Tallmadge Curriculum

Tallmadge City Schools
Directional System

OUR MANTRA
Empower - Everyone, Every Day

OUR VISION
Tallmadge is a collaborative community that empowers every student.

OUR MISSION
Every Tallmadge graduate is successfully employed, enrolled or enlisted.

Newsletter Theme:
Authentic Learning and Core Curriculum

> "Content without purpose is only trivia!"
>
> ~Steve Revington

Balancing Systematic Core Curriculums with Authentic and Personalized Learning

In today's educational landscape, we find ourselves navigating the delicate balance between adhering to a systematic core curriculum and fostering authentic, personalized learning experiences. While some may view these approaches as conflicting, the integration of both can create a powerful synergy that supports student growth, engagement, and success.

The Strength of a Systematic Core Curriculum

A systematic core curriculum provides a consistent, standards-aligned framework that ensures all students receive a high-quality education. Programs like Wit and Wisdom, Amplify, and SAVVAS offer carefully curated content, scaffolding, and structure to address critical literacy skills, including reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary development, and critical thinking.

This consistency benefits both teachers and students. Teachers have a reliable guide for instruction, reducing time spent on lesson planning and allowing them to focus on delivery and engagement. Meanwhile, students benefit from equitable access to rigorous content and a progression of skills that build year after year.

The Need for Authentic and Personalized Learning

However, no two students are alike. Authentic learning connects students to real-world problems, experiences, and audiences, while personalized learning tailors instruction to meet individual needs, interests, and abilities. By integrating these elements, we can transform a standardized curriculum into a vibrant, student-centered experience that resonates deeply with learners.

Merging the Two Approaches

The key to bridging systematic instruction and personalized learning lies in thoughtful adaptation and intentional design.

1. Leverage the Core Curriculum as a Foundation: The core curriculum's structure ensures essential skills and standards are addressed. From this foundation, teachers can incorporate authentic learning tasks, such as project-based assignments or inquiry-driven activities that align with the curriculum's themes and objectives.
2. Provide Choice and Voice: Personalization doesn't require abandoning the curriculum; it involves allowing students to make meaningful choices within it. Giving students ownership of their learning fosters engagement and intrinsic motivation.
3. Incorporate Real-World Applications: Authentic learning becomes possible when lessons extend beyond the classroom. Core curriculum objectives can be enriched by linking them to current events, career exploration, or service-learning projects.

The Best of Both Worlds

Balancing a systematic core curriculum with authentic and personalized learning allows teachers to address standards while honoring the individuality of each learner. When implemented effectively, this approach not only meets academic benchmarks but also cultivates critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners equipped to thrive in an ever-changing world.

By embracing the strengths of both methodologies, we can ensure every student benefits from the consistency of a core curriculum and the enrichment of personalized, meaningful experiences.

State and District Assessment Windows

MAP – District Testing Windows
December 16-20/January 6-10
April 21-May 9

THS Fall OST
Dec. 9 - U.S. Govt / ELA II, Pt. 1
Dec. 10 - ELA II, Pt. 2 / Algebra, Pt. 1
Dec. 11 - Algebra, Pt. 2 / Geometry
Dec, 12 - American History
Dec. 13 - Biology

ACT
February 25, 2025 (Juniors only)
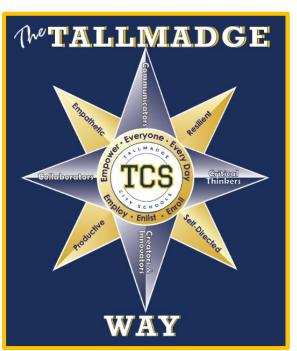
AASCD
February 24-April 18

District Spring OST Testing Windows (including makeups)
ELA District Testing Window - April 7-25
Math/Science/Social Studies District Testing Window - April 14-May 2

OELPA - Ohio English Language Proficiency Tests
  Screener: Aug. 6, 2024-June 30, 2025
  Assessment: Feb. 3-March 28, 2025
  Alternate Assessment: Feb. 3-March 28, 2025

Empower Everyone, Every Day

Social Emotional Learning

Incorporating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into ELA core curriculums like Wit and Wisdom, Amplify ELA, and SAVVAS My Perspectives enhances students' emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness while fostering deeper engagement with texts. Here are strategies for embedding SEL into these programs:

1. Build Self-Awareness through Reflection
- Journaling: Encourage students to write personal reflections on themes, characters, or events in texts. For example, students might explore how they relate to a character's struggles or triumphs.
- Goal Setting: Integrate lessons on setting personal goals related to learning or emotional growth, tied to unit themes.

2. Foster Empathy through Literature
- Perspective-Taking: Use texts to explore diverse perspectives. Discuss how characters feel, why they act as they do, and how their actions impact others.
- Role-Playing: Have students enact scenes from texts, focusing on how characters navigate conflict or emotional challenges.

3. Develop Relationship Skills through Collaboration
- Group Activities: Incorporate collaborative tasks where students practice listening, sharing ideas, and resolving differences.
- Peer Feedback: Teach constructive feedback techniques during writing workshops or group discussions, emphasizing kindness and support.

4. Encourage Responsible Decision-Making
- Analyzing Choices: Discuss characters' decisions in texts, examining the consequences of their actions and relating them to ethical dilemmas students may face.
- Creative Writing: Ask students to write alternative endings or "what-if" scenarios that focus on healthier decision-making.

5. Incorporate SEL Discussions into Themes
- Essential Questions: Tie unit essential questions to SEL competencies. For example:
  - "What does it mean to show courage in difficult situations?"
  - "How do we build understanding across differences?"
- Class Debates: Use SEL-related themes (e.g., fairness, inclusion, or integrity) for structured discussions that build critical thinking and empathy.

6. Use Writing as an SEL Tool
- Personal Narratives: Encourage students to write about their own experiences, emotions, and growth, linking them to themes in the curriculum.
- Letters to Characters: Have students write letters to characters offering advice, expressing understanding, or reflecting on how they would handle similar situations.

The Tallmadge Way

Our core curriculums can naturally support our core competencies through their structure and content. Here's how:

Communicators
Example: Students engage in structured Socratic seminars or discussions about the essential questions of a text (e.g., "What does it mean to lead with integrity?"). This fosters articulate expression, active listening, and thoughtful responses.

Critical Thinkers
Example: Students analyze a complex text to evaluate an author's purpose, point of view, or argument. For instance, they might dissect a persuasive speech, examining the rhetorical strategies used and their effectiveness.

Collaborators
Example: Group projects require students to work together to create a multimedia presentation on a module's theme, such as "resilience in adversity," blending individual contributions into a cohesive final product.

Creators
Example: After reading a text, students write and perform original monologues from a character's perspective, expressing deeper understanding of the narrative and showcasing their creative interpretation.

Authentic and Personalized Learning

Authentic Learning and ELA Core Curriculum

Incorporating authentic learning experiences into the *Wit and Wisdom* program can make the curriculum more engaging and meaningful for students while aligning with the program's focus on developing knowledge through content-rich texts. Here are some strategies:

1. Connect Lessons to Real-World Contexts
- Field Experiences: Pair module topics with field trips, virtual tours, or guest speakers. For example, during a module on ecosystems, students might visit a local park or a virtual zoo to observe habitats firsthand.
- Service Projects: Connect themes in texts to community service.

2. Promote Inquiry-Based Learning
- Student-Led Research: Allow students to choose research topics related to the module's essential questions. Provide opportunities for them to present findings to peers, families, or community members.
- Interactive Labs: For science-related texts, incorporate experiments or hands-on activities that mirror the text's concepts.

3. Foster Cross-Curricular Connections
- Collaborate with other subject areas to enrich modules. For example, while studying a historical text, integrate art by having students create period-appropriate artwork or reimagine scenes. In math, explore data analysis related to the text's themes.

4. Incorporate Technology and Multimedia
- Use tools like podcasts, digital storytelling, or video creation to help students explore module themes and demonstrate understanding creatively.
- Access online resources for extended learning. For instance, during a module on ancient civilizations, explore interactive museum exhibits.

5. Engage in Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Encourage group projects where students solve problems linked to the text. In a module on sustainability, students might brainstorm and implement ways to reduce waste at school.

6. Emphasize Student Voice and Choice
- Integrate open-ended performance tasks that let students express learning in ways that resonate with them (e.g., creating a skit, writing a poem, designing a brochure).
- Use authentic audiences. Students could write letters to community leaders, submit essays to contests, or share creative pieces with local organizations.

7. Personalize Learning
- Tailor discussions and activities to students' interests and backgrounds to make the content relevant. For example, during a module on immigration, students could interview family members or community members about their experiences.

Artificial Intelligence

AI can be a powerful tool to enhance our core curriculum, supporting teachers and students in achieving deeper learning outcomes, fostering engagement, and personalizing instruction. Here's how AI can be integrated into our core curriculums:

1. Enhancing Personalized Learning
- Adaptive Learning Tools: AI-powered platforms can assess student progress and provide personalized activities, such as differentiated reading passages or targeted grammar exercises, based on individual needs.
- Writing Feedback: Tools like Grammarly or Turnitin can provide immediate, actionable feedback on student writing, helping them refine their drafts before submitting.

2. Improving Engagement with Content
- Interactive Reading Experiences: AI can transform texts into interactive experiences. For example, tools like text-to-speech or embedded AI annotations can make reading more accessible and engaging.
- Gamified Learning: AI can introduce gamification, such as quizzes or challenges based on texts, to make comprehension and vocabulary activities more enjoyable.

3. Streamlining Lesson Planning and Resource Creation
- Content Recommendations: AI tools like ChatGPT or EdTech platforms can suggest supplementary texts, multimedia resources, or activities that align with specific units or standards.
- Rubric Generation and Grading Support: AI can help create detailed rubrics aligned with curriculum objectives and provide initial assessments of student work to save teacher time.

4. Facilitating Collaborative Learning
- Group Collaboration Tools: AI tools like Google Workspace's AI assistants can help students brainstorm, outline, or edit shared projects, fostering collaboration.
- Discussion Moderation: AI-driven discussion forums can encourage and guide peer-to-peer interactions, ensuring respectful and meaningful discourse.

5. Enhancing Research and Inquiry-Based Learning
- Smart Research Assistance: Tools like Elicit or Perplexity can guide students in finding credible sources, generating research questions, and synthesizing information for unit projects.
- Creative Project Support: AI can help students create digital storytelling projects, such as videos, podcasts, or infographics, aligned with unit themes.

6. Increasing Accessibility
- Translation and Language Support: AI tools like Google Translate or immersive readers can support English language learners by translating or simplifying complex texts.
- Speech-to-Text and Text-to-Speech: These tools can assist students with diverse learning needs, ensuring equitable access to curriculum materials.

English Learner Services

English Learner Family Toolkit

Interpreter Request Form

Website Information for EL Families

EL Newcomer Students Resources

Gifted Programming

High Quality Professional Development (HQPD) for Gifted Service in General Education Settings;

Professional Development in Gifted Education

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

Upcoming Trainings from Summit County ESC;

Summit County ESC Professional Development

Committee Meeting Schedule

- **ELA Implementation Consultation** with grades K and 1 on Tuesday, December 3.
- **ELA Implementation Consultation** with grades 2 and 3 on Wednesday, December 4.
- **ELA Implementation Consultation** with grades 4 and 5 on Friday, December 6.
- **EL Department Meeting** on Friday, December 6 at 1:15 p.m. in the Conference Room at the MEC.
- **Authentic Learning Local Coaches Training** on Wednesday, January 8 from 8:30-11:00 a.m. in the Community Room at THS.
- **Authentic Learning Steering Committee Meeting** on Wednesday, January 8 from 12:00-3:00 p.m. in the Community Room at THS.
- **Professional Development Committee Meeting** on Thursday, January 9 from 12:00-3:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at the MEC.
- **District Lead Teacher Meeting** on Thursday, January 9 at 3:45 p.m. in Room 230 at TMS.
- **New Teacher Cohort Meeting** on Tuesday, January 14 from 12:00-3:00 p.m. in the Community Room at THS.
- **LPDC Meeting** on Thursday, January 16 at 3:15 p.m. in the Conference Room at the MEC.
- **Math Content Committee Meeting** on Wednesday, January 22 from 12:00-3:00 p.m. in the Community Room at THS.
- **Health/PE Lead Teacher Work Session** on Friday, January 24 all-day in the Conference Room at the MEC.