Assessing
Implementation
of the Common Core
State Standards

A Union of Professionals
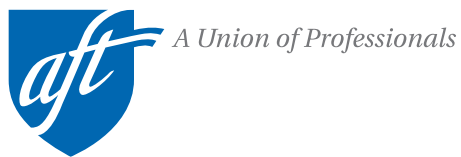
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The American Federation of Teachers strongly supports the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), believing they are the best path for a more consistent and focused set of standards that will allow students to be college and career ready. The AFT has supported the adoption and implementation of the standards through its recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee for Standards Rollout and by hosting conferences and workshops that support implementation of the CCSS. We recognize that states and districts have moved forward with implementing the standards with a variety of timelines and available resources. We believe implementation with proper supports is critical if we are to see the promise of the standards realized.

This document is intended to serve as a tool that will assist leaders and advocates in their implementation efforts by providing guidance that can drive the development of a high-quality implementation plan. This plan can be used to support efforts to make the standards a reality in their schools and classrooms.

This self-assessment tool can help the user determine:

- Whether the district's current implementation efforts address critical components of a high-quality implementation plan;

- Whether critical components of implementation are missing from the plan and what components will need to be developed as implementation continues; and

- Whether implementation efforts support goals that are aligned with current reform efforts in the district or state.

We have attempted to include all critical components that may be taken into consideration when implementing the CCSS. There may be areas that are important and unique to local circumstances that may not be included. You should incorporate those items to provide a more complete picture of implementation efforts for your local.

SCORING

The components that follow are intended to guide conversations around implementation of the CCSS by assessing the extent to which it has taken place in your district. Indicate which of the following best describes the extent to which your district has engaged in each component:

- ◯ Not at all
- ◕ Just started
- ◒ Partially
- ◕ Almost completely
- ● Fully implemented

PLANNING

Following each section, compile the number of times each indicator was selected. This will help determine which areas are strongest or require more support. You can use the guiding questions on the Implementation Planning Table (page 10) to prioritize critical components and develop a work plan. By inputting selected action items that received a ◕ or ◒ in the self-assessment, teams can develop plans to improve Common Core implementation. To effectively move implementation plans forward, you should build on strengths by selecting items with the greatest feasibility, and strengthen weaknesses by selecting items with the least feasibility.

Implementation, monitoring and making adjustments needs to be an ongoing process that evolves over time. Any plan needs to reflect the needs and address the challenges facing the educators within the system as well as include feedback.
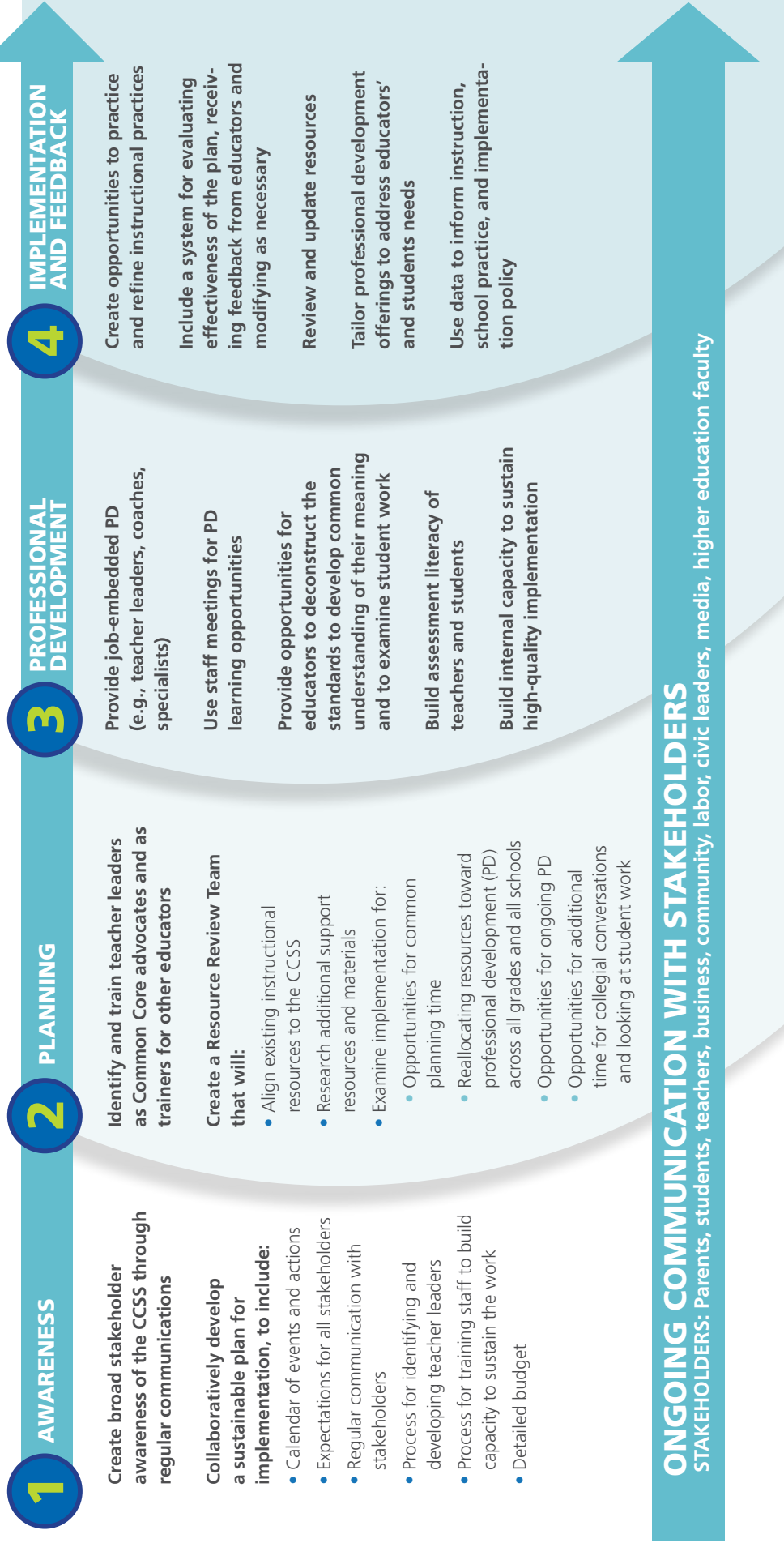
Common Core State Standards—Planning to Succeed

The K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide an unprecedented opportunity—and challenge. In advancing standards for mathematics and English language arts, the CCSS have the potential to help transform the very DNA of teaching and learning. As you review implementation note the following questions and components that should be addressed.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is the current awareness level of teachers, administrators, parents and the broader community?

- Are stakeholders building a culture that supports the implementation of the CCSS?

- Are state and local resources allocated equitably across the district?

- Do educators have access to high-quality professional development?

The chart indicates steps that should be taken chronologically but not independently. No step should ever be deemed complete. On going awareness campaigns and planning sessions should occur even while soliciting feedback on previous initiatives.

1 AWARENESS

Create broad stakeholder awareness of the CCSS through regular communications

Collaboratively develop a sustainable plan for implementation, to include:
- Calendar of events and actions
- Expectations for all stakeholders
- Regular communication with stakeholders
- Process for identifying and developing teacher leaders
- Process for training staff to build capacity to sustain the work
- Detailed budget

2 PLANNING

Identify and train teacher leaders as Common Core advocates and as trainers for other educators

Create a Resource Review Team that will:
- Align existing instructional resources to the CCSS
- Research additional support resources and materials
- Examine implementation for:
  - Opportunities for common planning time
  - Reallocating resources toward professional development (PD) across all grades and all schools
  - Opportunities for ongoing PD
  - Opportunities for additional time for collegial conversations and looking at student work

3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provide job-embedded PD (e.g., teacher leaders, coaches, specialists)

Use staff meetings for PD learning opportunities

Provide opportunities for educators to deconstruct the standards to develop common understanding of their meaning and to examine student work

Build assessment literacy of teachers and students

Build internal capacity to sustain high-quality implementation

4 IMPLEMENTATION AND FEEDBACK

Create opportunities to practice and refine instructional practices

Include a system for evaluating effectiveness of the plan, receiving feedback from educators and modifying as necessary

Review and update resources

Tailor professional development offerings to address educators' and students needs

Use data to inform instruction, school practice, and implementation policy

ONGOING COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS
STAKEHOLDERS: Parents, students, teachers, business, community, labor, civic leaders, media, higher education faculty

ONGOING COMMUNICATION TO STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying and communicating with stakeholders builds the awareness of those who are vital for the implementation of the CCSS. Communication with stakeholders should be ongoing and two-way as implementation progresses.

Indicate the extent to which your district has:

Identified key stakeholders, for example:

> Parents, students, civic leaders, faith-based leaders, politicians, labor, school board members, superintendents, media, business people, chamber of commerce members, and so forth.

Determined the messages that need to be communicated, for example:

> Parents need to know that the goal of the Common Core State Standards is college and workforce readiness for all students. They need to know ways to help their children at home and resources they can access to learn more.

> Union members and the district need to know that the CCSS are excellent for education because there are fewer and deeper standards. There was teacher involvement in generating and reviewing the standards. There is more student responsibility, and the standards level the playing field for all students, whether they are from affluent backgrounds or not. They create equity across educating all students.

Determined the methods for communication, for example:

> Email, print, media (newspaper, radio), website.

Determined how often messages are revised and/or updated.

In the box below, indicate the number of times you (or your group) circled each indicator in response to the extent to which your district has engaged in key components of Common Core Implementation:

ONGOING COMMUNICATION				
Not at all	Just started	Partially	Almost completely	Fully implemented

AWARENESS

Building on the foundation of stakeholder awareness, collaboratively developing a sustainable plan for implementation helps to ensure the presence of a culture that supports the implementation of the CCSS.

Indicate the extent to which your district has:

Collaboratively developed a sustainable plan for implementation, to include events and actions, as well as answers to these questions:

What is the timeline for completing activities?

What are the tools/processes for monitoring progress?

Who is responsible?

How does this information get shared?

What is the process for revising the plan?

Collaboratively set expectations for stakeholders to:

Understand the definition of the phrase "college and career readiness."

Know the importance of the instructional shifts for English Language Arts and Mathematics standards.

Advocate the importance of having proper CCSS implementation supports in place and the time needed to get this right to a variety of stakeholders.

Established a process for identifying and developing teacher leaders, which includes:

An application process;

A peer review process in which peers respond to a variety of questions regarding the applicant (different approaches can be used to select peers);

Training and professional development; and

A plan for expanding training to educators.

◯◑◖◗● **Created a detailed budget that reflects an assessment of resources and which:**

◯◑◖◗●   Identifies what teachers are going to need but don't currently have;

◯◑◖◗●   Identifies compensation for professional development (monetary, credits, time, etc.);

◯◑◖◗●   Provides transparency;

◯◑◖◗●   Reflects a collaborative approach.; and

◯◑◖◗●   Assesses need for realignment of allocated dollars.

In the box below, indicate the number of times you (or your group) circled each indicator in response to the extent to which your district has engaged in key components of Common Core Implementation:

AWARENESS				
Not at all ◯	Just started ◑	Partially ◖	Almost completely ◗	Fully implemented ●

PLANNING

Building on the awareness of the CCSS created with stakeholders, this planning stage establishes the materials, structures, and people that will be necessary to implement the standards.

Indicate the extent to which your district has:

◯◑◒◐● **Identified and trained teacher leaders as Common Core advocates for other educators.**

◯◑◒◐● **Provided copies of the standards to every teacher, paraprofessional and other appropriate school support staff.**

◯◑◒◐● **Developed a professional development plan that ensures sustainability and builds capacity.**

◯◑◒◐● **Developed a professional development plan that includes all educators.**

◯◑◒◐● **Created a resource review team that aligns existing instructional resources to the CCSS by:**

◯◑◒◐● Identifying the necessary tools to review instructional materials (AFT Alignment Tools for ELA/Math, achievethecore.org: EQUIP Rubric);

◯◑◒◐● Establishing a process for communicating results to educators, including gaps that exist; and

◯◑◒◐● Researching and identifying resources that are better aligned to the CCSS.

◯◑◒◐● **Examined school/district infrastructure for opportunities for common planning time collaboratively with school and district staff, such as:**

◯◑◒◐● Block scheduling;

◯◑◒◐● Providing aides for nonacademic duties to allow time for staff to work collaboratively;

◯◑◒◐● Examining ways to creatively structure the school day for collaborative time;

◯◑◒◐● Scheduling community service time for middle/high school students that is tied to literacy/social studies standards; and

◯◑◒◐● Requesting a waiver from the state for delayed start or early release once a month.[1]

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1. "Finding Time for Collaboration," by Mary Anne Raywid, *Educational Leadership*, vol. 51, no. 1, September 1993.

KEY: ◯ Not at all ◑ Just started ◒ Partially ◐ Almost completely ● Fully implemented

○◑◖◗● **Reallocated professional development resources to focus on the Common Core in all grades at every school.**

○◑◖◗● **Identified time for teachers to have collegial conversations and review student work.**

○◑◖◗● **Integrated teacher supports for ELLs and special needs populations into Common Core instruction and professional development.**

○◑◖◗● **Identified instructional and social/emotional supports for ELLs and special needs populations**

○◑◖◗● **Coordinated Teacher Development and Evaluation policies with the Common Core standards.**

In the box below, indicate the number of times you (or your group) circled each indicator in response to the extent to which your district has engaged in key components of Common Core Implementation:

PLANNING				
Not at all ○	Just started ◑	Partially ◖	Almost completely ◗	Fully implemented ●

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Moving forward, professional development should include deliberate links between Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) and the Common Core (CC). Linking together the components used in the teaching domains helps teachers to become more thoughtful practitioners and builds on the foundation of good teaching practices. CC implementation should not be viewed as an add-on to TDE.

Indicate the extent to which your district has:

○◔◑◕● **Developed plans for job-embedded professional development.**

○◔◑◕● **Built capacity for internal training using teacher leaders, coaches, specialists.**

○◔◑◕● **Restructured staff meetings for professional development using teacher leaders.**

○◔◑◕● **Provided opportunities to deconstruct the standards and develop common understanding of their meaning.**

○◔◑◕● **Strengthened the "assessment literacy" of teachers, paraprofessionals, students, parents and school leaders, which should include:**

○◔◑◕● Understanding sound assessment practices;

○◔◑◕● Describing the different types of assessment used to generate dependable student achievement information; and

○◔◑◕● Using data for intended purposes.

○◔◑◕● **Identified methods for assessing the effectiveness of professional development.**

○◔◑◕● **Assured professional development is sustainable.**

○◔◑◕● **Assured professional development is accessible to all educators.**

○◔◑◕● **Offered professional development through a blended model of online, in person, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC).**

○◔◑◕● **Provided staff in nontested grades and subject areas with supports and training to implement Common Core strategies.**

○◔◑◕● **Included training opportunities to engage in cross-curricular planning and lesson development.**

In the box below, indicate the number of times you (or your group) circled each indicator in response to the extent to which your district has engaged in key components of Common Core Implementation:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Not at all ○	Just started ◔	Partially ◑	Almost completely ◕	Fully implemented ●

IMPLEMENTATION AND FEEDBACK

This process should be modeled as a continuous improvement process that evolves over time. This process will never be completed because the issues that need to be addressed will change.

Indicate the extent to which your district has:

○◐◑◕● **Developed a process for collaboratively reviewing and revising its plan on an ongoing basis.**

○◐◑◕● **Created opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals to refine skills and strategies by visiting one another's classrooms to review quality instructional practices.**

○◐◑◕● **Requested continuous feedback on plans and processes from all educators and other stakeholders.**

○◐◑◕● **Developed a process for gathering, analyzing and sharing contextual data (data related to all aspects of the classroom, staffing, school and students) that informs decision making around school and district policies and instruction, and incorporates supports for sustainability.**

○◐◑◕● **Developed a process for gathering, analyzing and sharing student assessment data (summative and formative) that informs decision making around school and district policies and instruction, and incorporates supports for sustainability.**

In the box below, indicate the number of times you (or your group) circled each indicator in response to the extent to which your district has engaged in key components of Common Core Implementation:

IMPLEMENTATION & FEEDBACK				
Not at all ○	Just started ◐	Partially ◑	Almost completely ◕	Fully implemented ●

Implementation Preparation and Planning

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Assess: Where are we now?

Goal Setting: Where do we want to be?

Identify Needs: What is necessary to get to our goals?

Determine Feasibility: Given current capacity, structures, policies, and resources how feasible is this goal?

Using the guiding questions, prioritize areas and develop a work plan that we jointly implement from the self-assessment document. Build on current strengths and natural short term opportunities as you identify action items.

Action Item	Steps	Timeline	Coordinator/Person Responsible	Deliverables or Outcome Measures	Supports & Resources
1.					
2.					

Action Item	Steps	Timeline	Coordinator/Person Responsible	Deliverables or Outcome Measures	Supports & Resources
3.					
4.					

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