

“Curriculum focuses and connects the work of school professionals.”

Dr. Fenwick English

No task is more important than the development of a sound curriculum that challenges each learner and meets the needs of the Spotswood community. The construction and shaping of a dynamic responsive curriculum are challenging tasks, particularly when we reflect upon the complexity of our times. Thoughtful consideration is given to the development of a curriculum and review process that prepares each student to compete successfully in higher education and the workforce. The Spotswood community has established and supported a school system with a clear record of accomplishment. It is within this context that our schools direct their energies in curriculum renewal.

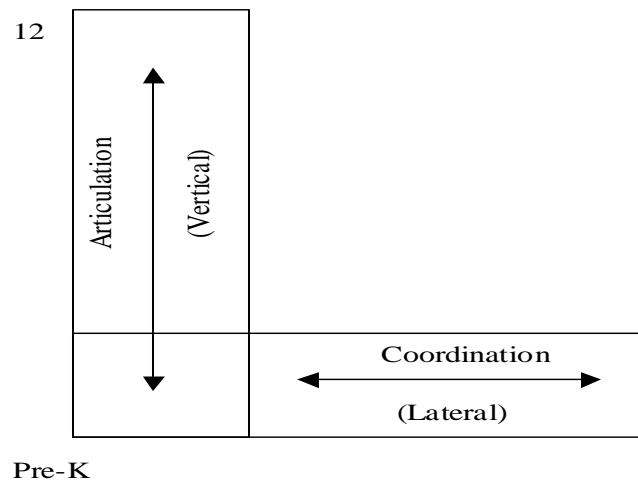
Some of the best minds in human history have devoted their thinking to the simple questions that we address in our curriculum development efforts:

1. What kind of person do we want to produce?
2. What should our students know, be able to do, appreciate and understand upon graduation from Spotswood High School?
3. How is our mission realized through our curriculum?
4. How do we make learning most meaningful for our students?

The curriculum developed in response to these questions has two essential characteristics. As a work plan, the curriculum is **coordinated** (providing for consistency) and **articulated** (providing for continuity).

- **Coordination refers to the degree of common focus at a grade level and/or for teachers of the same course in a department.** For example, three teachers of English I at the high school level would address the same mastery objectives – an expected common focus and horizontal connectivity. The learning is “the constant” - how various teachers address the common objectives is “the variable”.

- **Articulation refers to the focus and vertical connectivity in a school and in the system.** In this example, the curriculum objectives taught for mastery by each teacher of English I lead directly to the objectives taught for mastery in English II. There are common outcomes upon course completion with all students well prepared for the next level of instruction.

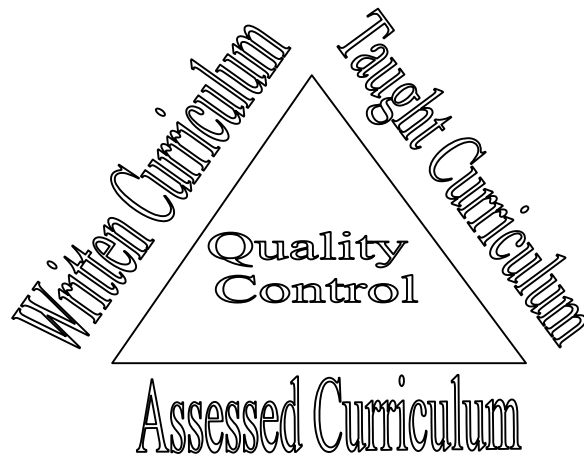


Coordinated with the horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum is assessment.

- The focus of assessments is to raise the achievement of all students, not simply to measure performance.
- It has become increasingly important that assessment be an integral part of the teaching/learning process rather than simply the counting of correct answers on tests.
- Assessment is the vehicle by which we can determine whether our learners are meeting their educational goals and objectives.
- Assessment also serves as the basis by which we are able to demonstrate successes as well as determine areas requiring future attention.

Student performance and achievement are dependent on improving “the match” between curriculum content and test content. *The essential task is aligning the relationship between the written and taught curriculum with the tested curriculum.* A quality program ensures that alignment.

Just as a quality curriculum is rich, meaningful and engaging, so must be the assessments. Information provided must be valued by staff, easily understood by parents and useful in the planning and delivery of curriculum. Powerful decision-making information is best provided by assessments that are locally developed and aligned with the curriculum.



Objectives for each curricular area by grade level and/or course can be found on individual building’s website.