—School leaders, school staff, and evaluators work to collect the information needed to complete the review. The extent of information, or data, needed will vary depending on the objectives identified earlier in the evaluation scope and may be quantitative or qualitative.
 - *Step Four: Analyze Relevant Data*—Evaluators transform raw data into meaningful research findings through methods such as interview coding (for in-depth interviews), document reviews, or survey analysis.
 - *Step Five: Share Analysis*—Evaluators share the results of the data analysis with school leaders; school leaders subsequently share the results of analysis with the wider district community, such as teachers, parents, and students.
 - *Step Six: Prioritize Next Steps*—Based on the results of the curriculum review, school leaders determine how to prioritize possible curricular changes.

SECTION I: CURRICULUM REVIEW PURPOSE

The following section discusses the definition of curriculum, common curricular concepts—such as explicit and implicit curriculum—and the purpose and goals of curriculum reviews.

What is a Curriculum?	• Defining the term and its usage among educators
Why Should We Review Curriculum?	• Understanding why the curriculum--and curriculum review--matters
How Can We Review Curriculum?	• Summarizing the lenses researchers use to review curricula
How Does this Relate to ECASD?	• Discussing the background of ECASD's planned review

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM?

The term “curriculum” is commonly used and rarely defined. The Glossary of Education Reform loosely defines curricula as “the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn,” explaining that although dictionaries may describe the term as the courses offered by schools,¹ *educators* use the term to refer to wide variety of concepts, including:²

....the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.

Further complicating a shared understanding of curriculum, many education researchers draw clear distinctions between concepts such as the “explicit curriculum” (the expectations and material officially taught in classes), the “implicit” or “hidden curriculum” (the expectations and materials not officially taught in classes, but that students learn regardless), and the “null curriculum” (the expectations and materials students do not learn at all). Throughout this report, we will use the term “curriculum” to refer to what these researchers would term the *explicit curriculum*.³

Within districts, curriculum design and implementation may range from highly centralized to highly de-centralized. In a centralized model, for example, district leaders may choose to purchase a comprehensive curriculum package across multiple grade levels and require all schools to follow the purchased curriculum. In a decentralized model, district leaders may provide schools with a set of general standards and ask that the schools implement and design curricula of their choice conforming to the district standards.⁴

¹ See, for example, “Curriculum.” Merriam-Webster. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curriculum>

² “Curriculum.” Glossary of Education Reform, August 12, 2015. <http://edglossary.org/curriculum/>

³ Flinders, D., N. Noddings, and S. Thornton. “The Null Curriculum: Its Theoretical Basis and Practical Implications.” *Curriculum Inquiry*, 16:1, Spring 1986. pp. 33–34. <http://wp.vcu.edu/hhughesdecatu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1868/2013/01/Null-curriculum.pdf>

⁴ “Curriculum,” Glossary of Education Reform, Op. cit.

Regardless of model, the theory and labor involved in designing and implementing curricula is rarely visible to external district or school stakeholders, such as parents and community members. Documents like summer reading lists, for example, may seem deceptively simple, yet “reflect a deep and sophisticated understanding of an academic discipline and of the most effective strategies for learning acquisition and classroom management.”⁵

WHY SHOULD WE REVIEW CURRICULUM?

Curriculum and instruction structure all student learning. To illustrate the importance of both concepts in “Align the Design: A Blueprint for School Improvement,” authors Mooney and Mausbach ask readers to imagine a poorly built house on a strong foundation or, conversely, a well-built house on a weak foundation. Each scenario presents potential challenges and dangers to inhabitants: it is only when both the design and foundation are sound that houses become safe and inhabitable. Likewise in the education setting, students may struggle to learn the content of a poorly designed curriculum no matter how well it is taught by enthusiastic, engaged teachers, or struggle to learn content taught poorly by teachers no matter how well the curriculum was designed.⁶

Curriculum reviews function as structural integrity checks, determining if the curriculum’s form and function still serve their intended purpose.

Given the impact of curriculum on student learning, educators recommend that school leaders conduct regular reviews of curricula. The actual frequency of those reviews may vary by district—sources on the subject often use imprecise words such as “periodically” or “regularly” to describe a recommended frequency—but should occur

frequently enough to account for changes that impact students’ learning environment, such as technological innovation, new research on how children learn best, or larger societal changes, and remain accountable to concerns from stakeholders, such as parents, students, and teachers.⁷ Moreover, although the specific frequency and scope of curricular reviews may vary from district to district or from year to year, all aim towards the same general outcome: ensuring that the curriculum effectively and efficiently supports identified learning goals. To expand on Mooney and Mausbach’s illustration, these reviews function as structural integrity checks, determining to what extent the curriculum’s form and function still serve their intended purpose.⁸

HOW CAN WE REVIEW CURRICULUM?

Evaluators typically see curricula from four perspectives, or components: as *intended* curricula, as *enacted* curricula, as *assessed* curricula, or as *learned* curricula (Figure 1.1).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mooney, N. and A. Mausbach. “Align the Design.” Association of School Curriculum and Development, February 2008. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108005/chapters/Developing-Curriculum-Leadership-and-Design.aspx>

⁷ See, for example, Zilian, F. “The Academic Curriculum Review.” School Matters, Fall 2013. <http://www.nais.org/Magazines-Newsletters/ISMagazine/Pages/The-Academic-Curriculum-Review.aspx>

⁸ Mooney and Mausbach, Op. cit.

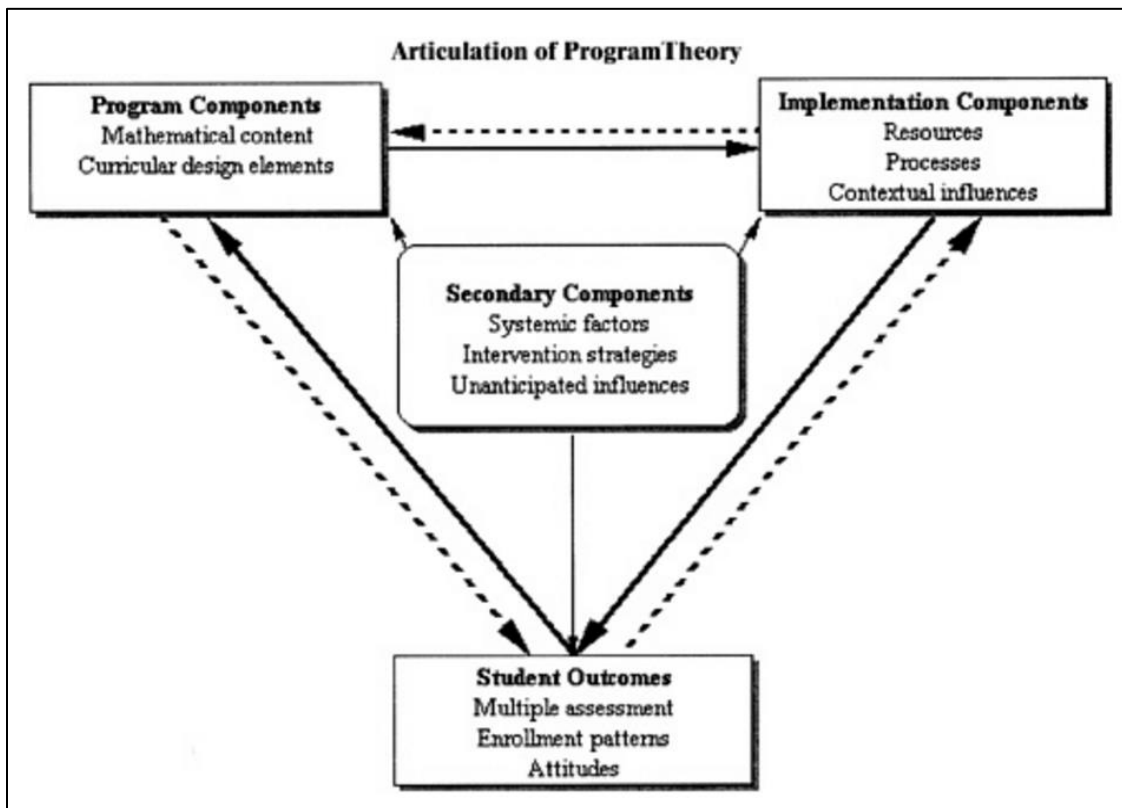
Figure 1.1: Curriculum Components

Intended Curricula	Enacted Curricula	Assessed Curricula	Learned Curricula
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The knowledge and skill targets for the enacted curriculum, often captured in content standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The knowledge and skills actually delivered during instruction in the classroom and other learning settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The knowledge and skills that are assessed to determine achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The knowledge and skills students actually acquire

Source: Iowa Department of Education,⁹ *Journal of Special Education*¹⁰

Reviews may focus on a single component and its adherence with perceived best practices, or on how components interact with each other or with other elements of the school system. The interaction between components can be conceptualized visually as a “program theory,” connecting curriculum design with implementation and results (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Curriculum Program Theory



⁹ Taken verbatim from: “Iowa Core – Key Curriculum Alignment Concepts/Terms.” Iowa Department of Education. http://iowaascd.org/files/1413/7233/3468/Curriculum_Alignment_Definitions_and_Visuals_2013-14.pdf

¹⁰ Kurz, A. et al. “Alignment of the Intended, Planned, and Enacted Curriculum in General and Special Education and Its Relation to Student Achievement.” *Journal of Special Education*, 44:3, 2010. p. 132. <http://sed.sagepub.com/content/44/3/131.full.pdf+html>

Source: National Academics Press¹¹

Whatever the focus, evaluations typically focus on answering one or several driving questions depending on the organization’s needs and resources. Examples include:¹²

- Are the curriculum’s intended outcomes written in specific language that is understandable in the same way to students, faculty members, and all other users?
- Is the formal academic curriculum specifically linked to non-course-based opportunities for learning on campus such as orientation and developmental academic advising?

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO ECASD?

ECASD is conducting a review of the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum throughout the district to identify gaps between the current curriculum and the “ideal” curriculum, as well as possibilities for bridging the gap. This review focuses on two of the four curriculum components—the *intended* curriculum and the *enacted* curriculum—to ensure that the review is manageable in scope and does not present an undue burden to district staff. The following figure demonstrates the review’s objectives, driving questions, and data sources.

OBJECTIVE	DRIVING QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES
#1 Describe the <i>intended</i> ELA curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To what extent is the intended ELA curriculum horizontally aligned? ■ To what extent is the intended ELA curriculum vertically aligned? ■ To what extent is the intended ELA curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards? 	<i>ELA curriculum document review</i>
#2 Describe the <i>enacted</i> ELA curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To what extent do stakeholders perceive that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ...the ELA curriculum is horizontally aligned? ○ ...the ELA curriculum is vertically aligned? ○ ...the ELA curriculum is aligned with Common Core State Standards? ○ ...opportunities for improvement exist regarding a) curriculum design, or b) curriculum implementation? 	<i>Surveys and in-depth interviews of stakeholders</i>
#3 Make recommendations for strategic changes to the ELA curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What opportunities exist to improve the ELA curriculum? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which of these opportunities may represent strategic changes for Eau Claire Area School District? ■ To what extent does best practices research support recommendations for changes to the ELA curriculum? 	<i>All previous data sources; best practice reports</i>

For more details on the specific components of the review and how they relate to you as an ECASD stakeholder, please see Section II: Curriculum Review Process.

¹¹ Figure reproduced from: Confrey, J. and V. Stohl. “On Evaluating Curricular Effectiveness: Judging the Quality of K-12 Mathematics Evaluations.” National Academies Press, 2004. p. 40.
<http://www.nap.edu/read/11025/chapter/5#39>

¹² Content taken verbatim from: Diamond, R. and L. Gardinerr. “Curriculum Review.” The National Academy for Academic Leadership. <http://www.thenationalacademy.org/readings/curriculum.html>

SECTION II: CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

The following section discusses the steps of the curriculum review process and the application of each step within the ECASD ELA curriculum review context (Figure 2.1). This section was developed using resources from several fields, including: curriculum evaluation in K-12 education (e.g., guides on curriculum evaluation or curriculum reviews published by other districts), program evaluation (e.g., guides on program evaluation processes), and project management (e.g., strategies and techniques practiced by managers on discrete projects).

Figure 2.1: Steps of the ECASD Curriculum Review Process

STEP ONE	• Set the Scope of Review
STEP TWO	• Establish Stakeholder Roles
STEP THREE	• Gather Relevant Data
STEP FOUR	• Analyze Relevant Data
STEP FIVE	• Share Analysis
STEP SIX	• Prioritize Next Steps

STEP ONE: SET THE SCOPE OF REVIEW

Called “the single most important step” of evaluation, planning is the first step to conducting a curriculum review. In this stage, school leaders and evaluators collaborate to determine what they would like to learn about the curriculum, setting the *scope* and *driving questions* of the analysis.¹³ This is particularly crucial due to the varying definitions of the term curriculum and the varying purposes of evaluation. Setting the scope and driving questions requires an understanding of institutional limitations and what project managers call the “triple constraints” of cost, scope, and time.¹⁴ As one discussion of academic curriculum reviews explains, reviews with extensive scopes may seem desirable because of their “comprehensiveness and ability to show relationships among... curricula,” but may also be “time-consuming and potentially divisive, depending on the culture of the school.”¹⁵


¹³ “The Program Manager’s Guide to Evaluation, Second Edition.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010. p. 3. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/program_managers_guide_to_eval2010.pdf

¹⁴ For more on the triple constraints, see Haughley, D. “Understanding the Project Management Triple Constraint.” Project Smart, December 19, 2011. <https://www.projectsmart.co.uk/understanding-the-project-management-triple-constraint.php>

¹⁵ Zilian, Op. cit.

THE ECASD CONTEXT

Figure 2.2: Step One Workflow (Complete)

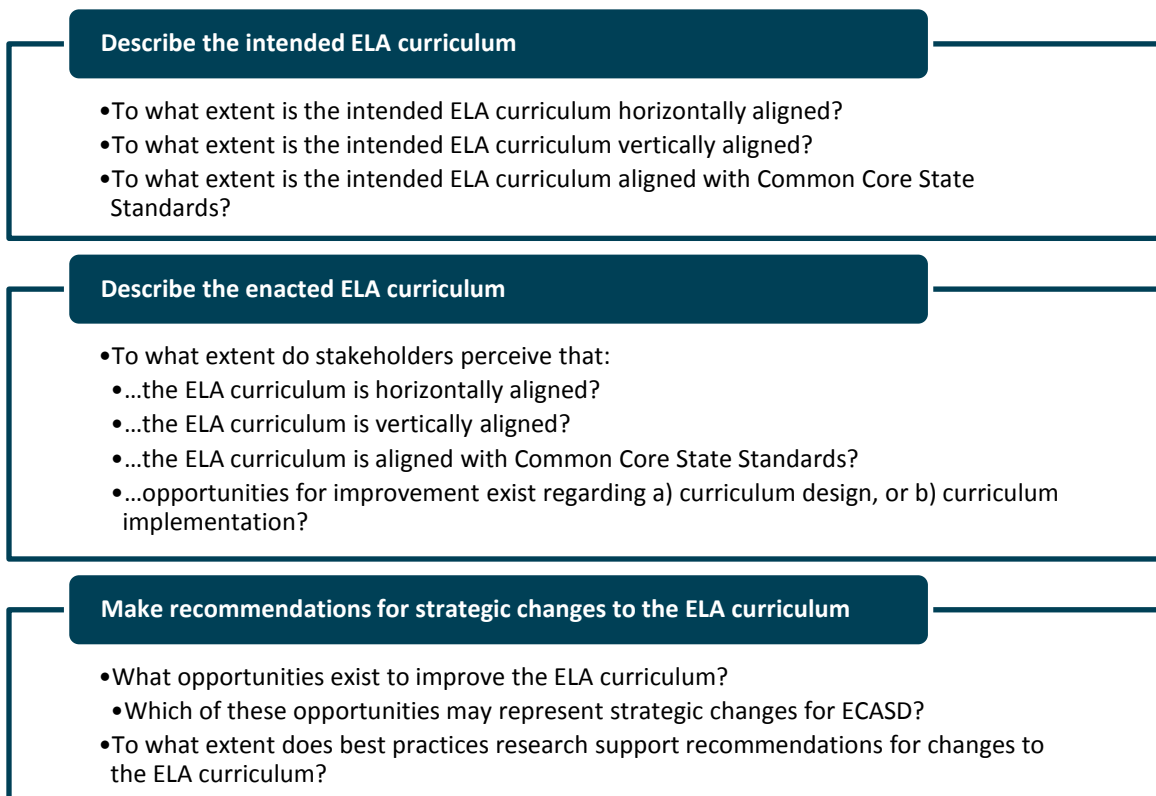
 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
SET SCOPE	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	N/A	✓ Complete
SET TIMELINE	Responsible; Accountable	Consulted	Consulted	Informed	N/A	✓ Complete
SET COSTS	Accountable	Responsible	Informed	Informed	N/A	✓ Complete

*parents, students, other community members

SET SCOPE, TIMELINE, COSTS

ECASD and Hanover jointly determined the scope, timeline, and costs of the review. As discussed in Section I, the scope of the review focuses on three objectives paired with several driving questions (pictured below in Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Scope of the ELA Curriculum Review



To address these objectives, Hanover and ECASD are completing a research agenda that can be grouped into four broad phases: introduction, data gathering, analysis, and follow-up.

- **Phase 1: Introduction (Step 2: “Establish Stakeholder Roles”)**
 - Project 1.1: Overview of the ELA Curriculum Review
- **Phase 2: Information Gathering (Step 3: “Gather Relevant Data”)**
 - Project 2.1: ELA Curriculum Document Review
 - Project 2.2: ELA Teacher and Administrator Survey
 - Project 2.3: In-Depth Interviews with ELA Stakeholders
- **Phase 3: Analysis (Step 4: “Analyze Relevant Data” and Step 5: “Share Analysis”)**
 - Project 3.1: Summary Report on State of ELA Curriculum
 - Project 3.2: Summary Report on Opportunities and Recommendations for ELA Curriculum Improvement
- **Phase 4: Follow-Up (Step 6: “Determine Next Steps”)**
 - Project 4.1: Best Practice Reports for Implementing ELA Improvements
 - Project 4.2: ELA Teacher and Administrator Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 2.4, below, depicts the anticipated timeline for the project.

Figure 2.4: ELA Curriculum Review Timeline

	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Overview of ELA Curriculum Review										
ELA Curriculum Document Review										
ELA Teacher and Administrator Survey										
In-Depth Interviews with ELA Stakeholders										
Summary Report on State of ELA Curriculum										
Summary Report on Opportunities and Recommendations										

STEP TWO: ESTABLISH STAKEHOLDER ROLES

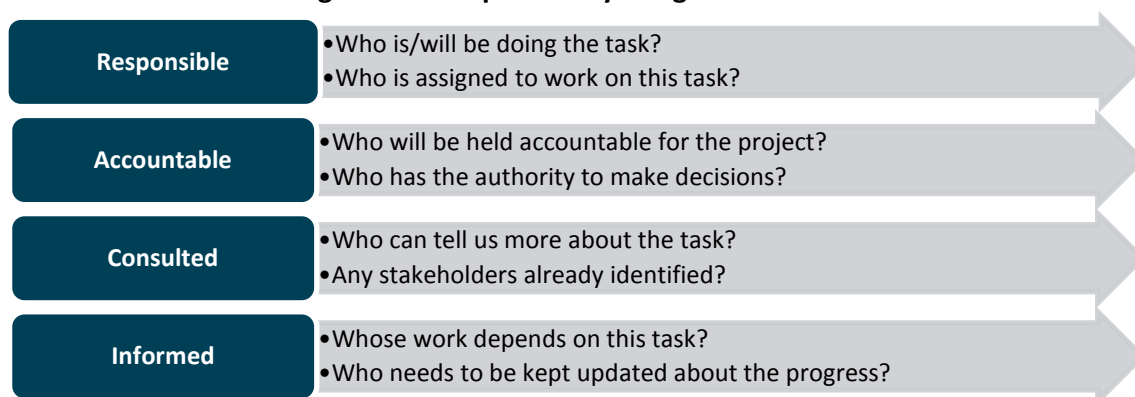
After setting the project scope, or plan, leaders should establish stakeholder roles and responsibilities for the project. Defined by the Project Management Institute (PMI) as “an individual, group, or organization, who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by... a project,” major stakeholder groups in the school context may include district administrators, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students.¹⁶ Keeping stakeholders involved is important for multiple reasons, namely:¹⁷

- Stakeholders are invested in the review process and results, and their involvement can enhance the review’s effectiveness.
- Stakeholders have expertise, and their background knowledge and skills can help ensure that the review questions, design, or methodology are appropriate.

Failing to appropriately involve key stakeholders in the review process can damage the progress and legitimacy of the review. In “Align the Design,” Mooney and Mausbach tell the story of a mathematics teacher, Ann, who worked to revise the mathematics curriculum with help from other teachers at her district. Although she kept these direct collaborators informed on the progress of the project, she did not keep the district board or the school community similarly informed. Consequently, when the board began hearing anxious comments from parents about the anticipated changes to the curriculum, Ann “was on the hot seat and had to scramble to provide the board with the pertinent information.”¹⁸

To determine which stakeholder groups or specific stakeholders should be involved in the review—and to what extent—leaders may wish to use project management tools such as the Responsibility Assignment Matrix, also known as a RACI Matrix. In this matrix, project leaders assign stakeholder’s roles in *reference to specific tasks* into one of four categories: responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Responsibility Assignment Matrix



¹⁶ Miller, D. and M. Oliver. “Engaging Stakeholders for Project Success.” Project Management Institute, 2015. p. 5.
<https://www.pmi.org/~media/PDF/learning/engaging-stakeholders-project-success.ashx>

¹⁷ Content adapted from “The Program Manager’s Guide to Evaluation, Second Edition,” Op. cit., p. 4.


¹⁸ Mooney and Mausbach, Op. cit.

Source: Project Management¹⁹

Examining the roles of stakeholder groups in similar curriculum reviews conducted in other school districts may also be helpful. In Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), for example, the Associate Superintendent is responsible for creating a Curriculum Evaluation Committee that oversees the entire evaluation process. Leaders within different content areas are responsible for spearheading efforts such as collecting student work or performance measures, conducting interviews with staff and students about their perceptions of the curriculum, and creating short-term and long-term curriculum management plans for their area.²⁰ Notably, these curriculum management plans are required to include a communication sub-plan. This plan lays out action steps BCPS staff must pursue to ensure that the public is accurately informed about the curriculum review process.²¹

THE ECASD CONTEXT

Figure 2.6: Step Two Workflow (In Progress)

 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Informed	N/A	✓ Complete
IDENTIFY PROJECT TASKS	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Informed	N/A	✓ Complete
PAIR STAKEHOLDERS WITH TASKS	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Informed	N/A	Δ In-progress

*parents, students, other community members

¹⁹ Viswanathan, B. "Understanding Responsibility Assignment Matrix." Project Management. <http://project-management.com/understanding-responsibility-assignment-matrix-raci-matrix/>

²⁰ "Curriculum Assessment/Evaluation Process." Baltimore County Public Schools. p. 5. https://www.bcps.org/offices/accountability_research_testing/pdf/curriculum_assessment_evaluation_process.pdf

²¹ "Baltimore County Public Schools Curriculum Management Plan." Baltimore County Public Schools. p. 20. <https://www.bcps.org/system/reports/Curriculum-Management-Report-Final-061207.pdf>

IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

Hanover identified the main stakeholders in the ELA curriculum review as follows:

- ECASD district administrators
- ECASD school administrators
- ECASD teachers
- ECASD community (e.g., parents, students)
- Hanover Research

IDENTIFY PROJECT TASKS

In this report, Hanover identifies the central tasks of the curriculum review, which are broadly categorized into six steps: set the scope of review, establish stakeholder roles, collect relevant data, analyze relevant data, share analysis, and prioritize next steps.

PAIR STAKEHOLDERS WITH TASKS

Hanover also pairs stakeholders with tasks in this report. For each task, stakeholder groups are categorized as accountable, responsible, consulted, informed, or not applicable. However, these pairings are preliminary and may be changed at the request of ECASD.

STEP THREE: GATHER RELEVANT DATA

In this step, evaluators and staff work to collect the information needed to complete the review. The extent of information, or data, needed will vary depending on the objectives identified earlier in the evaluation scope and may include both numerical, quantitative information (as is often the case in program evaluations, where evaluators collect information on student achievement) and qualitative information collected through surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. To determine the extent of information that is needed, some evaluators recommend developing a data collection plan. This plan details the data that must be collected, data sources, and data collection timelines, as demonstrated in Figure 2.7.²²

Figure 2.7: Sample Data Collection Plan Template

OBJECTIVE	DATA ELEMENTS	DATA SOURCES	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	WHEN COLLECTED


Source: OPRE²³

²² "The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, Second Edition," Op. cit., pp. 50–51.

²³ Ibid., p. 74.

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Figure 2.8: Step Three Workflow (In Progress)

 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
IDENTIFY DATA ELEMENTS	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	N/A	✓ Complete
IDENTIFY DATA SOURCES	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	N/A	✓ Complete
IDENTIFY DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	N/A	✓ Complete
COLLECT DATA (DOCUMENT REVIEW)	Consulted	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible	N/A	✗ Not begun
COLLECT DATA (SURVEY)	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	N/A	✗ Not begun
COLLECT DATA (IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS)	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	N/A	✗ Not begun

*parents, students, other community members

IDENTIFY DATA ELEMENTS

Hanover identified two data elements when completing the original scope of the project: written curricular documents (the “intended curriculum”) and stakeholder feedback about the implementation of the curriculum (the “enacted curriculum”). These data elements will be collected in three distinct information gathering projects:

- ELA Curriculum Document Review
- ELA Teacher and Administrator Survey
- In-Depth Interviews with ELA Stakeholders

IDENTIFY DATA SOURCES

Hanover identified ECASD administrators and teachers as the data sources for this review. ECASD administrators and teachers, for example, are responsible for providing the curriculum documents for review. ECASD administrators and teachers will also fill out a survey gathering information on how ELA teachers are interpreting the ECASD learning expectations for their grade level, CCSS, and other curriculum standards. Finally,

approximately ten key ECASD administrators and teachers will provide in-depth information in interviews on their perceptions of the enacted ELA curriculum.

Figure 2.9: Data Collection Template

OBJECTIVE	DATA ELEMENTS	DATA SOURCES	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	WHEN COLLECTED
Describe the intended ELA curriculum	Curriculum documents	ECASD teachers and administrators	Document collection	May-Aug 2016
Describe the enacted ELA curriculum	Stakeholder feedback	ECASD teachers and administrators	Surveys	Aug-Oct 2016
		ECASD teachers and administrators	In-Depth interviews	Aug-Oct 2016

COLLECT DATA

The data collection is scheduled to begin over the summer of 2016 and continue through October 2016 (see Figure 2.9). From May to June of 2016, ECASD teachers and administrators are responsible for identifying and collecting a representative sample of curricular documents across the district. From August to October of 2016, Hanover will design, administer, and analyze a survey of ECASD teachers and administrators that will gather feedback on the curriculum. In the same time period, Hanover will also conduct in-depth interviews of approximately ten key stakeholders.

STEP FOUR: ANALYZE RELEVANT DATA

After collecting data, evaluators use analytical methods to transform raw data into meaningful research findings. The “best” analytical methods for any given data set depend on factors such as data type (e.g., qualitative, quantitative) and data volume. Data analysis is not necessarily synonymous with statistical analysis. While statistical analysis is needed to make sense of quantitative data, other methods, like thematic coding, are effective for examining qualitative data collected during in-depth interviews, surveys, and focus groups.²⁴

Notably, evaluators should be careful to account for potential biasing factors that may have affected the collection or analysis of data. Common biases include history (“any event that takes place during the treatment phase unrelated to the treatment that may account for the particular outcome”), attrition (“clients who drop out of treatment... may influence the outcome results”), selection (“if clients are selected for the intervention, then the results may be skewed because of this selection”) and maturation (“general changes in clients that are not specific to the treatment”). Understanding what biases may have affected data helps evaluators to increase program accountability and establish analytical validity.²⁵ For

²⁴ Giancola, S. “Evaluation Matters: Getting the Information You Need From Your Evaluation (Draft).” U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. 2014. pp. 57–58. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/sst/evaluationmatters.pdf>


²⁵ Barrett, T. and J. Sorenson. “Human Services Program Evaluation.” Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2015. p. 86. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557770.pdf>

example, when conducting qualitative research such as interviews, researchers suggest keeping thorough records of transcripts and accounting for potential interviewee sampling biases.²⁶

Similarly, it is crucial to acknowledge *evaluation limitations*. To ensure that stakeholders realize the limitations of evaluations, the U.S. Department of Education recommends that final publications include a section on limitations, “including limitations based on evaluation design, analysis of data, and interpretation of findings.”²⁷

THE ECASD CONTEXT

Figure 2.10: Step Four Workflow (Not Begun)

 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
ANALYZE DATA (CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS)	Responsible	Informed	Informed	Informed	Informed	✗ Not begun
ANALYZE DATA (SURVEY RESULTS)	Responsible	Informed	Informed	Informed	Informed	✗ Not begun
ANALYZE DATA (INTERVIEW RESULTS)	Responsible	Informed	Informed	Informed	Informed	✗ Not begun
ANALYZE ALL DATA (COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS)	Responsible	Informed	Informed	Informed	Informed	✗ Not begun

*parents, students, other community members

ANALYZE DATA

Hanover is responsible for analyzing the data collected during the three “information-gathering” projects: the ELA Curriculum Document Review, the ELA Teacher and Administrator Survey, and the In-depth Interviews with ELA Stakeholders. After the data collection and/or administration (e.g., survey administration) windows close, Hanover will complete individual analyses on those data projects and provide ECASD with the results.

Likewise, Hanover is responsible for synthesizing the results of all information collected during the course of all three projects. These results will be presented in a summary report that creates a comprehensive picture of the current state of the ELA curriculum. The

²⁶ See, for example, Noble, H. and J. Smith. “Issues of Validity and Reliability in Quantitative Research.” *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 2015. <http://ebn.bmj.com/content/18/2/34.full>

²⁷ Giancola, Op. cit., p. 66.

summary report will also provide more in-depth analysis of the survey and interview results as well as a comparative analysis of the overall findings from each project.

STEP FIVE: SHARE ANALYSIS

The results of data analysis are typically publicized among relevant stakeholder groups. Ideally, this publication should occur in a “timely, unbiased, and consistent” manner.²⁸ Different publication methods may be appropriate for different stakeholder groups. For example, leaders may want to share the results with district and school leaders in person, and share the results with district parents using a memo, brief, or email. Moreover, different tones and content may be appropriate for different stakeholder groups. Teachers may be more interested in technicalities of curriculum design, for instance, than elementary students.

To determine what publication method and tone are the best fit for different stakeholders, the U.S. Department of Education recommends asking:²⁹

- What background do the stakeholders have regarding the program?
- What will they want to know?
- How much time and interest will they have?
- What do you want the audience to know?

Tools from program evaluations conducted in other fields, like public health, may be useful for leaders in education seeking to organize a publication strategy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for example, provides evaluators with worksheets that can be used to determine who needs to receive what information and how (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11: Communicating Results Worksheet

I NEED TO COMMUNICATE TO THIS AUDIENCE...	THIS FORMAT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE...	THIS CHANNEL(S) WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE...

Source: CDC³⁰

Finally, experts emphasize that a willingness to report negative findings or results is crucial. As the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation explains in a comprehensive report on program evaluation, “Negative results should not be thought of as shameful... There is as much to learn from program approaches or models that do not work as there is from those that do work.”³¹

²⁸ “Step 6: Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/guide/step6/#dissemination>


²⁹ Content taken verbatim from: Giancola, Op. cit., p. 65.

³⁰ “Step 6: Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings and Share Lessons Learned,” Op. cit.

³¹ “The Program Manager’s Guide to Evaluation, Second Edition,” Op. cit., pp. 87–88.

THE ECASD CONTEXT

Figure 2.12: Step Five Workflow (Not Begun)

 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
SHARE FINDINGS (HANOVER TO ECASD LEADERS)	Responsible	Informed	Informed	Informed	N/A	✗ Not begun
SHARE FINDINGS (ECASD LEADERS TO STAKEHOLDERS)	Informed	Responsible	Responsible	Informed	Informed	✗ Not begun

*parents, students, other community members

SHARE FINDINGS (HANOVER TO ECASD LEADERS)

Hanover is directly responsible for sharing the results of the data collection and analyses with key points of contact at ECASD throughout the entire project timeline.

SHARE FINDINGS (ECASD LEADERS TO STAKEHOLDERS)

ECASD may choose how to share the results of the data collection and analyses with stakeholders within ECASD, such as teachers, parents, and students. If needed, Hanover can provide guidance or assistance in developing materials for dissemination.

STEP SIX: PRIORITIZE NEXT STEPS

The final step of the curriculum review process is prioritizing “next steps.” Of the potential areas for change identified over the course of the review, which represent the most strategic changes for the community? Moreover, do different groups hold different opinions about “the most strategic changes for the community?” How will those differences in opinion be resolved? Although it may not be possible to satisfy all stakeholders, experts typically recommend taking time to listen to their thoughts, as doing so “gives you more awareness of where they are coming from, and more insight as to how they would best be motivated.”³²


Examples from other school districts illustrate how leaders may choose to prioritize next steps following curriculum reviews. At Mount Vernon Public Schools, for example, the Curriculum Leadership Team (CLT) is responsible for selecting a set of “final recommendations” after receiving the results of analyses from subject-area review teams. The CLT then presents these final recommendations to the Board of Education, the Assistant

³² Giancola, Op. cit., p. 72.

Superintendent of Curriculum, and the Superintendent. If the recommendations are approved, the CLT begins working on the implementation of the recommendations.³³ Similarly at Portsmouth Abbey, an independent school in Rhode Island, the established curriculum review committee votes on the changes presented by review sub-committee to determine which should be implemented. When voting, the dean of faculty notes that it is crucial to determine what percentage of votes (e.g., unanimous, majority) “approves” a recommended change.³⁴

THE ECASD CONTEXT

Figure 2.13: Step Six Workflow (Not Begun)

 TASKS	STAKEHOLDER ROLES					STATUS
	Hanover	ECASD district admins.	ECASD school admins.	ECASD teachers	ECASD community*	
PRIORITIZE NEXT STEPS	Informed	Responsible	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	✗ Not begun

*parents, students, other community members

PRIORITIZE NEXT STEPS

After receiving the final summary reports from Hanover, ECASD leaders are responsible for determining how and to what extent the report findings should impact ECASD’s curriculum. ECASD leaders may choose to make these determinations at an executive level, or they may choose to further involve the ECASD community in the decision-making.

³³ “Curriculum Review and Renewal Plan.” Vernon Public Schools, December 2013.
<http://vernonpublicschools.org/files/Curriculum-Documents/VPS%20Curriculum%20Review%20and%20Renewal%20Plan.pdf>

³⁴ Zilian, Op. cit.

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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4401 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400

Arlington, VA 22203

P 202.559.0500 F 866.808.6585

www.hanoverresearch.com