

## M-DCPS/UTD Curriculum and Instruction Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the intended use of the District Pacing Guides?

The District Pacing Guides align state standards and essential curricular content to instructional materials resources, and interim assessments.

The District Pacing Guides:

- assist teachers with transition to new standards;
- address issues of pacing to ensure that all State Standards are being addressed and that curriculum, in its entirety, is covered;
- provide consistency and uniformity at both school-site level and District-wide for increased rigor and equity of instruction for all students;
- address issues which arise due to student mobility within the District;
- ensure that the necessary content included in the FCAT assessment is addressed; and
- foster collaborative planning which allows teachers to be in close instructional proximity of one another through the orderly systematic use of Pacing Guides by grade levels, though styles and use of materials may vary.

### 2. How were the Pacing Guides developed and by whom?

Recognizing a need for the consistent implementation of the core curriculum within the context of the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCMI), Curriculum and Instruction District staff from the Division of Language Arts/Reading and the Division of Mathematics, Science, and Advanced Academic Programs, along with Regional Center Curriculum Support Specialists, DA staff, and a varied representation of teachers across all grade levels developed the District Pacing Guides. The developers considered the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, the tested benchmarks, the available resources, and the school calendar when they created the pacing guides.

### 3. In which schools are the District Pacing Guides required to be used?

Instruction at Intervene and Correct II D, double D, D former F, and F Differentiated Accountability (DA) designated schools in the areas of literacy, writing, mathematics, and science is implemented through the pacing guides. The use of the District Pacing Guides is recommended for all schools.

### 4. In which schools are Instructional Focus Calendars (IFC) required to be used?

Use of an IFC is required at Intervene and Correct II D, double D, D former F, and F DA designated school in the areas of literacy, writing, mathematics, and science. The development and use of the IFC is highly recommended for all schools.

### 5. How are Instructional Focus Calendars (IFC) developed and by whom?

The IFC is data-driven and includes date-range, benchmarks, activities, assessment(s), and strategies, all aligned to the FCIM. The IFCs are developed by course-alike/grade level school-site instructional teams. The course-alike/grade level communities of instructional staff meet regularly to develop the IFC and design lessons that focus on content to be studied through the five key elements of instruction – preparation, meaning, content, practice, and performance. Additionally, these teams analyze student data and work product so as to research, discuss, design, and implement instructional strategies to improve student achievement.

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**6. What is the intended use of the Instructional Focus Calendars (IFC)?**

The IFC is a document that provides teachers the opportunity to personalize instruction based on grade level/course content and students needs.

**7. Can District Instructional Focus Calendars (IFC) template be used as daily lesson plans?**

The IFC can be used as the daily lesson plan as long as all of the required elements of the lesson plan as described in the Labor Contract are included.

**8. What is the difference between a Pacing Guide and an Instructional Focus Calendar?**

The District Pacing Guides were developed collaboratively by instructional coaches, teachers, district supervisors/curriculum support specialists, and region instructional support staff/CSS. The guides provide the appropriate pacing or time frame in which instruction is to occur. In addition, the pacing guides are aligned with the timing and content of the District Interim Assessments, working together to provide both guidelines for instruction and tools for monitoring student progress throughout the year. Instructional Focus Calendars (IFC) are to be developed by teachers at schools and provide teachers with a mechanism for collaborative planning and promote instructional conversations on a grade level or within a subject area.

**9. Are all of the strategies on the School Instructional Review (SIR) conducted by Region Offices to be used by all teachers at all times?**

The strategies listed in the SIR are examples of researched-based best practices that are evident in model classrooms and are recommended.

**10. What professional development requirements do teachers have?**

- **Federal Level:** There are requirements associated with No Child Left Behind as it relates to Highly Qualified;
- **State Level:**
  - 1012.98 F. S. requires every teacher to have an individual professional development plan (IPDP). In Miami-Dade County we use the IPEGS Goal Setting Form that replaces the IPDP;
  - 1004.04 F.S. requires individuals who supervise interns Clinical educator training
  - 1012.34 F. S. requires all instructional personnel to have training provided on the instrument used for annual performance appraisal;
  - Certification Endorsement completion for targeted groups of teachers in the following areas: ESOL; Reading; Gifted; Autism; and
  - Requirements for schools that are specified in Differentiated Accountability regarding Professional Learning Communities and Lesson Study.
- **Local Level:**
  - IPEGS Goal Setting Form
  - Need for district-wide training to support implementation of state mandates, i.e. Bullying and Harassment Plans; to support local initiatives such as new SPED IEP System.
  - Teachers may be directed by the district, region, or school-site administrator, to attend specific professional development that supports school-wide or district- wide initiatives such as textbook adoptions, secondary school reform, etc.

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- Each school site may identify professional development areas and topics that will benefit learners at the school site based on available data.

### **11. Are common board configurations required?**

No, it is a State recommended best practice.

### **12. Are teachers required to incorporate literacy skill instruction regardless of the subject they teach, once they have received appropriate professional development?**

The use of literacy skill instruction is a research-based best practice and highly recommended.

### **13. What assessments are required for teachers to administer?**

The required M-DCPS assessments are listed in the District's assessment calendar and the LOU for District targeted DA schools.

### **14. Are teachers required to score all mandated assessments, including District Interim Assessments?**

Interim Assessments are scored through EDUSOFT. State required assessments in writing (pretest and mid-year) and reading (FAIR K-2) as listed in the District Testing Calendar are scored by teachers and/or school-based support team(s).

### **15. What are teachers expected to do with the data gathered from assessment results?**

Use data as a tool to guide instruction. The Interim Assessment home page which can be accessed at <http://oada.dadeschools.net/IAP/IAP.asp> will provide guidance in the interpretation of data.

### **16. Are FCAT practice tests required?**

The practice tests are made available by the FLDOE and are recommended for use, but not required

### **17. What's the difference between Sunshine State Standards, Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and CBC's?**

The Sunshine State Standards were adopted in 1996 in order to identify academic expectations for student achievement in Florida. The Next Generation Sunshine State Standards are a result of the revisions of the SSS. The CBC was written by MDCPS and it identifies the most essential objectives needed to demonstrate proficiency in performing identified competencies. The CBC aligns with the requirements of the SSS.

### **18. Which document should a teacher use: CBC or Pacing Guide?**

Curriculum and Instruction is developing District Pacing Guides for all content areas covered under the CBC. The District Pacing Guide is the CBC with a scope and sequence embedded. District Pacing Guides are currently available for most of the core content areas and implementation is recommended for all schools.

### **19. How are Interim Assessments aligned to the Pacing Guides?**

The Interim Assessments are formative assessments that were designed to provide a snapshot of the learning progress of students at 3 points in the school year. The District's Pacing guides are aligned with the timing and content of the Interim Assessments, working together to provide guidelines for instruction and tools for monitoring student progress.

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**20. Are all teachers who are teaching the same subject in a school required to be on the same page on the same day?**

No, but given the District's high student mobility rate and students' varying instructional needs, course-alike teachers should be in close instructional proximity, though styles and materials may vary.

**21. What is a Lesson Study?**

Lesson Study is a professional development activity that allows a group of teachers the opportunity to analyze a lesson, through its development, delivery, observation, reflection, and follow-up. Lesson Study provides a vehicle by which to deepen understanding of content and the impact of instruction on student achievement. Participants need to be trained in the Lesson Study Protocol to ensure its' successful implementation.

**22. How should Professional Learning Communities be used in District Targeted schools?**

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) can be used a variety of ways at each school site. PLCs are made up of teachers who agree to collaborate because of common interest/focus to closely examine their practice. These small groups of teachers gather by grade level or content area to examine student work, to analyze instructional practice, to review student data, or other instructional topics.

**23. How should common planning time in the District Targeted DA schools be used?**

Common planning in the District Targeted DA schools time may be used for lesson planning, collaboration, data-based decision-making to drive instruction, lesson study groups, and professional learning communities.

**24. Who determines how common planning time should be used?**

School-site administrators in collaboration with teachers determine how common planning time should be used.

**25. Are Lesson Studies and/or Professional Learning Communities to be conducted during contractually allotted planning time?**

Lesson Study may be conducted during common planning time as per the LOU at District Targeted DA schools. Members of the lesson study team are to be available to observe the lesson that was cooperatively developed. These activities can voluntarily take place during planning time but can be required during common planning at District Targeted DA schools.

**26. If teachers participating in Lesson Study and/or Professional Learning Community need additional resources or time, how will these be provided?**

Internal coverage, substitute coverage, use of early release days, and/or common planning time are all ways in which teachers may be allocated resource time in order to participate in Lesson Study and/or Professional Learning Community.

**27. Can teachers use instructional materials not specified in the Pacing Guide?**

Yes, the pacing guides specify the materials for instruction; however, the teacher may choose to supplement them with other materials.