



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** – 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.

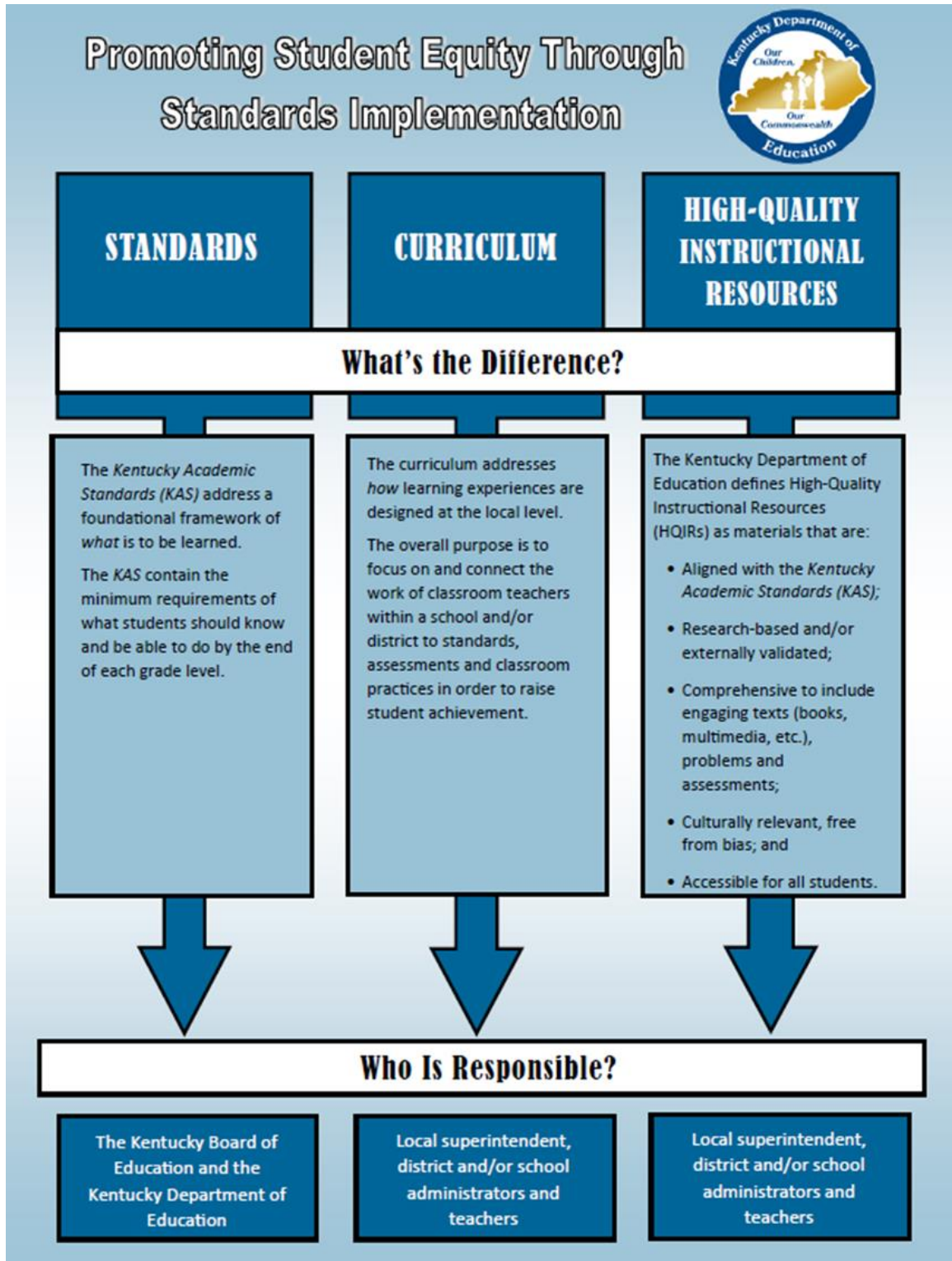
The five components of curricular coherence are essential to providing equitable access to learning for all students. Within U.S. schools, large racial and socioeconomic gaps still exist among graduation rates, test scores and advanced proficiency. Historically marginalized populations, such as students 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:

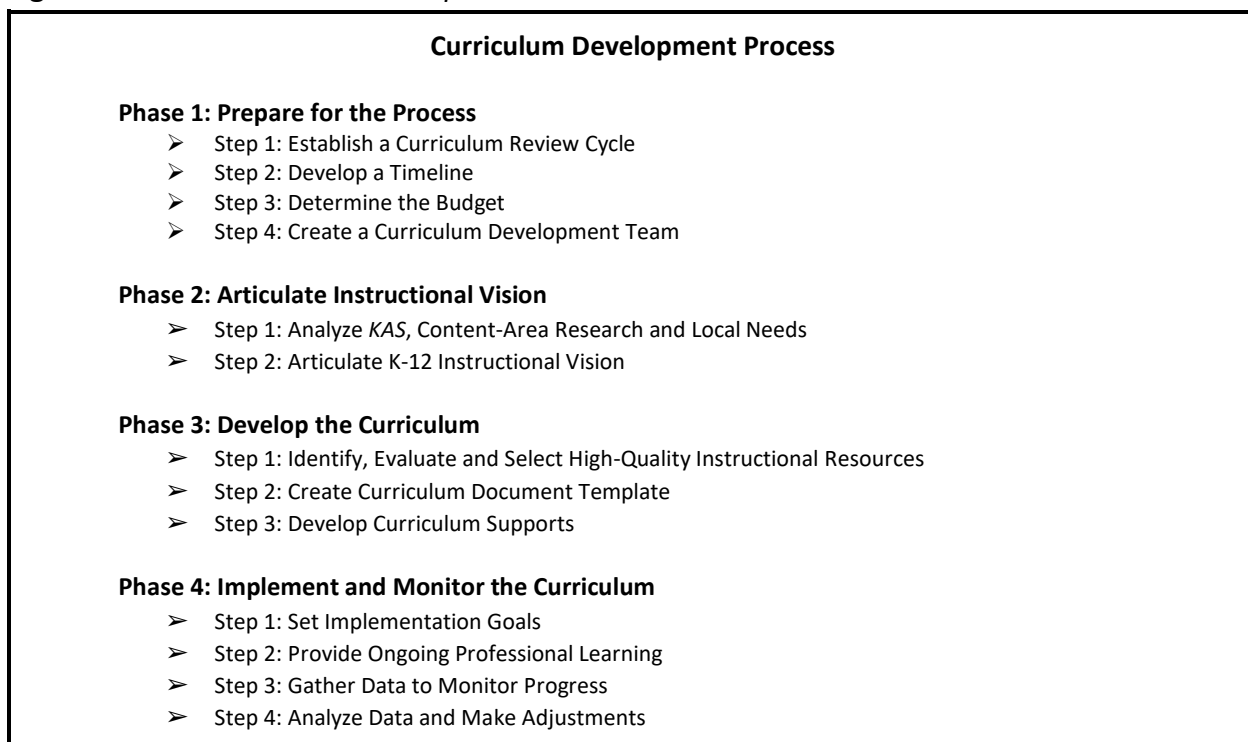
- Aligned to state standards, a HQIR can reduce variability in the quality of instruction across classrooms (SREB, 2017), and students in classrooms that used one HQIR for four consecutive years outpaced comparison students by a margin of 38 percentile points — equivalent to four additional years of 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).

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 and recommended tools.



**Figure 2.1. The Curriculum Development Process**



## **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: Establish a Curriculum Review Cycle**

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
<b>Reading and Writing</b>	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
<b>Mathematics</b>	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
<b>Social Studies</b>	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
<b>Science</b>	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
<b>World Language &amp; Visual Performing Arts</b>	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
<b>CTE &amp; Health/PE</b>	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 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.

**Key Questions**

- What data sources will be used to determine current curricular needs?
- Based on data analysis, how should content areas be sequenced in the local curriculum review cycle?

**Key Tool(s)**

- [Curriculum Review Cycle Template](#)



## Step 2: 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

- What is our ideal date for:
  - Finalizing members of the curriculum team?
  - Providing content area professional learning for the curriculum team?
  - 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?
- What key actions do we need to take to support the work of each phase?
- Who is responsible for each key action included in the timeline?

### Key Tool(s)

- [Sample Timeline 1](#) (yearlong) and [Sample Timeline 2](#) (six months)
- [Curriculum Development Timeline Template](#)

## Step 3: 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 School/District 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

- What resources are needed to support professional learning for the curriculum team during Phase 2 of the process?
- 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 4: 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

- **Curriculum Team Members:**
  - 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?
- **Meeting Logistics:**
  - 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](#)

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

Establishing a shared understanding of the subject area content, skills and pedagogy prior to development/revision of the curriculum provides a common foundation for the work. To build this shared understanding, the team should start with analyzing the *KAS* document itself, both its overall architecture and its critical components. The architecture comprises the organizational structure of the document, the different ways to view the standards and the design considerations of the specific components within the standards document.

After examination of the *KAS* document, other useful resources for deepening understanding include resources from [kystandards.org](http://kystandards.org), content-specific national and professional organizations, as well as educational experts in the respective subject area. Local data and needs assessments should also be examined to refine the team’s sense of local context.



## Highly Recommended Foundational Learning:

- [Kentucky Academic Standards document](#):
  - o “**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.
  - o **Foundational documents** used in standards development located in “The Writer’s Vision Statement” will help the team develop a deeper understanding of research that influenced creation of the standards and the potential impact on classroom instruction and assessment.
  - o **Standards Progressions** analysis will help the team gain a better understanding of student experiences over time: a zoom lens focused on the standards for a particular grade level and a wide-angle lens to see the K-12 perspective. Mini-progressions, coherence statements or complete K-12 progressions can guide development of both a microscopic and macroscopic view of the standards.
- [Getting to Know the KAS Modules](#) are professional learning resources that help build in-depth understanding of each content area standards document.

### Key Questions

- What foundational beliefs should drive local implementation of the KAS?
- 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?
- What supports will help teachers deliver standards-aligned instruction and grade-level assignments?
- What additional resources (research, local data, etc.) might support developing shared understanding of the subject area content, skills and pedagogy?

### Key Tool(s)

- [Team Analysis Planning Template](#)

## Step 2: Articulate K-12 Instructional Vision

Once the curriculum team has 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 community, they develop 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).

Figure 2.3 highlights the three lenses districts should consider when creating their instructional vision. All three lenses work to support a common vision focused on improving student outcomes and guide school and district-level decision-making.

In establishing 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

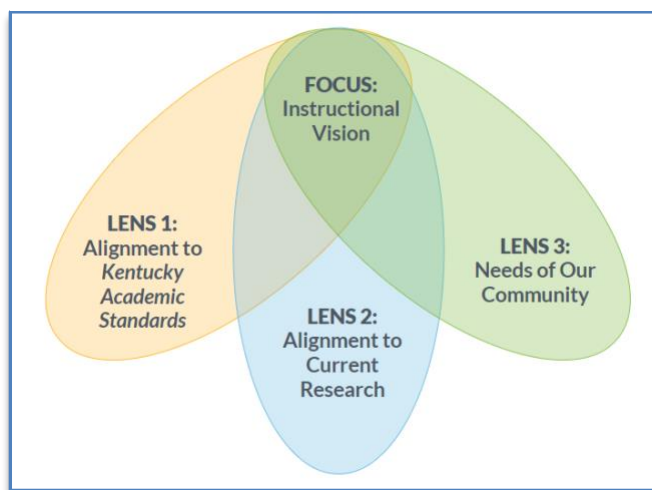
are capable of high-quality work and deeper learning) and the student experience. These belief statements should drive the rest of the curriculum development and be a touchstone the team can return to throughout the process. Each member of the curriculum team must support the agreed-upon core beliefs, understand the rationale for each and be committed to implementing the core beliefs into classroom practice.

Once the core beliefs have been identified, the team should articulate their instructional vision in writing in a way that is clear and easily understood by all stakeholders. As the sample vision statements provided are examined, it is clear each can find a form appropriate to its contents. **School/district leaders should seek stakeholder feedback and determine how they will incorporate the feedback into the instructional vision.** Once revisions are made based on the feedback received, the vision is then used to guide the rest of the curriculum development/revision process.

#### Characteristics of an Effective Instructional Vision:

- Focuses on the student experience and what student learning looks like in action (i.e., portrait of a learner);
- Embeds specific context related to the content;
- Aligns with state standards, but is not limited to a review of the standards documents;
- Is evidence-based and cited;

Figure 2.3. Three Lenses for Creating an Instructional Vision



\*Adapted from [Achievement Network](#)



- Prepares all students for postsecondary readiness;
- Includes instructional implications which lead to critical thinking, problem-solving and transferable knowledge (EdReports, 2021).

### Key Questions

- What is the vision for a standards-aligned, vibrant student experience in this content area?
- How well do current core belief statements align to our vision of an ideal experience? What revisions might increase alignment?
- How will we structure and articulate our vision in a way that is clear and easily understood by all stakeholders?
- How will stakeholders provide feedback, and how will that feedback be used to inform possible revisions to the instructional vision?

### Key Tool(s)

- [Sample Vision Statements](#) (ELA, Math, Science)
- [Sample Instructional Vision](#) (Woodford County Social Studies example)
- [Vision Statements and Tools](#) (ELA and Math)

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 High-Quality Instructional Resources

High-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) are a means by which local curriculum aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)* becomes an actionable foundation for improving the way students experience learning in the state of Kentucky and selecting a primary HQIR enables districts and schools to make a marked shift toward equitable, vibrant learning experiences for all students. A local curriculum anchored in a HQIR supports the learning goals, outcomes and core competencies that 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 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.), problems and assessments;
- Culturally relevant, free from bias; and
- Accessible for all students.

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.

### **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 comprehensive selection process also should include time and capacity for schools and districts to establish local priorities using an equity-focused lens that will guide the identification and selection of HIQRs. 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

- Based on the instructional vision, what selection criteria will help us identify a resource aligned to the desired student experience?
- **Engaging Stakeholders:**
  - 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 information? (Instruction Partner, 2019)
- **Using the Equity Lenses:**
  - How are the equity lenses woven into the school/district priorities?
  - Which equity lenses have been used consistently in the past? Which are opportunities for further attention?
  - Which equity lenses may be challenging for the team to examine in resources and/or may require additional support for examining? This will help identify specific learning the team may need to be able to engage in future steps fully.

### Key Tool(s)

- [Developing Selection Criteria](#)
- [Data Collection Tool](#)
- [Sample Stakeholder Questions](#)
- [Equity Lenses](#)

### Identify Potential High-Quality Instructional Resources

Once the team has determined the selection criteria, the next step is to identify 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 instructional resources and offers



comprehensive information about indicators of quality from a number of variety of publishers. For content areas not reviewed by EdReports, consider exploring various 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 2-4 do we want to further evaluate using our selection criteria?
- **For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports:**
  - Based on initial reviews using district selection criteria, which content area resources receive the highest quality rating? Which 2-4 most merit further evaluation?

### Key Tool(s)

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

### Evaluate Potential High-Quality Instructional Resources

Once two to four resources aligned to the selection criteria have been identified, team members engage in a hands-on study to determine the best option for meeting the instructional vision and student needs. Teams should begin by establishing the structure and process for researching each of the resources that are being considered. As a part of the process, the team will need to identify the tools/rubrics that will be used to inform evaluation of the potential resources. For content areas evaluated by EdReports, begin by using their criteria-based ratings; for content areas not evaluated there, the key tools below (e.g., Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics, Equity Lenses) can support curriculum teams in conducting their own evaluation.



Teams should also engage publishers to request samples of the resources 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

- What is the timeline that team members will have to conduct the reviews?
- What materials/resources will reviewers need access to and how will they get access?
- How will the team collect Review Team notes and final ratings?
- What key knowledge and skills will the curriculum team members need to conduct reviews (Instruction Partners, 2019)?

### Key Tool(s)

- [Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics](#)
- [EdReports Compare Tool](#) and [Compare Tool Overview](#)
- [Equity Lenses](#)
- [Sample HQIR Vendor Questions](#)

### Select a High-Quality Instructional Resource

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.

As the team selects its instructional resources, they may use the equity lenses to ensure the final set of resources contains strengths for each lens and that any gaps or supplementary needs are clearly noted. The equity lenses and analyses may be carried forward into Phase 4 of the Curriculum Development Process to help inform professional learning needed to support implementation.

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, cost, 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?
  - How will the team share with the school and/or district staff the strengths and gaps of the resources tied to the equity lenses?
  - Where there are continued needs/gaps tied to the equity lenses, what supports will teachers need to ensure students experience the content in a way that fulfills the instructional vision?
  - What will be the recurring costs? (Which materials are reusable, and which will be reordered each year?)
- **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](#)

## Step 2: Create Curriculum Document Template

The goal of this step is for the team to create a curriculum document template that plans a coherent instructional experience within and across grade levels that systematically builds student understanding of the *KAS* and reflects the beliefs of the instructional vision. “In addition to the central objective of supporting teachers and administrators, ensuring equity of access, and preparing students for college and careers, a strong curriculum must clarify what instructional decisions it holds tightly and loosely and what learning is essential and why” (Council of the Great City Schools, 2017, p.51).

The curriculum document template serves as the central guidance for all instructional staff who support and supervise teaching and student learning. The document should be designed to:



- Establish the curricular elements (*KAS* alignment, instructional, assessment, scaffolds/supports, etc.) aligned to the instructional vision that must be present in every classroom;
- Highlight within the HQIR where key curricular elements are addressed for each unit/module;
- Locate where supplemental resources might be required to address depths and dimensions unique to the *KAS* or to a local context; and
- Provide broad-based access and ease of use to support navigation.

### Key Questions

- In order to move toward the instructional vision for teaching and learning, what curricular elements and features should be accounted for in the template? Possible curricular elements to consider include:
  - *KAS* alignment
  - Grade-level tasks/assignments
  - Pedagogical/Instructional support
  - Assessment, formative and summative
  - Supports/Scaffolds for differentiation and diverse learners

### Key Tool(s)

- [Curriculum Document Template](#)

## Step 3: Develop Curriculum Supports

The final step in the process is to develop the curriculum supports aligned to each essential element. Each area of support must reflect the beliefs outlined in the instructional vision and be designed to help students meet the *KAS* grade-level or course expectations. Developing curriculum documents that support the key features and criteria ensures that schools and districts are providing a curriculum with meaningful guidance rather than just a set of materials or textbooks (Council of the Great City Schools, 2017).

As the team develops the curriculum supports for each grade-level, they should utilize the selected HQIR to guide this work. HQIRs have been thoughtfully built and deeply reviewed for alignment to research and evidence-based practices for the specific content area including:

- organization, sequencing and pacing of the standards,
- grade-level texts, tasks and assessments,
- instructional/pedagogical supports, and
- teacher supports for diverse learners.



Gaps in the primary HQIR may be identified while working through the curriculum template process prior to implementation, and subtle insufficiencies may also 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:

- All of the *KAS* for a content area or the full depth of specific standard(s) are not present;
- Some dimensions of the standards (inquiry in social studies, Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices in Reading and Writing, etc.) are not accounted for; or
- Specific aspects of equity are not reflected.

Ultimately, the goal of the curriculum documents is to provide teachers with common expectations for instruction and assessment to create coherence across all classrooms. The documents also should reflect where supports are located in the primary HQIR and any supplemental resources to provide for the vibrant student experience outlined in the district’s instructional vision.

**Instructional units containing a group of content standards organized around big ideas or questions helps to avoid students seeing the standards as a set of isolated information, skills or processes and can provide a way to identify places for interdisciplinary connections.** Since the standards represent what students should know and be able to do at the conclusion of a course, some standards may appear in multiple units in order to deepen understanding over time. Teams should then identify the organizational principles embedded in the HQIR, noting how standards are bundled and learning progresses to support implementation.

There is no one correct way to organize content course standards, and HQIRs will reflect this. However, the standards need to be organized in a way that reflects the school or district’s vision and upholds the instructional intent of the *KAS* document for the specific content area.

After considering the organization and sequencing of the standards within a HQIR, the team examines the appropriateness of its pacing for delivering the instructional units. The duration of each unit will vary based on the complexity of certain standards assigned to a particular unit or its intended learning outcomes (Ainsworth, 2010). **Consideration also must be given to including enough time in a unit for teachers to respond to student learning needs.** Ainsworth (2010) recommends building in a short interval between each unit referred to as a “buffer” period that provides flexibility to meet students’ needs.

### Key Questions

- **Organizing, Sequencing and Pacing:**
  - How are standards organized and sequenced to reflect the intent of the *Kentucky Academic Standards* and the instructional vision for the specific content area?



- How are standards within each unit organized around big ideas or questions to help avoid students seeing the standards as a set of isolated information, skills or processes?
- How might the standards be organized or grouped into instructional units in a way that anchors student learning and builds on students’ knowledge, skills and understanding over time?
- 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?
- **Curricular Supports:**
  - How does the curriculum document clarify common expectations for grade-level assessments and where those are located in the HQIRs?
  - How does the curriculum document clarify common expectations for grade-level texts, tasks and/or assignments, and where those are located in the HQIRs?
  - How are instructional/pedagogical supports identified and access to them enabled within the document?
  - How are supports for diverse learners identified and made accessible by the document?
- **Revision and Feedback:**
  - What process will be used for reviewing and revising so all aspects of the curriculum are viewed by both the vertical and grade-level teams to ensure coherence and quality across all grade levels?
  - How will district leaders gather staff feedback (i.e., clarity, organization, usability) of the completed curriculum documents and use the feedback to guide possible revisions prior to implementation?
- **Logistical Consideration:**
  - How will curriculum documents be made readily accessible to all staff?

### Key Tool(s)

- [Sample Local Curriculum Document](#) (Wayne County example)

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.



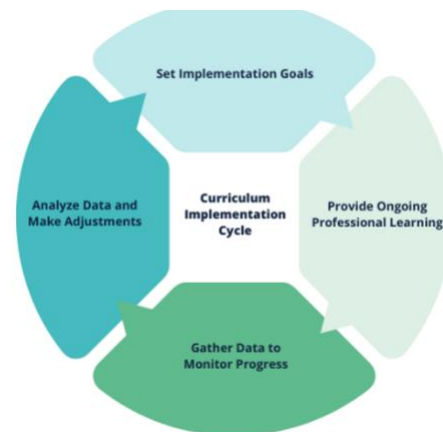


## Phase 4: Implement and Monitor the Curriculum

Research shows school and district leadership play a critical role in improving 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 school or district 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. Below is a list of key actions district and school leaders should take to support successful implementation of the locally developed curriculum and the instructional resources:

- **Establish a Clear Vision** – Communicate and develop a shared understanding of the instructional vision and establish clear goals for working towards it.
- **Develop Staff Capacity** – Provide leaders, teachers and others in the system with on-going professional learning and support needed for successful implementation.
- **Gather Data to Monitor Progress** – Gather quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress towards the implementation goals.
- **Analyze Data and Make Necessary 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 2.4. 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 2.4. Each year of implementation, leaders repeat these actions as they move closer and 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 aligned to key aspects of the new curriculum and HQIRs necessary for the articulated vision to become reality. After determining the implementation goals, school or district 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 documents. Data also should be gathered to ensure students have attained 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 the evidence as well as those responsible for analyzing the data. Finally, consider how often the 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

- **Setting Implementation Goals:**
  - What are our goals for effective implementation?
  - How do our goals connect to the system’s mission, values and goals?
  - What are the core beliefs that underpin our goals?
  - What will success look like over time?
  - What will success look like in year one? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Progress Monitoring:**
  - How will we know if we reach our goals?
  - For each goal, when 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)

### Key Tool(s)

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

## Step 2: Provide Ongoing Professional Learning

The goal of this step is to provide staff throughout the school or district with upfront and ongoing professional learning experiences that deepen their knowledge of how the curriculum works and set a foundation for strong instruction (Instruction Partners, 2019). When designing and/or selecting high-quality professional learning (HQPL) at the local level, school or district leaders should ensure alignment to [KDE’s Characteristics of High-Quality Professional Learning](#).

The ongoing professional learning plan should include initial opportunities to “get to know” the new or revised curriculum and HQIRs as well as sustained professional learning that directly



focuses on how teachers will learn to teach using the new/revised curriculum and instructional resources.

During the initial launch, teachers and school leaders throughout the district need time and opportunity to develop an understanding of the new curriculum and HQIR, its overall design, and how it differs from the past (Connecticut Department of Education n.d.). To help build initial understanding, the professional learning should focus on:

- the instructional vision and its rationale,
- the role of the curriculum and HQIR in realizing the instructional vision,
- organization and sequencing of the standards,
- overall design and essential elements of the curriculum and HQIR, and
- how to utilize the *KAS* document, district curriculum documents and the HQIR.

School or district leaders should contact the vendor to see what they recommend for initial and ongoing training and what professional learning they offer. Most high-quality instructional resources come with additional tools and resources that can support initial implementation. If the resources are open source, there are often materials, such as videos and support tools, that have been created and are available online. Leaders may also consider partnering with an external organization that has expertise throughout the implementation process.

Once professional learning needs are identified, the next step is for school or district leaders to develop an ongoing professional learning plan. Leaders should prioritize the identified areas to determine where to begin the work, funds that will be used to support the professional learning, who will facilitate, how facilitators will be trained, and possible timelines for completion.

Strategies like using stipends for extended service time outside of school hours or funds to free team members for protected blocks of release time during the school day could be potential ways schools and districts can secure the quality and quantity of time needed for professional learning. Utilizing existing PLC structures, when appropriate, also can be effective as aspects of the work are experienced in a job-embedded context.

Another valuable aspect of professional learning is the coaching and feedback teachers and staff receive during implementation. In this document, the word “coach” refers to, “anyone who provides teachers with feedback and support” on the curriculum and instructional resources (Instruction Partners, 2019). Regardless of formal title, all individuals coaching or providing feedback need to be on the same page about what they are looking for in terms of implementation. When planning to support implementation with coaching, leaders should first start with understanding current coaching practices in the school and/or district and how they support implementation or how they need to be adjusted.



Since the curriculum and resources also may be new to coaches, the school or district leaders should ensure coaches are well trained and supported on the intended use of the curriculum and resources as well. Coaches will need to provide specific feedback to teachers, and the best way to ensure that is happening is to make sure coaches are trained and receiving feedback of their own.

### Key Questions

- **Planning for Launch/Initial Training:**
  - Who are all the groups that need training on the instructional vision, expectations for students, curriculum design and effective use of the HQIR across our system? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
  - 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 classrooms?
- **Training for Coaches:**
  - What training or key information will all coaches supporting this curriculum need prior to implementation?
  - What do coaches need to understand about the instructional vision, the design of the curriculum and the HQIR before conducting an observation?
  - What support and feedback will coaches need to do this work well, and who will provide this? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
- **Coaching Supports:**
  - What structures are currently in place for coaching/feedback?
  - Who receives coaching? How often?
  - Who does the coaching?
  - What do coaches look for when they go into classrooms?
  - What do coaches need to do after each observation (documenting data, providing feedback, following up with coaching conversations, etc.)?
- **PL Logistics:**
  - What time is currently in place for professional learning across the year (summer, district/school PL days, PLCs, etc.)?
  - When developing the PL plan for each year of implementation:
    - What are the specific PL needs aligned to the implementation goals?
    - 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 leaders ensure consistent communication about how the PL plan each year aligns to the instructional vision? How will they address questions as they arise?
- 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)

### Key Tool(s)

- [Professional Learning Plan Template](#)
- [Groups Who Will Need Training](#)
- [Coaching Model Overview](#)

### 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 gather 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, samples of student work, and samples of assessments, tasks, and assignments to examine for alignment to the standards.

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 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)

- [Coaching Observation Template](#)
- [Observation Log Template](#)
- [Project Planning Check-In Agenda](#)

### Step 4: Analyze Data and Make Adjustments

This step is designed to support school and district 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 2.2 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"><li>• Prepare and analyze qualitative and quantitative data as outlined in the monitoring plan aligned to the implementation goals</li><li>• Reflect on progress and challenges.</li><li>• Identify 2-3 areas of improvement.</li><li>• Adjust implementation plan and revisit roles and responsibilities according to areas of improvement.</li><li>• Communicate changes and celebrate successes with stakeholders.</li></ul>
End-of-Year Step-Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze summative data and data not available during the school year.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Disaggregate data to evaluate for, “equity, specifically for students in poverty, students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners” (Instruction Partners, 2019).</li></ul></li><li>• Reflect on areas of improvement identified throughout the school year</li></ul>



Meeting Type	Key Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine systems and processes used to support implementation</li> <li>• Identify 2-3 areas of improvement for the upcoming school year</li> <li>• Revise implementation goals and revisit roles and responsibilities according to areas of improvement for following school year</li> <li>• Communicate changes and celebrate successes with stakeholders.</li> </ul>

### Key Questions

- **Quarterly Step-Back Meetings:**
  - 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:**
  - 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 level? (Instruction Partners, 2019)

### Key Tool(s)

- [Quarterly Stepback Data Gathering Template](#)
- [Quarterly Stepback Agenda](#)
- [End-of-Year Stepback Data Gathering Template](#)
- [End-of-Year Stepback Agenda](#)



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"> <li>• Introduction to the CDP <a href="#">Video</a> and <a href="#">Slide Deck</a></li> <li>• Phase 1 <a href="#">Video</a> and <a href="#">Slide Deck</a></li> <li>• Phase 1 <a href="#">Participant Handout</a></li> <li>• CDP PL Series <a href="#">Facilitation Notes</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stakeholder Communication Examples</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CDP Timeline Examples</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CDP Team Structure Examples</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stakeholder Inclusion and Communication to Build Buy-in Video Clips from Pilot Districts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Phase 1 Video Clips from Pilot Districts</a></li> </ul>



## Phase 2: Articulate K-12 Instructional Vision

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





### Phase 3: Develop the Curriculum

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



### Phase 4: Implement and Monitor the Curriculum

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

