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**Curriculum Adoption**

Our guiding principles:

* Students and their needs must be at the center of learning and decision making around curriculum, instruction and materials
* Student-centered learning happens through personalized learning
* Ultimately, the teacher should decides on the right mix of instructional practices and materials needed to facilitate learning experiences that meet students’ needs
* Equity is ensured in part through teaching to the standards and by maintaining a baseline for the quality of curriculum and instructional materials we use
* Teachers are professionals with different needs, styles and philosophies, therefore they need personalized support

**Phase 1: Select the materials**

Five Stars Academy follows the common core curriculum based out of the U.S. With the transition to online in a rapid time frame, we worked directly with the only U.S. curriculum distributor in Panama to locate the curriculum that best fit our needs based on our guiding principles.

Previous to the current 2020 situation, we relied on several key curriculum developers, using Houghton Mifflin and K12.com as our baseline. As we continue to grow and expand into upper grades, we extended our curriculum base to Pearson/Prentice Hall while integrating other well-known publishers and online materials.

Because of our small size, we have been able to maneuver quickly to adjust and make changes to curriculum where necessary. We have discussions throughout the school year to find out what is working, what needs to be tweaked, and what needs to be reviewed for the following school year.

The backbone of selecting a curriculum is to first be able to fully understand grade level expectations and what rigorous instruction looks like for all students. This includes understanding content areas, the demographics of our returning and incoming students, and a shared vision for instruction – both individual and project-based.

Based on this information, the Five Stars Academy administration manages the selection process and works with curriculum distributors to order, ship, print, unpack or set up online new materials before the school year starts and to place the materials in teachers’ hands prior to training.

**Phase 2: Implementation**

The goal of Phase 2 is to create a clear map of what successful curriculum implementation looks like and pave a smooth path that makes the journey easier for everyone involved.

Initially in August, training begins on any new curriculum or improving the planning and implementation for current curriculum. Led by teachers, we set goals around the implementation, teacher understanding and investment in the materials, and student achievement. As a team, we discuss plans for how teachers should pace lessons and when and how teachers should modify lessons from their original design.

In addition, we discuss plans for how other key academic systems – class schedules, assessment, and grading – should be adjusted to accommodate the curriculum’s goals and design.

Finally, we plan out how to best comprehensively train teachers and administration in all aspects of the curriculum – from setting up systems that provide ongoing support, including observations and evaluations, collaborative planning, and coaching, and communication.

**Phase 3: Support, Analyze, Refine**

The goal of Phase 3 is to support teachers in using the curriculum to inspire great instruction and increase student learning. This phase involves supporting our teachers through ongoing training, collaborative planning, and coaching with curriculum-specific feedback. This professional development cycle is supported by the continuous process of gathering and analyzing data. Five Stars Academy works with teachers and students to figure out what’s working and to make improvements. Throughout this phase, we work to refine goals, approaches to supporting teachers, and our policies and systems that includes grading and assessment.