CURRICULUM & STATE STANDARDS: THREE APPROACHES TO ALIGNMENT

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Today’s Objectives

• To work toward shared understanding of terminology: standards, curriculum, and alignment

• To review three alignment tools
Questions

• What should align to what?

• Does alignment mean the same thing when I’m talking about ongoing assessment as when I’m talking about curriculum?

• How do I document/show alignment?
Key Terms

– Standards
– Benchmarks
– Indicators
– Alignment
  •Indicator Level
  •Category Level
  •Big Idea Level
Ohio’s Standards Framework


**Pre-K – 3 Benchmark**
A. Establish a purpose for reading and use a range of reading comprehension strategies to understand literary passages and text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Kindergarten Indicators</th>
<th>Kindergarten Indicators</th>
<th>Grade 1 Indicators</th>
<th>Grade 2 Indicators</th>
<th>Grade 3 Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visualize and represent understanding of text through a variety of media and play. (4)</td>
<td>• Visualize the information in texts, and demonstrate this by drawing pictures, discussing images in texts or dictating simple descriptions. (4)</td>
<td>• Establish a purpose for reading (e.g., to be informed, to follow directions or to be entertained). (2)</td>
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<td>• Visualize the information in texts and demonstrate this by drawing pictures, discussing images in texts or writing simple descriptions. (3)</td>
<td>• Create and use graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams or webs, to demonstrate comprehension. (5)</td>
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Alignment

• The process of linking curriculum, assessment, classroom instruction, and learning to a set of standards that describes what students should know and be able to do.

• The goal of alignment is to ensure that classroom instruction and learning activities support adopted standards and assessments.

(taken from www.startest.com/glossary.html)
Approaches to Alignment

• Indicator Level
  – Allows for deeper understanding and conversation about concepts and skills inherent within the indicators

• Category Level
  – Helps cluster indicators into manageable groups

• Big Idea Level
  – Keeps attention on essential skills and concepts that cross content and developmental areas
Approaches to Alignment Defined

• **Indicators**
  – Are specific statements that describe conceptual knowledge and skills children can learn and demonstrate as the result of learning. They serve as checkpoints to monitor progress toward the benchmark or goal.

• **Categories**
  – Are broad concepts or topics within content learning that can be observed and assessed with children.

• **Big Ideas**
  – Are highly selected concepts, principles, rules, strategies, or heuristics that facilitate the most efficient and broadest acquisition of knowledge.
Alignment Continued

• Alignment doesn’t have to be
  – A cumbersome checklist of all the indicators
  – A commercial product that doesn’t match your program’s needs
  – A one-to-one correspondence process that leaves you paralyzed

• Alignment can be
  – Based upon Big Ideas that encompass indicators/skills from across all areas
  – Applicable and useful for your program/population of children
  – User friendly and understandable by all team members
Selecting & Aligning Curriculum

- Step 1: Know the elements of a curriculum framework
- Step 2: Form a team/committee
- Step 3: Know your children/families
- Step 4: Know your teachers
- Step 5: Review many curricula
- Step 6: Ensure alignment
- Step 7: Implement
- Step 8: Evaluate
Step One

• Know the elements of a curriculum framework
  – Many definitions
    • Comprehensive
    • Accessible
    • Developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate
Ohio’s Definition of Curriculum

• “Curriculum” means an organized framework that:
  (1) Provides for guiding developmentally appropriate activities in the learning environment that encompass the developmental domains to foster a child’s success through active learning; and
  (2) Delineates the content that children are to learn; and
  (3) Delineates the process through which children achieve goals; and
  (4) Describes what teachers do to help children achieve these goals.
Perception Check: Where Does Your Curriculum Fall of the Continuum?

• Consider your program’s curriculum. How does it compare to Ohio’s definition of a curriculum for preschool age children?
• Use the handout to note where on the continuum your program falls
• Provide evidence for your assigned rating
• Share your thoughts with a partner
Curriculum Framework

- Assessment (ongoing, embedded)
- Scope and sequence
- Activities and intervention strategies
- Progress monitoring
Setting the Record Straight

• What curriculum is….
  – A framework
  – A combination of resources and practices
  – Commercially developed or “homegrown”
  – Appropriate for all learners

• What curriculum is not…
  – A single resource or defined practices
  – Early learning content standards
  – Children’s individualized education plans
Curriculum Framework:

Example Bags
Step Two

• Form a team/committee
  – Composed of key stakeholders
  – Represents the diversity of the children and families being served
  – Willing to do homework; be creative; be open minded
Step Three

• Know your children and families
  – Review program’s mission
  – Identify priorities
  – Know population being served
  – Understand what is currently in place and working
Step Four

• Know your teachers
  – What are their skills and competencies?
  – What is their belief system?
  – What additional information/training will they need?
Step Five

• Review many curricula
  – Research/Evidence-based
  – Developmentally and culturally appropriate
  – Challenging and engaging
  – Comprehensive
  – Meaningful and built on children’s interests
  – Designed to promote positive outcomes
  – Aligned to standards and assessment
  – Thoughtfully planned and intentional
  – Built on the principles of universal design for learning
  – Provides families with multiple opportunities for involvement
  – Promotes collaboration among service providers, families, and community members
Ohio’s Curriculum Requirement

• Rule 3301-37-03
  – (B) A written* curriculum shall be adopted which describes developmentally appropriate activities, learning environment and approaches which meet the individual needs of the children and is aligned to the early learning content standards adopted by the State Board of Education.
Step Six

• Ensure alignment
  – Process of showing the relationship between curriculum, classroom instruction and assessment to a set of content standards
  – Essential at the local (program) level to assure connections within and across domains of early child development and content areas
  – Assists in identifying gaps (those areas NOT addressed in curriculum framework)
What Aligns to What?

• What aligns?
  – Only items that are written (commercial, self, program)
  – For all children

• To what?
  – Indicator Level
  – Category Level
  – Big Ideas Level
Three Alignment Examples

1. Standards-Curriculum-Assessment Alignment Tool that aligns at the *indicator level*

2. Standards-Curriculum-Assessment Alignment Tool: Category Focus that aligns at the *content area level*

3. Big Idea Toolkit that aligns at the *Big Ideas level*
Alignment Decision Making Process

• Start with main curriculum resource/s
  – Determine what aligns

• Identify gaps
  – Find supplemental resources that can be aligned

• Identify remaining gaps
  – Review ELCS Guidance document
  – Consider your daily activities and routines
Approach 1:

Standards-Curriculum-Assessment Alignment Tool: Indicator Focus

– Aligns at the *indicator level*
Approach 2:

Standards-Curriculum-Assessment Alignment Tool: Category Focus

– Aligns at the *content area level*
Approach 3:

Big Idea Toolkit

- Aligns at the *Big Ideas* level
Which Approach is Right for You?

Do you feel as though…

- your windshield is covered in mud?
- your windshield is covered with bugs?
- your windshield is clear as glass?
Perception Check: Which Alignment Approach is Right for You?

- Takes time and is a journey
- Start at the indicator level
- Progress to Big Ideas
- Continue to revisit the indicators to ensure
  - Understanding
  - Coverage
  - Alignment
## Indicator Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>List All Represented Concepts and/or Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sort, order and classify objects by one attribute.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize that people have many wants within the context of family and classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow simple oral directions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify characters in favorite books and stories.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize that words are made up of letters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine &quot;how many&quot; in sets of 5 or fewer objects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Content Area/Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order a set of objects according to size, weight or length.</td>
<td>Measurement (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate cooperative behaviors, Such as helping, turn taking, sharing, comfortong and compromising.</td>
<td>Process of Writing (ELA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence or order events in the context of daily activities and play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a topic for writing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate awareness of the outcomes of one’s own choices.</td>
<td>Citizenship (SS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat message conveyed through dictation or ‘writing‘.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Ideas Focus

Explore and identify parts and wholes of familiar objects.
Match familiar adult family members, plants and animals with their young.
Sort familiar objects by one or more property.
Compare sets of equal, more, and fewer.
Construct sets with more or fewer objects than a given set.
Place information or objects in a floor or table graph according to one attribute.

Classifies and compares similarities and differences.
Represents one thing to symbolize another.
Identifies, separates, splits up a whole into portions and/or puts together, combines, mixes portions into a whole.
Which Approach is Right for You?

- If your windshield is covered with mud uses the indicator level approach
- If your windshield is covered with bugs use the category level approach
- If your windshield is clear as glass use the Big Idea level approach
- If you have completed an alignment process or one was completed for your curriculum framework move to quality and implementation
Step Seven

• Implement
  – Need to ensure fidelity of implementation
    • Training and retraining
  – Make curriculum visible
  – Focus on evidence-based practices and resources
Step Eight

- Evaluate
  - Collect and analyze data
    - Conduct Assessments
    - Formative and Summative
  - Examine effects from multiple perspectives
    - Professional development
    - Coaching/mentoring
  - Continuous Improvement Process
Focus on Assessment for Planning

- **Characteristics of good assessment planning practices**
  - Collaborative
  - Systematic
  - Ongoing
  - Comprehensive
  - Common
  - Authentic
  - Use multiple measures
  - Aligned with state standards

- **Characteristics of poor assessment planning practices**
  - Single person
  - No overarching plan
  - One shot deal
  - Covers select areas
  - Only for one population
  - Contrived settings
  - Utilizes a single method
  - Aligned not at all
Ongoing Assessment Should be…

• Conducted in the natural environment during daily routines and events
• Developmentally appropriate, familiar, and non-biased
• Flexible and interesting to maintain children’s engagement and provide them with multiple means of demonstrating what they know and can do
• Done in collaboration with family/caregivers
• A key part of one’s curriculum framework
• Sequenced according to what we know about child development
And the cycle continues…

• Data used to make informed decisions
  – At the program level
  – At the classroom level

• Quality curriculum aligned with standards
  – Improved outcomes for all children
References


- Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & School Readiness. (www.ode.state.oh.us search title of tools)