Implementing the HSTW Recommended Core Curriculum: How Do You Do It?

Ivy C. Alford

*High Schools That Work*

Director of State School Improvement Services
OBJECTIVES

- Raise student achievement by eliminating low-level courses.
- Give more students access to an upgraded academic core and a concentration.
- Provide extra-help opportunities to assist students in completing high-level courses.
Initial Thoughts

- What do we believe?
- Should we require all students to complete an upgraded core and a concentration?
What is the *HSTW* Recommended Core Curriculum?
Recommended Academic Core for All Students

- Four credits in college-prep/honors English
- Four mathematics credits – Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and above
- Three science credits at the college-prep level; four credits with a block schedule
- Three years of social studies; four credits with a block schedule
- **Mathematics in the senior year**
**HSTW Definition of College-prep English**

- Read at least eight books and demonstrate understanding.

- Complete a short paper of one to three pages at least weekly.

- Complete a research paper.
**Recommended Core and Academic Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Reading Score</th>
<th>Average Mathematics Score</th>
<th>Average Science Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully Completed</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(completed all three subjects)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Completed</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(completed one or two of the subjects)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Complete</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Do we have high expectations for our students? Do we clearly present those expectations?
Out of the Mouths of Babes
From Interviews on TA Visits
“At this school, tracking is alive and well. Once you get placed into a low-level course, it is like being put into a black hole and you never get out.”

“We don’t think we need all these different levels of English.” “Why not just English and AP English, and expect all students to work hard?” “Make the ones who are not doing well attend after-school extra-help sessions.”
“We don't write essays. We're the dumb class.” “Other classes have them. I've wondered why we don't. We just have worksheets. I wish it were more challenging.”

“I take the geometry for the career-tech students. It’s not as hard. I’m a ‘black bird’ and I’ve been one since the first grade.”
“I work the hardest for the teachers who expect the most.”
Teachers reported that preparing almost all students with the academic knowledge and skills needed to enter college without taking remedial courses or enter the workplace is the primary goal of their high school.

All students: 20%
Career-bound students: 13%
On the 2002 *HSTW* Teacher Survey

- Only 32 percent reported that the principal stresses they should teach all students to high standards.

- Only four percent reported having staff development on raising expectations for student achievement.
On the 2002 *HSTW* Teacher Survey

- Sixty-two percent of teachers agreed that students’ success or failure are due to factors beyond their control in the classroom.

- Only 32 percent agreed strongly that teachers in their school maintain a demanding and supportive environment that pushes students to do their best.
On the 2002 HSTW Teacher Survey

- Only 27 percent fully completed the HSTW-recommend curriculum.
- Only 36 percent completed the recommended English curriculum.
- About 80 percent completed the recommended mathematics curriculum.
- Only 38 percent completed the recommended science curriculum.
On the 2002 *HSTW* Teacher Survey

- Only 14 percent reported being encouraged to take more challenging mathematics courses.

- Only 11 percent reported being encouraged to take more challenging science courses.
On the 2002 *HSTW* Teacher Survey

- Only four percent reported having an intensive emphasis on high expectations.

- Only 38 percent reported that their teachers set high standards and were willing to help meet them.
Do the courses we offer reflect high expectations?
Achievement Depends on the Courses that Students Take
## English Courses
(Reading Goal: 279)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2002 Data</th>
<th>Percentage Taking</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General English 9</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic English 9</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>285</td>
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<tr>
<td>General English 10</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic English 10</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>286</td>
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<tr>
<td>General English 11</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic English 11</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>286</td>
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<tr>
<td>General English 12</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Communications 12</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic English 12</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Mathematics Courses
*(Mathematics Goal: 297)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>2002 Data</th>
<th>Percentage Taking</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Algebra</td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Algebra I</td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg/College-Prep Algebra</td>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra II</td>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Mathematics I</td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Mathematics II</td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trig/Algebra III</td>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Calculus</td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Courses</td>
<td>2002 Data</td>
<td>Percentage Taking</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Science</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Science</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College-Prep Phy Science</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Biology</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>293</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College-Prep Biology</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>292</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Technology</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Biology/Chemistry</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>295</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where Do We Start?
Begin by Reviewing Your School’s Master Schedule
Reviewing the Master Schedule

- Highlight all English, mathematics and science courses that are below the college-prep level.
Reviewing the Master Schedule

- What percentage of the highlighted courses in each content area are below the college-prep level?

- Review the schedule again. Did we highlight all low-level courses?
Reviewing the Master Schedule

- How many levels exist in each content area? Why?

- Who is teaching the various levels? Do one or two teachers have all honors and AP while others have low-level courses?
Reviewing the Master Schedule

- What is the experience level of the teachers teaching the low-level classes?
Reviewing the Master Schedule

- Are there classes that substitute as graduation requirements such as applied communications, journalism and consumer mathematics? If so, who is taking these classes? Why?

- Are more seniors enrolled in low-level courses than ninth-graders? If so, why?
Reviewing the Master Schedule

Should some classes be eliminated? If so, which ones?
How Do We Eliminate Those Low-Level Courses?
Eliminating Low-Level Courses

- Revise your placement policies.
- Reduce the number of low-level courses offered by 25 percent.
- Enroll 25 percent more students in higher-level courses.
- Revisit the standards and benchmarks taught in each course.
Eliminating Low-Level Courses

- Gather data on the success rate of courses at your school.
- Promote higher-level courses with all stakeholders — especially parents.
- Create a new policy for schedule changes.
- Create career course sequences that highlight taking high-level courses.
Review Your School’s Course Handbook
Reviewing the Course Handbook

- Read the descriptions of all English, mathematics and science courses.

- Is there a difference in expectations based on the descriptions? If so, in which classes? Why?
Reviewing the Course Handbook

- Create a new course handbook that expresses high expectations.
- Create clear course pathways for students that include future postsecondary studies.
For Further Inspection

- How are students in all subgroups achieving in reading, writing, mathematics and science on state assessments, based on course experiences?

- How are students (by gender and ethnicity) achieving in reading, mathematics and science on the HSTW Assessment, based on course experiences?
For Further Inspection

- How are students in all subgroups achieving on the ACT and SAT, based on course experiences?

- Do diploma requirements vary or are all students expected to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration? If they vary, why?
Curriculum Audit
Auditing the Curriculum

Have teachers who teach the same subject review the curriculum separately.

For each standard:

- Have teachers place an R by a standard if it is simply reviewed within the course.
- Have teachers place a I by a standard if it is introduced within the course.
- Have teachers place a M by a standard if it is to be mastered within the course.
Auditing the Curriculum

- Have teachers who teach the same courses review their responses to look for differences in emphasis.
- Have core curriculum departments do a similar activity to look for alignment and gaps in sequencing of courses.
- Adjust the curriculum to reflect more rigor.
Auditing the Curriculum

- Use the newly updated curriculum review as a tool to promote taking higher-level courses.
Additional Actions
Additional Actions

- Create a structured system of extra help.
  - Summer bridge programs
  - Peer tutoring opportunities
  - Double dosing
  - Before/after-school tutoring
Additional Actions

- Focus on active student engagement in the classroom.
- Institute an adviser/advisee program.
- Solicit help from career/technical Instructors.
- Solicit help from key stakeholders.
- Do vertical alignment with feeder middle school(s).
Always Remember…

Change takes time and patience.
For Additional Information

Review the various publications from our Web site at:

www.sreb.org
Contact Information

Ivy C. Alford
*High Schools That Work*
Director of State School Improvement Services
(985) 429-9542
ivy.alford@sreb.org