

Kentucky Department of Education

Developing High-Quality Local Science Curriculum Pilot Application



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KDE HQLC Pilot Application

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Pilot Overview

Context and Need

According to research, schools that demonstrate increased curricular coherence also show marked improvements in student outcomes (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). 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 HQIRs that will assist student learning.

HQIRs are a means by which local curriculum aligned to the *KAS* becomes an actionable foundation for improving the way students experience learning in the state of Kentucky, and selecting HQIRs enables districts and schools to make a marked shift toward equitable, vibrant learning experiences for all students.

High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs), as defined by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), are 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
- Accessible for all students.

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Introduction to the Pilot

The KDE is seeking the participation of up to 9 districts and 27 schools, representative of 8 regional cooperatives, to implement the Curriculum Development Process as they develop their local science curriculum. This would account for participation of 2-3 schools per district. This will be a two year pilot that will begin in the fall of 2023 and end in the summer of 2025.

The application process will consist of answering a few questions and uploading artifacts. **The application will be open from March 1 to April 28, 2023.** Districts and schools will be notified of acceptance on or around May 15. More details on the application and selection process can be found below.

The pilot will focus on supporting local implementation of the 4 phases of the Curriculum Development Process outlined in the Kentucky Model Curriculum Framework. Detailed information of each year of the pilot is below.

Year 1 (2023-2024)

By the end of the first year in the pilot, districts will:

- Articulate a local instructional vision aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards*, current research for teaching and learning in science and the local context
- Select high-quality instructional resources aligned to the instructional vision
- Develop a local curriculum aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science* grounded in the selected HQIRs.

Year 2 (2024-2025)

By the end of the second year in the pilot, districts will:

- Create an implementation and monitoring plan
- Develop and implement a professional learning plan aligned to implementation goals.
- Conduct quarterly/yearly step backs to celebrate progress, identify challenges and make adjustments.

The Kentucky Department of Education, alongside the Achievement Network (ANet), will provide support to reach these outcomes. Founded in 2005, ANet is a nonprofit dedicated to creating **educational equity** for all students. ANet works towards educational equity by partnering with school and district leaders to support great teaching - teaching that is grounded in standards, shaped by data, and built upon the successful practices of educators across the country.

The KDE and ANet will be providing support to schools in districts in the form of:

- Cohort-based professional learning, focused on evaluating and selecting high-quality instructional resources to support implementation of the local curriculum aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards*
- One-on-one support to schools and districts to contextualize and implement learning
- School site observations and joint discussions with school and district leadership

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- Ongoing planning and progress monitoring of local curriculum and HQIR implementation
- Year-long district-level coaching support, based on identified local priorities and focus areas
- Year-long school-level coaching support, individualized to meet schools’ unique needs

Program Timeline

The timeline below gives an overview of the desired timeframes and outcomes of the pilot in years 1 and 2, as well as roles and responsibilities of districts and schools.

	March-May 2023	September-October 2023	September 2023- May 2024	March 2024-May 2024	June 2024-June 2025
District Support	Application and Selection	System Reviews	District Level Support Pilot		Implementation Support
School Support			School Principals Pilot Cohort	School Level Reviews	Implementation Support

Year 1

Meeting Type	Purpose	Who Might Attend
System Review - District Leaders	Learn about the strengths and areas of opportunity within your district.	District Academic Staff who will play a role in the pilot (i.e. - CAO, Science content lead, science coaches, etc.)
System Review - School Leaders	Learn about the strengths and areas of opportunity within your pilot schools.	School Leaders participating in the pilot (i.e.- principals, APs, etc.)
Monthly KDE Cohort Sessions	Understand the Phases of the CDP with participating districts	District leadership team (5-8 members including at least one science teacher from each school, school admin, district admin)

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Monthly ANet Coaching Sessions	Further support your implementation of the phases of the CDP in your district	District academic staff. School leaders and teachers optionally attend.
Principal Cohort	Support building level leaders as they guide stakeholders through the phases of the CDP.	Building Level Leaders and lead teachers (optional).

District-Level System Review: September 2023 - October 2023 ongoing

For selected districts ANet will start a system review alongside each district. The system review will provide each district with key insights about strengths and areas of improvement relative to local curriculum development and instructional resources strategy and implementation, recommending several next steps and priorities to accelerate outcomes for students. KDE and ANet will work together throughout this engagement to ensure alignment to statewide priorities and initiatives. The system review will include **up to two meetings per district** and will engage multiple stakeholder groups (i.e. district leadership, school leadership, teacher-leaders). Leadership teams will collaborate with ANet to either facilitate focus groups or administer stakeholder surveys as soon as possible. Each district will receive a brief summary of the findings and recommendations.

District-Level Support: October 2023 - May/June 2024

Following the system review process, the KDE and ANet will implement and facilitate a pilot focused on preparing for the curriculum development process, planning and professional learning for the Curriculum Development Committee, and developing the local curriculum and the instructional resources implementation. These actions are aligned to the Model Curriculum Framework as the key engagement for participating districts starting in October 2023 and continuing through May 2024.

The KDE and ANet will facilitate **five two hour professional learning cohort sessions** for district leaders to engage in group learning and **four 90-minute individualized coaching sessions with each district and its participants** and an ANet Coach, to contextualize and take individualized action on cohort learnings.

The KDE and ANet will work closely with key district stakeholders to identify a subset of areas to prioritize in this engagement based on the strengths, needs, and opportunities of participating districts. These focus areas will guide partnership planning action steps and progress monitoring, serving as the north star for this engagement. Focus areas may include:

- Drafting a shared instructional vision and theory of action that articulates the role high-quality curriculum and instructional resources play in enabling equitable science instruction.
- Identifying and analyzing existing curriculum and instructional resources available in the school or district to determine how well those align to the *Kentucky Academic Standards* using research-based criteria and/or evidence gathered from a review committee on the quality of the resources.

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- Considering additional standards-aligned, high-quality instructional resources to fill any gaps in existing resources.
- Creating guidance and recommendation documents for the use of resources in the system that represent a working group for stakeholder feedback and later finalization. This includes guidance for the use of resources to ensure equitable access to grade level content for all students, especially those that have been historically underserved and/or who struggled the most during distance learning.
- Develop a professional learning plan aligned to existing funds available to the district or school, as well as the relationship to the Comprehensive Improvement Plan at the school or district level.
- Identifying areas of professional learning necessary to help teachers implement the curriculum. Questions the team may consider include:
 - Are there areas of identified best practice in the instructional vision in which there is currently little evidence of implementation in classrooms across the school or district?
 - Are there specific needs for elementary versus secondary?
 - What type of professional learning is needed to support school leaders in understanding the curriculum and monitoring for evidence of implementation in the classrooms?
 - Is professional learning needed to assist teachers in selecting and utilizing instructional resources to engage students in standards-based, grade-appropriate assignments?

KDE School Principal Pilot Cohort: *September 2023 - May 2024*

The Principal Partnership Project (P3) leaders will facilitate five one-hour sessions for building level leaders during the first year of the pilot. Ideally, these sessions will complement the cohort trainings. We intend to cover the following topics:

- Principal's role in successful implementation of HQIR
- Planning for year one of HQIR implementation
- Designing High Quality Professional Learning to support HQIR
- PLC Design to support HQIR
- Leveraging vendor training and support
- Creating teacher buy-in and support

ANet School-Level Support: *March 2024 - May 2024*

A key part of the information-gathering process is the school review. This is designed to help us deeply understand the context of the local school and its community, thus helping school-level leaders internalize their successes and challenges, identify opportunities for growth, and develop a baseline for success. These reviews consist of interviews with key members of the school team. ANet will help schools determine the current state of foundational conditions against key criteria and better plan support based on the school's specific strengths and needs. The process is grounded in understanding the current state of the following focus areas:

- Prioritization of alignment and data to inform teaching and learning
- Schedule and time commitment required to advance instruction through teacher collaboration, classroom observation, and student intervention
- Dedicated leadership to deepen impact across the school, observing and giving feedback on teacher planning and instruction

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- Culture of learning, where feedback is valued to improve practice and sharing data and practices is valued as a tool for adult learning
- Standards-based planning/instruction and teacher knowledge of instructional standards.

Each school review includes **1-2 context building conversations, roughly 90 minutes each**, with key members of instructional leadership teams. ANet also conducts **one on-site, half-day school visit**, which may include district-level discussions alongside school leadership.

Optional End of Year Coaching and/or Summer Planning: Following the school review process, ANet is offering all participating schools the opportunity to begin the initial onboarding process, start summer planning around academic priorities, and/or continue foundational learning associated with findings of the school review . We anticipate that each school who opts into this offering will have **up to 3 additional interactions** between May 2022 and July 2022.

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Year 2

	District Coaching	School Coaching
Who	District Leaders	School Leaders
What	15-20 interactions with your system partner to support district-wide implementation.	20 interactions for each pilot school with your school coach focused on pilot school implementation
Interaction Examples	District Team Classroom Observations District Planning Meetings Progress Monitoring Meetings Professional Learning Design & Support	School Team Classroom Observations School Planning Meetings School Professional Learning Design and Support PLC observations and support

Year 2 support will help to ensure that the intended curriculum truly becomes the implemented curriculum. ANet will support school and district leaders to create a plan for supporting and monitoring implementation including data collection to determine what is working, what is not working and what is needed to improve alignment to the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science*.

District-Level Coaching: June 2024 - June 2025

ANet’s district support includes **15 system-level coaching interactions** throughout the school year. At minimum, ANet will meet with district leadership once per month over the course of the year. In planning for this partnership, ANet will work with key stakeholders to narrow in on a set of outcomes or areas of focus, which will include a subset of the following:

- Defining structures and supports for how instructional resources, instruction, assessment and professional learning support the articulated program philosophy and theory of action ensuring effective implementation
- Change leadership support and ongoing strategic communications planning that results in timely and consistent communication to key stakeholders to solicit input for continued implementation
- Progress monitoring support focused on how curriculum and instructional resources implementation is meeting the needs of all learners, with recommended next steps
- Classroom observations, alongside district stakeholders, to 1) calibrate on what high quality implementation of the curriculum and instructional resources looks like and 2) assess quality of initial implementation with specific recommendations based on observations

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- Feedback to district teams and CAOs on how their roles are supporting implementation, resulting in recommended next steps
- District leaders' strengthening knowledge of standards and shifts in Reading and Writing
- Strengthening processes to support coherence across departments and between schools and departments
- Defining the PL plan to address gaps/needs identified in advising phase and to support internalization of the local curriculum, HQIRs, and equitable instruction
- Feedback to leaders/teachers grounding in the common language and instructional vision.

School-Level Coaching: July 2024 - June 2025

ANet's school partnership model is based around our theory of action, which states that developing school leadership is key to ensuring equitable, standards-aligned instruction for all students. In ANet's school partnership, each school's instructional leadership team will work alongside a dedicated ANet coach throughout the school year. The ANet coach will create a yearlong plan for coaching and professional learning that addresses the school's instructional needs and priorities. ANet coaches are veteran teachers and school leaders who act as expert thought-partners and resources to improve leader practice. The school-level partnership will include:

- Roughly **20 interactions at each school** with a dedicated ANet coach, ten of which will be virtual and ten in person. A school's ANet coach learns about the school's strengths and needs, then works alongside the leadership team to support rigorous instruction that is grounded in a deep knowledge of the standards, shaped by data, and built on strong practices of great educators across the country.
- Unlimited access to ANet's online platform that provides educators with easy-to-understand data and instructional resources in math and reading and writing. These resources enable them to plan rigorous, standards-aligned lessons and adjust instruction based on student understanding.
- Access to the best practices of ANet network of partner schools delivered through professional development convenings throughout the school year.

Inform Statewide Learning

This pilot will not only support local districts and schools in their development of a local curriculum, but will also inform the KDE's work in this area moving forward. Feedback will be regularly collected to understand district and school experience in the pilot. Participating districts and schools will regularly share information, artifacts, and data that informs KDE of pilot progress to help not only measure the effectiveness of the pilot, but also inform future work across the state.

District Assurances

Participating Districts will be asked to commit to the following:

- Must identify 2-3 schools who will be willing to participate in the pilot and year long implementation. The selected schools need to represent 2 different grade bands, i.e. elementary, middle and high school.
- Create a district team comprised of a science teacher from each school, an administrator from each school, and at least one district administrator. The committee can have 5 to 8 members.
- Must ensure their district team is willing to participate in the pilot and year long implementation.
- Commit to project for both the pilot and year long implementation at both the district and school level (through June 2025).

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- Consistent, active participation of pilot cohort members in both cohort and one-on-one coaching sessions.
- Adopt high quality instructional resource(s) for the development of the local curriculum OR review and refine the implementation of existing high quality instructional resource(s) **at least within** the pilot schools.
- Fully participate in the program
 - Attend cohort sessions and training.
 - Upload artifacts that align to the phases of the Curriculum Development Process.
 - Work with ANet and the KDE to set up school and district interactions and site visits.
- Collect data for an additional 2 years
 - Take part in a semi-annual survey and site visit from the KDE.
- Disclose the use of widely used instructional resources within the district.

Application Information

Selection process

We are seeking the participation of up to 9 districts and 27 schools, representative of 8 regional cooperatives. This would account for participation of approximately 2-3 schools per district. A selection committee will review all completed applications submitted by the April 28 deadline. Consideration will also be given to geographic distribution of districts and accountability model performance distribution of districts.

Instructions for Submission

Interested districts shall complete and submit an online form, hereafter known as the “**Application**” on behalf of the schools by Friday, April 28 at 5:00 p.m. ET to be considered for selection as a pilot site.

Criteria for Scoring

Districts and/or schools with completed applications will be considered for possible inclusion in the pilot program based upon scores using the following criteria, with some consideration given to regional geographic distribution and accountability system distribution across the state.

- District and School Investment
 - Interest in project
 - Connection between project and school/ district priorities
- District and School Capacity
 - Availability of school and district leaders to fully participate in the pilot
 - Connection of project goals to other job related duties
- Teaching and Learning Structures
 - District structures for professional development
 - School structures for professional development
- Current Resources in Use
 - HQIRs already in use
 - Or, commitment to adopting HQIRs for the 24-25 school year

PLEASE NOTE: Handwritten, faxed, and scanned applications will not be accepted.

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Interested and want to apply? [Click here.](#)

Access Superintendent Signature Form [here](#)