

September 20, 2018



Foothills Education Charter High School Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment September 2018

Staff, Friends, and Supporters of Foothills Education Charter High School:

Consistency, accountability, and alignment of curriculum, assessment and instruction to standards - these have been the watchwords as Foothills has hit the ground running to start the 2018-2019 school year.

Based on the excellent curriculum review work that was completed over the past year, the following revised courses are live at all fourteen GradPoint sites:

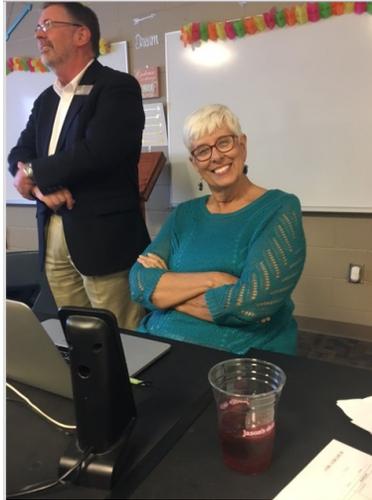
American Lit A
American Lit B
Biology A
Biology B
Economics
Algebra 1 A
Algebra 1 B
Geometry A
Geometry B
Physical Science A - Chemistry
Physical Science B - Physics
US History A
US History B

To stay on top of all the current and emerging changes, **Mark Tavernier**, **Scott Gordon**, and the Curriculum Team have established a rotating series of monthly face-to-face or virtual meetings. At the first virtual curriculum meeting in late August, teacher leaders presented via Zoom to their peers in:

Math - Algebra and Geometry; Social Studies - US History and Economics
English/Language Arts - American Literature
and Science - Biology and Physical Science

Across the board, presenters shared the yearlong and continuing process for revising the courses; the importance of ongoing teacher feedback; updated and new videos and other resources; and curriculum and assessment items that have been added or deleted, and better aligned to standards.

See below, Jane Berger (with Scott Gordon), ready to present US History updates via Zoom.



Scott Gordon also recently shared via email specific writing assignment guidelines for Writing and ELA teachers in GradPoint and assesslets.

Tim Jarboe continues to lead the Data Team and has set up a series of monthly meetings for the rest of the year, with a focus on data analysis protocols. In early September, Jarboe also led a comprehensive online conversation via Zoom on design considerations for recognizing and creating the best possible selected response assessment questions. He reminded everyone that multiple choice question construction includes four key parts - the Stimulus (e.g., a graphic or passage), the Stem (question), the Key (correct answer), and Distractors (plausible other answers). He reviewed each of these elements in detail, covering such points as:

- Matching the question to the standard
- Using "visual rests" and consistent fonts
- Using complete sentences
- Formatting questions consistently
- Using photos and "All of the Above" and "None of the Above" appropriately and sparingly
- Highlighting key terms, and
- Keeping wording simple and focused.

Mark Tavernier followed up this discussion with a quick reminder about the GradPoint Module Map, and pointed out that:

- Each lesson should usually be aligned to only one standard
- Teachers should include five items per standard on a posttest, and
- GradPoint generates posttests and directs students to needed remediation.

Mary Ann Hale and **Rachel Parr** have been working closely with instructional coaches at all sites, providing clear guidance about their role, activities, and schedules for the year. They recently reminded coaches that:

- 1/3 of the job is working with teachers and students to insure nightly goal setting is being done by the students and reviewed with a teacher;
- 1/3 of the job is training new teachers (using the new hire check-list) and mentoring new teachers - this will insure the integrity of the Foothills

- program as we move into our 4th year; and
- 1/3 of the job is completing tasks that you and your site directors have identified to insure best practices are being applied in the classroom.

Finally, in other brief news updates:

- Foothills has now been granted **NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) approval** - this is great news for student-athletes graduating from Foothills and looking to continue their athletic pursuits in college.
- **Rebecca Moon**, assistant site director at Phillips, **will be rolling out a test preparation program for all of Foothills** at the end of September. More details to follow next month.

See you next month with the October update.

Regards,
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