CURRICULUM SUPPORT GUIDE

WORKBOOK

Key Action I.2: Establish the Vision

I.2: ESTABLISH THE VISION

	Key Action I.1: Plan Your Process	Step I.2.A: Train the Selection Team and Review Committee
Phase I: Select >	**Key Action I.2: Establish the Vision**	Step I.2.B: Articulate the Vision of Instruction and Core Beliefs
	Key Action I.3: Develop the Rubric and Prepare for Reviews	
	Key Action I.4: Review, Pilot, and Decide	
	Key Action I.5: Procure and Distribute Materials	

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

The goal of this key action is to prepare the Selection Team and Review Committee to understand the standards and develop a shared vision of effective instruction for each relevant subject for all students.

WHY IS THIS KEY ACTION IMPORTANT?

Interviews with early implementers were clear and conclusive: to make a difference in student learning, materials selection and implementation has to start and end with a vision of great instruction for students. From the start, everyone involved needs to center on that aspiration. Otherwise, this process will become an exercise in compliance. Early implementers that launched into rubric development without first developing a common understanding of the expectations for students and vision of instruction saw competing visions pulling in different directions during selection and/or implementation. This is the key action that differentiated selection success among early implementers.

EXPLANATION OF LANGUAGE

We use the term **expectations for students** interchangeably with **standards**. These terms refer to the stated expectations for student performance for that year. We also reference **sample test items**, meaning sample items from your state assessment or similar state assessments. We use the terms **content area** and **subject** interchangeably to refer to the discipline of focus (math, ELA, etc.). We use the term **vision of instructional excellence** to describe a statement of the essential elements of effective instruction for that content area, informed by content-specific pedagogical practices. We use the term **walkthrough tool** to describe an observation guide that can be used on an informal, regular basis to reflect on the content fundamentals in the vision. We use the phrase **core beliefs** to describe the foundational principles about student learning that will guide and support selection and implementation.

I.2.A: TRAIN THE SELECTION TEAM AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

GUIDING QUESTIONS

i.   What are our desired outcomes for this training?

ii. What are the key activities we want to prioritize?

iii. Who will lead this training?

iv. If we are doing it in-house, how many facilitators do we need?

v.   How much time do we need?

vi. Where and when will it take place?

vii. What materials will we need?

viii. What do participants need to do in advance?

ix. What feedback do we want to get from participants?

NOTES

Educators bring a variety of experiences and perspectives to this work. Establishing a common foundation and viewpoint of the subject area prior to selection gives everyone a common starting point.

This training should feel like school — doing problems and tasks together as a group. This should not be about "breaking down the standards," but rather seeing what the standards look like in action.

Go to the resource Standards Training Guidance and Examples to see key elements of standards training, key content pedagogy for each subject, and PowerPoints and materials.

Whoever facilitates this training needs to know the standards and content discipline deeply, and also be effective at designing and facilitating adult learning.

Generally, your options are:

• Leverage someone in your system
• Find someone in a neighboring system
• Ask for help from the state or regional support centers
• Find an independent consultant or PD provider that can come to you
• Send your team to a conference

The Email for Communicating Standards Training to the Review Committee resource is a sample email for communicating training information to participants.

I.2.B: ARTICULATE VISION OF INSTRUCTION AND CORE BELIEFS

GUIDING QUESTIONS

i.   What is the vision of instructional excellence for this subject that we want to anchor our work?

ii. What would we want to see in instruction in every lesson?

iii. What would we want to see in instruction in every unit?

iv. What are the core beliefs that will be the foundation for our work?

v.   How do we anticipate that these core beliefs will be challenged? How will we handle it if/when they are?

NOTES

A vision is most concretely articulated as a walkthrough tool — what would we want to see in the enacted daily instruction in this subject? Some aspects of the vision may feel like they live at the unit (not daily) level. The Vision Statements and Tools resource includes sample vision statements.

Some early implementers took the Selection Team and Review Committee to observe classrooms or watch videos of a lesson to look for evidence of the vision and standards in action. These experiences often revealed differences of opinion that helped refine the vision and key needs for the materials.

Changing materials often accompanies a fundamental shift in expectations for students. Naming your agreements about core beliefs (i.e. that all students are capable of high-level work) can create a touchstone you can return to throughout the process. The resource Core Beliefs gives you a starting point.

For early implementers, this was the first place that questions about whether students would be able to do the work came up. See the resource Key Messages for Maintaining High Expectations for Students for research and talking points that you can use in these conversations.

Standards Training Guidance and Examples

This resource provides an outline of must-haves for standards training, as well as sample PowerPoint agendas and open source materials that can be adjusted for your training.

If the decision has been made to develop the standards training internally or in combination with a partner, the following resources provide guidance and materials for content and pedagogy design. The left-hand side of the chart features notes on must-haves for Math and ELA. On the right-hand side, there are resources to support the key features.

Standards Training Key Features	Resources

Math Considerations:
   • Complete a grade level assessment
   • Understand the key math shifts and aspects of rigor of the standards
   • Identify the major work of the grade
   • Analyze the progression of math standards in and across the grade band
   • Complete sample tasks for the examined standards
	Resources explaining the standards and shifts: Understanding the Shifts (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018) Effective Teaching Practices (NCTM, 2014) Standards for Mathematical Practice (Common Core State Standards) Knowing and Teaching Elementary Mathematics (Richard Askey, 1999) Achieve the Core Coherence Maps for Mathematics (Student Achievement Partners) LA Believes Rigor Documents (LDOE)
	
	Sample assessment items to show what the standards look like in application: Sample PARCC Math items (PARCC, 2018) Sample Smarter Balanced Test Items (The Regents University of California) Sample SAT Math items (College Board) Sample ACT Math items (ACT, 2018)

ELA Considerations:	Resources explaining the standards and shifts:
▪ Complete a grade level assessment, working through text andtasks ▪ Understand how students do and- do not learn ELA (a specific focus on shifting from teaching standards in isolation to teaching with text at the center) ▪ Understand the ELAshifts ▪ Understand the role offoundation- al skills	ELA CCSS DesignConsiderations(Common Core State Standards Initiative,2018) Research on Text Complexity(corestandards.org) How to Read the ELAStandards(Common Core State Standards Initiative,2018) Expectations for College andCareer Readiness in ELA(Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018) Advancing Our Students' Literacy:The Challenge of Complex Text(Marilyn Jager Adams, 2017) **Foundational Skills Materials:** Achieve the Core Foundational-Skills Course(Student Achievement Partners, 2018) **Sample assessment items to show what the standards look like in application:** Sample PARCC Items(PARCC, 2018) Sample Smarter Balanced Items(The Regents University of California) Sample SAT Reading items(College Board) Sample ACT Reading items(ACT, 2018)

Sample Standards Training Materials:
Instruction Partners hosts a 2-day Standards Bootcamp training each summer. All resources are open source and can be found here.

UnboundEd hosts a 5-day Standards Institute. All of their materials are open source and can be found in the links below. Their resources include PowerPoints and session materials for facilitation.

Math
Sample K-2materials
Sample 3-5materials
Sample 6-8materials
Sample HSmaterials

ELA
Sample Understanding the Literacy Shifts session
Attending to Language, Craft, andStructure
Building Knowledge and Fluency Through a Volume ofText
Scaffolding Standards-Aligned Text DependentQuestions
Phonics andFluency

Student Achievement Partners posts professional development online with ready- made PowerPoints, handouts, and facilitator notes.
Resource Bank on Understanding theSh

Email for Communicating Standards Training to the Review Committee

This resource is a sample email communicating the goals and agenda for the training to the team.

Team –

We are looking forward to our standards training next week from 9:00-3:00. This training will help us get on the same page about our understanding of the standards and begin to make connections to our upcoming materials selection work. During the training, we'll all be doing the work of the standards – including reading and analyzing passages, completing tasks, and writing. Come ready to engage deeply in the work of the standards!

Below are high-level goals and agenda for the day:

Goals:
- As a team, we have a clear, shared vision for the rigor of the 6-8 ELA standards.
- We understand the shifts of the standards and how they are articulated in the 6-8 ELA standards.
- We can name elements of strong ELA content and content pedagogy.

Agenda:
9:00-9:30 – Opening, icebreaker norms, and purpose setting
9:30-11:30 – ELA assessment and debrief
11:30-12:00 – Review of the shifts
12:00-12:30 – Lunch
12:30-2:30 – Text complexity, text-dependent questions, and knowledge building in the standards and instruction
2:30-3:00 – Summary, synthesis, and closing

Please bring a computer to training. Reach out with any questions.

Best,
X

Vision Statements and Tools

This resource shares sample content-specific vision statements that you can adapt. There are also sample walkthrough tools, which many systems use to measure their vision in action.

Math Vision Statements
- TNTP's Vision of Excellent Math Instruction(TNTP)
- Principles to Action Executive Summary(NCTM)
- KIPP Math Vision for K-8 Instruction(KIPP)
- Southbridge Elements of an Effective Math Lesson(Southbridge Public Schools)

Math Walkthrough Tools
- Instructional Practice Guide(Student AchievementPartners)
- Curriculum Implementation Observation Tool(LDOE) - this tool focuses on use of materials in service of achieving the instructionalvision

ELA Vision Statements
- TNTP's Vision of Excellent Literacy Instruction(TNTP)
- KIPP K-8 Literacy Instructional Vision(KIPP)
- Gladstone ELA Vision(Gladstone Elementary School, KansasCity)
- Southbridge Elements of an Effective ELA Lesson(Southbridge Public Schools)

ELA Walkthrough Tools
- Instructional Practice Guide(Student AchievementPartners)
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Core Beliefs

This resource provides sample core beliefs for guiding selection and implementation.

We believe…

- All students are capable of meeting the expectations of the standards.

- All students deserve strong, engaging instruction supported by highly aligned instructional materials and resources that makes them excited about learning.

- It is our responsibility to prepare students for post-secondary opportunities.

- We believe every member of the system has a critical role to play in materials selection and implementation – students, teachers, community members and parents, school leaders, and system leaders.

- Materials support our ultimate goal, which is student engagement and learning. The materials are a means to an end in obtaining our vision for instruction, not an end in itself.

Key Messages for Maintaining High Expectations for Students

This resource provides ideas to support conversations about high expectations for students. It includes key messages to highlight, tips on facilitating difficult conversations, and resources to lead the group to shared understandings around expectations.

Key Messages

- Our expectations for student learning are reflected in thematerials (assignments, texts, assessments) we givethem.
- Access to grade-level materials really matters. When students are given grade appropriate assignments, combined with strong instruction, engagement,and high expectations, they achieve higheroutcomes.
- Students do what they are asked to do; when our demands arehigh, performance ishigher.
- Implementing a rigorous curriculum does not preclude teachersfrom supporting and accommodating individuallearners.

Conversation Tips

- Presume bestintent.
- Use inclusive language like "we" and "our school community"when responding.
- Lean into the tension by asking clarifyingquestions.
- Make sure everyone in the group has a voice ("That's really interesting, X.Y, what do you think about thispoint?").
- Reiterate that these conversations are what will help students succeedand increase student engagement and achievement across thesystem.
- Resist the urge to rattle off facts and talking points. Instead, spend time unpacking a resource below to bring the group to shared ideas.(Example: Jigsaw read *The Opportunity Myth* and use the 4 A's protocol todiscuss.)

Resources to Explore

Re-source	High-lights
[The Opportunity Myth](TNTP, 2018)	• Misaligned resources contribu-teto students not being prepared for post-graduationoptions. • Students spend up to 500 hour-sa year on assignments that are not aligned to the gradelevel.

	• Students are more likely to find instruction engaging if theteacher expects them tolearn. • Students of color and from low- income backgrounds are increasingly less likely to have access to aligned materials and stronginstruction. • The lives of students arebeing impacted by adultchoices.
Why Assignments Matter(Eleanor Dougherty, ASCD)	• Task predicts performance: High- rigor tasks lead to higher performance. • Regardless of what skill-sets students bring with them to courses, they need to be challenged. • "Students can do no better than the assignments they are given."- Ruth-Mitchell
Checking In: Do Classroom Assignments Reflect Today's HigherStandards? (The Education Trust, 2015)	• Merely adopting "Common-Core- aligned materials" does not guarantee that assignments are actually aligned to thestandards. • A post-Common Core adoption audit of middle school assignments revealed that only 38% were aligned to the grade-levelstandard. • Only 4% of assignments pushed students to employ higherlevel thinking. • In many assignments, teachersdid more work than thestudents.
Practice What You Teach: Connect-ingCurriculum & Professional Learning inSchools, (Ross Wiener and Susan Pimentel, The Aspen Institute Education, 2017)	• Tasks and assignments signal-the expectation for student performance. • High-quality materials are a baseline for equity -- we ensure that *all* students are accessing intellectually demanding work,not just somestudents.

[Should We Teach Students at Their Reading Levels?](#) (Shanahan, 2014) [New Evidence on Teaching Reading at Frustration Levels](#)(Shanahan, 2017)	• The research base to support leveled reading isthin. • Only giving students a diet of instructional-level textsdoesn't lead to gains inachievement. • Students benefit from reading complex texts withappropriate scaffolds.

About Us

The Curriculum Support Guide was written and designed by Instruction Partners, an education non-profit that works shoulder to shoulder with educators to support great teaching and accelerate student learning. Our work with schools and systems is grounded in the instructional core, and we provide coaching, action planning, and professional development. In the last three years, we have observed hundreds of classrooms and been fortunate to partner with many schools and school systems. We specialize in supporting smaller school systems, who may lack capacity but are able to make big changes quickly.

Thank You

FOR USING THE

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