

Curriculum Design Process Protocol

To support districts and schools through curriculum design, review, and revision processes, the Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI) developed this protocol document that includes guiding questions and resources that can be used to support development or evaluation of existing curriculum design, review, and revision processes and instructional materials.

Using the Protocol

This protocol document includes guiding questions and resources for various focus areas of related to curriculum design, review, and revision, including communication and dissemination considerations, curricular scope and sequence considerations, and implementation considerations. As districts and schools develop comprehensive plans for developing new curriculum or revising existing curriculum, this protocol document can be used to identify needed actions and resources. Guiding questions are based on CSAI's work with a district conducting evaluation of their existing curricula and implementing revised curricular materials. Reflecting that work, this protocol document is designed to include a range of questions that are applicable to different tasks related to curriculum review and possible design changes. The protocol document is designed to support users through different curriculum-focused actions, encouraging analysis of existing actions and identification of next steps and considerations. This includes the evaluation of existing instructional materials, identification of needed changes,

and professional development that may be needed to support implementation of any new or revised curriculum. Users are also supported with associated resources that reflect research-based guidance for best practices in each focus areas. This protocol document can be used to plan for different curriculum review, design, and revision processes and identify progress and outcome measures, as well as identify progress metrics during and after implementation to ensure that each focus area has been properly discussed and reviewed.

To use the protocol document, review each focus area and the guiding questions that are listed for each area. Use the boxes to mark when different evaluation and review actions have been completed. Applicable guiding resources are listed for reference and support.

Curriculum Design, Development, and Review Process

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
This column identifies the associated action category.	Sample guiding questions can be used to identify possible actions for evaluation of curriculum design and review.	Users will find examples of evidence that is representative of the associated action. This can be used to help identify evidence of already completed actions, as well as to plan next steps and identify needed documentation.	Check box when analysis for this action has been completed.	This column lists resources to help identify research-based best practices for focus areas and actions.
Readiness	Has a needs assessment been completed prior to curriculum writing activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher analysis of the present curriculum to identify strengths, weaknesses, omissions, and/or problems. Sample lessons that illustrate curriculum implementation. Sample assessments that illustrate the implementation of the curriculum. Identification of what teachers at each grade level perceive to be the most serious issues within the curriculum. A detailed analysis of state and local test data, including [large scale assessment] scores, grade-level criterion-referenced test data, and course final examination results. Suggestions for change and improvement generated by meetings with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators. Parent and other community members' concerns and expectations for the program obtained through surveys and invitational meetings. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>A Guide to Curriculum Development: Purposes, Practices, Procedures.</i>[PDF].</p> <p>Connecticut Department of Education. <i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>
Communication	Does the district have a definition of curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written definition of curriculum exists. The district has communicated its definition of curriculum to all district staff and faculty. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>
Communication	Does the district have a stated purpose or purposes for the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district's stated purpose(s) for the curriculum exists in written records. The district has communicated its stated purpose(s) for the curriculum to all district staff and faculty. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Communication	Does the district have the political, technical, and organizational preconditions needed to support the development and implementation of a high-quality curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district has consistently communicated a strong, unifying vision for high-quality school and classroom practice that is founded on college and career ready standards and high expectations for all students. • The district has ensured that teachers and instructional leaders share an accurate understanding of instructional expectations. • The district has set clear, measurable goals for the academic attainment of all students. • The district has a comprehensive professional development plan in place that communicates the message that not only teachers, but a wide variety of central office and school-based leaders and staff are expected to develop the content knowledge and skills necessary to implement district college and career ready standards. • The district has ensured that both internally- and externally-provided professional development is consistent with the district's instructional vision, aligned to college and career ready standards, and prioritized and logically organized to address teacher needs. • The district is continuously working to build a culture of shared accountability for student achievement across central office departments, staff, and schools. 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Communication	Do the district's curriculum documents reflect the district's beliefs and vision about student learning and achievement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and administrators can readily see how their work is connected with the district's beliefs and vision for student learning and achievement. • Teachers and administrators can readily see how their work is connected with the district's respect for the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students. • The district communicates the vision and expectation that all students will meet district standards and graduate ready for college and careers. • The curriculum guidance reflects the expectations for the types of classroom reading materials and suggested activities and questions that are to be used. • The curriculum provides guidance on how to advance students who have not been challenged in prior grades, so they can make the necessary progress in their academic language, reading levels, and reasoning skills. • Curriculum examples reflect the district's beliefs about how students best learn. • The introduction to the primary curriculum document specifically references the district's beliefs and vision about student learning and achievement, and indicate how the curriculum guidance is directly linked to those ideals. • Suggested activities and exemplars of student work align with and support the district's vision. • The primary curriculum document provides supports to instructional staff to attain the stated goals. 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Communication	Do the district's curriculum leaders support teachers and administrators by translating this overarching vision into a coherent, systemic set of learning expectations by grade level and subject so instructional staff can devote their energies to helping students learn essential knowledge and skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade level learning expectations are vertically and horizontally aligned. Teachers have access to learning expectations across grade levels and content areas. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Communication	Is there consensus on the right level of granularity to ensure that district curricular expectations are clear? Note: A district with high teacher turnover rates, for instance, may choose a smaller grain size than those with a stable, knowledgeable teaching force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of granularity (standards, etc.) in learning expectations are consistent across the district. Shared understanding of appropriate level of granularity across all district faculty and staff. Reasoning for level of granularity of learning expectations is documented in curriculum design materials. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Communication	Does the district curriculum clarify in detail what it expects teachers to teach and students to learn? Note: A majority of the district curricula provides a list of the standards to be taught at each grade level, without providing any guidance as to the precise content or the depth of knowledge and rigor with which to teach these concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation shows that the district has explicitly considered why and how their particular approach to school oversight is likely to improve instruction and advance academic achievement based on staff capacity and student performance. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Monitoring	Does the district have a thoughtful, internally consistent approach to instructional management and oversight?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district's approach to instructional management and oversight one that tailors the level of central oversight to the needs of schools, based on where schools and the district are on the continuum of progress. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Quality	Have potential lesson extensions to enhance/ deepen learning opportunities been indicated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons and units include extension activities. Extension activities serve to deepen student understanding of content and grade-level expectations. Lessons include spaces for teachers to create their own extension activities. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Quality	Does the curriculum explicitly articulate standards-aligned expectations for all learners, by grade level, for student work at different points during the school year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are clear indicators of what student performances are likely to be at various points within the school year included. Annotated exemplars of actual student work illustrating the level of performance the district expects at different points in the school year included. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Scope and Sequence	Are the district's curriculum documents clear about what must be taught and at what depth to reflect college and career ready standards for each grade level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum documents specify content standards and learning expectations. Curriculum documents include specification of different levels of student understanding. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Scope and Sequence	Based on walk-throughs, student work, and student achievement data, does the district identify which aspects of a learning objective need to be amended or need greater emphasis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of analysis of formal and informal student assessment data to identify learning objectives that require further analysis. Summary of analysis of lesson observation data to identify learning objectives that require further analysis. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Coherence	Is this unit/lesson coherent within and across grade levels? Are standards being addressed at the appropriate depth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons are reviewed by the content department as well as grade level Indicators of student success are in line with grade-specific standards criteria Professional Learning Communities (PLC) groups have the opportunity to collaborate on lesson plan development to ensure coherence within and across grade levels Curriculum audit is completed and finds units/lessons to be coherent within and across grade levels Scope and sequence documents are available to illustrate coherence within and across grade levels districtwide Unit/lesson plans explicitly address associated standards from grades below and above target grade level 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Coherence	Are there links between multiple clusters, standards, concepts, or skills to support teachers in making these connections in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons reference other applicable lessons (vertically and horizontally) where connections may be made • PLC groups have the opportunity to collaborate on lesson plan development to identify where connections can be made • Clearly identified delivery methods to assist in teaching content/ concepts/skills that have been traditionally difficult for students 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Coherence	Are standards-aligned indicators and expectations of student performance clear? Are they mapped backwards from where students should end up?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance expectations are explicitly written out and are in line with knowledge and skills dictated by grade-specific standards • Standards to be addressed in each unit/lesson have been unpacked • There is a direct connection between what students are expected to know and do with unit/lesson content and activities • Assessment events are outlined and indications are made regarding when and how to use them • Student exemplars are included • Rubrics to assess student knowledge are present 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Coherence	Does the curriculum build instructional coherence within and across grade levels consistent with college and career ready standards for each grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the curriculum build instructional coherence within a grade level so that students are able to make connections between concepts, knowledge, and ideas? Does the curriculum show explicit links between multiple clusters, standards, concepts, or skills to support teachers in making these connections in the classroom? Does the curriculum build instructional coherence across grade levels, attending to how concepts and skills are developed over time? Do the curriculum notations on each grade-level curriculum guide indicate what learning students had the previous year and where that learning will progress in subsequent grade levels? Does the district provide teachers with information about typical misconceptions and common learning gaps and how to address those issues while simultaneously working on grade-level concepts and skills? Does the curriculum consider what students should know and be able to do to be college and career ready, and then determine how students will acquire and develop knowledge and skills throughout their K–12 experience? Does the curriculum alert teachers to typical student misconceptions and incomplete learning that has been seen in student performance in previous years? Does the curriculum provide teachers with guidance for supporting and further enhancing learning opportunities for gifted and talented students? 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p>
Scaffolding & Student Supports	Are scaffolding and/or other supports included to address gaps in student knowledge and needs of special student populations to bring them up to grade-level expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment for learning practices is embedded within lesson plans across all content areas Lessons include components of mastery learning practices (e.g., enrichment activities, supplementary resources, diverse learning opportunities, etc.) Opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning about the formative assessment process Preteaching notes are included and emphasize where students have traditionally had difficulties 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p> <p>Guskey, T. R. (2007, November). Closing Achievement Gaps: Revisiting Benjamin S. Bloom's "Learning for Mastery." <i>Journal of Advanced Academics</i>, 19(1), 8-31.</p> <p>Wiliam, D. (2011). What is Assessment for Learning? <i>Studies in Educational Evaluation</i>, 37, 3-14.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Scaffolding & Student Supports	The curriculum contains scaffolds or other supports that address gaps in student knowledge, typical misconceptions, and the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities to ensure broad-based student attainment of grade-level standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the district analyze student performance data and use curriculum guidance documents to alert teachers to likely gaps and how to address them? • Does the district use assessment data and samples of student work collected during walk-throughs in schools to determine the learning gaps that are common throughout the school system? • Does the district have a process to identify areas that require additional instructional focus in language, writing, and reasoning skills? • Does the district provide examples of activities or links to videos of classroom techniques that can support 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Educator Supports	Are reference sources/instructional materials specifically indicated (links, page numbers, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and materials include references and links to specific resources. • Resources and materials include page and lesson numbers. • The name of resource(s) being utilized are identified. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Educator Supports	Have teachers been meaningfully included throughout the process, supplemented by appropriate supports to allow for enactment, follow-through, and revision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is consistent communication through appropriate channels regarding the curriculum design process. • There are professional learning community activities that encourage and support all stages of the curriculum design and review process. • Teachers are aware of and are invested in district goals for curriculum design. • 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Educator Supports	Are curricular documents developed in a way that ensures broad-based access and ease of use, with deliberately chosen and clearly identified delivery models?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External analysis is conducted to measure access to curricula for different student groups. • Professional development is provided that demonstrates different delivery modes for curricula. 	□	
Educator Supports	Has the district presented a unified message and implemented unified processes across campuses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools/campuses are provided with teacher leaders and/or administrators who have undergone district training on processes. • Initiatives and processes are generally consistent from year to year based on documentation. • A communications plan for dissemination of curriculum design messaging and process exists and is executed. • Curriculum design and review processes are outlined, detailed, and shared with all district and school staff. • The district provides all campuses with appropriate supports that provide structure and guidance necessary for curriculum changes to be enacted. • The district continuously builds a culture of shared accountability for student achievement across all district offices, including the central office, schools, etc. 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p> <p>Voegt, J. M., Pieters, J. M., & Handelzalts, A. (2016). Teacher Collaboration in Curriculum Design Teams: Effects, Mechanisms, and Conditions. <i>Educational Research and Evaluation</i>, 22(3-4), 121-140.</p>
Assessment & Student Measurement	Are assessments directly linked to standards and instruction? What are the indicators of student success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and measurable student goals are indicated • Indicators of success are written in a positive language • Lessons allow for student-friendly version of indicators to be shared with students • Explicit link(s) exist between indicators and standard(s) intended to be addressed • Indicators of student success allow for equitable demonstration of success • Assessment decisions include information about potential next steps in instruction 	□	<p><i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.</p> <p>Wiliam, D. (2011). What is Assessment for Learning? <i>Studies in Educational Evaluation</i>, 37, 3-14.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Assessment & Student Measurement	The curriculum provides suggestions for the best ways to measure whether students have met specific learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the district begin with the end in mind to ensure that classroom teaching leads to the desired expectations? Does the district provide sample tasks or guidance on how to measure student achievement? Does the district show or link to samples of student work products that illustrate the level of work the district expects from students and the level of tasks assigned to lead to that work? Are there custom rubrics for particular assignments? Do instructional materials explicitly indicate when and how to use assessments, including formative assessments, to determine whether students are making progress in attaining a particular standard or set of standards? 	□	
Assessment & Student Measurement	Is there a process for refining and improving curriculum based on the feedback collected from teachers and administrators as well as from student achievement and student work data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the district regularly reach out across departments and to teachers and administrators to gauge the quality and alignment of the curriculum and its usefulness to end users in supporting student achievement? Does the district clearly communicate all changes to the curriculum to teachers, administrators, and staff, acknowledging the role of data and feedback in these revisions? Does the district provide teachers and administrators with guidance on what to look for in student work, what to look for during walk-throughs, and how to assess student learning to provide evidence that assignments and student work are aligned to grade-specific instructional expectations articulated in the curriculum? Is there a bank of annotated exemplars of student work in order to provide explicit guidance on what students are expected to learn and produce at each grade level, as well as next steps in addressing unfinished learning? Is there a system to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development in improving instructional practice and increasing college and career ready levels? Is there a system to evaluate how teaching resources are used and monitor the placement and use of technology to prevent inequities in access to digital resources? 	□	

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESOURCES
Assessment & Student Measurement	Are there checkpoints and measures for gauging whether the school system is on the right path in its instructional reform efforts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there measures that consist of a diverse set of indicators of student achievement and access to rigorous, grade-level content? • Are all summative, formative, criterion-based assessments, as well as the systematic evaluation of student work, aligned to the content and rigor of college and career ready standards? 	□	
Implementation	Implementation requires focused collaboration and calibration on the part of all district staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the curriculum process have the endorsement and support of a district's school board and superintendent? • Is the implementation process guided by cross-functional planning, including a diverse set of district instructional leaders, school supervisors, principals, and teachers? • Are resources strategically allocated based on district priorities? • Are there high-quality, ongoing professional learning opportunities based on district data that are targeted to meet the diverse needs of teachers, aides, and administrators? • Do principals and supervisors understand what key focus areas are, why they are critical, and what that learning looks like? • For observers, is there coherence in what they are observing and looking for in classrooms and the way they gauge the progress students should be making at various points of the year so that they are in a position to provide teachers with quality feedback? • Are there formal and informal feedback mechanisms? • Is there monitoring of implementation in all schools and classrooms? • Is there assessment of student work and progress? • Is the district continuously working to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with integrity and is supporting access to rigorous content and high-quality instruction for all students? 	□	

Instructional Materials Review

This includes district-developed materials and resources.

Resources to support an instructional materials review:

- ◆ Resources: Downloadable Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved February 05, 2018, from <https://www.edreports.org/resources/downloadable-resources/index.html>
- ◆ Resources: Tools and Evidence Guides. (n.d.). Retrieved February 05, 2018, from <https://www.edreports.org/resources/tools-and-evidence-guides/index.html>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Overall Quality	Have the materials been vetted by an external expert panel and/or internal experts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the materials been vetted by an external expert panel and/or internal experts? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Overall Quality	Is there evidence of an articulated process for vetting the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of an articulated process for vetting the curriculum? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chingos, M. M., & Whitehurst, G. J. (2012) <i>Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core.</i> The Brookings Institution.
Overall Quality	Is there evidence that the curriculum is aligned to the state standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence that the curriculum is aligned to the state standards? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chingos, M. M., & Whitehurst, G. J. (2012) <i>Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core.</i> The Brookings Institution.
Overall Quality	Are teachers engaged in piloting new products prior to adoption?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation data are collected from teacher piloting. • Teacher notes are collected from piloting sessions. • Notes are collected from professional development sessions where new curriculum products are discussed or reviewed. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Overall Quality	Does the material add to the representation of diverse authors and information sources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum represents material and perspectives from authors representing different stakeholder groups. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Overall Quality	Is there a strong presence of research-based practices within and throughout the material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum is developed based on evidence-based best practices. Curriculum includes materials or practices from organizations using evidence-based best practices. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Overall Quality	Is there support for the best teaching through identification of appropriate annotated resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiling a list of resources that can be readily shared with district and school staff. Compiling a list of organizations that can be referenced or contacted for support or resources. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Text Quality	Are there culturally responsive texts and resources that respect and celebrate the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development modules or resources discuss cultural responsiveness in curricula. There is evidence of internal or external review for possible curricular bias. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Text Quality	<p>Is there evidence of measurement of the quality of texts?</p> <p>Note: Texts are of sufficient scope and quality to provide text-centered and integrated learning that is sequenced and scaffolded to (1) advance students toward independent reading of grade-level texts and (2) build content knowledge (e.g., ELA, social studies, science, and the arts). The quality of texts is high—they support multiple readings for various purposes and exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information. Materials present a progression of complex texts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In grades 2–12, materials provide texts that are appropriately complex for the identified grade level according to the requirements outlined in the standards. Measures for determining complexity include quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as reader and task considerations. Poetry and drama are analyzed only using qualitative measures. In grades K–2, extensive read-aloud texts allow sufficient opportunity for engagement with text that is more complex than students could read on their own. At least 90 percent of texts are authentic and offer rich opportunities for students to meet the grade-level standards; the texts are well-crafted, representing the quality of content, language, and writing that is produced by experts in various disciplines. Materials provide a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about themes with connected topics and ideas through tasks in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language. Within a sequence or collection, quality texts of grade-level complexity are selected for multiple, careful readings throughout the unit of study. In grades K–2, the inclusion of read-aloud texts in addition to what students can read themselves ensures that all students can build knowledge about the world through engagement with rich, complex text. These texts must also form a coherent sequence or collection of connected texts that build vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about themes with connected topics and ideas through tasks in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language. Texts increase in complexity as materials progress across grade bands. Read-aloud texts follow the same trend, although they may have greater variability because listening skills in elementary school generally outpace reading skills. 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p>
Text Quality	<p>Is there evidence of a range and volume of texts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the materials reflect the distribution of text types and genres as suggested by the standards? In grades K–12, materials seek a balance in instructional time between literature and informational texts. (Reviewers will consider the balance within units of study as well as across the entire grade level using the ratio between literature/informational texts to help determine the appropriate balance.) Materials include texts of different formats (e.g., print and non-print, including film, art, music, charts, etc.) and lengths (e.g. short stories and novels). 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
	<p>Do the instructional materials provide instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, development, syntax, and fluency in a logical and transparent progression? (Grades K–5 only)</p> <p>Note: These foundational skills are necessary and central components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials follow a sequence of appropriate foundational skills instruction indicated by the standards, while providing abundant opportunities for every student to become proficient in each of the foundational skills. In grades K–2, materials include engaging, content-rich, and phonetically controlled student texts that allow for systematic, explicit, and frequent practice of foundational skills as they are introduced. In grades 3–5, materials demand knowledge of grade-level phonic patterns and word analysis skills. In grades K–2, materials provide instruction and practice in word study including pronunciation, roots, prefixes, suffixes and spelling/sound patterns, as well as decoding of grade-level words, including high-frequency words, by using sound-symbol knowledge and knowledge of syllabication and regular practice in encoding (spelling) the sound symbol relationships of English. In grades 3–5, materials provide instruction and practice in word study, including systematic examination of grade-level morphology, decoding of multisyllabic words by using syllabication, and automaticity with grade-level regular and irregular spelling patterns. Opportunities are frequently built into the materials that allow for students to achieve reading fluency in oral and silent reading; that is, to read a wide variety of grade-appropriate prose, poetry, and informational texts with accuracy, rate appropriate to the text and expression. This should include monitoring that will allow students to receive regular feedback on their oral reading fluency in the specific areas of appropriate rate, expressiveness, and accuracy. Materials guide students to read grade-level text with purpose and understanding and to make frequent connections between acquisition of foundation skills and making meaning from reading. In grades K–2, materials provide opportunities for teachers to assess students' mastery of foundational skills and respond to the needs of individual students based on ongoing assessments offered at regular intervals. Monitoring should include attention to invented spelling as appropriate for its diagnostic value. Materials provide abundant and easily implemented materials, so teachers can readily provide more time, attention, and practice for those students who need it. 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p>
Text Quality	<p>Do text dependent and text-specific questions and tasks require use of textual evidence in support of meeting other grade-specific standards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A majority of questions in the materials are text dependent and text specific; student ideas are expressed through both written and spoken responses. Questions and tasks include the language of the standards and require students to engage in thinking at the depth and complexity required by the grade-level standards to advance and deepen student learning over time. (Note: not every standard must be addressed with every text.) 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Text Quality	Are the majority of tasks text-dependent or text-specific, do they reflect the writing genres named in the standards, require communication skills for college and career readiness, and help students meet the language standards for the grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials include a variety of opportunities for students to listen, speak, and write about their understanding of texts. Those opportunities are prominent, varied in length and time demands (e.g., informal peer conversations, note taking, summary writing, discussing and writing short-answer responses, whole-class formal discussions, shared writing, formal essays in different genres, on-demand and process writing, etc.), and require students to engage effectively, as determined by the grade-level standards. A vast majority of oral and written tasks at all grade levels require students to demonstrate the knowledge they built through the analysis and synthesis of texts, and present well-defended claims and clear information, using grade-level language and conventions and drawing on textual evidence to support valid inferences from text. (Applies to grades 3–12 only.) Materials address grade-level foundation standards that require students in the early grades to know their letters, phonetic conventions, sentence structures, and spelling. (Applies to grades K–2 only.) Materials include multiple writing tasks aligned to the three modes of writing (opinion/argumentative, informative, narrative) as outlined by the standards at each grade level. For example, as students progress through the grades, narrative prompts decrease in number and increase in being based on text(s). In grades 3–12, tasks included blended modes (i.e., analytical writing). For example, materials engage students in many shared (grades K–2) or short research projects annually to develop the expertise needed to conduct research independently. Materials provide models for writing and student exemplars to support writing development in ELA. Materials explicitly address the grammar and language conventions specified by the language standards at each grade level and build on those standards from previous grade levels through application and practice of those skills in the context of reading and writing about unit texts. For example, materials create opportunities for students to analyze the syntax of a quality text to determine the text’s meaning and model their own sentence construction and writing after texts as a way to develop more complex sentence structure and usage. 	□	<i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Assessment	Do instructional materials offer assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress and elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the assessed grade-specific standards with appropriately complex text(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement of progress via assessments should include gradual release of supporting scaffolds for students to measure their independent abilities. Aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines (such as scoring guides or student work exemplars) are included and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. Materials use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. Materials assess student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students. 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p>
Scaffolding & Student Support	Do instructional materials provide all students, including those who read below grade level, with extensive opportunities and support to encounter and comprehend grade level complex text as required by the standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reading activities and suggested approaches to teacher scaffolding are focused and engage students with understanding the text itself. Pre-reading activities should be no more than 10 percent of time devoted to any reading instruction. Materials must have the goal of students gaining full comprehension of complex text (through read-aloud in grades K–1) and do not confuse or substitute mastery of skills or strategies for full comprehension of text; reading strategies support comprehension of specific texts and focus on building knowledge and insight. Texts must not serve as platforms to practice discrete strategies. Materials regularly direct teachers to return to focused parts of the text to guide students through rereading, discussion, and writing about the ideas, events, and information found there. The materials are easy to use and well organized for students and teachers. The reading selections are centrally located within the materials and obviously the center of focus. Appropriate suggestions and materials are provided for supporting varying student needs at the unit and lesson level (e.g., alternate teaching approaches, pacing, instructional delivery options, suggestions for addressing common student difficulties to meet standards, reteaching strategies or suggestions for supporting texts, suggestions for more advanced texts for extension, etc.). The content can be reasonably completed within a regular school year and the pacing of content allows for maximum student understanding. The materials provide guidance about the amount of time a task might reasonably take. Do the instructional materials reflect a diversity of students’ cultures and lived experiences? Do the instructional materials anticipate and address the learning needs teachers will have in trying to enact the curriculum (“educative features”)? 	□	<p><i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i></p> <p>Chingos, M. M., & Whitehurst, G. J. (2012) <i>Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core</i>. The Brookings Institution.</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Sequence	<p>Is the required background knowledge acknowledged?</p> <p>Note: Content should not be kept from students because it is “developmentally inappropriate.” The term implies there is a biologically inevitable course of development, and that this course is predictable by age. To answer the question “is the student ready?” it is best to consider “has the student mastered the prerequisites?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum identifies the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to access new materials. Supports and strategies are identified to help students develop prerequisite knowledge and skills. 	□	<p>https://standardswork.org/good-bye-comprehension-strategies-hello-background-knowledge/</p> <p>Skinner, B. F. (1954). <i>The science of learning and the art of teaching</i>. Cambridge, Mass..</p>
Sequence	<p>Is the content explicit through carefully paced explanation, modeling, and examples?</p> <p>Note: This can help ensure that students are not overwhelmed. “Explanation” does not mean teachers must do all the talking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample lessons demonstrate how to incorporate explanation, modeling, and examples into classroom instruction. There are notes from professional learning communities or work groups on how to implement curriculum to be paced. 	□	<p>Skinner, B. F. (1954). <i>The science of learning and the art of teaching</i>. Cambridge, Mass..</p>

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Sequence	Does the scope and sequence of the curriculum specify what content knowledge and skills should be taught, and at approximately what point during a school year, so that students who transfer between schools have a coherent learning experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum includes a clear sequence that outlines progression of knowledge and skills. The curriculum identifies the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to access the curriculum at different points. 	□	<i>Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.</i> (2017). Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools.
Educator Supports	Does the material include educator supports that help teachers deepen pedagogical and content knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are supports and suggestions for teacher professional development to engage in lesson study. Resources align with best practices for bolstering teachers' pedagogical knowledge. There are supports and suggestions for administrators and subject leaders to engage with teachers in professional development. 	□	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Focus	Is there evidence that the instructional materials focus on grade level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum is presented by grade level. The curriculum includes specification of grade-level appropriate knowledge and skills. 	□	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Focus	Is there evidence that instructional materials focus on major "clusters" of the grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum is presented by clusters. The curriculum specifies how different skills relate to one another. The curriculum specifies how instructional clusters are grade- or age-appropriate. 	□	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Usability	What are the logistical, technological, and financial barriers that must be removed to allow schools to purchase and implement required material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an accurate and current count of students who will need to be served by curricular materials. • There is an inventory of district or school resources, including technological equipment and curricular materials. • Governing board policies or materials that regulate curricular purchasing or acquisition have been shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of coherence between rigor and instructional practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources or documents that are used to establish a common definition of rigor. • Internal or external review of the alignment between instructional practices and intended rigor has been conducted. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of coherence between rigor and balance within the grade-level content?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal or external review of the alignment between instructional rigor and balance has been conducted. • Tasks that have grade-appropriate rigor have been identified. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of explicit connections between instructional practices and content?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample lessons demonstrate how curriculum can be implemented for different students. • Evidence-based instructional practices for the associated subject matter have been identified. • Notes have been taken from professional development discussing the alignment between instruction and curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of embedded instructional supports and their usability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different instructional supports and the resources needed to implement or use each have been identified. • Different instructional supports and the context in which each should be used have been identified. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Coherence	Is there evidence of instructional use and design to facilitate learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are used to develop a common understanding of instructional use and design. There has been an internal or external review to identify how instructional use and design are applied to curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of supports for teacher learning and understanding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning resources or modules are aligned to curriculum. Schedule of professional development for both teachers and administrators is focused on understanding and bolstering teacher learning as it relates to curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of aligned assessment resources and tools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal or informal assessment tools that are aligned to curriculum are used. There has been an internal or external study that demonstrates alignment between assessment and curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of supports for differentiated instruction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum identifies different entry points for students, depending on their existing knowledge and skills There are resources or documents that teachers can use to identify strategies for differentiating instruction. There are professional development notes or resources that discuss how teachers can differentiate different lessons. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.
Coherence	Is there evidence of supports for effective use of technology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum identifies all technology that could be used to support curriculum implementation. Measures that indicate appropriate use of technology have been identified. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Practice What You Teach: Checklist for System Leaders to Reshape Professional Learning Systems in Schools.</i> (2017). The Aspen Institute and Student Achievement Partners.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Coherence	Do instructional materials contain meaningful, connected tasks that build student knowledge and provide opportunities for students to read, understand, and express understanding of complex texts through speaking and listening, and writing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherent sequences of questions and tasks focus students on understanding the text and its illustrations (as applicable), making connections among the texts in the collection, and expressing their understanding of the topics, themes, and/or ideas presented in the texts. Questions and tasks are developed so that students build knowledge and skill over the course of the unit. Questions and tasks are designed so that students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language through quality, grade-level complex texts. 	□	<i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i>
Coherence	Do tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening, and include components of vocabulary, syntax, and fluency, as needed, so that students can gain meaning from the text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions and tasks support students in examining the language (vocabulary, sentences, and structure) critical to the meaning of texts. Questions and tasks also focus on advancing depth of word knowledge through emphasizing word meaning and relationships among words (e.g., concept- and thematically related words, word families, etc.) rather than isolated vocabulary practice, and engaging students with multiple repetitions of words in varied contexts (e.g., reading different texts, completing tasks, engaging in speaking/listening). 	□	<i>Louisiana Department of Education – Rubrics and guides for evaluating curriculum, instructional materials, and benchmark assessments</i>
Rigor	Does the curriculum guide teachers and students through complex, highly engaging tasks that require “deeper learning” (i.e., the ability to apply content knowledge to solve problems across different contexts with increasingly less support over time)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of scaffolding strategies that can be used to help students access increasingly rigorous material Professional development modules or resources that help teachers identify and implement instructional strategies for increasingly rigorous material Identification of differentiated instruction to help a variety of students access rigorous material 	□	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Quality	Is the content of the professional development meeting the teachers' needs given the content?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher feedback is provided on professional development, including identification of successful features and existing needs. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Quality	Are results on changing practice or improving outcomes of students being measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is identification of goals or outcomes that will be used to measure impact. There is evidence of departmental or school-based data analysis that includes collection of student outcome data. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Does the professional development include protocols for using collaborative time effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are examples of professional development modules or schedules that highlight effective collaboration. There are resources that identify research-based practices for effective professional development practices. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Does professional development leverage student work products as teaching tools for teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are examples of student data/work analysis that demonstrate how this analysis can inform future instruction. Time is scheduled during professional development or professional learning communities for teachers to collectively analyze student work, assess student understanding, and inform future instruction. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Does the professional development create "common" experiences across groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time is scheduled for teachers to collaborate and share their instructional experiences. There are procedures for teachers to share their instructional experiences and perspectives. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Effectiveness	Does the professional development include opportunities for explicit connections between what was taught with how it was taught?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are notes from classroom observations to identify connections between content and pedagogical methods. • Curricular exemplars are selected to demonstrate best practices for instruction that is explicitly linked to curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Are professional development teams led by content experts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is identification of the content expertise professional development leaders possess. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Is there a short (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly) cycle of development in small content-specific professional learning communities at schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schedule of professional development shows dedicated time for curricular development. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Does the professional development provide an opportunity for teachers to deepen their content knowledge and hone their expertise in the standards-aligned teaching practices that are most important for their particular content area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development modules or resources share strategies for supporting teacher work regarding content knowledge. • Professional development modules or resources focus on standards-aligned instruction. • There is evidence of professional development or professional learning opportunities where teachers can discuss their instructional experiences. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Effectiveness	Is there a brief (≤15 minute) observation component that provides an opportunity for the teachers to showcase their learning from the professional development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes are collected from teacher observations. There is evidence of discussion regarding observation notes and insights and how teachers can use this information to shape instruction. 	□	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Is there an opportunity for participants to receive praise for the growth they are making? And an opportunity to process with the content expert, prioritize one skill to focus on during the coming week, plan an upcoming lesson with this skill in mind, and practice the skill with the content expert?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development or professional learning schedule includes dedicated time for teachers to debrief with content expert. There are documents describing the individual-level support content experts will provide to teachers. 	□	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Are the content experts the right leaders? It takes a special skill set to be a leader. One needs expertise in a whole set of adult coaching and facilitation skills, as well as deep content knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback is collected from teachers on their experiences with content experts. Feedback is collected from teachers on the coaching and facilitation skills of content experts. 	□	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Effectiveness	Are content experts vetted and provided extensive training opportunities (e.g., summer training, ongoing training, etc.) throughout the year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a schedule of professional development or professional learning opportunities provided to content experts. • Relevant professional development modules or resources for content experts are identified. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Is there a dedicated team for design, strategy, leadership development, and implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team that is responsible for professional learning, including associated responsibilities for each team member, is identified. • There is documentation of how each team member's role relates to broader goals for professional learning. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Is there an evaluation plan to ensure that the effort is actually transforming teaching practice and raising student achievement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluator is identified. • An evaluation plan, including the data that will be collected and analyzed to determine impact, is developed. • A timeline for the evaluation is developed. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Effectiveness	Are teachers required to apply their learning, study how it worked for students, bring back questions and suggestions to the group, and repeat the cycle of learning, application, and reflection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing notes are created to record professional development or professional learning where teachers can reflect on their instruction and student outcomes. • Exemplars of teachers engaging in lesson study are identified and shared. • Professional learning modules or resources for administrators to understand how to implement and support lesson study are identified and shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Effectiveness	Is the professional development provided addressing decisions teachers are making with their students in the context of the actual materials they are using?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials from professional development sessions that focus on coherence between instruction and curriculum are identified and shared. Exemplars of lessons that demonstrate lesson analysis and subsequent instructional refinement are identified and shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Culture	Is professional development a collegial process that draws on and values their experience as a resource?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from teachers regarding the culture and tenor or professional learning is collected. Schedules or notes are collected from teacher professional development or professional learning that include opportunities for teachers to share their knowledge and insights with one another. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Culture	Are teachers being asked for feedback?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools (e.g., surveys, focus groups) or processes used to collect teacher feedback are identified and shared. Processes used to collect teacher feedback are documented and shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.
Culture	Is teacher feedback being reviewed and applied?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School or district staff responsible for reviewing teacher feedback are identified. Processes for reviewing teacher feedback, analyzing feedback, and using feedback to develop or revise professional learning are documented and shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i> . Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Support	<p>Is there district-provided time and support so teachers can become experts in the curriculum?</p> <p>Note: Studies of high-performing systems found that 30 to 35 percent of teachers' time is spent on "working in teams with other teachers to develop and improve lessons, observing and critiquing classes, and working with struggling students. [T]eachers also counsel and train each other, constantly observing, evaluating, and improving their practices.... This highly professional work environment is uncommon in the U.S."¹ This type of collaboration, which is oriented specifically around how to improve instruction in the context of a specific content area, is directly associated with more effective teaching and stronger student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules of professional learning or professional development include dedicated time for teacher learning. Professional learning modules or resources that can be used to support teacher learning are identified and shared. 	<p style="text-align: center;">□</p>	<p>Wiener, R., & Pimentel, S. (2017). <i>Practice What You TEACH: Connecting Curriculum & Professional Learning in Schools</i>. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.</p>

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures. (2016). No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State. Retrieved from: http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/10-31-2016_NCSL_NoTimetoLose_Handout.pdf.

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Support	<p>Are teacher leaders being provided time to deepen their content knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and leadership skills?</p> <p>Note: Studies of high-performing systems found that districts provide at least 90 minutes of collaborative planning time per week for teachers, without reducing instructional time for students. System and school leaders create time for collaboration either by adjusting teacher and student schedules or by increasing the overall number of hours that teachers work during a school day or week. The method for building this time into teachers' schedules varied based on system context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules of professional learning or professional development that include dedicated time for teacher leader learning Identified professional learning modules or resources that can be used to support teacher leader learning 	<input type="checkbox"/>	

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Support	Does teacher collaboration focus time for specific instructional purposes and include organized resources around this time to ensure that teachers have the tools and support to use it productively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules from professional development or professional learning time include dedicated time for instruction. Resources are identified that can be shared and used to focus collaboration time on instructional development. Feedback is collected from teachers on the effectiveness of professional development and its content. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support	Do created teams share content, have a balance of teacher skills, and focus on improving instruction and student learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different team members and their methods for sharing information and collaborating are identified. Notes are collected from teams on professional learning activities and outcomes. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support	Are teams assigned instructional experts who have time to facilitate and support collaborative planning time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional experts and their responsibilities regarding professional development are identified. Schedules identify when instructional experts are made available to teachers. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support	Are teams provided agendas, tools, protocols, and easy-to-use student assessment data to support collaboration and create accountability for the shared time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are examples of team materials that include dedicated time for collaboration. There are resources that can be shared to demonstrate strategies or activities for collaboration. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Support	Has district leadership cultivated a professional adult culture and willingness to collaborate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is district documentation of norms and expectations for collaboration. • District goals and desired outcomes for collaboration are identified. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning
Support	Does the district provide time, support, and training for instructional experts to develop their own content knowledge and improve their coaching practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning modules or resources that can be used to support coaches are identified. • Professional development schedules include dedicated time for coaches to increase their content knowledge. • Examples of effective instructional coach practices are identified and shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning
Support	Does the district have a fair and accurate system for differentiating teachers' effectiveness as well as aligned compensation and career pathways in order to develop instructional leadership among teacher leaders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is documentation of teacher effectiveness protocols, including documentation of these protocols being disseminated across all schools. • There is documentation of career pathways and the processes for career advancement. • There is documentation of district or school leaders sharing teacher effectiveness and career advancement protocols with teachers. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning
Feedback	Does the district provide frequent, content-specific feedback?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a schedule for conducting teacher observations to collect data and share feedback with teachers. • Resources that provide guidelines for effective feedback are identified and shared. • There is documentation of meetings between district staff and teachers to discuss instruction. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Feedback	Is there a culture of learning characterized by high levels of trust between staff members, candid feedback, and commitment to a growth mindset?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom observations are conducted to understand relationships between administrators and teachers, and between teachers. Feedback is collected from different school staff groups (e.g., survey, focus groups) to understand experiences of different school staff. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning
Feedback	<p>Are there sufficient instructional experts in each school to ensure a low (15:1) teacher-to-coach ratio?</p> <p>Note: Studies of high-performing systems show average teacher-to-instructional expert ratios ranging from 12:1 to 22:1, with far less variation from school to school, due in part to implementation of teacher leadership programs that help to develop and more evenly distribute school-based instructional expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each instructional coach and the teachers each coach is responsible for working with is identified. District or school policies mandating the teacher-to-coach ratio are shared. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning

FOCUS AREA	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE	ANALYSIS	RESEARCH
Feedback	<p>Has the district allocated sufficient time for observation and coaching cycles?</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a “typical” district, principals, coaches, or administrators only observe teachers once a year for 30 minutes at a time, which is less than 0.1 percent of the total 1,000 or so hours that teachers spend teaching in a single school year. 2. A recent National Bureau of Economic Research working paper showed that in schools where teachers receive informal or formal feedback at least 10 times per semester, students perform significantly higher than in schools where teachers receive less frequent feedback. 3. High-performing systems studied deliberately designed expert support roles so they could observe each teacher for typically 15–30 minutes a week followed by a 15–30 minute debrief conversation within 48 hours of the observation. This makes it possible to incorporate feedback cycles firmly into the rhythm of the school, with teachers and coaches working together to improve a variety of skills over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a schedule for conducting teacher observations. • There is a schedule for dedicated coaching time. • There is district documentation of requirements for observations and coaching cycles. • Professional learning modules or resources specify the appropriate processes and amount of time for conducting teacher observations and coaching. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Igniting the Learning Engine - How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning</p>



CSAI Update is produced by the The Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI). CSAI, a collaboration between WestEd and CRESST, provides state education agencies (SEAs) and Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) with research support, technical assistance, tools, and other resources to help inform decisions about standards, assessment, and accountability. Visit www.csai-online.org for more information.

This document was produced under prime award #S283B050022A between the U.S. Department of Education and WestEd. The findings and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education.



WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development, and service agency that partners with education and other communities throughout the United States and abroad to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has more than a dozen offices nationwide, from Massachusetts, Vermont and Georgia, to Illinois, Arizona and California, with headquarters in San Francisco.

For more information, visit WestEd.org; call 415.565.3000 or, toll-free, (877) 4-WestEd; or write: WestEd / 730 Harrison Street San Francisco, CA 94107-1242.