

# IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders



Achieve



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Part of **IMPLEMENTING  
Common Core**  
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To download the full workbook, go to  
[www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook](http://www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook)



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U.S. EDUCATION  
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**We are at one of those rare, maybe once-in-a-lifetime moments.** After 30 years of fits and starts, true transformational reform in education is not only possible but also entirely within our grasp. In the last few years, we have seen a number of significant shifts occur: College and career readiness for all students is the new national norm, the majority of states have adopted internationally benchmarked K–12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English, and most states are participating in a Race to the Top assessment consortium. The nation has, by and large, coalesced around a common — and rigorous — set of expectations and goals that will put all students on a trajectory to graduate from high school ready for college, careers and citizenship.

As remarkable as the effort has been to get to this point, the true transformation will occur only if these goals are put into practice and fully implemented for the benefit of every student, in every classroom, in every state. Can it be done? Much of the answer to that question rests squarely with you, the state and district leaders charged with making the CCSS a reality in schools and classrooms. Leading change within a school district or state education agency takes hard, sustained effort. No greater task confronts state and district leaders today than preparing students to meet the new expectations. Trying financial circumstances and stretched capacity only compound the degree of difficulty. Yet the work is critical. The ability of students to reach their full potential — and by extension, our nation’s ability to compete and lead — depends on your ability to take full advantage of this moment in time.

By adopting the CCSS, your state has taken a critical first step forward. You now have a clear road map — anchored in college and career readiness and internationally benchmarked — for what students in your state must know and be able to do to succeed. With this road map comes the chance to fundamentally rethink your system, including long-held notions about educator training, professional development and instructional materials — not to mention the transition from where you are today to where you hope to be by the time the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments are given.

**You will face a choice in the days ahead: The transition to new standards and related tests can be done in the way it has always been done, or the CCSS can be at the heart of more aggressive instructional reform efforts.**

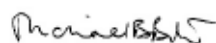
What would this look like? Rethinking instructional reform means deliberately building on good practice in leading districts while injecting urgency and capacity into struggling districts. It means understanding how to get aligned instructional materials in the hands of the right teachers at the right time and how to ensure professional development design reflects best practices and accurately targets student needs. And it means being relentlessly curious about the impact of your implementation efforts, so nothing will surprise you once students sit down to take their first PARCC assessment.

Our two organizations are committed to helping you succeed. We have combined Achieve’s content knowledge with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute’s implementation expertise in performance management. The result is the Common Core Implementation Workbook, which can help you organize for the transition to the CCSS. The workbook contains a framework for how to put all the relevant policies in place and offers sample timelines, relevant best practices, implementation advice and critical exercises to guide this important effort.

We hope that the workbook, in addition to the related state team gatherings and webinars, will help your team take maximum advantage of this moment in history. We look forward to helping you succeed.



Michael Cohen  
President  
Achieve



Sir Michael Barber  
Founder  
U.S. Education Delivery Institute



Kathy Cox  
Chief Executive Officer  
U.S. Education Delivery Institute

# 1. Introduction

“The [Common Core State] standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America’s children for success in college and work.”<sup>1</sup> This is the aspiration behind the newly developed and adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Soon, rigorous content will be taught throughout elementary, middle and high school, with a focus on how to apply this knowledge. Doing so will equip students from every walk of life to compete with their peers in top-performing countries.

**First, though, state and district leaders must diligently prepare for the implementation of the new standards.**

Broadly speaking, complex policies and practices must be organized so that policy intent at the state level actually translates to classroom practice across the state. This means aligning instructional materials and curricular units to the CCSS; conducting highly effective professional development; and redesigning data, assessment and accountability systems to reflect the expectations in the CCSS. It also means mobilizing supports for students with disabilities and other challenging populations. Finally, state and district leaders must work with systems of higher education to guarantee that new mechanisms for teacher evaluation and preparation accurately reflect expectations for student learning. Integrating all of these policy efforts is critical.

With the right planning, high-capacity districts can be in the vanguard of this effort. Here, the state education agency’s role is to ensure that the work occurs consistently across the state. **The state agency does not necessarily need to lead the work directly, nor does it have to treat all districts in the same way.** By differentiating among districts based on capacity, the state can create networks that leverage high-capacity districts and better target its limited resources where they are most needed — to helping struggling districts. Realizing this vision demands that the state also create feedback loops, monitor performance and solve problems as they arise.

The implementation challenge looms large. In response, Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute have developed a **practical Common Core Implementation Workbook for all states in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**. The workbook uses a proven performance management methodology known as “delivery” to lay out clear action steps for states and districts. It provides relevant information, case stories of good practice, key questions and hands-on exercises for leadership teams to complete together. Regardless of your timeline, the workbook offers state and district leaders the means to plan for the CCSS and then drive successful implementation.

The discipline of delivery was first developed in 2001 under U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair. This approach to public-sector management is widely credited with helping Blair’s government meet most of its policy targets for a range of public services. Delivery has five stages, which move a system from its aspiration to planning to implementation.<sup>2</sup> Few of these elements are new; however, delivery provides a systematic and comprehensive way to think about implementation. The approach connects ongoing project management to strategic planning, all with student outcomes in mind. Today, state education agencies in Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Tennessee have adopted and refined the delivery approach and are moving from managing projects to managing for results. The same approach can help states elsewhere improve student achievement by successfully implementing the CCSS and related assessments.

## How To Read This Workbook: The Elements of CCSS Implementation

This is a once-in-a-generation chance to match student performance against the best in the world. To take advantage of this opportunity, state and district leaders must put the CCSS at the heart of broader efforts to create aligned instructional systems. This means tackling a complex and integrated policy set **as a whole** — thinking through policies on formative and summative assessment (and related technologies); coherent professional development; course approvals and revisions; student supports; new instructional materials; changes to teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing; and improvements to the existing data system and accountability framework.

The diagram below is one way to work through this integrated policy set. This workbook will cover all the shaded implementation actions and critical questions in the diagram. Future chapters may address the remaining actions and questions.

Organize To Implement	Aspiration (p. 3.3)	Internal leadership team (p. 3.5)	Timeline (p. 3.9)	Budget (p. 3.17)	Gap analysis (p. 3.24)	Stakeholder communications (p. 4.1)
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		Critical questions					
		Where are we now?	What would success look like in 2014–15?	What are our strategies to achieve success?	How will the strategies be implemented through the field to the classroom?	How will we connect strategies to expected outcomes?	How will we monitor progress and stay on track? (p. 11.1)
Take Action: Implementation Actions	Align instructional materials (p. 5.1)						
	Train educators (p. 6.1)						
	Transition technology and assessment system (p. 7.1)						
	Transition accountability and data reporting system (p. 8.1)						
	Align teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing (p. 9.1)						
	Inform student transitions to higher education (p. 10.1)						

**Desired Student Outcomes**

Covered in this workbook

Anticipated

The workbook begins with a **diagnostic assessment** to help you determine where your CCSS implementation effort is going well and areas of challenge that merit additional attention. Findings from the diagnostic should then guide how you use the rest of the workbook. Page numbers for each relevant section are within the diagnostic so you can quickly focus attention on areas of true need.

After the diagnostic, the next sections of the workbook focus on how the state agency and school districts can **organize for implementation**. These actions undergird the entire implementation effort. Chapters 3 and 4 contain concrete information on how to shape the leadership team, create a timeline, set the budget, manage external stakeholders and form a communications plan to accompany your implementation strategy.

The workbook then offers a set of **implementation actions** that consist of the actual work of the CCSS transition. Chapters 5 and 6 help you answer the critical questions for two key actions: how to align curricular and instructional materials and how to train educators on the CCSS. Though many states will take until 2013 or later to implement all the complex changes associated with the transition to the CCSS, most have indicated that these two actions will be their first steps.<sup>3</sup> As the diagram on the previous page shows, four more key actions are required to align your instructional system to the CCSS. Over time, additional chapters that guide the transition to new assessments and the role of postsecondary institutions will be added to the workbook. The workbook ends with Chapter 11, which answers the final question — **how to monitor progress and sustain momentum**, a topic that obviously applies across all the implementation actions.

Within each chapter of the Common Core Implementation Workbook, you will find one or more of the following:

- **Diagnostic questions** to help your team gauge the extent to which you have already addressed the action(s) in question;
- **A brief narrative** that provides potential options for putting the relevant action(s) in place;
- **Case stories** that illustrate the principles in the narrative; and
- **Exercises** that will help flesh out your implementation strategy and put the relevant action(s) in place.

This workbook is organized in a linear fashion, but only because this medium of communication requires it. In reality, many implementation actions require nonlinear iteration. Moreover, no state or district is starting the planning effort from scratch; each has been leading work on many (or perhaps all) of these actions. Therefore, you should read this workbook as a reference guide for the overall implementation strategy — one that gives you the option to dig deeper in the areas that are critical for your state or district. Where answers already exist, insert them and move on. Elsewhere, honest and critical reflection on the exercises — preferably done together as a leadership team — will help you fill in the blanks.

By completing this workbook, your state or district will have set a clear path for making the most of the transition to the new CCSS and improving instructional practice in classrooms throughout your system. And by participating in the associated webinars and convenings, you will have access to emerging practices across all the states in the PARCC consortium.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 National Governors Association and Council for Chief State School Officers (2010). Press release, June 2.
- 2 Barber, Moffit, & Kihn (2011). *Deliverology 101: A Field Guide for Educational Leaders*.
- 3 Center for Education Policy (2011). *States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing the Common Core State Standards*.



## Acknowledgments

This workbook was the result of many months of hard work. Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) would like to thank those individuals whose efforts made it possible.

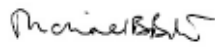
We would like to thank the members of the Achieve and EDI staffs for their tireless efforts on this workbook. Alissa Peltzman provided the overall leadership and guidance for this effort. Alex Harris and Nick Rodriguez played the lead roles in the writing of the report. Special thanks to Marie O'Hara and Lauren Kurczewski for their research contributions, writing and editorial support. Additional thanks to Kate Blosveren, Sandy Boyd, Matt Gandal, Margaret Horn, Stephen Pruitt and Doug Sovde, who shared insights and provided helpful feedback throughout the process.

We also would like to thank Kathy Ames, Marisa McCrone, Emily Plimpton and the team at KSA-Plus Communications, Inc., for their editorial and design contributions. In addition, Melissa Junge and Sheara Krvaric of the Federal Education Group provided valuable guidance on budget and resource allocation.

Finally, funding for this work was made possible by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as well as through a grant awarded to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers through the U.S. Department of Education's **Race to the Top assessment competition**.



Michael Cohen  
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## About Achieve

Achieve is a bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization that has worked with states, individually and through the 35-state American Diploma Project, for over a decade to ensure that state K–12 standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems are calibrated to graduate students from high school ready for college, careers and life.

Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless. In 2005, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network. Starting with 13 states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers.

Achieve partnered with the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative, and a number of its staff served on writing and review teams. More recently, Achieve was selected to manage the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The 25-state PARCC consortium was awarded Race to the Top assessment funds to create next-generation assessments in math and English aligned to the CCSS.

## About U.S. Education Delivery Institute

The U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) is an innovative nonprofit organization that focuses on implementing large-scale system change in public education. Its mission is to partner with K–12 and higher education systems with ambitious reform agendas and invest in their leaders' capacity to deliver results. By employing a proven approach known as delivery, EDI helps state leaders maintain the necessary focus to plan and drive reform.

EDI provides intensive on-the-ground support, data analytics, ongoing professional development and a network through which state systems can collectively build their capacity. As a result of this work, EDI expects to increase the number of well-prepared students who graduate from high school then enter and succeed in college. EDI emphasizes actions to close the gaps that too often separate low-income students and students of color from others. Its success is based entirely on whether the partner systems achieve these aspirations.

# 2. REVIEW SYSTEM CAPACITY

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## IN THIS SECTION

Diagnostic Tool \_\_\_\_\_ 2.3



## 2. Review System Capacity

The first step for any new implementation effort is to review the system's **current** capacity to deliver its aspiration. Implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will require a clear understanding of the people and organizations that play a part in implementation — as well as an assessment of the extent to which they are already undertaking the essential elements of this work.

The diagnostic tool in this chapter will help you assess your capacity to implement the CCSS. Based on this workbook's organizing framework, the rubric considers the extent and quality of your current implementation plan. It lists the relevant questions and lays out guideposts for what “weak” and “strong” performance look like, ranging from a rating of 1 (weakest) to 4 (strongest). Finally, the rubric defines potential evidence to consider as you rate your own system's capacity.

Complete this assessment with your leadership team before reading further. The pattern that emerges can then guide your use of this workbook — in areas where you rate your planning effort as weaker, you can refer to the relevant section of the workbook, denoted by the page number in the far right column.

### Diagnostic Tool

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page ...
Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement	Aspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No aspiration defined for why the CCSS are important</li> <li>Aspiration not widely shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has defined an aspiration for how the CCSS will change classroom practice</li> <li>Department has secured wide buy-in for aspiration inside and outside the department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If asked, how many people inside the department can name the aspiration?</li> <li>What about key players outside the department?</li> </ul>	3.3
	Internal leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ownership of CCSS implementation is haphazard or unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has specified a clear point of accountability or defined multiple points of accountability with clearly delineated responsibility for implementing the CCSS, both inside the department and with external stakeholders (e.g., higher education)</li> <li>Those in charge have the leverage and/or relationships they need to coordinate the effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many people in the department can name the key people responsible for the CCSS effort and their specific responsibilities?</li> <li>What about key players outside the department?</li> </ul>	3.5
	Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timeline is vague or undefined</li> <li>Only real milestone is the rollout of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in 2014</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has articulated an ambitious but realistic timeline of implementation that will credibly prepare the system for rollout of the PARCC assessments</li> <li>Timeline defines key areas of work and milestones for each, which should enable tracking of implementation on a monthly or quarterly basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the timeline exist?</li> <li>To what extent do those responsible for implementation use it as the guiding reference document for their deadlines?</li> </ul>	3.9

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page ...
Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement	Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A cost estimate may have occurred, but little or no thinking has been done about how various state and federal funds will be used to provide sufficient resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has identified most or all relevant state and federal funds that can be used to fund CCSS implementation</li> <li>Department has built a comprehensive budget for CCSS implementation that allocates all costs to relevant funding sources and takes into account the restrictions on each</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does a budget with allocation of federal and state funding sources exist?</li> <li>How confident are we in its accuracy?</li> </ul>	3.17
	Gap analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little effort has been made to compare the system's current content standards to the CCSS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has performed a detailed gap analysis that shows where new state standards will be added and where existing state standards must be augmented, moved or dropped</li> <li>Department has used this analysis to identify high-priority subject areas and/or grade spans according to the size of the gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the gap analysis been performed?</li> <li>Do those responsible for implementation have a clear idea of the highest priority subject areas and grade spans?</li> </ul>	3.24
	Guiding coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no deliberately identified group of external stakeholders who can drive change at all levels, or such a group is limited in its scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 7–10 change leaders from key backgrounds share a consistent understanding and are supportive of the aspiration and strategy for CCSS implementation</li> <li>Department consistently consults and works with this group to guide implementation and communicate to the field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can the leadership team name the members of the guiding coalition?</li> <li>How frequent are the leadership team's interactions with the coalition?</li> </ul>	4.3
	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications efforts regarding the CCSS are sparse, uncoordinated and one way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has a clear communications plan for CCSS implementation that details the message and objective, audiences, modes of communication, frequency or timing of communication, and messengers</li> <li>The communications plan includes five-year strategies for ongoing communications with all audiences to maintain support</li> <li>Audiences understand both what will be accomplished and how</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent do teachers, principals and superintendents in the field understand how their work environments are going to change as a result of the CCSS?</li> <li>To what extent do core external players understand their responsibilities to make this happen?</li> </ul>	4.6

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page ...
Chapter 5. Implementation Action i: Align Instructional Materials to the CCSS	Strategies to achieve success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific activities have been identified for alignment of instructional materials, or activities are uncoordinated and siloed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department and external stakeholders have identified and laid out a balanced and coordinated set of activities that will credibly align instructional materials with the CCSS</li> <li>Activities are benchmarked against best practices both within and outside the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Among those responsible for instructional materials, how many could name the core priority activities?</li> <li>How confident are we that these activities are the ones with the highest potential for impact?</li> </ul>	5.3
	Understanding how the strategies will be implemented through the field to the classroom (i.e., delivery chain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has not yet articulated how the reform strategy will reach the field — that is, how materials will actually reach and influence teachers and their behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all relevant activities, department has explicitly laid out the “delivery chain” that runs from the state through regions and local education agencies to schools and classrooms</li> <li>Delivery chain consists of strong relationships that create a credible path for aligned materials to reach the field, or department has identified weaknesses in the chain and has a plan for addressing them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we explain, in one minute or less, exactly how new instructional materials will be developed or identified and delivered to every classroom in the state?</li> </ul>	5.8
	Connecting strategies to expected outcomes (i.e., targets and trajectories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metrics and targets for success have not been identified or are not meaningfully connected to the overall aspiration</li> <li>No clear path is drawn between the planned activities and the achievement of any targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has identified a range of metrics — from outcome measures to implementation milestones — that define “success” in aligning instructional materials to the CCSS</li> <li>Department has set annual targets for each metric through 2014</li> <li>The targets and metrics provide feedback on whether the aspiration is being achieved on time and whether the right steps are being taken to achieve it</li> <li>Activities are sequenced to show how achieving implementation milestones will help department hit the outcome targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we articulate how we will know whether we are successful with our instructional materials strategy?</li> <li>Has an analysis been done to show how completing this strategy successfully will result in improved outcomes for students? How credible is it?</li> </ul>	5.12

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page ...
Chapter 6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the CCSS and Related Assessments	Strategies to achieve success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific activities have been identified for training educators, or activities are uncoordinated and siloed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department and external stakeholders have identified and laid out a balanced and coordinated set of activities that will credibly train educators to use the CCSS</li> <li>Activities are benchmarked against best practices both within and outside the state</li> <li>A sustainability strategy is in place to support long-term implementation of aligned professional development (e.g., creating systems for training trainers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Among those responsible for professional development, how many could name the core priority activities?</li> <li>How confident are we that these activities are the ones with the highest potential for impact?</li> </ul>	6.4
	Understanding how the strategies will be implemented through the field to the classroom (i.e., delivery chain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has not yet articulated how the reform strategy will reach the field — that is, how professional development for educators will be identified, adapted and deployed to have an impact on educator behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all relevant activities, department has explicitly laid out the delivery chain that runs from the state through regions and local education agencies to schools and classrooms</li> <li>Delivery chain consists of strong relationships that create a credible path for professional development to reach the field, or department has identified weaknesses in the chain and has a plan for addressing them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we explain, in one minute or less, exactly how new professional development will be identified, adapted and delivered to every educator in the state?</li> </ul>	6.8
	Connecting strategies to expected outcomes (i.e., targets and trajectories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metrics and targets for success have not been identified or are not meaningfully connected to the overall aspiration</li> <li>No clear path is drawn between the planned activities and the achievement of any targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department has identified a range of metrics — from outcome measures to implementation milestones — that define “success” in training educators on the CCSS</li> <li>Department has set annual targets for each metric through 2014</li> <li>The targets and metrics provide feedback on whether the aspiration is being achieved on time and whether the right steps are being taken to achieve it</li> <li>Activities are sequenced to show how achieving implementation milestones will help department hit the outcome targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we articulate how we will know whether we are successful with our professional development strategy?</li> <li>Has an analysis been done to show how completing this strategy successfully will result in improved outcomes for students? How credible is it?</li> </ul>	6.13



	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page ...
Chapter 11. Put It All Together: Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems	Monitoring data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance dialogues make little reference to data</li> <li>Data may occasionally be brought up but not in a systematic and consistent way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance dialogues center on the range of metrics that department has used to set its priority targets</li> <li>More frequent data (leading indicators, intermediate metrics, process milestones) are discussed when outcome data are unavailable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How frequently are performance data discussed by the system leader and those who are accountable?</li> </ul>	11.3
	Sharing progress with the system leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance dialogues are haphazard and often take place only in the context of addressing immediate and urgent issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance dialogues are true routines: They are scheduled regularly and given consistent priority by the system leader and key senior managers</li> <li>Routines balance frequency and depth to give the system leader a comprehensive view of all priorities regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How regular and/or consistent are performance dialogues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the point of view of the chief?</li> <li>From the point of view of those accountable?</li> </ul> </li> <li>In the course of a given month, are these routines giving the system leader the right performance information at the right level of depth to drive decisionmaking?</li> </ul>	11.3
	Regularly solving problems to get implementation back on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem-solving may occur but only on an ad hoc basis to “fight fires”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routines surface problems that may require additional attention</li> <li>As problems arise, the system categorizes and allocates resources to them according to severity and urgency</li> <li>Department staff exhibit a culture of problem-solving in addressing both large and small issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When an issue arises at the leadership level, how is it handled? Is there a standard operating procedure that effectively gets the issue resolved with minimal disruption?</li> <li>If we had to guess, what percentage of issues are resolved at the leadership level vs. lower down?</li> </ul>	11.8

**EXERCISE: DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT**

**Purpose:** Use this template to assess your capacity to implement the CCSS.

Chapter	Critical question or action	Rating (1–4)	Evidence
<b>Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement</b>	Aspiration		
	Internal leadership team		
	Timeline		
	Budget		
	Gap analysis		
	Guiding coalition		
	Communications		
<b>Chapter 5. Implementation Action I: Align Instructional Materials to the CCSS</b>	Strategies to achieve success		
	Delivery chain		
	Targets and trajectory		
<b>Chapter 6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the CCSS and Related Assessments</b>	Strategies to achieve success		
	Delivery chain		
	Targets and trajectory		
<b>Chapter 11. Put It All Together: Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems</b>	Monitoring data		
	Sharing progress with the system leader		
	Regularly solving problems		

## NOTES

# 3. ORGANIZE TO IMPLEMENT

## The Basics

Part of **IMPLEMENTING  
Common Core**  
State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to  
[www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook](http://www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook)



Achieve





## IN THIS SECTION

<b>Set the Aspiration</b> _____	<b>3.3</b>
<b>Form an Internal Leadership Team To Determine Timeline, Assign Responsibility and Monitor Progress</b> _____	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Set Assessment Implementation Timeline</b> _____	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Set the Budget</b> _____	<b>3.17</b>
<b>Complete the Gap Analysis</b> _____	<b>3.24</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> _____	<b>3.25</b>



## 3. Organize To Implement: The Basics

### Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Is the system's aspiration for students clear and widely shared?
- Has your state conducted a thorough analysis of the gap between current state standards and the Common Core State Standards?
- Is there a designated leadership team with the focus, tools and skill set needed to drive implementation?
- Are the budget and implementation timeline clearly articulated and sufficient to achieve the aspiration?

Planning begins with setting an aspiration. Then, several other building blocks position implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for success: a talented team to lead the delivery effort with a clear timeline and budget to accomplish the work, an understanding of how drastic the changes from current to future content standards will be, and a clear communications strategy to engage external support.

### Set the Aspiration

The aspiration is a powerful tool that signifies a shared understanding of what success looks like. It must be clear, measurable and understandable to everyone. In the case of the CCSS, the aspiration will describe the impact you expect the new content standards and related assessments to have on student learning by 2014–15. At first glance, this question may seem relatively easy to answer; however, once your leadership team begins to unpack the key components, you may realize that properly answering the question is actually quite complex. **You can learn more about setting an aspiration [here](#).** The aspiration may also identify the theory of action that undergirds your state's reform agenda.

### CASE STORY: DELAWARE

Though Delaware student performance has long been above average, leaders in the First State are no longer satisfied. Now, these leaders publicly assert a new aspiration for Delaware: "Every single student in our system will graduate college and career ready, with the freedom to choose his or her life's course. Our education system needs to change because the world is changing, and because it's the right thing to do. We must prepare our students to meet new standards, or we limit their life choices. Our new standards reflect how prepared our students really are. Half of our student population (representing tens of thousands of students) will likely not meet the new standards. The Delaware Education Plan will improve student readiness through more rigorous standards and assessments, better use of data, more effective teachers and increasing the support to low performing schools."<sup>1</sup>

## EXERCISE: DEFINE YOUR ASPIRATION

**Purpose:** To clearly articulate the importance of the CCSS and share this aspiration with key stakeholders throughout your state.

**Who should participate?** The system leader or district superintendent should complete this exercise, with the input of the broader leadership team.

**Directions:** For each of the areas of CCSS implementation below:

1. Begin with the expectations for students: What are the relevant performance targets for 2014–15? Explain the rationale behind those targets.
2. Describe the current state for each implementation action. What is working well? Where is more planning needed?
3. For each action, describe the ideal state in 2014–15.
4. For each action, explain why it is important that your state make the proposed changes.

		Where are we now?	Where do we want to be in 2014–15?	Rationale
<b>Student performance</b>				
<b>Implementation actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curricula and instructional materials</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and accountability</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student transitions to higher education</li> </ul>			

## Form an Internal Leadership Team To Determine Timeline, Assign Responsibility and Monitor Progress

Ownership of the policy elements related to the CCSS sit in many different places within the state education agency; this poses a major challenge for the implementation effort. Thus, states should put together a team tasked with creating an overall vision, timeline, phase-in strategy and work plan for implementation. This **strategic implementation team** will reinforce the delivery message by engaging stakeholders, providing timely updates on the work to partners, and establishing and monitoring key feedback loops.

The strategic implementation team must know your current state standards well, have the capacity to consider and make recommendations about each of the elements that should be in the state's plan, and ultimately execute and oversee such a plan. The team should include representatives from the state department of education (curriculum and instruction, assessment, data, district support, special education, English language learners), higher education and the governor's office. Key, too, are policy, budget and communications experts. The team should also include representation from vital districts and schools, including teachers, administrators and content area experts.

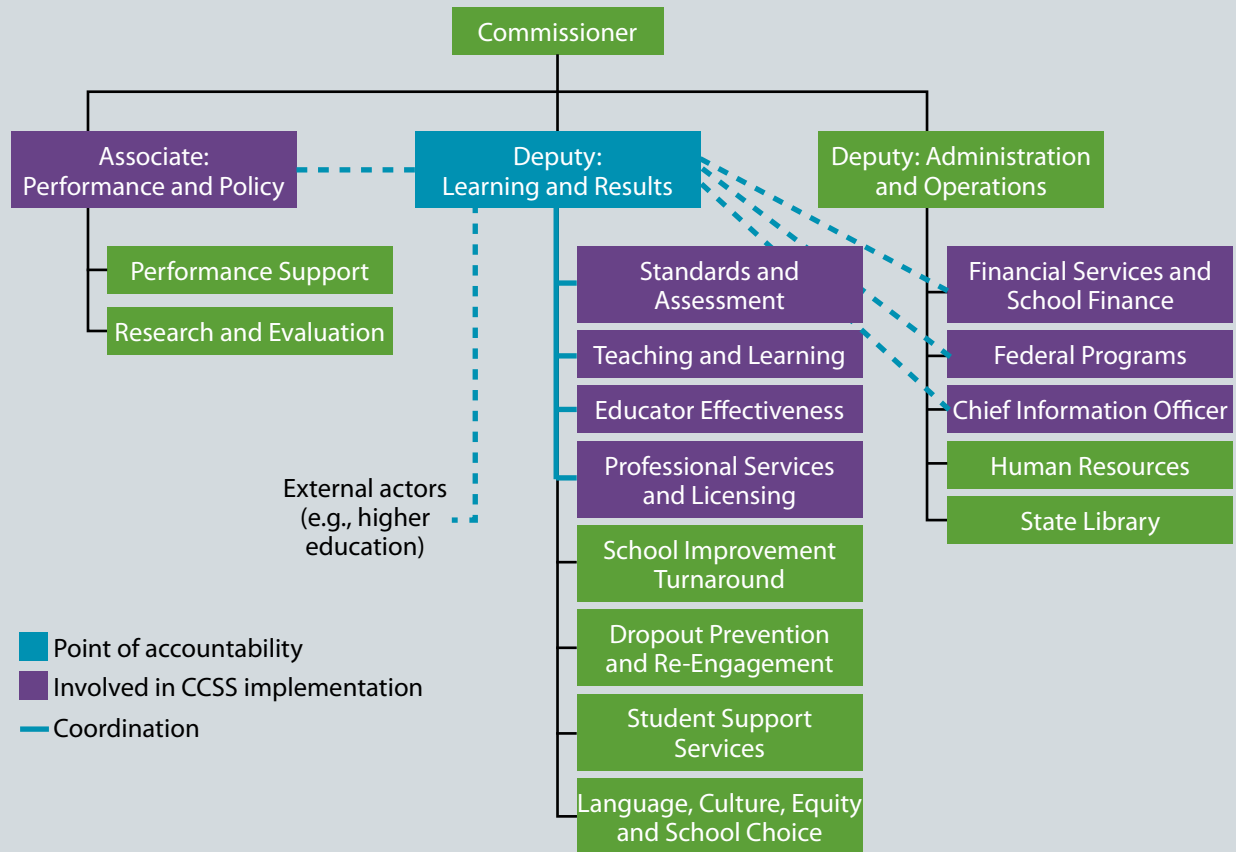
As the implementation effort proceeds, your strategic implementation team will likely need to create other working teams to delve into specific issues, such as professional development design, and recommend how to proceed. Consider what mechanism is in place to ensure fluid communication among the department of education, governor's office and other state education entities such as your higher education system or your teacher licensing board. Consider also what mechanism can be used to provide project oversight to the agency's leadership team (e.g., the chief and key deputies).

There are two general models that you can follow to have a single point of accountability:

1. **Assign a deputy or associate commissioner** to drive the overall effort. This person will be held accountable for the deliverables and outcomes expected of the overall effort. He or she must be senior enough to be able to manage and coordinate the heads of the various units that will be involved. The advantage of this approach is coherence, giving both the system leader and those working on the effort somewhere to turn for leadership. Systems that choose this route must find a way to give this leader sufficient leverage to coordinate multiple units within the state education agency — even when the leader does not have direct line authority over them.



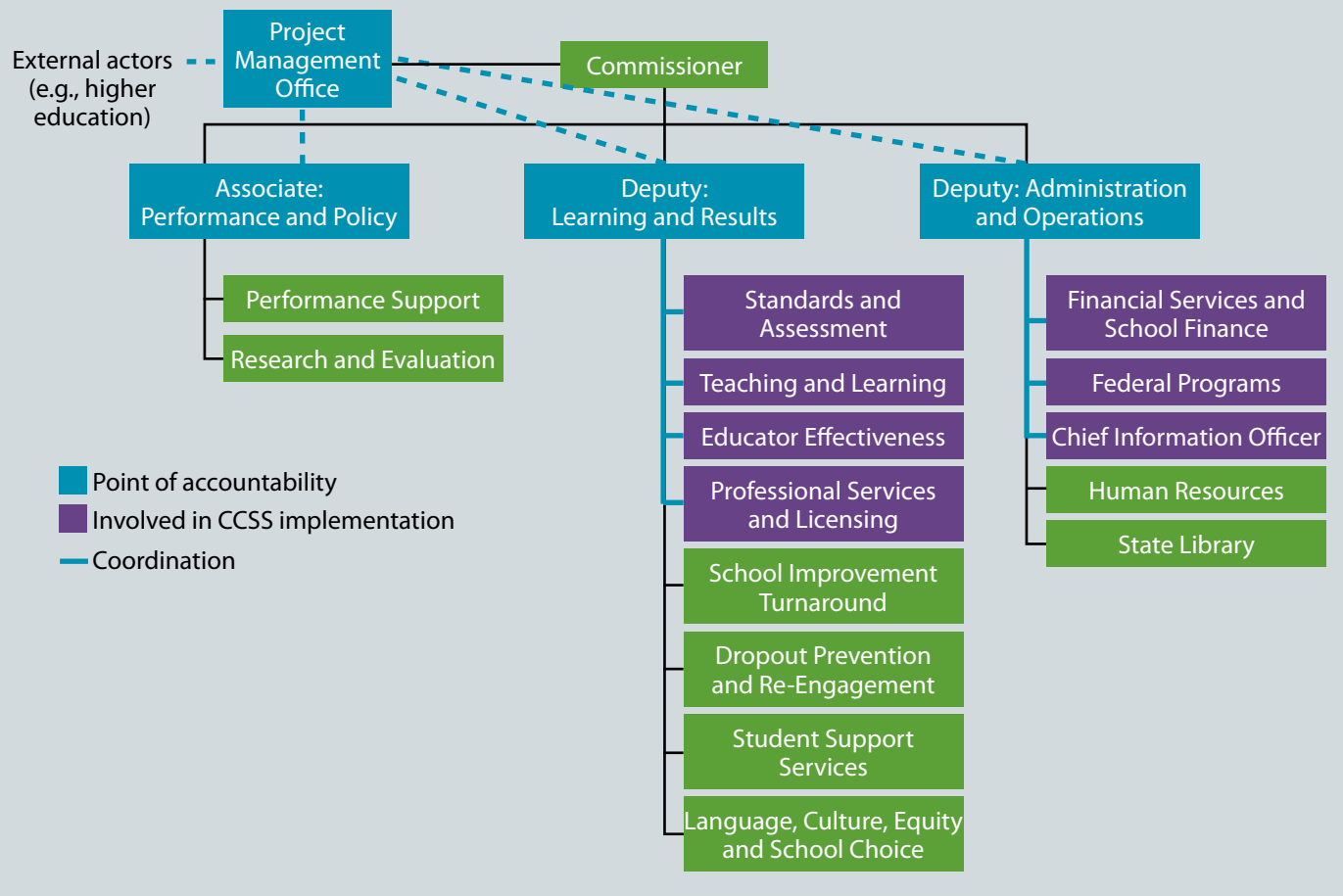
## Deputy Commissioner (EXAMPLE)



- 2. Create a project management office (PMO).** Designate a person or team of people with the right skills to drive implementation by applying the right set of tools for planning and problem-solving. In this case, direct leadership of project work will sit in the various units in the agency; the PMO will play a coordinating and monitoring role. Systems that already have PMOs could potentially fold this work into their existing efforts. PMO staff members need not be senior, but they must be skilled at working with and coordinating more senior counterparts. Thus, they will need strong problem-solving skills, interpersonal and relationship management skills, and “run room” from the senior team to coordinate the work. This approach is less disruptive to existing lines of hierarchy in the organization. To make the approach work, system leaders need to be able to rely on a strong leadership team that can work well together and will be willing to respect the role that the PMO plays. They will also need to find the right person to lead the PMO.

Systems that already have *delivery units* may adopt either approach and integrate it with their existing delivery efforts. In the case of a single point of accountability, that person will become the delivery unit’s primary point of contact. In the case of a PMO, the delivery unit will play a parallel role, managing toward overall outcomes even as the PMO is tracking deliverables and milestones. **You can learn more about the role of a delivery unit [here](#).**

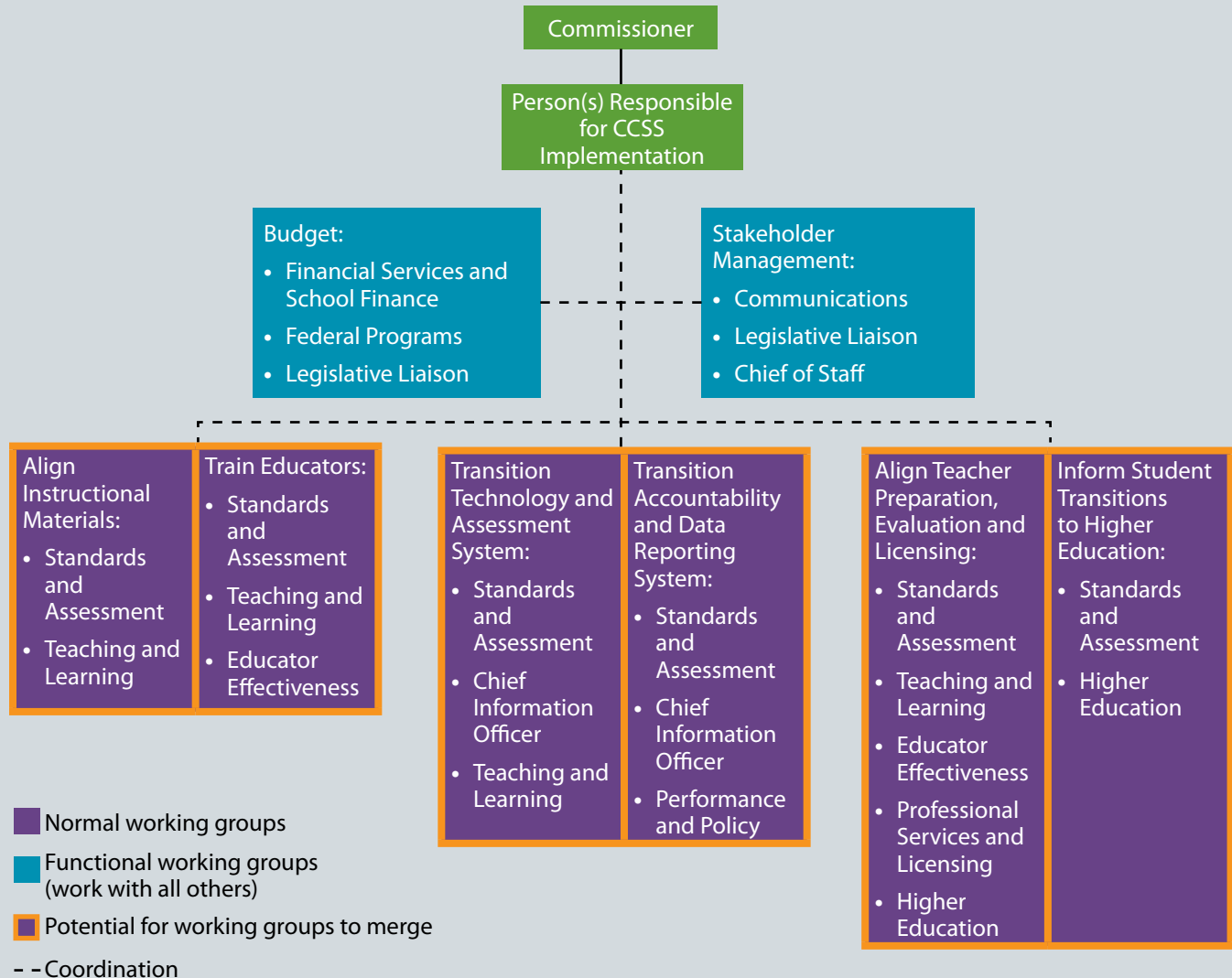
## Project Management Office (EXAMPLE)



Even with leadership defined, staff members throughout the system will need to coordinate their efforts in a way that gets beyond the department's organization chart. To break down silos, it is advisable to create some type of working group structure that brings the relevant leaders together around the major areas of work. Different tasks will require the various divisions in your agency to combine their efforts — often with the efforts of external partners like higher education institutions — in different ways. For example, a working group around the transition of a technology and assessment system might include representatives from standards and assessment, the chief information officer, the teaching and learning division of a state education agency, and district and vendor partners. And any working group will need to draw on your agency's budget, finance and communications divisions to ensure that it is using resources and managing stakeholders effectively.

Whatever form your strategic implementation team takes, it will interact primarily with these working groups. An example of a working group structure is given in the figure on the next page.

## Working Group Structure (EXAMPLE)



### CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

The Kentucky Board of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board signed a resolution directing their respective agencies to implement the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics. This resolution formalizes the state's agreement to integrate standards into its K–12 curriculum, teacher preparation programs and other higher education activities. Details on the resolution can be found [here](#).

## Set Assessment Implementation Timeline

Budget and timeline considerations will influence how your state rolls out the transition to the CCSS. The implementation timeline can be staggered by year, content area, pilot districts or cohort (e.g., bringing the CCSS first to the youngest grade in elementary, middle and high schools).

To help you navigate among these choices, two example timelines are provided to illustrate how your state could approach the CCSS. These timelines are meant only as a starting point. The first example represents a *measured* rollout of the CCSS for a state or district working to implement the CCSS by fall 2014. The second timeline represents a more *accelerated* timeline for a state or district working to implement the CCSS by fall 2012.


Each state and district will obviously need to customize the implementation effort. For example, a state or district may develop a plan based on the results of its gap analysis and grab the “low-hanging fruit” in grades where the CCSS are most similar to the state’s former standards. These timelines simply provide an important reference point as you set your own timeline for this effort.

The following assumptions were made in constructing the timelines:

- **The state has conducted a valid and reliable comparison between its former K–12 standards in English language arts and math and the new CCSS.** Additionally, it is assumed that the state has identified the gaps between the two sets of standards, new content and performance expectations, and changes in grade-level content and noted what content is no longer included.
- **State and district roles overlap, ownership of components is shared, and horizontal and vertical collaborations will occur.** States will employ different approaches in how/who leads particular components/stages of the work and when districts assume more responsibility. States should identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation.
- Though **implementation may be staggered by grade/grade band depending on state/district needs and capacity**, the following timeline was used for purposes of this exercise:
  - MeasuredState: CCSS K–2 (2011–12), CCSS 3–5 (2012–13), CCSS 6–8 (2013–14) and CCSS 9–12 (2014–15); all transition support (professional development, assessment rollout, etc.) occurs for all grades simultaneously.
- **The state has established state-, regional-, district-, school- and classroom-level processes** around adoption and implementation of new curricula and instructional materials. The same assumption holds for professional development.
- English language arts and math content areas **follow the same implementation timeline.**
- Adjustments to the accountability/reporting timeline will be made **contingent upon reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.**
- **Critical anchor milestones have been identified in ORANGE** and can be used by the chief, deputy or other senior leader to manage the overall flow of work.

## MeasuredState: 2014 Implementation Timeline for CCSS/PARCC (EXAMPLE)

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
<b>Organize to implement</b>															
Conduct gap analysis on new vs. existing standards <i>(assumed done already)</i>															
<b>Form an internal leadership team (the strategic implementation team) to determine timeline, assign responsibility and establish process to monitor progress</b>															
<b>Set instructional/assessment implementation timeline</b>															
<b>Conduct self-assessment/audit of resource allocation</b>															
<b>Set budget</b>															
Build a base of support by establishing the “guiding coalition”: Develop a list of the partners most important to making teachers aware of the new CCSS															
Build a base of support by establishing the guiding coalition: Identify new/existing channels to leverage for curriculum, professional development and communications needs															
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of leadership: Disseminate materials/information (state board of education, governor, state legislature, higher education, education organizations, professional development network leaders, district curriculum leaders, career technical centers, teachers, regional/district leadership teams and charter schools)															
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of the leadership: Develop/refine stakeholder engagement strategy around the CCSS and related assessment implementation															
<b>Align instructional materials (may be state-led, district-led or a hybrid, whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts’ efforts in front of statewide implementation)</b>															
<b>Make publicly available the results of a secondary review/ validation of standards gap analysis, including the differences in topic, content AND cognitive demand</b>															
Develop a process for review of textbook and instructional materials															
<b>Compare alignment of existing state-developed instructional materials/performance tasks to the CCSS</b>															
Develop sample content frameworks — coordinated/building on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) prototypes															
Develop model aligned instructional units materials/ performance tasks — coordinated/building on PARCC prototypes															
Review state/district textbook and instructional materials procurement policies and ensure adoption timeline necessitates that materials align with CCSS implementation timeline															

 Critical milestone

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Examine course specifications — particularly at the high school level — to ensure they align with the new CCSS															
Examine state graduation requirements policies in collaboration with higher education and technical college staff to ensure alignment with the new CCSS; it takes, on average, five to six years for changes in state graduation requirements to take effect															
Review/implement PARCC model 12th grade bridge courses aligned to the CCSS															
Develop a plan for integrating the CCSS literacy standards into the state science and social studies standards (crosswalk literacy standards with state science/social studies standards, identify next revision cycle, etc.)															
Teach the CCSS in the classroom			K-2				3-5				6-8				9-12
<b>Train educators</b> (may be <b>state-led</b> , <b>district-led</b> or a <b>hybrid</b> , whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts' efforts in front of statewide implementation)															
<b>Develop a coordinated agencywide plan and calendar for professional development (PD)</b>															
Conduct awareness sessions to make teachers/principals comfortable with the CCSS															
PD to unpack standards to ensure deep understanding of content and performance expectations															
PD for teachers with new/different content responsibilities															
PD for teachers on instructional strategies															
PD for teachers on PARCC assessment system, item types and data interpretation															
PD for teachers on literacy standards in science, social studies and technology															
Development of online resource centers for on-demand assistance															
<b>Transition assessment system</b>															
<b>Develop an assessment transition plan</b>															
Conduct an analysis of the current state assessment blueprint/test specifications against the new CCSS to identify changes in topic placement and cognitive demand and to determine the significance of changes required to accommodate the new standards															
Align formative tools/assessments to CCSS content to avoid measuring outdated content or expectations															
Review existing items for alignment with regard to grade level and cognitive demand															
Convene Technical Advisory Committee to present findings and determine if a transition test is plausible and appropriate															

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Develop a notification strategy to alert all districts, schools and communities about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year of implementation (notification should occur at least 12 months prior to the operational assessment)</li> <li>• Changes to the assessment structure</li> </ul> If possible, release items indicative of the new assessment															
<i>The following assessment transition tasks may not be applicable and are dependent upon a state's decision to change its current state assessments in English language arts and math prior to the implementation of the common assessments.</i>															
Review the possible new assessment to ensure all federal regulations regarding peer review and approval are appropriate or if new approval will be needed															
Review current assessment contracts and overall fiscal resources to determine the fiscal and practical impact, especially if additional field testing or new standard setting is required															
Ensure internal leadership fully understands the implications of changes in assessment															
Convene a team of district assessment directors to discuss district and school impact of a change in the assessment at this stage															
Pilot participation in PARCC															
Fully participate in PARCC statewide															
<b>Transition technology to support accountability system</b>															
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data															
Review/revise state/district/higher education data system budgets to prioritize funding the maintenance and growth of a sustainable P-20 data system															
Build/revise user-friendly data dashboards that allow good public reporting of critical college and career readiness indicators															
Build/revise high school feedback reports to reflect PARCC/college and career readiness indicators															
Identify teacher/school evaluation metrics (growth measures, observations, etc.)															
Review/revise state accountability index to reflect approaching, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness indicators and PARCC assessments															
Consider implications of the CCSS/assessments on the current accountability workbook															
<b>Transition technology to support assessment system</b>															
Conduct a self-audit, identifying how/if district, state and higher education data systems interact and the technology infrastructure needs to support transition to PARCC															
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data															

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Build and implement strategies to close technology infrastructure gaps to prepare for computer-based assessments															
Develop an early warning system based on the PARCC assessment to identify students in need of additional support to get on track before graduation															
Review/revise state accountability index to reflect approaching, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness indicators and PARCC assessments															
<b>Align teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing</b> (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)															
Investigate implications of the CCSS on current teacher licensure/relicensure															
<b>Inform student transitions to higher education</b> (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)															
Align undergraduate entry-level, credit-bearing courses to the CCSS															
Revise teacher preparation in-service and preservice programs and alternative certification programs to align to the CCSS															
Examine two- and four-year public college and university and college placement requirement policies into entry-level, credit-bearing courses to ensure they align with the new CCSS															
<b>Monitor and sustain progress</b> (applies to all aspects of implementation above)															
<b>Establish quality control/feedback loop structure to evaluate the impact of transition activities</b>															
Monitor progress using one or more internal routines															
Complete annual review of implementation progress with state policymakers to ensure on track to meet goals															

## AccelerState: 2012 Implementation Timeline for CCSS/PARCC (EXAMPLE)

Please note the change in the accelerated timeline axis from a four-month to a bimonthly period that ends in September 2012.

	March 2011	May 2011	July 2011	September 2011	November 2011	January 2012	March 2012	May 2012	July 2012	September 2012
<b>Foundational elements</b>										
Conduct gap analysis on new vs. existing standards ( <i>assumed done already</i> )										
<b>Form an internal leadership team (the strategic implementation team) to determine timeline, assign responsibility and establish process to monitor progress</b>										
<b>Set instructional/assessment implementation timeline</b>										
<b>Conduct self-assessment/audit of resource allocation</b>										

■ Critical milestone



	March 2011	May 2011	July 2011	September 2011	November 2011	January 2012	March 2012	May 2012	July 2012	September 2012
<b>Set budget</b>										
Build a base of support by establishing the “guiding coalition”: Develop a list of the partners most important to making teachers aware of the new CCSS										
Build a base of support by establishing the guiding coalition: Identify new/existing channels to leverage for curriculum, professional development and communications needs										
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of leadership: Disseminate materials/information (state board of education, governor, state legislature, higher education, education organizations, professional development network leaders, district curriculum leaders, career technical centers, teachers, regional/district leadership teams and charter schools)										
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of leadership: Develop/refine stakeholder engagement strategy around the CCSS and related assessment implementation										
<b>Align instructional materials</b> (may be <b>state-led</b> , <b>district-led</b> or a <b>hybrid</b> , whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts’ efforts in front of statewide implementation)										
<b>Make publicly available the results of a secondary review/validation of standards gap analysis, including the differences in topic, content AND cognitive demand</b>										
Develop a process for review of textbook and instructional materials										
<b>Compare alignment of existing state-developed instructional materials/ performance tasks to the CCSS</b>										
Develop sample content frameworks — coordinated/building on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) prototypes										
Develop model aligned instructional units materials/performance tasks — coordinated/building on PARCC prototypes										
Review state/district textbook and instructional materials procurement policies and ensure adoption timeline necessitates that materials align with CCSS implementation timeline										
Examine course specifications — particularly at the high school level — to ensure they align with the new CCSS										
Examine state graduation requirements policies in collaboration with higher education and technical college staff to ensure alignment with the new CCSS; it takes, on average, five to six years for changes in state graduation requirements to take effect										
Review/implement PARCC model 12th grade bridge courses aligned to the CCSS (slated for development in 2013, not reflected in timeline)										
Develop a plan for integrating the CCSS literacy standards into the state science and social studies standards (crosswalk literacy standards with state science/social studies standards, identify next revision cycle, etc.)										
Teach the CCSS in the classroom										
<b>Train educators</b> (may be <b>state-led</b> , <b>district-led</b> or a <b>hybrid</b> , whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts’ efforts in front of statewide implementation)										
<b>Develop a coordinated agencywide plan and calendar for professional development (PD)</b>										

	March 2011	May 2011	July 2011	September 2011	November 2011	January 2012	March 2012	May 2012	July 2012	September 2012
Conduct awareness sessions to make teachers/principals comfortable with the CCSS										
PD to unpack standards to ensure deep understanding of content and performance expectations										
PD for teachers with new/different content responsibilities										
PD for teachers on instructional strategies										
PD for teachers on PARCC assessment system, item types and data interpretation										
PD for teachers on literacy standards in science, social studies and technology										
Development of online resource centers for on-demand assistance										
<b>Transition assessment system</b>										
<b>Develop an assessment transition plan</b>										
Conduct an analysis of the current state assessment blueprint/test specifications against the new CCSS to identify changes in topic placement and cognitive demand and to determine the significance of changes required to accommodate the new standards										
Align formative tools/assessments to CCSS content to avoid measuring outdated content or expectations										
Review existing items for alignment with regard to grade level and cognitive demand										
Convene Technical Advisory Committee to present findings and determine if a transition test is plausible and appropriate										
Develop a notification strategy to alert all districts, schools and communities about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year of implementation (notification should occur at least 12 months prior to the operational assessment)</li> <li>• Changes to the assessment structure</li> </ul> If possible, release items indicative of the new assessment										
<i>The following assessment transition tasks may not be applicable and are dependent upon a state's decision to change its current state assessments in English language arts and math prior to the implementation of the common assessments.</i>										
Review the possible new assessment to ensure all federal regulations regarding peer review and approval are appropriate or if new approval will be needed										
Review current assessment contracts and overall fiscal resources to determine the fiscal and practical impact, especially if additional field testing or new standard setting is required										
Ensure internal leadership fully understands the implications of changes in assessment										
Convene a team of district assessment directors to discuss district and school impact of a change in the assessment at this stage										
Pilot participation in PARCC ( <i>occurs in 2013–14, not reflected in timeline</i> )										
Fully participation in PARCC statewide ( <i>occurs in 2014–15, not reflected in timeline</i> )										
<b>Transition technology to support accountability system</b>										
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data										
Review/revise state/district/higher education data system budgets to prioritize funding the maintenance and growth of a sustainable P–20 data system										

	March 2011	May 2011	July 2011	September 2011	November 2011	January 2012	March 2012	May 2012	July 2012	September 2012
Build/revise user-friendly data dashboards that allow good public reporting of critical college and career readiness indicators										
Build/revise high school feedback reports to reflect PARCC/college and career readiness indicators										
Identify teacher/school evaluation metrics (growth measures, observations, etc.)										
Review/revise state accountability index to reflect approaching, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness indicators and PARCC assessments										
Consider implications of CCSS/assessments on the current accountability workbook										
<b>Transition technology to support assessment system</b>										
Conduct a self-audit, identifying how/if district, state and higher education data systems interact and the technology infrastructure needs to support transition to PARCC										
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data										
Build and implement strategies to close technology infrastructure gaps to prepare for computer-based assessments										
Develop an early warning system based on the PARCC assessment to identify students in need of additional support to get on track before graduation										
Review/revise state accountability index to reflect approaching, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness indicators and PARCC assessments										
<b>Align teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)</b>										
Investigate implications of the CCSS on current teacher licensure/relicensure										
<b>Inform student transitions to higher education (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)</b>										
Align undergraduate entry-level, credit-bearing courses to the CCSS										
Revise teacher preparation in-service and preservice programs and alternative certification programs to align to the CCSS										
Examine two- and four-year public college and university and college placement requirement policies into entry-level, credit-bearing courses to ensure they align with the new CCSS										
<b>Monitor and sustain progress (applies to all aspects of implementation above)</b>										
<b>Establish quality control/feedback loop structure to evaluate the impact of transition activities</b>										
Monitor progress using one or more internal routines										
Complete annual review of implementation progress with state policymakers to ensure on track to meet goals										

## Set the Budget

The goal of the CCSS is to improve a state's core instructional programs to prepare students to meet increasingly rigorous expectations; as such, implementation efforts should be supported primarily with state and local revenue. Federal education grant funds can provide supplemental support to help states, districts and schools leverage reforms, but each federal funding source has its own rules that govern how the grant may be used. The steps below provide a framework to help states and districts determine whether federal funds can be used for a particular cost. This list is not exhaustive. Staff should always consult the specific program statutes, regulations and guidance to determine what additional rules apply. Including the chief financial officers and experts in Title I or other federal programs in all planning discussions for CCSS implementation is an important first step.

### Step 1: Identify the specific costs that need to be supported.

The first step in developing a budget is to determine what specific activities, services, supplies, materials and personnel costs need to be funded to implement the CCSS and related assessments. Using federal funds to support some activities may be possible, but evaluating whether federal funds can support a state's or district's implementation efforts is impossible without first identifying the specific costs the state or district wants to fund.

For example, states and districts may wish to provide training about the CCSS and related assessments to instructional staff. Several federal funding sources support professional development, but each grant has its own restrictions for what kinds of professional development activities are permissible.

*Note:* The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will bear many of the development costs associated with updating the state testing system on a discrete, one-time-only basis.

### Step 2: Make an initial determination of which federal funding sources might be able to support the proposed cost.

The next step is to determine which federal funding sources might be available to support the identified cost. Federal education funding streams are designed for specific purposes and can support only certain types of activities (a brief summary of the major federal funding streams can be found on the following pages). Once the most relevant potential federal funding sources are identified, Steps 3–7 can assist states and districts in further analyzing whether a specific cost is permissible.

For example, a district seeking to launch professional development for teachers in how to use the CCSS and related assessments to improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring would typically focus on the School Improvement Grant, Title I and Title II. Unless the professional development specifically targets students with disabilities or English language learners, drawing funds from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants or Title III is not prudent or legal.

### Step 3: Determine whether there are any fiscal restrictions, such as the “supplement not supplant” requirement, that bar the proposed cost.

Most federal education programs have fiscal requirements designed to ensure federal funds are spent on *extra* costs a state or district would not normally support with state or local funds. The most common of these requirements is the supplement not supplant rule. While applying the supplement not supplant test is very fact specific and varies from program to program, in general, costs are not considered extra when they:

- Are required by state, local or federal law;
- Were previously supported with state or local funds; or
- Benefit all students, not just the specific target population of a given grant (this is mostly relevant for the Title I and migrant programs).

Given this, identify which of the costs from Step 1 are extra costs the state or district would not normally pay for; these extra costs are typically the ones that may be eligible for federal support. For example, if a state legislature mandates that districts carry out specific types of professional development activities as part of the CCSS implementation effort, districts generally may not support those professional development activities with federal funds that contain a supplement not supplant requirement.

*Note:* Schools that operate Title I schoolwide programs, explained in more detail [here](#), may have more flexibility in defining what is considered extra at the school level. As a practical matter, however, there is considerable confusion among auditors and monitors about how to apply the supplement not supplant requirement to costs at the school level; thus, schoolwide program schools must exercise caution when developing their budgets.

### Step 4: Determine who will benefit from the cost.

If a proposed cost is generally consistent with the purpose of a federal program (Step 2) and does not violate the supplement not supplant requirement that applies to most federal education programs (Step 3), the next step is to determine who will benefit from the proposed costs, such as who will participate in the planned activities, whose salaries will be paid, who will use the materials purchased, etc. Each federal education grant has its own eligibility criteria defining the target population that can be served. Costs may support only eligible beneficiaries. For example, if a school district purchases supplemental instructional materials aligned to the CCSS with IDEA, Part B funds to provide extra support to students with disabilities, the district must ensure the materials are used *exclusively* for IDEA-eligible students.

### Step 5: Consider applicable “use of funds” requirements, including mandatory caps and set-asides.

Next, determine whether the proposed costs are consistent with a program’s use of funds requirements. Many federal education programs have a statutory use of funds section that outlines the types of costs that can be charged to the program. Some programs, such as Title I and IDEA, do not have a specific use of funds section, in which case the proposed costs must clearly align to the program’s purpose. In addition to the statute and regulations, the U.S. Department of Education develops nonregulatory guidance for certain programs that contains more information about the use of funds.

States and districts should also take into account any statutory caps that limit the amount that may be spent on specific types of costs, as well as set-asides that require funds to be spent on specific activities.

*Practical Tip: Many federal education programs require districts (and, in some cases, states) to set aside funds to support activities for eligible private school students, staff and parents. How a district uses federal funds for its public schools can, in some cases, affect what it must set aside for private schools.*

In addition to federal use of funds requirements, states and districts must also take into account state-imposed rules that affect federal grant programs. Most of the major federal education programs, such as Title I and IDEA, are state-administered programs, meaning the state is responsible for overseeing program implementation throughout the state. As a result, states are given latitude to impose additional rules governing how federal funds may be spent. Districts are legally required to comply with these state-imposed rules as well.

States that wish to encourage their districts to use federal funds for CCSS implementation activities might consider ways they can support district efforts, such as minimizing state-imposed barriers and developing guidance informing districts how they can use federal funds for specific activities.

### **Step 6: Identify why the proposed cost is “necessary and reasonable” for the success of the federal program supporting the cost.**

Consider how the proposed cost will further the goals and objectives of the federal program(s) that might be used to support the cost. All costs charged to federal funds must, among other things, be necessary for the performance or administration of the relevant federal program(s). They must also be reasonable in light of the amount of money to be spent and the needs of the entity spending the funds.

*Practical Tip: States and districts must be able to demonstrate that all costs charged to federal funds benefit the program(s) that support the costs. As states and districts develop their budgets, they should think ahead about the systems they will rely on and the strategies they will use to document their activities.*

For example, a state or district using federal funds to support an implementation cost should be prepared to demonstrate how the activity furthers the goals of the applicable federal grant program; that the amount paid reflects a fair market value; and that the state or district followed all applicable state and local laws, policies and procedures when paying for the activity (e.g., procurement rules, inventory rules, payroll and human resources rules).

### **Step 7: Review state rules, grant applications and program plans.**

The last step is to ensure the proposed cost is consistent with any application, program plan or other planning tool the state, district or school submitted to receive the funds. All costs charged to federal funds must be consistent with these plans. States typically submit plans and applications to the U.S. Department of Education. For example, states submitted a document known as the “Consolidated Application” for major Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs in 2002, along with additional information, including accountability workbooks, in subsequent years as part of that process. Similarly, states were required to submit a detailed application for School Improvement Grant funds under section 1003(g) and for Race to the Top funds.

In state-administered programs, districts submit plans and applications to their state, and the state is responsible for designing the applications that districts use to apply for funds. Depending on the timing and the application process involved, states or districts might need to amend their applications to use federal funds if the cost is not contemplated by the initial application.

## Overview of Major Federal Education Programs

The following summaries provide a brief overview of certain federal education programs that may be relevant to CCSS implementation efforts. A state, district or school must take a range of issues into account before using any of these funding sources for a particular cost. These overviews are designed only to help identify potential sources of funding for proposed activities. Because federal funds often have different requirements for how funds can be used at the state, district and, in some cases, school levels, these summaries provide brief information about the permissible uses of funds at each level.

### Title I, School Improvement, Section 1003(a)

**Purpose:** To improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring to enable those schools to make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status.

**Major uses of funds** include salaries, professional development, materials and other costs related to school improvement initiatives.

<b>State</b>	State education agencies (SEAs) must reserve 4 percent of their Title I, Part A allocation for school improvement activities. Of this amount, they may retain 5 percent to carry out their responsibilities for school improvement under <b>section 1116</b> and the statewide system of support under <b>section 1117</b> .
<b>District</b>	Local education agencies (LEAs) may use their funds for school improvement activities consistent with <b>section 1116</b> in schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring.
<b>School</b>	LEAs are not required to allocate funds to schools but may choose to in order to support school-level school improvement activities.

Section 1003(a) funds are not technically governed by a supplement not supplant provision; however, other rules require Title I funds — including section 1003(a) funds — be used for extra costs. [See Q&A F-4 of the U.S. Department of Education’s Non-Regulatory Guidance on School Improvement Grants.](#)

### Title I, School Improvement Grant, Section 1003(g)

**Purpose:** In conjunction with funds reserved under section 1003(a), to improve student achievement in Title I schools and Title I-eligible schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring to enable those schools to make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status.

**Major uses of funds** include costs related to implementing the school turnaround initiatives described in the state and local applications, consistent with the approved budgets.

<b>State</b>	SEAs may reserve up to 5 percent of the grant for administration, evaluation and technical assistance expenses.
<b>District</b>	LEAs must use funds to implement one of four school intervention models in eligible schools in accordance with the LEA’s application approved by the SEA.
<b>School</b>	Funds earmarked for school-level costs must be spent consistently to implement the selected school intervention model in accordance with the LEA’s application approved by the SEA.



Please note, section 1003(g) funds are not technically governed by a supplement not supplant provision; however, other rules require Title I funds — including section 1003(g) funds — be used for extra costs. [See Q&A F-4 of the U.S. Department of Education’s Non-Regulatory Guidance on School Improvement Grants.](#)

## Title I, Part A

**Purpose:** To ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

Title I, Part A does not have a specific use of funds section describing the allowable use of Title I, Part A funds. However, Title I does have a **statement of purpose**. Because Part A falls under Title I, funds spent on Part A programs must adhere to the purposes of Title I. Major uses of funds include salaries, professional development activities for Title I staff, instructional materials and supplies, and activities designed to help improve student academic achievement.

<b>State</b>	SEAs may reserve up to 1 percent of the Title I, Part A grant for state administration. As a practical matter, most states require the full amount of this set-aside for implementing the oversight responsibilities of the Title I program.
<b>District</b>	LEAs may, and in some cases must, reserve funds for <b>specific district-level activities</b> . In particular, LEAs may reserve funds for districtwide initiatives that benefit eligible students and are consistent with the purposes of Title I.
<b>School</b>	<p>Schools that receive Title I must operate one of two program models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school that is eligible to operate a <b>schoolwide program</b> may spend funds on educational costs consistent with the school’s needs identified through a needs assessment and articulated in a schoolwide plan.</li> <li>• Schools that are not eligible to operate a schoolwide program, or that choose not to, must operate a targeted assistance program. Such schools must use Title I funds to target specifically identified students.</li> </ul>

Title I, Part A contains a **supplement not supplant** provision; at the school level, a different test applies to schools with schoolwide programs, which may provide for more flexibility in certain circumstances. For more information about this rule, please see the [U.S. Department of Education’s Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I Fiscal Issues.](#)



## Title II, Part A (Improving Teacher Quality)

**Purpose:** To increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools and to hold LEAs and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement.

**Major uses of funds** include professional development activities, activities to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, and class size reduction.

<b>State</b>	SEAs may reserve up to 2.5 percent of the Title II, Part A allocation for a variety of state-level activities set out in <b>section 2113(c)</b> , including professional development for teachers and principals in the state, helping LEAs create professional development programs, and supporting activities to ensure that teachers use state standards and assessments to improve instructional practices and academic achievement.  Please note: State-level Title II, Part A funds are subject to <b>equitable services</b> requirements for private schools. As a result, each SEA must use a portion of the funds it reserves for state-level activities to provide equitable services to private school teachers, principals and other staff.
<b>District</b>	LEAs must conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of the LEA's teaching force to be able to have all students meet state standards. The LEA must spend Title II, Part A funds, consistent with the results of the needs assessment, on activities set out in <b>section 2123</b> , including certain kinds of professional development activities to improve instructional practices and academic achievement.
<b>School</b>	LEAs are not required to allocate Title II, Part A funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to, the school must spend the funds consistent with section 2113, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

Title II, Part A contains a supplement not supplant provision at both the **state** and **local** levels.

## Title II, Part B (Math and Science Partnerships)

**Purpose:** To improve the academic achievement of students in the areas of mathematics and science.

**Major uses of funds** include professional development for math and science teachers, instruction on the use of data and assessments to improve classroom practices, and developing more rigorous math and science curricula, consistent with the partnership's approved application and budget.

<b>State</b>	SEAs may reserve a limited amount of funds that are necessary and reasonable for administering the Math and Science Partnership program.
<b>Partnership*</b>	Partnerships may spend funds consistent with their approved application on authorized activities in <b>section 2202</b> . If set out in the approved application or an appropriate amendment, these activities may include developing or redesigning more rigorous mathematics and science curricula as well as professional development activities for math and science teachers.

\*States must fund eligible partnerships made up of a high-needs LEA and an engineering, mathematics or science department of an institution of higher education. The partnership may include other organizations identified by **statute**.

Title II, Part B contains a **supplement not supplant** provision.

### Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition)

**Purpose:** To help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English and meet the same state standards all children are expected to meet.

**Major uses of funds** include professional development for eligible teachers and supplemental materials for eligible students.

<b>State</b>	SEAs may reserve up to 5 percent of the Title III, Part A allocation for a variety of state-level activities set out in <b>section 3111</b> , including professional development activities and other activities that assist personnel in meeting state and local certification and licensing requirements for teaching limited English proficient children.  Please note: State-level Title III, Part A funds are subject to <b>equitable services</b> requirements for private schools. As a result, each SEA must use a portion of the funds it reserves for state-level activities to provide equitable services to private schools.
<b>District</b>	LEAs must use district-level funds for the mandatory activities set out in <b>section 3115(c)</b> , including specific kinds of professional development activities to improve language instruction programs. After carrying out the mandatory activities, LEAs may use their funds for the activities set out in <b>section 3115(d)</b> .
<b>School</b>	LEAs are not required to allocate Title III, Part A funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to, the school must spend the funds consistent with section 2113, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

Title III, Part A contains a **supplement not supplant** provision. For more information about this rule, please see the [U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Supplement Not Supplant Provision of Title III of the ESEA](#).

### IDEA, Part B (Special Education Grants)

**Purpose:** To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

**Major uses of funds** include salaries, professional development activities for special education staff, child find and evaluation activities, supplemental instructional materials and supplies, and permissible assistive technology.

<b>State</b>	Consistent with their state plans, SEAs may spend the funds reserved for state-level activities on a variety of costs set out in <b>section 611(e)</b> . SEAs must carry out the monitoring, enforcement, complaint investigation and mediation activities specified in section 611(e)(2)(B) and then may carry out other authorized activities, including professional development.
<b>District</b>	IDEA, Part B does not have a specific use of funds section describing the allowable use of district-level funds. Consistent with their local plans, LEAs must spend their IDEA, Part B funds for the excess cost of providing special education and related services to eligible children.
<b>School</b>	LEAs are not required to allocate IDEA, Part B funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to make the allocation, the school must spend the funds consistent with the purpose of Part B, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

IDEA, Part B contains a **supplement not supplant** provision, although **some state-level funds are exempt**. For more information about this rule, please see [Q&A C-6 in the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Funds for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Made Available Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#).

## Race to the Top

**Purpose:** To encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas.

**Major uses of funds** include educational costs to implement the initiatives articulated in the approved application and budget.

<b>State</b>	SEAs must spend funds reserved for state-level activities consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.
<b>District</b>	LEAs must spend funds for district-level activities consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the state.
<b>School</b>	LEAs may serve schools consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the state.

Race to the Top does not contain a supplement not supplant provision.

## Complete the Gap Analysis

You will want to identify the degree to which your state's current content standards compare with those in the CCSS, as the findings hold obvious implications for curriculum, instruction, assessments and teacher professional development. This activity is best coordinated at the state level and shared with all districts and schools. Most states in PARCC have completed this analysis using Achieve's Common Core Comparison Tool (CCCTool).<sup>2</sup> Those states that have not yet done so can access the CCCTool at <http://ccctool.achieve.org>. The CCCTool provides information — by grade level as well as overall — about what it will take for states to move from their current standards-based systems to full implementation of the CCSS. The CCCTool allows a user first to match one or more state standards to a CGSS and then to rate the strength of the match.

First, though, be sure to closely read the standards themselves. Without doing so, you may miss key, but often subtle, features of the CCSS. For example, a close reading of the mathematics standards will show coherence across grades, coherence within grades, and connections between the content standards and practice standards. The CCSS provide a critical opportunity to help students see mathematics as a connected and interdependent discipline. Now, states and districts are prepared to conduct a gap analysis, the results of which will inform where to funnel resources to support student learning.

While analyzing the gap between current and future standards, be sure to also discuss the changing requirements in cognitive demand. Teachers and curriculum and assessment directors need to not just know about changes in topics within the CCSS but also understand the new requirements for student performance. For instance, 4th grade students have traditionally had to recognize and generate equivalent fractions. In the CCSS, 4th grade students must now use visual fraction models. This task requires a deeper level of understanding and should lead teachers to adapt their instruction and frequently test for understanding via formative assessment. Improve students' preparation for the future rigors required in the CCSS by discussing the actual implications within instruction or assessment using Webb's Depth of Knowledge or Bloom's new verbs. Again, the CCCTool also allows states to determine the cognitive demand rating using a three-point rating system.

Even those states that completed a gap analysis before deciding to adopt the CCSS should consider doing so again. After all, a gap analysis for implementation should show which standards are new, which occur sooner and which

occur later, all of which provide critical data to make decisions on resource allocation, instructional materials and professional development. Reviewing the summary findings from the mathematics and English language arts gap analyses in [Arizona](#), [Connecticut](#) and [Oregon](#) may also prove instructive. Finally, you should discuss the following questions:

## Discussion Questions

- Which of the concepts and skills required in the CCSS are included in your state's standards?
- How strong is the match between the two sets of standards with regard to topics by grade and the cognitive demand of each topic?
- Which of the concepts and skills required in the CCSS are not included in the state's standards?
- How similar are the CCSS and state standards with respect to the grade levels at which concepts and skills are taught? At what grade levels do state expectations address concepts and skills earlier or later than the CCSS?
- How similar are the CCSS and the state standards with respect to the cognitive demand expectations that are included in specific strands (English language arts) and domains (mathematics)? In what strands and domains are the differences greatest?
- Which concepts and skills required in your state's standards are not included in the CCSS?
- What are the implications for your curricula, materials and professional development strategy?

## CASE STORY: WASHINGTON STATE

Recent legislation in Washington state allows the superintendent of public instruction to provisionally adopt the CCSS. In the legislation, the superintendent was asked to submit a report by January 2011 that compares the new CCSS to the state's current standards, identifies the transition timeline, and estimates the cost to both the state and school districts. Taking the time to analyze this gap has informed the rest of the implementation effort in the state. The full report can be found [here](#).

## Conclusion

The five building blocks covered in this chapter have set the stage for your CCSS implementation effort. With the right aspiration, the appropriate people on board, an adequate budget and a high-level timeline for implementation, you will be well positioned to manage the transition. Even if you are well into implementation, stepping back and ensuring these conditions are in place will aid your effort. Next, you will want to form a communications plan to ensure that others beyond your strategic implementation team support the aims of your CCSS implementation effort.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Delaware Department of Education (October 2010). *Delaware Education Plan Overview*.
- 2 The CCTool is secure: States enter a user name and password provided by Achieve in each content area. Each state can designate specific staff within the department of education as being responsible for distributing the passwords. Once a state receives its passwords, Achieve will no longer distribute them but will refer all inquiries to the designated "password keeper" in the state. For information on how your state can receive a password or to determine your state's password keeper, go to [www.achieve.org/contact\\_us](http://www.achieve.org/contact_us).

## NOTES

## 4. ORGANIZE TO IMPLEMENT

# Getting the Message Out

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## IN THIS SECTION

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and Widen the Circles of Leadership \_\_\_\_\_ 4.6**

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## 4. Organize To Implement: Getting the Message Out

### Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Is there a group of key people outside the state education agency or school district who are actively committed to the success of the implementation effort? Is this group organized to influence key groups in the delivery system? How strong is its influence?
- Does the state education agency or school district regularly communicate with key stakeholders about the overall goal as well as the implementation of the goal? Is there a compelling message tied to different stakeholders?

One risk faced by any change effort is “undercommunicating by a factor of 10, or even 100.”<sup>1</sup> The communications effort should receive the same amount of attention as the implementation effort. Often the best communications strategy is simply having a clear and easily articulated implementation strategy that provides transparency and ensures open dialogue with critical stakeholders. Communications will never be effective if simply tacked on to the end of your implementation strategy; you need to communicate and engage with key stakeholders early, often and throughout to build the necessary statewide support for these major reform efforts.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) raise expectations for student performance. Maintaining popular support for this effort is essential. A **guiding coalition**, consisting of 7–10 key external stakeholders, can help. Beyond this small group, you must also have a plan for **communicating** the message to the field, to parents, to students and to the public at large, who should all know what to expect and why. School leaders, for example, need to understand the effort's aspiration, the path to successful implementation, and how related policies such as school accountability and teacher education will be affected. Likewise, teachers of English language arts and mathematics need to adjust the scope and sequence of what they teach. In essence, communications efforts help widen the circles of leadership beyond your department so that the transition to the CCSS has the support it needs.

### Build a Base of Support by Establishing the “Guiding Coalition”

Flagging public support can push implementation off the rails. Pressure to water down student expectations may build, for example, once new assessment results show that students are not as prepared as once believed. Inevitably, state and district leaders need help in keeping rigorous expectations for students at the heart of their agenda. Though the strategic implementation team plays a key role in supporting this agenda, a small group of highly visible and credible leaders are needed to sustain effort in the face of pushback.

The role of this “guiding coalition” is to remove bureaucratic barriers to change, exert influence at key moments to support implementation and offer counsel to the strategic implementation team. The guiding coalition might include a head of a university, key businessperson, state legislator, leader of a professional content association, teachers union leader or vocal parent. **You can learn more about establishing a guiding coalition [here](#).**



## CASE STORY: TENNESSEE

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Leaders in Tennessee knew they needed to mobilize core support from across government, business and the political sphere to successfully compete for federal Race to the Top funds. The mission of Tennessee SCORE, a nonpartisan organization chaired by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, is to encourage sound policy decisions in public education. Tennessee SCORE has played an important role in helping form and coordinate the state's guiding coalition. The results are impressive. State leaders have consistently supported a set reform agenda. In fact, all seven 2010 gubernatorial candidates signed on to support the state's Race to the Top proposal. More recently, the group launched a campaign called "Expect More, Achieve More" in support of the state's new, higher academic standards. The work of SCORE offers a compelling lesson about how to build support for education reform efforts by partnering with an intermediary organization.

## EXERCISE: BUILD THE GUIDING COALITION

**Purpose:** To identify a guiding coalition, determine how you will build trust and alignment among its members, and prepare for opportunities that exist for the group to reinforce the importance of this implementation project to your state.

**Who should participate?** The strategic implementation team should complete this exercise, with the input of the system leader.

### Directions:

1. Brainstorm possible members of the guiding coalition.
2. Narrow the list by excluding those who would be unlikely to ever support the aspiration.
3. Complete the top portion of the template below, describing each possible member.
4. Evaluate your list using the following criteria, and make any necessary changes.
  - a. Diversity
  - b. Balance
  - c. Potential to work together
5. Check for overlap, make any necessary changes and finalize your guiding coalition members (suggested: six to eight members).

### Discussion questions:

- How will you build trust and alignment among the group?
- What opportunities exist for your guiding coalition members to reinforce the importance of the CCSS/Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers?

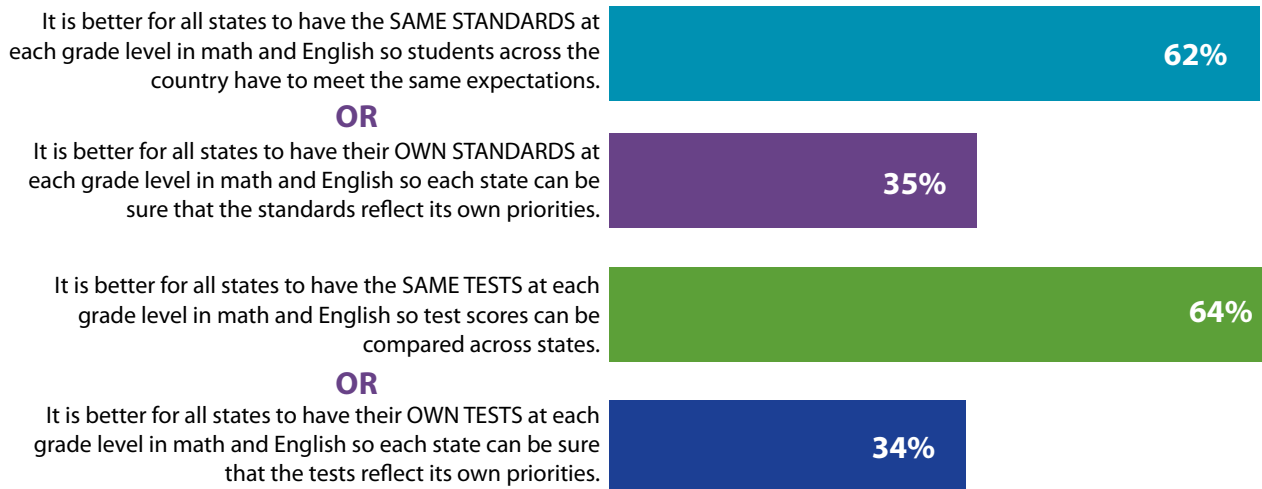
Person	Alignment with aspiration (very low, low, high, very high)	Potential for alignment with aspiration (very low, low, high, very high)	Relative power (very low, low, high, very high)	Type of power (position, credibility, leadership, etc.)	Sphere of influence (legislature, teachers, department of education, etc.)	Potential for difficulty with others

## Communicate the Delivery Message and Widen the Circles of Leadership

Alone, the guiding coalition is insufficient to maintain public support. For the CCSS to improve pedagogy, teachers, principals and the broader public need to understand the “why” behind the effort: Why are the new standards and related assessments important? What is their moral purpose? They must also understand your system’s strategy, how it will be carried out and, crucially, what it means for them.

Research suggests that registered voters have broad, but not necessarily deep (or intense), support for common standards and common assessments.<sup>2</sup>

### Percentage of respondents who say this statement is closer to their point of view



Messages about the need for consistent expectations across and within states and high standards — and therefore equal opportunity — for all students should build off this base of support. The lack of intense support, though, also suggests that the public may be swayed by opposition messages, especially given the discomfort many already have with standardized testing and a reform program incentivized by the federal government. The best way to ensure that this does not occur is to play offense — make sure your messages and goals reach key audiences first and are regularly reinforced by credible messengers. In fact, don’t be afraid to communicate even if your implementation plan is in flux. Rather than say nothing, be honest but clear about the decisions already made and the decisions still to come. All of this can be done via a communications plan.

An effective communications plan should answer five basic questions:

- Why are we making the change to the new standards?
- What is our aspiration?
- How do the CCSS differ from our state’s current standards?
- Why choose this course?
- What does this mean for you?

The last question, in particular, may raise pressing concerns about possible changes to course requirements, instructional materials, and your assessment and accountability system.

## Internal Communications and Coordination

An obvious, but important, first step is to assemble the core communications team of people you need to promote and gain support for the CCSS. While a compact team makes sense early on, over time you want to include policy and communications specialists from the governor's office, state education agency, higher education system/community, business community, and other public and third-party advocacy organizations. You may also want to add a district-level or a school-level leader to round out the team. Because this team is intentionally cross-sector, you will want to assign an individual or agency as the lead coordinator, ultimately responsible — and accountable — for executing the communications plan.

Before any efforts are taken to formally engage key stakeholders and local actors, states and districts need to recognize that communicating internally — among yourselves and your team members — is where all efforts must begin. The key to the **internal then external** communications strategy is to prevent any surprises. You never want one of your internal team to read about something you have done in the morning newspaper or first hear about it from a supervisor in his or her office.

States can make a number of efforts to coordinate their internal communications efforts:

- Host regular in-person meetings with your core communications team;
- Schedule conference calls when you cannot meet in person to allow for information-sharing and brainstorming as a team;
- Send a regular update to your core team, which can be as simple as an e-mail news alert or electronic newsletter; and
- Establish an e-mail distribution list of those internal people whom you must reach out to frequently to ensure that they are informed and on board with your efforts. Send them relevant news coverage, new studies and reports, and other related materials. Using an e-mail listserve is a no-cost way to keep other team members engaged and in the loop.

Having this cross-sector, core communications team in place also provides natural “ins” into critical organizations and stakeholder groups. Each team member, at a minimum, should make use of his or her existing networks and lines of communication within the person's organization.

## Know Your Audience/Stakeholders

The first questions the core communications team should ask are: Who are the critical stakeholders in your state? What organizations or individuals have the ability to make or break the successful implementation of these education reforms? What organizations or individuals are critical to the long-term success and sustainability of the CCSS and related assessments?

**Stakeholder mapping** offers a natural starting point to answer these questions. By prioritizing the most critical stakeholders and identifying specific strategies for engagement, you can focus your outreach efforts — and identify potential champions among those already engaged and supportive. It is tempting to identify a large number of stakeholders to engage — such as educators, school administrators, district administrators, legislators, the state board of education, parents, students, higher education leaders, higher education faculty, community leaders, civil rights organizations and so on. But with limited resources and time to devote to communications and outreach, it is more useful to identify those individuals and organizations with the most to add — or detract — from the reform efforts and focus your efforts there.

## Reaching Your Audience/Stakeholders: The Message

Developing **three key messages** around the CCSS and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is the core of the communications strategy. Typically, the first message defines the issue, the second outlines the problem and the third explains the solution. The key three should be distributed to all internal team members and communicated consistently, without variation, at all times. Repeat, repeat, repeat these messages across all communications channels and by all public messengers. Discuss the transition to the CCSS as a comprehensive reform, albeit one with many moving parts.

### Key Three Messages

#### Example A:

- Existing standards and assessments put an undue burden on educators, students and the education system as a whole — and rarely provide the information needed to have a positive impact on any of those stakeholders.
- In addition, state standards and assessments have historically been set too low, offering an inaccurate view of how well our students are truly achieving.
- The Common Core State Standards and aligned common assessments are more rigorous than what we have in place now and will provide an honest picture of how well our students, schools and system are achieving on the most critical knowledge and skills in mathematics and English.

#### Example B:

- With nearly every state having adopted the Common Core State Standards, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform education across America and improve our global competitiveness.
- Currently, far too many students drop out or graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills required for success, closing doors and limiting their post-high school options. In our state, XX percent of students are dropping out before earning a high school diploma, and XX of first-year college students are enrolled in remedial (non-credit-bearing) courses.
- Implementing the Common Core State Standards is a critical step toward ensuring that all students receive the education they need for success in life.

In addition to the key three messages, your state will need to communicate critical information to certain groups, based on their role in the implementation process. Largely based on previous experiences with standards and assessments, certain pressure points are already clear. Think through the standard messaging and associated advocacy materials you need to develop to address such issues. For example:

- **Educators and school and district administrators** need to understand clearly what the transition will look like and how it will affect their day-to-day work:
  - Where are the biggest changes in instruction? How do the CCSS differ from the state's current standards?
  - What does full implementation look like? What is the final vision?
  - What will the new standards mean for curriculum and instructional materials?
  - What are the implications of implementing the CCSS before aligned assessments are in place?
  - What is the technology transition plan? (Or what steps are being taken to prepare for the transition to computer-based assessments given school-based and student-specific challenges?)
  - What does this mean for state and/or federal accountability?
- **Parents and community members**, on the other hand, need to know what this means for their kids:
  - What are the benefits of the reforms? How do they represent a step forward for the U.S. (and your community's) education system?
  - Will the new assessments be high stakes (with college-ready cut scores)?
  - What are the higher education incentives attached to the new standards and assessments? Which local institutions of higher education are engaged?
  - What supports will be offered to help students meet the raised expectations?
  - What supports will be offered to help educators teach the raised expectations?
  - What might happen if we don't embrace common standards and assessments?
- **Policymakers** might have more questions about how implementation will be paid for, but they also need to be prepared (and engaged enough) to respond to high-level concerns from educators and parents (aka their constituents):
  - Why are we making the change to new standards and assessments?
  - What are the upfront costs, and what are the costs (and savings) over time?
  - How can we use existing funds to cover the implementation costs?
  - What has been the level of involvement from the federal government? What will be its level of involvement moving forward?
  - What implications do the new standards and assessments have on career and technical education? On STEM education? On charter schools? On graduation rates?

As often as possible, relay exactly how the education community — and educators in particular — have been involved in the development of the new standards and how they will be involved in the development of the new common assessments. Teachers had a seat at the table and were engaged every step of the way in the CCSS development process, including drafting standards and providing feedback on various public drafts. The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association were involved throughout. Those organizations plus the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, for example, all endorsed the final CCSS.

## Reaching Your Audience/Stakeholders: The Messengers

Your cross-sector core communications team and the guiding coalition are all advocates throughout implementation. In addition, though, you need a broader set of engaged and informed messengers at all levels. Part of your communications plan must include the identification and development of “ambassadors” within key stakeholder groups who can serve as peer-to-peer messengers in support of the reforms.

For example, PARCC states will convene cadres of K–12 leaders from across the 25 PARCC states. These convenings will provide an opportunity to engage K–12 educators around a set of instructional tools developed to support the CCSS and PARCC assessments (e.g., content frameworks, professional development modules, etc.). These educator leaders — be they classroom teachers, school administrators or district leaders — will then be equipped to go back to their states and train other educators using the tools so that understanding of, support for and ownership of the implementation of the new CCSS and related assessments will grow throughout districts and schools. These same K–12 leaders can also serve as ambassadors for the CCSS and PARCC assessments.

Similarly, there are strategies for developing peer advocates in the state legislature, among community-based organizations, in the civil rights communities and among other critical voices for education reform. What is most important is that these messengers are engaged often, are kept in the loop as decisions are made that affect the implementation process, and are armed with the information and support they need to be successful peer advocates. **You can learn more about communicating the delivery message [here](#).**

### CASE STORY: INDIANA

***The Indiana Department of Education*** has made a wide range of instructional resources available to help educators understand the new CCSS and what the transition to the new standards will require. In addition to the state-developed curriculum maps, instructional transition guidance documents and implementation timelines, the department’s CCSS web page also includes a series of short videos from state leaders explaining the new standards, including a number of videos that explore the connection between the new English language arts/literacy standards and other disciplines, such as science, history/social studies, agriculture, health science and fine arts.

### CASE STORY: UTAH

Utah is organizing a series of ***Common Core Academies*** to provide professional development to the state’s educators around the CCSS. Starting in summer 2011, the academies, offered at 14 sites around the state, will focus specifically on K–12 English language arts and 6th and 9th grade mathematics and will involve about 5,600 teachers. In addition, while the Utah State Office of Education has a well-developed ***CCSS page*** on its website, it also has partnered with the Utah Education Network and Higher Ed Utah/Utah System of Higher Education to develop a robust ***CCSS site*** that includes resources such as CCSS crosswalks, a sample letter to parents about the CCSS, suggested student

course progressions, an explanation of the assessment transition schedule, videos from the CCSS writers explaining the standards in English language arts and math, and sample student work and performance tasks (excerpted from the CCSS). This joint endeavor represents one way in which state education agencies can leverage partners and existing networks to communicate about the CCSS and related assessments.

## CASE STORY: VERMONT

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The Vermont Department of Education has created a [\*\*\*“Common Core in Vermont”\*\*\* wiki](#) to disseminate an assortment of tools and resources related to the implementation of the CCSS in Vermont, ranging from an updated implementation timeline to resources for educators to familiarize themselves with the new standards. The department continually updates the wiki with resources presented at state and regional meetings, as well as those created by local education leaders. This simple tool helps keep everyone on the same page.



## EXERCISE: IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS WHO ARE MOST CRITICAL TO SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY

**Purpose:** To identify and map those stakeholders who are most critical to successful implementation so you can prepare a communications plan for engaging their support.

**Who should participate?** The core communications team should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Brainstorm stakeholders who will need to be involved at all levels of implementation of the CCSS and related assessments. Be sure to consider those at the state, district, school and classroom levels, as well as external stakeholders, such as professional organizations.
2. Using the 2 x 2 matrix template below, place each of your key stakeholders according to the degree to which they contribute to CCSS implementation and their level of support.

High		
CONTRIBUTION TO IMPLEMENTATION		
Low		
	Low	High
	LEVEL OF SUPPORT	

3. Identify the stakeholders most critical to your goal. These are those individuals or groups who fall into the top half of the matrix and who present the greatest challenges in terms of engagement.
4. For each priority stakeholder you have identified, complete the mapping template on the next page. You can repeat this exercise specifically for the PARCC assessments. *(continued on next page)*

		Stakeholder 1	Stakeholder 2	Stakeholder 3	Stakeholder 4
Stakeholder	Who are the key groups/individuals who need to be engaged in the implementation of the CCSS to ensure broad buy-in and shared ownership across the state?				
Contribution to implementation	How critical is the stakeholder to the success of the CCSS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High:</b> Is critical to the success of the CCSS in the short and long terms</li> <li>• <b>Medium:</b> Has the potential to be a critical ally for the successful implementation of the CCSS</li> <li>• <b>Low:</b> Is not necessarily critical to the implementation of the CCSS at this time, but is an important ally for long-term success</li> </ul>				
Level of support	How supportive of the CCSS is this stakeholder? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High:</b> The group is very supportive of the CCSS</li> <li>• <b>Medium:</b> The group (or some individuals) are supportive, but this support can grow</li> <li>• <b>Low:</b> The group does not appear to support the CCSS at this time</li> </ul>				
Objective	Ideally, what would the engagement of this stakeholder look like?				
Outreach/engagement activities	What are ways in which states can engage the stakeholder? Sample activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one briefings</li> <li>• Scheduled presentations at group meetings</li> <li>• Partner to identify leadership cadre educators</li> <li>• Feedback on instructional and curricular tools/products</li> </ul>				
Outcomes	How will you know when this stakeholder is effectively engaged in your implementation project?				
Lead contact	Who should take the lead on engaging this stakeholder (be it someone inside or outside the government)?				

**EXERCISE: DEVELOP A CORE SCRIPT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

**Purpose:** To identify key messages and create a strategic communications plan for engaging key stakeholders.

**Who should participate?** The core communications team should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Examine the Sample Strategic Communications Plan on the next page, and think through the key messages and communications that might apply to your key stakeholders.
2. For each of the key stakeholders you identified in the prior exercise, complete the blank Strategic Communications Plan template, defining your key messages and detailing your plan for the communication of those messages.

*(continued on next page)*

**Strategic Communications Plan (EXAMPLE)**

<b>Target audience/ stakeholder</b>	<b>Define the target audience with specificity:</b> DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Define the outreach objectives:</b> To engage, over the course of the next six months, at least 75 percent of all local superintendents around CCSS implementation			
<b>Key target messages (which fit under the key three messages)</b>	<b>Outline the tailored submessages for this target group:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CCSS directly address the common complaint that academic standards are “a mile wide and an inch deep” and will allow teachers to focus on the most important concepts rather than try and teach too many topics in one year.</li> <li>With nearly every state in the nation working to implement the CCSS, the opportunities for leveraging best practices and fully vetted instructional materials will be greater than ever.</li> </ul>			
<b>Channels/vehicles/ tools</b>	<b>Identify the kinds of earned, paid and new media channels and/or outreach tools used to reach this audience:</b> <i>Superintendents will be targeted through:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Putting CCSS and common assessments on the agenda at already-scheduled (and to-be-scheduled) statewide meetings.</li> <li>Smaller briefings with superintendents representing urban, suburban and rural districts to address their geographic-specific concerns about implementation.</li> <li>Asking superintendents (and educators) to sign on to a letter — or compact with the state department of education — committing to working together to see through the full implementation of the new standards. For some, this could take the form of a Race to the Top Scope of Work.</li> <li>Monthly conference calls or webinars (which are recorded and made available online) about progress (and modifications) made on implementing the CCSS and developing the common assessments.</li> <li>Fact sheets about the implementation timeline for the CCSS, which superintendents can personalize and share with their administrators, district staff and teachers.</li> <li>Suggested initial boilerplate language/links for district websites.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>For each channel/vehicle/tool, define the timeline for implementation:</b>			
	Template for stakeholder communications plan			
	Stakeholder: District Superintendents                      Objective: Engagement			
	<i>What specific tools will we use to achieve our objective with this stakeholder and when?</i>			
	<b>Communications tools</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
	Convenings		Statewide meeting	
	Individual briefings	Establish schedule	20 briefings	20 briefings
Compact to work together on the CCSS	Notify districts	Deadline to sign compact 2/28		
Webinars		Run webinar	Run webinar	
Distribution of fact sheets and boilerplate language		Develop materials Consult with key superintendents	Distribute materials	
<b>Measuring success</b>	<b>Define what actions the target audience could take to show success:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 75 percent of urban, suburban and rural superintendents demonstrate support for implementation through a compact or some other means.</li> <li>At least 50 percent of districts have a web page dedicated to the CCSS and/or PARCC, with relevant details about implementation, links to resources and contact information for state department of education staff.</li> </ul>			

Strategic Communications Plan				
<b>Target audience/ stakeholder</b>	<b>Define the target audience with specificity:</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Define the outreach objectives:</b>			
<b>Key target messages (which fit under the key three messages)</b>	<b>Outline the tailored submessages for this target group:</b>			
<b>Channels/vehicles/ tools</b>	<b>Identify the kinds of earned, paid and new media channels and/or outreach tools used to reach this audience:</b>			
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>For each channel/vehicle/tool, define the timeline for implementation:</b>			
	Template for stakeholder communications plan			
	Stakeholder: _____ Objective: _____			
	<i>What specific tools will we use to achieve our objective with this stakeholder and when?</i>			
	<b>Communications tools</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
	Speeches/presentations			
	Convenings			
Individual meetings				
Notes/letters/e-mails				
Others?				
<b>Measuring success</b>	<b>Define what actions the target audience could take to show success:</b>			

## Conclusion

You should now have a solid communications plan to accompany the CCSS implementation effort. The plan contains key messages and messengers, a stakeholder engagement strategy, and how a guiding coalition can be used to support the transition to the CCSS and the related assessments. It is time now to plan for the first transition that states and districts will face — how to ensure that every mathematics and English language arts teacher has in his or her hands instructional materials and curricula aligned to the CCSS.

### ENDNOTES

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- 1 Kotter (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- 2 Achieve (2010). *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda*.

## NOTES

## 5. TAKE ACTION

# Implementation Action I

## Align Instructional Materials to the Common Core State Standards

Part of **IMPLEMENTING  
Common Core**  
State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to  
[www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook](http://www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook)



Achieve





## IN THIS SECTION

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Prioritizing the Reform Strategy** \_\_\_\_\_ 5.3

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Determine the Delivery Chain(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ 5.8

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes** \_\_\_\_\_ 5.12

**Conclusion** \_\_\_\_\_ 5.20

## 5. Implementation Action I: Align Instructional Materials to the Common Core State Standards

### Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have clear strategies to ensure that high-quality instructional materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards?
- How will all mathematics and English language arts teachers receive these materials?
- What information and feedback loops will be used to monitor whether instructional practice changes?

Transitioning to new standards poses an early challenge — how to place high-quality, research-based curricula and instructional materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the hands of teachers. Before you can begin an intensive professional development push, this action first needs to occur so that principals and teachers have the materials on which they will be trained. Despite widespread differences in how states and districts adopt curricula and textbooks, you can do a lot to plan for a smooth transition. In fact, this transition may be a hidden opportunity to work with other states and districts on the analysis and adoption of materials — the kind of collaboration that the CCSS now make possible.

The strategic implementation team should task a specific working group with leading this endeavor. One of the first actions this working group can take is to identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation. The working group will also want to involve educators during the creation of instructional tools and materials, as teachers clearly know better than anyone what they need to effectively teach the new standards and to build support across the education community. Taking the time to craft a **delivery plan** will help the working group identify exactly how aligned instructional materials are developed and distributed across the state.

### Draft the Delivery Plan: Prioritizing the Reform Strategy

Before thinking about the “how” of implementation, it is important to decide on the “what”: What is your strategy for getting aligned instructional materials into the hands of teachers and principals? There are obviously multiple options; your task is to prioritize those activities that are most likely to help your system achieve its aspiration for instructional materials. **You can learn more about prioritizing the reform strategy [here](#).** Following is a set of possible activities to consider in the formal adoption, purchase and/or creation of aligned materials and curricula. The delivery plan should be iterative, and evidence from student work should constantly inform adjustments to instruction or curricular materials.

### Better Align Current Materials

Establishing alignment criteria sets an important quality control standard for the industry. How this is done will depend on the degree of state authority, level of content expertise in leading districts and economies of scale. Several options merit consideration:

1. **Compare current instructional materials to the CCSS.** States can convene panels of teachers, administrators and content experts to examine instructional materials alongside the CCSS and determine what needs to change and what can stay the same. This activity is best completed by the state education agency, given the economies of scale. It can be time consuming. Yet states and districts should resist the temptation to paper over gaps and should be candid about whether and how their materials need to change to reflect the new standards. Panels or committees that accomplish this work should summarize whether alignment exists in different grades and subjects and, if not, what changes will be necessary.
2. **Release lists of model materials or books that states have determined are aligned.** This option is most appropriate in those states that leave materials adoption to local districts. Here the state is providing guidance and allowing districts to focus on how materials will be used.
3. **Develop a list of “must haves” that districts can look to when determining CCSS alignment with their materials.** This option is most appropriate in states that are legislatively prohibited from identifying materials or books.
4. **Share strong district-driven comparisons with other districts.** Where leading districts have already completed a high-quality crosswalk comparison, the state education agency can share this work with the other districts in the state.
5. **Develop a rubric to aid the textbook adoption process.** Though publishers are also likely to undertake this task, it may be wise for states and districts to also take their own look, either individually or collaboratively, to ensure alignment of content and cognitive demand and, of course, quality.

Again, where leading districts have already completed one or more of these activities, creating networks to share with other school districts will help the state leverage this important work.

## Delivery Plans

*“The plan is nothing. The planning is everything.”*  
— Dwight Eisenhower

The delivery plan provides a road map for how the implementation should proceed. This important operational tool is a work in progress, and there is no such thing as a perfect plan. A good delivery plan begins with the end in mind, linking the purpose of the plan (developing aligned instructional materials) to the overall vision for the system (improved student learning outcomes).

Unlike a typical strategic plan, the delivery plan should connect three primary components: the prioritized reform strategies, relevant delivery chains and expected impact upon key outcome metrics. The plan should also meet the following criteria. It should:

- **Assign leadership, management and accountability** for the plan owner and project managers (e.g., those responsible for major strategies or activities).
- **Detail performance management**, such as key indicators that can be used to monitor the impact of the plan more regularly or implementation milestones to track implementation progress.
- **Describe the resources and support required** for the plan’s success.
- **Prepare to manage stakeholders and users** by providing a thoughtful engagement strategy.
- **Anticipate and prepare for risks** that might throw the work off course, with particular attention given to how implementation can go awry.

You can learn more about creating delivery plans [here](#).

## Generate New Materials

6. **Create a role for open education resources (OERs).** Ranging from wholly contained instructional modules to units of study with lesson plans and assessments to worksheets for use in a single lesson, OERs are gaining momentum among teachers, districts and state agencies alike. These important classroom tools are generally freely available, dynamic resources that can be edited by their communities of users and shared with others. Like any instructional resource, though, OERs need to be reviewed to ensure alignment with the CCSS and to assess quality. In recognition of the growing role of OERs, some states' and districts' current content adoption procedures allow for the consideration of OERs. In addition, some states are actively working toward the incorporation of OERs into their recommended instructional materials libraries. If your state or district does not yet have policies around OERs, aligning the CCSS to instructional tools provides the perfect opportunity to address this emerging issue.
7. **Develop prototype model lesson plans, curricula and pacing guides.** For states that won the federal Race to the Top competition in particular, this homegrown activity features prominently in project plans at the state and/or district levels. Validating for quality and utility is important. Also, these prototypes can catalyze further activity if shared with key vendors in the marketplace.
8. **Acquire supplemental materials** that publishers can change more quickly to meet the CCSS, such as websites, teachers' guides, lesson planning materials, CD-ROMs and other classroom tools (most appropriate for states that just underwent an adoption cycle and face questions as to how aggressively they can afford to adopt new materials).
9. **Harness collaborative technology** by creating a bottom-up mechanism for high-quality open-source instructional materials to be developed. Though there are many quality control questions to resolve in this activity, taking this "wiki"-like approach can unleash the creative potential of school- and district-level instructional leaders.

## Leverage the Power of the CCSS

10. **Collaborate across states.** Once states and districts have determined their vision for aligned instructional materials, they should check with other states and districts about their own materials adoption and alignment process. The opportunities for efficiencies that come with multiple states and districts conducting alignment reviews and buying materials is attractive to both purchasers and publishers. In particular, collaboration can help ensure that new textbooks and instructional tools cover the CCSS and little else, moving beyond the bloated, "inch deep, mile wide" approach publishers now typically take in developing materials that work for a multitude of states with differing standards.
11. **Draw on content framework and model instructional units developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).** The content framework provides state-level content leads and district-level curriculum developers with a road map of how the CCSS may be organized to show the big ideas in each quarter within each grade. PARCC will also release model instructional units for how to teach the standards measured by the through-course assessments.

To identify the right set of high-impact activities that make up your state's reform strategy, the working group should discuss the following key questions:

- **How are curriculum and instructional materials developed in your state today?** Many actors, from the state itself to vendors and publishers, create a complex curricular arena for teachers and schools to navigate. What is the current “market share” — by both volume and funding — of the state agency? Textbook publishers and other vendors? School districts? Nonprofits and other nongovernmental groups? Individual principals and teachers? Knowing this information will help identify where the necessary changes will need to come from. *See sample delivery chain on p. 5.9.*
- **What would it mean to differentiate districts by their capacity to develop or implement aligned instructional materials?** Placing aligned instructional materials in the hands of teachers may mean crafting separate approaches for high-, medium- and low-capacity districts. High-capacity districts are generally ahead of the state in launching new curricula that lead to teaching and learning improvements. District leaders plead for clarity about when content standards, assessment blueprints and related policies will change and then ask for the state to step aside. Districts with medium internal capacity typically have steady student performance — albeit persistent achievement gaps — and selectively engage with the state when opportunities arise. These districts may appreciate economies of scale provided by the state, for example. Implementing the CCSS poses the greatest challenge in districts with low internal capacity. Here, the state needs to inject additional urgency, training and support. Each district's accountability status can help form this categorization.
- **Finally, what must the timing of this effort be to get new materials in the hands of teachers?** Specifically, what is the current textbook adoption cycle, and how does it coincide with the CCSS timeline? Are there set plans to introduce new curriculum and pacing guides and the PARCC assessments? And when must these materials be complete for high-quality professional development to occur on the new standards, assessments and materials?

## CASE STORY: CALIFORNIA

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The California Department of Education has published a **model curriculum framework**, organized by grade, that is designed to support California's transition to the CCSS. For each grade, the framework describes what a student should know upon entering that grade. A narrative description of the standards by domain/strand makes note of topics that are now being addressed at a new grade (e.g., “With full implementation of CCSS, how to recognize, name, and compare fractions will be addressed at grade three, a grade two topic in the 1997 California mathematics standards.”). Each grade also includes a section addressing support for English language learners. Finally, crosswalk charts highlight some of the more significant changes to be considered as California progresses toward full implementation of the CCSS.

## CASE STORY: OHIO

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The Ohio Department of Education has released draft **K–12 Model Curricula** for mathematics and English language arts. The grade-level breakdowns of the standards by domain in mathematics and strand in English language arts include content elaborations, expectations for learning, instructional strategies and resources, common misconceptions of students around specific skills and concepts, and how teachers can differentiate instruction in math, and they make connections to related standards in other grades. The department led the model curricula development but worked closely with teams of teachers to collect instructional strategies and resources aligned to the CCSS and build understanding and buy-in along the way.

## EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR REFORM STRATEGIES FOR ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

**Purpose:** To articulate your prioritized reform strategy. With options from your own state and this workbook in hand, narrow the list and choose those activities that will have the greatest impact.

**Who should participate?** The working group for aligned instructional materials should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Brainstorm the strategies you will use for the implementation of the new curricula and instructional materials. These can include both changes to current system activities and the creation of new system activities. Consider that your strategies may be different for high-capacity districts and low-capacity districts.
2. Plot your strategies on the 2 x 2 matrix below. Place the strategies for low-capacity districts in the left quadrants and those for high in the right (you can plot the same strategy twice if it touches both high- and low-capacity districts). Be sure to consider the impact of each strategy, and place it in either the top quadrants for high impact or the bottom quadrants for low impact.

High		
IMPACT OF STRATEGY		
Low		
	Low	High
	CAPACITY OF DISTRICT	

## Draft the Delivery Plan: Determine the Delivery Chain(s)

How will teachers receive new instructional materials for use in the classroom? To answer this question, the working group must identify the **delivery chain**. The delivery chain is the set of actors, and the relationships among them, through which the activities you have chosen will be implemented. The delivery chain for aligned instructional materials answers one core question: Starting from the intent of state leaders and ending with the desired change in behavior on the front line (teachers improving their practice based on the new materials), how — and through whom — will the development and dissemination of these instructional materials actually happen? In other words, what is the mechanism through which the materials will be distributed and adopted for use in the field?

Delivery chains can be drawn in any number of ways. The specific shape of your delivery chain matters less than whether you (1) have a well-articulated delivery chain and (2) have confidence that it will get the job done. For aligned instructional materials, selecting the right distribution mechanisms may be affected by the gap between current and future standards, the extent of the state's legal authority, and how the state interacts with high- and low-capacity districts. In those states with considerable legal authority and a minimal gap between current and future standards, for example, the state education agency can produce the materials directly or dictate the necessary adjustments to the marketplace (activities 7 and 8, page 5.5). Conversely, a state in which such decisions are exclusively left to districts may need to focus instead upon ensuring alignment rather than generating instructional materials directly (activities 2–5, page 5.4). Those states looking for ways to let teachers and schools drive material development may want to leverage the benefits of technology (activities 6 and 9, page 5.5).

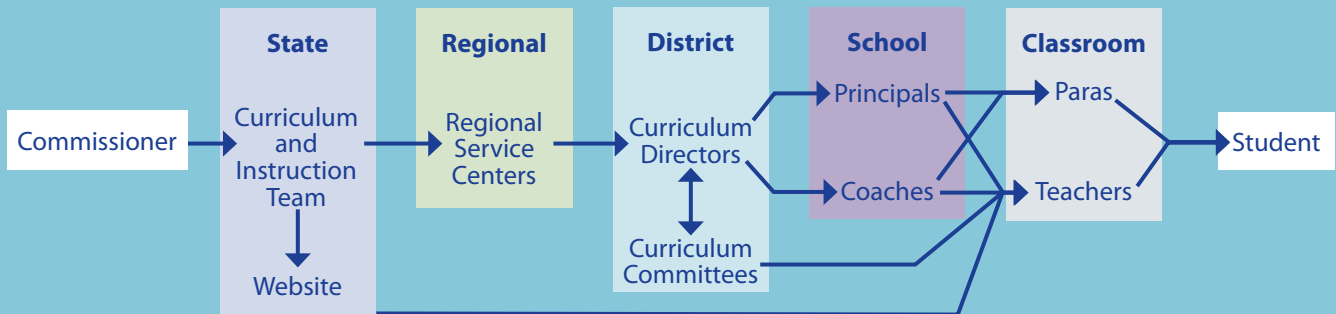
Once you have identified your delivery chain, it is important to probe for areas of potential weakness. Questions to consider:

- **Individual relationships:** What is the quality of personal relationships among critical actors? Where are the areas of strongest (e.g., line authority) and weakest (e.g., entirely reliant on persuasion) leverage?
- **Complexity:** How many actors are involved in the delivery chain? How easy or difficult is coordinating these actors to get something done?
- **Funding flows:** What are the major sources of funding and resources? Who controls these flows, and in which direction(s) do they go?
- **Feedback loops:** What mechanisms are in place to help us know what is happening on the ground? How will you know that the desired change is occurring at the other end of the delivery chain?
- **Choke points:** Are there particular actors that you disproportionately depend on to get something done?

To the extent that you find weaknesses, your plan must lay out the ways in which you intend to address them. In some cases, this may mean strengthening relationships in the delivery chain, perhaps by borrowing from the practices of your strongest existing relationships. In some cases, it can mean redesigning the chain entirely — usually with the aim of simplifying it, removing unnecessary actors or easing the pressure on overburdened ones. **You can learn more about delivery chain analysis [here](#).**

## Delivery Chains: From the Classroom Perspective

One easy way to think about the chain's complexity is to think about it from the perspective of the teacher looking to improve his or her practice. For example, consider the delivery chain for model curricula created by one PARCC state:



From the point of view of the teacher in the classroom, a few key questions emerge:

- How many different inputs are there? The figure shows that the teacher may be receiving information on instructional materials from principals and coaches in schools, curriculum committees in districts, and a website run at the state level.
- To what extent are these inputs coordinated? There are two types of coordination to consider:
  - **Aggregate coordination** means that multiple inputs apply to the same teacher but they reinforce the same message or work. For example, if there is one agreed-upon model curriculum, and all four of these inputs are teaching the same thing, it may be helpful for a teacher to receive information from multiple sources. When aggregate coordination fails, there is the risk of either overloading or annoying the teacher with duplicative touchpoints.
  - **Complementary coordination** means either that the different inputs apply to different teachers or that the messages of inputs to the same teacher complement one another. For example, curriculum committees may be the primary vehicle for delivering the model curricula in large districts, but principals and coaches work together to do this in small districts that have no model curricula. The website may be an optional but universally accessible tool that provides teachers with reference materials when they get stuck. When complementary coordination fails, some teachers may have too many touchpoints while others have none at all.

If the view from the classroom is not clear, your delivery chain likely is overly complex.



## EXERCISE: MAP THE DELIVERY CHAIN FOR ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

**Purpose:** To draw a delivery chain for instructional materials, identify the weaknesses in it and identify solutions to address those weaknesses.

**Who should participate?** The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

### Directions:

- List the key actors in your ideal delivery chain — the ones who will be a critical part of getting instructional materials into the hands of teachers. Think of actors at five levels: state, region (if applicable), district, school and classroom. In addition to recording which actors are involved, please note how many of each there are in your state (e.g., 100 superintendents, 1,000 principals, etc.). Keep the following questions in mind:
  - What materials will come from the state?
  - What materials will come from the district?
  - Will materials and curricula be affected by other actors in the chain?
  - Will the delivery chain be different for high- and low-capacity districts? (You may need two variations.)
  - Will the delivery chain be different for the various activities in your strategy?
- Draw the single, more important line of influence between the system leader and the student, and articulate how you would like it to function. Some questions to keep in mind:
  - What options are available to the state?
  - What are we (at the state level) good at?
  - What has been the impact of how we historically roll out new instructional materials?
- Identify and draw secondary lines to other actors who need to be involved.
- On the delivery chain, identify the feedback loop — the method you will use to identify whether or not implementation is working.
- Identify potential weaknesses in the delivery chain and the ways you will address them. Use the worksheet template on the next page.

### Potential weaknesses in delivery chains (EXAMPLE)

	Typical challenges	Potential solutions
<b>Individual relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak personal relationships</li> <li>Low leverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and replicate stronger relationships of this type</li> <li>Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain</li> </ul>
<b>Complexity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many actors necessary to get something done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Rationalize” chain</li> <li>Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain</li> </ul>
<b>Funding flows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mismatch between resource flows and delivery chain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redesign chain to take advantage of leverage from resource flows</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback loops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few or no feedback loops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create feedback loops</li> <li>Use feedback loops to exert influence</li> </ul>
<b>Choke points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-reliance on a few key actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build capacity/cooperation of key actors</li> <li>Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain</li> </ul>

## Delivery chain analysis of weaknesses and solutions worksheet

	Potential weaknesses	Potential solutions
Individual relationships		
Complexity		
Funding flows		
Feedback loops		
Choke points		
Other		

## Draft the Delivery Plan: Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes

Implementation planning typically ends once aligned instructional materials are placed in the hands of teachers. Yet equal attention is needed to ensure that teacher instruction *actually changes*. Are these instructional materials sufficiently aligned and of value? How are they being used? What impact are they having on classroom teaching and student learning? To answer these questions, the working group should connect activities to their expected outcomes and create or leverage the feedback loops in the delivery chain to track impact.

First, the working group needs to identify a clear **timeline** of when planned activities need to occur. Sequencing the key deliverables will show when the benefits of the activities will be felt in the field. A “deliverable” is a milestone or end product for an activity. For example, if the state plans to release new model curricula to all district curriculum directors, one deliverable might be that all curriculum directors have received this communication by a certain date. Tracking whether these deliverables are met is an important project management discipline.

Next, the working group needs to articulate the **success measures** to track. Three potential types of measures merit discussion:

- **Alignment:** To what extent are principals and teachers using the instructional materials and model curricula, and to what extent are they using them with fidelity to the original design? Potential metrics include self-reporting of usage by teachers or observations of teacher behavior for a sample of classrooms, either observed directly or reported by principals.
- **User satisfaction:** To what extent do principals and teachers using the instructional materials find them to be helpful in aiding student learning on the new CCSS? The potential metric in this area would be a user satisfaction survey for principals and teachers.
- **Impact on student outcomes:** To what extent do principals and teachers using the instructional materials and model curricula achieve better results for their students? Potential metrics include formative assessment data, comparing teachers who use the instructional materials and model curricula with those who do not, or summative assessment data, compared in the same way.

At the highest level, these success measures are outcome oriented. At the most basic, they are process oriented. Both types of success measures, and the intermediate metrics that connect them, demonstrate your system’s theory of action for how the prioritized activities will actually result in real impact. Making this connection is hard work, and there will be disagreements about what to measure. However, without having the difficult conversations on this topic, you will not have a true compass to know if your activities influence the outcomes you care most about.

You may also need to design new mechanisms for data collection. Some examples include adding questions to an existing working conditions survey, developing an online survey and creating incentives for participation, using technology to conduct some observations, building mechanisms for data collection into new teacher evaluation systems, and building or adapting formative and summative assessment systems to be interoperable with other collected data. The feedback loop(s) you have identified in the delivery chain exercise should get you part or all of the way there — and in the end, this discussion will also influence how those feedback loops are designed.

Finally, you will want to set targets. Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as teachers receive and are influenced by instructional materials. To get that level of impact, how strong will your alignment and user satisfaction have to be? If you hit the milestones in your timeline, what impact will that have on the success metrics? How should you see them move over time? Now that you have articulated your success

metrics, activities and implementation timeline, it is time to put them together to estimate the impact of these activities over time. The resulting trajectory will help you monitor progress over the next several years and will give you an early indication of whether you are on track to achieve your desired results. **You can learn more about trajectories [here](#).**

Like the discussion about success metrics, this one will be challenging. Trying to estimate the future is uncomfortable, especially when you are accountable for it. Moreover, the various components are interdependent: Your expected impact over time is based on your selection of success metrics and activities, but your selection of activities may in turn be influenced by a need to achieve the targets you have set. Two things are worth bearing in mind:

- The estimate of impact over time is a *guideline* for you, not a hard prediction. The real purpose of the estimate is to compare it to what actually happens and use the differential to drive any mid-course corrections. It is not to create additional accountability with consequences.
- Revisiting prior discussions is good, and even necessary, at this stage. Activities, success metrics and impact over time are interdependent variables. As you discuss one, it makes sense to revise and refine the other two until you have a balance that represents an ambitious but realistic plan for real progress.

The following case story demonstrates how to create a feedback loop to monitor project deliverables and impact.

### CASE STORY (Modified from an implementation plan created by a PARCC state)

One PARCC state plans to pilot a model mathematics curriculum for the critical 8th grade year. Its plan involves piloting the curriculum with 50 teachers in summer 2011 so that they align their instructional practice to the expectations in the CCSS for the 2011–12 school year. Then, in summer 2012, a refined and modified model curriculum will be posted on the department's website and promoted in 100 critical districts. The deliverables for this plan are as follows:

Deliverables by year and quarter		
<b>Model curriculum for 8th grade math</b>		
2011	Q1	
	2	
	3	Pilot with 50 teachers
	4	
2012	Q1	
	2	
	3	Scale up to 100 critical districts
	4	
2013	Q1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
2014	Q1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

To track progress, the department created a feedback loop consisting of three metrics:

	Metrics	Targets for 2014	Data collection mechanism(s)
<b>Alignment</b>	Number of 8th grade math teachers using the new curriculum (cumulative)	260	School climate survey
<b>User satisfaction</b>	Number of 8th grade math teachers using the new curriculum who report that it is helping them improve outcomes (cumulative)	190	School climate survey
<b>Impact on student outcomes</b>	Additional number of proficient students on 8th grade math assessment	2,031	Student assessment results

Targets in the plan are drawn from the department's analysis of the impact of these measures in the next two years:

- In summer 2011, the department assumes that the 50 teachers who pilot the reform will have a 100 percent satisfaction rate (because they will be selected specifically for the pilot). Each teacher teaches five math classes of 25 students apiece. This means that the new curricula will affect 6,250 students, of which 57 percent are now scoring below proficient. Based on historical data, the department drew a conservative hypothesis that each pilot teacher would move 15 percent of the below proficient students into the proficient category, for a total impact of 534 additional proficient students at the end of the 2011–12 school year. These gains are assumed to persist in later years.
- In summer 2012, the department intends to expand the curriculum to 100 critical districts, of which 21 are expected to fully integrate it into their instructional practice. Assuming that 10 8th grade mathematics teachers in each district implement the curriculum, this means that 210 new teachers will use the model curriculum. The department projects user satisfaction to drop to 66 percent due to dilution, which means that 140 new teachers will really use the materials to improve pedagogy. Using the same assumptions above, this means that 17,500 students will be affected by the new model curriculum, of which 1,497 will move from below proficient into the proficient category. This trajectory is summarized below:

Impact on success measure by year and quarter			
Metric	Alignment	User satisfaction	Student outcomes
<b>Baseline</b>	0	0	0
2011	Q1		
	2		
	3	+50	
	4		+50
2012	Q1		
	2		+534
	3	+210	
	4		
2013	Q1		
	2		+1,497
	3		
	4		
2014	Q1		
	2		
	3		
	4		

Thus, this state's plan for implementing a new model curriculum clearly connects its activities and timeline to an expected outcome of 2,031 additional proficient students, complete with a feedback loop that will help it understand whether it is on track to reach this target. The following exercises walk you through the necessary steps to create a similar picture in your state or district.

## EXERCISE: CREATE A TIMELINE OF DELIVERABLES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND MODEL CURRICULA

**Purpose:** To create a specific sequence of activities and deliverables for getting aligned instructional materials into the hands of teachers.

**Who should participate?** The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Think through the activities you previously identified and the delivery chain you drew, and create a list of the deliverables for instructional materials and model curricula for which you will be responsible.
2. If any deliverables already have hard dates associated with them, place those in the appropriate place in the template below.
3. Use the template below to create a timeline for the other deliverables between now and 2014. Prioritize, where necessary, based on the impact you have already identified. The model timelines in Chapter 3 can aid your thinking.

### Deliverables by year and quarter

Activity					
2011	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2012	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2013	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2014	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

## EXERCISE: SET SUCCESS METRICS AND TARGETS

**Purpose:** To set metrics and targets for your activities so you can assess success according to the feedback loop.

**Who should participate?** The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Determine how you will measure success in terms of alignment, user satisfaction and impact on student outcomes, and record this in the Metrics column in the template below.
2. Next, identify specific, numerical targets you aim to achieve, based on the metrics you established. Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as new curricular materials are placed in the hands of teachers. To have that level of impact, how strong will alignment and user satisfaction have to be? Record these in the Targets column in the template below.
3. Finally, identify the mechanism(s) through which you will collect these data. Record this in the Data Collection Mechanism(s) column in the template below.

	Metrics	Targets	Data collection mechanism(s)
<b>Alignment</b>			
<b>User satisfaction</b>			
<b>Impact on student outcomes</b>			



**EXERCISE: ESTIMATE IMPACT OVER TIME**

**Purpose:** To connect planned activities to success metrics and targets to create a trajectory of estimated impact over time.

**Who should participate?** The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. For each of your success metrics, create a baseline by estimating what the current level is (where possible). Can you audit existing instructional materials for alignment? Do you have current surveys of teacher and principal satisfaction with instructional materials that you can use? What do you know about the relevant student outcome measures? Make the best estimate that you can — it will not be perfect because many of these measures are new.
2. Connect the key deliverables to the impact you expect your selected activities to have. Specifically, given the timing of the deliverables you have previously identified, consider the potential impact on alignment, user satisfaction and student outcome metrics. Designate impact on each measure in each time period as “zero,” “low,” “medium” or “high,” and record this on the template on the next page.
3. Assign a numerical value to the “low,” “medium” and “high” categories, and calculate the expected numerical impact on each of your success metrics. Does this picture look plausible? Are there areas where you overshoot or undershoot? Are there assumptions underlying your estimates that need to change?

*(continued on next page)*

**Impact on success measure by year and quarter: Success measure 1**

Metric		Alignment	User satisfaction	Student outcomes
2011	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2012	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2013	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2014	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			

## Conclusion

You should now have a clear plan for how to provide the state's teachers with aligned instructional materials and curricula. The plan considers what success in 2014–15 will look like; key activities and the delivery chain(s) through which instructional materials will be distributed to the classroom; and the necessary action steps, sequence, and roles and responsibilities. The plan also identifies key milestones and a feedback loop that will allow the working group to monitor implementation progress. It is now time to address the next essential element in the transition to the CCSS — crafting a way to launch high-quality professional development around the new standards and related assessments.

## NOTES



## 6. TAKE ACTION

# Implementation Action II

## Train Educators on the Common Core State Standards and Related Assessments

Part of **IMPLEMENTING  
Common Core**  
State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to  
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## IN THIS SECTION

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Prioritizing the Reform Strategy** \_\_\_\_\_ **6.4**

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Determine the Delivery Chain(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **6.8**

**Draft the Delivery Plan:  
Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes** \_\_\_\_\_ **6.13**

**Conclusion** \_\_\_\_\_ **6.19**



## 6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the Common Core State Standards and Related Assessments

### Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have clear strategies to train educators on the scope, sequence and expectations of the Common Core State Standards?
- How will mathematics and English language arts teachers receive this training?
- What information and feedback loops will be used to monitor whether instructional practice changes?

Teachers have to adjust their practice if students are to succeed on new assessments of the content expectations in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Professional development — defined as the time and money diverted to increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers and school leaders — can be a powerful mechanism to improve instructional practice.<sup>1</sup> State and district leaders recognize that massive and widespread efforts are needed to provide highly effective and cost-efficient professional development on the CCSS.

Yet the history of this effort in our country indicates that states and districts alike have fallen short. Professional development is often fragmented and episodic and rarely focuses on the actions that can truly affect student achievement in the long term. Too often, such training is still delivered in a one-time workshop without follow-up or support.<sup>2</sup>

The picture of teacher professional learning in the United States is decidedly mixed. While the percentage of teachers who participate in training on subject matter content and classroom management increased slightly from 2004 to 2008, the intensity of this training has actually decreased over the same time period.<sup>3</sup> When compared to high-performing countries, the United States lags far behind in providing teachers access to the extended learning and collaborative communities shown to improve practice.<sup>4</sup>

This lag is despite massive state and federal resources having been allocated for professional development. In 2009 alone, more than 40 percent of the \$3 billion allocation of federal Title II funds was targeted specifically for the professional development of teachers. Limited capacity and little evaluation data have undermined state aspirations to maximize this investment.<sup>5</sup> **Transitioning to the CCSS provides the ideal opportunity to rethink how educators are trained on the new standards and related assessments.**

A second working group should be tasked with this effort. Specifically, the working group should consider how an effective professional development system can help change instructional practice. What actions can your state undertake that improve the return on this considerable investment and realize the promise of the CCSS? States should work to identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation. Taking the time to craft a *delivery plan* will help the working group identify exactly how professional development occurs across the state. The delivery plan should be iterative, and evidence from student work should constantly inform adjustments to professional development.



## Draft the Delivery Plan: Prioritizing the Reform Strategy

What is your strategy for ensuring that all educators have high-quality professional development that helps them become practitioners of the new standards? Emerging consensus describes the features of professional learning needed to increase teachers' knowledge and skills and change classroom practice. According to the research literature, effective professional development is "ongoing, intensive, and connective to practice and school initiatives; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; and builds strong working relationships among teachers. When teachers receive 50 hours or more of a high-quality approach per year, student test scores rise by an average of 21 percentage points."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, effective professional development does not take away from instructional time. The National Staff Development Council's standards for staff development reinforce these findings and provide the working group several important design principles.<sup>7</sup>

Rethinking educator training also means examining the system in which professional development occurs. A well-designed professional development system allocates scarce resources to the most important priorities in ways most likely to raise student achievement.<sup>8</sup> What does this look like in practice? It begins with a **concrete understanding of the available resources and kind of professional development most likely to improve student performance**. It also means that leaders can **identify the state's or district's student learning priorities and isolate the exact level** (whole elementary schools or teachers of English language learners) **and content area** (8th grade mathematics) **to target support**. As teacher and leader evaluation results come on line, these data should become central to shaping the professional development effort.

Two tools can help the working group pinpoint the needs of the teaching force: First, the **gap analysis** can identify which grade spans, content areas or curriculum strands need immediate attention. Second, **carefully considering district capacity** can help the state leverage the work of leading districts as well as target additional resources to struggling districts.

### Delivery Plans

*"The plan is nothing. The planning is everything."*

— Dwight Eisenhower

The delivery plan provides a road map for how the implementation should proceed. This important operational tool is a work in progress, and there is no such thing as a perfect plan. A good delivery plan begins with the end in mind, linking the purpose of the plan (training educators) to the overall vision for the system (improved student learning outcomes).

Unlike a typical strategic plan, the delivery plan should connect three primary components: the prioritized reform strategies, relevant delivery chains and expected impact on key outcome metrics. The plan should also meet the following criteria. It should:

- **Assign leadership, management and accountability** for the plan owner and project managers (e.g., those responsible for major strategies or activities).
- **Detail performance management**, such as key indicators that can be used to monitor the impact of the plan more regularly or implementation milestones to track implementation progress.
- **Describe the resources and support required** for the plan's success.
- **Prepare to manage stakeholders and users** by providing a thoughtful engagement strategy.
- **Anticipate and prepare for risks** that might throw the work off course, with particular attention given to how implementation can go awry.

You can learn more about creating delivery plans [here](#).

Differentiating among districts is particularly important to the design of a good professional development system. After all, those districts that demonstrate steady gains in student achievement most likely already have successful professional development systems in place. Here, regional support structures, state learning networks and electronic means can share these lessons learned with other districts across the state. Elsewhere, however, the state may need to target limited resources and directly inject capacity into struggling districts via contracts, large-scale gatherings and focused partnerships with professional organizations. Finally, in those districts unwilling to engage in this work, the state may need to directly stimulate demand among principals for effective professional development aligned to the CCSS.

Your task then is to prioritize those activities most likely to help your system achieve its vision for how educators are trained. **You can learn more about prioritizing reform strategies [here](#).** To identify the right set of high-impact activities, the working group should discuss the following questions:

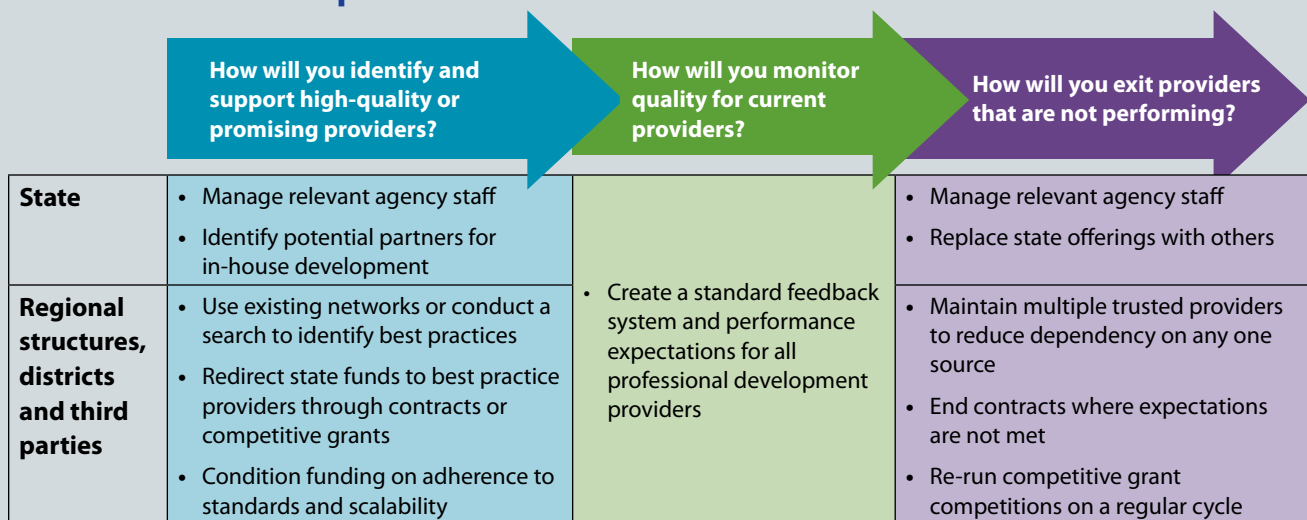
- **Based on your gap analysis, what areas of professional development should you focus on?** Which grade spans and content areas will form the cornerstone of your professional development strategy?
- **How is professional development delivered today?** There are myriad providers of professional development in most states. What is the current “market share” — by both volume and funding — of the state agency? Textbook publishers and other vendors? School districts or schools? Nonprofits and other nongovernmental groups?
- **What are your standards for high-quality professional development in your areas of focus?** Are you able to concretely define your state’s expectations for professional development that will help teachers implement the CCSS? These expectations will be important for helping you regulate the quality of professional development.
- **Based on those standards, where is high-quality professional development currently located?** To what extent are some or all of your identified providers currently providing expert professional development that is congruent with your areas of focus and of sufficient quality? Are there high-capacity districts whose practices could be shared? Trusted vendors that do reliable work? By contrast, are there some areas where the new professional development will need to be created from scratch? Every state’s landscape will be different, so it will be important for you to understand yours.
- **Who will you lean on most heavily to develop the right professional development offerings?** There are several options for providers, including the state itself, regional structures, districts and third parties. You should strive to build a balanced portfolio of providers that can be trusted to deliver high-quality professional development at scale. A number of considerations must be taken into account, including:
  - Past performance according to your standards for professional development;
  - Potential for future performance; and
  - Ability to reach the field with scale (see the following sections on delivery chains for more information).
- **What is your preferred model for ensuring that your primary providers develop and promulgate high-quality professional development at scale for your areas of focus?** The figure on the next page offers one way to think about this question and some levers at your disposal. At their most basic level, these considerations involve how you regulate entry into, activity in and exit from the “market” of professional development provision. As the figure shows, the levers for doing this vary depending on the players you ultimately choose to work with: State-provided professional development, for example, can be regulated through your direct management of your

agency, while thoughtfully using the contract and grant structure may be required to manage other players. The means by which you monitor existing providers should be the common denominator: Holding all providers to a single standard of performance can serve as the basis for either retaining or replacing them.

- **What role do you need principals to play?** The principal holds the key to determining whether teachers in the school actively participate and engage in the professional development offerings. What actions can the state or school district take so that principals become key partners in this reform effort?

By answering these questions, you will essentially develop a statewide model for the creation of high-quality professional development offerings. This model can serve as a guide for how you prioritize your system's strategies for teacher professional development.

## Considerations and Potential Levers for Regulating the Quality of Professional Development



### CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

*Kentucky Administrative Regulations* provide a clear definition of high-quality professional development. The department of education has further articulated **11 professional development standards** and developed a *Professional Development Training/Options Board*. Professional training opportunities sponsored directly by the department as well as via external training partners are identified by program content, target grade levels and the targeted audience. Providing this information helps schools and districts be informed consumers of well-designed professional development.

## EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR REFORM STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING EDUCATORS

**Purpose:** To articulate your prioritized reform strategy. With options from your own state and from this workbook in hand, narrow the list and choose those activities that will have the greatest impact.

**Who should participate?** The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

### Directions:

1. Brainstorm the strategies you will use to ensure that all educators are trained in the use of the CCSS. These can include both changes to current system activities and the creation of new system activities. Consider that your strategies may be different for high-capacity districts and low-capacity districts.
2. Plot your strategies on the 2 x 2 matrix below. Place the strategies that adhere more to your preferred model in the top half of the matrix, with those that adhere less on the bottom. For example, if you have decided to pursue a regional-led approach to creating professional development offerings, a strategy to create these offerings in the agency itself would be placed in the bottom half of the matrix. Then, arrange your strategies from left to right according to how difficult they will be to implement.
3. Finally, select a small set of prioritized strategies from among the ones you have just mapped. Choose from the upper half of the matrix to ensure adherence to your chosen model, and select a range of difficulty levels so that you have both quick wins and long-term work in your strategy set.

High		
ADHERENCE OF STRATEGY TO MODEL		
Low		
	Low	High
	DIFFICULTY OF STRATEGY	

## Draft the Delivery Plan: Determine the Delivery Chain(s)

It is now time to think about how professional development efforts will reach educators. Again, at the heart of your approach is the concept of a **delivery chain**, which helps force clarity about how a reform strategy is expected to roll out. The delivery chain is the set of actors, and the relationships among them, through which the activities you have chosen will be implemented. The delivery chain for training educators answers one question at its core: Starting from the intent of state leaders and ending with the desired change in behavior on the front line (teachers improving their practice based on the new professional development), how — and through whom — will professional development actually happen? **You can learn more about delivery chain analysis [here](#).**

In crafting a statewide model for high-quality professional development, you have already begun this analysis by constructing the delivery chain from your agency to the relevant provider(s) — which may, in some cases, be just the state agency itself. Now you will complete the analysis by determining the chain through which knowledge and feedback is transferred from providers to educators.

You have several options for ensuring that professional development reaches the right educators. The specific shape of your delivery chain matters less than whether you (1) have a well-articulated delivery chain and (2) have confidence that it will get the job done. Well-established means of delivering professional development may already exist and can be expanded or leveraged. As you draw the delivery chain, consider the many avenues through which educators now participate in professional development. It may be helpful to further categorize these as **direct** and **indirect** activities. What percentage of each professional development activity can the state influence?

Educators participate in professional development provided <i>directly</i> from:	Educators participate in professional development provided <i>indirectly</i> via:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state education agency</li> <li>• Regional structures</li> <li>• School districts</li> <li>• Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic/virtual means</li> <li>• Professional organizations</li> <li>• Intermediary organizations</li> <li>• Train-the-trainer models</li> </ul>

The choice of delivery chain may well be influenced by your model for professional development. A state-led model has very different implications for implementation from one in which best practices are identified and expanded through the marketplace. As you construct your delivery chain, you may find that the realities you discover influence your choice of model, even as your choice of model influences the chain. Allow your team to iterate between these two important questions until they arrive at a solution that is right for your state.

Once you have identified your delivery chain, it is important to probe for areas of potential weakness. Questions to consider:

- **Individual relationships:** What is the quality of personal relationships among critical actors? Where are the areas of strongest (e.g., line authority) and weakest (e.g., entirely reliant on persuasion) leverage?
- **Complexity:** How many actors are involved in the delivery chain? How easy or difficult is coordinating these actors to get something done?
- **Funding flows:** What are the major sources of funding and resources? Who controls these flows, and in which direction(s) do they go?

- **Feedback loops:** What mechanisms are in place to help us know what is happening on the ground? How will you know that the desired change is occurring at the other end of the delivery chain?
- **Choke points:** Are there particular actors that you disproportionately depend on to get something done?

To the extent that you find weaknesses, your plan must lay out the ways in which you intend to address them. In some cases, this may mean strengthening relationships in the delivery chain, perhaps by borrowing from the practices of your strongest existing relationships. In some cases, it can mean redesigning the chain entirely — usually with the aim of simplifying it, removing unnecessary actors or easing the pressure on overburdened ones.

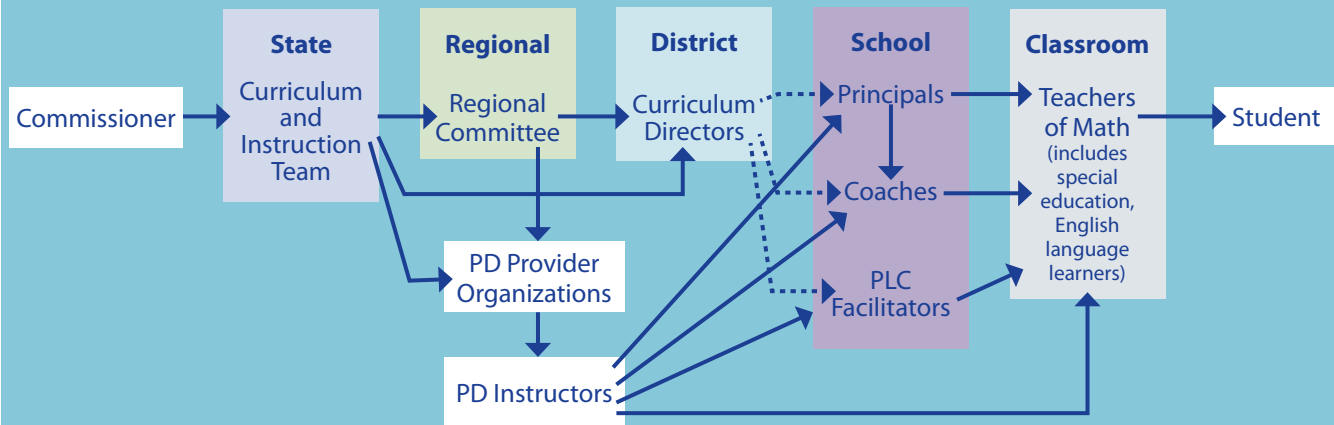
### CASE STORY: COLORADO

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Though the history of professional development in Colorado is one of local control and independent providers, the Colorado Department of Education has increasingly turned to regulation and incentives to drive instructional improvement. For example, all districts must now provide a state-approved induction program for beginning teachers. The department's **Read to Achieve** program allocates \$99 million in tobacco funds to improve instruction in early elementary school classrooms with below average student literacy and comprehension skills. Additional state and federal funds that flow to school districts are differentiated to support educators whose needs are identified through performance evaluations. This range of targeted support and pressure helps maximize professional learning opportunities in the state given limited resources.

## Delivery Chains: From the Classroom Perspective

One easy way to think about the complexity of a delivery chain is to think about it from the perspective of the teacher whose changed classroom practice is a critical measure of the impact of your strategy. For example, consider the delivery chain for middle school mathematics professional development (PD) that one state in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers created:



A few key questions tease out potential issues:

- How many different inputs are there? The figure shows that the teacher may be receiving PD from principals, coaches and professional learning community (PLC) facilitators in schools or directly from PD instructors hired at a regional level.
- To what extent are these inputs coordinated? There are two types of coordination to consider:
  - **Aggregate coordination** means that multiple inputs apply to the same teacher but they reinforce the same message or work. For example, if there is one agreed-upon PD course for middle school math teachers, and all four of these inputs are teaching the same thing, it may be helpful for a teacher to receive information from multiple sources. When aggregate coordination fails, there is the risk of either overloading or annoying the teacher with duplicative PD offerings.
  - **Complementary coordination** means either that the different inputs apply to different teachers or that the messages of inputs to the same teacher complement one another. For example, principals, coaches and PLC facilitators are likely to coordinate their efforts within a given school. Outside PD instructors might be brought in only for schools with a teacher workforce that is seriously struggling and needs additional help. When complementary coordination fails, some teachers may have too many touchpoints while others have none at all.

If the view from the classroom is not clear, your delivery chain likely is overly complex.

**Sometimes the delivery chain needs to be completely redesigned.** The state does not have to treat all districts the same. Often, leading districts have already designed strong professional development approaches that the state can leverage by creating a learning network. Similarly, low-capacity districts may need more targeted support from the state, region, vendor or professional organizations. Redesigning the delivery chain requires a clear assessment of the problem and a willingness to test new approaches.

**EXERCISE: MAP THE DELIVERY CHAIN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Purpose:** To draw a delivery chain for professional development, identify the weaknesses in it and identify solutions to address those weaknesses.

**Who should participate?** The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. For the overall professional development strategy, list the key actors in your ideal delivery chain — the ones who will be a critical part of ensuring that educators get the training they need. Think of actors at five levels: state, region (if applicable), district, school and classroom. In addition to recording which actors are involved, please note how many of each there are in your state (e.g., 100 superintendents, 1,000 principals, etc.) Keep the following questions in mind:
  - a. What, if any, professional development will be delivered by the state agency?
  - b. What professional development will be delivered by districts?
  - c. What professional development will be created by regional centers or third parties?
  - d. To what extent and in what ways is professional development affected by other actors in the chain?
  - e. Will the delivery chain be different for high- and low-capacity districts? (You may need two variations.)
  - f. Will the delivery chain be different for the various activities in your strategy?
2. Draw the single, more important line of influence between the system leader and the student, and articulate how you would like it to function. Some questions to keep in mind:
  - a. What options are available to the state?
  - b. What are we (at the state level) particularly good at?
  - c. What historical lessons have we learned in rolling out prior professional development?
3. Identify and draw secondary lines to other actors who need to be involved.
4. On the delivery chain, identify the feedback loop — the method you will use to identify whether or not implementation is working.
5. Identify potential weaknesses in the delivery chain and the ways you will address them. Use the worksheet template on the next page.

*(continued on next page)*



## Delivery chain analysis of weaknesses and solutions worksheet

	Potential weaknesses	Potential solutions
Individual relationships		
Complexity		
Funding flows		
Feedback loops		
Choke points		
Other		

## Draft the Delivery Plan: Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes

Implementation planning typically ends once planned professional development activities have begun. Yet equal attention is needed to ensure that classroom instruction *actually changes*. Is the professional development sufficiently aligned to the CCSS and of value? How are these lessons being used? What impact are they having on classroom teaching and student learning? To answer these questions, the working group should connect activities to their expected outcomes and create or leverage the feedback loops in the delivery chain to track impact.

The first step is to identify a clear **timeline** of when planned activities need to occur. Sequencing the key deliverables will show when the benefits of the activities will be felt in the field. A “deliverable” is a milestone or end product for an activity. For example, if the state plans to provide low-performing districts with CCSS coaches, a deliverable might be that all the curriculum directors in these districts have received this resource by a certain date. Tracking whether these deliverables are met is an important first step to ensuring that the necessary work occurs.

Next, articulate the **success measures** that you want to track. Consider the impact you expect to achieve by launching the professional development effort. This will help you decide how to measure success and whether this level of impact is sufficient. What might this look like? If the right professional development offerings occur, and if principals and teachers participate in them, their practice will improve, and student learning will be affected. Four potential types of success measures follow from this logic:

- **Alignment:** To what extent are principals and teachers participating in professional development that is aligned to the state’s models? Potential metrics include the number of providers that provide aligned professional development or the number of participants (teachers and principals) in professional development of any kind that is provided by an aligned provider.
- **User satisfaction:** To what extent do principals and teachers who participate in aligned professional development find it to be helpful in aiding student learning on the new CCSS? The potential metric in this area would be a user satisfaction survey for principals and teachers.
- **Classroom practice:** To what extent do teachers participating in aligned professional development change their practices? Potential metrics include self-reporting of changed practice by teachers who participate in aligned professional development (versus those who do not) or observations of teacher behavior for a sample of classrooms that do and do not participate in aligned professional development, either observed directly or reported by principals.
- **Impact on student outcomes:** To what extent do principals and teachers participating in aligned professional development achieve better results for their students? Potential metrics include formative or summative assessment data, comparing teachers who participate in aligned professional development with those who do not.

At the highest level, these success measures are outcome oriented. At the most basic, they are process oriented. Both types of success measures, and the intermediate metrics that connect them, demonstrate your system’s theory of action for how the prioritized activities will actually result in real impact. Making this connection is hard work, and there will be disagreements about what to measure. However, without having the difficult conversations on this topic, you will not have a true compass to know if your activities are being selected or executed to influence the things you care most about.

You may also need to design **new mechanisms for data collection**. Some examples include requiring professional development providers to submit certain data on participation to the state agency, conducting audits of professional development providers to check fidelity, adding questions to an existing teacher working conditions survey, developing an online teacher/principal survey and creating incentives for participation, using technology to conduct some observations, building mechanisms for data collection into new teacher evaluation systems, and linking teacher identification to professional development activity to use student performance results to gauge the impact of professional development that teachers received. The feedback loops you have identified in the delivery chain exercise should get you part or all of the way there — and in the end, this discussion will also influence how those feedback loops are designed.

Finally, you will want to **set targets**. Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as new professional development occurs. To get that level of impact, how strong will your alignment, user satisfaction and changes in classroom practice have to be? If you hit the milestones in your timeline, what impact will that have on the success metrics? How should you see them move over time? Now that you have articulated your success metrics, activities and implementation timeline, it is time to put them together to estimate the impact of these activities over time. The resulting trajectory will help you monitor progress over the next several years and will give you an early indication of whether you are on track to achieve your desired results.

Like the discussion about success metrics, this one will be challenging. Trying to estimate the future is uncomfortable, especially when you are accountable for it. Moreover, the various components are interdependent: Your expected impact over time is based on your selection of success metrics and activities, but your selection of activities may in turn be influenced by a need to achieve the targets you have set. Two things are worth bearing in mind:

- The estimate of impact over time is a *guideline* for you, not a hard prediction. The real purpose of the estimate is to compare it to what actually happens and use the differential to drive any mid-course corrections. It is not to create additional accountability with consequences.
- Revisiting prior discussions is good, and even necessary, at this stage. Activities, success metrics and impact over time are interdependent variables. As you discuss one, it makes sense to revise and refine the other two until you have a balance that represents an ambitious but realistic plan for real progress.

## EXERCISE: CREATE A TIMELINE OF DELIVERABLES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Purpose:** To create a specific sequence of activities and deliverables for ensuring that all educators receive professional development that will allow them to become practitioners of the new standards.

**Who should participate?** The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Think through the prioritized activities and the delivery chain you drew, and create a list of the deliverables for CCSS-related professional development for which the state will be responsible.
2. If any deliverables already have hard dates associated with them, place those in the appropriate place in the template below.
3. Use the template below to create a timeline for the other deliverables between now and 2014. Prioritize, where necessary, based on the impact you have already identified. The model timeline in Chapter 3 can aid your thinking.

### Deliverables by year and quarter

Activity					
2011	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2012	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2013	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2014	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

## EXERCISE: SET SUCCESS METRICS AND TARGETS

**Purpose:** To set metrics and targets for your activities so you can assess success according to the feedback loop.

**Who should participate?** The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. Determine how you will measure success in terms of alignment, user satisfaction, classroom practice and impact on student outcomes, and record this in the Metrics column in the template below.
2. Next, identify specific, numerical targets you aim to achieve, based on the metrics you established. Record these in the Targets column in the template below.
3. Finally, identify the mechanism(s) through which you will collect these data. Record this in the Data Collection Mechanism(s) column in the template below.

	Metrics	Targets	Data collection mechanism(s)
<b>Alignment</b>			
<b>User satisfaction</b>			
<b>Classroom practice</b>			
<b>Impact on student outcomes</b>			

**EXERCISE: ESTIMATE IMPACT OVER TIME**

**Purpose:** To connect planned activities to success metrics and targets to create a trajectory of estimated impact over time.

**Who should participate?** The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

**Directions:**

1. For each of your success metrics, create a baseline by estimating what the current level is (where possible). Can you audit existing professional development offerings for alignment? Do you have current surveys of teacher and principal satisfaction with professional development that you can use? What do you know about the relevant student outcome measures? Make the best estimate that you can — it will not be perfect because many of these input measures are new.
2. Connect the key deliverables to the impact you expect your selected activities to have. Specifically, given the timing of the deliverables you have previously identified, consider the potential impact on alignment, user satisfaction, classroom practice and student outcome metrics. Designate impact on each measure in each time period as “zero,” “low,” “medium” or “high,” and record this on the template on the next page.
3. Assign a value to the “low,” “medium” or “high” categories, and calculate the expected numerical impact on each of your success metrics. Does this picture look plausible? Are there areas where you overshoot or undershoot? Are there assumptions underlying your estimates that need to change?

*(continued on next page)*

**Impact on success measure by year and quarter: Success measure 1**

Metric	Alignment	User satisfaction	Classroom practice	Impact on student outcomes
2011	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2012	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2013	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2014	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			

## Conclusion

You should now have a road map for how high-quality professional development can help educators across the state align their instructional practice to the expectations in the CCSS. The plan considers what success in 2014–15 will look like; key activities and the delivery chain(s) through which the professional development will be provided; and the necessary action steps, sequence, and roles and responsibilities. The plan also identifies key milestones and a feedback loop that will allow the working group to monitor implementation progress. It is now time to put all this planning together by creating a set of routines that will allow the strategic implementation team to drive implementation and solve problems as they arise.

### ENDNOTES

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- 1 Hawley Miles (Summer 2003). *The Big Picture: A Systems Perspective*. National Staff Development Council. Volume 24, No. 3.
- 2 Hirsch, Koppich & Knapp (1998). *What States Are Doing To Improve the Quality of Teaching: A Brief Review of Current Patterns and Trends*. Seattle: The Center for the Student of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.
- 3 Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson (2010). *Professional Development in the United States: Trends and Challenges*. Palo Alto: Stanford University.
- 4 Jaquith, Mindich, Wei & Darling-Hammond (2010). *Teacher Professional Learning in the United States: Summary Report*. Palo Alto: Stanford University.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Jaquith, Mindich, Wei & Darling-Hammond (2009). *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*. Palo Alto: Stanford University.
- 7 Professional development must comprise professional learning that (1) is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals; (2) is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers or other teacher leaders; (3) primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals and other instructional staff members such that the teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement that (i) evaluates student, teacher and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance and (ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data.
- 8 Hawley Miles (Summer 2003). *The Big Picture*.



## NOTES

## 11. PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

# Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems

Part of **IMPLEMENTING  
Common Core**  
State Standards and Assessments

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## IN THIS SECTION

**Establish Routines** \_\_\_\_\_ 11.3

**Solve Problems** \_\_\_\_\_ 11.8

**Sustain and Build Momentum** \_\_\_\_\_ 11.11



# 11. Put It All Together:

## Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems

### Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have set routines to track progress against your aspiration? Do these routines identify the actions needed to stay on track or get back on track?
- Does analysis uncover key issues, anticipate problems and prioritize them for resolution? Do you have processes in place to solve problems quickly and effectively?
- Do you have a plan for sustaining a consistent focus on the transition to the Common Core State Standards?

### Establish Routines

Implementation does not end once good planning is complete. The key to driving and monitoring performance lies in establishing set **routines**. Today's state education agencies and school districts face multiple barriers to successful implementation; the greatest risk is that crises and fires will distract leaders at all levels from the core work of implementing the new standards. Routines are regularly scheduled checkpoints that help the system leader and strategic implementation team review performance, discuss major issues and jointly identify solutions to drive implementation forward. Put differently, routines force leaders to regularly check progress on a consistent set of priorities. Routines can take multiple forms — a face-to-face discussion, a brief written note or even a more in-depth report — but at their essence, all of them are dialogues about performance.

The principle of a routine is, of course, not unfamiliar to most state education agencies or districts. Examples of current routines are senior staff meetings, all-hands staff meetings and project management processes like a Project Management Oversight Committee. The one major difference between a regular interaction such as this and a delivery routine is the focus: **A delivery routine will consistently return participants to questions of whether they are on track to achieve the results that they have promised.** When properly designed, routines can be a source of structure and discipline for Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation efforts.

A few simple steps will allow a system to build a set of routines that fulfill this purpose. The first step is to clearly establish **what is being monitored**. This means deciding the level at which you will be doing the review, which can range from overall implementation of the new CCSS to a tighter focus on key projects like introducing model curricula and aligned instructional materials. Local school districts are also an important unit of analysis; a state department could seek regular feedback from regional staff or district superintendents on the progress being made in key districts. For states that already have significant delivery efforts under way, the overall implementation of the CCSS should fall under one or more of your overall delivery goals for student outcomes — which means that the level of review will be even more broad. There is no single right answer; you should choose a level of review that makes the most sense for your system to regularly assess the most important areas of implementation.

You must also establish **what data and information will be reviewed**. The success measures that you identified are a good starting point to answer this question. They include outcome metrics, intermediate metrics and process

milestones. The more outcome oriented a metric is likely to be, the less frequently available it usually is. This should not stop you from regularly reviewing progress using more process oriented — but more frequently available — measures of success. Because of the hard work you have done to create trajectories, you have explicitly drawn the connection between these process metrics and your expected impact on the overall outcome. When you lack outcome data, the relevant questions are: Given what I know about progress on the relevant activities, are we on track to achieve our desired results? What is the likelihood that we will deliver?

Once you have identified the data and information that you want to review, certain tactical questions then become important. Who will ensure that the data are collected? What will the process look like? How will you avoid duplication of effort? Answering these questions is important, both to preserve staff resources and to ensure that your work is not seen as more of a burden than it must be.

### CASE STORY: PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC) STATE

In one PARCC state, the CCSS implementation effort is set in the broader context of a goal to improve 3rd grade literacy. Adopting the CCSS, creating model curricula and launching professional development on these curricula are three of about a dozen projects that are meant to contribute to this goal.

To track progress, the state has developed a feedback loop consisting of a range of evidence:

- It has defined a student outcome goal of increasing the number of students who score proficient on the 3rd grade reading assessment by around 14,000 by the 2014–15 school year.
- It has defined several leading indicators. (One related to CCSS implementation, for example, is the retention rate of teachers with fewer than five years of service in grades K–3.)
- It has created a project charter with milestones and deliverables for each of the projects, with an explicit estimate of the contribution that successful completion of each project will make toward the student outcome goal.

The strategic implementation team wants to regularly review progress — and the likelihood that its goals would be delivered — in a systematic and regular way. To do this, it instituted a quarterly review meeting that includes the senior official responsible for the goal, the commissioner and related project leaders. The challenge is to ensure a consistent discussion at each meeting, despite the fact that much of the data from the aforementioned feedback loops are infrequently or irregularly available.

To solve this problem, the team relied on an **assessment framework** — a qualitative rubric that asks several rigorous questions about each component of the plan to determine the likelihood that the component will contribute its share to the desired outcome. The qualitative judgments are combined with what data are available to render an overall judgment:  (**on track**),  (**mixed**),  (**problematic**) and  (**highly problematic**).

## Assessment Framework To Evaluate and Compare Progress at Any Level (EXAMPLE)

Judgment	Rating	Rationale summary
Degree of challenge	L/M/H/VH	
Quality of planning, implementation and performance management		
Capacity to drive progress		
Stage of delivery	1/2/3/4	

Data on outcomes,  
leading indicators  
and milestones

Likelihood of  
delivery



### KEY

L — Low  
M — Medium  
H — High  
VH — Very High

Highly problematic — requires urgent and decisive action  
 Problematic — requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention  
 Mixed — aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good  
 Good — requires refinement and systematic implementation

This framework can be applied at any level — the outcome itself (what is the likelihood that the target outcome will be delivered?) or a component project (what is the likelihood that the project will deliver its estimated contribution to the outcome goal?). This second view is illustrated in the figure on the next page.




## Interim Assessment of Progress for One Strategy in 3rd Grade Reading Goal (EXAMPLE)

### Leading indicators for a strategy

#	Strategy	Leading indicator	Q1 2010–11
2	Ensure prekindergarten–grade 3 teachers statewide receive consistent professional development related to curriculum standards.	<b>Retention of teachers with fewer than five years of service, grades PK–3</b>	<b>87.8%</b>

+

### Qualitative judgments of the likelihood that each of the strategy's projects will deliver the promised impact on the goal

Projects	Judgment	Rationale
CCSS professional development		Plan relies on train-the-trainer model, needs support component
Communicate content of professional development offerings		Project charter not developed
Curriculum map and pacing guide		Not aligned to CCSS

A quarterly data set that can serve as the evidence base for a performance conversation about the strategy

#### KEY



Highly problematic — requires urgent and decisive action

Problematic — requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention

Mixed — aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good

Good — requires refinement and systematic implementation

These data allow the department to have regular conversations about whether their activities are having the expected impact. By applying a similar type of routine and assessment framework to the projects in a CCSS implementation effort, you can establish a monitoring system that will help drive results.

Finally, keep in mind several important design principles when establishing routines. First, repurpose existing meetings where possible. The weekly leadership team meeting, for example, can be used to also review CCSS implementation once a month. Second, use existing project management practices to inform delivery routines. Where routines are already in place to review whether projects are on track, the strategic implementation team can also examine data from this process to better understand the impact of this work on teacher behavior and student outcomes. Third, there should be no surprises. The purpose of the routine is not a “gotcha” but rather a chance for the system leader and staff to remove implementation barriers and problem solve. And fourth, use routines to review progress but push for next steps. When done properly, the routine can serve as an effective forcing mechanism to create interim deadlines for action.

## EXERCISE: ESTABLISH ROUTINES TO DRIVE AND MONITOR PERFORMANCE

**Purpose:** To create a plan for regular routines that will allow your team to monitor implementation progress, problem solve and continually drive your implementation forward.

**Who should participate?** The strategic implementation team should complete this exercise, with the input and approval of your state chief.

**Directions:**

1. Think through the routines you already have in place, how they might be changed and which routines you will need to establish.
2. Complete the template below outlining the participants, frequency, form (written notes, in-person meeting, etc.) and data to be reviewed at each routine.
3. Review your list to ensure that your routines will provide the right people with the right information at the right time.

	Participants	Frequency	Form	Data to be reviewed
Routine 1:				
Routine 2:				
Routine 3:				
Routine 4:				
Routine 5:				



## Solve Problems

Unforeseen problems inevitably arise as plans are made and implementation begins. System leaders and staff need to have a process that can identify and address these problems according to their urgency and severity.

The first step is to ensure that the system is **regularly receiving the information that is needed to identify problems as they arise**. Mechanisms for this include routines for monitoring progress (see previous pages) and feedback loops for information from the field. In addition, instituting a regular “pulse check” with key audiences — both internal and external — may help you spot and deal with emerging issues before they escalate.

The second step is to create the process for **choosing which problems to deal with, in what order and with what level of resources**. Many systems miss this step: The nature of a public agency is such that there are always more problems to be solved than there is capacity to solve them. Lacking the means to address all problems, systems often become firefighters, dealing with problems in the order in which they arise and not necessarily in order of importance.

A system’s approach to problem-solving should be similar to medical triage: As problems arise, prioritize them according to severity and/or complexity and assign staff resources to them accordingly. Each “category” in this system should define criteria for inclusion in it (e.g., How severe is the problem? How difficult is it to solve? How urgent?), as well as guidelines for appropriate assignment of staff resources (e.g., “ignore for now,” “delegate to junior staff to handle,” “solve as a team,” “dedicate a portion of system leader’s personal time to resolving”).

### Problem-Solving as a “Triage” Process: Determining How Seriously the Problem Is Affecting the Work (EXAMPLE)

Level	Characteristics of problem	Potential actions for strategic implementation team
1: Gentle reminder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work is <b>somewhat</b> off track</li> <li>Cause and solution are relatively clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personally contact individual accountable for relevant aspect of the work (e.g., phone call, e-mail)</li> <li>Offer support, but ask individual to fix the problem</li> <li>Follow up to ensure problem has been resolved</li> </ul>
2: Standard problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is <b>significantly</b> affecting the work</li> <li>Cause and solution are not obvious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate members of your strategic implementation team responsible for “co-owning” the problem with the relevant official</li> <li>Conduct collaborative problem-solving</li> <li>Get additional attention from chief; develop more frequent and deeper routines</li> </ul>
3: Intensive problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is <b>severely</b> affecting the work</li> <li>Cause and solution have significant complexity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate special problem-solving team</li> <li>Conduct quick fieldwork for deeper problem-solving</li> <li>Develop temporary new routines for reporting progress (e.g., weekly)</li> </ul>
4: Crisis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is among the top one or two problems of the system and is <b>completely</b> impairing the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve strategic implementation team leader full time in problem-solving</li> <li>Request active and frequent participation of chief</li> <li>Use system’s crisis management techniques (e.g., specialized teams with outside experts, public relations blitz, etc.)</li> </ul>

Assigning problems into these categories needs to be an explicit and regular discussion within the strategic implementation team. For this reason, someone on the strategic implementation team should lead that discussion to help the team agree on where to focus time and energy.

The third step is to equip everyone in the system with **the tools and mindsets to address issues as they arise**. Lower-level problems can be resolved by mid-level and junior staff only if those staff feel empowered to act. In some cases, this means sending a clear message that such behavior is not only allowed but also encouraged. Communicating about the triage system — and its implications for mid-level and junior staff — is one helpful way to do this. In other cases, capacity-building will be necessary. A variety of simple tools can be used to coach staff in new problem-solving behaviors. **You can learn more about problem solving [here](#).**

### Similar Problem-Solving Approach for Staff in Your Department (EXAMPLE)

Level	Characteristics of problem	Desired staff mindset
1: Gentle reminder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work is <b>somewhat</b> off track</li> <li>Cause and solution are relatively clear</li> </ul>	"I will take responsibility to solve the problem myself and inform my team/supervisor of my work."
2: Standard problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is <b>significantly</b> affecting the work</li> <li>Cause and solution are not obvious</li> </ul>	"I will try to understand the problem more deeply for myself. I will not take it to my team/supervisor until I have a proposed solution and have isolated the most difficult and critical questions."
3: Intensive problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is <b>severely</b> affecting the work</li> <li>Cause and solution have significant complexity</li> </ul>	"I will actively involve my team/supervisor to solve the problem and create formal mechanisms/venues to do so."
4: Crisis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem is among the top one or two problems of the system and is <b>completely</b> impairing the work</li> </ul>	"I will work with my team/supervisor to support the system leader in crisis management."

Two sets of tools will be useful for higher-level problems that demand more joint leadership attention. **Investigative tools** allow you to break down complex issues to discover the real source of a problem and the potential solutions. These include:

- **Issue trees** that break down larger problems into smaller, more manageable pieces for a team to solve. **(You can learn more about issues trees [here](#).)**
- **Delivery chain analysis** that identifies where implementation may be going wrong along the path of a reform strategy, from the intent of system leaders all the way to impact in the classroom. **(You can learn more about delivery chain analysis [here](#).)**
- **Field work and evidence-gathering** that will allow your team to investigate the potential issues and/or solutions surfaced by these tools.

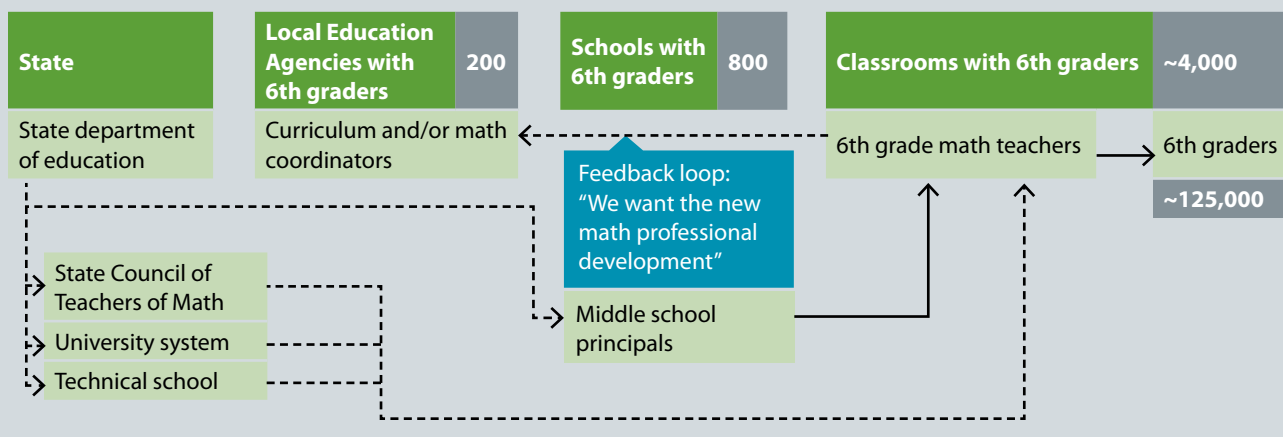
## CASE STORY: USING DELIVERY CHAIN ANALYSIS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN A PARCC STATE

As one PARCC state rolled out its latest mathematics standards, it confronted a common challenge: The related professional development depended heavily on a train-the-trainers model and was failing to reach the classroom. To solve this problem, state leaders examined the delivery chain and looked for the weak link. They found it at the district level: Individual curriculum directors had no incentive or motivation to change their existing professional development practices — which meant that a multihour professional development session often got watered down to a 30-minute (or less) mention in an after-school meeting. The state’s analysis is shown in the exhibit below; the weak link it had identified was rooted in weak relationships between the department and the relevant district personnel.

To solve this problem, the state redesigned the delivery chain to circumvent the curriculum directors in districts. It partnered with several respected state entities — including two leading universities and the state Council of Teachers of Mathematics — to promulgate the new professional development through principals and directly to teachers. Initially, this strategy exposed more teachers to the right professional development, but there was a secondary effect: Teachers who had not received the new training began asking their curriculum directors what they were missing.

### Solving Problems by Finding New, Indirect Routes to the Classroom (EXAMPLE)

#### New delivery chain for new math curriculum professional development (6th grade)



Through analysis of its delivery chain, the state was able to identify the root cause of its problem and identify a solution for it.

Once the root causes and potential solutions of a problem have been identified, there are **intervention tools** at your system’s disposal to get delivery back on track. These include:

- **Positive pressure/convening around best practices:** If implementation is going wrong in the field, convenings or demonstrations are critical tools for communication and dialogue about what should be happening.
- **Evaluation/restructuring/termination of vendor contracts:** Public agencies often underuse the leverage that they have over vendors in the contracting process. If vendor behavior is the source of an issue with CCSS implementation, aggressive contract management is the only real means to resolve it.

- **Rejection or conditional approval of a district's consolidated plans:** State education agencies also underuse the leverage they have in the consolidated planning process. If consolidated plans are to be a meaningful way to influence implementation of CCSS in the field, agencies must be willing to withhold funding until school districts and schools get these plans right.
- **Use of Title I/accountability levers to raise concerns:** Likewise, the current federal accountability framework provides for a set of potential interventions in underperforming districts and schools. These actions — or the mere threat of these — can create an opportunity for meaningful dialogue around CCSS implementation.

A robust and deliberate strategy for dealing with unforeseen challenges will ultimately lessen their adverse impact, allowing your strategic implementation team to keep CCSS implementation on track.

## Sustain and Build Momentum

Routines are crucial to drive success in the implementation effort. Done right, these routines will begin to demonstrate success quickly. Even as the first positive results come in, it is crucial that you not declare victory prematurely. The hard and grinding work of sustaining progress is just beginning. These early wins can either serve as fuel to inspire further improvement or be squandered in self-congratulation. The strategic implementation team must persist through the distractions, manage those who continue to resist change, challenge the status quo vigorously and celebrate success at every opportunity. Luckily, the time spent *planning* for implementation has already given you the tools to *drive* implementation. The following five actions can help sustain and build momentum:

- **Develop the compelling and effective message and stay on it!** At every turn — every speech, every public appearance or hearing, every state or school board meeting — take the opportunity to share your three key communications messages and provide an update on implementation progress. Think of the effort as a marketing person would. Saturating key audiences with consistent messages is a good thing.
- **Keep the guiding coalition secure but fresh.** This will involve tasking the coalition with proactive actions to build public support as well as helping state or district leaders play defense when necessary. Careful attention should be given to shifts and changes in political leadership.
- **Constantly give time and pay attention to key leaders in the delivery chain.** This is especially true for those links in the chain that are weak. Are regional structures ably playing the role intended for them? Who can rise to lead the instructional improvement efforts(s) in struggling districts?
- **Connect state efforts to the national landscape.** This involves finding a state or district that people in your state or district relate to and use its progress as leverage in your own state. For a state in PARCC, for example, this might involve pegging your implementation efforts to those in a neighboring PARCC state.
- **Use data constantly.** The guiding coalition and key messengers should all know the current performance data in your state or district and refer to these numbers to reinforce why the CCSS implementation effort is needed. Data are personality neutral and can be effectively used to disarm arguments as well as to demonstrate and celebrate success.

When things are not going well, these actions will help you battle the inevitable excuses. When things are going well, they will help you maintain a sense of urgency and avoid conflating “good” with “great.” **You can learn more about how to sustain and continually build momentum [here](#).**

## NOTES



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