School District
Professional Learning System Readiness Assessment:
Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

May 2012

Overview and Vision

Washington's vision for K-12 education is for every Washington public school student to graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. The state's recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in July 2011 sets a target for what this means in the areas of English language arts and mathematics, and reaches toward more intentional connections with other subject areas. Thus, implementation of the CCSS will not be the sole responsibility of English and mathematics teachers, moreover it will be the shared responsibility of all educators, and will ultimately affect students' performance in all areas.

Our vision for statewide implementation of the CCSS is for every student to have access to the CCSS standards through high quality instruction aligned with the standards every day; and that all teachers are prepared and receive the support they need to implement the standards in their classrooms every day. In order to achieve this vision, OSPI sees our role as one that develops a statewide system with aligned resources that supports all school districts in their preparation of educators and students to implement the CCSS. This includes building system-wide capacity for sustained professional learning that can support CCSS implementation now and be applied to other initiatives in the future. Washington will learn along with other states and benefit from national implementation tools and processes. The standards will be fully implemented through the state's assessment system starting in the 2014-15 year, with limited pilot testing in years prior.

Given the extent by which the CCSS will challenge current structures for standards implementation, assessment, and professional learning, Washington is approaching support for implementation of the CCSS through two lenses:

1. Content-specific shifts within each subject; and
2. Instructional shifts that will need be made through more intentional instruction and teacher practice.

Overall instructional shifts that the CCSS will entail include:	For English language arts, the CCSS shifts include:	For mathematics, the CCSS shifts are:
1. Increased rigor across subjects that focuses on major topics, including shifts in topics among grade levels 2. Focus on school-wide literacy across subjects 3. Student engagement as a critical element for success 4. Focus instructional time on what is emphasized in the standards so that students gain strong foundations 5. How districts approach supporting system-wide professional development	1. **Building knowledge** through **content-rich nonfiction** 2. Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in **evidence from text,** both literary and informational 3. Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**	1. **Focus:** Significantly narrow the scope of content and deepen how time and energy is spent. 2. **Coherence**: **Think** across grades, and **link** to major topics 3. **Rigor:** In major topics, pursue **conceptual understanding,** procedural skill and **fluency,** and **application**

Essential to statewide implementation is prioritization of instructional support or professional learning systems and the pivotal role of district and building leaders to set a strong course for implementation throughout schools and districts.

State Context

Washington, as with virtually every other state in the nation, has a plethora of high stakes education reform initiatives underway that span the P – 20 spectrum. Many of these initiatives have converging implementation timelines. Two excellent examples of initiatives that must connect intentionally with instructional content and practice are the state's Teacher Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP) and the state's current piloting of the pre-service Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA).

> **TPEP:** Starting with the 2013-14 year, all school districts must have in place a teacher and principal evaluation system that attends to new criteria as outlined in 2010 and 2012 legislation (E2SSB 6696 and 2012 ESSB 5895). To support this new system, the state will adopt three teacher and leadership frameworks from which districts will select for use locally. These three frameworks must be identified by the state by September 2012 for teachers and principals. ***It is important to note that there are connections to be made between the evaluation criteria and the instructional shifts that will be necessary to support for successful implementation of the CCSS for all students and teachers.*** The new criteria are included at the end of this document for reference.

> **TPA:** Washington's Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has joined a national consortium of 20 states to develop a pre-service assessment for national use. The assessment will have shared core content plus some state-specific elements. (RCW 28A.410.270(2)(b)). All PESB-approved teacher preparation programs have piloted this assessment during the 2011-12 school year. The PESB shall adopt rules that establish a date during the 2012-13 school year after which candidates completing teacher preparation programs must successfully pass this assessment*. **It is important to note that pre-service candidates entering teacher preparation programs in the 2012-13 year will exit in 2014-15 needing to have full mastery of the CCSS content and instructional shifts for application in their classrooms.***

The Readiness Assessment

This "readiness assessment" is a tool to help districts assess their system specifically in the area of professional development. It is meant to serve as a formative tool for school districts to identify where they are in building comprehensive professional learning systems that are necessary to support implementation of initiatives that will involve significant attention to staff development, such as the CCSS. Our hope is for this assessment to be a catalyst for school district teams to have critical discussion across departments and subject areas regarding allocation of resources, time, and expertise with the vision of supporting all students to achieve the standards. We hope that it will be a tool useful for analyzing school district self-assessment specifically related to CCSS implementation, and that it will be useful over time as applied to other system-wide initiatives.

> **It's Foundation:** The categories in the left column of the chart below are adapted from Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning (2011 revised). These standards serve as our state's frame for the comprehensive "container" necessary to support strong implementation of the CCSS. It is assumed that districts using this assessment are entering the process with a systems-thinking framework for teaching and learning across the district.

Intended Users: This assessment tool is meant to be used by school district teams consisting of the following:
- School district administrative leadership (should include leaders with the ability to allocate and adjust resources, such as time, funding, expertise);
- School building leadership
- Content leadership (to inform system development around CCSS instructional shifts)

Using the Assessment: This exercise is intended to help you consider your district's willingness and capacity to support all educators in your system to implement the CCSS effectively. By first applying the Readiness Assessment within your district's local context, the result will be insight as district teams develop comprehensive district-wide CCSS transition plans that honor the strengths within current professional learning systems, and help to identify key areas where additional attention may be needed to support strong implementation.

Possible Protocol: The following process might be used to complete this readiness assessment with your district team. It should be a springboard to frame your district's overall CCSS implementation plan.
1. Start with discussion about your district's vision for implementation of the CCSS within the context of larger district-wide teaching and learning efforts.
2. Provide reflection time - quiet write - "where you do want your district to be one year from today?"
3. Create posters of each of the Readiness Assessment sections and post them throughout the room.
4. Have each team member reflect on each section and weigh-in with an initial self-assessment using green, yellow, and/or red dots on the poster to visually represent where they believe the district has strength and where additional work is needed.
5. Group discussion about strengths, gaps, and what you might be doing within current professional learning that might not support CCSS implementation at all. **This might include analyzing the TPEP criteria and/or your district's selected instructional framework to identify ways in which implementation of the CCSS is interconnected with implementation of the TPEP criteria.**
6. Prioritize next steps based on the readiness assessment data and group discussion to formulate your district's CCSS implementation plan – ideally the plan might include 3, 6, 9, and 12 month action steps (who, what, and by when) for moving forward with system implementation of the CCSS.

Learning Communities: Build collegial and collaborative relationship among educators to enhance student learning

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• District supports and expects all educators to exhibit collaborative and collegial practices focused on understanding and implementing CCSS to improve student learning. Especially intentional collaboration that attends to instructional practice. (Teacher and Principal Evaluation Criteria #8). • Educators' practice encourages collective responsibility for all students meeting CCSS. • Educators are given distributed, scheduled and frequent meeting time to continuously improve their own understanding of the CCSS. • Educators know, articulate and use learning progressions that assist students in reaching academic goals. • Learning community uses data to for continuous improvement about their own learning.	**Learning Communities**		

| Leadership: Capacity for learning and leading; Advocate for professional learning; Create supports and structures |

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Leaders develop a network of district and school instructional leaders with CCSS expertise. • Leaders focus on the CCSS as a high priority for students, staff, and themselves. • Leaders identify existing initiatives to suspend or amend in order to create capacity. • Leaders understand and connect initiatives focused on student learning and initiatives focused on educator effectiveness.	**Leadership**		

Resources: Prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources; Monitor resources; Coordinate resources

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Districts identify gaps in human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to achieve the CCSS. • Districts prioritize and coordinate resources (both internal and external) towards addressing gaps in support, including the support necessary for all teachers to implement the CCSS and for general education teachers to build their own instructional capacity to support students with disabilities, English language learners, and highly capable students.	**Resources**		

Data: Analyze student, educator, system data; Assess progress; Evaluate professional learning

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Districts use disaggregated data about students, educators, and systems to define individual, team, school, and system goals for professional learning to support the CCSS. • Key attributes and formative components of the new assessment system are understood and used to inform instruction. • Districts assure teachers use multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning (***Teacher and Principal Evaluation Criteria #6***). • Grading practices are aligned to support implementation. • Districts use educator effectiveness data to inform professional development planning.	**Data**		

Learning Designs: Apply learning theories, research, and models to instructional practice; Select learning designs; Promote active engagement

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Districts use the research about impactful professional learning to design learning opportunities focused on the CCSS. • District professional learning attends to the vertical alignment and learning progressions within the CCSS. • District organizes professional learning that builds a deep, focused, and coherent understanding of the CCSS among all educators. • District has structures that support all teachers provide clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum, centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement and demonstrate effective teaching practices (***Teacher and Principal Evaluation Criteria #1, 2, and 4***).	**Learning Designs**		

Communication: Build on common focus and collaboration with all stakeholders including families and communities to enhance student learning.

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Communicates the intent and implications of standards to build awareness of the value of CCSS. • Communicates the level of expectations of the CCSS across stakeholder groups, including with families and communities. • Communicates how the CCSS fits with ongoing district and school improvement efforts and other district initiatives.	**Communication**		

Alignment of Policies and Practices: Aligned system focused on learning; Internal and external alignment

High Implementation of CCSS	Where is our district at this time?	Evidence	Next Steps
• Clear internal vision to which all policies, structures and practices are aligned. • Leaders align district initiatives to build capacity for implementation of CCSS.	**Alignment of Policies and Practices**		

Reference Material:

Revised 2010 Teacher and Principal Evaluation Criteria

Revised Teacher & Principal Evaluation Criteria -	
Revised Principal Evaluation Criteria – RCW 28A.405.100 (6)(b)	Revised Teacher Evaluation Criteria – RCW 28A.405.100 (2)(b)
1. Creating a school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff (i) 2. Demonstrating commitment to closing the achievement gap (ii) 3. Providing for school safety (iii) 4. Leading the development, implementation, and evaluation of a data-driven plan for increasing student achievement, including the use of multiple student data elements (iv) 5. Assisting instructional staff with alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with state and local district learning goals (v) 6. Monitoring, assisting, and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices (vi) 7. Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities (vii) 8. Partnering with the school community to promote student learning (viii)	1. Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement (i) 2. Demonstrating effective teaching practices (ii) 3. Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs (iii) 4. Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum (iv) 5. Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment (v) 6. Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning (vi) 7. Communicating and collaborating with parents and school community (vii) 8. Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning (viii)