INTRODUCTION

Stage 1 – Desired Results

**Goal(s):**
- Ensure a more thorough understanding of what UbD is and how it can improve our daily work.
- Supervisors will be able to observe indicators of successful implementation and provide feedback to faculty on the application of UbD principles throughout the school year.
- Faculty will be able to effectively design, implement and review quality UbD units that are aligned to standards.

**Understanding(s):**
- Effective curriculum/units/daily lessons design evolves “backward” from clear goals and is aligned across all three stages.
- UbD is a way of thinking more carefully about curriculum/units/daily lessons design; it is neither a prescriptive program nor just a template for design.
- UbD design process is non-linear and ongoing.
- Teaching and assessing for understanding enhances learning of content standards.

**Essential Question(s)**
- Why are the best curricula/units/lessons designed “backwards”?
- What is good design? How does UbD support curriculum/unit/lesson design?
- Why teach for understanding?
- How will we know that students really understand?
- How will we know that as a district we are moving from an awareness stage to an application stage in the change process?

**Knowledge:** Staff will know...
- the 3 stages of “backward design”
- characteristics of “big ideas” and “essential questions”
- the six facets of understanding and GRASPS
- the WHERE/TO elements of instructional planning
- design standards of UbD

**Skills:** Staff will be able to...
- develop understandings, essential questions and assessment evidence.
- design units using the “backward design” template that meet UbD Design Sandards.
- review other designs against the Design Standards.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

**Direct Evidence:**
- Develop draft designs using UbD template and tools.
- All staff participate in a school-based unit peer review process for feedback and making necessary revisions.
- Pilot the UbD units, reflect on results, and plan for changes.
- Participate in regional peer review processes for final approval prior to District curriculum adoption.
- Principals integrate UbD standards into supervision and evaluation process, and observe implementation of UbD principles applied in daily lessons.

**Indirect Evidence:**
- Pre- and post-workshop surveys.
- Observations of participants’ understandings, questions, misconceptions, and frustrations.
- Quality of responses on exercises and worksheets.
- Participants’ self-assessments and reflections on their understandings and design.
- Written and oral feedback on workshops and UbD implementation
- “Needs” statements for future professional development.

Stage 3 – Action Plan

- Work as school-based teams to establish clear goals aligned to state standards.
- Regional curriculum committees will review and revise the regional curriculum guides to create common goals and core rubrics for assessment on a continuous basis as part of District’s Curriculum Development plan.
- Utilize portions of faculty meetings to facilitate deeper understanding of unit design and share works in progress.
- Provide guided design work time and workshops as needed.
- Build in opportunities for eams to work on units (through release times, summer work, after-school work, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for interested faculty to advance their learning through regional and/or school-based study groups, and local, regional, state, and national conferences.
- Provide ongoing peer review training opportunities in order to build expertise first regionally and then locally.
- Publish approved units and excellent UbD models on ubdchange.org and school-based intranets.
- Administrators will monitor implementation, providing faculty with ongoing input using observable indicators.
INTRODUCTION

Goal(s):
• Reduce the amount of whole-group instruction and increase use of appropriate differentiated strategies.
• Increase the use of pre-assessments to diagnose students’ readiness levels and guide differentiation.
• Increase the achievement (annual growth) of all student sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

Understandings (for teachers):
• Learners differ in their readiness (background knowledge, skills and experiences), learner profile (culture, gender, and preferred style) and interests.
• Learning is enhanced when these differences are acknowledged and addressed.
• Diagnostic (pre-) assessments are essential to reveal differences in readiness, profiles, and interests to guide differentiation.
• Respectful tasks engage learners with content standards in ways that appropriately challenge them.

Essential Questions (for staff exploration):
• Why should we differentiate our instruction?
• What does effective differentiation look like in the classroom?
• How do we decide what differentiation is needed?
• How can we make differentiation feasible with large classes?
• Is differentiation compatible with a standards-based accountability system?

Knowledge: Staff will know...
• basic principles and practices of differentiation
• the ways in which students differ
• the content standards and benchmarks that all students are expected to learn

Skills: Staff will be able to...
• apply basic differentiation strategies – tiered lessons, flexible groupings, scaffolded assignments, and giving appropriate choices
• use diagnostic (pre-) assessments effectively
• manage a differentiated classroom

Direct Evidence:
Classroom observations will find:
• decreased use of whole-group instruction
• increased use of pre-assessments and appropriate differentiated instruction
• effective management of the class
• increase in student engagement in learning

Student assessment data will show:
• Increased achievement by sub-groups in reading and mathematics.

Indirect Evidence:
• Lesson plans include plan for differentiation.
• Teachers can explain how their instruction is responsive to student learning needs based on assessment data.
• Staff surveys identifying needs for future professional development.

Stage 3 – Action Plan
• Purchase copies of Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design (ASCD, 2006) for all teaching staff, and encourage them to read the book during the summer.
• Use the pre-school professional days and our two in-service days for book discussion, exploration of essential questions, and staff workshops on differentiation strategies conducted by district specialists.
• Engage staff in developing a set of observable indicators of effective differentiated instruction in the classroom.
• Use the agreed-upon set of observable indicators for “walk through” classroom visits; provide feedback to staff.
• Encourage grade level teams in sharing lesson plans that incorporate differentiated strategies.
• Use one faculty meeting a month for exploring a particular DI strategy (determined by staff needs assessment).
• Use regularly scheduled grade-level meetings to examine assessment data (from district benchmark assessments and state test results) and make plans for improving sub-group student performance. (Note: May involve some regrouping of students across classrooms.)