

Upper Elementary Department Analysis

1. How are the department's curriculum and instructional strategies aligned with the school's Desired Results for Student Learning?

Technology is integrated into the curriculum by utilizing computer-assisted learning programs and instructional strategies which promote effective communication. Students engage in small-group work and discussions, written and oral presentations, and cognitive reflection.

2. How does each course offering align with the state's core curriculum that prescribes content and course specific intended learning outcomes?

Course-specific content is aligned to the Utah State Core Curriculum as well as the Core Knowledge Curriculum objectives to provide each student with a well-balanced educational foundation.

3. To what extent does the department utilize a variety of assessments to monitor student achievement and adjust instructional practices?

Students are given pre-and post-assessments in math and reading, in both computer-based and paper formats. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess students both formally and informally. These assessments inform teaching methods and strategies as well as curriculum development.

4. How does the department collaborate with other departments to create integrated, relevant and authentic learning opportunities for students?

Time is set aside each week on an early-dismissal day for departments to meet and collaborate, planning subject-area integration and learning activities geared towards student progress. Upper- and lower-elementary grade classes form "buddy reading" opportunities for older students to read, teach and mentor younger students.

5. To what extent do department members utilize inclusionary teaching strategies to meet the needs of ALL students (ESL, Special Education, Gifted, etc.)?

Subjects such as Math and Reading are taught in ability groups to meet the needs of individual students. Differentiated instruction is offered to students through lessons that are prepared to address the different learning styles of students. Students-at-risk are identified and qualifying students receive special education services.

6. To what degree is the allocation and use of department resources aligned with the educational goals of the school?

Resources are shared among department members to promote the central focus of fostering effective communication and critical thinking skills. Each of the department members uses Studies Weekly newspapers, educational videos, math manipulatives, computers and educational software in common.

7. How does the department collaborate and engage in ongoing professional development growth for the purpose of improving student performance?

Faculty members receive professional development on a monthly basis addressing instructional practices and classroom management which improve teacher and student performance. Department representatives engage in daily dialogue to promote educational growth through stimulating discussions and the exchange of ideas.

8. How do students have access to additional support beyond the classroom?

Teachers are available for tutoring and support before and after school. With the utilization of blogs and websites, students and parents have access to supplemental online resources and information.

9. How do students have access and utilize technology as a regular part of the instructional program?

Educational software programs such as Renaissance Place (Accelerated Reader, STAR Reading) and A+ Educational Solutions are used to teach and reinforce academic skills. Teachers also use projectors, document cameras and digital resources to assist with instructional delivery.

10. How does current staffing and certification meet current program needs?

All teachers within the department are highly qualified and are current in their credentialing with the Utah State Office of Education.

11. How is the department collectively addressing the school's current school improvement goals?

Department members collaborate weekly to evaluate progress toward department and school goals related to student progress.

Areas of strength:

- Camaraderie among teachers
- Flexibility
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Dedicated and hard-working
- Organization

Recommendations for growth:

- Offer more basic technology training and instruction for students
- Attend more specialized training workshops in all core curriculum areas
- Continue to develop and place emphasis on traditional American values in our students