

## Curriculum Initiatives for 2017/18

It is the goal of Ashe County Schools to graduate students who are career, college and life ready. We are committed to putting each students' academic achievement and safety above all else to ensure our students have access to a high quality education. To help boost student achievement, Ashe County Schools will continue the implementation of the following initiatives and programs.

**Rigor**—What is rigor? Rigor is NOT more or harder worksheets, a higher level book in reading, more work or more homework. Rigor IS scaffolding **thinking**, assessing **thinking** about content, recognizing the level of **thinking** students demonstrate and managing the teaching/learning level for the desired **thinking** level. Rigor is creating an environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels, is supported so he or she can learn at high levels, and each student demonstrates learning at high levels (Blackburn, 2008). Plans are to embed the rigor necessary in classrooms to make students successful in their career, college or life. Professional development will be provided to increase rigor to your lesson planning and instruction.

**Literacy**—The Ashe County School System believes that literacy is the single most important outcome of a PreK-12 education. Our initiatives are broad in their scope and reach. The goal is to provide an instructional program that guarantees our students their educational right to literacy.

**Disparity in Boys Implementation**—Based upon the male vs female comparative data of the last four years, a focus was placed on closing the reading achievement gap for boys in the 2016/17 school year. Training and ideas were provided district wide. Each school has a teacher lead that had intensive training through NCCAT. Each principal will decide how to implement strategies at their site. Each school will use test data to decide which strategies to implement.

**Writing**—Based on a county-wide need for writing improvement, the Writing Committee is revising a new and improved Ashe County Schools Writing Plan. With the integration of writing across the curriculum embedded in the North Carolina standards, this plan will help teachers incorporate writing into daily instruction.

**Math**—Reflections from administrators, teachers and assessment data, a focus will be put on gathering math interventions in all grade and tier levels for the upcoming school year.

**Thinking Maps Tool**—During 2016/17 school year, identified groups were trained in Thinking Maps, a **tool** that helps close the achievement gap and improve student achievement in all areas PreK-12. The maps align with current research and can be used to ensure differentiated instruction and an academically challenging learning environment. These maps help visualize the eight different types of thinking in which our brains engage and organize our understanding of the world around us. This tool helps students transfer thinking processes and integrate their learning in **all** subject areas.

Teachers can also use them to continuously assess student progress. Other trainings will be offered throughout the 2017/18 school year.

**MTSS**—NC Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a multi-tiered framework that the Department of Public Instruction has implemented to promote school improvement through engaging, research-based academic and behavioral practices. MTSS employs a system approach using data-driven problem-solving to maximize growth for all. The pilot program began in 2014/15 and Ashe County Schools chose to participate in the third-year cohort. The first phase requires a district-level team composed of a representative from each school. This team has gone through training and will be our leaders in the implementation process. Every North Carolina PreK-12 public education system **will implement and sustain all components of a Multi-Tiered System of Support to ensure college and career readiness for all students**. Upon completion of the district process, MTSS will begin roll out at the school level which is a year-long process. The school system will then be under full implementation by July 1, 2020.

**Digital Teaching and Learning Initiative**—Ashe County Schools is committed to providing personalized digital-age education that PreK-12 students need to be successful in college, careers, and as globally engaged productive citizens. In 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 23, which called on the State Board of Education to develop digital teaching and learning competencies that would "provide a framework for schools of education, school administrators, and classroom teachers on the needed skills to provide high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning." The following begins the launch into fulfilling House Bill 23 requirements.

- Chromebook initiative – will provide classrooms with mobile devices to support digital education.
- Canvas—will become the Learning Management System (LMS) for students, parents, teachers and administrators.
- Prepare students for college and online instruction.
- Allow for virtual, blended or flipped classrooms.
- SAMR—Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition—teacher model for integrating technology into the classroom. Professional development will be required and on-line modules will be available through Canvas.
- DLC—Digital Learning Competencies for teachers as required by Legislation (House Bill 23).

**NEW**—**Assessment and Data Plan**—Our District Assessment and Data Plan plus the implementation of Common Benchmarks will help ensure consistency across the system and continuity from PreK-12. Data collection and analysis will be part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. Data not only shows what students know and can do but what they still need to learn. To help all students achieve, instructional leaders need to purposefully use data to guide instructional decisions to meet students' learning needs. Data use is an ongoing cycle of collecting multiple data sources, interpreting the data to formulate strategies to raise student achievement and implement instructional change. This plan, launched in 2017/18, will be a fluid document that will change based upon student and teacher needs. Your building administrator will drive this initiative.

## ***New Initiatives for 2018/19***

**English Language Arts**—On April 6, 2017, North Carolina adopted the most recent K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. With this adoption, the standards became part of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCoS), beginning with the 2018/19 school year.

The ELA Standards are based on research and evidence that describe the competencies necessary for all students to become college and career ready by the end of high school, outlining a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the 21st Century.

On January 8, 2018, the NCDPI ELA Team released the Virtual Implementation Kit (VIK), an online repository of ELA resources. The VIK provides a variety of resources for supporting administrators, educators and parents during the implementation of the 2017 ELA Standard Course of Study. The range of resources and modes of navigation offers teachers an opportunity to discover materials that match their needs. Teachers will work through the modules in the VIK during the 2018/19 school year to deepen and clarify their understanding of the new standards, design lessons aligned to the new standards, and look for evidence of alignment in aligned instruction. In line with the new ELA Standards and the emphasis placed on writing, we will continue with Year 2 of Thinking Maps—the Reading/Writing connection. We will take the foundation learned in Year 1 and move into the various modes of writing and how they connect to literature.

**Math**—The new K-8 Mathematics Standards were adopted June 1, 2017 for implementation beginning with the 2018/19 school year. The standards provide a clear focus of content that must be mastered at each K-8 grade level. The new guidelines for math were written so they are easier for teachers and parents to understand, although learning concepts rather than simply memorizing formulas would remain the focus for students. Teachers will continue their work in the Math Wiki/Canvas and Tools4NCTeachers to access lessons, task resources and parent letters, as well as the unpacking document and Instructional Framework for that cluster. These documents are designed to assist educators teach the Mathematics Standard Course of Study and will be continually updated to add additional information and resources.