



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Kentucky Department of Education

Model Curriculum Framework

Section I:
Curriculum Development
Process

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Introduction to the Model Curriculum Framework

The **Model Curriculum Framework**, per [KRS 158.6451](#), provides guidance for schools and districts in implementing educational best practices in a way that creates curricular coherence to positively impact student success. Curricular coherence involves local alignment of standards, curriculum, instructional resources and practices, assessment, and professional learning within and across grade-levels in a district or school to help students meet grade-level expectations. According to research, schools that demonstrate increased curricular coherence also show marked improvements in student outcomes (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Figure 1.1 highlights the five key components of curricular coherence addressed within this document:

- **Section 1: Curriculum Development Process** – Outlines a systemwide process for articulating an instructional vision, developing a local curriculum aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)* and selecting a primary high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to support implementation.
- **Section 2: Professional Learning Communities (PLC)** – Emphasizes a systems-based approach to developing a shared understanding of the PLC process as an aspect of continuous improvement, the role of leadership in creating a supportive culture and the role of teachers as effective collaborators within a PLC.
- **Section 3: Balanced System of Assessment** - Provides guidance on how teachers and leaders can implement a comprehensive, balanced system of assessments to ensure high-quality and reliable assessment practices with a focus on the formative assessment process and providing stakeholders with effective strategies for noticing, recognizing and responding to evidence of student learning.
- **Section 4: Evidence-Based Instructional Practices** - Supports leaders and teachers in understanding what constitutes an evidence-based practice, in coordinating a system of effective instruction aligned to disciplinary practices and outcomes of the *KAS* and in evaluating the quality of instructional resources.



Figure 1.1. Key Components of Curricular Coherence



The organization of this document mirrors the use of backward design, beginning with what educators must know and be able to do, proceeding to how learning will be assessed and concluding with how that translates into daily teaching and learning.

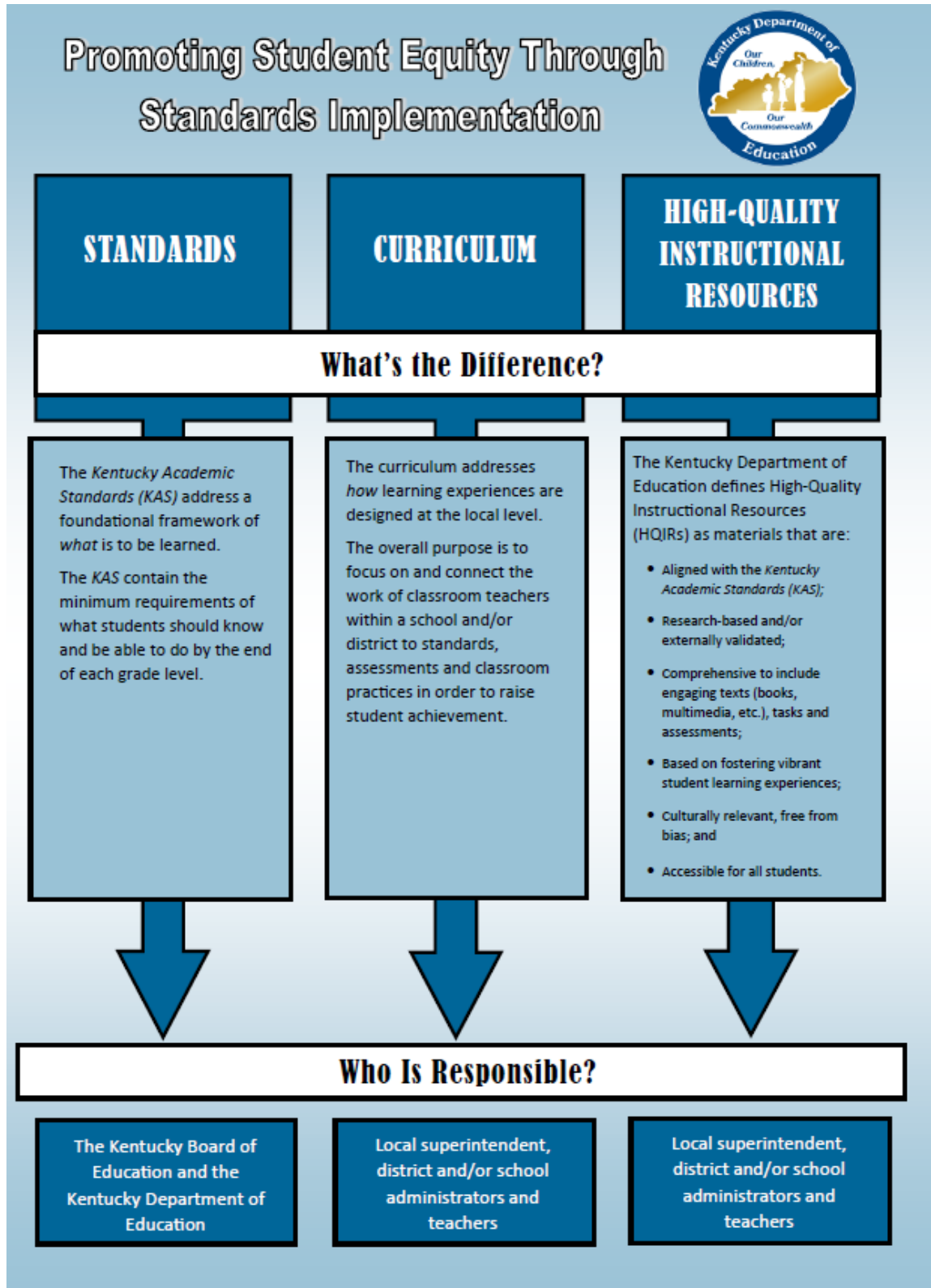
The five components of curricular coherence are essential to providing equitable access to learning for all students. Within U.S. schools, large racial and socioeconomic gaps still exist among graduation rates, test scores and advanced proficiency. Historically marginalized populations, such as students of color, English language learners and exceptional students, are less likely to be given access to high-quality curriculum and resources. A 2018 study, from districts around the country, found students of color and those from low-income backgrounds are less likely than white and higher-income students to have access to quality curriculum, instruction and grade-appropriate assignments (TNTP, 2018).

For educators to meet the challenge of helping **all** students reach grade-level expectations, they must have a clear vision of best practices in teaching and learning and a clear roadmap to follow throughout the year (Ainsworth, 2010). High-quality curriculum and instructional resources have the power to provide that roadmap by connecting standards, curriculum, effective instruction, assessment and professional learning (Achieve the Core, 2017).

To create curricular coherence, educators must understand the relationship between standards, curriculum and instructional resources. Figure 1.2 below highlights the differences between these terms as well as who has responsibility for each as defined in Kentucky law ([KRS 160.345](#), [704 KAR 3:455](#)).



Figure 1.2. Defining Standards, Curriculum and Instructional Resources



For schools and districts, translating standards into a guaranteed, viable curriculum is vital to student success and the first step in creating curricular coherence.

- **Guaranteed Curriculum** – Guaranteed ensures specific content is taught in specific courses and at specific grade levels, regardless of the teacher assigned to a student. When schools and districts are unable to guarantee the curriculum being taught, the result is redundancy and inconsistency from one classroom to the next across grade levels and little alignment between the standards, assessment and instruction (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).
- **Viable Curriculum** - Viability means the articulated grade-level standards, instructional calendar (pacing guide), and daily instruction are all manageable and can be realistically taught to mastery levels in the instructional year (Marzano, 2003). This means schools and districts must ensure enough instructional time is available to develop essential knowledge, skills and concepts of the guaranteed curriculum.

Development of a district curriculum aligned to the *KAS* and adoption of a primary HQIR does not guarantee students have access to the same knowledge and skills. A distinction must be made between the *intended* curriculum and the *implemented* curriculum. In many places, gaps exist between the district- or school-established curriculum and what is implemented by teachers in classrooms. For districts to truly achieve a guaranteed and viable curriculum, the leaders and teachers accountable for delivering it must possess a common understanding of the curriculum and of the HQIR.

To support effective implementation, teachers and leaders need ongoing professional learning experiences that deepen their knowledge of how the curriculum and HQIR work together to set a strong instructional foundation (Instruction Partners, 2019). The professional learning can occur through the PLC process, workshops, coaching, classroom observations, feedback and other job-embedded contexts.

Referencing Figure 1.1, when districts across Kentucky create coherence by implementing high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional resources, support implementation and continuous improvement through high-quality professional learning and collaboration, measure student growth through a balanced system of assessment and provide teachers and students access to evidence-based instructional practices, a more equitable environment is established. Leaders and educators working together to implement the local curriculum help ensure every student has access to the same content, knowledge and skills regardless of teacher or school they attend.



Curriculum Development Process

Introduction

The first step in creating curricular coherence is to translate the standards into a local curriculum anchored in high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs). While the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)* establish *what* students must know and be able to do, the district is responsible for developing a curriculum that addresses *how* learning experiences are to be designed and for selecting the instructional resources that will *assist* student learning.

Current research recommends districts adopt and implement a primary HQIR as the print, nonprint or electronic medium designed to assist student learning and support implementation of a high-quality curriculum. The research shows:

- Aligned to state standards, a HQIR can reduce variability in the quality of instruction across classrooms (SREB, 2017), and students in classrooms that used one HQIR for four consecutive years outpaced comparison students by a margin of 38 percentile points — equivalent to four additional years of learning (Steiner, 2018).
- Teachers creating their own lessons rarely results in a fully sequenced, coherent learning experience over time and across a system (Steiner, 2018), and 75 percent of teacher-created or selected resources are found to be below grade-level (TNTP, 2018).
- Teachers without access to HQIRs spend 7-12 hours per week searching for resources online (Goldberg, 2016).
- Switching from a low to a high-quality instructional resource can boost student achievement more than other, more popular interventions (Steiner, 2018).

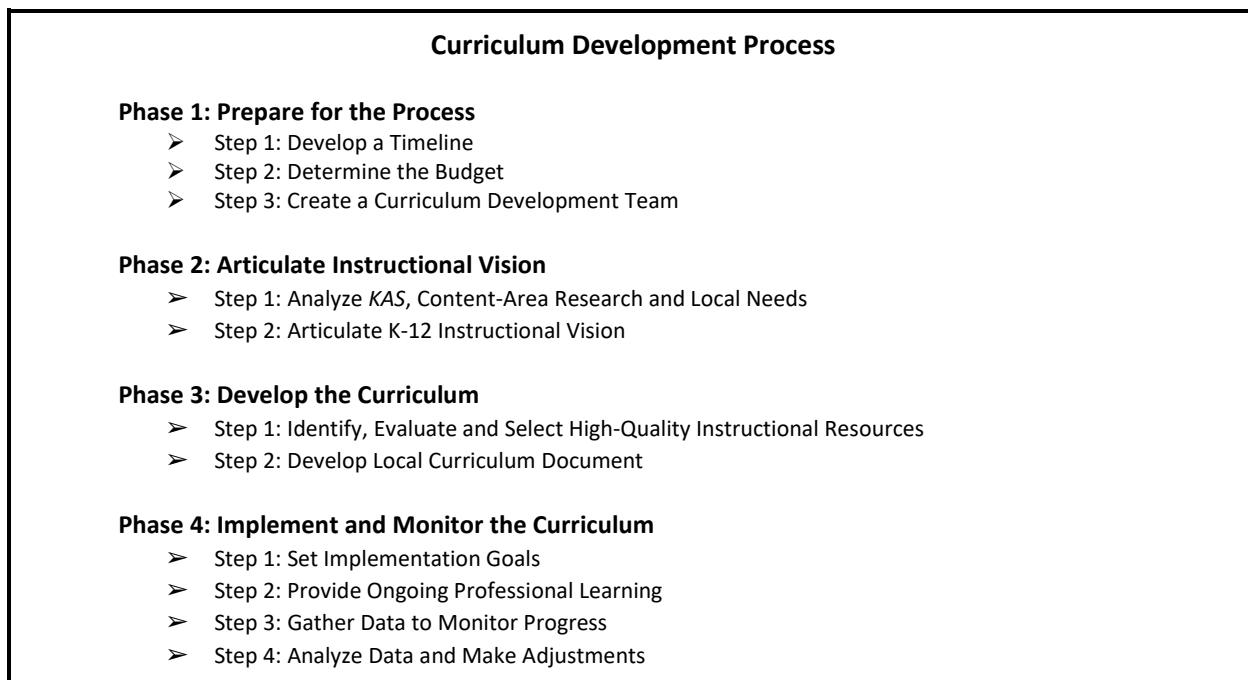
Teachers and leaders also must receive high-quality professional learning focused on effective implementation of the local curriculum and the HQIR. Research demonstrates that simply providing teachers with a curriculum and a HQIR without also providing them professional learning focused on how to implement those resources effectively to meet the needs of all students will not impact student achievement (Blazar, D., et al., 2019).

Senate Bill 1 (2022), codified into law per KRS 160.345, places the responsibility for developing the district’s curriculum and selecting HQIRs to support implementation on the local superintendent. KRS 160.345 further states this work should be done in consultation with each school’s site-based decision-making (SBDM) council and local board of education. There also must be a reasonable review and response period for stakeholders in accordance with local board of education policy before any final decision is made regarding curriculum and instructional resources.



This section is designed to provide guidance to district leaders on implementing a systematic process for developing a local curriculum, selecting a HQIR aligned to the KAS and supporting effective implementation. Figure 2.1 provides an example of a possible way to structure the curriculum development process and serves as an outline for this section. To support leaders in this work, each phase of the process includes general guidance, key questions, recommended tools and considerations for stakeholder inclusion are embedded throughout. To support leaders in this work, each phase of the process includes general guidance, key questions, recommended tools and considerations for stakeholder inclusion are embedded throughout.

Figure 2.1. *The Curriculum Development Process*



To make the work more manageable, district leaders should consider establishing a curriculum review cycle that focuses on a limited number of content areas per year in a repeating cycle. This is critical in helping districts to manage the work and the budget in a way that is not overwhelming. Figure 2.2 shows an example of a review cycle.



Figure 2.2. Sample Curriculum Review Cycle

Content Area	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Reading and Writing	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor
Mathematics	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop
Social Studies	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan
Science	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust
World Language & Visual Performing Arts	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust
CTE & Health/PE	Year 2: Monitor & Adjust	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust	Year 4: Monitor & Adjust	Year 5: Monitor & Adjust	Year 6: Monitor & Plan	Year 1: Develop	Year 2: Implement & Monitor	Year 3: Monitor & Adjust

District leaders may want to consider establishing a cycle that aligns with the standards review process at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). In accordance with [KRS 158.6453](#), the current schedule calls for one or two content areas to be reviewed each year and every six years after that on a rotating basis.

In determining the order of the content areas in the curriculum review cycle, district leaders should utilize data from their annual needs assessment. This might include data on student achievement, analysis of student work and sample assessments and tasks, and feedback gathered from surveys regarding classroom climate, school culture, engagement and learning experiences. Once the local curriculum review cycle has been established, districts can use the following process for the content-area(s) under development/review each year.



Phase 1: Prepare for the Process

Some key decisions should be made by district leaders to prepare for and support the work of the curriculum development process. Taking the time to complete the steps for Phase 1 helps create the conditions necessary for the work to be effective, efficient and meaningful. Every decision is crucial to ensuring the process flows smoothly and that time and resources are used effectively.



Step 1: Develop a Timeline

District leaders should develop a curriculum review timeline for the content area of focus and expected outcomes to be completed at each point in the process. Several factors may play a role in the allotted time frame for completing the process, such as team member availability, allocation of resources, budgeting considerations, etc. Once the timeline is established, this process would be repeated with each content area as it comes up in the district's curriculum review cycle.

Key Questions

- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - o How will we communicate (1) the need for a revised local curriculum for the content area of focus and (2) our rationale for using this process to develop it to stakeholders, including boards of education and site-based councils?
 - o How will we communicate information regarding a timeline and key actions for the process?
- **Logistical Considerations:**
 - o What is our ideal date for:
 - Finalizing members of the curriculum team?
 - Facilitating analysis of the KAS, of relevant content area research and of the local context.
 - Refining the instructional vision for the content area?
 - Selecting the high-quality instructional resource(s)?
 - Creating the curriculum template?
 - Developing the curriculum supports using the selected HQIR?
 - o What key actions do we need to take to support the work of each phase?
 - o Who is responsible for each key action included in the timeline?

Key Tool(s)

- [Sample Timeline](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 1\)](#)

Step 2: Determine the Budget

Prior to beginning the process, district leaders should develop a budget for the scope of the work to be completed each year. To help prioritize, leadership should consider how curriculum development and implementation might be reflected in their Comprehensive District/School Improvement Plans. Consider how various funding sources (e.g., general, federal, state, local,



technology, etc.) may be utilized to support the launch and sustainability of the curriculum development and implementation process each year.

Key Questions

- Will funds be required to pay stipends or substitutes for members of the curriculum team? What funds will be used?
- Are funds needed to purchase high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) to support implementation of the curriculum? What funds will be used?
- What resources are needed to support professional learning to build staff capacity with the curriculum and associated HQIRs during implementation? What funds will be used for this purpose?

Key Tool(s)

- [Curriculum Development Budget Template](#)

Step 3: Create a Curriculum Development Team

The last step in preparing for the Curriculum Development Process is for district leaders to create the content area curriculum team.

- **District-level team:** The district-level team may consist of teacher representatives from various schools and grade levels in the district, instructional coaches, as well as building and district administrators. It also may be beneficial to include teacher representatives from other areas, such as special education, gifted and talented, English Learners and library media specialists. For a large district, consider dividing into elementary and secondary teams. However, team members from transition grade levels should have opportunities to meet to ensure vertical alignment of the curriculum.
- **School-level team:** If the delegation of responsibility is transferred to the school level, the team may consist of teacher representatives from each grade level, school-based instructional coaches/specialists, as well as building administrators. Like the district team, consideration should be given to teacher representatives from other areas. The school may want to consider including district administrators with curricular and/or specific content expertise.

Once team members have been selected, the district should pre-determine meeting dates and associated logistics. For each phase of the process, leaders should decide when and where the team will meet and the purpose of each meeting. In terms of the purpose, the intended outcomes of each meeting (i.e., expected learning outcomes, work to be accomplished) should be considered. By determining and communicating meeting logistics at the beginning of the



process, team members may plan accordingly to ensure they can commit to each step of the work.

Key Questions

- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - o How will we communicate (1) how the curriculum team was formed, (2) who will serve on the curriculum team and (3) the role of team members in the process?
- **Curriculum Team Members Selection Considerations:**
 - o How will potential team members be strategically identified and recruited?
 - o Do individuals model a growth mindset?
 - o Are individuals able to inspire and influence others within their school and committed to supporting a common, agreed-upon message?
 - o How will district leaders ensure equitable representation to provide voice to diverse experiences and perspectives throughout the process?
- **Logistical Considerations:**
 - o What are the dates the team will meet, and what is the purpose of each meeting?
 - o How will meeting logistics be communicated to the team in a timely manner?

Key Tool(s)

- [Curriculum Development Team Template](#)
- [Meeting Schedule Template](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 1\)](#)

For professional learning support in implementing Phase 1, the KDE has created a supplemental resource toolkit located in [Appendix A](#). Resources include a self-assessment tool, video modules, sample district artifacts and other supporting resources.



Phase 2: Articulate Instructional Vision

An in-depth understanding of the *Kentucky Academic Standards* and of what makes them unique is vital when crafting a vision for teaching and learning in a content area, as is familiarity with relevant research. Districts must also have an accurate sense, derived from local data and input, of their particular educational context. Together these provide curriculum teams an ongoing point of reference for fashioning an instructional vision that can guide them throughout the development and implementation process.



Step 1: Analyze KAS, Content-Area Research and Local Needs

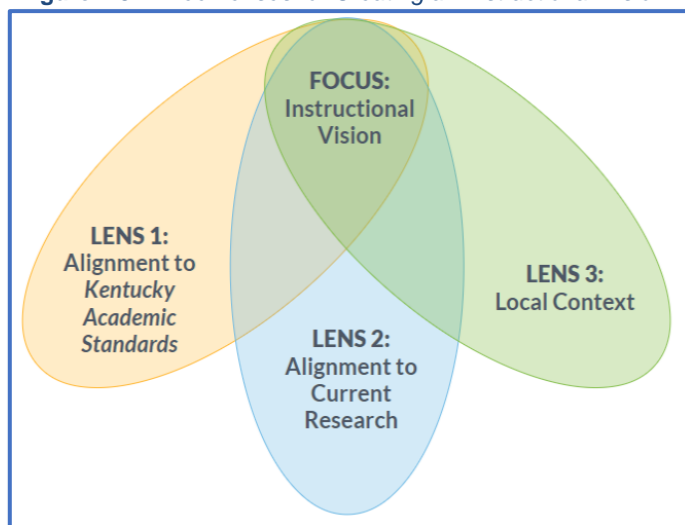
In order to create a strong local instructional vision, the district curriculum team must first spend time establishing a shared understanding of the subject area content, skills and pedagogy prior to development/revision of the curriculum. Figure 2.3 highlights the three lenses districts should focus on to build this shared understanding: (1) the *Kentucky Academic Standards*, (2) current research for teaching and learning and (3) the local context. All three lenses work to support a common vision focused on improving student outcomes and guide school and district-level decision-making.

The curriculum team should start with analyzing the KAS document itself, both its overall architecture and its critical components. “The Writer’s Vision Statement” and “Design Considerations” sections will help the team gain an understanding of the foundational beliefs that guided standards development and the design considerations of the specific components within the standards document. Standards progressions analysis will help the team gain a better understanding of the student experiences over time, both within a course and across K-12.

The curriculum team should also spend time deepening their understanding of research-based best practices and approach to teaching and learning in the content area of focus. This might include resources from kystandards.org, content-specific national and professional organizations, as well as educational experts in the respective subject area.

Local instructional priorities (e.g., portrait of a learner, project-based learning, cooperative learning, workshop model, standards-based grading), data and needs assessments should also be examined to refine the team’s sense of local context.

Figure 2.3. Three Lenses for Creating an Instructional Vision



*Adapted from Achievement Network

Key Questions

- **Lens 1 (Alignment to the Standards) Considerations:**
 - What foundational beliefs from the KAS should drive local implementation of the standards?
 - What impacts might these standards and foundational beliefs have on classroom instruction and assessment?



- How do components within the standards document help educators gain clarity on what students need to know and be able to do to meet grade-level expectations?
- What does analysis of the standards progression(s) reveal about the student experience at grade level and across K-12?
- **Lens 2 (Alignment to Current Research) Considerations:**
 - What current research on teaching and learning in the content area of focus might support developing shared understanding of the subject area content, skills and pedagogy?
- **Lens 3 (Local Context) Considerations:**
 - What possible sources of data (student demographics, unique learning needs/gaps, cultural values/connections, district initiatives and pedagogical practices, etc.) might be used to develop understanding of the local context?

Key Tool(s)

- Content-Specific Team Analysis Resources
 - [Mathematics Team Analysis Resources](#)
 - [Reading and Writing Team Analysis Resources](#)
 - [Science Team Analysis Resources](#)
- [Team Analysis Planning Template](#)

Step 2: Articulate K-12 Instructional Vision

With a shared understanding of the depth and rigor of the standards, a common view of content pedagogy grounded in current research, and an understanding of the needs of the local context, the curriculum team develops an instructional vision of teaching and learning for that content area. The vision is more than what the school or district thinks should be happening in individual classrooms. The instructional vision describes the school or district’s “instructional aspirations and articulates what teaching and learning look like in the content area” (EdReports, 2021).

In formulating the instructional vision, the curriculum team identifies the core beliefs that will be the foundation for their work. These core beliefs should include content-specific beliefs as well as beliefs about students (i.e., all students are capable of high-quality work and deeper learning) and the student experience. A set of belief statements can then be elaborated to show what they might entail for various role groups and the outcomes they will produce.

Once the team has articulated the instructional vision in a way that is clear and easily understood by all stakeholders, **school/district leaders should seek stakeholder feedback and determine how they will incorporate the feedback into a revised draft.** That revised draft



should drive the rest of the curriculum development and be a touchstone the team can return to throughout the process, refining when appropriate.

Key Questions

- **Instructional Vision Considerations:**
 - How well do the belief statements reflect alignment to the *KAS*, current research for teaching and learning in the content area and our local context?
 - What would our belief statements “look like in action” at the district, school and classroom levels? What roles and responsibilities would follow from them? What might be their observable indicators?
 - How well does the initial instructional vision represent an ideal state of teaching and learning in the content area? What revisions might increase alignment?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will we communicate the draft of our instructional vision for the content area in a way that is clear and easily understood by all stakeholders?
 - How will stakeholders provide input and feedback, and how will that be used to inform the instructional vision?

Key Tool(s)

- [Sample Instructional Vision from Kentucky Districts](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 2\)](#)

For professional learning support in implementing Phase 2, the KDE has created a supplemental resource toolkit located in [Appendix A](#). Resources include a self-assessment tool, video modules, sample district artifacts and other supporting resources.



Phase 3: Develop the Curriculum

Once drafted, the articulated instructional vision for the specific content area is used to drive the work of developing the curriculum anchored in a high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to support implementation. As the team works through this phase, the focus is on what teachers across the school/district would need to see reflected in curriculum documents and instructional resources to work toward the articulated vision.

Step 1: Identify, Evaluate and Select HQIRs

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) defines High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) as materials that are:



- Aligned with the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*;
- Research-based and/or externally validated;
- Comprehensive to include engaging texts (books, multimedia, etc.), tasks and assessments;
- Based on fostering vibrant student learning experiences;
- Culturally relevant, free from bias; and
- Accessible for all students.

High-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) are a means by which local curriculum **aligned with the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*** becomes an actionable foundation for districts and schools to equitably foster **vibrant student learning experiences**. A local curriculum anchored in a HQIR supports the learning goals, outcomes and core competencies students must demonstrate to reach the grade-level expectations within the *KAS*. It also provides teachers with an array of pedagogical supports to help meet the needs of all learners.

The process of identifying, evaluating and selecting a primary HQIR involves multiple steps to ensure decision-makers select resources that will serve local priorities and meet the needs of all learners as articulated in the instructional vision. This work may be completed by the district curriculum team or delegated to a sub-committee formed to undertake this task. If a sub-committee is charged with the evaluation and selection of the HQIR, members of that team must understand the instructional vision to ensure the selected resource aligns to that vision. In addition, the sub-committee should receive ongoing support and collaboration with the curriculum team throughout the selection process.

The four-step selection process outlined below is general in nature and can be applied to any content area. For more content-specific support for selecting HQIRs, KDE’s consumer guides provide an overview of the standards-aligned markers and characteristics of high-quality content-area instructional resources, as well as specific tools and resources. A consumer guide is currently available for [Reading and Writing](#) and [Mathematics](#), with other content areas under development.

Determine Selection Criteria

To help determine selection criteria, the team should use their instructional vision developed in Phase 2 of the Curriculum Development Process as their guide.

The curriculum team should engage educators and stakeholders upfront in meaningful ways to reflect the diverse voices of the district (including families, students, teachers, support staff and community members). Taking time to gather this input will help build support for and investment in the work and ensure the perspectives of those affected by the selection decision inform the process.



A full selection process also should include time and capacity for schools and districts to establish local priorities with an equity focus that will guide identification and selection of HIQRs. Students deserve access to instructional resources that are **culturally relevant, free from bias and accessible for all**, resources they can readily connect to the diverse perspectives of their communities. The practice of including local priorities can help ensure schools and districts select resources that better serve students who have been previously marginalized. Possible equity lenses to consider include selecting resources that:

- Meet the high-quality instructional markers laid out in the KDE definition of High-Quality Instructional Resources.
- Recognize, celebrate and leverage students’ cultures and identities and provide opportunities to broaden perspectives by learning about other cultures.
- Provide opportunities for students to lead learning that is meaningful and relevant to them, both in connection to their local context and communities and the broader global context of the world.
- Provide engagement with grade-level content and the KAS for all students.
- Allow students to engage and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

Key Questions

- **Stakeholder Inclusion Considerations:**
 - How will we communicate the importance of selecting a primary high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to support development of the local curriculum?
 - How will we gather stakeholder input to help inform possible selection criteria?
 - What do we want to learn from each stakeholder group?
 - How are we going to get this input?
 - Who is responsible for gathering input?
 - When and how will we see the collected information? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
 - How will stakeholder input inform drafting of the selection criteria?
- **Selection Criteria Considerations:**
 - How well do the selection criteria represent the most important aspects of the instructional vision?
 - Alignment to the *Kentucky Academic Standards*
 - Alignment to Current Research
 - Local Context
 - How are important local initiatives and pedagogical practices (e.g., portrait of a learner, project-based learning, cooperative learning, standards-based grading) represented in the selection criteria?



- Based on the instructional vision, what specific supports are needed in a resource to help teachers make the instructional shifts necessary to provide the desired student experience?
- If an instructional resources consumer guide is available for the content area, has it been used to cross-check the instructional vision and selection criteria?
 - HQIR Markers for the Content Area
 - Equity Lenses for the Content Area

Key Tool(s)

- [Developing Selection Criteria](#)
- [Data Collection Tool](#)
- [Sample Stakeholder Questions](#)
- [General Equity Lenses](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Identify Potential HQIRs

Once the team has determined the selection criteria, the next step is to identify **research-based and/or externally validated** resources for review. Educators have more options than ever from which to find instructional resources to try to meet their local priorities; however, in such a crowded marketplace, finding high-quality instructional resources that are aligned to the KAS and meet specific school and district needs can be difficult.

EdReports is a recommended starting point for school and district review teams to research available resources. It provides free reviews of K-12 primary or comprehensive instructional resources and offers information about indicators of quality from a variety of publishers. For content areas not reviewed by EdReports, consider exploring reputable vendors and open-source materials to identify potential resources for further evaluation. Contacting other districts or schools to gather anecdotal information can also help ground findings in a Kentucky context.

After identifying HQIRs of interest, the team is ready to narrow the choices down to those that have the potential to meet the instructional vision and the needs of the teachers and students in the district. The narrowing process allows the team to not only learn about potential resources through research but also to compare characteristics of resources to determine how well they can serve the selection criteria.

Key Questions

- **For Content Areas Reviewed by EdReports:**



- Based on EdReports reviews, which resources for this content area are rated green according to indicators for their three gateways?
- Of the green-rated resources, which 2-3 do we want to further evaluate using our selection criteria?
- **For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports:**
 - Based on initial reviews using the district instructional vision and selection criteria, which 2-3 content area resources merit further evaluation?

Key Tool(s)

- [EdReports Reports Center](#)
- [How to Read an EdReports Review](#)
- [EdReports Compare Tool](#) and [Compare Tool Overview](#)
- [Video Tutorial: Navigating EdReports to Identify Potential HQIRs](#)

Evaluate Potential HQIRs

Once two to three potential resources have been identified, the district should establish a process for examining each of the resources being considered to determine the best option for meeting the local selection criteria. As a part of the process, the team will need to create an organizer around their selection criteria to capture evaluation notes. For content areas not evaluated by EdReports, the key tools below (e.g., Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics) can support curriculum teams in conducting their own evaluation.

Because HQIRs are **comprehensive** and include a range of **texts, tasks and assessments**, teams should also engage publishers to request samples and set up presentations. The time spent with publishers can be used to have them answer questions the team has developed that specifically align to the instructional vision and the identified selection criteria.

Key Questions

- **Review Considerations:**
 - How will the team collect evaluation notes and final ratings? What format for an organizer might work best (for evaluation organizer examples, please see Key Tools).
 - What is the timeline team members will have to conduct the reviews?
 - Who will set up meetings with vendors and what questions will guide those conversations (Sample HQIR Vendor Questions in Key Tools below)?
 - What materials/resources will reviewers need access to and how will they get access?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will stakeholders be provided opportunities to review and give input on the 2-3 potential high-quality instructional resources under consideration?



Key Tool(s)

- [Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics](#) (Used to support resource evaluation in content areas not reviewed by EdReports.)
- [Sample HQIR Vendor Questions](#)
- [Sample Evaluation Organizers](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Select HQIR(s)

The evidence gathered from the evaluation process is used to inform the review team as they make a final selection. Resource review teams should examine the evidence collected from the evaluation activities in light of the identified selection criteria. **Ultimately, no one primary instructional resource is likely to provide the full supports necessary to reach the grade-level expectations within the KAS, the local articulated vision and the identified selection criteria.** Districts may select a primary HQIR and then purchase supplemental resources to fill any identified gaps. The [Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics](#) and the [Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines](#) can help inform selection.

Once made, the decision, the rationale for it and next steps should be shared to all stakeholders. Finally, a plan should be established for the procurement and distribution of the resources to get them into teachers' hands and for the team to use as they move into developing the curriculum documents.

Key Questions

- **Selection Considerations:**
 - What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of identified HQIR options (selection criteria, alignment to stakeholder feedback, initial and recurring costs, vendor supports, etc.)?
 - What work will need to be engaged to implement each option, and what are potential implications of the choices on other initiatives and on staff capacity?
 - For any identified gaps (e.g., with the KAS, the equity lenses, local initiatives) in the selected primary HQIR, what additional resources/supports will teachers need to ensure students experience the content in a way that fulfills the instructional vision?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will a rationale for the selected primary HQIR be communicated to stakeholders?
- **Logistical Considerations:**
 - Where will we store the materials before distribution can occur?
 - How will we inventory materials once they arrive?
 - How will we inventory and track materials once they are distributed to schools?



- Where and how will the school and/or district distribute the resources (Instruction Partners, 2019)?

Key Tool(s)

- [Decision-Making Options](#)
- [Sample Consensus Protocol](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Step 2: Develop Local Curriculum Document

The goal of this step is for the team to develop a curriculum document that lays out a coherent instructional experience within a course or grade level, one that systematically builds students' knowledge, understanding and skills aligned to the *KAS*, and reflects the values of the instructional vision. The curriculum document also serves as central guidance for all instructional staff who support and supervise teaching and student learning.

For Content Areas Adopting a Primary HQIR

When working from a primary HQIR and the resources it provides, the curriculum document should be designed to:

- Identify the *Kentucky Academic Standards* assessed in a unit;
- Provide links to the HQIR's instructional model, scope and sequence, assessments and instructional supports;
- Identify gaps in the *KAS* and supplemental resources intended to address them;
- Indicate which pedagogical practices from district initiatives (e.g. portrait of a learner competencies, elements of project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, cognitive strategies, standards-based grading) are to be embedded and where this is to occur;
- Establish which expectations are "tight" or "nonnegotiable" for particular units;
- Indicate unit duration as determined by the HQIR, its fit within the logistics of the local context and any "buffer time" allotted to address the range of student learning needs;
- Provide equitable access and ease of use to support navigation.

Gaps in the primary HQIR may be identified while working through the curriculum document process prior to implementation, and they also may emerge as the resource is used over time. Where gaps are found, selecting supplemental resources, rated as high-quality by an evaluator like EdReports, when possible, can be a way of addressing them. Examples of initial gaps might include:

- Missing standards for a content area or the full depth of specific standard(s) is not present;



- Specific aspects of equity are not reflected; and/or
- Pedagogical practices from local initiatives not embedded in the HQIR.

The Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas with Primary HQIRS provides an organizational tool districts can use to fully represent all aspects of the local curriculum, those provided by and those supplementing the primary HQIR.

For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports

For content areas in which a green-rated primary HQIR may not yet be available, the district may need to develop a more detailed local curriculum document that lays out a coherent instructional experience within and across grade-levels using the district-selected instructional resources. The curriculum document needs to clearly signal where key curricular elements are addressed for each unit/module from the selected resources to ensure full alignment to the KAS and the local context. *The Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas Without Primary HQIRS* provides an organizational tool districts can use to represent essential aspects of the local curriculum when having to draw from multiple resources.

Key Questions

- **For Content Areas Adopting a Primary HQIR**
 - Which relevant curricular documents (e.g., instructional model, scope and sequence, pacing guide) from the HQIR need to be included in the local curriculum?
 - How will the curriculum document address the non-negotiable aspects of the HQIR?
 - How will any needs for supplementation (e.g., addressing gaps in the KAS, embedding pedagogical practices from local initiatives) be addressed within the local curriculum document?
- **For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports**
 - How are standards bundled within units around big ideas or questions to anchor student learning and build students' knowledge, skills and understanding over time, and to help avoid students seeing standards as a set of isolated information, skills or processes?
 - What curricular elements and features should be accounted for in the local curriculum document to move toward the instructional vision for teaching and learning in the content area? Possible curricular elements to consider include:
 - KAS assessed in each unit, sequencing standards and showing how they are bundled;
 - Key grade-level text(s) and tasks;
 - Common assessment (formative and summative);
 - Pedagogical practices; and/or
 - Evidence-based instructional supports/scaffolds.
 - For standards that appear in multiple units, when are they assessed for mastery? When are they supporting standards?



- Is the pacing appropriate, and does it provide flexibility for teachers to respond to student needs?
- How will the curriculum document clarify common expectations for each identified curricular element and indicate where those are located within the district-selected instructional resources to ensure full alignment to the KAS and local context?
- **Revision and Feedback Considerations:**
 - What process will be used for reviewing and revising the curriculum document so all aspects of the curriculum are viewed by both the vertical and grade-level teams to ensure coherence and quality across grade levels?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will district leaders gather staff feedback (i.e., clarity, organization, usability) on the completed curriculum documents and use the feedback to guide possible revisions prior to implementation?
 - How will the curriculum document be made readily accessible to all staff?

Key Tool(s)

- [Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas with Primary HQIRs](#)
- [Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas without Primary HQIRs](#)
- [Pedagogical Practices Mapping Tool](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

For professional learning support in implementing Phase 3, the KDE has created a supplemental resource toolkit located in [Appendix A](#). Resources include a self-assessment tool, video modules, sample district artifacts and other supporting resources.

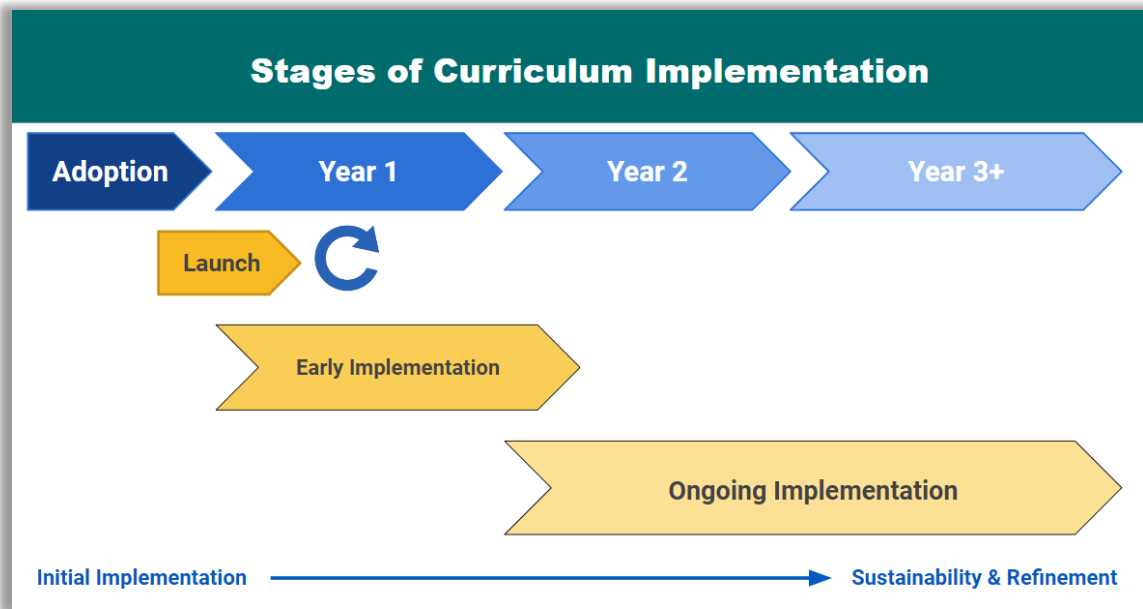


Phase 4: Implement and Monitor the Curriculum

Effective implementation of a local curriculum and supporting HQIRs is an ongoing process typically requiring 3-5 years to reach a point of refinement and established sustainability. The KDE has identified three critical stages, shown in Figure 2.4, of curriculum implementation: **Launch**, **Early Implementation** and **Ongoing Implementation**.



Figure 2.4: Stages of Curriculum Implementation



*Adapted from [Rivet Education](#)

Although all role groups contribute to effective implementation across its three stages, **research confirms district and school leadership play a vital part in ensuring an adopted curriculum and instructional resource(s) improve student outcomes.** Based on a review of the research, the Wallace Foundation (2021) states leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors that can impact student learning. For a district or school to make the instructional vision a reality in all classrooms, there must be a sustained commitment and focus from leaders at all levels of the system.

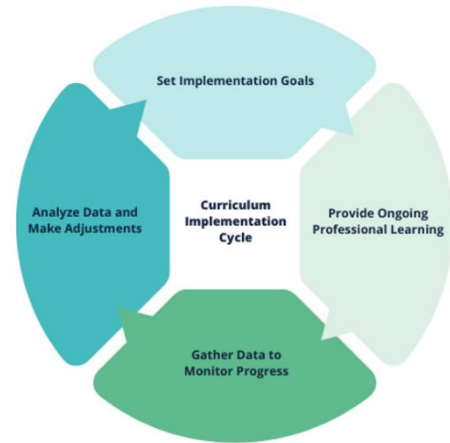
[The Curriculum Implementation Framework](#) outlines roles and responsibilities aligned to each of the three stages of implementation, highlighting how leadership creates the enabling conditions for the actions of other role groups. While the framework outlines unique aspects within each stage, it also embodies **four core actions** district and school leaders should take each year to support successful implementation of a locally developed curriculum and its instructional resources:

- **Set Implementation Goals** –Establish clear goals each year aligned to the instructional vision and stage of implementation.
- **Provide Ongoing Professional Learning** – Provide leaders, teachers and others in the system with curriculum-based professional learning appropriate to each stage of implementation.



- **Gather Data to Monitor Progress** – Gather quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress towards the implementation goals.
- **Analyze Data and Make Adjustments** – Analyze data to determine progress towards the goals, identify key successes, learn from and solve for significant challenges, and make adjustments to the implementation plan.

Figure 2.5. Curriculum Implementation Cycle



The key actions listed above allow school and district leaders to work in a cycle of continuous improvement, as shown in Figure 2.5. Each year of implementation, leaders repeat these actions as they move closer to the district’s instructional vision for teaching and learning in the content area.

Step 1: Set Implementation Goals

To support the vision that the intended curriculum truly becomes the implemented curriculum, district and school leaders need to set clear implementation goals each year aligned to key aspects of the new curriculum and HQIRs according to the stage of implementation. After determining each year’s implementation goals, district and school leaders should develop a monitoring plan. The plan should clearly define what data will be collected to provide evidence of implementation at the classroom level aligned to the instructional vision and the curriculum. Data also should be gathered to ensure students continue to attain the learning outcomes of the curriculum aligned to the appropriate depth of the *Kentucky Academic Standards*.

When developing the monitoring plan, consider the person(s) responsible for collecting evidence as well as those responsible for analyzing data. Finally, consider how often data will be analyzed in order to make decisions in a timely manner regarding adjustments and/or supports needed to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.

Key Questions

- **Implementation Goal Setting Considerations:**
 - Based on current evidence and the stage of implementation, what are our goals this year?
 - What are the core beliefs that underpin our goals?
 - What will success look like in year one and over time? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Progress Monitoring Considerations:**
 - For each goal, how will we know if we are on track? What data will we review?
 - Operationally, what needs to happen to gather this data? Who is responsible?



- When will we step back to review our progress toward our goals holistically? Who will be a part of these step-backs? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will we gather feedback from staff to help inform our implementation goals and monitoring plan?
 - How will we communicate our goals for effective implementation and plans for monitoring progress toward them?

Key Tool(s)

- [Setting Implementation Goals Template](#)
- [Sample Implementation Goals](#)
- [Monitoring Plan Template](#)
- [Sample Monitoring Plans and Approaches](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 4\)](#)

Step 2: Provide Ongoing Professional Learning

Simply providing teachers with a curriculum and HQIRs without also providing them professional learning focused on **how** to implement those resources effectively to meet the needs of all students will not impact student achievement (Short & Hirsh, 2023; Blazar, D., Heller, B., Kane, T., Polikoff, M., Staiger, D., Carrell, S.....& Kurlaender, M., 2019; Instruction Partners, 2019). **Educators need professional learning that deepens understanding of what to teach, improves content knowledge and pedagogy through exploring how best to teach it and facilitates transfer by being connected to the curriculum used in classrooms** (Rivet, 2020). This need, now recognized in the field, has resulted in beginning to establish high-quality professional learning that is curriculum based.

Curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) supports districts as they move through the stages of implementation, from gaining an initial understanding of the curriculum and HQIR, to arriving at a fuller, more nuanced understanding and making informed adjustments to the HQIR as implementation progresses. The three critical stages of implementation identified above correspond to three stages of curriculum-based professional learning to support teachers and leaders in moving toward refinement and established sustainability: **Launch PL, Early Implementation PL** and **Ongoing PL**.

- **Launch PL** – Prior to the start of the school year, designed to develop initial understanding of the new curriculum and HQIR, its overall design, and the instructional shifts it represents. To help build initial understanding, educators spend time internalizing early units of instruction.



- **Early Implementation PL** – Occurs during the first year of implementation and is designed to provide collaborative PL opportunities that begin to deepen understanding of the curriculum and what is required for effective implementation (e.g., continued unit/lesson internalization, lesson rehearsal, experiencing lessons as students, analyzing models of effective practice).
- **Ongoing Implementation PL** – Begins in year two, continues throughout successive years of implementation and is designed to deepen understanding of how to integrate HQIRs more skillfully into regular practice and make smart adaptations to help meet the needs of all learners (e.g., student work analysis, lesson study, coaching, classroom observations and feedback).

Each year of implementation, district and school leaders identify professional learning needs aligned to a particular stage of implementation. Once professional learning needs are identified, the next step is to develop a professional learning plan. Leaders should prioritize identified areas of need to decide where to begin the work and then determine which funds will be used to support the professional learning, who will facilitate it, how facilitators will be trained and possible timelines for completion. Most high-quality instructional resources come with tools and/or trainings to support implementation, and districts may also consider partnering with the HQIR vendor or an external PL provider. In addition, the KDE’s [Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Guidance Document](#) contains key ideas, questions and protocols specifically aligned to each stage.

Key Questions

- **Yearly PL Plan Considerations:**
 - What are the specific PL needs aligned to the implementation goals and the stage of implementation?
 - What structures will be used to provide the PL?
 - What are the potential focuses and outcomes of the PL?
 - How will training be differentiated (over time and according to varying needs)?
 - What is the target date/time frame?
 - Who will be responsible for providing the PL?
 - What funding will be used?
 - How will the school/district know if participants have mastered the professional learning objectives, and what data will be collected at the end of each session? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will input be gathered from staff to help determine possible areas of professional learning needed to support effective implementation?



- How will leaders ensure consistent communication about how the PL plan each year aligns to the instructional vision? How will they address questions as they arise?

Key Tool(s)

- [Professional Learning Plan Template](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 4\)](#)
- [Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Guidance Document](#)

Step 3: Gather Data to Monitor Progress

The goal of this step is to implement the curriculum and professional learning plan and for leadership to collect data in order to determine what is working, what is not working and what needs to be adjusted.

Implementation should be observed at every level in order to give a full picture of what is happening. **Though no single data point is able to provide full analysis of student achievement, the triangulation of data can provide information to identify where the curriculum and instructional resources are having positive impacts and where adjustments may be needed.** The evidence gathered should focus on both quantitative and qualitative data.

- **Qualitative Data:** May include insights gathered from classroom observations (i.e., informal and formal principal observations, instructional rounds, learning walks) and feedback from surveys and ongoing conversations with students and school and district staff.
- **Quantitative Data:** Should also represent overall student performance closely linked to daily instruction and may include grade-level or course assessment results and samples of student work (samples of assessments, tasks and assignments).

While school or district leaders should meet quarterly to make large adjustments, quick check-ins more regularly can support leadership in progress monitoring and allow for quick problem solving and adjustments in the implementation plan. Leaders also may spend time as a PLC analyzing data at various times throughout the school year to identify school and district trends. As teachers work collaboratively through the PLC process, analyzing data from common formative and summative assessments, they are able to monitor student attainment of the curriculum.

Key Questions

- How are things going across our implementation plan?
- What bright spots and exemplary practices can we celebrate and share?
- Where are we having challenges?



- What are we hearing and what questions are we getting?
- What concerns can we address easily? What concerns are more challenging?
- What else do we want to observe and listen for before our next meeting? (Instruction Partners, 2019)

Key Tool(s)

- [Implementation Evidence Consolidation Log](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 4\)](#)

Step 4: Analyze Data and Make Adjustments

This step is designed to support district and school leadership teams as they examine progress towards the goals, identify key successes, learn from and solve significant challenges, and adjust the plan for the next chapter of work (Instruction Partners, 2019). While the team should meet consistently during the year for check-ins to monitor progress and make small adjustments, more formal meetings quarterly, and then yearly, give the team an opportunity to get a comprehensive view of overall progress on goals. Table 2.1 outlines essential actions that comprise both meeting types.

Table 2.1. Step-Back Meetings

Meeting Type	Key Actions
Quarterly Step-Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and analyze qualitative and quantitative data as outlined in the monitoring plan aligned to the implementation goals. • Reflect on progress and challenges. • Identify 2-3 areas of improvement. • Adjust implementation plan and revisit roles and responsibilities according to areas of improvement. • Communicate changes and celebrate successes with stakeholders.
End-of-Year Step-Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze summative data and data not available during the school year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disaggregate data to evaluate for, “equity, specifically for students in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners” (Instruction Partners, 2019). • Reflect on areas of improvement identified throughout the school year. • Examine systems and structures used to support implementation. • Identify 2-3 areas of improvement for the upcoming school year. • Revise implementation goals and revisit roles and responsibilities according to areas of improvement for following school year. • Communicate changes and celebrate successes with stakeholders.



Key Questions

- **Quarterly Step-Back Meeting Considerations:**
 - Where are we on pace to meet our goals?
 - What are the drivers of success?
 - Where are we off track to meet our goals? What is holding us back from meeting those goals?
 - What are the 2-3 areas we want to improve in next quarter?
 - For each of the 2-3 priorities, what is the root of the problem?
 - At our next step-back meeting, how will we know that these adjustments worked?
 - What do we need to observe and what additional data do we need to collect next quarter to know if it is working? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **End-of-Year Step-Back Meeting Considerations:**
 - Where did we meet our goals?
 - What were the drivers of success?
 - Where did we miss our goals? What held us back from meeting those goals?
 - What will be different next year, and what should our goals be to account for those differences?
 - What work needs to be done this summer to support teachers and leaders who have been using the curriculum to prepare for the next stage of implementation? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - Following the quarterly and end-of-year stepbacks, how will we communicate to stakeholders:
 - “Bright spots” and exemplary practices (email, newsletter, social media, etc.), and
 - Adjustments and next steps in relation to the implementation and professional learning plans?

Key Tool(s)

- [Quarterly Stepback Data Gathering Template](#)
- [Quarterly Stepback Agenda](#)
- [End-of-Year Stepback Data Gathering Template](#)
- [End-of-Year Stepback Agenda](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 4\)](#)

For professional learning support in implementing Phase 4, the KDE has created a supplemental resource toolkit located in [Appendix A](#). Resources include a self-assessment tool, video modules, sample district artifacts and other supporting resources.



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Appendix A: Curriculum Development Process Toolkit

The toolkit below contains sample artifacts and video clips from districts that participated in the Developing Local High-Quality Reading and Writing Pilot. More artifacts and videos from additional content areas will be forthcoming.

To guide district and school leaders in analyzing their approach to developing and implementing a local, standards-aligned curriculum, the KDE has developed a [CDP Self-Assessment Tool](#).



Phase 1: Prepare for the Process

Professional Learning Support	Sample Artifacts	Additional Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the CDP Video and Slide Deck • Phase 1 Video and Slide Deck • Phase 1 Participant Handout • CDP PL Series Facilitation Notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Communication Examples • CDP Team Structure Examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Inclusion and Communication to Build Buy-in Video Clips from Pilot Districts • Phase 1 Video Clips from Pilot Districts



Phase 2: Articulate K-12 Instructional Vision

Professional Learning Support	Sample Artifacts	Additional Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the CDP Video and Slide Deck • Phase 2 Video and Slide Deck • Phase 2 Participant Handout • CDP PL Series Facilitation Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Instructional Vision Examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 Video Clips from Pilot Districts





[Phase 3: Develop the Curriculum](#)

Professional Learning Support	Sample Artifacts	Additional Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the CDP Video and Slide Deck • Phase 3 Video and Slide Deck • Phase 3 Participant Handout • CDP PL Series Facilitation Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District HQIR Evaluation Organizer with Selection Criteria Examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3 Video Clips from Pilot Districts • Reading and Writing Instructional Resources Consumer Guide and Video Overview • Mathematics Instructional Resources Consumer Guide



[Phase 4: Implement and Monitor the Curriculum](#)

Professional Learning Support	Sample Artifacts	Additional Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the CDP Video and Slide Deck • Phase Video and Slide Deck • Phase 4 Participant Handout • CDP PL Series Facilitation Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Implementation Goals and Monitoring Plan Examples • District Professional Learning Plan Examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 4 Video Clips from Pilot Districts • Curriculum Implementation Framework • Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Guidance Document • KDE's Characteristics of High-Quality Professional Learning

