

Hillsborough County Elementary Music Curriculum

EME 6235 Fall 2015

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ABSTRACT

Project proposal document for the creation of a teacher designed elementary music curriculum for Hillsborough County Florida.

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Introduction and Background

The Hillsborough Co. Florida elementary music program must conform to the Florida State Standards (FSS), while providing for end of year assessments (EOY) consistent with the Student Success Act (SB 736). This EOY assessment must be approved by the state Board of Education. Given the large number of elementary students in Hillsborough Co., a standardized test is the only practical assessment method. Unfortunately, because performance based tasks are difficult (or impossible at such a large scale) to measure using multiple choice tests, the EOY music assessment is essentially a vocabulary test, with minimal listening examples. As a result the curriculum has become more text focused and less performance based. Naturally, teachers are focusing on teaching musical vocabulary rather than musical performance, since their compensation is tied to student performance. The district supervisor has expressed a desire to emphasize “musical performance teaching” rather than “vocabulary teaching”.

To this end, the objectives are:

- Develop a bank of lesson plans that emphasize performance while aligning with district EOY assessment vocabulary and concept.
- Adapt current curriculum aligning concepts with FSS and provide a curriculum map spanning the elementary (K-5) curriculum.
- Develop a series of online and in-person trainings to facilitate onboarding of new hires, and serve as continuing education for recertification for existing teachers.
- Revise the assessment language and vocabulary to reflect the diverse nature of the Hillsborough Co. population.

Music, by definition, is a performing art. It requires strong process based instruction to guide learners towards the physical and mental skills they will need. A musical performance incorporates physical performance skills, listening skills, and the ability to integrate both. Measuring a performance task is possible, but time consuming and not practical with a large number of students. Nonetheless, the Florida legislature has required all districts to have an EOY assessment for all students in all courses. School districts throughout the state have found that standardized tests are the only practical way to fulfill state requirements. Unfortunately, this has narrowed the instructional focus to only what is contained in the test, as a result instruction has shifted from process to the acquirement of facts.

In order to facilitate the instruction of test material while still retaining the processes integral to music performance, this project will create a framework of lessons created and vetted by experienced teachers. These lessons will focus on each concept dictated by the curriculum, in the context of a performable skill. Each lesson, whenever possible will contain either a movement, playing, singing, or some

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other manipulative activity. In addition a curriculum map will be created with monthly lesson goals. This will allow inexperienced teachers to follow the curriculum “as is”, and experienced teachers can use it as a guide, deviating whenever necessary. The objective is not to add further rigidity to the curriculum, but create a framework, which can be adapted by individual teachers according to their needs, while still following state and district guidelines.

Key Deliverables:

- Yearly curriculum map outlining weekly concepts and lessons, per grade level.
- Weekly lesson plans aligned with the curriculum map.
- Powerpoint presentations for classroom use, as needed for each lesson.
- Grade level index, by standard, activity, and lesson focus.

Product Requirements:

The product shall conform to State of Florida Music Standards
The product shall align with current End of Year assessments

Functional Requirements:

The product shall provide at least 1 performance activity per lesson (playing, singing, moving, manipulatives).

The product shall provide a weekly lesson map for the school year.

The product shall cover grade levels K-5.

The product shall be indexed per grade by: standard, activity, materials needed, lesson focus (concept, vocabulary, or skill).

Non Functional Requirements:

The product shall take no more than 2 pages per lesson.

Target Audience:

Hillsborough Co. Elementary music supervisor

Hillsborough Co. Elementary music teachers

Hillsborough Co. Elementary school students

Key Resources and Materials

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Key deliverables will not necessarily be “high tech”. The goal is to deliver a performance based curriculum that classroom teachers can use, and adapt to their individual situation, regardless of their classroom equipment. While technology can be a powerful force multiplier, in the elementary classroom manipulatives such as classroom instruments, are more useful to the goals of performance instruction than anything else. Every teacher has at minimum a computer with an internet connection and a printer so the lessons will be delivered electronically, and can be printed as needed by teachers. In addition, supplementary PowerPoint slides will be created, as needed for each lesson.

To that end, the primary creation tools will be Adobe Illustrator and/or Photoshop, and InDesign and PowerPoint. Google Docs will be the primary creation tool, as it allows for multiple users to easily collaborate.

- Google Docs - a cloud based office suite, that allows multiple team members to contribute to a common document, or set of documents.
- PowerPoint - Presentation program allowing user to display text and graphics on screen, or via LCD projector.
- Adobe Illustrator - Vector graphics program for creating infinitely scalable graphics
- Adobe Photophop - Raster graphics editor for creating images, or editing photos (it’s main use in this project).
- DocsFlow – Allows Google Docs to be merged into specified areas of InDesign layouts, allowing for easier creation, and allowing for easier modification in the future, by simple changing the text on the Google Doc.

To distribute the load, a template will be developed for the lesson contributors. Contributors will create the lessons with text only, using Google docs. There will be a block of text for objectives, materials needed, grade level, step by step instructions, etc. Each of those blocks of text will be limited in number of characters. That way they can be inserted via DocsFlow into a two page template created in InDesign. Contributors can create their own graphics and PowerPoints, consistent with a set of design guidelines. Not all graphics will be in final form obviously, but a graphic designer can redo, add to, or clean them up without having to design everything from scratch.

Google Docs	Initial text of lessons will first be created here, text will later be inserted into InDesign template.
PowerPoint	Additional presentations can be created by contributors in PP, consistent with a simple set of design guidelines.
Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop	Supporting graphics will be edited, added, or created via these two programs.

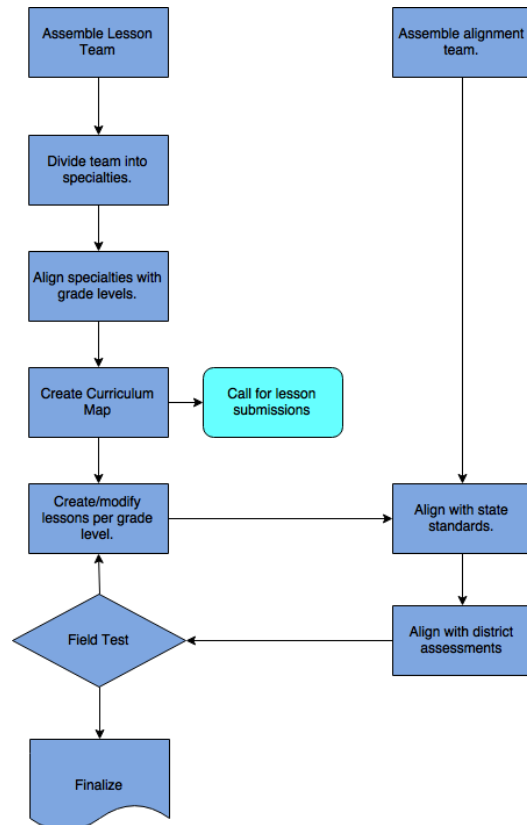
Adobe Indesign and DocsFlow	Text and images will be merged via DocsFlow into InDesign consistent with a set of design guidelines.
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Project Schedule

List of Tasks

- 1.1 Post a call for resumes/skill list on district message board
- 1.2 Review information with supervisor to select teams.
- 1.3 Divide team into specialties (LKR, Orff, World Music Drumming, etc.)
- 1.4 Assign specialties per grade level (Orff K-5, WMD 3-5, etc.)
- 2.1 Post call for lesson plan submissions
- 2.2 Create curriculum map for each grade level.
- 2.3 Align lessons with curriculum map
- 2.4 Align lesson with state standards
- 2.5 Align lessons with current Hillsborough Co. final assessment.
- 3.1 Field test/pilot lessons
- 3.2 Analyze feedback
- 3.2 Modify/realign with standards
- 4.1 Index plans
- 4.2 Create progressive weekly lesson plan list
- 4.3 Post rough draft for review
- 4.4 Finalize documents.

Production Flowchart



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Project Checkpoints and Milestones

Because it will be created by working teachers using lessons they have created themselves, it's not reasonable to expect the bulk of the work to be done during the school year. A large part of the design and development can be done during the summers. Lessons will be made available for one school year for teachers to use and give feedback.

Planning: (Jan-Feb)

- Assemble Team
- Call of lesson plans to support each concept per grade level

Design: (March-June)

- Adapt or refine current curriculum map (timeline)
- Adapt or refine current curriculum map (State Standards)

Development: (June – July)

- Adapt submitted lesson plans to include performance component
- Align plans with curriculum framework
- Create standard feedback survey
- Release preliminary plans for field testing

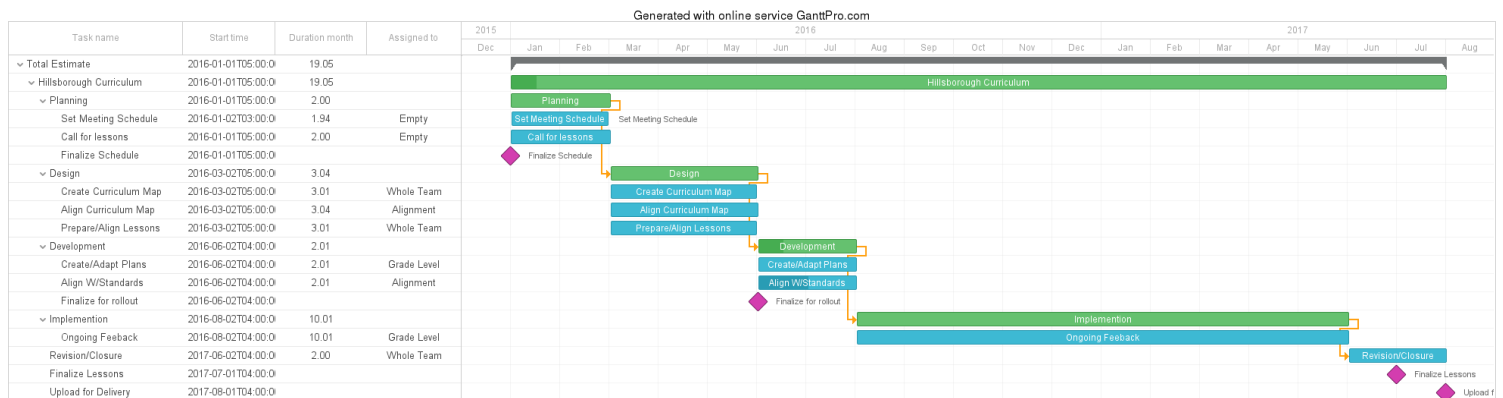
Implementation: (August – May)

- Field test curriculum
- Analyze Feedback
- Refine individual plans
- Refine curriculum map

Closure: (June)

Evaluate and refine elements as needed, develop inservice trainings.

Work Breakdown Structure and Key Milestones



Team Dynamics

Hillsborough County is 8th largest school district in the U.S. encompassing a wide level of students. Approximately 62% of elementary schools in Hillsborough Co. are (List of Title 1 Schools, 2015) schools, with almost half of those (44%) being extremely high poverty (Renaissance School). As an elementary school music teacher the 2 career tracks are to retire as an elementary school music teacher, or move into administration. As a result, large projects such as this tend to become “resumé builders”. Many of those in the administrator track move through higher SES schools. Caution should be taken to not choose team members based on the quality of the school they teach in, rather, it would be prudent to choose a team that is representative of the district demographics, and not fill the team with teachers from high SES schools.

It will also be important to choose team members that have been teaching at least 5 years. Boyd et. al (2007) found that teachers started to reach peak effectiveness at 6-10 years of experience. If a curriculum is to become district wide, then it needs to be designed by members that have a firm grasp on best practices, and have proven themselves.

Budget

As the software tools are already owned by the district, the main budget would be paying the teams for their work. At the current time teachers can receive a stipend of \$10 per hour for school related duties, outside of school. While barely over minimum wage, it is unlikely to that more funds per hour could be allocated. Team members should be informed up front before deciding to join the project, what their compensation will be. It’s reasonable to assume that a lesson plan from an experienced teacher can be adapted/created in an hour. Any teachers that submit lesson plans that are chosen could also be compensated for one hours work at the stipend rate.

There are 36 “lesson weeks” maximum in a school year. In reality, because of holidays, testing schedules, schools events, etc. the number is often closer to 32 weeks. Assuming one hour per lesson, and 2 lessons per week (36 weeks) that leaves us with 72 lessons per grade level per year. At \$10/hour that would be \$720 in man hours (spread throughout the team) to create a years worth of “raw” lessons. Then those lessons would have to be aligned, graphics added, PowerPoint created (as needed). Adding one more hour per lesson would bring us to \$1440 per year, per grade.

Administrative: 100 hours/\$10

- Keeping track of submissions

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- Calculating hours worked per team member
- Scheduling, etc.

Graphic Design: 100 hours/\$10

- Adapting or creating graphics
- Modifying PowerPoints
- Creating Lesson Template.

Incidental Expenses

- Office Supplies
- Extra man hours
- Etc.

Task per grade level	Per Hour	# of Hours	Total
Create/Adapt Lesson Gr 1-5	\$10	72x5	\$3600
Align Lessons, Create Incidentals Gr 1-5	\$10	72x5	\$3600
Graphic Design Creation/Clean Up	\$10	100	\$1000
Administrative Tasks	\$10	100	\$1000
Incidental Expenses	-	-	\$1000
Total Cost:			\$10200.00

Communication and Tracking

Because a large part of the project will be during the year, it's unreasonable to expect working teachers to have weekly meetings outside of their other duties. Monthly meetings are much more reasonable to expect, because it is important to have face to face meetings, as they will foster engagement with the project on the whole.

To avoid having weekly meetings the PM and ID will create a set of guidelines for content creation, content, best practice in designing graphics, reducing cognitive load etc. This can be disseminated at the initial meeting with input from the Lesson Designers (LD's). The format of the lessons should also be discussed at the initial meeting. It's important to clarify how the end product should look because the sheer volume of material will make it difficult to change mid-stream.

For ongoing communication, an online conference can be created on the district intranet, to facilitate communications that don't necessarily need a face to face meeting. This conference should be able to handle different threads, if such a conference isn't possible, then there are free open source tools that allow that to be set up (phpBB) for example.

Individual Lessons will be submitted by Google Docs, with the ID and PM and LD

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teams having permission to edit. It's important that the grade level teams be familiar with Google Docs and use the commenting feature to add any questions/concerns. Keeping comments and edits clear is important, if the use of Google Docs isn't consistent, and team members use other methods to communicate, then version control becomes impossible

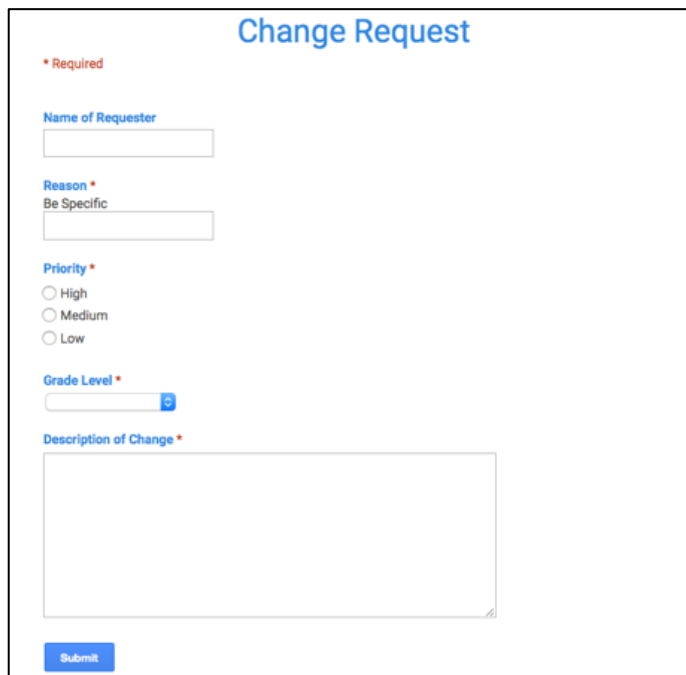
Communications Plan

- Monthly meetings to discuss upcoming monthly tasks and progress. (Dates will be solidified at first meeting.)
- Online conference to discuss issues as needed.
- Google Docs comments in individual lessons.

Change Orders:

For any team changes a process must be followed. The team member requesting the order will fill out the simple Google form (see below). Each form will have a drop down box for grade level, this will allow the appropriate members of the team to approve (or not) the change, instead of the whole team being involved. By using Google Forms the data can be sent to a Google Doc spreadsheet, which will act as a change log.

In the rollout phase of the project, another form will be created for people to submit feedback on the lessons, after they have field tested them. This will probably be the most data intensive part of the process, however if teachers are implementing the lessons according to the curriculum map then there shouldn't be an influx of data all at once.



The image shows a Google Form titled "Change Request" with a blue header. The form contains several required fields, indicated by a red asterisk. The fields are: "Name of Requester" (text input), "Reason" (text input with the instruction "Be Specific"), "Priority" (radio buttons for High, Medium, and Low), "Grade Level" (dropdown menu), and "Description of Change" (text area). A blue "Submit" button is located at the bottom left of the form.

Potential for Scope Creep and Other Issues

The Hillsborough Co. Curriculum is currently aligned with state standards, but it's up to teachers to decide what performance opportunities will support the standards. There are many that are unhappy with the current End of Year (EOY) assessments, which have room for improvement, but that is outside of the scope and goals of this project. There would be a large potential for team members campaigning to change the EOY tests. If that were warranted, I think aligning to the current EOY's and then tweaking the EOY's is the more practical solution. Most importantly, because the original goal of teaching *through performance* will be served.

In order to realize the goal of performance/process oriented instruction, it's critical to assemble a team that are "experiential" teachers – those that favor practice over theory. It's easy to intellectualize the concepts, but if you focus on teachers excited about the musical performance aspects of teaching, then they less concerned changing things outside of the scope of the project. Still, discussions about changing or getting rid of the EOY's should be monitored and handled with care.

Although not technically scope creep, another potential roadblock is excessive "tweaking" of the plans after being field tested (possibly before). It's important not to let perfect be the enemy of good. Again, the deliverables should be a solid framework, not a script to be followed to the letter. It's important to let the target audience (teachers) to bring their professional judgment to bear. Every situation is different and it's important to trust professionals to do what is best for their situation.

Analysis

A similar project was created about 10 years ago as part of a grant the district received. A bank of model lessons were made and made available. However, they were not easily searchable or indexed, and it was difficult to find the type of lesson that was needed. The weakness of the previous project is that the lessons weren't progressive, or didn't focus on the particular concepts needed by the teachers. At the time the EOC requirement was not in place, so there only needed to be a general alignment with state standards.

The lesson to learn, is that a curriculum needs to be specific to its stakeholders, yet flexible enough that it can modified as needed in specific classrooms. In this project alignment to a yearly district curriculum map, and well indexed lessons should increase adoption among music teachers.

Future Planning

By using Google docs to create and disseminate the deliverables online, when standards are changed in the future, it should be easy to add to or modify the

lessons. If there is an interest and budget, a future goal would be to extend the curriculum via an other online components that students can access on their own time (Moodle lessons, YouTube, etc). Some of this can be handled by district infrastructure already in place, like Edsby, the districts current LMS tool. A teacher component (as opposed to the student component mentioned above) of videos of model lessons, and procedures that are difficult to convey via text (how to play a certain passage, steps to a dance, etc.) would be a logical extension, as would a series of online trainings for teachers that are new to the district, or unsure about the text directions.

Wrap Up and Testing of Final Project:

Since this is a multiple year project, User Acceptance Testing can be done on an ongoing basis. After initial lessons are created, they will be posted where they will be available to teachers throughout the year. Every teacher using the lessons will be asked to fill out an online Google form giving a brief description of their thoughts and critiques. This information will be used by the grade level teams to modify the lessons as needed.

After all the lessons have been distributed via “soft rollout” (essentially the ongoing UAT) and lessons have been tweaked via information provided in the online critique form, the project team will spend the summer doing any final tweaking, and then complete the project closeout form.

It’s almost certain that the curriculum will need to be modified in the future as standards change. However, the original team will not always be available to change it, so it’s important that resources be archived so that they can be used in the future.

It’s recommended to retain the original, edited Google Docs text lessons, and use DocsFlow to merge them into the InDesign template. DocsFlow allows Google Docs to be inserted into specified areas of InDesign documents, essentially allowing the curriculum to be expanded or updated as needed, without a complete document revision. The initial Google Docs are easily edited, and if the account is maintained, it’s simply a matter of changing the Google Doc, which will populate the InDesign template. The process can also work in reverse, if the InDesign layout needs changing it will simply be a matter of rearranging text blocks, which are populated by the referenced Google Doc.

Project Closeout Document

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to mark the completion of the Hillsborough Co. Schools Elementary Music Curriculum project by assessing the project's performance, identifying lessons learned, and confirming that essential deliverables have been completed.

1.1 Background:

This project was intended to produce a set of weekly lessons for Hillsborough County elementary music in grades K-5. Each lesson will contain at least one performance components (singing, moving, playing, manipulatives) per lesson. The elementary music supervisor felt that lessons were becoming too text based and were missing essential performance components, this curriculum is intended to remedy that.

2. Project Assessment

Describe the overall success (or not) of the project.

2.1 Checklist for Key Deliverable Goals Met:

- Weekly curriculum map for grades K-5
- Weekly lessons for grades K-5
- Electronic components as needed for each lesson (recordings, PowerPoints, video, etc.)
- Each lesson has at least one performance component as described in 1.1
- Lessons are aligned with Florida State Standards
- Lessons are aligned with grades 1-5 Hillsborough Co. final music exams.
- Lessons are indexed per grade by: standard, activity, materials needed, lesson focus (concept, vocabulary, or skill).

2.2 Deliverable Goals Not Met:

Describe which components were not delivered, and any reasons, or compensation for failure to deliver.

2.3 Scope Creep:

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Scope Change Type	Total # of Changes	Person Hours	Estimated Cost
Add			
Remove			
Defer			
Modify			
Total			

Describe here if needed and use the table below to describe any elements that were expanded or added outside of the original scope of the project and key components. Estimated costs can be monetary or time costs.

2.4 Overall Project Assessment:

Provide an assessment relative to scope, deliverables, stakeholder feedback, and any time and cost details. You may add any other pertinent information other than that mentioned here.

3. Lessons Learned:

Describe any issues, challenges, or successes, encountered during this project. Provide a description and any product documentation references, that provide additional details. Recommend solutions to avoid any future issues, or document successes that can contribute to best practices in the future.

Decide which categories that can be analyzed, and divide each category into two sections, "lessons learned" and "future recommendations". Examples can include (but are not limited to):

- Time management
- Project Management
- Human Resource Management
- Information Management
- Software Tools Effectiveness
- Scope management

Present this in the table show below

Category	Lesson Learned	Recommendation	Reference

4. Asset Handoff

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Who will have future control of online assets (document repository, passwords, initial assets, etc.)

5. Project Closeout Approval:

The undersigned acknowledge they have read and approved the **Project Closeout Form** and agree with the approach it presents.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

Project References:

Boyd, Donald J., Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb, Jonah E. Rockoff, and James H. Wyckoff. 2007. "The Narrowing Gap in New York City Teacher Qualifications and Its Implications for Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools." CALDER Working Paper 10. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

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