

West Sioux Falcon Newsletter

Covering Grades 6-12

Iowa Core Curriculum

Current Progress and What's Coming Next

Schools in Iowa are in the process of developing implementation plans for the new Iowa Core Curriculum. West Sioux teachers and administrators have spent time this summer working on the details of the district's implementation plan.

Passed by the Iowa legislature and signed into law by Governor Chet Culver in spring 2008, an implementation plan for the Iowa Core Curriculum is due July 1, 2010 for high schools and July 1, 2012 for elementary and middle schools. West Sioux has decided to develop a district plan, rather than two separate plans.

The vision for the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure the success of every student by providing a world-class curriculum. The Iowa Core Curriculum is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and lifelong learning. It identifies the essential content and instruction that all students must experience.

"The curriculum process we have is effective. Unlike many schools that don't have a curriculum process or a cadre in place, we are further along in the implementation process. It should be a fairly smooth transition considering what we have already put into practice," said Tara Sheridan, cadre member.

The Iowa Core Curriculum covers the content areas of math, science, literacy and 21st century skills.

Last spring, West Sioux teachers spent time during an inservice day examining the content of the Iowa Core Curriculum and analyzing the alignment of West Sioux's curriculum to the Iowa Core Curriculum. There were a few gaps identified in each of the content areas, but overall, West Sioux's curriculum is closely aligned with the Iowa Core Curriculum. "As we developed the science curriculum, we aligned West Sioux's standards to the National Science Foundation Standards. These same standards were used to develop the Iowa Core Curriculum standards for science. West Sioux's curriculum matches the Iowa Core Curriculum very closely," said Duane Sperle, high school science teacher.

Future inservice days will be spent aligning West Sioux's curriculum to the Iowa Core Curriculum. According to the Iowa Department of Education, "School districts that implement the Core Curriculum with integrity increase the likelihood that all students become life-long learners, productive adults, and engaged citizens."

How Are We Doing?

West Sioux Schools has met all requirements for Annual Yearly Progress

Since the legislation of No Child Left Behind in 2002, schools are required to assess students and report their progress. Each year, West Sioux students are given the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) or the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED). The results are collected by the Iowa Department of Education and analyzed.

Each school in the nation is expected to make progress in a number of areas. One area of expected progress is student achievement. Each school is expected to continue to increase student achievement and ultimately

reach the goal of 100% of the students reaching the proficiency level in math and reading.

The ITBS and ITED tests are used in Iowa as evidence of student achievement.

West Sioux met the requirements set by the state to fulfill the expectations for Annual Yearly Progress.

West Sioux is not on a list of schools that need improvement.

West Sioux administrators and teachers will continue to analyze student achievement data, analyze best practices and programs and work to continue to provide high quality programs to meet the learning needs of all students.

Dress Code Reminder

As the school year quickly approaches and you plan your school clothes shopping trip, please keep in mind the school's dress code.

Students at West Sioux are expected to wear clothing that does not in any way offend other students or school employees. No clothing promoting the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, sex related pictures or topics, will be allowed. All clothing is to be clean, and appropriate for school. Chains and other materials that can be considered weapons are not to be worn or brought to school. Shirts and/or tops and pants, skirts, or shorts, must meet and cover the waist. The length of shorts and skirts must be the length of the student's fingertips when arms are extended at their side or reach the middle of the student's thigh, whichever is longer. No undergarments should be showing. The top of shirts should be above a line drawn from the student's armpit to armpit. Thin strapped tank tops and halter tops are prohibited. Slippers and pajama pants are not permitted to be worn. Students are expected to wear reasonable footwear, appropriate to the activity. Coats are not to be worn in the classroom. Hats, and/or bandanas, are not allowed from the time students enter the building in the morning, until 3:45.

West Sioux Awarded AIW Grant

West Sioux Middle School/High School was recently awarded a grant to participate in the Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) project. The grant was a competitive grant offered through the Iowa Department of Education.

Schools that are selected for the AIW Project will engage in a rigorous process that will improve student achievement. AIW participants will focus on teaching that promotes student production of Authentic Intellectual Work. The building level leadership team that has been focused on reform initiatives for the past several years, along with several additional staff members, will be the initial team that participates in the project.

AIW comes highly recommended by principals in the state that are participating in the project. Everything they say about AIW indicates that participation in the AIW project is a natural next step for West Sioux to take.