

NC ACCESS BEST PRACTICES



Office of Charter Schools
NC ACCESS PROGRAM
NC Department of Public Instruction

School Culture

Academic Support

New Curriculum for a New Era

Implementation Description

Triad Math and Science Academy (TMSA), a K-12 charter school in Greensboro, NC, prepares students to become competent, responsible, and successful individuals in a globalized society. To this end, the school leadership recognized the need to revise their current curriculum in order to provide the best academic program possible.

As an important first step, the school began by meeting with teachers at all grade levels to determine their curriculum needs. From these conversations, school leaders were able to establish priorities for purchasing effective curriculum, which included curriculum that was aligned to the NC Standard Course of Study, contained both hard copy and electronic resources, was research-based, and was highly recommended by other schools. Utilizing these criteria, the team selected Springboard ELA and Math curriculum which was purchased with NC ACCESS funds. They chose both the electronic curriculum and student hardcopy workbooks to offer teachers the flexibility to adapt their instruction to the students' learning needs. Studies have shown that offering differentiated approaches to instruction has the potential to benefit a wider range of students and their learning needs (Tucker, N.d.).

After purchasing the curriculum, the logical next step was to ensure teachers received appropriate training to implement the program with fidelity. The school chose the Train the Trainer model in which Springboard trained a small team of TMSA staff and teacher leaders. Armed with knowledge, this small team of experts conducted half-day instructional sessions with each department and grade level at TMSA. They provided support to their colleagues as needed throughout the school year. This model promoted ownership among staff and ongoing support for

About This School

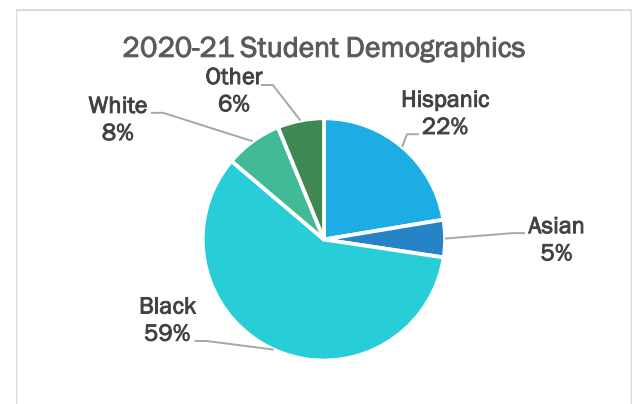
Triad Math and Science Academy

Triad Math and Science Academy (TMSA) is a tuition-free public charter school focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) in Greensboro, North Carolina. TMSA's mission is to prepare students to become competent, responsible, and successful individuals in a globalized and technology-based society through strong academic programs, school-family-community partnerships, and strong teacher-student relationships. TMSA provides a safe, nurturing, and culturally-responsive learning environment for elementary, middle, and high school students on our two campuses.

Year School Opened: 2008-09

Grant Awarded: 2020-21

Initial Grade Levels Served: K-12



% ED Student Population: 52 %

Urbanicity: Urban / Greensboro, NC

Persons in Poverty (Guilford County)⁴: 16 %

teachers. The Train the Trainer model has been shown to develop leadership skills among team members, providing a sustainable source of guidance and knowledge beyond the capacity of a one-time external training session (Powers Resource Center, 2019). The curriculum implementation helped teachers adjust their instructional delivery and ensure instruction was aligned with state standards. Staff observed a high level of student engagement when implementing the curriculum. Selecting quality curriculum has been shown to aid in achieving these goals (Admin Leadership, 2020).

Results

While the education community was concerned about potential learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TMSA found their students showed a modest increase in achievement throughout the year. School-provided access to technology and the implementation of high-quality curriculum likely contributed to this success. EOG and EOC scores in science were stable, while ELA scores showed an increase in achievement.

Challenges

Virtual attendance was a challenge for many schools during the 2019-20 school year, but TMSA found that attendance did not suffer as expected. In fact, their Average Daily Attendance (ADA) increased slightly from 95.77% ADA 2019-20 to 96.8% in 2020-21.

COVID-19 safety regulations did cause the distribution of hardcopy learning materials to students to be somewhat challenging, and staff training for the new curriculum had to be conducted virtually. While these circumstances were not ideal, the school proactively addressed these obstacles in order to maintain a strong academic program.

Future Modifications

TMSA regularly offers two 3-week long summer sessions to their students, and this summer they will be using their new curriculum to provide recovery instruction to students. Students can then retest to pass the EOG or EOC in order to begin the 2021-22 school year in the next grade level or course.

Critical Components

Getting Started

TMSA commented that much of their success was the result of two-way communication between teachers and school leadership. Actively listening to what teachers wanted in a curriculum was essential in order to purchase quality curriculum and increase teacher buy-in.

Ongoing Supports

School leadership will continually assess the success of the new curriculum as it continues to be implemented and make adjustments based on students' needs.

Equity Connections

High-quality curriculum has been shown to improve equity by offering low-income students the same high academic standards and rigor that "*their more affluent peers*" are given (Steiner, et al, p.6, 2019).

TMSA researched and implemented a new curriculum that would better meet the needs of their students.

Research

1. Admin Leadership, Curriculum Development. (January 15, 2020). "7 Reasons Why Your Curriculum Matters More Than You Think". Chalk. Accessed on June 11, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.chalk.com/resources/7-reasons-why-your-curriculum-matters-more-than-you-think/>
2. Powers Resource Center. (April 18, 2019). "Trend Watch: Top 6 Benefits of Train-the-Trainer Programs". Accessed on June 11, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.powersresourcecenter.com/trend-watch-top-6-benefits-of-train-the-trainer-programs/>
3. Steiner, D., Magee, J., Jensen, B., & Button, J. (January, 2019). "High-quality curriculum and system improvement". Johns Hopkins School of Education: Institute for Education Policy. Accessed on June 11, 2021. Retrieved from <https://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Quality-curriculum-and-system-improvement.pdf>
4. United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts North Carolina, Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NC/PST045219>