



DISTRICT 4184

ASPEN ACADEMY

World's Best Workforce Plan

2015 - 2016

## Introduction:

This document is intended to report on the basic requirements of MN STATUTE 120B.11: SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCESS FOR REVIEWING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT; STRIVING FOR THE WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE. The Minnesota Legislature has mandated that school districts form advisory committees for the planning and improvement of the instruction and curriculum affecting state and district academic standards. This committee makes recommendations to the school administration who in turn reports to the Aspen Academy School Board.

This report is organized into two sections. Part 1 gives an overview of the Local World's Best Workforce (WBW) requirements. Part 2 discusses components specified in best practice. Aspen Academy supports continuous curricular and instructional improvements. In order to continue to offer students the highest quality educational opportunities and to assure the community that the school system is being operated efficiently and effectively, the administration and staff propose to implement a comprehensive process according to the specifications outlined.

**Our Mission** is to provide students with a well-rounded, Core Knowledge-based education which meets the intellectual, creative, and social needs of each child.

**Our Vision** is to prepare students for future educational opportunities and life in a global society by creating an academically rigorous, literature-rich environment where class sizes are small, and a strong sense of community is built and valued.

## PART ONE: STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

### Performance Measures

Each district shall strive to create the World's Best Workforce by providing progress toward the following measures:

- Closing the achievement gap between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty, and between all racial and ethnic groups.  
*MCA test scores for the 2015-2016 school year are as follows (F & R denotes Free & Reduced)*

<b>MATH</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>
<b>ASPEN – overall</b>	83.3	92.1	84.6	63.2	69.6	80.0
<b>F &amp; R</b>	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
<b>STATE – overall</b>	69.6	68.8	58.8	56.1	56.2	58.2
<b>F &amp; R</b>	51.4	49.8	38.6	34.4	34.3	36.9

<b>READING</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8th</b>
<b>ASPEN</b>	63.6	90.5	80	68.4	69.6	66.7
<b>F &amp; R</b>	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
<b>STATE</b>	57.5	58.4	67.7	62.3	56.7	57.3
<b>F &amp; R</b>	39.2	38.9	49.1	43.6	37.4	38.5

<b>SCIENCE</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>8th</b>
<b>ASPEN</b>	78.5	50.0
<b>F &amp; R</b>	NA*	NA*
<b>STATE</b>	61.6	47.5
<b>F &amp; R</b>	40.8	27.4

\*F& R population too small

- All students in third grade shall achieve grade level literacy.  
*Aspen Academy has a Reading Well by Third Grade Literacy Plan which is posted on our website. Third grade Reading proficiency for 2015 was 63.6%, with the state average being 57.5%.*
- All students shall be ready for kindergarten.  
*As a charter school, Aspen Academy is not required to and does not provide preschool screening or offer kindergarten readiness or early childhood programming. We do, however, assess all incoming kindergarteners during the first two days of school in order to know their proficiency levels in basic math and literacy skills.*
- All students shall attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school.  
*Aspen Academy has been transitioning these students to high school by connecting with the local high schools in the area.*
- All students shall graduate from high school.  
*Not applicable because Aspen Academy is a K-8 school.*

### **Measures to Assess Progress**

Measures must include the following but may be supplemented by additional measures:

- Student performance on the National Association of Education Progress  
*Aspen Academy has not implemented this assessment. Our students take the CTP, the Comprehensive Testing Program which assesses students in Math and Literacy. Our students score above the national norms and slightly below the suburban norms in all subject areas.*

- The size of the academic achievement gap by student subgroup  
*MMR (multiple measurement domains) was 83.27%, with our achievement gap reduction scoring 19.86 points.*
- Student performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments  
*Aspen Academy collects this data and it is published in its annual report.*
- High school graduation rates  
*This requirement is not applicable because Aspen Academy is a K-8 school.*
- Career and college readiness under section 120B.30, subdivision 1 (3) consistent with this paragraph and section 120B.125, age-appropriate exploration and planning activities and career assessments to encourage students to identify personally relevant career interests and aptitudes and help students and their families develop a regularly reexamined transition plan for postsecondary education or employment without need for post-secondary remediation.  
*This requirement will be attained at the high school level - school districts must assist all students by no later than grade 9 to explore their educational, college, and career interests, aptitudes, and aspirations and develop a plan for a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary education or employment.*

### **District Plan Components and Activities**

The District Strategic Plan must align itself with the following components and activities. These activities may be further delineated in other core documents of the district:

- Clearly defined district and school site goals and benchmarks for instruction and student achievement for all student subgroups identified in section 120B.35, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), clause (2)  
*Aspen's Annual Report contains goals and results and is posted on our website.*
- Specific information on a process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in pursuit of student and school success and curriculum affecting students' progress and growth toward career and college readiness and leading to the world's best workforce  
*Aspen Academy's implementation of Data Driven Instruction (DDI) meets this requirement for purposes of student progress. Aspen Academy's implementation of Leverage Leadership (teacher coaching/mentoring) meets the requirement of identifying teacher strengths and weaknesses of instruction. The 2015 Coaching/Teacher Evaluation process will continue to support this.*

- Description of a system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all instruction and curriculum, taking into account strategies and best practices, student outcomes, school principal evaluations and teacher evaluations  
*Aspen has several systems in place to support curriculum and instruction including DDI, teacher coaching and mentoring, curriculum/standards alignment, principal evaluations, and teacher evaluations.*
- Specific information on strategies for improving instruction, curriculum, and student achievement;

*Specific strategies to date include Strategic Planning, parent surveys, DDI, teacher coaching/mentoring, comprehensive/ongoing staff development planning. We are providing students with additional Language Arts and Math assistance in the upper grades through the Extend program and Targeted Services in the lower grades. We continue to use Scantron that will allow us to do real-time assessment on the standards using MCA-type questions and to allow teachers/students immediate feedback. We have provided staff with further training in differentiated instruction to better meet individual student need. We will continue to work on individualizing instruction for each student through Data Driven Instruction (DDI). We utilize IXL (pronounced i-excel), software that provides individualized practice on state standards. We have set Habits of Discussion (training students to be active participants in classroom discussions) as a building-wide goal. Through new teacher orientation, staff are educated on the importance of meeting the charter goals and how that impacts our charter renewal.*

- Description of education effectiveness practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, instructional technology, and a collaborative professional culture that develops and supports teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness  
*Specific strategies include DDI – over the summer we had new staff formally trained in DDI through Friends of Education. We include teacher coaching/mentoring, implementation of Teach Like a Champion strategies, professional learning communities with a choice of learning topics, and on-going professional development opportunities such as Reading in-services. As a charter school, the building support is the same as the district support.*
- An annual budget for sustaining implementation of the district plan  
*Aspen has a budget that supports curricular needs and staff development needs, with these items being a large percentage of the budget after personnel costs.*

### **District Reporting Requirements**

The District has a responsibility to report annually to the MN Department of Education, to Friends of Education, and to the public. These reporting requirements include:

- The school board shall publish a report in the local newspaper with the largest circulation in the district, by mail, or by electronic means on the district website. Public report to be titled: *District Number, District Name Local World's Best Workforce Plan*. Will be prominently displayed on the district's official Web page and contain all required elements listed consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, in a manner that is accessible and relevant.

*Aspen Academy will publish its report by posting it on their website.*

- The school board shall hold an annual public meeting to 1) Review, and revise where appropriate, student achievement goals, local assessment outcomes, plans, strategies, and practices for improving curriculum and instruction, and 2) Review district success in achieving the previously adopted student achievement goals and related benchmarks and the improvement plans leading to the world's best workforce.

*Aspen held its Annual Report presentation on November 17, 2015 and Student Performance presentation on November 17, 2015.*

- The school board must transmit an electronic summary of its report to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education each year. Summary report to be titled: *District Number, District Name Local World's Best Workforce Summary Report*, submitted in a manner that is accessible and relevant by December 1, 2016.

*This report shall serve as the starting point for this reporting to MDE and can be built upon in subsequent years.*

- Each school district shall periodically survey affected constituencies about their connection to and level of satisfaction with school. The district shall include the results of these surveys in the summary report.

*A survey was sent out to our parents last winter.*

### **District Committees and Roles**

The District shall create an Aspen Advisory Committee (AAC) to ensure active participation in all phases of improving the curriculum and instruction affected by state and local standards.

Components include:

- The district advisory committee, to the extent possible, shall reflect the diversity of the district and its school sites, and shall include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents.
  - Maggie Rowan, Curriculum Coordinator
  - Christopher Adderley, Teacher
  - Diane Sterna, Teacher
  - Kristina Houglum, Teacher
  - No students or parents present on committee

- Whenever possible, parents and other community residents shall comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members.

*No parents stepped forward. We did not meet this goal.*

- The district advisory committee shall provide recommendations to the school board regarding rigorous academic standards, student achievement goals and measures consistent with subdivision 1a and sections 120B.022, subdivision 1, paragraphs (b) and (c), and 120B.35, district assessments, program evaluations.

*These provisions 1) require a district to acknowledge language proficiency skills and cultural understandings students may already possess if they are not native English speakers, including Native American languages, and 2) Allow districts to award World Language High Proficiency Certificates. Aspen should review these criteria as part of assessing their Spanish, Latin, and ELL programming.*

- The district may establish school site teams as subcommittees of the district advisory committee. The site team develops and implements strategies and evidence-based practices to improve instruction, curriculum, and student achievement at the school site, and may advise the board and the district advisory committee about developing the annual budget and revising the school site improvement plan that aligns curriculum, assessment of student progress and growth in meeting state and local academic standards and instruction.

*Aspen Academy has a clearly articulated Scope and Sequence. The Math and Literacy curricula are closely aligned with MN State Standards. Other subject areas are aligned with State Standards or, where state standards do not exist, are aligned with national standards or Core Knowledge or program outcomes. Next steps involve 1) review of student data, particularly DDI data to review information on subgroups of students, and evaluation of best practices that will improve delivery of instruction.*

## **PART TWO: BEST PRACTICES and COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

In the following section, key questions are listed to guide the work of the committee. Below is a list of committee goals, pertinent school documents that can be used in the course of committee work, key sources of data, and key questions to guide the work of the committee. It is assumed that in the course of the work of the committee, answers to these questions (and any other key questions identified by the committee) will be inserted into this report.

### **AAC / World's Best Workforce COMMITTEE GOALS INCLUDE:**

- Create opportunities for staff, students, board members, administrators, and citizens to work together for the educational benefit of students, making recommendations to administration and the school board.
- Ensure alignment of the curriculum with State and National Standards.

- Provide a systematic review of curricular programs through a study of best practices, data collected from key stakeholders, results of local and state assessments, and current legislative and authorizer mandates.
- Provide essential goals, benchmarks, and curricular outcomes at the classroom level.
- Determine optimal curricular materials to be used by the district/school in each subject area, including practical integration of technology to meet technology standards.
- Provide opportunities for professional learning teams to assure that students reach school/district goals. Determine a focus for in-service and staff development with a focus on instructional delivery models.
- Provides a guide for budgetary decisions for curriculum development and staff development.
- Communicate expectations for all teachers, students, and parents with respect to a course or a field of study, as well as information about the Data Driven Instruction process.

**PERTINENT DOCUMENTS/RESOURCES INCLUDE:**

*Aspen Academy Literacy Plan: Reading Well by Third Grade, Grade Level and Subject Area Scope and Sequence Curriculum Maps, Strategic Plan, Teacher Evaluation and Mentoring (TEAM) documents*

**PERTINENT DATA SOURCES INCLUDE:**

*MCAs, CTPs, DDI scores, Running Records, Targeted Services data, EL data, student demographic data*

**GOALS OF A CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS WITH RESPECT TO THE WORLD’S BEST WORKFORCE:**

- Ensures alignment of the curriculum with State and National Standards. Answers the question: “What do we want students to know and be able to do?” Addresses external expectations (as defined by state and federal standards).
- Creates opportunities for staff, students, board members, administrators, students, and citizens to work and plan together for the educational benefit of students.
- Provides a systematic review of curricular programs through a study of best practices, data collected from key stakeholders, results of local and state assessments, and current legislative and authorizer mandates.
- Communicates district expectations for all teachers in a course or a field of study. Communicates district expectations to parents and students.
- Provide essential outcomes for the development and implementation of common assessments at the classroom level as well as ongoing evaluation of the Data Driven Instruction process.
- Determines optimal curricular materials to be used by the school site in each subject area, including practical integration of technology to meet technology standards.
- Provides a guide for budgetary decisions for curriculum development and staff development.
- Provides opportunities for professional learning teams to assure that students reach school/district goals. Determine a focus for in-service and staff development.

## HOW DO WE IMPROVE CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND THE USE OF OUR MATERIALS?

- Evaluate present levels of student performance through assessment data to assure students are learning.
- Review current curriculum/standards alignment and curriculum mapping. Continue to monitor and adjust.
- Research best practices and teachers' work in professional learning teams to implement strong delivery models and effective use of teaching resources.

## CURRICULUM REVIEW CYCLE AND PROCESS

Aspen Academy's charter requires that the school offers a Core-Knowledge based curriculum, Singapore Math, Spanish, and Latin. Within these requirements, however, we do have some options that are part of our curriculum review. These include:

Year 1	Spanish
Year 2	Latin
Year 3	Grammar
Year 4	Math
Year 5	Writing
Year 6	Phonics

This goals and intended outcomes of this process is intended to ensure that:

- The curriculum is aligned with state and national standards and the curriculum is appropriately mapped in all disciplines and across grade levels.
- All students will receive a high standard of instruction and assessment
- Technology will be well integrated in the various subject areas
- The curriculum receives ongoing monitoring and review
- Where necessary, improvements will be recommended, changes piloted, and progress monitored and reported on.

## CURRICULUM REVIEW and IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

- A) What do we need to learn in order to ensure we have the best instructional delivery models and curricular materials (including technology) for our students?
  - Research best practices for both instructional delivery models and curricular materials (including technology) for the discipline
  - Examine current documents including state and national standards, and student data
  - Get feedback from teachers about current instructional practices and needs
- B) Identify what data is needed and how it will be collected. For example:
  - Examine formative and summative assessments to determine if they will provide the needed student data
  - Achievement and common assessment data
- C) Analyze current program effectiveness
  - Measure the extent to which the program is meeting standards, state legislative mandates
  - List the findings of those measurements as program strengths and weaknesses.
  - Identify overlaps and gaps
  - Make recommendations for improving the identified weaknesses.

- D) Develop an instructional framework for the subject area/discipline.
  - Use Backward Design to determine essential outcomes, learner objectives, unit implementation, and required assessments
  - Determine necessary staff development and teaching resources for effective and quality delivery
  - Determine budget needs
  
- E) Teachers implement curriculum with materials in the classroom with students
  - Teachers draw from best practices research and professional learning team to implement curriculum under best delivery models
  - Teacher uses resources and materials, including technology where appropriate, to best implement curriculum and achieve desired outcomes
  - Assist in identifying needs and wants in staff development that will help with implementation.

### **ASPEN ACADEMY CURRICULUM STRUCTURE**

- Community (State and National Standards)
- School Board
- Director
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Peer Coaches and Mentors
- Student Services Teachers (ELL, Targeted Services, etc.)
- Classroom Teachers
- Curriculum Review Committee

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Community (State and National Standards) – Legislated or mandated criteria
- School Board – It is the job of school board members to provide policy oversight
- Director – It is the job of the Director to ensure statutory requirements are met, ensure communication between members of the committee, board, authorizer, Department of Education, and other stakeholders.
- Curriculum Coordinator – it is the job of the Curriculum Coordinator to provide leadership for the curriculum improvement process, advise the Curriculum Advisory Committee, coach the instructional teams, and serve as a liaison between the teaching staff and administration/board.
- Peer Coaches and Mentors – It is the job of Peer Coaches and Mentors to provide teacher support for implementation of quality teaching practices, and mentoring that is in line with the MN Teacher Evaluation process.
- Student Services Teachers (ELL, Targeted Services, etc.) – It is the job of student support teachers to support the efforts of general classroom teachers and subject area teachers to promote student success.
- Classroom Teachers – It is the job of general classroom teachers and subject area teachers to implement quality teaching methods and curriculum to ensure student learning.
- Curriculum Review Committee – Parents and community members should reflect views of stakeholders in the curriculum improvement process, attending meetings and providing input as needed.

**ARTICULATION OF CURRICULA BY GRADE (Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade samples given. All grade samples are available on Aspen Academy's website)**

**KINDERGARTEN** - By the end of the school year, students will be able to:

**Math**

- Compare and order objects
- Recognize and sort two and three-dimensional shapes
- Recognize, create, complete and extend patterns
- Understand length, size, weight, and capacity
- Understand the relationship between quantities and whole numbers up to 31, then 100
- Use objects and pictures to represent situations involving combining and separating, number bonds, and sets, beginning addition and subtraction

**Language Arts**

- Ask and answer questions about key details in both fiction and non-fiction stories
- Retell familiar stories
- Identify characters, settings and major events in a story
- Recognize common types of texts
- Define the role of an author and illustrator
- Describe relationships between illustrations and the story in which they appear
- Actively engage in group reading activities
- Identify basic similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic
- Demonstrate understanding of basic print concepts including reading left to right, top to bottom, page to page
- Demonstrate understanding of basic phonological awareness including rhyming words, syllables and blending and segmenting onsets in single syllable words.
- Read emergent reader texts with purpose and understanding
- Nursery rhymes, folktales, fiction stories, and fables

**Writing**

- Use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to compose opinion pieces, informative/explanatory pieces and narrate a single event
- Participate in shared research and writing projects

**Social Studies**

- Demonstrate civic skills in the classroom including listening to others, participating in classroom discussions, taking turns, sharing and cooperating.
- Describe American symbols, songs and traditions
- Distinguish the difference between goods and services
- Describe spatial information including in front of, behind, above and below
- World, continent, ocean, exploration,
- Understand what a map and globe are
- Columbus, pilgrim
- Native Americans, Regions, Tribes
- Compare and contrast traditions, way of life

**Science**

- Develop observations, Sort objects
- Magnets

- Five senses
- Monitor daily and seasonal changes in weather, seasons, ecology, conservation
- Identify the sun as a source of heat and light
- Observe and compare plants and animals, living and non-living things
- Observe and identify a natural system including aquariums and gardens
- Farming, animals, pets, animal needs

## **FIRST GRADE**

### **Math**

- Number sense, tens and ones
- Telling time
- Counting coins
- Addition and subtraction fact families
- Geometry
- Measurement
- 2D and 3D shapes
- Comparing and Graphing
- Beginning multiplication and division
- Fractions

### **Language Arts**

- Decoding words
- Alphabetizing lists
- High frequency words and Spelling
- Descriptive and narrative writing
- Handwriting and journaling
- Couplet, Acrostic, and Diamante
- Basic sentences, questions, exclamations
- Reading comprehension and fluency
- Fairy Tales, folk tales, Aesop, poetry

### **Social Studies**

- U.S. History
- World History
- Geography
- Native American History
- Community and Economics

### **Science**

- Habitats, Animal Life, Classification, Oceans
- Scientific Method, Atoms, Three States of Matter, Measuring Properties
- Electricity, Safety
- Earth Science, Volcanoes, Rocks and Minerals
- Astronomy, Sun, Moon, Planets, Stars
- Major Bodily Systems, Healthy living
- Science Biographies (Carson, Edison, Jenner, Pasteur)