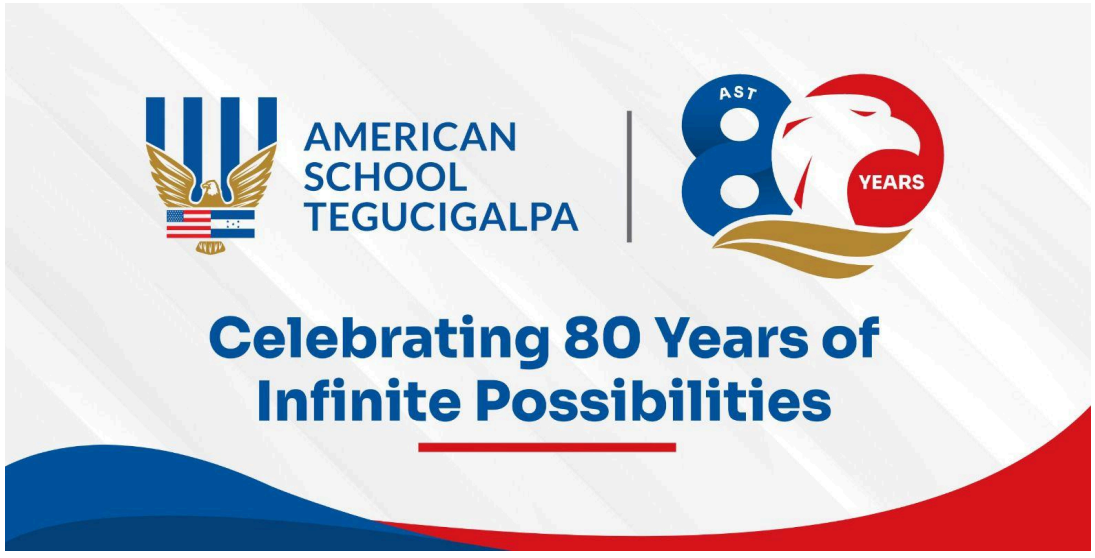


AST Professional Learning Plan

Professional learning at The American School of Tegucigalpa (AST) is informed by the research-based Framework for Teaching (FFT), classroom observations, student performance data and feedback from key stakeholders. The professional learning plan builds capacity among AST teaching and support staff based on shared school improvement goals and identified needs.

Professional Learning Framework

At AST we use **The Framework for Teaching (FFT)** developed by The Danielson Group to support powerful reflection, collaboration, and coaching leading to more effective classroom practice.

We embrace The Danielson Group's mission which is:

"To fundamentally transform professional learning to empower teachers to be their best through professional learning systems and practices that promote inquiry, innovation, dignity, and joy, and are grounded in the most widely adopted and influential vision of student-centered, transformative teaching and learning – the Framework for Teaching (FFT)."

The framework addresses four domains designed to enhance professional practice:

- Planning and Preparation
- Learning Environments
- Learning Experiences
- Principled Teaching

Rationale for framework selection

The Framework for Teaching aligns well with AST's school's mission and vision. Our teacher evaluation tool (TESC) has been informed by the framework since 2013. The components within each domain support a culture of collaborative inquiry while prioritizing high-quality curriculum and equitable practices.

Assessing Professional Learning

Professional learning is assessed using various tools:

- Teacher Evaluation Score Card (TESC)
- Educator Surveys
- PBL Pulse Implementation Surveys
- Student Performance Data

Professional Learning Goal: Build capacity among AST staff by promoting a culture of collaborative inquiry, personalized learning paths and data-driven decision-making, resulting in improved instructional practices in support of student learning.

"The American School is a student-centered, college preparatory institution that fosters globally-responsible citizens and leaders by offering a rigorous, international education which promotes core values in a safe, innovative, and collaborative environment."

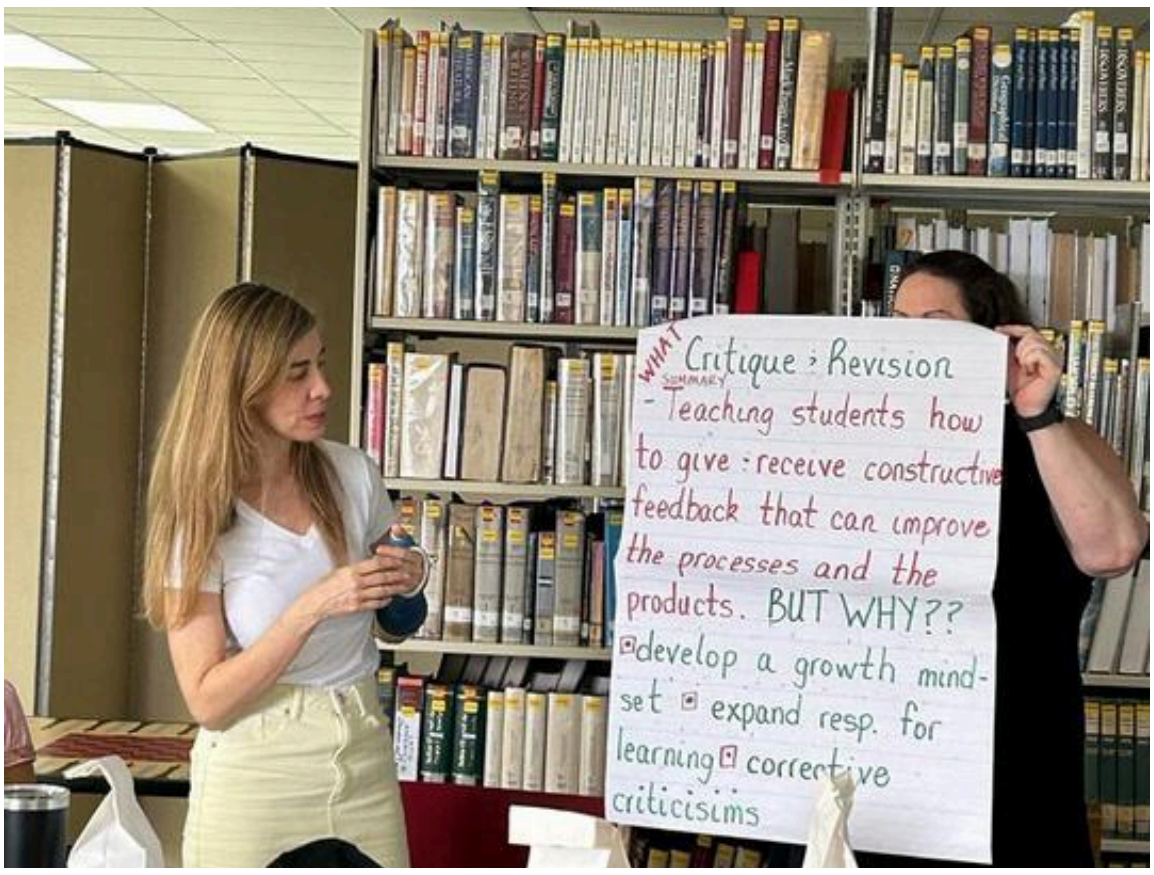
Mission

Learning Strands

- Culture of Collaborative Inquiry
- Personalized Learning Path
- Data-Driven Decision Making

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry

Job-embedded professional learning is the preferred structure to support adult learning at AST. Teachers and support staff meet regularly in professional learning communities; grade level teams in the preschool and elementary and in subject area teams in middle and high school. Teacher leaders facilitate these meetings using the ***Meeting-Wise protocol*** (developed by Harvard Graduate School of Education's Data-Wise Project) and establish norms to ensure balanced participation and maintain focus on meeting objectives. In support of equitable teacher collaboration, weekly common planning time and monthly release days are embedded in the school calendar. Monthly faculty meetings are also learning spaces for professional growth.



Tasks teachers are frequently involved with include curriculum revision and standards alignment, examining student work, student performance data analysis, assessment and lesson design, among others. The school continues to support teacher participation in webinars, courses, conferences, book studies and other professional learning offerings by securing a budget for this purpose.

In efforts to promote a culture of continuous improvement, **peer observations** are part of each teacher's professional growth plan. This practice encourages dialogue among colleagues sharing what they have learned as well as pitfalls and successes in the classroom. These observations are non-evaluative, encouraging teachers to reflect on their own practice while gaining insights from their peers.

Personalized Learning Path

Self-Directed Learning Plans: Educators at AST are encouraged to take ownership of their learning, creating their own professional learning path based on self-selected improvement goals and areas of interest within the FFT framework. Opportunities to participate in action research, online courses, workshops or conferences exist, allowing teachers to choose what aligns best with their identified needs. Teachers work directly with their academic leader to set annual improvement goals.

Self-Assessment and Reflection: Following the Framework for Teaching's (FFT) four domains, teachers have the opportunity each semester to assess their progress in each component when completing their Teacher Evaluation Score Card (TESC). In addition, a ***Student Survey of Teacher*** is administered each semester to collect additional data and insights from students to help inform and enhance their professional practice.

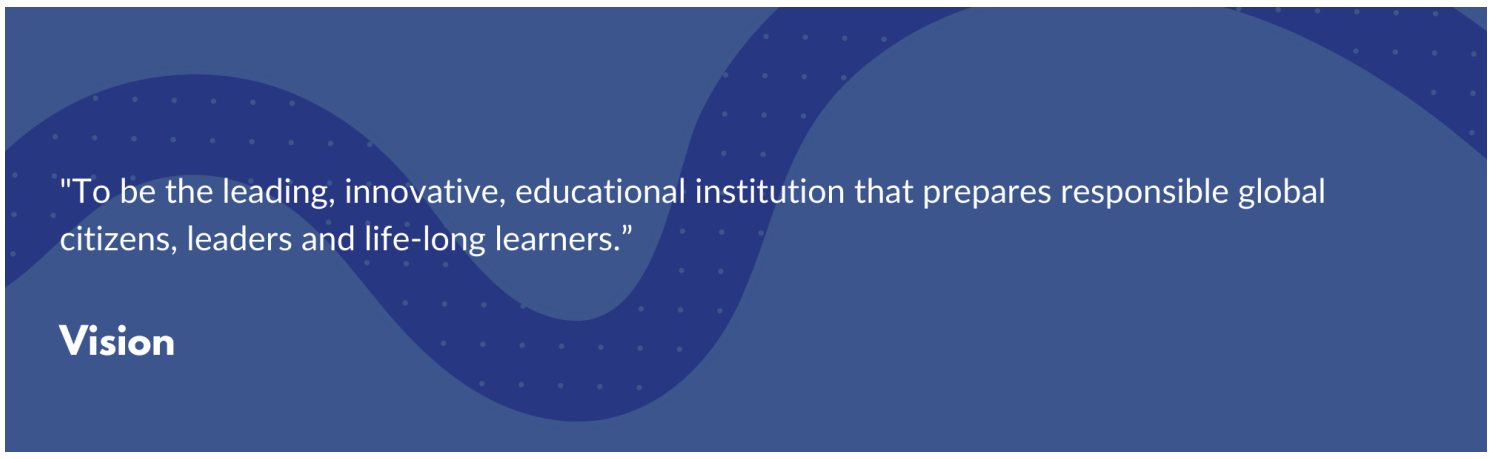
Project Based Gold Standard Teaching Practices: Teachers use the PBLWorks research-based ***Gold Standard Teaching Practices*** to align their professional goals. Each teacher selects a strategy to effectively implement a practice of their choice. This approach directly supports our annual school-wide goal of ***Engaging Students in Learning*** (Domain 3c in the FFT Framework) and encourages teachers to commit to applying research-based practices in their classrooms.

Micro-credentials and Badges: Teachers can earn badges by completing specific courses or demonstrating mastery in a particular skill or topic. This gives them tangible recognition for their professional development efforts. Examples of these include, but are not limited to: advanced Google Educator Certifications (Level 1 or 2, Google Trainer and Google Coach), Math Specialists in International Schools (MSIS) certification, Exceptional Needs certification, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) credentials, and IB certification.

Data-driven decision making

Staff has been trained in the use and analysis of data using Daniel R. Venables's book ***How Teachers Can Turn Data into Action*** which outlines the steps of a data cycle, teaches how to triangulate data and how to effectively use protocols (such as the 'Notice and Wonder' protocol) to guide conversations about student work. Staff has also participated in workshops on the use of MAP Reading Fluency and MAP Growth data facilitated by NWEA experts. Teachers meet regularly in PLC's and use data from classroom assessments, MAP tests, and IB results to modify instruction and intervene in a timely manner.

Data Wise Improvement Process: Developed by faculty and doctoral students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), this 8-step process highlights how student assessment results can be used to improve teaching and learning. AST teachers use the ***Meeting Wise*** checklist and resources to make the most of collaborative time.



Resources to support Teaching & Learning at AST

Teacher Resources Site

A clearinghouse available to AST educators featuring an ample collection of resources filtered by grade level and subject area.



Teaching & Learning Newsletter

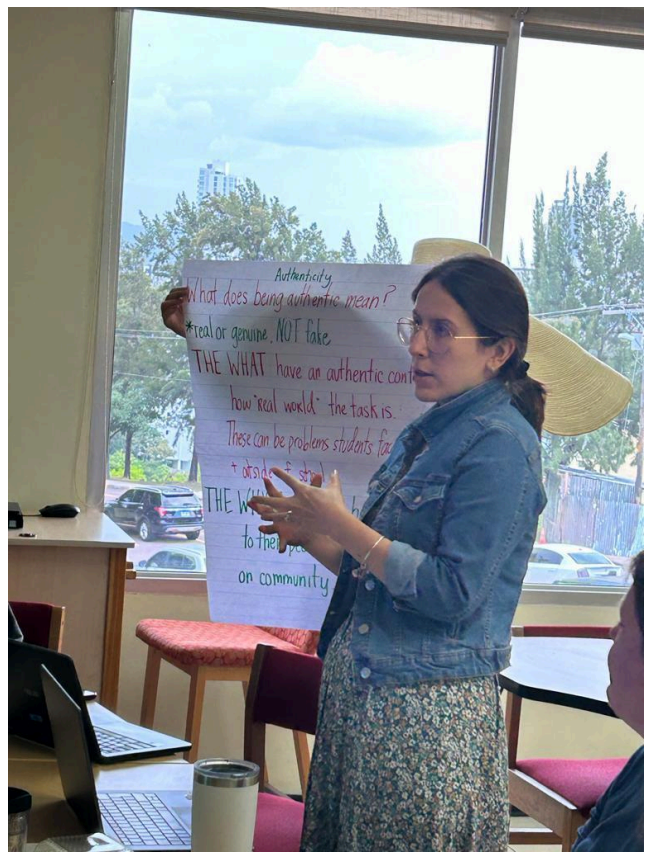
A bi-monthly newsletter shared by The Curriculum Office with the latest literature and trends in education, tech tips, professional learning offerings and learning in action.



Core Leadership Team

A team of teacher leaders from all four divisions of the school allows for equitable representation and feedback on school initiatives, curriculum design and implementation. The team conducts book studies, is involved in action research, models best practices, creates anchors and supporting documents for effective lesson and assessment design.





Digital Toolkit

A myriad of digital and online resources are available for teachers to enhance their daily instruction. Some examples include IXL Learning, Raz Kids, Newsela, BrainPOP and Quizizz to name a few. In addition, teachers use Google Classroom and Schoology to create and post assignments as well as collect data on student learning. A PBL Toolkit is also available for teachers to access quality resources and tools in support of project-based teaching practices.

Masters Program

AST has partnered with Buffalo State (The State University of New York) since 2003 to offer teaching staff the opportunity to complete a ***Master of Science degree in Multidisciplinary Studies*** through the International Graduate Programs for Educators. The Curriculum Office works closely with the program coordinator to design a program of study that aligns with the school's mission and improvement initiatives. The school covers the entire cost of the program for AST full-time staff. Teacher cohorts comprise of 10-18 participants allowing for rich discussions and collaborative inquiry. Our records indicate over 90 teachers and support staff have earned this degree through this program.



"Be kind, it’s the Eagle Way.”

Motto

Recent Initiatives



Informed by our school improvement plan and stakeholder surveys, our **STEAM initiative** is all about strengthening our science, technology, art and mathematics course offerings. In efforts to promote deeper and personalized learning for all students, AST has collaborated with external consultants to seek guidance in support of more authentic learning experiences.

As a result, AST has made the following enhancements to curriculum and instruction:

- **GANAG lesson planning schema** (adopted in 2018) promotes active learning as well as gives students the opportunity to self-assess and monitor their own learning.

- Anchors have been created by AST teachers to assess and support project design as well as success skills. We refrain from referring to them as ‘soft’ skills as we consider these essential future-ready skills. The anchors include the **Problem Solving Process (PSP)** model and the **4Cs rubrics**.

- Partnership with Project Lead the Way offers students new and exciting hands-on courses in support of a computer science and an engineering career pathway.

- International Baccalaureate (IB) new course offerings are selected based on student preference. IB teachers complete comprehensive training in preparation to teach these courses.

- All teaching and support staff has earned **Google Educator Certification** which has led to improved use of technology and Google tools for education. As a result, AST earned the distinction of becoming the first **Google Reference School** in Honduras (2021).

- Adoption of **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** as an approach to student-centered teaching and learning. Teachers are currently being trained using the ***Gold Standard PBL: Essential Project Design Elements and Teaching Practices*** (PBLWorks). A PBL Implementation Pulse Survey is administered each semester to identify areas of strength and needs in our PBL implementation journey. A PBL Digital Toolkit has been created to house key resources in support of quality project design.

- The position of **STEAM Coaches** was created to support PBL lesson and assessment re-design. Coaches provide one-on-one support as well as facilitate workshops throughout the school year.

Google for Education
Reference School



To learn more details about AST's professional learning program, contact aparedes@amschool.org.

Visit our school website at www.amschool.org.