



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

Curriculum Development Process:
Phase 1



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, an 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).

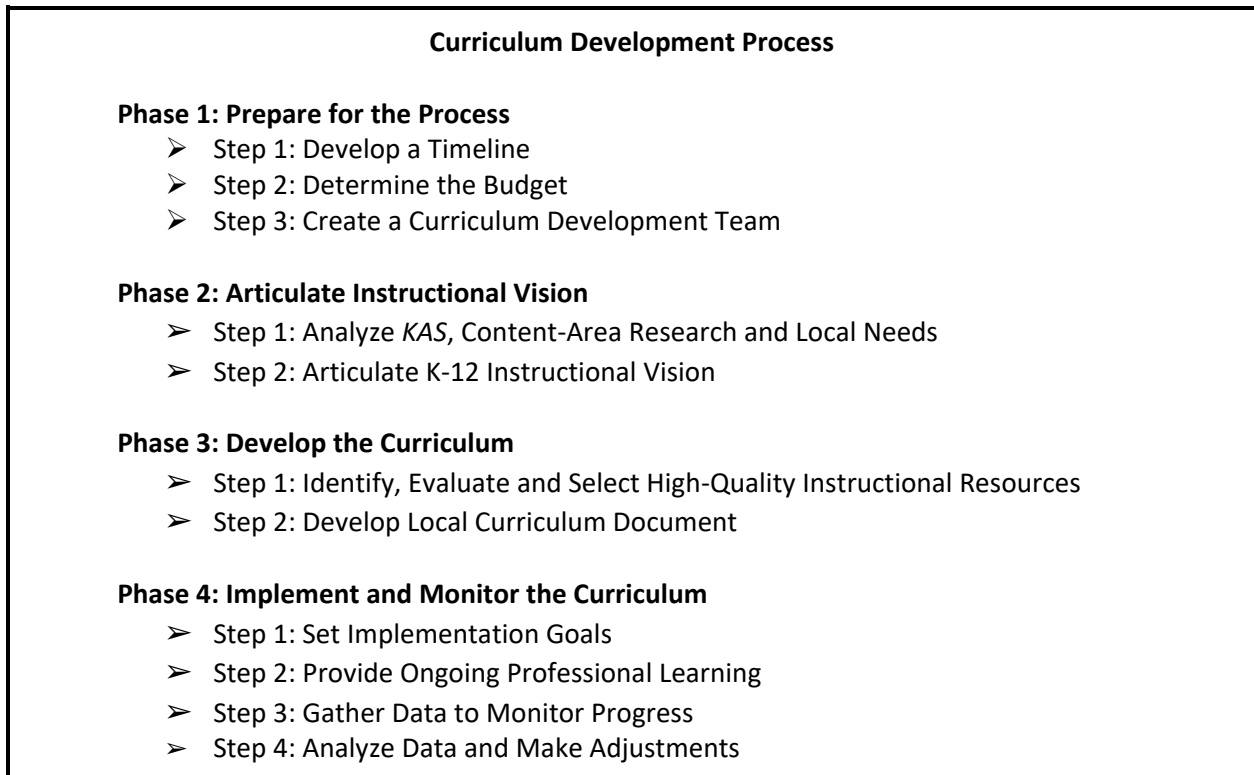
Teachers and leaders also must receive high-quality professional learning focused on effective implementation of the local curriculum and the HQIR. Research demonstrates that simply providing teachers with a curriculum and a HQIR without also providing them professional learning focused on how to implement 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. District and school leaders may choose to take the preliminary step of using the [CDP Self-Assessment Tool](#) to analyze the current approach to developing and implementing a local, standards-aligned curriculum to inform next steps.

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. Teacher representatives should include core teachers, special education teachers (co-teachers and resource teachers), support specialists (e.g., interventionists, English learner, gifted and talented) 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, teacher representatives should include core teachers, special education teachers (co-teachers and resource teachers) and support specialists (e.g., interventionists, English learner, gifted and talented) and library media specialists. 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 the curriculum team represents a variety of role groups, 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 \(Phase 1\)](#)



References

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