

Curriculum and Staff Development

“So What’s the Difference?”

In organizing for your staff development efforts this year, you may find some confusion by staff members on what is the difference between staff development and curriculum writing. For a long time in our district staff development was tied to the curriculum cycle. For example, when it came time to write curriculum for science and math, teachers were simply provided workshops in those areas or subs were hired to do some curriculum planning. Curriculum writing and staff development are two separate points of attack in creating effective, results-oriented schools. They are interrelated but serve very distinct purposes. **Curriculum writing is about building precision and clarity in the curriculum.** It is about establishing clear content standards

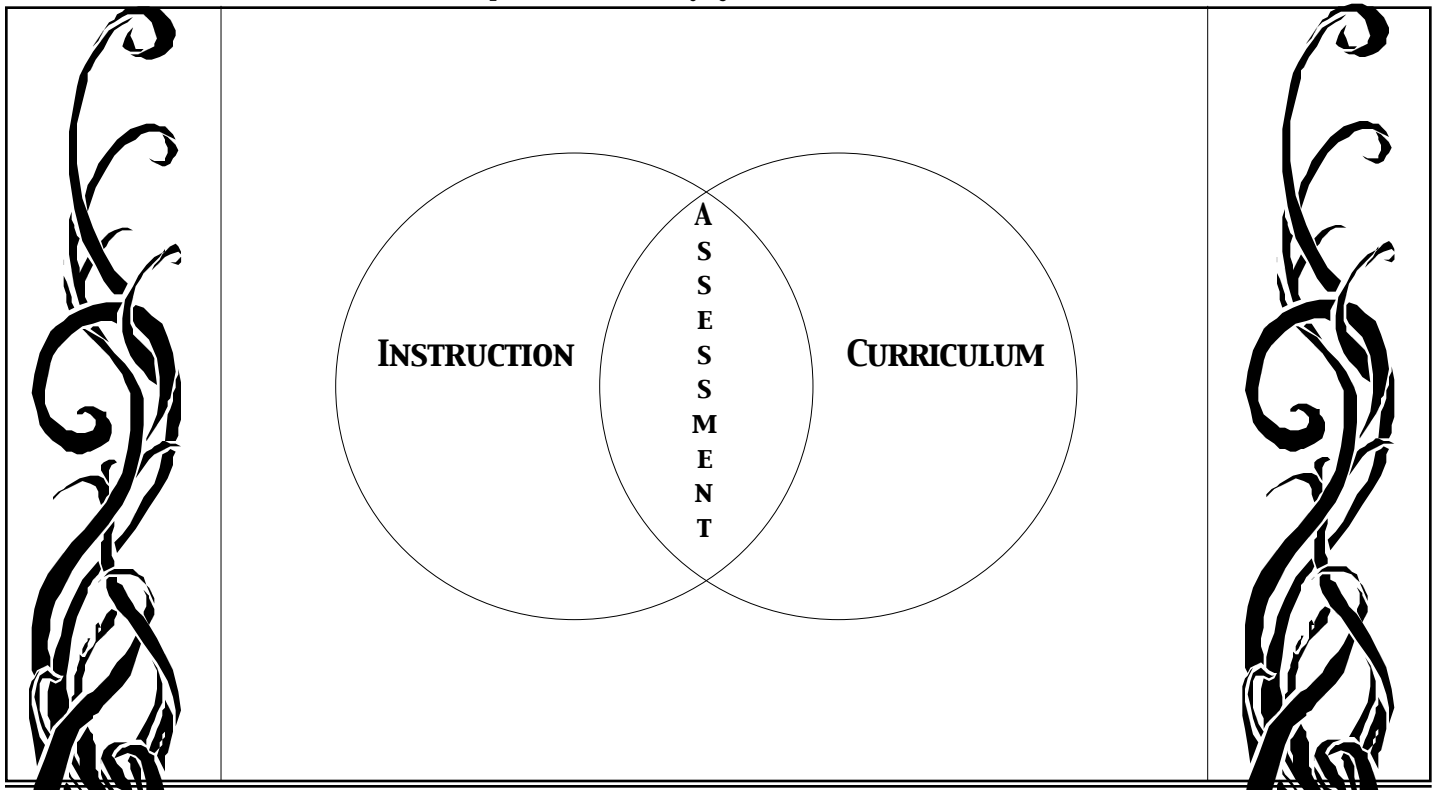
and the process skills (constructivism) necessary to make learning meaningful for students. It takes into account all the current research on learning and is assessed regularly throughout the school year, not just during a curriculum cycle.

Although staff development may support some curriculum efforts, its main purpose is to increase student achievement by providing a professional development structure that builds teacher/staff capacity and skill level. Staff development should also support and if needed, create organizational efficiency throughout the district. In Big Lake we focus staff development efforts around four key areas: organizational development, personal mastery, job-embedded

learning, and team building. Each one of these areas is anchored by the concept that the first step in planning is to ask what results you want.

In order to keep curriculum from being confused with staff development, a district should assign a separate budget for each effort. In Big Lake, we created the following visual to help staff and administration understand the difference between these two important initiatives.

*If you have a staff development idea that is successful in your school, we would like to hear about it. You can send a brief description and a copy of the tool or form to Jim Roussin, Big Lake H.S., 501 Minnesota Ave., Big Lake, MN 55309
E Mail address - J.Roussin@BigLake.K12.mn.us*



Staff Developer’s Tool Box