

Curriculum Coordination Assignment

AH Student

University of Montevallo

EDL 594, Fall 20**

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Name and title of person interviewed: Daffy Duck, Elementary Program Area Specialist (English Language Arts and Social Studies)

School District: ABC County Schools

1. *When evaluating the curriculum what approved methods and principles of program evaluation are used in the curriculum improvement process? If there are none used can you suggest one?*

- **DD:** “The first thing that we would do is look at the standards to make sure that the curriculum is aligned with the standards. We then consider the outcome that we are trying to reach as far as assessment and make sure that curriculum and assessment are connected. We would want to make sure that the curriculum offers multiple opportunities for application and the depth and rigor that students would need in order to meet the standards. We would utilize tools such as checklists, rubrics, etc... to evaluate the curriculum based on the criteria that it needed to meet.”

2. *How do the processes used in this school/school district ensure that the focus is upon student learning and that this is the driving force for not just curriculum but also instructional and institutional decision-making?*

- **DD:** “Student learning is the focus of everything that we do as a school system. We have structures in place so that all students received equitable opportunities for learning. Teachers receive on going professional development, and the district sets expectations for teaching and learning. Teacher leaders are selected from each school, and are provided with professional development and planning supports four to six times each year.

The teacher leaders then turn the information around at the local schools.

Vertical team meetings are held at the local schools as well as at a district level to support teaching and learning.”

3. *Do they use multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement?*

- **DD:** “We use multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement. We have a CSI (Continuous School Improvement) process where by teams from local schools meet at the district several times a year to look at data and receive professional development relating to data and school improvement. The first meeting is when the team looks at data from multiple sources to write their school improvement plan. Areas of improvement are selected based on data from Global Scholar and ACT Aspire. The plans are monitored by central office partners who visit schools monthly to do walk-throughs relating to the strategies and the action steps that each school listed in their plan. The district provides benchmark assessments at each grade level to monitor student learning. Formative assessment is used along the way in all grade levels to adjust instruction. The district also has an RTI plan in place in order for students to receive appropriate instruction and supports at all levels based on the data.”

4. *How do they engage staff in the ongoing study and implementation of research-based practices and how do they as administrators use the latest research, applied theory, and best practices to make curricular and instructional decisions?*

- **DD:** “Each school sends Teacher Leaders in ELA (English Language Arts) and Math to district training and planning sessions four to six times per year. This training is turned around at the local schools to ensure that all teachers receive the training. Teacher leaders plan with peers from other schools during these meetings as well using research based strategies and best practices. Each grade level in K-5 has a curriculum map that was developed by teams at each grade level using the College and Career Ready Standards. Teachers and administrators are provided with opportunities for additional professional development training during the summer as well. Principals meet monthly for a district provided Professional Learning Unit (PLU) that is based on best practice and formulated based on data from the previous year. Principals also meet in Professional Learning Communities on a monthly basis for professional development, planning, and other related activities that are taken back to their schools. Local professional development is planned in each building and provided during the year. Literacy Coaches who provide job embedded professional development and training are housed in each elementary school and shared with middle schools through our Literacy Link Project.”

5. *How do they communicate high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of students?*

- **DD:** “We have GAP (Goal Action Plan) teams which are made up of various stakeholders across the district who plan for academic and social development of our students. The CSI (Continuous School Improvement)

plans are written by teams from each school and this information is shared at each school. Everything planned for relates back to student learning. We have curriculum guides and plans, which state the expectations we have for student learning. As far as social development, our district works closely with agencies to provide learning supports to our students as well as teachers as needed. We also have a social worker on staff as well as counselors in each school. Additionally, we have a therapist from one of our agencies who comes into the schools to meet with students who require mental health support.”

6. *How do they ensure that curriculum content and instruction are aligned with high standards resulting in improved student achievement?*

- **DD:** “The College and Career Ready Standards are what drive our instruction. Our curriculum is written around the standards. Textbooks and other resources are used as tools, but the standards are primary in all of our planning, instruction and assessment. These standards are at the focus for all that we do in terms of curriculum content and instruction because they determine the depth and rigor in instruction. Two years ago, we moved away from our basal reading program because we felt it would not serve our students to the level it needed to.”

7. *How do they identify differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of a variety of student populations and who in-services the teachers on these?*

- **DD:** “We have a large ELL population. Supports are provided in each school through additional staff and professional development. We also provide district professional development for all teachers relating to differentiated

instructional strategies whether they be intervention or enrichment. Our Literacy Coaches and teachers have worked with various departments to development additional strategies to differentiate instruction for all students. We use the learning progressions in the College and Career Ready Standards to differentiate instruction as well. In-service training is provided at the district level as well as at the local school level by teachers, coaches and administrators. We have also utilized outside experts who come in to provide additional training as needed.”

8. *How do they ensure that curriculum is aligned to state standards, including standards unique to career and technical education (if a secondary school) and to special education?*

- **DD:** “The Alabama State Department of Education provides training on the College and Career Ready Standards to districts five times each year. The standards are what drive our curriculum. So, the standards came first and then the curriculum was developed. The same holds true for career and technical education. “

9. *How do they use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process and what formal and informal assessments are used to assess student progress?*

- **DD:** “We have a data dashboard in our district which organizes all of the data from multiple sources into one place. Formal assessment such as Global Scholar and ACT Aspire are utilized. We also use formative and summative assessment in all schools. Our district provides benchmark assessments as

well that are utilized in all schools. We also consider other data such as attendance, grades, etc.... to make decisions for supports that students might need. Data is at the forefront of everything we do in ABC County. Our Continuous School Improvement process and structure supports this effort as well.”

10. How do they align curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments to district, state and national standards including those unique to technical education (if a secondary school) and to special education?

- **DD:** “Our teachers are given curriculum maps which are aligned to the College and Career Ready Standards. Instruction is planned based on the standards listed in these maps. We look carefully at all assessments to determine if the students are getting what is being taught, adjust instruction and/or provide interventions or other supports until they reach mastery. Students in special education receive Tier I instruction with support as well as additional instruction based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP). We look closely at the results from all assessments to make adjustments in instruction and monitor growth.”

11. In your opinion, are there any processes that you believe could be or should be improved and how?

- In my opinion, I truly believe that ABC County Schools have put a lot of time, effort, and thought into their programs, including planning, providing professional development, assessing, and altering the programs as needed. Several years ago, there was a push to use a basal program for reading such

as Harcourt Storytown or Scott Foresman Reading Street. When the new standards were presented, ABC County worked tirelessly to revise their programs, assessments, and practices to fit with the depth and rigor of what the standards called for the students to master. They spend a great deal of time in providing professional development at all levels from administration to supports (such as Literacy Coaches, English Language Learner teachers, etc), teacher leaders, and teachers to make sure that everyone feels prepared to bring each child to graduation, regardless of the grade level they teach or serve. ABC County has placed a large focus on student learning and assessment but has many plans in place to make sure all teachers and students are supported in carrying out these plans for *all* learners. One suggestion I would have is that they provide some sort of in service to outline how all of the components the coach discussed work together to support our curriculum. Many teachers have received plenty of professional development on what and how they are teaching but they also have a very important question: where did all of this come from? I think if they were provided an arena to ask this question, they would have a better understanding, and ultimately better buy-in, related to the curriculum and would feel more comfortable in sharing what is and is not working.