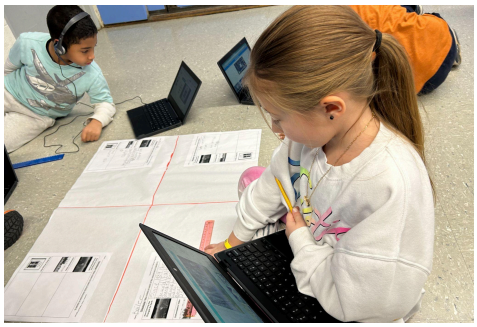
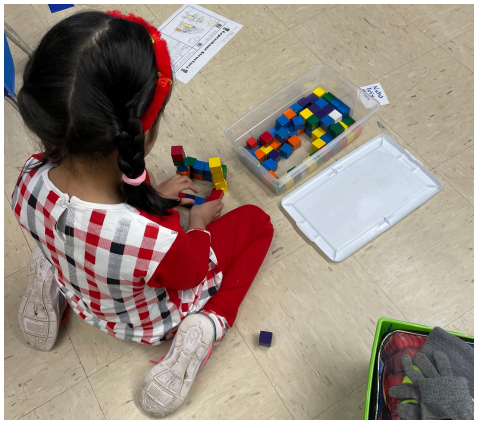
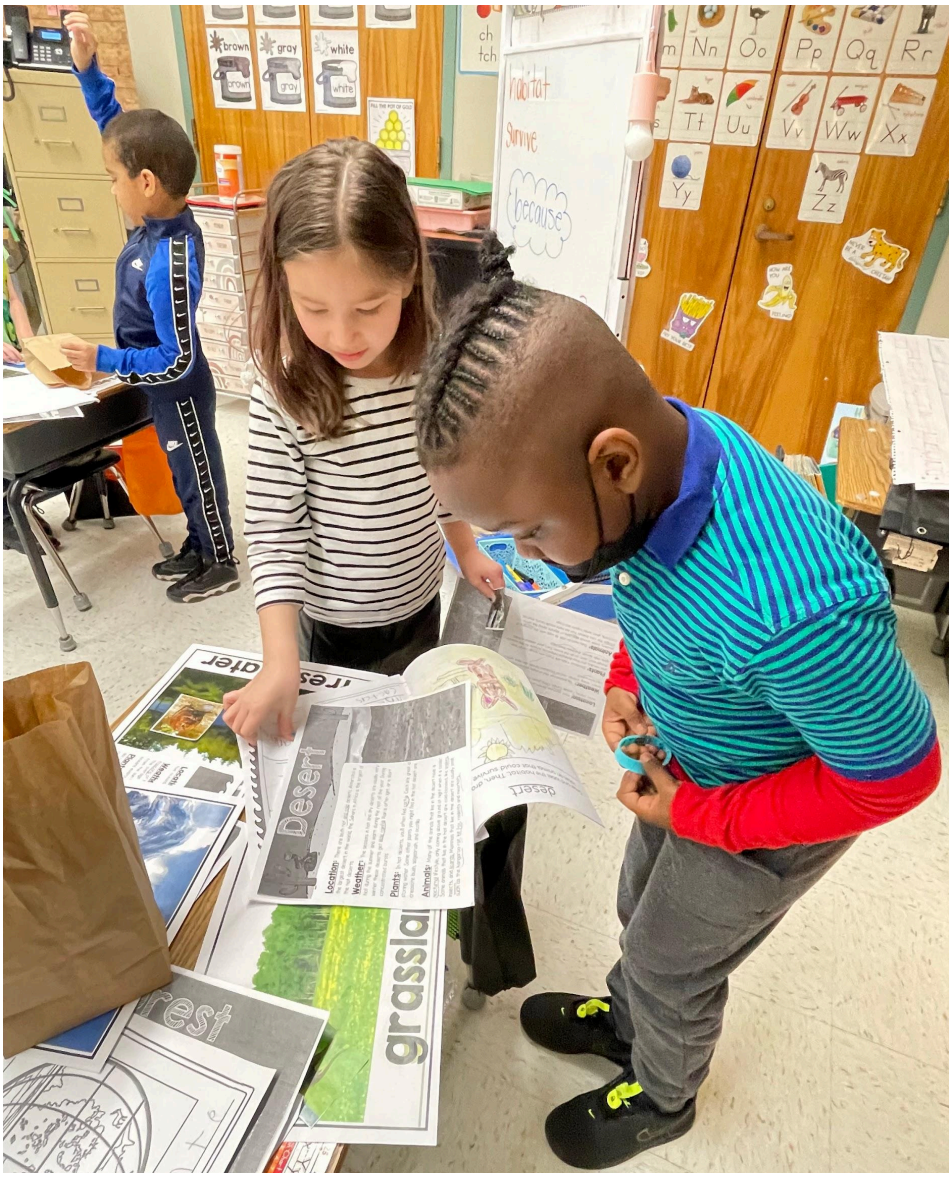
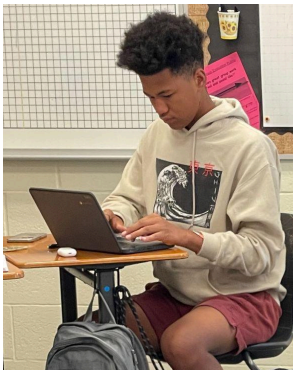








TEACHING & LEARNING
HANDBOOK

Naugatuck Public Schools
EST. 1920

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Handbook

Naugatuck Public Schools' Teaching and Learning Handbook is based on research into best practices and guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Naugatuck Public Schools' Teaching and Learning Handbook is also written with feedback from our faculty and students. We remain steadfast in our commitment to equity, and in maintaining the highest quality of education for each and every student in our district. This means adhering to our guiding principles and never wavering in our efforts to provide opportunity and access for all, our commitment to eradicate the opportunity gap, and our belief that every child can achieve our high expectations, as expressed in our NPS Competencies and curriculum.

We are educating our students in a time of intense change, and we must remain well-informed, flexible and adaptable as we continue to provide our children with the best education possible.

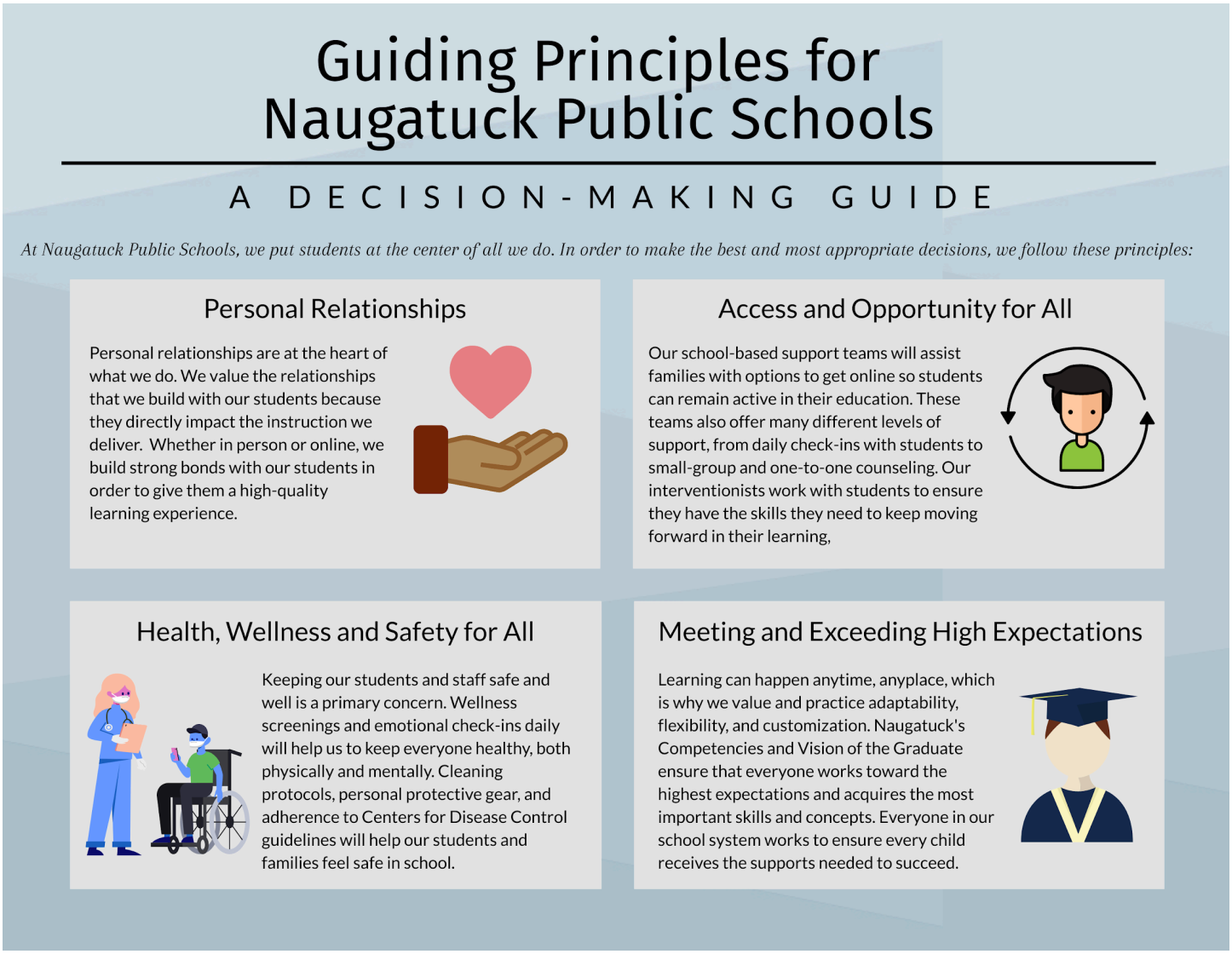
We will adapt and thrive in order to meet the varied needs of each and every student. We will use new tools to diagnose, assess, and fill in learning gaps. The health, safety and wellness of our students and our staff is uppermost in our considerations as we plan for instruction and assessment.

This handbook provides teachers and administrators with the necessary guidance and tools to implement district curriculum in accordance with the NPS Competences and Scoring Guides. It provides purposeful direction for delivery of instruction as well as videos, exemplars, and models that demonstrate the techniques.

The ongoing process of curriculum development and revision has resulted in new documents this year that provide access to resources and student work so that we can better understand what student work should look like and how we can analyze student work to improve our own practice.

Guiding Principles

To effectively run our school programs, we will use these guiding principles to make decisions about what is best for students:



We will keep the development of personal relationships at the forefront of our learning programs. When families and students are connected to their teachers, learning can be deeper and more meaningful. We will use the appropriate NPS Competencies - reflected in the purpose of curricular units in the curriculum for all subject areas and disciplines.

In addition, our schools will build and maintain:

- A culture of excitement and positivity for learning
- Empathy and Compassion
- Collaboration
- Flexibility and Adaptability

It is important that we take this time with students to create a positive, exciting culture for learning. We

want our students to be better prepared for the next grade level. Creating a positive, exciting culture through personally connecting with students to better understand their learning needs assists us in meeting them where they are in their own learning journey.

We want to be compassionate and empathetic with our students so that we can better understand who they are - which will enable us to identify and meet their educational needs.

Flexibility and adaptability will be key to our work this year as we put the students at the center and plan instruction to accommodate their needs.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Principles of Curriculum

The curriculum of Naugatuck Public Schools is continually evaluated and revised according to the following priorities set forth by the Connecticut State Department of Education. We ensure that the curriculum is:

- Focused
- Relevant
- Flexible
- Rigorous
- Coherent
- Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive

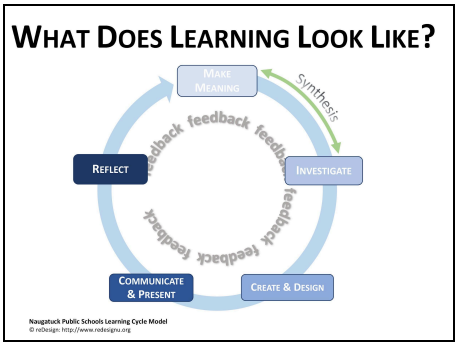
In accordance with district values, we also consider:

- NPS Competencies (grounded in state and national standards)
- The latest research on learning and the brain
- A learning cycle model that encompasses both curriculum, instruction and assessment

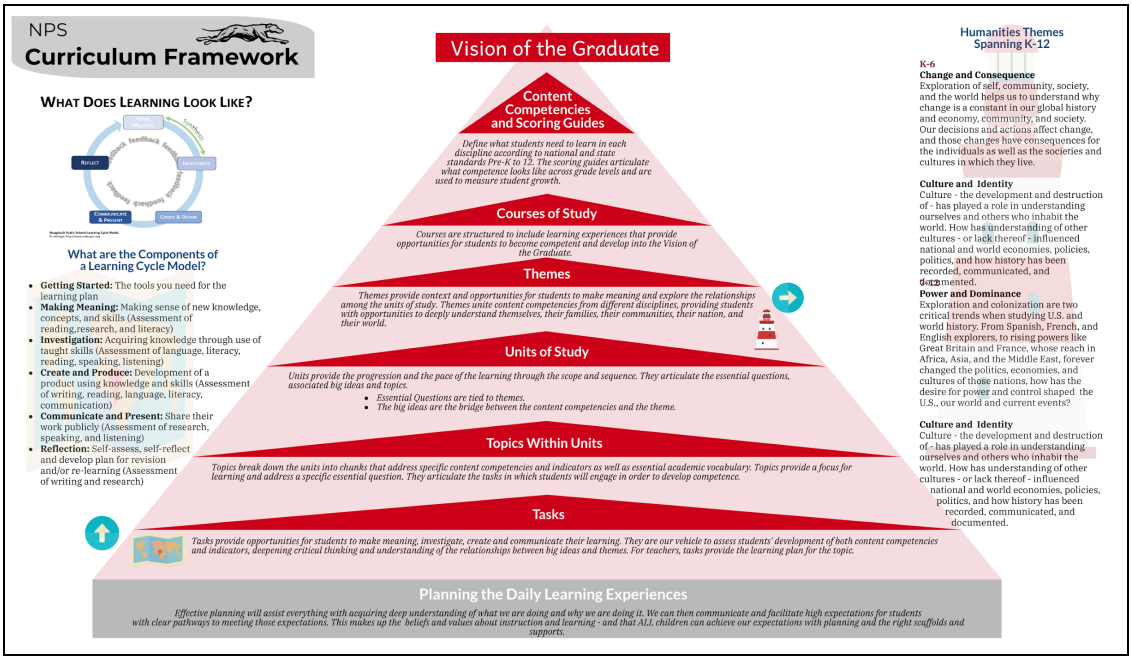
The curriculum is structured to achieve competency with NPS' high expectations for students. Clicking on the link below will enlarge it.

The curriculum is grounded in a learning cycle framework. All curriculum design and tasks are written to reflect the stages of the learning cycle model:

- Making meaning
- Investigation
- Creating/Producing
- Communicating/Presenting
- Reflecting



Feedback is woven throughout the model. Without actionable feedback that students can use to improve their skills and deepen their understanding, learning has a greater potential of being superficial and procedural, rather than deep and enduring.



The [curriculum model] is founded on the teacher's planning of

the daily learning experience that is prescribed in the task that encompasses the learning within the topic. A curriculum unit of study can have more than one topic, and all topics are linked together through the unit's essential questions and enduring understandings.

The units of study are carefully developed to align with themes of learning that guide the questions we ask and the knowledge and concepts we present to our students to explore and understand. These themes also drive the courses that are designed and are predicated on the NPS Competencies, upon which all students will be assessed. Demonstrating competence on our competencies - along with engaging in the practices and learning experiences demanded by our Vision of the Graduate - will guide our students toward becoming that vision and being equipped for the next stage in their lives - whether it be higher education, technical education, the workforce, the military or other pursuits.

The district also uses other curriculum from reputable sources. For example, Illustrative Math is implemented in the district for math instruction; Science Dimensions by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is used for Science K-5; OpenSciEd is used for science in grades 6-8. We follow these curriculum with fidelity.

Curriculum can be found on the district web site.

Executing the Curriculum

The curriculum will continue to be executed as presented. The Scope and Sequence of each curricula will be examined and adjusted by principals, coaches and teachers in accordance with how best to sequence the learning and respond to any gaps within schools and grade levels.

Teachers, coaches, department heads and principals will use Professional Learning Communities to plan for instruction that supports the curriculum and **keeps the learning moving forward.** This **acceleration of learning** will be the district's strategy to improve learning outcomes for all students. It is a vital part of the district's strategic plan.

Acceleration as a Strategy: The District's Stance

Students will enter our schools with diverse needs. For many of our students, unfinished learning and/or learning loss will require our vigilance in the continual diagnosing and addressing of these gaps so that students will have access to grade-level learning and opportunity to engage meaningfully within the context of their classroom. The past practice of remediation not tied to Tier 1 instruction has not been effective in closing the achievement gap, thus creating a greater opportunity gap. We must reimagine our approach to ensuring all students achieve success within our classrooms and beyond by focusing on acceleration as a strategy.

NPS uses strategies from *Learning in the Fast Lane* by Suzy Pepper Rollins to move students forward in all educational settings.

6 Key Takeaways*:

Relationships and learning are inseparable.
A cornerstone of the work will be the positive, engaging and supportive relationships we build with each and every student in our classrooms. Without these relationships to hold us up, we never truly know each other as learners. Naugatuck is also committed to a continued partnership with families and creating structures that promote regular two-way communication regarding the acceleration plan and their child's progress.

What teachers expect of their students influences what students expect of themselves.
At the foundation of this work will be a mindset focused on what students can do, not on what they can't. Our competencies are built to reflect what to look for in our students' thinking in order to accurately assess and diagnose.

Moving forward into grade-appropriate content with supports will advance learning more than stopping and going back. The best plan won't work for all students; continuously monitoring, understanding, and meeting needs will.
We will build upon their strengths and provide just-in-time supports and scaffolds that will address the prerequisite skills and knowledge our students need to access grade level learning. We will continue to prioritize our competencies and curriculum, and design academic tasks that integrate SEL. These tasks are culturally responsive and relevant to the students and families that we serve in order to be personally and socially meaningful.

The quality of student work is directly connected and impacted by the quality of the task and instruction they receive.
Students give us what we ask for - so what, exactly are we asking for? Deep reflection of our instructional moves, as reflected in our planning, our tasks and assessments, our in-the-moment adjustments, our clarity, and our purpose will all be factors in the success of our students. We will use ongoing formative assessment to guide our work and adjust instruction, ensuring that students receive timely feedback that will move them forward on the progression of learning outlined in our NPS competencies.

Students engage and learn best from work that is challenging, relevant to their lives, and helps them understand and impact the world.
In order to engage each and every student in the learning task, we will empower our students by creating a culture where students value their learning and believe they can succeed. Prior knowledge and prior experience is critical to students' ability to connect to the learning and find how it is meaningful to them.

The way teachers support their students is a direct reflection of the way leaders support teachers.
The support, opportunities for learning, and care that we show to our staff creates the climate and culture in which all of us learn. A culture of creativity, acceptance, risk-taking, and positive relationships for teachers will also be inclusive of the students they see, teach, and interact with every day.

In this model, weekly PLCs become a necessary curricular structure in order to ensure the learning is "just in time" and supported with any concepts and knowledge needed for all students to achieve grade level proficiency.

Therefore, in executing the Naugatuck Public Schools curriculum all teachers will:

- Engage in PLCs where the focus is on planning and instruction aligned with the curriculum
- Plan for grade level learning, anticipating potential gaps and embedding pre-requisite skills and learning where it will be most effective and useful to students
- Customize learning so that students are grouped and instructed in what they need to keep their learning moving forward
- Meet with students in small groups or one-on-one to support their learning and deepen their understanding

- Plan with grade level and/or content partners to ensure **consistency in instruction, focus, and purpose**

The Director of Curriculum will work with coaches to ensure curriculum implementation, and what "just in time" support and intervention can look like. The district has also participated in ongoing, years-long professional learning on acceleration as a strategy for improving student outcomes. Principals and coaches will develop any additional, needed professional learning focused on this type of support for students.

The curriculum of Naugatuck Public Schools will be adhered to, and any modifications or adjustments will occur only in PLCs with the guidance of the Director of Curriculum, coaches and principals.

Communication Plan for Curriculum

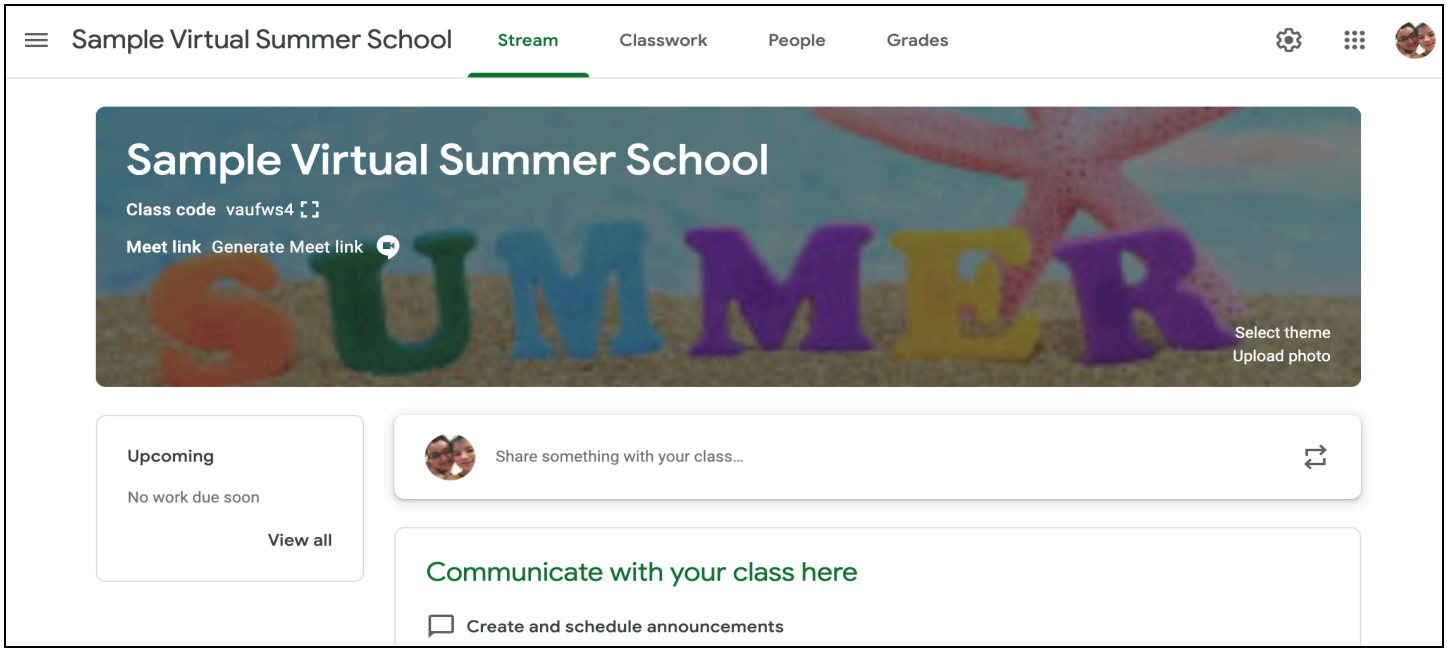
The handbook will be disseminated to principals and teachers via links and the district website. Principals and coaches will have opportunities to work with teachers in professional learning cohorts to review the instructional expectations for teachers.

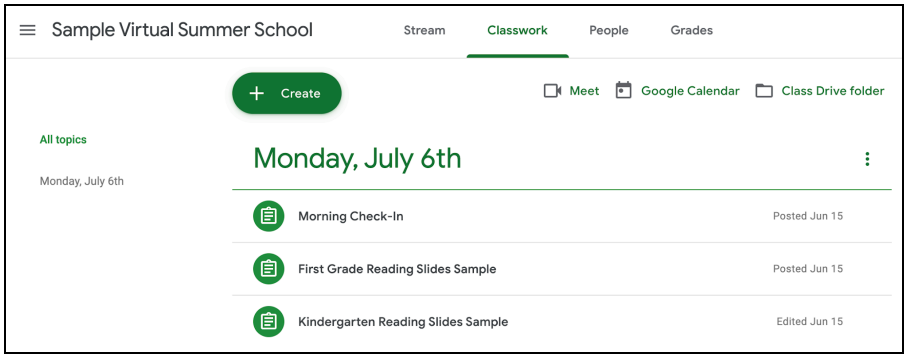
Principles of Instruction

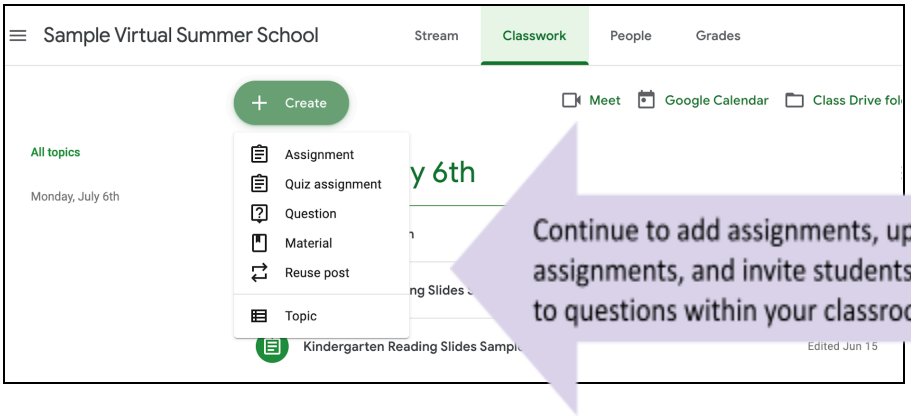
NPS' Vision of the Graduate speaks to the empowerment of students. In order to empower students, our staff and faculty will explicitly teach skills and cultivate a culture of collaboration and risk-taking. We discover, explore and ultimately learn through mistakes - some of the greatest inventions and innovations of our world came about through experimentation and mistakes. Therefore, instruction needs to be flexible, adaptable, responsive, and purposeful. What students are learning and why should be clearly stated and linked in learning targets and goals, and instructional strategies and methodologies must support and guide students, leading them to independence and the confidence that they can lead their own learning.

Standardized Google Classroom

All teachers, regardless of grade level or subject area, have the option to maintain a Google Classroom that is standardized in setup. Students can be absent for an extended time for a variety of reasons, and a Google Classroom is an effective way to maintain contact and share resources with families. Below is a sample classroom that all teachers can access and replicate. You can access this classroom with the code vaufws4.







Every Google Classroom will feature assignments for students under the date with specific information.

- K-4 classrooms will be specific to the teacher to which they are assigned. Students will see assignments by date and titled with the subject matter. For example “Reading,” “Humanities,” “Science,” and “Math.” Assignments should be prepared so students know what to focus on for each day.
- 5-12 classrooms will be specific to the teacher and subject area that they teach.

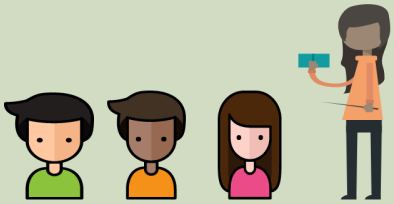
A Google Classroom ensures continuity of learning for each and every child. Every student will have a similar experience in his or her Google Classroom that can support them should they be absent.

Non-negotiables in a Google Classroom include:

- The posting of assignments and any directions students need to complete that work. This could take the form of a video if necessary.
- A presentation of the work for students (i.e., Google Slides, A Google Doc, etc.) that is consistent day after day, week after week, so students can develop a routine and familiar practices. A sample is here. Slides should remain consistent throughout their educational experience for the 2024-25 school year.

Teachers may use some or all of the tools listed below. Teachers have discretion to use what is most helpful to students.

- Google Suite (i.e., Docs, Slides, Forms, Sheets, etc.)
- Google Meet
- Canva
- Text Blaze
- Kami
- Nearpod
- ScreenCastify
- PearDeck
- Peardeck Assessment (for assessment)
- EdPuzzle (for videos)
- Padlet (naugatuck.padlet.org)
- Online versions of district purchased and approved programs (i.e., Illustrative Math, Desmos, etc.)



A Quick Guide for Instruction

- Opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-teacher discourse
- Opportunities for conferring and feedback, both from peers and teachers
- Mini lessons that focus on skills development.
- Direct instruction with modeling and opportunities for students to pose questions and practice
- Small groups assembled by skills needs
- Customized learning plans based on formative assessment of student work, both in person and online
- Actionable feedback students can use immediately to improve performance - best communicated through conferring.
- Opportunities to think critically

- Texts or online reading assigned for anytime, anywhere learning
- Opportunities to work through problems with peers while appropriately distanced.
- Student groupings that are flexible
- Access to texts that are culturally relevant at a variety of reading levels

The use of some or all of the programs available are listed below. Teachers have discretion to use what is most helpful to students. Some of these programs, like Learning A-Z, can be embedded in the daily instruction.

- Learning A-Z and Raz Kids for MLs
- Learning Ally
- Lexia
- Legends of Learning (free edition)
- Epic! Books
- NewsBank

- PebbleGo (K-4)
- Illustrative Math
- MyWorld Social Studies resource online
- HMH Science Dimensions
- Amira

Additional resources purchased by the district for student learning should also be implemented and are available through the district web site or direct program access.

Any other tools or programs should be discussed and shared within the PLC with coaches and principals for consistency across a grade level. These tools and programs will also be discussed with the Director of Curriculum to ensure students throughout the district have equitable access and experiences.

Instruction

Naugatuck Public Schools teachers can use Google Classroom as well as effective instructional strategies. Students should be well-acquainted with Google Classroom and how to access, complete and turn in assignments in their digital classroom as teachers at all grade levels use the tool for easy access to materials and small group/center work.

Instructional routines for all grade levels will remain consistent to provide coherence and familiarity for students and for families. Every classroom teacher will include the following strategies in their daily instruction every day:

- **Daily Meeting/Circle:** Every morning or at the start of every class, teachers will greet students and review the **focus and purpose** of the learning for the day. This daily meet will include:
    - A warm welcome
    - A brief overview of the learning for the day (context)
    - Concrete connection between the stated purpose and the work
    - RULER check-in with a student's emotional well-being for the day as well as Responsive Classroom/restorative practices strategies.
        - This check-in will grow to include student cognizance of other RULER principles like what they will need to do to be their best selves and how they will plan to take a meta moment to regroup and reframe their situation.
- **Mini-Lessons:** Students should have a brief mini-lesson, not more than 10 minutes, that guides them through their learning. Students should have opportunities for guided practice, conferring, and peer review and feedback. Video examples are provided on the Professional Development web page.
- **One-to-One Conferring:** Any meeting with a student should provide actionable feedback the student can use to improve their work in the moment. This can be through a one-on-one meeting or other verbal exchange. This could also be written, as long as the student can engage with the teacher, like through the Comments feature on a Google Doc or through Google Classroom.
- **Reading:** It is expected that students in Kindergarten through 4th grade will be part of the ARC CORE reading program, with the IRLA reading assessment given at the start of the year. The district's guide to ARC CORE should be used and implemented.
- **Number Talks and Math Language Routines**: All Math instruction in-district will begin with a Number Talk. Resources have been provided so that teachers can reflect and plan for this important, powerful instructional tool regardless of grade level. All teachers K-12 can use Number Talks to understand student thinking about numbers, number sense, place value, and mathematical concepts.
- **Google Classroom:** Google Classrooms will be standardized. This will help families with more than one child in Naugatuck schools.
- **PLCs:** All schools run PLCs with grade levels. These PLCs focus on planning for instruction and exploration of the curriculum. This is a valuable tool for ensuring consistency in what is delivered to students and, in some instances, how it is delivered (i.e., centers). Some district norms for PLCs are:
    - Be honest, open and curious
    - Collaborate and listen to different ideas about how to implement the curriculum effectively
    - Everyone speaks once before someone speaks twice.

- Ask Questions for clarification
- Be open to new ideas

Instructional Programming: Reading

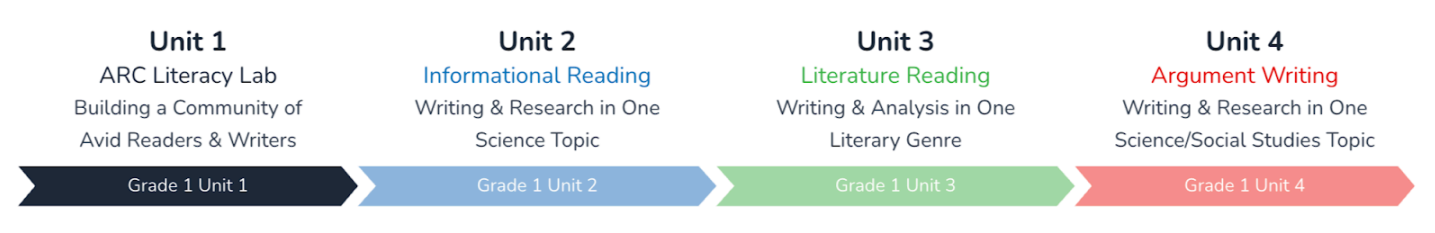
Naugatuck Public Schools uses the American Reading Company's CORE program to teach children to read. The district also employs Heggerty to support growth and learning in phonics and phonemic awareness. Research consistently shows that children need to be reading on grade level by third grade so that they have access and opportunity to more complex ideas, concepts and learning.

Reading Instruction for Students K-4

Reading instruction will take place for two hours a day, everyday, with small group instruction based on a student's individual needs when it comes to reading acquisition. Teachers will run small groups and use American Reading Company's materials, as well as the district's Phonics Scope and Sequence and accompanying assessments, grounded in research and aligned with ARC CORE.

It is imperative that our teachers strive to understand the mechanics of reading - accuracy, fluency, phonemic awareness - as well as the purpose - comprehension, understanding, deep personal and real-world connection, analysis, inference, and evaluation. During their reading block, students will have time to engage in a read-aloud as well as uninterrupted time to read for 30 minutes a day on their own.

A schedule for the two-hour reading block and scopes and sequences for each grade level can be found on the district's website. ARC CORE's program is broken down into four units of study and targets specific types of writing.



The first unit of study sets the stage for the year. It focuses on building a reading community and a reading identity. Students engage with many different texts and build their reading stamina while they find the types of books that are interesting to them.

The next three units use engaging Social Studies and Science topics to snag the attention and imagination of students and set them up for success in writing about their reading and investigations. More information, including a scope and sequence for each grade level, can be found on the district site.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction in Elementary Education

According to reading research, 40% of our students will learn to read on their own (Kilpatrick, 2015). The most essential work students need to do to acquire skills in reading is phonemic awareness. Rhyming, phoneme segmenting, blending, and manipulation as well as syllable work will help students to find the rhythm of reading and make sense of words. Since we learn to speak before we learn to read, it is important to connect the spoken word to the written word. Oral language is very important in K and 1 to aid in this connection. Phonemic awareness is also an essential part of storing words for one's sight word vocabulary.

Children do not store words through visual memory. In fact, visual memory only plays roles in alphabet

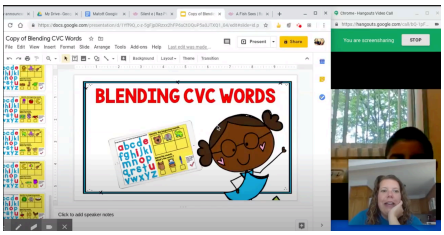
recognition and in comprehension in that good readers can generate a visual representation of the text as they read. Research shows that we do not remember words based on visual memory. There is a very small statistical correlation between visual memory skills and sight vocabulary, however, there is a very large statistical correlation between phoneme awareness and sight vocabulary.

Instead, we store words through orthographic mapping - the mental process we use to permanently store words for immediate retrieval. “Our oral dictionaries are very fast. If they were not, we would struggle to understand spoken language. The stream of sounds that we hear activates our oral/mental dictionaries. If someone speaks in an unfamiliar language, that stream of syllables is meaningless to us. Those sounds find no matches in our oral filing system” (Kilpatrick, 2016). This oral filing system is the foundation for the filing system we eventually develop to read words.

Orthographic mapping is a two-way street. It requires an awareness of the phonemes in the spoken word so that when a child encounters an unfamiliar word, he sounds it out; this sound attaches the phonemes in the pronunciation to the printed word. Phonic decoding starts with a printed word that is unfamiliar. “The letters are translated into sounds, which are then blended together to identify the spoken word” (Kilpatrick 2016).

A strong oral tradition, a cycle of repetition and review, and systematic phonics instruction are important factors in the teaching of reading. Children with phonemic awareness and good letter-sound skills will recognize letter sequences in printed words because they can see the relationship between print and phonemes they hear in spoken words. This is how words become embedded in our permanent memory.

This video by A. Matott of Andrew Avenue Elementary School demonstrates how phonics and phonemic awareness can be crucial links for beginning readers.



“Children who struggle with phoneme awareness struggle in reading. Why? Because they do not notice the logical/meaningful relationship between the word’s pronunciation and the letters used to represent that pronunciation in print. This makes words extremely difficult to remember. Until phoneme proficiency is developed, a student will not have an efficient way to make letter strings familiar” (Kilpatrick, 2016).

The bottom line: “We use our oral filing system as the basis for sight word storage and retrieval. The point of entry into our permanent filing system for written words is at the level of letters and phonemes, not ‘whole words,’ despite how badly our intuitions have misled us” (Kilpatrick 2016).

Phonological/phonemic awareness and phonics instruction needs to be explicit and systematic. Sound spelling relationships need to be directly taught and in a thoughtful progression. Students need opportunities to practice these skills daily in whole group and small group settings. There are opportunities to practice phonemic awareness as well as encoding and decoding skills daily during read alouds, shared writing experiences, teacher think alouds and explicitly during whole group phonics instruction and small group instruction.

Use the district’s scope and sequence for phonics and phonemic awareness to guide your instruction. The district has created a Phonics Scope and Sequence for grades K-4 based on the science of reading. The scope and sequence for each grade level provides monthly skills to be taught under the buckets of phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency words, early literacy concepts, word meaning and literacy and language (grammar) and is aligned to the state-approved reading program, ARC CORE. In each scope and sequence document there are resources for each skill including skills cards from the ARC CORE program, word sorts, optional Lexia and Amplify lessons, look-fors for the end of each month as well as

120-Minute Literacy Block

Daily components, in any order that makes sense

Read/Write/Discuss Complex Text (as Interactive Read-Aloud and/or Shared Reading) (20–35* min.)	**Lesson Launch** • Teacher introduces today's Standards Focus. **Read/Write/Discuss Complex Text** • Whole-group, grade-level shared reading or writing. • Students work in small groups/pairs to practice applying today's Focus to the shared text or to writing.
Reading Lab (35–45 min.)	**Independent Reading** • Students practice applying today's Focus to self-selected texts at a variety of levels. At least a portion of this time is spent with texts within the Thematic Unit. **Teacher Coaching/Formative Assessment** • Teacher works one-on-one (and eventually with small groups) to accelerate reading growth through Power Goal conferences. Teacher checks proficiency with the day's Focus.
Writing (30–60 min.)	**Writing** • Teacher models how today's Focus will be applied to writing. • Students practice applying today's Focus to writing. **Teacher Coaching/Formative Assessment** • Teacher works one-on-one (and eventually with small groups) to coach writing proficiency and growth.
Phonics/Word Study (10-20 min.) **Reading Lab Part 2 and/or Read-Aloud** (20-40 min.)	**Phonics/Word Study** • Teacher introduces and students practice today's Foundational Skills Focus through phonological awareness, phonics, and word study. **Wide Reading** • Students practice applying today's Focus and their Power Goals to self-selected texts at a variety of levels. Students can pick any texts on any topics/in any genre. **Formative Assessment** • Teacher works one-on-one (and eventually with small groups) to accelerate reading growth through Power Goal conferences. Teacher checks proficiency with the day's Focus. **Above-level Read-Aloud** • Students listen to increasingly complex texts across the year.

***Time ranges vary intentionally. Depending on the lesson and student energy, teachers may spend more time writing or more time reading.**

Weekly Goals:

- Students read for 5 hours a week, with some time spent reading texts within the Thematic Unit and some time in complete free-choice. Reading time can be spread across the school day and/or at home.
- Teacher meets with a minimum of 10 students 1:1 or in small groups to focus on their Power Goals.

monthly informal assessments that will provide essential data for report cards. A yearlong overview of the skills that need to be taught is also provided to show the progressions of skills for your grade. Coaches will work with teachers in PLCs to more deeply understand the progression and embed the progression into the phonemic awareness instruction.

The district has produced a short guide to good instructional practices for phonics and phonemic awareness.

Vocabulary and Word Work at All Levels

Students should be exposed to appropriate vocabulary - including academic vocabulary - through strategies that are appropriate and require repetition and continuous exposure so that students can contextualize language.

Each classroom has a focus wall with a TIP (Term, Information, Picture) chart for vocabulary. Selected vocabulary is displayed and referenced throughout the unit/topic of focus. Students engage in various activities (found below) to deepen their understanding of new vocabulary.

All children regardless of age or grade level, should keep and maintain a word notebook or journal. ARC CORE provides journals for students to write, record their comprehension of stories, and engage with word work. They should discuss their ideas about the definition of words with another student or a teacher, and then draw a picture of the word - what does it look like? What visual does it remind them of? Student visuals can be displayed on the focus wall/TIP chart.

Other strategies include Robert Marzano's work with words. An education researcher and teacher, he promotes direct vocabulary instruction in all content areas. He suggests these six steps:

1. The teacher explains a new word, going beyond reciting its definition (tap into prior knowledge of students, use imagery).
2. Students restate or explain the new word in their own words (verbally and/or in writing).
3. Ask students to create a non-linguistic representation of the word (a picture, or symbolic representation).
4. Students engage in activities to deepen their knowledge of the new word (compare words, classify terms, write their own analogies and metaphors).
    - Clark Strategies (some specific Clark strategies have been embedded in the Humanities curriculum with examples, below is an overview of two of the vocabulary strategies)
        - **Vertical Sentence:** A vertical sentence can be used to create synonyms of a specific vocabulary word. The language objective for a vertical sentence is to generate synonyms, select words that have similar connotation to the author's purpose and rank the words from _____ to _____. Vertical Sentence prep and procedure Sample Vertical Sentence
        - **Morph House:** The language objective for the morph house is to generate words with the same base word, use each new word in a complete sentence, and identify the part of speech of each new word by its affix, position in the sentence and function. Morph House prep and procedure Sample Morph House
5. Students discuss the new word (pair-share, elbow partners).
6. Students periodically play games to review new vocabulary (Pyramid, Jeopardy, Telephone).

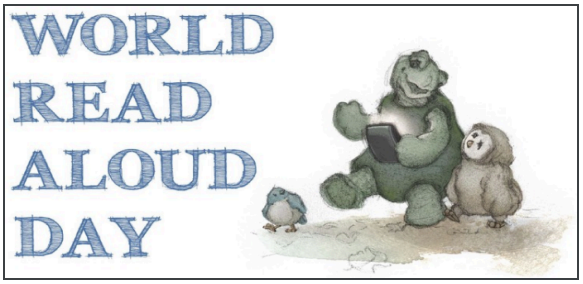
Marzano's six steps activate different ways for students to internalize words and therefore internalize language.

Students are engaged in thinking about, talking about and playing with new words in a trusting environment. At no point should a child at any level be directed to a dictionary without teacher support. Dictionaries are designed to explain words in a variety of contexts, including etymology. Support is needed for this tool to be effective in student learning.

Please see the section on working with English Language Learners or the *Multilingual Learner Handbook* for more strategies in working with Multilingual Learners.

Interactive/Purposeful Read-Alouds - at Any Level

Read-alouds are part of the comprehension work that all students will do. It is important to engage in an interactive/purposeful read-aloud at any level as they provide in-the-moment opportunities for questions, interaction and exchange of ideas.



World Read Aloud Day: February 5, 2025

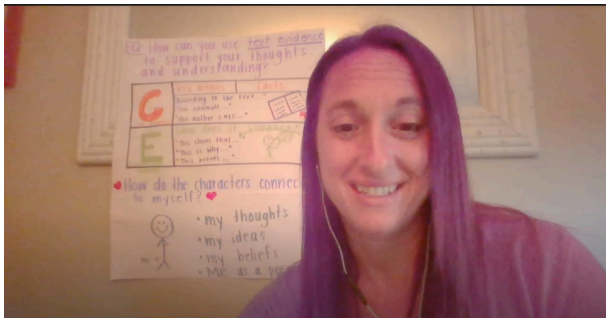
World Read Aloud Day has been established as the first Wednesday in February. It is an opportunity to celebrate reading aloud with communities around the world and to honor the power and joy of reading and sharing stories.

When engaging in a read-aloud, take into consideration the following:

Interactive Read Alouds

- **Strong purpose** for why you are reading this book - connection to purpose of unit or topic and learning target.
- **Reading the same text for more than one purpose**. Read the text the first time for enjoyment, engagement, or inspiration, and then reread it for purpose.
- **Encourage questioning** - Stopping at certain points in the story to pose a question or model a reading strategy.
- Ponder a **prediction** or note something about the characters - these should be tightly connected to the purpose for the read-aloud.
- **Share your feelings** about what is happening and why it is making you feel that way.
- **Model what good readers do**. Model fluency and inflection.
- Read-alouds can be the perfect opportunity to build **cross-curricular connections**. Sharing a text can be utilized to introduce, reinforce, or extend student learning on a topic from another subject area.
- **Read- alouds can be a section of a text.** Read-alouds can focus on a strategy within a text or chapter book.
- Read-alouds **build memories** for learners.
- Building **vocabulary and listening skills**.

This video demonstrates how a read-aloud can be focused and coherent to its purpose. Watch Mrs. Graziano of Andrew Avenue Elementary School as she shows the hallmarks of an engaging, purposeful read-aloud.



Literacy expert Regie Routman, in *Literacy Essentials: Engagement, Excellence, and Equity for All Learners*, calls reading aloud an "indispensable first step in reaching and teaching [students]."

"It slows us down, relaxes us, reminds us of the joy and inspiration of a well-crafted story. Being read to puts us in the frame of mind for learning and increases literacy achievement," Routman writes. And this is why any solid program, from K-12, incorporates some form of a purposeful read-aloud.

Without purpose, read-alouds become another opportunity for disengagement or confusion. When students are clear about why they are reading, they can focus on the purpose and contribute more thoughtfully and more critically to a text, concept, and idea. Everyone needs to be read to - the excitement of the voice doing the reading, and the thoughtful questions posed while reading - are a major part of literacy development in our students.

Teachers can use read-alouds to create a class bond; promote a love of reading; preview information, themes, or text structures; model effective reading; show how texts connect with one another (intertextuality); or provide an exemplar for a genre of writing. The read-aloud is like the Swiss Army knife of literacy; it has multiple uses at every age and in every content area.

In addition, read-alouds can:

- Create a bridge to more complex texts. A child's reading level doesn't catch up to their listening level until around 8th grade. (Sticht, 1984) A read-aloud offers a powerful opportunity to expose students to texts that they can't decode for themselves or may have trouble reading. (In high school, this could be Shakespearian text or text written in unfamiliar contexts or styles.)
- Provide an oral language foundation and improve the acquisition of academic vocabulary, especially for ML/ELs. There is a connection between reading and writing, but an even more powerful connection is the one between speaking, listening, and writing. Read-alouds help our students be better consumers of ideas and better writers.
- Provide a scaffold to the reading, speaking, and writing that students do on their own. Research confirms that students of ANY age who regularly engage in read-alouds score higher on state and national literacy tests.

A good read-aloud is focused. Select stopping points with your purpose clearly in mind. About 80% of your questions should always be traced back to your learning target. With read-alouds, focus on the purpose for the read-aloud. They should be enjoyable for students. Read-alouds should be used in all disciplines in grades K-12 because teachers can model strong reading and comprehension skills, demonstrate critical thinking and annotation, and tempt students to learn more about certain texts and topics.

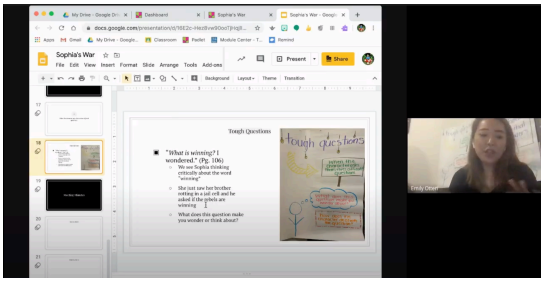
- Students should have an opportunity to reflect on the reading in reading journals, where there are no rules or prompts. Reacting to the story or passage is an important reflective tool and may uncover ideas others hadn't considered before.
- Students should engage in discussion and conversation after read-alouds. Use your purpose and learning target as the springboard and allow students to build off of one another's thinking.
- Use a compelling quote or part of the text that connects to your purpose. This can begin a conversation with students that leads to deeper understanding of your target and purpose.

Read-alouds should be relevant and rigorous. It is an opportunity for students to grow their thinking and try new ideas and skills. Don't move on to another student because the student you asked a question of, or requested they share, gets stuck. Encourage them to finish their thought with a well-placed question. This will help

students feel supported. It will communicate that their ideas matter.

Interactive & Purposeful Read Alouds		
Before Reading…	**During Reading…**	**After Reading…**
• Read the text **prior to sharing with students.** • Determine the **purpose** for sharing the text. • Use Sticky Notes to mark key stopping points to support questioning and build comprehension. (Notes could include clues to support purpose, a skill, dialogue, illustrations, or key vocabulary.) 	• Stop at marked points to engage learners, and involve students with questioning to build understanding. • Stop at points in the text that were not previously marked that may support understanding in the moment. • Think Aloud or model comprehension strategies. • Opportunities for students to Turn and Talk and share their thinking about the text or questions posed.	Reread text to focus on another target, strategy or to make cross-curricular connections. Provide student access to the text for them to reread or share with a partner. Provide time for students to discuss or act out the text with partners. Provide time for students to jot notes or journal about their thinking about the Read Aloud.

Book Clubs - <u>at any level</u>



Book Clubs are an incredible way to offer students voice and choice in the literature they read tied to a specific theme, genre or social issue. **In all grades, Book Clubs are an incredible teaching and learning strategy to instill in students a love of learning. With that love of learning comes mastery of the competencies.** Book club expectations were developed by teachers at each level. Please see:

- K-4 Book Club Expectations
- Grades 5 expectations, Grade 6 expectations
- Grades 7 and 8 expectations
- Grades 9-12 expectations

Usually paired with a read-aloud that models skills and strategies, book clubs help students to explore particular NPS competencies and reading strategies on their own and with a small group of their peers. See below for examples of read-alouds and mini lessons from teachers below:

- Grades K-4
- Grades 5 and 6

- Grades 7 and 8
- Grades 9-12

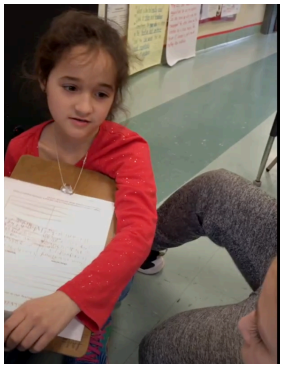
This video from Cross Street Intermediate School demonstrates facilitation techniques during book clubs so students grow their understanding by interacting with each other.

Books club journals or Reader's Notebooks provide opportunities for students to explore their thinking and make approximations about literature. With teacher guidance, students can deeply explore text through the use of strategies such as see, think, wonder; quote analysis; visualization; double-entry responses; character maps; evaluation of literary technique; etc. See these examples.

Students can also build their understanding of the world by seeking to understand why an author wrote a particular piece of literature. For instance, students can enhance their learning of the Civil Rights Movement through a study of *All-American Boys* by Jason Reynolds or *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone.

Journals will help students keep track of their thinking and practice skills. These journals also are essential when students write about literature, as they can review their own thinking and see how it has grown and changed throughout the novel.

Humanities and 7-12 English/Language Arts/Social Studies Instruction



Humanities units of study should be the way in which skills and concepts come together. Students read to learn and develop their thinking, research, analytical and evaluative skills.

No matter the grade level, students should have purposeful, well-designed instruction in synthesizing information and ideas in order to generate new thinking and create their own demonstrations of learning.

Centers and stations should form the main way in which students obtain knowledge and information, through a variety of media - articles, excerpts, images, graphics, graphs, maps, experiences, etc. Center cards are available for use. There are cards especially designed for 5-6, but can be applied anywhere.

The priorities of the Humanities instruction include student exploration, discourse, synthesis of learning and creation of new understandings. Research confirms that students learn best from one another. Centers are an effective way for students to safely share and build upon their own ideas.

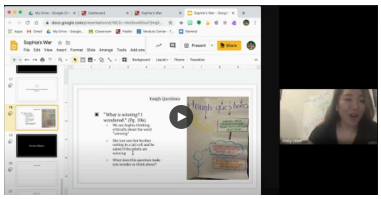
- Watch an image center discussion
- Watch a video center discussion

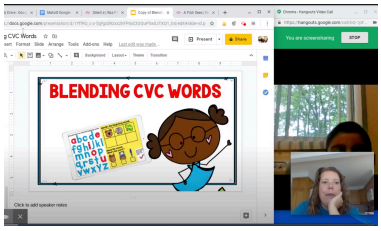
Designing Lessons and Learning in English/Reading/Humanities

Lesson planning should include adherence to a coherent structure. It should follow the tenets of the Learning Cycle Model with a learning target connected to the essential question(s) of the unit and topic.

Learning targets should build upon each other so that learning is scaffolded, logical and makes sense according to the progression laid out in the NPS Competencies. Scoring guides should be an integral part of the planning process. All lessons should have similar structures in place:

- Learning target and its connection to a competency
- Essential question that is connected to the learning target
- What students will understand as a result of this lesson (learning target or separate statement based on the Enduring Understanding connected to the Essential Questions)
- Instructional Purpose
    - Mini-Lesson connected to learning target/essential question (Watch T. Deitelbaum of Hop Brook)
    - Teacher-Student Discourse (Watch E. Otten of Cross Street)
    - Student-Student Discourse (Watch C. Piscitelli of Western)
    - Independent Experiences
    - Pairs/Small Groups (Watch L. Taft of Hop Brook)
    - Whole Group Share
    - Transitions
    - Group/Independent Work
    - Student Share
    - Wrap-Up connected to learning target
    - Exit Slip or Other Formative
- Formative Assessment opportunities (Watch A. Matott of Andrew Ave.)
- Differentiation
- How prior knowledge will be activated
- Vocabulary
- Questions to ask (80% should be focused on the learning target)
- Acceleration Strategies (i.e., activating prior knowledge, vocabulary, etc.)
- Potential misconceptions





Teachers are also encouraged to ask questions when they plan. Planning can occur alone, with grade level and/or discipline area partners, in PLCs, etc. Opportunities to plan together afford teachers time to share ideas, student work, and learning targets. Questions should guide planning or review of plans. Some questions include:

- What is my instructional purpose?
- How does the task communicate my instructional purpose? Is it clear?
- What competency is being assessed? How is it being assessed?
- Is this lesson coherent? How or how isn't it?
- What is the focus of the lesson? How does it fit into the larger progression of English Language learning?
- How can we prepare students for this lesson? What acceleration strategies would enable my students to access the learning?
- What is the rigor of the lesson?
- As a teacher, how could you monitor and track student misconceptions? How might students monitor and track their own misconceptions?
- As a coach, how would you assist a colleague in improving instruction?

- How does the literature/readings/examples/problems/scenarios you've selected connect to your instructional purpose?

Instructional Programming: Math

Math instruction at Naugatuck Public Schools follows a model that uses what students know from previous work to build on the current learning and be ready for future learning. Math instruction is designed for coherence across grade levels and to honor the innate progression of learning. Every lesson should have a clear purpose that is directly related to this learning progression. The progression is honored and visible in the NPS Math Competencies at every grade level.

Problem-Based Learning as an Instructional Model

Naugatuck Public Schools defines problem-based learning as:

> *Problem-based learning means building a deep conceptual understanding through problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking and metacognitive processes to access content. Students use knowledge to interpret, gather, identify, evaluate and present information about problems in real-world contexts in order to organize and build new knowledge and understandings. In problem-based learning, collaboration and the context of the problem drives mathematical thinking and reasoning while the teacher facilitates and scaffolds the process. In this way, students can clarify their own misconceptions and transfer what they know to problems that matter in the world.*

In mathematics, students will encounter daily lessons through the IM curriculum designed to facilitate problem-based learning. Mathematical discourse (i.e., number talks) is promoted and an integral component of this instructional model. Students cooperatively and collaboratively solve problems, test solutions, challenge each other's thinking and provide justification for a solution's reasonableness.

A model of problem-based learning entails many instructional and learning components in play at the same time, all working in concert to provide purposeful educational experiences designed around what students will learn by doing.

In Naugatuck Public Schools, students engage in mathematical discourse as a problem-solving approach and as a way to gain experience as problem solvers in a collaborative context through the IM curriculum.

This model also supports the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics' position that procedural fluency should be taught and developed through students' growing conceptual understanding of math.

Instructional Strategies

Questioning: The three components of a math lesson also encourages teachers and students to engage in inquiry by developing and asking questions. Questioning strategies should encourage exploration and deeper thinking about mathematics and its connections to the world. Teachers can facilitate learning through carefully crafted questions that lead students to new learning and new understandings.

Facilitation: Teachers guide the learning by providing students with a framework for discourse. Naugatuck Public Schools embraces a model of mathematical discourse that promotes questioning, challenging one another's thinking, attempting multiple strategies to solve a problem, developing action plans, and accountable talk. Through discourse, students can probe one another's thinking, justify their own ideas and approaches to problem-solving, and model potential solutions.

Number Talks: A number talk asks students to communicate their thinking when presenting, justifying and defending their solutions to problems, either solved mentally or collaboratively. When students have to explain their thinking, they develop more accurate, efficient and flexible strategies. "Accuracy denotes the ability to produce an accurate answer; efficiency denotes the ability to choose an appropriate, expedient strategy for a specific computation problem; and flexibility refers to the ability to use number relationships with ease in computation." (Parrish, 2014) According to Sherry Parrish, a number talk offers students opportunities to:

- Clarify thinking
- Investigate and apply mathematical relationships
- Build a repertoire of efficient strategies
- Make decisions about choosing efficient strategies for specific problems
- Consider and test other strategies to see if they are mathematically logical

Math is about making sense of numerical relationships through strategies, concepts, operations and properties. Key components of a number talk include: Classroom environment and community; classroom discussions; the teacher's role; the role of mental math; and purposeful computation problems. What this means for Naugatuck Public Schools is that teachers not only plan for the learning, but also plan for their role in the learning. They have processes and plans for what and how students will talk, and they have a shared understanding of "mental math" (see definition). According to Parrish, in a number talk a wrong answer is an opportunity to discover misconceptions and "for students to investigate their thinking and learn from their mistakes." (See pp. 10-15 of *Number Talks* by Sherry Parrish)

- Parrish gives five overarching goals for number talks. They are:
    - Number Sense
        - Numbers and algorithms, while a part of the business of doing math, are not the definition of the discipline. When mathematics is viewed as the relationship between quantities and numerical symbols, it is no longer a fixed body of knowledge. When mathematical instruction focuses on quantity instead of numbers, students no longer just learn and apply rules for manipulating numbers to find a right answer. Instead, students "construct and discover relationships between quantities and numbers and then examine alternative ways to describe and record these relationships." (Parrish, 2014) Mathematics is about relationships and is composed of three worlds: "the actual quantities that exist in space and time; the counting numbers in the spoken language; and formal symbols, such as written numerals and operation signs. Number sense requires the construction of a rich set of relationships among these worlds. Students must first link the real quantities with the counting numbers. Only then can students connect this integrated knowledge to the

world of formal symbols and gain an understanding of their meaning. To attain number sense, students need opportunities to discover and to construct relationships among these three worlds at higher and higher levels of complexity." (Griffin, 2004)

- Place Value
  - Understanding place value means that students can think flexibly about numbers and confidently manipulate them to understand patterns and trends. This is strongly reliant on a foundation built through number sense. An understanding of numbers involves integrating several key concepts, such as unit, place value, and one-to-one correspondence… (Dougherty, Flores, Louis, Sophian, 2010, p. 41) Place value understanding begins with counting by ones and grows to counting by groups and singles (collections), to counting by tens and ones, to a deep understanding of equivalent groupings. "It is critical that students see the relationship between number names such as "fifty-three" with the grouping of tens concept. They must also see that the way we write numbers (ones on the right, tens on the left of ones and so on) must be coordinated with the idea of groupings. (Van de Walle, John A., and LouAnn Lovin. 2006. Teaching Student-Centered Mathematics: Grades K-3. Boston: Pearson Education.)" This NCTM resource has different activities and guidance for place value.
- Fluency
  - Mathematical fluency is "skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately" when calculating solutions. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. 2010) "Accuracy denotes the ability to produce an accurate answer; efficiency denotes the ability to choose an appropriate, expedient strategy for a specific computation problem; and flexibility refers to the ability to use number relationships with ease in computation." (Parrish, 2014)
- Properties
  - Properties are characteristics of an operation or a number. Properties lead to students' deeper understanding of equivalent expressions and why equivalent expressions are important in explaining and describing the world. It is important that students know the five properties of math and how they work to make sense of numbers and mathematical thinking. (The commutative property, the associative property, the distributive property, the identity property of multiplication and the identity property of addition.)
- Connecting mathematical ideas
  - Connecting mathematical ideas happens, in part, through purposeful mathematical discourse between teacher and student, and student-to-student.

Purposeful Design: Curriculum and its accompanying resources are tools for teachers to be purposeful in how they design and execute a lesson. Competencies are the "for what?" to learning. For example, when designing instruction around place value, it is not only understanding that each digit holds a particular value that is dependent on the place it occupies in the number (for example, in 261, the 6 is a representation of 60 because it occupies the tens place, and 261 is actually 200+60+1), but also that place value understanding is a tool to accurately and efficiently solve more complex problems.

Intentionality: Being intentional happens on many different planes: planning for the learning, planning for your role in the learning, and planning for differentiation.

- **Planning for the learning:** When planning what students will learn, it is also important to connect with how they will learn it and how will you know they learned it? By setting a goal for the learning through exploration of how standards referenced in enVisions 2.0, Desmos Math or Illustrative Math connect to Competencies and Performance Indicators, you will not only create a

vision for what students need to master, but where it is situated in the overall math learning and where it is situated in the Vision of the Graduate (i.e., when students use a tool like place value they are Informed Thinkers). When planning for the learning, ask not only what students will **do,** but also what students will **learn and understand** as a result of doing.

- **Planning for your role in the learning:** A guiding question when planning for learning is, "What will I be doing?" Be intentional about your role in student learning and place students at the center of that learning. How will you guide the learning? How will you facilitate the learning? How will you empower students to take ownership of their learning? What structures and processes (i.e. discourse protocols, success criteria) will you create and/or implement to ensure that students are thinking deeply and making sense of mathematical concepts for themselves?

- **Planning for Differentiation:** Differentiating learning is more than just a few leveled activities. When you differentiate the learning, you offer students a variety of ways to experience the learning. Students benefit from multiple pathways to a single goal. How will you monitor the learning and perform checks for understanding? What tools can you use to ensure all students are meeting high expectations and learning at deep levels? Differentiation goes beyond what students will **do**; it captures how different experiences can deepen the learning in different ways for all students. According to Carol Tomlinson, differentiating instruction means accommodating the different ways in which students learn. It requires active planning for student differences so that all students achieve the same deep levels of learning.

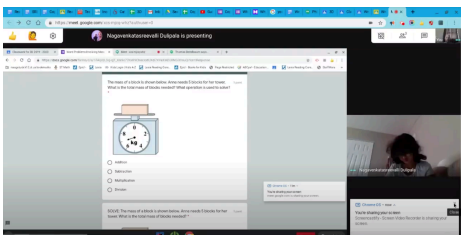
These are some of the components of high-quality instruction in Naugatuck Public Schools. For more information, please refer to the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics' *Principles to Actions: Ensuring Mathematical Success for All.* All teachers of mathematics in Naugatuck have a copy of this seminal text.

Designing Lessons and Learning in Math

The district is transitioning to Illustrative Math K-12. Grades 6 through 9 use the Desmos platform for IM, and this year, grades K-5 will use the IM curriculum. By 2026, grades K-12 will be using IM. Lesson planning should include adherence to a coherent structure. It should follow the tenets of the Learning Cycle Model with a learning target connected to the essential question(s) of the unit and topic.

Learning targets should build upon each other so that learning is scaffolded, logical and makes sense according to the progression laid out in the NPS Competencies. Scoring guides should be an integral part of the planning process. All lessons should have similar structures in place:

- Learning target and its connection to a competency
- Essential question that is connected to the learning target
- What students will understand as a result of this lesson (learning target or separate statement based on the Enduring Understanding connected to the Essential Questions)
- Instructional Purpose
    - Mini-Lesson connected to learning target/essential question (Watch C. Piscitelli of Western)
    - Teacher-Student Discourse (Watch T. Deitelbaum of Hop Brook)



    - Student-Student Discourse
    - Independent Experiences
    - Pairs/Small Groups
    - Whole Group Share
    - Transitions
    - Group/Independent Work
    - Student Share
    - Wrap-Up connected to learning target
    - Exit Slip or Other Formative

- Formative Assessment opportunities (Watch J. Mariano of Hillside)
- Differentiation
- How prior knowledge will be activated
- Vocabulary
- Questions to ask (80% should be focused on the learning target)
- Acceleration Strategies (i.e., activating prior knowledge, vocabulary, etc.)

Teachers are also encouraged to ask questions when they plan. Planning can occur alone, with grade level and/or discipline area partners, in PLCs, etc. Opportunities to plan together afford teachers time to share ideas, student work, and learning targets. Questions should guide planning or review of plans. Some questions include:

- What is my instructional purpose?
- How does the task communicate my instructional purpose? Is it clear?
- What competency is being assessed? How is it being assessed?
- Is this lesson coherent? How or how isn't it?
- What is the focus of the lesson? How does it fit into the larger progression of English Language learning?
- How can we prepare students for this lesson? What acceleration strategies would enable my students to access the learning?
- What is the rigor of the lesson?
- As a teacher, how could you monitor and track student misconceptions? How might students monitor and track their own misconceptions?
- As a coach, how would you assist a colleague in improving instruction?
- How does the literature/readings/examples/problems/scenarios you've selected connect to your instructional purpose?

For ideas about how to structure your math block, see this chart that details the difference between IM and the district's previous Math program, enVisions 2.0. It will explain the different facets of a math lesson. Instructional strategies for having students practice mathematical

Illustrative Math Block	enVisions Math Block
A typical lesson has four phases: • A warm-up • One or more instructional activities • The lesson synthesis • A cool-down In kindergarten, most lessons do not include cool-downs. During these lessons, checkpoints are used to formatively assess understanding of the lesson. Since activities are shorter, each lesson includes 15–25 minutes of time for centers. In grade 1, some lessons do not have cool-downs. During these lessons, checkpoints are used to formatively assess understanding of the lesson. A note about optional activities: A relatively small number of activities throughout the course have been marked "optional." Some common reasons an activity might be optional include: • The activity addresses a concept or skill that goes beyond the requirements of a standard. The activity is nice to do if there is time, but students won't miss anything important. • The activity provides an opportunity for additional practice on a concept or skill that we know many students (but not necessarily all students) need. Teachers should use their judgment about whether class time is needed for such an activity. **Alternatives to worksheets:** • Provide a laminated card with problems, graphs, illustrations and have students work in their math notebooks to solve problems. • Be selective - print out the activities that are most meaningful if done individually on a sheet of paper. • Use Google Classroom to provide a digital copy. Students can use their workbooks to work through the problems you select.	A typical lesson has four phases: • A solve and share • The Visual Learning Bridge • Guided Practice • Independent Practice **Solve and Share:** Students can use a projected image of this page or view it through the Savvas Realize platform. It can be assigned through Google Classroom. Students can use their notebooks to work through the problem. This is an excellent way to guide students through reading the problem and isolating what they believe is the most critical information that they write in their notebooks before they record their ideas about solving the problem. **Visual Learning Bridge:** Students view a video about the concept they will be exploring in class with peers. This video has built-in stopping points where the teacher can facilitate learning through turn and talks, small group discussion, and individual responses. This is a great time to have children come up to the whiteboard and discuss their thinking as they engage with the Visual Learning Bridge. **Guided Practice:** Not all students will need the same instruction all the time. Carefully select problems and situations from the enVisions platform on Savvas Realize. Students can use whiteboards to record their work on the problems that teachers project. Teachers can also assign pages from the enVisions workbook digitally through Google Classroom. Students can look at the page and use their math notebooks to record their work and their thinking alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Printing out pages is also an option if it is in students' best interests to have it. **Independent Practice:** This is a great time for small group instruction based on how well students understood the concepts from the guided practice. Students can be assigned problems from enVisions through the Savvas Realize platform and Google Classroom. They can work in pairs, small groups or alone to work through the problems in their math notebooks. Printing out pages is also an option if it is in students' best interests to have it.

concepts include:

- Use of a math notebook where they record their thinking about how to approach and solve a problem given what they know and are learning.
- Using Google Classroom and digital pages to share problems that students should practice in their notebooks. They can share their notebooks with the teacher and peers to get feedback on their thinking.

Instructional Programming: Districtwide Programs

Naugatuck Public Schools offers several district wide programs PreK-12 to meet the needs of all learners. During low risk status, these programs will continue with safeguards and protocols in place to ensure that our students have access to the programming that they need and are protected to the maximum extent possible. The activities below will operate this year.

Community Trips

Community trips are an integral part of teaching and learning in our community programs.Teachers will collaborate with administration to review the instructional objectives associated with any trips and decisions will be made on a trip-by-trip basis. The number of students attending a trip, the location they are traveling to, and safety protocols that are in place at the destination will factor into the decision-making.

Activities of Daily Living

In partnership with families, activities of daily living include the students' teams collaborating and communicating with families about how goals and objectives associated with activities of daily living will be addressed.

Community Jobs/Internships

The Transition Coordinator will collaborate with worksites to ensure safety practices are in place and will communicate with families to determine if students will go to the worksites.

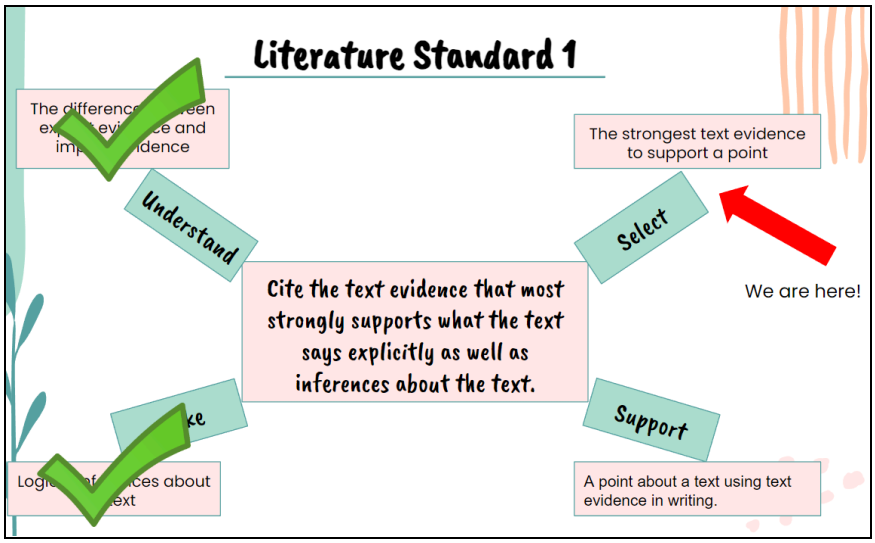
The high school programs that serve the salad and coffee bars will operate under teacher supervision and guidance.

Instructional Structures

Naugatuck Public Schools will maintain the following structures with integrity to improve the quality of student learning and high expectations for students.

Standards Walls

Students' overall learning goals are stated in Naugatuck's Competencies for each grade level and articulated by teachers within each learning activity students experience. However, students often struggle to understand what those goals are and what they are building toward. Standards walls are a tool that help students visualize their learning goals and understand their progression. The process of creating a standards wall is detailed in *Learning in the Fast Lane* by Suzy Pepper Rollins. The steps are summarized below.



Before starting work in a new unit of study, teachers should create a concept map. Their first step is to identify the enduring understanding or central standard they will be teaching and write this in the center of a large piece of paper. Next, teachers will identify several smaller learning goals from that standard that will move students toward a deep comprehension of the long-term goal in the center. Create noun/verb learning goals and place those in a logical sequence around the central standard. The rigor of the standards should be maintained, but the language should be understandable to students. See example photo on the right.

Display this map in the classroom and place an arrow at the starting point. This will be a visual cue to students of the first learning goal they will be addressing. A TIP chart of essential academic vocabulary words for the unit should also be displayed close by. Words should be added to this chart one by one, as encountered in the learning. This will provide an easy reference for students as they move throughout their lessons.

At the start of each lesson, refer to the standards wall and discuss the learning target for the day. Teachers should move their arrow marker to the part of the standard they will be working on each day. As students complete assignments, sample work should be posted near the relevant learning goal to create another reference point for students. Posting sample work is a key part of this process, as it allows teachers to recognize exemplary effort and gives students concrete examples of the skills they are learning.

Standards walls, TIP charts, and sample work should be changed several times throughout the year to reflect the current learning goals students are working on.

Success Starters

The opening minutes of class are when students are the most ready to learn, so it is important to start off with a

quick activity that is interesting, relevant, and leads smoothly into the day's lesson. (Rollins, 2014) An effective success starter should be as compelling as possible and make the purpose of the day's lesson clear before the teacher explicitly states it.

Effective success starters should:

- Connect to prior knowledge
- Hold high interest, real-world relevance, and value students
- Be explicitly tied to the standards being taught
- Engage every learner
- Answer the question, "What's this got to do with me?"
- Be fast-paced and time-conscious
- Set up the lesson, including the purpose for any assigned reading
- When appropriate, employ concrete representations before abstract concepts

Some strategies for effective success starters include role playing, surveys, sorting activities, question-generating activities, brainstorming, and concrete representations such as pictures or video clips that relate to the topic. (Rollins, 2014)

Centers and Stations in Math, Humanities and Science

Centers and stations provide opportunities for students to guide their learning in a structured manner. This structure can be used across disciplines and grade levels. Centers and stations can be organized around a topic or skill:

- The Age of Exploration in humanities
- Multiplication of decimals in math
- CVC words for phonics instruction

This instructional structure provides opportunities for students to learn through discourse as they co-construct knowledge. The teacher facilitates learning in this setting providing guiding questions to deepen student learning.

When these centers/stations are used in Humanities settings it provides students with the opportunity to build their background knowledge around a topic. This occurs through immersion, using a variety of materials including non-fiction texts, images, maps, quotes, primary source documents, etc. Students can self-select materials that are of interest to them in service of answering an essential question.

These are not centers for guided reading. A detailed explanation of guided reading centers can be found in this handbook.

Small Group Instruction

Small group instruction provides teachers with the opportunity to differentiate based on the specific learning needs of the students. Students are able to learn and collaborate with others who have the same interest and/or needs as them. This instructional structure allows the teacher to work with specific students on specific skills

once whole group instruction is completed. Small group instruction can offer student choice, inquiry and extensions of learning. It can be used across disciplines and grade levels.

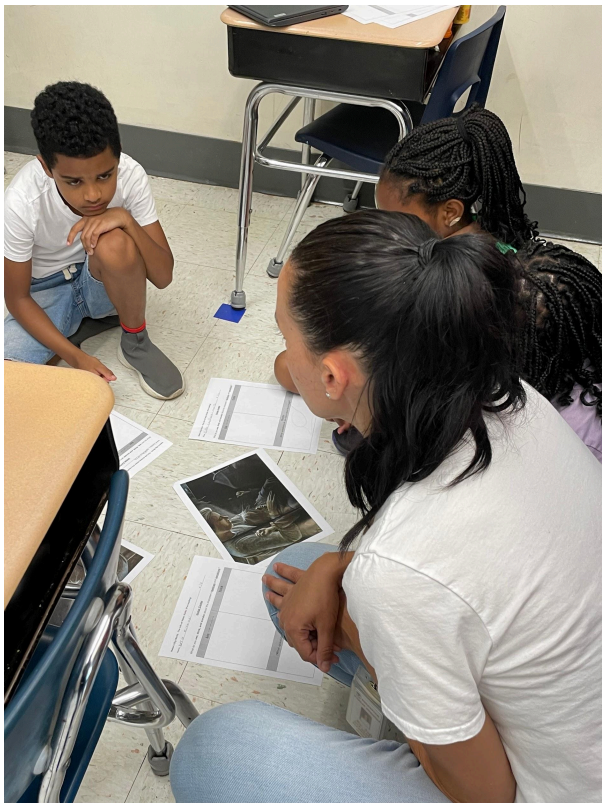
Writer's Workshop, grades 5-12

Students need extensive opportunities throughout the school year to practice writing in each of the three types of writing defined in the Common Core State Standards: argument, informational, and narrative. These opportunities should be accompanied by explicit instruction in writing techniques and strategies that follow a clearly designed learning progression and actionable feedback from teachers and peers. (Calkins, 2014) The Writer's Workshop structure is an effective way to deliver this instruction.

The key components of a writing workshop lesson are:

- Mini-lesson: A brief, ten minute lesson on a writing strategy delivered to the whole class.
- Writing time: The main work of the day in which most students work on their writing while teachers conduct one-to-one writing conferences and small group instruction.
- Sharing Session: The closure of the lesson in which students have time to share some examples of their writing and teachers share their final observations and teaching points for the day.

Inquiry and Student-Constructed Learning



The Learning Cycle Model strongly supports inquiry. In order for students to deeply understand something, they need to examine the pieces and put them together in ways that make sense to them. They need to create and understand meaning together. Sociologist James Paul Gee calls learning "a social act" and that we must have "social knowledge" in order to deeply understand how to interact with larger, historical discourse happening around us. Paulo Freire (1995, org. 1968) in his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was uncompromising in the idea that in order to understand language in any meaningful or useful way means also understanding the world. To make meaning of what is spoken and/or written, we need to have knowledge about the motivations of that speaker or writer. (Gee, 2015)

It becomes very important, then, to have students co-construct their own learning and build knowledge and skills together. One of the best ways to do this is through inquiry centers and focused, purposeful small groups. Watch this video of L. Taft masterfully working with this group and providing feedback.

Partner and Group Work

Partner and group work are imperative for students to be able to build upon their learning and understanding with their peers. This type of work increases student engagement, fosters oral language practice and communication skills, and provides students with an opportunity to learn from one another. In order for partner and group work settings to be successful they need to be purposeful. Students need a clear understanding of their task and role within their group or partnership. To ensure that all students are connected to the learning, clear expectations for partner and group work need to be set from the beginning of the school year. Expectations for discourse and how to work effectively in a group should be modeled, clearly expressed, and revisited. Teachers will need to facilitate groups more heavily when they are started but as students become more comfortable with their roles and expectations teacher facilitation will be needed less and less. Groupings should also be flexible to allow students an opportunity to work with a variety of their peers throughout the year.

Collaborative Learning

When students are learning together they are not passively receiving information to then discuss - they are making sense of information together and sharing their perspectives. Ultimately, they must synthesize what they have discovered to relate it to the purpose you have set for the learning.

Collaborative learning is not one thing - it encompasses a variety of educational approaches and strategies that involve joint intellectual effort by students or by students and teachers together. By working in small groups, students are searching together for understanding, solutions, meanings, creation of a product or idea, or any other critical thinking act.

According to Cornell University, when you engage in collaborative learning structures, you work in service of:

- Development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills.
- Promotion of student-faculty interaction.
- Increase in student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility.
- Exposure to and an increase in understanding of diverse perspectives.
- Preparation for real life social and employment situations.

To learn more about collaborative learning structures and processes, visit Cornell's website.

Peer Feedback and Peer Review of Work

Feedback students receive should be timely and actionable (Brookhart, 2017). If it is neither of these things, then the feedback is useless. Instead of writing on a student's paper, engage in conferring with a student, where you ask specific questions to arrive at a point where both you and the student

are clear about the next steps moving forward. The student's clarity comes from their own ideas about what they need next in order to get better at a task or skill.

Engaging peers in the process is vitally important as the teacher is only one person and cannot always get to everyone in a class in the allotted time. But peers do not know what to do or how to be effective until you teach them and afford them time to practice.

Peers should have a clear purpose for their feedback - what are they looking for and why are they looking for it. This video provides some excellent ways to train your students in a culture of feedback and revision. This article from *Edutopia* also has excellent advice for getting students ready to provide feedback to peers.

Book Clubs and Reading

Book clubs and independent reading are entirely student-centered and student-driven. The point of each activity is to foster student independence and interest in reading. Therefore, students will always have a choice in Naugatuck Public Schools of what they read independently.

Teachers 5-12 have adapted Sonja Cherry Paul's work *Breathing New Life Into Book Clubs.* Your reading coach will have a copy or two if you would like to see the inspiration for Naugatuck's book club guidelines.

- Grades 5 expectations, Grade 6 expectations
- Grades 7 and 8 expectations
- Grades 9-12 expectations

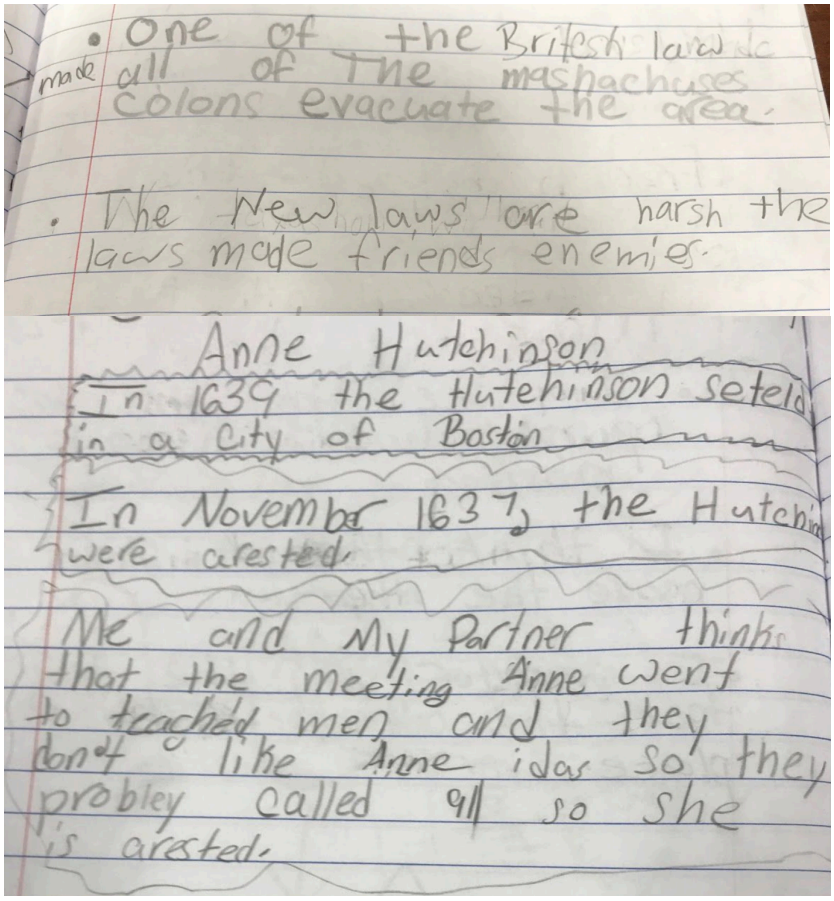
The rationale for book clubs is simple: "The research around book clubs shows several benefits. Engagement increases when students have autonomy over their reading. In turn, students' volume of reading increases along with opportunities for them to strengthen their reading skills. Further, it is in book clubs where students have in-depth discussions where they examine their own lives, explore their identities, and learn from various perspectives. Book clubs have an indelible influence on students as they develop as critical thinkers, lifelong readers, and change makers in the world." (Education Week, 2019)

When students have autonomy in their reading choices, they are more engaged and more interested in reading. Says Cherry-Paul, "Oftentimes, we've heard teachers make comments such as, 'I would rather die than give up teaching *The Giver*,' or, 'I would rather die than give up teaching insert any text that's used by some teachers year after year after year.' And what this signals to us is being mired in teaching texts versus readers, this swearing of allegiance to teaching a book that you love rather than seeing a book as a model, a vehicle, a roadmap for making visible the reading strategies that helps students to become more proficient readers." (Podcast transcript)

Our goal is grow the volume of reading a student does by giving them choice and voice when we are able. Through ARC CORE, students have the ability to choose the texts they want to read. Through book clubs 5-12, students are able to select a text that is interesting to them and engage with peers reading the same text. What's important is that they love what they are reading and we are teaching the necessary skills to be adept at reading - not a particular text.

Notebooks Across the Disciplines

Worksheets largely ask students to engage in practice through repetition or to engage with questions that someone else has generated. While some of this has a purpose in the classroom, it should be a small part of a child's educational experience. In order to truly engage in student-constructed and student-directed learning, notebooks provide students with a safe space to play with ideas, reflect, pinpoint and comment on important and relevant concepts, and becomes a place to house learning in meaningful ways that can be revisited and re-explored.



Using notebooks effectively for learning is a skill that needs to be taught, and there are several effective ways for students to keep notebooks, and depending on the task, you may choose to direct them to try out a strategy or you may ask them to try any strategy that they are comfortable with. This introductory professional learning can help teachers and students to expand their understanding and use of notebooks.

Notebooks are places for students to reflect and build their understanding on their reflections. It is in this way that students build metacognition. John Dewey (1910) theorized that reflection is iterative and a critical part of learning: "Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence - a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while in turn leans back on its predecessors" (p. 3). When students reflect, they are actively making meaning of what they have learned. This reflection gives birth to new thinking and new knowledge (Dewey, 1910). Metacognition also encompasses knowledge about how to reflect, analyze, draw conclusions, and apply one's knowing to solve problems, make decisions, and process information (Brown & Palinscar, 1987; Flavell, 1979; Pintrich, 2002; Zimmerman, 2002).

Naugatuck Public Schools teachers use notebooks to build student self-efficacy and agency as they are guided through new learning.

Mini-lessons

When planning direct instruction it is essential to be purposeful, strategic and clear in what students will learn, how they will learn it, and when they will practice it. Naugatuck Public Schools teachers should use mini-lessons as a strategy to directly instruct students. Mini-lessons last no longer than 15 minutes and release students to the work as quickly as possible.

The benefit of a mini-lesson is that they are short, to-the-point, and focused on one skill. This makes it very clear to students what they should be doing and why they should be doing it. They also have a purpose for what you are teaching as they will employ it in the next step of the lesson.

How will your mini-lesson connect to your target?	What will you do during these parts of a mini-lesson?
CONNECT Students learn **why** today's instruction is important to them as readers (or writers) and how the lesson relates to their prior work. The **learning target** is stated.	
TEACH The teacher shows the students how readers (or writers) go about doing whatever is being taught. • We may teach by demonstrating (modeling how and when readers or writers use this strategy or concept in their work, rather than simply telling what readers or writers do); • explaining and showing an example; • involving the class in a shared inquiry; or • taking them through guided practice.	
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT After we teach something, students are given a chance to quickly practice what has just been taught or to share noticings about the demonstration in order to understand a kind of thinking about reading or writing that they can try in their own work.	
LINK The teacher reiterates what has just been taught, adding it to student's growing repertoire. Students are reminded that today's lesson pertains not only to today, but to every day and to strengthen their Reading or writing for the specific unit inquiry.	

When planning a mini-lesson, Naugatuck Public Schools has a template available to help teachers plan. The mini-lesson should have a clear connection to why this learning is important to them as learners, purposeful instruction in the learning, actively engage them in practicing the skill/new learning, and linked to what has been taught and what will be taught.

Professional Learning Communities

All schools maintain regular PLC meetings by grade level so that coaches and department heads can help teachers to plan for units of study, design learning, and examine student work to determine needs and strengths within a classroom. Building administrators are actively involved in these PLCs, and continue to build community amongst teachers and teams.

Coaches and Department Heads will continue to provide support to teachers and students.

In addition, Naugatuck Public Schools believes in and supports a student-centered model of instruction. This can also be achieved through a Blended Learning model to help underscore the success of students with complex subject matter. Your instruction can impact how well these models will work for you and your students.

Intervention Services

Intervention services will be focused on acceleration strategies. Remediation will occur as needed and be dependent on the student's needs. Classroom teachers will assess student progress and student learning, and provide differentiated and scaffolded learning opportunities to meet the needs of the students in the classroom.

The district will continue to provide professional learning on district priorities. As we build our intervention services, we will be guided by the principles of acceleration as described in Suzy Pepper Rollins' (2014) book.

Physical Education, Athletics, Arts, & Extracurricular Activities

A well-rounded educational experience includes students' participation in physical education, sports, and the arts.

The implementation of physical education, fine arts, health and library/media curriculum will consider the needs of all students, and be adapted as needed to insure the participation of each and every student.

Physical Education

Physical Education classes will be outdoors, weather permitting, or indoors. Students will participate in a variety of activities aimed toward mastery of the National Physical Education Standards.

Teachers will focus their instruction on activities, fitness, exercises, and sports that are teacher-led but performed individually and focus on lifetime fitness, utilizing many different environments. Physical education will focus on health and wellness, mindfulness, meditation, fitness-based activities, yoga, strength development, and other appropriate learning. The Physical Education teacher, in conjunction with his or her supervisor, will make the best choices of activities based on space and curricular priorities.

All students may have a personal water bottle with them throughout the day. Students are not allowed to share water bottles.

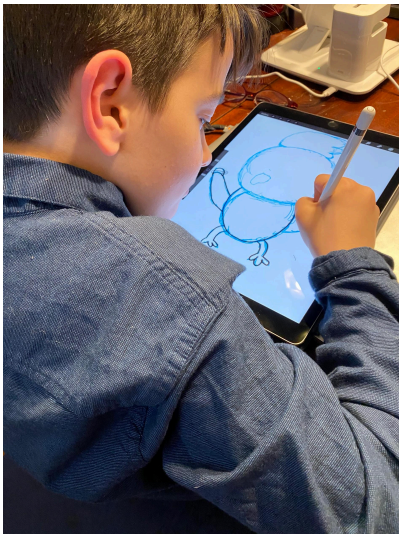
During classroom instruction, P.E. teachers will support social-emotional learning through classroom instruction and utilizing appropriate games and activities. District P.E. teachers will deliver social emotional lessons in the classroom, avoiding the repetition of NPS Health Curriculum. The P.E. SEL lessons will be from the OPEN P.E. 2020-2021 Curriculum Mapping Project. The lesson links can be found below:

- OPEN Planning Tools and Maps
- OPEN 10-week block plans by grade band

Arts and Music Education

Arts and music education are vital components of a rich, educational experience. Students are exposed to content and concepts that they may not otherwise encounter.

Art



Art Instruction K-12 will be grounded in the NPS Visual Arts Competencies available on the district's website. Scoring guides provide consistent, mastery-based ways to assess learning and give effective feedback to students on their performance. Some guidance:

- Manage class time for materials and tools to be distributed by teacher only or area designated for individual storage and to allow for proper cleaning of materials
- Students should engage in hand hygiene before and after using shared materials. School personnel will clean the materials as appropriate.

- Maintain current program of studies and course offerings.
    - At the middle school, continue to offer students choices and opportunities to explore different artistic mediums and experimenting in those mediums.
    - At the high school, continue to customize and differentiate projects for students so that they have equitable use of supplies and can co-design their learning with the teacher.
- Create gallery "opening" experiences and assessments.
- Where appropriate, include tech devices as options for photography, storage of photos, and exporting image files.
- Strategically use on-line apps or platforms for student work (e.g., SeeSaw, Artsonia, Google Classroom, Flip Grid, museum collections, painting/drawing platforms), video displays (e.g., YouTube), and slides (e.g., Google Slides, PowerPoint).

Art teachers use the competencies to plan and deliver cohesive, focused and purposeful instruction in visual arts to students of all ages.

Music

Grades K-8

Music education K-8 provides students with varied opportunities to create music, study musical compositions, explore how music impacts them and others, and different ways music impacts culture, language, and our lives.

- Third graders engage with recorders and learn how to make music using specific wind instruction. Every student receives their own instrument.
- Fifth graders have the opportunity to play an instrument and explore what it means to be part of a music-making ensemble.
- All students at every age will have experiences making music, singing, listening to music, and learning how music is written, composed, and performed.

The use of music manipulatives (drums, orff instruments, boom whackers, or ukuleles) enhances a student's experience with music and will be used and cleaned in accordance with district and state guidelines. Teachers can use Google Classroom to organize learning, handouts, and other resources. Tools like Screen Castify or Screen Cast-o-matic can assist students and teachers with recording their work and demonstrating their technique for critique and feedback.

Video recording demonstrations and providing students with an exemplar of a piece of music will help them to understand what it should sound like. Virtual partnerships with high school musicians will be helpful in learning an instrument.

Grades 9-12

Music education at the secondary level includes more performance- and computer-based courses. Throughout the week, music teachers will provide support and feedback to support completion of the task and mastery toward the NPS Music Competencies being addressed.

General Music

Music education 9-12 will include the use of music manipulatives (drums, orff instruments, boom whackers, or

ukuleles) to enhance understanding and connection with the act of composing and making music.

Instrumental Ensembles

Students should have opportunities to continue to develop their instrumental technique.

In grades 9-12, large ensembles such as band or marching band convene indoors and out, weather permitting, and in accordance with any district and state guidance. Time spent in person can include viewing videos the student has made of themselves performing an excerpt, and the student and teacher can review the video and discuss how the student can improve their performance and technique and set goals for themselves.

In addition to full ensemble performances, teachers are encouraged to plan recitals where students can perform in person or record performances and schedule them for viewing.

Vocal Ensemble

Students should have opportunities to continue to develop their vocal technique.

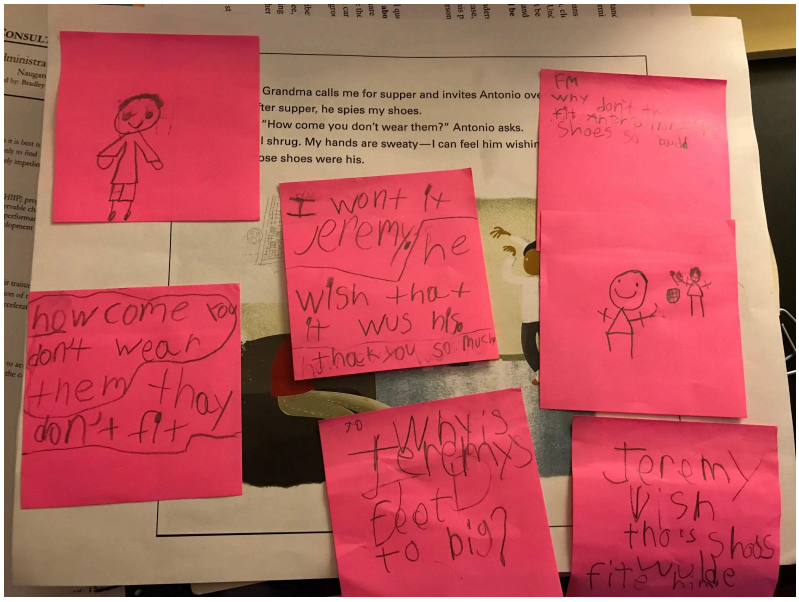
Large ensembles, such as chorus, may convene inside or out, weather permitting.The Choral Director will work with students to schedule one-to-one lessons so that students can receive feedback on their vocal technique and set goals for improvement. The director will also plan instruction to address the needs and goals of small groups. The Choral Director will also use video recordings, Flip Grid and other technology tools to view student performance and provide timely feedback.

For Music Instruction K-12

Music teachers will use the NPS music competencies to plan instruction and assess student growth and performance. Music teachers may use on-line apps or platforms for student work (e.g. Google Classroom, Flip Grid, SmartMusic, Sound Trap, Acapella), video displays (e.g., YouTube), and slides (e.g., Google Slides, PowerPoint).

Assessment

In order for students to demonstrate improvement and grow as learners, we must engage in assessment **for** learning - not assessment **of** learning. The difference? Assessment for learning provides room for actionable feedback students can use to improve performance and achieve the level of understanding and skill we expect. When we engage in assessment **of** learning, we are not providing feedback or opportunities for growth. We are assessing what a student knows on a particular day at a particular time without the benefit of opportunities to continue growing and learning.



During the school year, teachers should assess students for learning using formative assessment techniques. By doing so, it allows for adjustments in instruction based on the information gathered. Rather than use one singular piece of evidence to capture what a student can do with what they know, teachers should collect smaller pieces of work as evidence of student growth and achievement. Examples of formative assessment may include student work samples, notes from student-teacher conferences, student journal entries or exit slips. Refer to Tools for Formative Assessment for engaging and alternative ways to gather important student knowledge. This ongoing collection of data can be used when administering summative assessments and diagnostics.

The use of programs like mClass, IRLA, spelling inventories, DIBELS, and other methods of data collection can greatly assist teachers in understanding student performance and needs. The use of running records and the IRLA to monitor reading development and progress will assist teachers in tracking growth and progress.

Teachers should rely on the NPS Scoring Guides to appraise how students are progressing. Some assessment tools that can guide teachers are:

- Running records in Learning A-Z and mClass
- Progress Monitoring through the IRLA (K-4)
- iReady Diagnostic Screener
- iReady Standards Mastery assessments
- Edulastic (Pear Assessment) as an assessment tool for quick checks for understanding
- Verbal responses to questions and text

- Written responses to questions and text
- Verbal explanations of problem-solving and understanding of number sense
- Written explanations of problem-solving and understanding of number sense
- Discourse between students
- Discourse between teacher and student
- Writing - through journals/notebooks, reflections, etc.
- Drawings, sketches and other artistic work accompanied by a verbal or written explanation
- Any examples of analytic thinking
- Use of Making Thinking Visible strategies like See-Think-Wonder
- Use of Clark oral language strategies for self-expression (K-4)
- Notes, annotations, or observations - either in writing or verbally - about literature

For additional formative assessment strategies, check out Dylan Wiliam's book Embedded Formative Assessment (a few copies are available at Central Office in the Curriculum Conference Room Library). You can also check out these videos by Dylan Wiliam:

- What is Formative Assessment?
- Embedding Formative Assessment
- What do We Mean by Assessment **FOR** Learning?
- Importance of formative assessment for increasing teacher quality
- Unpacking formative assessment
- Dylan Wiliam Center

For additional information on feedback, Susan Brookhart's *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* is highly recommended. A few copies are available at the Central Office in the Curriculum Conference Room Library. You can also check out Brookhart's resources and her recorded webinar on feedback.

Grading

Students will be assessed regularly during learning in accordance with the district's protocols and procedures, including conferences with families and report cards. Report cards will be issued by trimester in grades K-8 and by quarter and semester for grades 9-12.

K-6 Competency-Based Report Cards

Teachers will continue to monitor, assess and report on student growth and progress every trimester on competencies and indicators. Below, teachers can access the schedule for when indicators will be open for scoring. Once a competency is open, it remains open for the remainder of the school year and can be adjusted and changed by the teacher when the student shows growth and progress. Science competencies will shift this year to a new design based on performance indicators. New science indicators are available on the district website.

Competencies and Indicators Open by Trimester

Kindergarten	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	General Music K-2 Physical Education Visual Arts Library Media and Technology
Grade 1	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	
Grade 2	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	
Grade 3	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	General Music 3-6 Performance Ensembles Physical Education Visual Arts Health 5-6 Library Media and Technology
Grade 4	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	
Grade 5	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	
Grade 6	Reading/Language Arts Social Studies	Mathematics Science	

Grades 7-12

Students in grades 7-12 will be assessed by their teachers with the NPS Competencies and Scoring Guides. They will receive a traditional report card with a traditional grade that represents their knowledge and skills in the content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health Music, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Foreign Language and Applied Education.

I.T. and Chromebooks

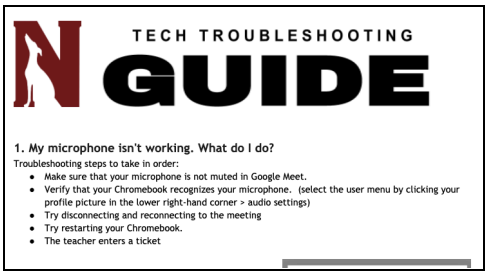
During the 2023-24 school year, students and teachers will still have access to I.T. support regarding their Chromebooks. The following procedure will be used to report faulty Chromebooks and other technology support issues.

- Step One: The teacher will enter a ticket into the system. The IT site on the district page will allow you as the teacher to log in with your credentials that you would use to log into your classroom computer. Please fill out the electronic form and hit submit. It is important to enter a ticket immediately so that I.T. can resolve any issues quickly.
    - Teachers can use this same link and form to report problems they may encounter with technology.
- Step Two: The I.T. Department communicates with you in a timely manner regarding your technology question or issue.
- Step Three: The teacher will check in with the student to confirm that the technology issue is resolved. In the event that a Chromebook needs to be replaced, I.T. will communicate with the teacher and the principal to apprise them of when it will be delivered.

Please use the ticket system to communicate with our I.T. Department and resolve any issues you and your students may be having.

Troubleshooting

Should students encounter problems with their Chromebooks - for example, their microphone isn't working, I.T. has created this guide to help solve the problem before submitting a ticket.



Social and Emotional Support Services and Education

Every school in Naugatuck has established a school-based team to connect with families and children and to assist them with strategies and services to support their success. Using the RULER program from Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence, we will continue to check in with students throughout the day and use the tools of RULER to assist them with giving voice to their feelings and using appropriate strategies to self-regulate their behavior.

The first step will be for each class to create their RULER charter of how they want to feel at school. This will pair with their Compact for how they will keep each other safe every day from the first unit about Needs and Wants.

Next, teachers will use RULER's Mood Meter to track how students are feeling throughout the day, reporting any students in red or blue to the school-based team. Teachers will also teach and monitor the use of other RULER strategies like imagining our best selves and determining how we can achieve our best self.

Teachers will also teach and monitor the use of the Meta-Moment and the Blue Print. More information is available by signing into RULER's website.

The district also uses the principles of Responsive Classroom and the morning meeting as a check-in with students as they start their day. In addition to students, the district strives to take care of its faculty and staff.

Mandated Reporter Training

Upon return to work all faculty will complete the state's online training for mandated reporting and work with their school-based team to be aware of issues of abuse or neglect.

The state has also made its K-3 SEL Framework available, which complements the district's Vision of the Graduate and SEL Competencies developed K-4.

Counselors have collaborated to create the SEL Competencies and Scoring Guides for grades K-4 available on the district's website.

Special Services

Naugatuck Public Schools works with the CSDE to provide Special Education services to students.

Naugatuck Public Schools will provide students with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as required by law. This includes participation with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible. Our students will engage with nondisabled peers in accordance with their IEPs. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services. NPS will work with families and students to customize the plan that will be most effective and beneficial in executing IEPs and 504 Plans.

Alternative schedules **may** be considered so that the student can participate to the fullest extent possible according to the district instructional plan and customizing schedules that meet the students' needs and the goals and objectives specified in the student's IEP.

NPS' Director of Special Services also works with outside agencies to accommodate students and families who attend school based on the McKinney-Vento Act. When students require transportation to Naugatuck Public Schools from outside of the district, the Director of Special Services will work with current transportation providers.

Educators and staff will also continue to abide by OSHA regulations.

Student Needs:

Some students may have needs that require unique or innovative solutions. Students with significant communication and/or executive functioning deficits; impaired vision, hearing and/or other physical disabilities; and students who haven't been able to access related services will have customized plans that target their goals and objectives and serve their IEPs.

Multilingual Learner Support Services

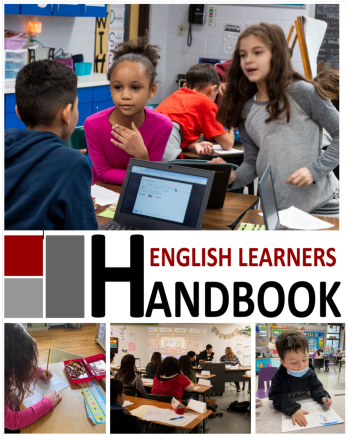
Naugatuck stands ready to support its growing population of English Language Learners and continuing to develop their English language proficiency and grade-level academic content.

Naugatuck Public Schools will provide support for ELs as they access academic content and their supplemental language instruction program.

It is paramount that grade level content be provided with adequate scaffolds and supports, so that ELs may access the grade level content being provided in the classroom while developing language proficiency. This will assist our schools in closing the opportunity gap for our students and providing them greater access to the content and the concepts.

EL students will receive their EL instructional program in addition to their mainstream, grade-level and content-area instruction, as provided by law. Such language instructional education programs may consist of a range of services, including bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Sheltered Instruction and others. Please see the district's Multilingual Learners' Handbook for more information.

The district will also offer bilingual education programs when warranted by CSDE guidelines and mandates. Students in bilingual programs are entitled to receive native language support as part of their school's designated bilingual program model.



Our teachers and staff will communicate with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English in a language that they understand. The district has provided communication services for both written and verbal communication through translation services. These include a telephone translation service and ParentSquare, a notification and communication system that will transmit messages from the district in a language designated by the family. In addition, technology tools like TalkingPoints and Google Translate will be employed.

EL students who are also identified as students with disabilities will receive those supports and services as well. Dually identified students will have their language needs represented in their annual meetings about their IEP.

Flexibility and adaptability is a key component to instruction. Communication between general education teachers, special education teachers, and EL teachers is vital in maintaining a coherent continuum of services that enable the student to move forward in his or her learning.

The district and its staff will also attend to the Social and Emotional needs of its EL students, recognizing that ELs may have unique, individual needs from each other and from their non-EL peers.

Communication will go out to parents for Pre-LAS (Kindergarten) testing and LAS Links placement. This state-mandated test tracks achievement toward proficiency and growth of English Learners against the Connecticut English Learner Proficiency standards.

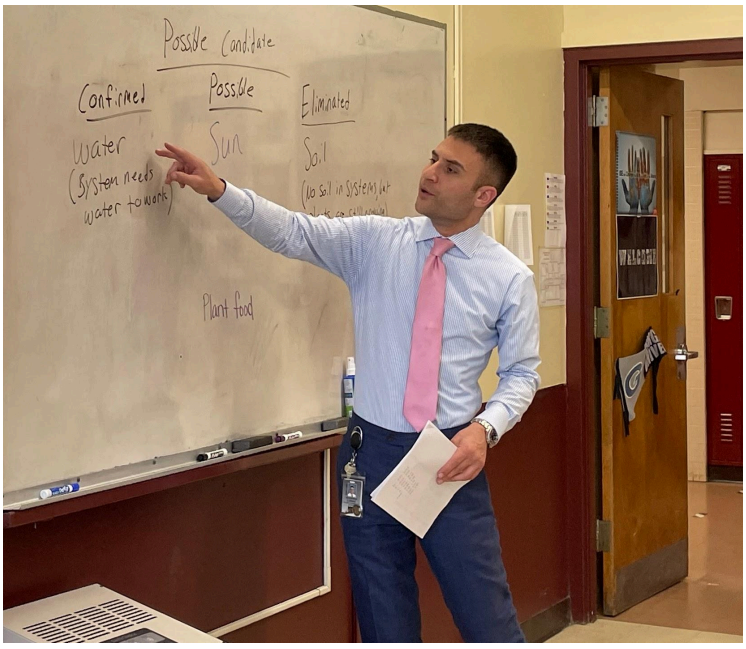
Afterward

We are blessed to have a talented and resourceful faculty and staff. We are blessed to have personal relationships with our students, our families and one another. We have opportunities to teach and grow like never before - to usher in real, substantial change that endures.

Flexible. Adaptable. Customized.

This Teaching and Learning Handbook will continue to be a resource for our educators and staff as they look to implement the instructional strategies and curriculum that will support our students as 21st century learners.

We will thoughtfully and with purpose continue to develop the skills and concepts necessary for every student to become the Vision of the Graduate.



At Naugatuck Public Schools, we are all in. This handbook is designed for our teachers so that every student can meet and exceed our high expectations as expressed in our competencies. NPS plans for our children's safety, education, social and emotional health, needs, passions, and growth as responsible, empathetic, wise human beings who understand how to navigate uncertainty with courage and valor.

We believe we can do this. We believe in our families. We believe in each other. We believe in our students - they can meet and exceed our expectations with the right instruction, the right intervention, the right experiences, and the right scaffolds. We will continue to assess their needs and rise to meet them.

It is our sincere hope that this handbook provides you with the answers and understanding you seek. Like any plan, it is subject to change as the world changes and as we change and evolve. We will be flexible and adaptable, customizing learning for all of our learners. This handbook will be regularly updated and revised by a team of teachers and administrators to reflect research-based, best and promising practices in education.

The 2024-25 school year will be one of challenge, change, innovation and courage. We are #naugystrong.