

Supplement to

HANDBOOK FOR SUSTAINING STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION IN ADULT EDUCATION:

Checklists for Assessing Effective Implementation

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How to Use This Document

This document is designed as a resource for state and local program leaders looking to support the effective implementation of state academic content standards. At the center of this supplement are two checklists.

One is the State Leadership Checklist. State staff can use this as a self-assessment to gauge the effectiveness of their state's implementation of and support for academic standards grounded in research. It identifies the actions needed to sustain an effective college and career readiness (CCR) standards implementation initiative at the state level. The State Leadership Checklist includes eight core components of effective implementation.

State leaders are often the first point of contact for local or regional program leads as they begin the work of standards implementation. They are looking for guidance on how best to build a sustainable model at the program level where so much of standards implementation takes place. Consequently, the second checklist is the Program Leadership Checklist. It is designed for use by both state and local program leaders to help guide the implementation of high-quality standards at the local and regional levels. It includes six Sustainability Steps that programs need to take. The second checklist is a tool some states may wish to integrate into their monitoring of local providers.

Both checklists also can be used in conjunction with the Handbook for Sustaining Standards-Based Education in Adult Education.¹ The handbook has additional guidance regarding several sustainability elements. Considered together, the checklists and the handbook can assist state and local programs in developing a long-range, step-by-step standards implementation plan.

¹ The Handbook for Sustaining Standards-Based Education in Adult Education is located at: <https://lincs.ed.gov/professional-development/resource-collections/profile-740>.

Part I. State Leadership Checklist for Assessing the Effective Implementation of High-Quality Academic Standards

Core Component 1. Embrace an active learning model at the state level.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Subject your ideas and practices to the same sort of analysis, feedback, and improvement cycle expected of local program staff.	
Keep an eye on your programs' abilities to function effectively, cope adequately, change appropriately, and grow from within.	

Rationale: *It is essential to focus everyone in the system—from front-line classroom instructors to state-level program administrators—on improving adult student learning. A culture of learning is ultimately traceable back to its leaders. Modeling good practice for instructors shows that everyone is learning and moving in the same direction.*

Core Component 2. Create a strategic implementation plan, in specific and quantifiable terms, to articulate the scope and rollout of the standards initiative.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Size up your context for full-scale integration of standards to determine how best (and at what speed) to proceed for three to five years.	
Set goals for professional development that are clear, measurable, and directly connected to student learning.	
Translate the standards initiative into an inspiring vision and rationale that you can share with others.	
Create realistic expectations and outcomes, and minimize potential challenges or costs.	
Ensure sufficient finances and resources to support the standards initiative at state and local program levels.	

Rationale: *Putting together a plan from the very start provides you with a road map for implementation. It identifies outcome expectations for the new initiative, and names potential losses if it is not implemented. It helps program leads and other educators understand how the new standards initiative supports and connects with the state's overall adult education philosophy and why implementation is a high priority.*

Core Component 3. Provide CCR Standards-in-Action (CCR SIA) content standards training (or its equivalent) to implementation team members and state professional developers.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Form a talented, committed implementation team.	
Offer training about the key instructional advances of high-quality academic standards for mathematics and English language arts (ELA)/literacy that must be enacted in classrooms (e.g., through CCR SIA Foundational Units 1–4).	
Offer training on other critical aspects of standards implementation, such as quality of materials, assessments, and instructional practice (e.g., through CCR SIA Advanced Units 1–3).	

Rationale: *Research shows that organized and effective implementation teams make a huge difference in achieving success. Several studies show that making modest investments in competent teams to drive implementation dramatically improves outcomes; such investments improve the fidelity and increase the speed of implementation reforms.² For implementation team members and professional development leads to be prepared to train others, they must clearly understand the intent of the standards—what knowledge and skills are to be taught and learned.*

² Fixsen, Dean L., Sandra F. Naoom, Karen A. Blase, Robert M. Friedman, and Francis Wallace. 2005. *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*. FMHI Publication #231. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, the National Implementation Research Network.

Core Component 4. Establish clear expectations for program leads regarding standards implementation.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Identify for local program staff why standards implementation is a high priority, and how it supports and connects with the state's overall adult education philosophy.	
Share the goals of your standards initiative with program leads.	
Set the expectation that program leads focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning budgets and employment policies to support the standards initiative. • Investing in high-quality instructional materials that reflect the full demands of college and career readiness in math and ELA/literacy. • Providing time for instructors to engage in professional learning about high-quality academic standards. • Creating a culture where curiosity and learning are valued. • Supporting ongoing content-specific professional learning opportunities and monitoring the effectiveness of standards training for its successful replication. • Addressing transitions and turnovers in staff so newcomers receive the CCR standards training they need. 	

Rationale: *Because teaching is a highly context-specific craft, programs are the essential unit of change for improving the quality, relevance, and efficacy of professional learning. That's why program leads need to understand that they have vitally important roles and responsibilities to shoulder. They need to recognize that the most important work—job-embedded and ongoing professional learning that deepens content knowledge, pedagogy, and instructors' ability to apply standards—either happens in the professional community of a program or does not happen.*

Core Component 5. Deliver CCR SIA trainings (or their equivalent) statewide according to the schedule set out in the strategic implementation plan.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Provide professional development on key instructional advances contained within high-quality academic standards for mathematics and ELA/literacy that must be enacted in classrooms (e.g., through CCR SIA Foundational Units 1–4).	
Provide professional development on other critical aspects of standards implementation, such as quality of materials, assessments, and instructional practice (e.g., through CCR SIA Advanced Units 1–3).	

Rationale: *Instructors need (and deserve) training to understand and implement new academic standards. The CCR SIA Foundational Units introduce the key instructional advances of high-quality academic standards for mathematics and ELA/literacy. To address three additional elements of standards-based reform, training on the Foundational Units should be followed by advanced CCR SIA trainings (or their equivalent). This includes aligning lessons, instructional materials, assignments, and student work with the standards. It also includes promoting continuous improvement on instructional practices aligned with the new standards.*

Core Component 6. Monitor the effectiveness of year-one trainings to plan for their successful replication and improvement in subsequent years.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Collect data to determine how to achieve quality trainings reliably under different circumstances in later years of implementation.	
Collect information on program efforts to align curricula, upgrade assignments, and target professional development.	
Adopt an appropriate match between the demands of standards implementation and known staff motivations and capabilities as training proceeds around the state.	
Hold the implementation team (including state members) accountable for developing support systems, resolving organizational issues and system-related challenges that arise, and achieving positive results.	

Rationale: *Monitoring the effectiveness of your trainings will provide you with the necessary insight to spread the standards initiative more quickly and effectively. Based on the data collected, you can determine with the implementation team what possible modifications (if any) you wish to make to the process or substance of the strategic implementation plan before moving on. In particular, you can determine if the plan to implement standards through training needs to be aligned with new contexts.*

Core Component 7. Provide content-specific support for program leads across the state to deepen their pedagogical expertise and understanding of the demands of the standards.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Ensure equitable development and distribution of content expertise across programs so that all instructors and students can benefit from expert support.	
Create simple tools (such as training protocols and sample agendas from CCR SIA) to support content-specific training cycles in programs.	
With support from the implementation team, establish a site-based steering committee in each program to guide and support the replication of state training.	

Rationale: *Adopting and phasing in the new standards requires well-designed guidance and support for program leadership. It also requires establishing new working relationships, contributing to positive interpersonal interactions, and countering any disruptive rumors or misinformation.*

Core Component 8. Build numbers of committed educators.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Solicit educator feedback about professional development and make improvements based on results, creating buy-in from program leaders and teaching staff.	
Secure a committed and ever-growing group of adult educators to move sustainability plans forward and become champions for the changes you are working toward.	
As you build capabilities among those involved in your training, use their practical expertise to coach others.	
Encourage a systemic shift in organizational culture with policies that recognize and celebrate the behaviors of lead learners.	
Create a repository on your state's website for standards-based lessons, assignments, and student work built from the advanced-level trainings.	

Rationale: *Improvement efforts depend on the “good will and engagement of the people whose work is the subject of change.”³ Instructors’ and program leaders’ impressions of quality and usefulness are important, as is evidence of improved practice and student learning.*

³ Bryk Anthony S., Louis M. Gomez., Alicia Grunow, Paul G. LeMahieu, *Learning to Improve: How America’s Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. March 2015. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 280 pp. ISBN-10: 1612507913.

Part II. Program Leadership Checklist for Assessing the Effective Implementation of High-Quality Academic Standards

Program Sustainability Step 1: Align budgets and employment policies to support the standards initiative.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Allot sufficient funds to support ongoing professional learning.	
Ensure recruitment, onboarding, and employment decisions work together to reinforce deep content expertise and a learning orientation.	
Informally assess educator investment (attitudes, dispositions, and improvement of practice) in professional learning experiences and take appropriate action in response.	

Rationale: *The likelihood of sustaining any new approach increases dramatically when it is integrated into the existing infrastructure dedicated to system development efforts. Doing so creates a collective vision and a set of coordinated actions.*

Program Sustainability Step 2. Invest in high-quality instructional materials that reflect the full demands of college and career readiness in math and ELA/literacy.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
<p>Select instructional materials that are highly rated by external expert panels (e.g., EdReports) or engage internal experts to apply expert-designed rubrics (e.g., IMET, EQuIP).</p>	
<p>Consider multiple aspects of quality in addition to standards alignment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of research-based instructional practices. • Inclusion of educative materials for teachers to understand significant design principles and to deepen both requisite content and pedagogical knowledge. • Adaptation of lessons and units to appropriately scaffold instruction for students with specific learning needs, including English language learners and students who are significantly below grade level. • Evidence of student outcomes. <p>Or adapt the existing curriculum to strengthen its alignment with the high-quality standards after conducting an alignment analysis (e.g., the CCR SIA Resource Alignment Tool, the EdReports rubric, the EQuIP rubric) to identify gaps.</p>	

Rationale: *The implementation of new, higher academic standards cannot be realized unless the content that instructors teach reflects the full aspiration of college and career readiness. Similarly, it is difficult for professional development to have its desired effect unless the underlying instructional materials that instructors have to use in classrooms are excellent.*

Program Sustainability Step 3. Provide sufficient time for instructors to engage in professional learning about high-quality academic standards.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
<p>Embed professional learning into the work life of instructors so they get sufficient time to follow up on state training. (Research cites that approximately 50 hours annually is optimal.⁴)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select instructional resources that tightly align with high-quality academic standards; alternatively, analyze and revise a resource to improve its alignment to standards (CCR SIA Advanced Unit 1). • Employ protocols for reviewing student work (CCR SIA Advanced Unit 2) to reflect on instructional decisions and student progress and learning needs aligned to the standards. 	
<p>Protect regular times for educators to develop, share, and refine best practices with their colleagues.</p>	
<p>Roll out trainings in incremental steps so instructors can make small adjustments in their teaching and to reduce staff members' resistance and stress levels.</p>	

Rationale: *It takes instructors time to become familiar with instructional materials and the content knowledge that the new standards demand. To develop expertise, instructors need dedicated time throughout the year to engage with their colleagues on how best to implement the standards.*

⁴ Kwang Suk Yoon, Teresa Duncan, Silvia Wen-Yu Lee, Beth Scarloss, and Kathy L. Shapley. October 2007. "Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement," Regional Education Laboratory, Edvance Research Inc. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/re_l_2007033_sum.pdf.

Program Sustainability Step 4. Create a culture where curiosity and learning are valued.	
INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Explicitly acknowledge that core to the work of instructors (and those who support instructors) is the intellectual preparation needed to engage students in mastering rigorous content.	
Celebrate practitioners who assume the stance of a learner, including instructors who take risks when making the changes in practice called for by the high-quality academic standards.	
Actively model a learner stance in leadership positions.	
Encourage instructors to take risks, ask questions, and even to challenge recommended practices to ensure any issues or concerns they have are respected.	

Rationale: *Implementing new standards relies on instructors' active participation and willingness to be vulnerable and to take the stance of a learner. If instructors experience the standards initiative simply as a top-down compliance mandate or are preoccupied with accountability from the outset, positive change can be undermined and progress stunted. Research finds that when teachers engage in frequent peer-to-peer conversations centered on the complex task of instructing students, it leads to feelings of trust. It also leads to closeness among staff and increases in student achievement.*

Program Sustainability Step 5. Support ongoing content-specific professional learning opportunities and monitor the effectiveness of standards training for its successful replication.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Engage skillful instructor-leaders to facilitate learning among their peers. This includes selecting content leads in math and ELA with deep expertise in their content areas to assist in training and coaching.	
Solicit instructors' input and feedback in implementing professional learning aligned with the standards and the learning needs of students; make the results public.	
Enlist support of early adopters and influential champions to coach their peers and reinforce the motivation for implementing standards.	
Conduct regular classroom observations using the CCR SIA Classroom Observation Tool (CCR SIA Advanced Unit 3) to gather evidence as to how instructors are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering standards-based curricula. • Increasing student engagement in lessons. • Making assignments more demanding. 	
Ensure that the content of training and professional learning opportunities offered for instructors aligns with state expectations.	

Rationale: *The initial phase-in period of standards implementation in programs often consumes considerable effort and presents unique challenges. Therefore, it is crucial to create an environment that mobilizes and then maintains instructors' involvement and confidence. That requires finding an appropriate match between the demands of standards implementation and known staff motivations, capabilities, and attitudes. Good follow-up coaching with skilled instructor-leaders, along with regular classroom observations, can minimize negative impact, overcome barriers, foster community, and enhance morale.*

Program Sustainability Step 6. Address transitions and turnovers in staff so newcomers receive the CCR standards training they need.

INDICATOR:	Notes: What documentation verifies that this activity is being carried out?
Provide new staff access to the CCR SIA Foundational Units (or their equivalent) as part of an induction process.	
Assemble a collection of resources for program staff (e.g., lessons, assignments, and student work) that illuminate the standards.	

Rationale: *Anticipating and planning for a turnover in staff is key to integrating the standards initiative permanently into the program's infrastructure.*

Appendix: Summary of Core Components and Program Sustainability Steps

Eight Core Components of the State Leadership Checklist

- **Core Component 1. Embrace an active learning model at the state level.**
- **Core Component 2. Create a strategic implementation plan, in specific and quantifiable terms, to articulate the scope and rollout of the standards initiative.**
- **Core Component 3. Provide CCR Standards-in-Action (CCR SIA) content standards training (or its equivalent) to implementation team members and state professional developers.**
- **Core Component 4. Establish clear expectations for program leads regarding standards implementation.**
- **Core Component 5. Deliver CCR SIA trainings (or their equivalent) statewide according to the schedule set out in the strategic implementation plan.**
- **Core Component 6. Monitor the effectiveness of year-one trainings to plan for their successful replication and improvement in subsequent years.**
- **Core Component 7. Provide content-specific support for program leads across the state to deepen their pedagogical expertise and understanding of the demands of the standards.**
- **Core Component 8. Build numbers of committed educators.**

Six Sustainability Steps of the Program Leadership Checklist

- **Program Sustainability Step 1: Align budgets and employment policies to support the standards initiative.**
- **Program Sustainability Step 2. Invest in high-quality instructional materials that reflect the full demands of college and career readiness in math and ELA/literacy.**
- **Program Sustainability Step 3. Provide time for instructors to engage in professional learning about high-quality academic standards.**
- **Program Sustainability Step 4. Create a culture where curiosity and learning are valued.**
- **Program Sustainability Step 5. Support ongoing content-specific professional learning opportunities and monitor the effectiveness of standards training for its successful replication.**
- **Program Sustainability Step 6. Address transitions and turnovers in staff so newcomers receive the CCR standards training they need.**

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