

Leadership Planning Guide

CALIFORNIA

Common Core State Standards and
Assessments Implementation

First
Edition



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*"[We] face a choice in the days ahead: The transition to new standards and related tests can be done in the way it has always been done, or the [Common Core State Standards] can be at the heart of more aggressive instructional reform efforts!"**

First Edition

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Consortium for the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

*Development of this Guide coordinated by
California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)*

* Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI). *Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments: A Workbook for State and District Leaders* (Washington, DC, 2012), 1.5 at http://www.achieve.org/files/Common_Core_Workbook.pdf.

Developed with the input and cooperation of the

- California State Board of Education
- California Department of Education
- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
- California Teachers Association
- Association of California School Administrators
- California School Boards Association
- California State PTA
- Californians Together
- California Charter Schools Association

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NOTE: The California Department of Education (CDE) has many valuable resources for supporting the implementation of the Common Core (see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp>). This document builds on those resources to provide a practical guide for district and community leaders to use and adapt as they see fit. Beside CDE as a critical partner, this Guide was developed collaboratively with the California State Board of Education and several state-wide organizations in order to provide a degree of uniformity of guidance. This Guide should be viewed as a dynamic document that will continue to change and grow as research and experience dictate.

California has a unique opportunity to improve public education by strengthening instruction, providing targeted support for English learners and struggling learners, preparing students for the demands of the technology reliant 21st century, and expanding pathways for students to college and career. This opportunity is made possible by the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which are designed to increase expectations to the level of other high-performing countries, go deeper into subjects, are based on research, and provide for a more active curriculum.

The goals of the use of the CCSS include 1) addressing a persistent disparity between the performance of U.S. students and their counterparts in top-performing countries, 2) lessening the remediation rate for first-year college students, 3) improving the preparation of students for the workplace, and 4) equipping students for civic participation¹ and reaching individual potential through the liberal arts.

“Equitable implementation of the CCSS has the potential to close long-standing opportunity and achievement gaps impacting low-income students, students of color, and English learners.”^{2,3}

All standards are expected of all students.

The advent of the CCSS provides a unique and powerful opportunity to strengthen and grow “Professional Capital” which stresses the importance of both individual human capital and social capital. Investing in both of these is hugely important with the implementation of the CCSS. The potential for forming a new culture of teamwork and collaborative decision-making, **where the teaching role is front and center**, should not be overlooked. Focusing on Professional Capital can provide the power of making change together and of moving the entire profession forward.⁴

This is an opportune time to refocus and improve support for the classroom teacher. Important questions include how much time they need (to teach, to prepare, to collaborate), what tools are necessary, and what types of support need to be available to make the standards come alive. Within the context of a coherent and aligned instructional plan, teachers must be supported to initiate their own changes and make their own judgments on the frontline. And they need to be critical partners in planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

1 For a rich resource, see Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) document, "Preparing Students for College, Career, and CITIZENSHIP: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects" at http://commoncore.lacoe.edu/documents/preparing_students_civic_education_connections.pdf.

2 The Education Trust-West. The One Billion Dollar Question: How Can Districts and Schools Equitably Implement Common Core? (August 2013), 1 at <http://www.edtrust.org/west/publication/the-one-billion-dollar-question-how-can-districts-and-schools-equitably-implement-t>

3 Strengthening the impact of the CCSS for English learners was achieved through the adoption of the California ELD Standards. The ELD Standards support English language development, are incorporated into the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework (soon to be available), and help define access to the CCSS.

4 Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan. *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012).

California has a twenty-five year history of rich curriculum frameworks and acclaimed Academic Content Standards, so this work in many ways is a natural next step.

Local decision-making and local control has been re-energized with the advent of the Local Control Funding Formula. School districts are being given greater flexibility as well as responsibility. Decision-making is being pushed to the local level, including decisions on how to teach, how to get instructional resources into the hands of teachers, how to get people trained, how to integrate technology with high-quality teaching, and how to organize the district to effectively use the CCSS.⁵

Therefore, the focus of this document is on the school district. It is understood that some districts will give flexibility and authority to schools in terms of site-based decision-making for much of the CCSS implementation. This guide should be helpful at both the district and school site levels.^{6,7}

School districts have numerous and sometimes disparate “systems” which need to be in alignment toward a common goal to form a cohesive educational system. The subsystems, or major components of the whole system, include: leadership, communication, curriculum and instruction, instructional resources, electronic resources, professional development, student learning feedback systems and assessment, support and intervention programs, technology support, fiscal and human resources, and student transitions.

These ten key components are based on a combination of research, years of practical experience, and lessons emerging from early implementing districts.

The alignment of these components, together with a common focus on implementing the CCSS, is essential to effectively support the significant changes required for successful implementation. **Figure A** (next page) illustrates the district “system” composed of the ten key components noted earlier. The more each component is focused on what it takes to support the CCSS the more successful the implementation.

5 Schools and districts have had such flexibility before, in years long past, and saw idiosyncratic instruction, a lack of curriculum alignment, and huge disparities in inputs and resulting outcomes. This time an opportunity is afforded not to repeat those failures, but instead to embrace the autonomy provided and demonstrate that equitable curriculum, robust instruction, and coherence and alignment for all students can be provided.

6 School Site Councils do not go away, and the school level *Single Plan for Student Achievement* will need to be brought into alignment with the district Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) required by the Local Control Funding Formula.

7 Districts might also want to consider economies of scale afforded to a unified district approach as well as the potential discrepancy in different neighborhoods that could result unless careful district stewardship and collaboration guide decision-making.

FIGURE A

Implementing the Common Core State Standards at the District Level: Ten Key Components



Purpose

The purpose of this Guide is to offer essential considerations and recommended first steps for each of the ten key components. These steps represent where the main challenges are most likely to be found, and the steps that need to be thought through in implementing the CCSS and new assessments. This document goes into a level of detail that some schools and districts need and have asked for. On the other hand, some districts are already well into implementation, so this guide might serve as a review checklist.

The initial audience for this Guide is school board members, superintendents, principals, teacher and instructional leaders, and classroom teachers. This document may also be useful for engaging parents and community members, some of whom might potentially be enlisted to assist with the implementation of the CCSS.

The partners involved in this document, and the ongoing work of CCSS implementation, will continue to upgrade and update this Guide as experience and research dictate. Additional information, resources, updated links, and examples of best practices will be added as time goes along. Forums are planned to encourage discussion and collaboration on the ten key components.

Implementation

What would implementing the CCSS look like? Can this opportunity indeed be used to strengthen and improve instructional delivery systems and ensure that every student is moved toward college and career readiness?⁸

Can we use this opportunity to improve and integrate research-based efforts to better assist English language learners and students with disabilities and to improve the achievement of historically underperforming groups?^{9,10}

Can this effort stimulate a renewed commitment to teamwork, to new and deeper teacher/administrator/board member collaboration, to effective joint decision-making, and a revitalized role for parents? Can this opportunity be used to really strengthen the school site as the locus of improved teaching, support, and accountability?

Rethinking instructional improvement while ensuring that foundational skills are maintained means deliberately building on verified good practice while injecting urgency and capacity to deliver. It means understanding how to get aligned instructional materials in the hands of the teachers at the right time and how to ensure professional development design reflects best practices and accurately targets student needs.

It also means being relentlessly curious about the impact of the implementation efforts, so hurdles can be addressed and nothing will be a surprise once students sit down to take their first Smarter Balanced Assessment. This internal analysis of progress is at the heart of continuous improvement.

Implementation of the CCSS means a top-to-bottom re-examination of what students should know and be able to do as well as how to deliver

8 ASCD, "Fulfilling the Promise of the Common Core State Standards" at <http://educore.ascd.org/resource/Download/1d60f46d-b786-41d1-b059-95a7c4eda420>

9 NEA Today, "Six Ways the Common Core Is Good for Students" at <http://neatoday.org/2013/05/10/six-ways-the-common-core-is-good-for-students/>

10 National Council of La Raza, "Raising the Bar: Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Latino Student Success" at http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/pages/Implementation_Guide.pdf

and engage students in the curriculum that is designed to teach the standards. **The CCSS are not a curriculum.** Curriculum is the roadmap that teachers use to help students acquire and master the knowledge and skills detailed in the standards. A coherent and specific curriculum is *mapped backwards* from desired performances.¹¹ Therefore, deciding what should be taught when is “job number one.”

Districts are encouraged to ensure that their curricula is thoughtfully and fully aligned to the standards. This process could include selecting full curricula designed to work with the CCSS, or designing programs from the ground up, utilizing best practices and evidenced-based instruction, and grounded in the new California curriculum frameworks. Districts will need to decide which recently developed curriculum and materials, either proprietary, open source, or home grown, or a combination, will best implement the CCSS. It is understood that in some districts these decisions will be pushed to the school site level where groups of teachers, along with the principal, decide how best to meet the needs of individual students. (When decisions devolve to individual schools, leaders will need to consider how all parents can be assured that regardless of zip code their children will receive the same high-quality instruction.)

11 For English learners it means also mapping back to the English Language Development (ELD) standards to understand the scaffolding that districts, schools, and teachers will need to employ to allow for maximum accessibility to the CCSS. Educators can rely on the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework for guidance when it is made public in a few months.

The CCSS impact more than just English language arts (ELA)/English language development (ELD) and mathematics. Thought should be given to integrating and reinforcing the goals of the new standards throughout *all* the subjects that are taught. The CCSS assume that all students will have access to a broad comprehensive curriculum.

For the last twenty-five years, California has espoused an **expansive liberal arts education**—a full and complete educational experience that includes the arts, science, history/social studies, universal languages, health, physical education, and Career Technical Education. For too long schools have had neither the resources nor the time to support a full and well-rounded curriculum. Now is an excellent opportunity to review instructional programs, assess their effectiveness for every single student, and begin to direct resources toward the greatest areas of need in order to broaden and deepen instructional programs.

The CCSS also provide an important opportunity to improve access to rigorous academic content standards for students with disabilities and for our most vulnerable learners. It is critical that there is planning as to how to accommodate students with disabilities in the general education setting, as well as those who are well below grade level, using Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) systems, and at the same time ensuring that students with disabilities who are served

the majority of time through special education programs and services also receive a robust curriculum that encompasses the authentic standards. A critical aspect of implementing and sustaining a tiered intervention model is having appropriate progress monitoring and screening measures, especially for students in elementary grades.¹²

The CCSS come to life through quality instruction, the right curriculum, and the assessments.¹³ However, we want to ensure that what we do is not primarily driven by national, state, or local tests, but by what is supported by research, what works for every student, and what best supports teachers.

The big vision is not just about the standards themselves; it is about preparing students for the next phase of life, whether it be the work force or post-secondary education, and fostering wide knowledge and civic engagement, all of which the standards are designed to promote.

Standards and Curriculum Frameworks

In 2010 the California State Board of Education, supported by the Governor and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, adopted the CCSS. The current Governor and State Board added additional standards that are now embedded in California's CCSS. The standards can be viewed at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp>.¹⁴

The step of adopting the CCSS builds on California's work on highly-acclaimed curriculum frameworks, started in the late eighties, and the world class academic achievement standards adopted in the mid-nineties.

This next step, implementing the CCSS, requires an extensive re-thinking of what is working and what is not, a deep analysis of what is needed to teach the standards, an examination of how districts and schools support teachers and 're-purpose' and reinvigorate professional learning communities, a hard look at how technology is used for instruction, a deep analysis of the instructional resources (both print and electronic) available to support the teaching of the standards, a review of the district's data management and assessment capacities, and a series of decisions regarding expanding and supporting student pathways to higher education and careers.

Of great help to teachers and other educators will be the new California curriculum frameworks that encompass the CCSS. Currently in California there is a draft **mathematics curriculum framework** recommended by the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) that is aligned to and incorporates the CCSS. This draft framework is posted for public review at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/draftmathfwchapters.asp> and will

12 The National Center on Response to Intervention identifies the most effective tools for such purposes. Furthermore, RtI² is a "prevention" approach and as such, maintaining attention on the early reading and math skills will be vital.

13 Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, "From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas" at http://grantwiggins.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/mctighe_wiggins_final_common_core_standards.pdf

14 The San Diego County Office of Education with support from the California Department of Education (CDE) has translated the CCSS into Spanish with the linguistic modifications for the specific features of the Spanish language. The standards are posted on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp>

be going to the State Board of Education for action in November 2013. When approved and adopted this framework will be posted at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp>.

The **ELA/ELD curriculum framework** will integrate both the ELA Content Standards and the recently adopted ELD Standards and will align to the CCSS. This framework will go to the IQC in November 2013, followed by field review from December 2013 to February 2014. The IQC will recommend the framework in spring 2014 to the State Board of Education for action in July 2014. When approved and adopted the framework will also be posted at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp>.

Four Phases of Implementation

Getting parents, students, and teachers ready and at a point of understanding will take a while. The discipline of delivery describes the movement of a system from aspiration to planning to implementation.¹⁵ This Guide encourages thinking about four phases of implementation: awareness, transition, implementation, and continuous improvement.

These phases are not uniform across all aspects of implementation; nor are they mutually exclusive and linear. While districts may be at the awareness phase with respect to some aspects of CCSS implementation, they may be in the transition or implementation phase with respect to other aspects.

In the following section the phases are described in very broad terms, considering CCSS as a whole. However, districts and schools may want to apply this general framework to specific components of the work as they deepen their efforts on the standards over time.

1. Awareness Phase

To appropriately implement a new approach, stakeholders must first become aware of that approach and its relationship to current practice. In the case of CCSS, stakeholders include the school board, educators within the system, parents, the general community including employers and local colleges, and students.

Questions to ask while initiating the awareness phase include the following:

- Has the school board received an overview of the CCSS and new assessments? (A board workshop on the CCSS would be helpful in most instances.)

¹⁵ U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) at <http://www.deliveryinstitute.org/>

- Has the board been made aware that a series of decisions related to “what to teach when” will need to be made?
- Has there been an effort to make every district employee aware of the new standards and of the district implementation plan?
- Is there a strategy in place for providing **parents and community members** a thorough briefing and opportunity for discussion about the new standards and assessments?

Local political leaders and media sources should receive at least an overview of the standards and assessments, and how educators are planning on approaching the challenge of transitioning to new curricula and assessments.

There are several self-assessment tools that ideally should be completed during this initial phase (if they have not yet been completed). By examining the responses in the self-assessments, it should become clear where work needs to be focused in order to move to the CCSS-based instructional programs that are equitable and will assist every student.

- a. CDE Smarter Balanced Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) at <https://www.techreadiness.net/cas/login>
- b. SBAC Technology Readiness Tool Spring 2012 Summary at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbac-itr-spr2012sum.asp>
- c. TRT Devices File Data Collection Fields at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbac-itr-dev-import.asp>
- d. TRT School Survey Data Collection Fields at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbac-itr-sch-import.asp>

These self-assessments provide valuable information as the district and schools move to the next phase—the Transition Phase.

2. Transition Phase

During the transition phase, each district and school should organize to work across the ten components of implementation. The ten components, representing years of experience with systems at the district level, are addressed individually in the following sections of this Guide. Each is important; each is necessary.

Emphasis is given to curriculum and instruction, instructional resources, and instructional support as the CCSS need to be translated into teaching courses, units, and lessons. Significant work needs to be done to “actualize” the standards in terms of what to teach, the sequencing of what is taught grade by grade and by subject, the selection and use of instructional materials and electronic resources aligned to the standards, as well as ongoing professional development and teacher collaboration to ensure all students have access to rigorous content. It is suggested that the district select either the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework or the new mathematics curriculum framework as a starting point.

California’s County Offices of Education stand as a delivery network, ready to assist each leader and group with planning and implementation, and to support with training as needed. *There are many additional providers in California, both proprietary and non-profit, who can provide training and other supports.* Each district and school should make a strategic decision in terms of partnerships that work for them and that will be there to help “for the long haul.”

3. Implementation Phase

As the CCSS are being implemented in schools and classrooms, efforts to review with the district board as well as parents and strategic community groups how the curriculum has changed need to be continued. Be explicit with topics such as algebra and how to support English learners and students with disabilities. For instance, districts can provide for acceleration in middle grades so that some students finish the 9th grade algebra sequence in 8th grade, or sooner, as long as the students don’t skip the content of the grades 6–8 CCSS.

The new ELD Standards adopted by the California State Board of Education, as well as the ways they are integrated into the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework, should be an emphasis in both communication as well as professional development.

The implementation phase is also a time to ensure that interventions are in place alongside of, and in support of, the more rigorous instruction for those students who are well below grade level and who lack the early literacy or math skills.

The technology improvement plan should be finalized and implemented (based on the findings of the Technology Readiness Survey). Every school needs to have sufficient bandwidth to

support both learning and assessment. Both software and devices purchased should be consistent with the type of support teachers need for instruction as well as for student assessment.

The implementation phase is a good time to collaborate with other districts, to learn together what is working.

4. Continuous Improvement Phase

As the CCSS and ELD Standards are implemented, there is a need for ongoing assessment of how well they are working for students. This is essential for ensuring continuous improvement.

Some efforts will work; others will not. Barriers will be identified. Candor and openness is critical if adjustments are to be made to the instructional program, and focused support is to be given to teachers and students. Data analysis and “continuous improvement” thinking should become a regular part of teacher and principal collaboration.

The district should be public about what milestones will be monitored, and how often. How do the milestones/metrics include low-income students, students with disabilities, African-American, Latino, English learners, Asian, foster youth, and other student subgroups?

Ten Key Components

Effective implementation of the CCSS requires thoughtful planning, a coherent and strategic approach supported by the local board and involving teacher leaders and parent and community representatives, and attention to many interconnected elements.

This Guide is organized around the identified ten important components (or essential considerations) of CCSS implementation. The ten components are based on a combination of research, years of practical experience, and lessons emerging from early implementing districts.

All ten components need to be considered in order to have an effective district plan for implementing the CCSS. The ten components are:

1. capacity building and leadership development;
2. communication and stakeholder engagement;
3. review of curriculum and instruction;

4. alignment of instructional materials and electronic resources;
5. professional development for all, including professional learning communities;
6. student learning feedback systems and new assessments;
7. alignment of instructional assistance and support programs, including supports for English learners and those programs traditionally viewed as special education;
8. technology support for instruction, data, and assessment;
9. realignment of fiscal and human resources realignment to support implementation; and
10. student transitions to higher education and careers, including collaboration needed with higher education, career tech, and health and community support organizations.

In the following pages each component will be introduced with a narrative, followed by suggested steps, and key questions and special considerations. After each of the ten components have been described, a “quick checklist for implementation” is included which should prove helpful in early thinking and planning. (Page number references point back to the suggested steps and special considerations and are for each component in the left-hand column.)

Finally, a word about the need for continuous improvement strategies is offered.

To assist school and district leaders and teacher leaders,

- **Appendix A** offers a “Quick Checklist for CCSS and Assessments Implementation.”
- **Appendix B** offers a “Conceptualization of the Ten Key Components and the Four Phases of Implementation.”

The word “plan” is used frequently. It is not designed to imply that a written plan needs to be developed in every case. The word is sometimes used as a verb. Most importantly, when the word “plan” is used, it most likely can be viewed as establish action steps and timelines, and to see that the action steps are being adequately resourced and implemented

1. Capacity Building and Leadership Development

The past years have seen California schools and districts enduring cuts and undergoing significant “belt-tightening” in order to survive a serious fiscal crisis. Governor Jerry Brown has promoted the Local Control Funding Formula which, along with increased temporary tax revenue, gives local school districts the impetus to “redesign” for delivery of improved instruction and learning, in particular to provide additional resources or support for pupils who are English learners (EL), foster youth, or disabled.¹⁶ Indeed, **local school boards** have great discretion and responsibility over a wide range of issues, from curriculum to resource allocation.¹⁷

The emphasis in the CCSS on career and college readiness offers an opportunity to move to deeper and more active student learning, improve graduation rates, and provide wider choices for students upon graduation and address long-standing inequities in student outcomes.

A key to this effort is building the capacity of the district office in meaningful and strategic ways in order to better support teachers, to utilize their leadership skills, to support increased collaboration and professional learning, to support them in engaging parents, and to assist principals as they become instructional leaders and work with teachers in useful and productive ways.

Also key, as discussed in the introduction of this Guide, is the opportunity to form new types of collaboration, teamwork, and shared decision-making with teachers.¹⁸ The possibilities for moving the education profession forward are numerous, as are the opportunities for flexibility and decision making at the local school site.

This is an opportune time for the district to revisit and affirm that its vision, mission, policies, and priorities are focused on the academic achievement of all students, especially ELs, students with disabilities (SWDs), and other high-need students, and that they reflect a commitment to equitably serving the educational needs and interests of all students.

Finally, effective leadership will be compromised unless deep understanding of the standards and of curriculum is developed. Successful leadership, both for administrators and teachers, is

16 See CSBA at <http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources.aspx>

17 See CDE, Local Control Funding Formula Overview at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>

18 The legal framework addressing decision making and encompassed in *Government Code* Section 3543.2 and *Education Code* Section 60208 applies in many cases.

linked to “really knowing the stuff” of the CCSS and how the content was built, to understanding the need for coherent curriculum grade-by-grade, and having the skills to recognize effective teaching through observation.¹⁹

Suggested Steps

19 See "Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the Secondary School Leader Action Brief" at <http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-secondary-school-leader-action-brief> and "Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the Elementary School Leader Action Brief" at <http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-elementary-school-leader-action-brief>

20 See "Common Core State Standards Comparison Briefs" at <http://www.achieve.org/CCSS-comparison-briefs>

21 CDE has resources at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp> and Achieve and EDi, "Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments" at <http://www.deliveryinstitute.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-and-assessments-workbook-state-and-district-le> and <http://www.achieve.org/ImplementingCommonCore>

1. View the move to CCSS as a vehicle to engage parents and the community in district efforts to deepen the curriculum, improve graduation rates, engage students more deeply in their learning, and close persistent achievement gaps.
2. Brief the Board on the instructional shifts and assessment implications of moving to the CCSS.²⁰
3. Assist the Board to understand that the flexibility offered in funding, combined with the advent of the CCSS, gives them a unique opportunity for broadened decision making to meet local needs and situations.
4. Establish a **core leadership team** to decide how to organize and lead implementation of the CCSS. Ensure representation of teacher leaders as well as parents and all stakeholder groups.
5. Because the CCSS have significant implications for teaching, learning, and assessment, discuss with teacher and principal leadership the preferred and agreed-upon steps to take to begin implementation.
6. Work with the Board to understand the need for supportive district structures to build capacity, and the need both initially and ongoing to move resources to support implementation.
7. Develop a draft implementation plan for the CCSS, working through the core leadership team, and review with the district staff and the board to solicit input. Establish a working timeline for implementation and make it public.²¹
8. Examine each department in the district in terms of how it can re-align resources and efforts to support the CCSS. For example, should the hiring criteria for new teachers be changed to ensure that teacher candidates have been trained on the CCSS?

9. Consider contracting with a third party (county office of education or other alternative outside resource or independent contractor, proprietary or non-profit) to assist with the analysis and re-alignment of resources, structures, practices and policies toward the CCSS.
10. Review the budget for professional development on an on-going basis. The implications are significant for continuous improvement.
11. Many districts will want to give consideration as to how much money should be moved to the school site level to enhance local decision making.
12. Begin an examination of programming and services for ELs in order to maximize this time to improve instruction for ELs and other groups that need additional time and support.
13. Review instructional planning processes for students with disabilities to ensure that the elements are being included in the overall planning for the district and are an integral part of the implementation plan being prepared.
14. Alert the leadership of preschool and after-school programming that the CCSS have significant implications for them and prepare them to participate in professional development.

Key Questions and Special Considerations ---

1. Has the awareness phase been completed for everyone? (i.e., have all staff received a basic orientation on the CCSS?)
2. Is there a cadre of teacher leaders and others who know the CCSS well, who can be leaders at the school level, and who can inform and educate others?
3. If not, how soon can professional development be arranged in order to develop a degree of expertise (through a county office of education or other entity or organization)?
4. Have decisions been made as to how district structures and offices need to be re-configured to support ongoing implementation?

5. Consider how much decision making can/should be delegated to the school site level.
6. Has the district administration considered partnerships to assist with the transition and implementation phases (such as the local county office of education or some other proprietary, non-profit, community-based or business provider)?
7. Has the district completed the “Technology Readiness Tool” for each school as well as district wide, and are steps being taken to address the “gaps”?
8. Has a review of the adequacy of instructional materials and electronic resources to support teachers and teaching been started, and are plans in the works to provide professional development on the materials selected or developed?
9. Has a review been undertaken of the progress of and existing supports for ELs and special needs students in order to give guidance as to improvement steps needed to close the achievement gap?
10. Consider the utility of utilizing academic coaches in certain instances to assist with professional development.
11. Has provision been made for including special education and Response to Intervention staff in all communication and professional development?

22 See PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools at <http://pdkintl.org/programs-resources/poll/>

23 See E.D. Hirsch, Jr., “Why I’m for the Common Core: Teacher Bashing and Common Core Bashing Are Both Uncalled For” at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/e-d-hirsch-jr/why-im-for-the-common-cor_b_3809618.html

Key Component 2

2. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement: *Create and implement a comprehensive communication and outreach plan*

The history of school reform and improvement has been fraught with misunderstandings and erroneous assumptions. It has been noted that many people do not know about the CCSS.²² Additionally, there is already misinformation circulating about the CCSS. As one nationally known expert commented, “CCSS bashing is uncalled for.”²³ Therefore, it is critical that a strategic plan for initial as well as ongoing, two-way communication and

public engagement be developed and executed. It is prudent to engage stakeholders early, often, and throughout the process of implementation.

Teachers, principals, students, parents, and community leaders need to know the essence of the CCSS and the ELD standards, and why deep knowledge and thoughtful implementation is so important. They need to know how learning will be evaluated through formative assessments and new interim/benchmark and summative assessments. In most cases there is a need to be specific, using actual instructional modules and assessment tasks, in order to bring the standards to light.

All district staff need to be equipped with key messages that the district wants to disseminate to the community. A helpful article, “Engaging CCSS: Reading for Key Ideas and Details,” suggests using actual examples from the CCSS in the public engagement effort. These can be found at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/engagement_and_reform/2013/08/engaging_common_core_reading_for_key_ideas_and_details.html.

The California Department of Education has developed a useful Communications Toolkit for California. It can be found under the Administrators tab at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp>. This website also includes resources for parents.

It is important to utilize an array of communication tools (electronic, face-to-face, web-based, print, etc.) to engage all stakeholders on an ongoing basis. An emphasis should be placed on communicating with parents and facilitating two-way communication between parents and their children’s teachers.

Helpful resources for parents and community members can be found at <http://www.commoncoreworks.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=239> which was established by the Council of the Great City Schools. See especially the parent guides, in English and Spanish, and the three-minute video explaining what the CCSS are.

Additional resources are listed below as well as in the following sections of this Guide.

- Conservatives for Higher Standards at <http://highercorestandards.org/about-common-core/>
- Get to the Core at <http://get2core.org>
- Expect More, Achieve More at <http://expectmoretn.org/>

- Common Core Real Learning for Real Life at <http://commoncoreil.org/>
- Ready Washington at <http://www.readywa.org/index.html>

Suggested Steps

1. Review with the Board and obtain their input on the specific communication plan to be used, including the actual curricular examples and assessment tasks to be widely shared.
2. Decide on the key message that needs to be delivered, as well as specific modified messages for particular audiences. (Identify key “talking points” to ensure a consistent district message.)
3. Refine the core message to include reasons for the CCSS, and how the district is building on the curricular strengths and major instructional shifts of the CCSS. Include answers to commonly asked questions. To assist and support the communication plan, a useful set of **Frequently Asked Questions** has been developed by the National Education Association (NEA) and can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>. Consider utilizing information from these three helpful resources:
 - a. Achieve the Core at <http://www.achievethecore.org>
 - b. NEA Policy Brief, “Common Core State Standards: A Tool for Improving Education” at http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/PB30_CommonCoreStandards10.pdf
 - c. ASCD, “Fulfilling the Promise of the Common Core State Standards: Moving from Adoption to Implementation and Sustainability” at <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/commoncore/CCSSSummitReport.pdf>
4. Every district, either on their own or in consortia with the local County Superintendent of Schools, should meet with their press and locally elected officials. (Don’t wait for them to ask!)
5. Ensure that parents are represented on the “communications team” and that two-way communication with parents is maintained as the CCSS are being implemented.

6. Check to be sure communication is in the needed home languages and in clear-to-understand formats (no jargon), and that a plan is in place to engage and reach the full audience of parents, students, and the broader local community.
7. Give consideration to building the capacity of parent leaders to serve as “CCSS Ambassadors.”

Key Questions and Special Considerations ---

1. Has the board been sufficiently briefed? How? Does each board member feel supported to answer basic questions if necessary?
2. Are the school principals prepared to explain the purpose of the standards, the major instructional shifts, and the new types of assessment, using specific examples?
3. Is there a plan to communicate the changes to all parents, and to listen to their questions and concerns? Do the messages address what changes may look like/ can be expected in terms of what their children will learn or how tests will be administered? (i.e., the messaging should focus first and foremost on helping parents understand what CCSS means for their children.)
4. Have presentations been planned with specific community organizations and groups?
5. Do people understand that the CCSS maintain fundamental skills while moving to deepen learning? If there is any confusion, then the message needs to be tightened.
6. District and school leaders should meet with local newspapers and realtors in advance of the first round of tests to communicate that they will be baseline and are likely to be low because the expectations have increased.
7. Have students been assisted in understanding what the shift to the CCSS will mean for them in very practical terms?
8. Is there a plan to explain to parents of English learners how the CCSS and the ELD standards will improve their child’s English and academic performance?

3. Curriculum and Instruction: *Review and develop coherent and sequenced curriculum*

“A curriculum is not just a piece of paper that guides the teacher; it is a living document that guides and brings coherence to the *whole educational endeavor*.”²⁴

Standards are implemented through rigorous curriculum and powerful teaching. Standards are statements of the knowledge and skills that students must master to be considered college- and career-ready.

Curriculum is the roadmap that teachers use to help young people acquire and master those skills. Decisions need to be made on what to teach, what curriculum and instructional materials are best for teaching the standards, and how curriculum will be improved in conjunction with a continuous improvement process.

The developmental and instructional shifts in math and English language arts associated with implementing the CCSS are significant. The CCSS envision a sophisticated mix of various teaching strategies and professional judgments.

For example, the mathematics standards place strong emphasis on the grade-level and course-level standards; they stress coherence across grades and link major topics in each grade; and they emphasize conceptual development and understanding, procedural skills and fluency, academic discourse, and application in complex situations. In addition the implementation of the CCSS in math requires rethinking not only about course content, but also topic and course sequencing.

A major tenet of the CCSS is a **coherent K–12 curriculum** that promotes opportunities for content disciplines to reinforce the learning objectives found in the math and language arts standards.

The CCSS stress coherent curriculum. They state: “By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.”²⁵

24 See American Educator, “Common Core Curriculum: An Idea Whose Time Has Come,” Winter, 2010 at <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/winter1011/Editors.pdf>

25 National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, “Common Core State Standards Initiative” at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R>

The CCSS envision a more active curriculum with questions and presentations and projects. Leaders may want to spend some time understanding these changes, and studying written and interactive resources that provide general background on the shifts in teaching and learning. Three helpful resources are listed here:

- NEA Issues and Action: CCSS at <http://www.nea.org/home/IssuesAndAction.html>
- The Hunt Institute's Common Core video series at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntInstitute>
- California Department of Education: CCSS Professional Learning Modules for Educators at <http://myboe.org/portal/default/Group/Viewer/GroupView?action=2&gid=2996>
- Another resource providing an overview of the conceptual instructional shifts in the CCSS can be downloaded from the Aspen Institute Education and Society Program website.²⁶

California is in the final stages of revising its curriculum frameworks in English language arts and in mathematics to conform and embrace the CCSS, as well as promote a broad liberal arts curriculum. Consideration should be given to starting with these frameworks in the work to examine curriculum. Each framework not only includes the CCSS but also specifications to help educators translate the standards and learning outcomes into a curriculum that meets those standards.

Specifications are also included for instructional materials, professional development, and ramping up timely interventions for struggling students.

The ELA/ELD Framework is currently being drafted for the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) for presentation in October 2013. It is expected to be sent out for public review and comment from December 2013 through February 2014. The Mathematics Curriculum Framework has already been approved by the IQC and can be viewed at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/draftmathfwchapters.asp>. When adopted by the State Board of Education, both the Mathematics and the ELA/ELD Frameworks will be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp>

It is not reasonable to expect teachers to develop all the necessary curricular units to engage students in the new standards and expectations.

26 Implementation of the Common Core State Standards: A Transition Guide for School Level Leaders developed by the Aspen Institute Education and Society Program, Education First, Insight Education Group, and others. See page 10 (Appendix I) at <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/implementation-common-core-state-standards-transition-guide-school-level-leaders>

Districts, and consortia of districts and county offices, have an opportunity to work together to review and strengthen curriculum—to ensure that it is coherent and specific. Indeed, E.D. Hirsch has noted that “The single most effective way to enhance teacher effectiveness is to create a more coherent multi-year curriculum, so that teachers at each level will know what students have already been taught.”²⁷

The CCSS are sometimes written by grade spans, and decisions need to be made as to what concept should be taught at what grade level. In other words, it is likely work will need to be done on a new or revised scope and sequence before curriculum can be fully developed, and before lesson plans can be extensively designed.

New York and Colorado have both done extensive work on model curriculum for the CCSS. Visit these two sites for sample curricula and model unit:

- New York State Education Department’s website, <http://www.engageny.org/>, provides information on their Common Core Mathematics Curriculum Framework which includes specifications for curriculum and units of instruction. (See <http://www.engageny.org/common-core-curriculum-assessments>)
- Colorado Department of Education, “Colorado’s District Sample Curriculum Project” at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>.

27 J.D. Hirsch, Jr., “Why I’m for the Common Core: Teacher Bashing and Common Core Bashing Are Both Uncalled For” at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/e-d-hirsch-jr/why-im-for-the-common-cor_b_3809618.html

Posted on The University of Arizona website is a series of math progressions documents for the math CCSS. These documents should prove helpful and can be found at <http://ime.math.arizona.edu/progressions>

Thinking about curriculum in conjunction with implementing the CCSS gives opportunity for broadening and integrating the curriculum for students, both to reinforce and to promote the teaching of the arts, history/social studies, science, and physical education. To cite one example using arts education see, “The Arts and Common Core Mapping Project” at http://commoncore.org/maps/documents/Art_in_the_Maps.pdf.

The *Next Generation Science Standards* were adopted by the California State Board of Education in September 2013. These standards make some of the same shifts as the CCSS and complement them. (The CCSS are only developed for

mathematics and English language arts/English language development.) That is, the new science standards promote more active teaching, fewer topics, more depth, and stress the importance of practice standards.

This is a good opportunity to promote and expand tiered instruction and build on the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. The key is a system of quick and intensive interventions specifically tailored for specific students. In order to accomplish that challenge schools must have frequent data on each student. Progress monitoring and screening tools can be found on the National Center on Responses to Intervention website at <http://www.rti4success.org/resourceslanding>.

Finally, curriculum and instruction is realized through benchmarks (i.e., decoding simple words by first grade) and a system of progress monitoring. Therefore, benchmarks need to be decided upon and established for both curriculum and instruction and assessment.

Curriculum and instruction must be the levers by which the CCSS become reality and firmly take root.

Suggested Steps

1. Provide a context for teachers and administrators as to how they should think about curriculum to support the CCSS. Specific grade sequencing must be reviewed, and suggestions for approaching curricular decisions provided.
2. Consideration should be given as soon as feasible to conducting in-depth professional development on the new California curriculum frameworks as they encompass the CCSS and provide instructional guidance and context. A good start is to utilize the new mathematics framework, and the forthcoming ELA/ELD curriculum framework, as the basis for initial study in preparation for reviewing and adopting curriculum.
3. The standards have to be broken apart and their spiraling nature understood (i.e., how the standards build on each other). Then the school and district curriculum needs to be examined and/or mapped, and the gaps or opportunities identified.

Note: The **California Teachers Association** (CTA) has completed a “spiraling” project to show how the standards and skills build on each other at each grade at <http://ctaipd.ning.com/group/ipd-strand-ucla/page/summer-institute-materials-and-resources> (Summer Institute Materials and Resources).

4. Through this process pay special attention to retaining and building on foundational reading skills. The new ELA/ELD curriculum framework is organized around five topical areas: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills. An organized program of foundational skills should include the teaching of print concepts, phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding and sounding out new words, fluency, syllabication, and morphemic analysis. (See also the state of Colorado “Five Components of Reading” at http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/clf/eightelements_01-fivecomponents for more information.) **The CCSS does not lessen the emphasis on foundational skills, but rather encompasses them.**²⁸
5. A key role of the district board of education is to review student learning and performance expectations and approve the curriculum.²⁹ Setting up a board “workshop” is a good first step to ensure board members have common understandings as they approach decisions on curriculum.
6. Districts will need to decide on the traditional math sequence or an integrated sequence. To read a description of the sequences (or “pathways” as they are called), see CCSS for Mathematics Appendix A at http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_Mathematics_Appendix_A.pdf. Examples are offered for assistance.
7. Set up a process to have peer examination of the curriculum of all teachers—including visual performing arts, science, history/social studies, etc. All subjects should ideally reinforce one another, and be sequenced so as to maximize instruction aligned to the standards. The goal is to ensure a strong liberal arts education, including civic engagement, and to ensure that all classroom teachers support students with accessory texts in their discipline.

28 See International Dyslexia Association. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, Fall 2012 at <http://www.interdys.org/Perspectives.htm>

29 For examples of the district board of education authority see *Education Code* Sections 51210, 51220, 60210, and 60119.

8. Set up a process so that all teachers are exposed to and understand the literacy strand as it crosses all subjects.
9. Ensure assistance for English learners is embedded throughout the curriculum.³⁰ The ELA/ELD curriculum framework addresses this in detail. For additional references at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp> and WIDA (the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment resource) at <http://www.wida.us/>
10. Ensure that support and resources are being given to educators working with students with disabilities in order that appropriate instruction that addresses content and skill expectations aligned to the CCSS is being provided. This includes ensuring that evidence-based instruction and curricular models have been incorporated into the programs provided for students with disabilities. A good reference for this work is provided by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) at <http://www.ncscpartners.org/>
11. Analyze the assessments and study test items, and examine how the curriculum supports and covers the goals in the standards that will be assessed³¹
12. Set up professional development opportunities to promote the understanding of formative assessments, how to ask questions of the students, and how to implement the curriculum. Ensure that all educator populations are considered in the design of professional development opportunities, including teachers and staff working with EL students and students with disabilities and struggling learners.
13. Working with teachers, re-design school time to ensure adequate instruction and collaboration time for teachers.
14. Check to be sure that national, state and local assessments and data are at the service of instruction, not driving instruction, and that the data loops back to capacity building for the school and district as well as to the continuous improvement process.
15. If the district teachers and content experts desire to work on model curriculum “chunks” (i.e., “grow your own”), the following suggestions may be helpful:

30 See Claude Goldenberg, "Unlocking the Research on English Learners." *American Educator* (Summer 2013) at <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/summer2013/Goldenberg.pdf>

31 See Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Sample Items and Performance Tasks at <http://www.smarterbalance.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/>

- a. Start by deciding specific learning objectives for each unit.
- b. Build in 6-week interim/benchmark assessments.
- c. Finalize decisions on grade-level content.
- d. Sequence units to target specific skills for alignment of units and across each grade or course.

Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. To what extent do teachers and administrators understand how instruction will change when the CCSS are fully implemented? What else needs to be done to support them?
2. Ask, “Are all students given access to the core curriculum?”
3. Is targeted instruction being maintained to ensure access for all learners?
4. Are teachers engaged in creating curriculum maps/ scope and sequences? What do they need in order to be better supported for these tasks?
5. Are there school district supports for students having trouble with foundational skills or with the more demanding curriculum?
6. Do all instructional staff understand the standards and expectations for English learners and for special needs students?

Key Component 4

4. Alignment of Instructional Materials and Electronic Resources

It is essential that the instructional materials and resources selected, both electronic and print, be well aligned to the CCSS. If districts are attempting to retain and utilize older materials, and add to the older materials, the same thoroughness and care needs to be taken regarding alignment.

Rubrics for assessing the quality and alignment of instructional materials and resources can be found in the new California

Curriculum Frameworks. The Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQUIP) at <http://achieve.org/EQUIP> can also be helpful.³² Finally, see the Materials Alignment Toolkit developed by the Chief State School Officials and Achieve for assistance in determining alignment to the CCSS. (See <http://www.achievethecore.org/page/285/toolkit-content-list-page>)

Reviewers need to be selected and trained on these alignment rubrics so that thoughtful decisions can be made as to which materials and resources are best aligned to the CCSS. Once selections are made, teachers need to be made aware when they will receive the resources, when they will be trained on how to use them, and when they will have time to collaborate.

The Basal Alignment Project, a joint project of the Council of the Great City Schools and Student Achievement Partners, can also be helpful. It rewrites questions to make the curriculum more active using existing materials. See p. 323 at <http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/Calendar%20of%20Questions.pdf>.³³

Suggested Steps

1. Review curriculum in terms of alignment and coverage of the CCSS.
2. Utilize California's new/revised curriculum frameworks as each one has very good suggestions to assist in the selection and alignment of instructional materials and electronic resources at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/cf/>.
3. Establish grade-level and school-site teams to analyze the standards, to understand the clusters, to assess what new resources need to be obtained or worked on, and to decide on the desired mix of basal, supplementary, and electronic resources from proprietary, non-profit, or free sources.

Note: Useful rubrics are in the Appendices of both the Mathematics and English Language Arts/ELD frameworks at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp>.

4. Some teachers will create or modify units of study. Care needs to be given to ensure they are tightly aligned to the CCSS. Reminder: lesson plans do not constitute the full curriculum that needs to be in place. Other teachers might want to work on replacement units, or search to identify such units and broad clusters of units.

32 See Oregon Department of Education, Instructional Materials at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=3590> and NCSM, Materials Analysis Tools at <https://www.mathedleadership.org/ccss/materials.html>

33 See Edmodo and the basal alignment project. They have developed rigorous text-based lessons aligned to existing basals; they are doing the same for middle school anthologies.

Allow for these efforts in the process of curriculum definition and selection.

5. Study the supplemental resources reviewed by the CDE as deemed aligned to standards (See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/suptsupmatreview.asp>).
6. Review and study the “Approved and Aligned Instructional materials” adopted and listed by the State Board of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr12/yr12rel104.asp> [Mathematics in January 2014 (although legal deadline is March 2014); ELA/ELD in November 2015 (as required under SB 201)]. The review process used for the state review “adoption” offers helpful tips for review at the local level. (See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/im/> for a description of the process used.)
7. Utilize a rubric to aid the textbook adoption process and the selection of electronic resources (See <http://www.corestandards.org/resources> and <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/evaluationcriteria1-4-12.asp>). Ensure that the reviewers are well trained on the rubric selected or developed.
8. Develop and make known specific plans on getting sufficient teaching and learning materials and resources into the hands of teachers.
9. Consider if there is a role for open education resources (OERs).^{34,35}
10. Consider establishing a quality-control process for vetting teacher-developed resources.
11. Develop discussion groups among teachers and protocols for meaningful sharing of units, lessons, and instructional materials.³⁶ Make these discussions a regular part of collaboration time.
12. Investigate how technology could enhance instruction and learning. Look at the evidence of what works. Work with a group of teachers to assess and to develop a work plan of actionable steps, and include teachers from the wide range of populations served by the district, including teachers with EL students and SWD.
13. Work with educators in the area of special education to develop lessons with universal design for learning using CCSS, and review instructional materials being

34 See Lisa Hansel, "What's the Difference Between Great Lessons and a Great Education?" *Core Knowledge* (July 11, 2013) at <http://blog.coreknowledge.org/2013/07/11/>

35 See ISKME, OER Support at <http://www.iskme.org/services/oer-support> and OER Commons at <http://www.oercommons.org/>

36 See Better Lesson at <http://betterlesson.com/>

utilized to ensure that lesson materials are aligned with key standards. Identify where the gaps are present and identify and procure supplemental materials to respond to areas that are not in alignment.

14. Do school and classroom libraries have both fiction and nonfiction books for students to read? Is there a good selection of books available for students to read in addition to textbooks? Are books available in languages other than English?

Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. To what extent have teachers and administrators reviewed curriculum instructional materials in terms of alignment to the CCSS? Have they reviewed options and the desired combinations of open and proprietary? (Have parents been given an opportunity to review?)
2. Have appropriate curriculum resources been identified that will support EL students and students with disabilities having full access to the CCSS?
3. Is there a systematic textbook/ technology adoption process to compare options against the CCSS to determine which series/software has the strongest alignment?
4. Is there a process and funding set aside for enhancing the collection of fiction and nonfiction books for classroom and school libraries to support the curriculum maps/units developed by the district and/or schools?
5. Ask what kind of feedback will be gathered and what kind of follow-through will be provided so that continuous improvement will be supported over time.

Key Component 5

5. Professional Development for All

Educators must deeply understand the CCSS, and all staff that impact and influence teaching and learning—not only math and English language arts teachers or classroom teachers—need to be familiar with the instructional shifts they require. To address

the needs of all students, the needs of all teachers need to be addressed.³⁷

Therefore, extensive and ongoing purposeful professional development is essential. An emphasis should be on observing and debriefing if possible. Teachers need to know “what we are we looking for.” Further, until the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework incorporating both ELA and ELD standards is available (should be public in draft form by the middle of December, 2013), consideration should be given to training on the ELD standards in tandem with the CCSS.

Ideally, training would be delivered in partnership with content experts who will be around “for the whole ride” and who can bring an emphasis on building long-term internal capacity.

According to one report, the teaching profession lacks five critical inter-connected structures:

- *professional career continuums*
- *distributed leadership models*
- *collaborative practice*
- *guiding principles developed by educators, for educators*

Implementing the CCSS presents an opportune time to work on these structures. (See the National Network of State Teachers of the Year report at <http://www.nnstoy.org/>)

³⁷ See WestEd, *R and D Alert*, Volume 14, No. 2 (2013), at <http://www.wested.org/resources/rd-alert-vol-14-no-2/>

Principals will need a new level of support in order to embrace their role as instructional leaders. Demonstration of instructional leadership among principals is characterized as:

- Support for the effective and full implementation of the district-adopted core and intervention programs and research-based teaching strategies, including knowledge of pedagogy and strategies specific to English learners.
- Analysis and use of student achievement data to monitor the effective implementation of programs and inform student placement in various interventions.
- Collaboration with staff to identify targeted professional development to help move school staff toward specific instructional and achievement goals.

- Leveraging of all available resources, both inside and outside the school, to fully implement the CCSS to maximize learning.³⁸

Principals should work with teachers to revisit the issue of instructional time. Helpful resources for principals are available from the **National Elementary Principals Association** (See <http://www.naesp.org/common-core-state-standards-resources>). Good information for **Secondary Principals** can be found in the Achieve “Secondary Action Brief” (See http://www.achieve.org/files/RevisedSecondaryActionBrief_Final_Feb.pdf)

Training for teachers in utilizing the newly selected instructional resources is essential and time needs to be provided to discuss and collaborate on resources.

Ideally, professional learning incorporates multiple modes of delivery, including workshops, peer observation, study groups, and coaching.

Consideration should be given to leveraging funds and resources to support site-based professional learning.

Successful implementing districts have found that a strategic and extensive professional development plan and program must be of the highest priority.

38 For general reference, download the District Assistance Survey at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/dasintro.asp>

Suggested Steps

1. Decide what needs to be included in the professional development to ensure deep understanding of content and performance expectations, the instructional shifts upon which the CCSS are built, and the types of assessment that will be used to measure student progress.
 - a. Include an understanding of the integrated approach to curriculum, planning, and delivery as an instructional shift of the CCSS.
 - b. Include any newly adopted (at district or site level) instructional materials and electronic resources in planning the professional program.
2. It is recommended that professional development first be given on the new curriculum frameworks approved by the state in mathematics and English language arts. These useful references help introduce the CCSS and

place them in the context of the larger instructional picture. The frameworks also include recommendations for professional development.

3. Include all teaching staff, as well as after-school, instructional aides, support staff, preschool and transitional kindergarten teachers, in the professional development planning and delivery.
4. Consider the appropriate level of CCSS training for Pre-K and transitional kindergarten teachers, and if possible, offer a “crosswalk” between the California Preschool Learning Foundations (See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>) and the CCSS.
5. Principal training is key. Decide what will be covered in the training in order to sufficiently understand the instructional shifts called for in the CCSS, and how those shifts can be made. Time should be spent both on the CCSS and on the new state curriculum frameworks.
 - a. Principals need *transformational leadership* skills in order to develop high functioning teams, to support the instructional shifts of the CCSS, and to foster continuous improvement.³⁹ Professional development needs to include suggestions for team building and ways to promote meaningful continuous collaboration.⁴⁰
 - b. Principals need to be well grounded in the content of the standards and in the instructional materials.
 - c. Principals need be able to recognize and support good teaching through observation⁴¹ and collaboration skills.
6. Provide professional development for teachers and principals on the new assessment system, including item types, types of formative assessment, and data interpretation.
7. Create and sustain Professional Learning Communities.
 - a. Have a plan for forming and supporting professional learning communities, both in person and online.
 - b. Develop school-site teams around CCSS implementation and continuous improvement strategies.

39 See Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn. *Leading Transformational Change* (2012) at [http://www.michaelfullan.ca/images/handouts/12_ISTE_Closing\(V03\).pdf](http://www.michaelfullan.ca/images/handouts/12_ISTE_Closing(V03).pdf) and Kenneth Leithwood, et al., *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning* (2004) at <http://www.sisd.net/cms/lib/TX01001452/Centricity/Domain/33/ReviewofResearch-LearningFromLeadership.pdf>

40 *Implementing the Common Core: The Role of Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) and Looking at Student Work (LASW)*, the Aspen Institute at <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/implementing-common-core-role-instructional-leadership-teamsilts-looking-student-work>

41 See Achieve, Publications at <http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-statestandards-role-secondary-school-leader-action-brief> and NAESP, Common Core State Standards Resources at <http://www.naesp.org/common-core-state-standards-resources>

- c. Allocate sufficient funds and time so that school-level collaboration can be sustained.
 - d. Teachers can be assisted in knowing how to ask students questions, how to promote student study teams, and how to encourage students' learning through "productive struggle."⁴²
8. Allot sufficient time to understand the new research on English learners, and the increased emphasis on the specifics of language acquisition. See "Unlocking the Research on English Learners" by Claude Goldenberg, *American Educator*, 2013 at <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/summer2013/Goldenberg.pdf>
 9. Provide professional development for teachers on the literacy and ELD standards as they are reinforced in science, history/social studies, the arts, and technology.
 10. Plan for initial training and ongoing support for the use of technology as an instructional tool. Consider how technology can be integrated with high-quality teaching.
 11. Consider leveraging funds and resources to support site-based professional learning.

42 See Joint Action Brief, "Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the Elementary School Leader" (2013) at <http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-elementary-school-leader-action-brief>

Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. Professional development should provide opportunities that are job-embedded, such as lesson study and/or peer coaching, in order to bring professional learning to bear on changing instruction.
2. How is ongoing support provided to teachers on the instructional shifts that should be present in the implementation of the CCSS, the level of student engagement desired, and the content knowledge for each set of standards?
3. In what ways will teachers be provided with frequent and structured opportunities to meet and share and work together in terms of getting better at implementing the CCSS?
4. Has consideration been given to identifying a core group of "local experts" that can be identified and trained to be site-level trainers, as desired?

5. Has consideration been given to identifying a cadre of instructional leadership coaches to support the ongoing provision of professional development?
6. Have strategies been identified and included in the professional development to address the specific needs of EL students, students with disabilities, and struggling learners with an eye toward closing achievement gaps?
7. Does the professional development include strategies for the integrated use of technology, and practice of the same?

Key Component **6**

6. Student Learning Feedback Systems, New Assessments, Reflection, and Instructional Adjustments

The goal is to design and implement a comprehensive assessment strategy that places instruction and actionable data for teachers at its center.

Interim/benchmark and formative assessments need to be provided throughout instruction to make sure that students are learning what they are being taught. There are many different types of interim/benchmark and formative assessments. To some teachers these types of assessment are new, and professional development needs to be offered in order to further understanding and purposeful use. Further, work must be done in both interim/benchmark and summative assessments—particularly on how to interpret and use the data—in order to adjust instruction, student by student.

The district needs to fully support the regular collection and analysis of common formative and summative assessment data to establish instructional priorities, inform classroom instruction, appropriately place and exit students from intervention programs, and monitor student progress in core and intervention programs. (Schools should consider progress monitoring and screening tools, especially for K–3, as recommended by the National Center on Response to Intervention.)

Teachers need to be supported to utilize immediate feedback regarding student learning as well as data over longer time periods (end of week, or clusters of standards). Professional

development for teachers should include practice in adjusting instruction based on student learning data.

Full implementation of this component means that the district has in place timely, two-way communication systems with all stakeholders regarding student achievement, academic expectations, and accountability requirements. All communication is rendered in a format and language that is understandable to all stakeholders. The district may want to consider modifying their report cards in order to encourage parents to track their students' progress.

For struggling students the district will want to consider restating their expectations for the regular and uniform administration and analysis of common district benchmark assessments. Further, formative/curriculum-embedded assessments can be very helpful to teachers of these students on a regular basis.

Finally, the use of placement/exit criteria to provide strategic and intensive interventions, as well as providing additional grade-level instruction, become essential. (RtII demands frequent progress assessment and monitoring. For a list of rated assessments that fit the criteria for RtI (or RtI²), refer to the National Center on Response to Intervention's Tools Charts at <http://www.rti4success.org/resourceslanding>.

It is unlikely that the Smarter Balanced Assessments can be successfully taken by students unless practice and "trial runs" are provided. Students have to know how to take these tests, including how to use the technology.

Suggested Steps

1. Agree on what teachers and administrators should expect to see and hear as they observe high-quality teaching and learning.
2. Decide on the measures to be used to track and monitor progress of implementation, and whether instructional practice is changing and improving.
3. Track student performance and teacher implementation by agreed upon metrics.
4. Implement SBAC-aligned assessment tasks and district benchmark assessments aligned to SBAC item specifications, with the needed accommodations for English learners and students with disabilities.

5. Decide on the measures to be used to track and monitor progress of English language proficiency, how to determine literacy and math skills in the student's home language, and whether the test results of the ELs reflect their academic needs or their lack of English proficiency to understand the demands of the test and implications for reclassification.
6. Implement schoolwide instructional processes to deliver, revise, and reteach as determined by assessment results.
7. Decide what data is needed to inform students and parents of the preparation of students to transition to higher education and careers.
8. Utilize the National Center on RTI for progress monitoring tools that can be used to evaluate progress of RTI, adjust practices based on the evaluation, and monitor changes to ensure sustainability of tiered instruction and RTI. (See www.rti4success.org/progressMonitoringTools.)

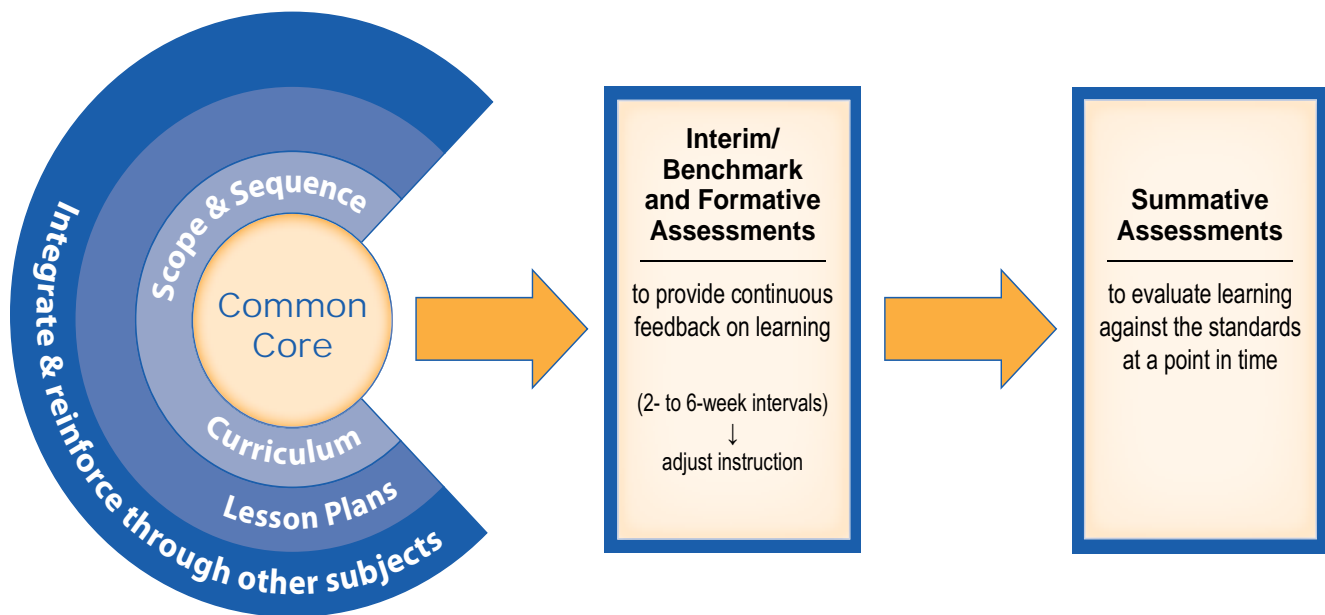
Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. Is there a system in place for the regular collection of interim/benchmark and summative assessment data to be made available to teachers? This should include immediate feedback as well as weekly progress monitoring.
2. How are the curriculum and assessments aligned across the grade spans?
3. Are benchmarks being utilized in tiered instruction in order to determine effectiveness and to build into feedback systems?
4. How will it be determined whether or not the needs of English Learners, students with disabilities, and struggling learners are being met? What are the indicators of success?
5. How will parents be kept informed of student progress?

Figure B (next page) is designed to illustrate how curriculum and instruction form the basis for both interim/benchmark and formative as well as summative assessments.

FIGURE B

The Relationship of Common Core State Standards to Teaching and Learning and Assessment



Key Component **7**

7. Align Instructional Assistance and Support Programs

As the skills and knowledge expectations change for students, and the curriculum is changed, the instructional methodologies needed to teach the standards must ensure a range of approaches and strategies.

There are significant implications for tiered instruction, for Response to Intervention and other special education efforts, for the types of instructional programming and support for English learners, for intervention programs, and so forth. Of special significance is the need to bring early education into alignment with the CCSS kindergarten and first grade expectations.

Suggested Steps

1. Align Pre-K and transitional kindergarten programs to prepare for the CCSS in kindergarten and first grade.
2. The use of immediate feedback to intervene quickly should be a priority, as discussed in component 6. Take this opportunity to review the changes that can be made to tiered instruction and to Response to Intervention (RTI), as well as to special education programs. A good resource for use with RTI is the guide developed by the **Ventura County Office of Education** and CCSSEA which can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/>
3. For those ready for acceleration, select a pathway that ensures coverage of 8th grade CCSS, and offers supports for struggling learners (i.e., change the method of teaching, give more time, intervene). (Reminder: expectations have been raised with the CCSS.)
4. Identify useful intervention programs and strategies and decide how they can best be mobilized to support the teaching and learning of the CCSS.
5. Review all special and support programs, including special education and after school programming, so that they work in tandem and in alignment with the implementation of the CCSS. (see National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) for basic resources on the CCSS and special education at <http://www.nclld.org/about-us>)

Key Questions and Special Considerations:

1. Can the supports that will assist special education teachers and others to teach to the new standards be described?
2. Will academic coaches/teacher leaders be utilized? If already being used, will they be used differently given the context of the CCSS?
3. How will interventions need to be revised and/or expanded in light of the CCSS?
4. How can the Response to Intervention framework, with the tiered instruction approach, be better utilized to support the CCSS?

5. Some high school and middle school students need more time to learn the standards. Explore alternative pathways to get more students “up to speed.”
6. Are special education teachers and related service personnel prepared and supported to utilize the CCSS through their various settings?
7. What steps are being taken to align and assist Pre-K and Transitional Kindergarten programs to prepare for the CCSS?
8. Are all Pre-K programs utilizing the California Pre-K Early Learning Foundations?⁴³
9. How can the after school programs be brought into tighter and more purposeful alignment with the CCSS?
10. Are the efforts to teach English learners consistent with the CCSS? How effective are they?
11. Does first instruction and subsequent intervention for EL students build upon a student’s home language, background and experiences, as well as their linguistic proficiency in both English and their home language?
12. Consider increasing high demand alternative pathways of preparation for the workplace, preferably negotiated with the local community college, for those students not going to four-year higher education institutions.
13. Engage parents in two-way communication relative to the employment and post-secondary educational opportunities for students upon graduation.

43 California Preschool Learning Foundations, California Department of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>

44 See Preface to Common Core State Standards at <http://www.corestandards.org/>

Key Component 8

8. Technology Support for Instruction, Data, and Assessment

Students are expected to “...use technology and digital media strategically and capably.”⁴⁴

The CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessments bring new technology challenges to districts. District leaders face the challenge of building technology-rich school and classroom environments where all students

can succeed at high levels with CCSS, and demonstrate that knowledge on SBAC assessments.

To create those classroom learning environments, districts must develop and implement plans to: increase educator knowledge and capacity to effectively teach with technology; increase student access to quality learning experiences with technology; and assure that infrastructure requirements for teaching and learning CCSS and administering SBAC assessments are met. Through focused and purposeful action, districts can take important steps forward to address these goals.

Review and analyze the CCSS and the SBAC assessments to identify technology expectations for students at each grade level. As the student technology expectations are being reviewed, consider learning needs of students, the professional learning needs of staff, and technology infrastructure implications. Carefully review plans related to components three through seven of this Planning Guide so that technology planning is clearly aligned with teaching and learning goals and actions, infused throughout.

Carefully review the *Smarter Balanced Technology Strategy Framework and System Requirements Specifications*, which gives minimum hardware specifications, and basic bandwidth calculations that enable schools and districts to determine which of their existing computers will support administration of SBAC assessments in the 2014-15 school year at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/technology/>. Utilize calculators, tests, and tools available on the CDE Smarter Balanced Technology Readiness Tool website to help determine technology readiness and needs at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbac-itr-index.asp>

California has worked diligently to establish the K–12 High Speed Network (K12HSN)⁴⁵ statewide high-speed network that ties together every county office, school district, and most every one of California’s 10,000 schools. Nonetheless, the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessments bring new technology challenges to districts. Not every school has sufficient connectivity to offer online assessments and still maintain technology-rich instruction and manage data systems.

Therefore, the **first step** for each district should be to examine the bandwidth of the school and classroom connection against the technical requirement of the assessments.^{46,47}

45 See K–12 High Speed Network at <http://www.k12hsn.org/>

46 For minimum specifications for hardware and bandwidth see Smarter Balanced Technology Strategy Framework and System Requirements Specifications at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/technology/>

47 Studies have shown great variability in the costs associated with bandwidth, so comparative shopping and careful analysis of costs is recommended.

The **second step** should be to assess the district's existing human resources (HR) capital necessary to maintain, support and implement technology. The assessment should include both technical HR as well as programmatic/teacher goals and the necessary abilities for using technology as an instructional tool. This process informs step three.

Third, the district needs to invest in the expertise and human capital needed to design, implement, and manage a network that will wirelessly connect every classroom to the internet and help implement the district's technology plan. (Consideration could be given to expanding the partnership with the county office of education to support the districts' technology plan.) Leaders need to be aware of the importance of maintaining networks and devices, and of refreshing them when they age. Pooling funds to expand the one-time CCSS state monies can maximize the investment in technology.

The **fourth step** should be to analyze the data management system to be sure it can carry the additional demands for assessment and data as a result of a more robust instructional program.

Fifth, care should be taken, working closely with teachers, to select devices and other hardware and software that can and will escalate the level of instruction and student engagement. It should be noted that much of the software available currently is either weak pedagogically or addresses only small portions of the skills and knowledge necessary to learn the CCSS standards.

The instructional approach and instructional software selected should drive decisions regarding device acquisition. Successful technology integration is most often achieved with a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies.

Sixth, consideration needs to be given to the technological skills students will need to fully participate in the curriculum and the assessments. For example, many students will probably need to be taught keyboarding skills in order to prepare for and take on-line tests.

Finally, systematic outreach to parents should address technology expectations and family engagement and ways for parents to support learning at home.

Therefore, the district must develop systematic selection processes that will result in the technology that will be most helpful and will in fact be used to enhance teaching. Each

curriculum framework from the state includes a rubric for the selection of instructional materials and electronic resources that can serve as a helpful starting point in initiating the review and selection process.

Suggested Steps

1. Using the Technology Readiness survey, develop specific plans to address gaps and identified needs, and transition support for hardware, software, and devices.
2. Develop plans to train teachers and others staff members on the technologies to be utilized. Technology training and support needs to be ongoing for current teachers. For new teachers, the schools of education through induction and clinical supervision can assist. Support needs to continue long after the first year of teaching.
3. The technology expectations for teachers should inform the negotiations with colleges in terms of new teacher preparation.
4. Ensure a program of support is available for teachers as they use technology as an instructional tool (see California eLearning Framework at http://www.ccsesa.org/resources/eLearning_Framework_FINAL1.PDF).
5. Review the skills found within the CCSS that students will need to acquire. In order to ensure that students have opportunity to learn these skills, develop a plan to address the teaching of these skills within the appropriate grade level or grade span.
6. Use the rubrics in the California Curriculum Frameworks or develop a district agreed-upon rubric to assist with the review and selection of electronic resources.
7. Develop and implement a plan for outreach to parents and families regarding technology expectations for students, and opportunities for family engagement. Offer training as appropriate.
8. Conduct outreach to the community, business, higher education, and philanthropic partners, seeking collaborative approaches to accomplish technology goals.

9. Use technology to “step up” coordination with community health and support services for students. View the schools as the center for coordination and provision of many social services.
10. Review and consider the sufficiency and alignment of assistive technology for students with disabilities.

Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. Ask: does every school have sufficient connectivity?
2. Some computers and devices may not lend themselves to both instruction and assessment; therefore special consideration must be paid to “trying out” the devices before purchase and installation.
3. The district needs to be clear about who is providing technology leadership, and how technical, infrastructure expertise is combined with curriculum and instruction expertise.
4. Has the district/site identified the professional development needs of teachers related to the integrated use of technology in the context of the CCSS?
5. Directly address equity issues related to technology access in planning; take steps to assure that English learners, and students who have less robust technology access at home have the same rich opportunities for meaningful learning with technology.
6. Use the technology planning resources available from the county office of education, technology organizations, and the CDE and SBAC Web sites. Avoid sole reliance on vendors.
7. Address digital citizenship themes directly in order to assure that student and staff technology use is socially responsible, safe, proactive and appropriate. Integrate digital citizenship planning with district and school safety plans. For assistance, see the reference from the California School Library Association at <http://ecitizenship.csla.net/>. See also http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html and <http://www.edutopia.org/cyberbullying-internet-digital-citizenship-resources>

8. Consider how the district can build on the strengths and assets of staff who bring deeper facility, understanding, and knowledge about new technologies, and leverage this knowledge in formal or informal ways to achieve goals. How can these staff members be part of the solution?
9. Note that students' facility with technology devices and social media frequently exceeds that of staff, and consideration should be given as to how to build on the strengths students bring with them to school.
10. While there is urgency around preparing for the demands of CCSS teaching and learning and SBAC assessments, a robust vision of the district's technology future can enhance long-term planning.
11. Seek to infuse curriculum and instruction in every subject area with meaningful, powerful, interactive, creative learning opportunities that address the highest levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge⁴⁸ in order to achieve the promise of new technologies and Web 2.0 tools.
12. Build in continuous learning and improvement processes. New technologies are changing our society in profound and powerful ways. In our 21st century world, many programs and approaches are being replaced with newer, better options previously unattainable. Bear in mind that the rate and pace of change is accelerating, creating a continuous learning challenge that requires leaders to reexamine their own approaches and beliefs about the "right" course of action or solution.

48 See "Webb's Depth of Knowledge Guide: Career and Technical Education Definitions" (2009) at http://www.aps.edu/rda/documents/resources/Webbs_DOK_Guide.pdf

Key Component 9

9. Fiscal and Human Resources Realigned to Support Implementation

The occasion of the Local Control Funding Formula, giving districts extensive latitude on allocating money, is a unique opportunity which, when combined with implementing the CCSS, **gives local control and local decision-making new meaning and impetus.**

To successfully implement and sustain the types of instruction called for within the CCSS, a district-wide "systems" approach is necessary. System elements need to be in alignment with the

stated priorities of the district. For example, the fiscal priorities should mirror and support the instructional priorities which include buying and installing technology, purchasing the needed instructional resources, and most importantly, providing the extensive professional development and intervention support necessary for successful implementation of the CCSS.

Likewise, the human resources processes of the district must be examined to be sure they are supporting and reinforcing the CCSS priorities of the district. For example, have discussions been held with the nearby institutions of higher education/schools of education about the importance of training teacher candidates on how to teach the CCSS and work with the new assessments? The district in most cases will need to stress that they intend on hiring those new teachers who have a background in the CCSS. And the district will need to reexamine its hiring procedures to be sure that the stated priorities indeed align to the actual hiring priorities.

Leaders can refer to **Greatness by Design** for an outline of possible measures for getting, supporting, and keeping new teachers.⁴⁹

Examining human resources suggests looking at professional development, incentives for improvement, observation of teachers, and so forth.

49 See California Department of Education, "Greatness by Design: Supporting Outstanding Teaching to Sustain a Golden State" at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf>

Suggested Steps

1. Review with the district board the challenge and responsibility to sufficiently support the implementation of the CCSS with both fiscal and human resources.
2. Consult with teacher leaders as to their sense of the budget needed to support implementation, especially for professional development and materials/resources.
3. Make public the fiscal resource commitment to implementing the CCSS in order to demonstrate and support the extensive work to which the district and teachers are committing.
4. The development of the Lead Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) calls for extensive community engagement. Therefore, collaborative outreach and budget development is highly recommended.

5. Ensure that sufficient monies are allocated for professional development and collaboration time.
6. Create collaboration sessions with the local colleges/ teacher development institutions (administrators and teachers from each), and ensure that they are aware of and have copies of *Greatness by Design*. Collaboration should foster joint learning and discussion of the implications of this report. These sessions should prove valuable and should result in an outline of possible measures for getting, supporting, and keeping new teachers.

Key Questions and Special Considerations ---

1. How will essential fiscal resources be directed and repurposed to support implementation? Consider the district staff capacity needs.
2. Has provision been made for the delivery of necessary professional development, and for the purchase of aligned instructional resources and technology/software?
3. Has the Board established budget priorities to support raising student achievement and meeting success indicators?
4. How do hiring practices and teacher assignment policies need to be modified to ensure support for the new CCSS?
5. Have indicators of success been set for teachers, after involvement and agreement of teachers, so that CCSS implementation progress can be tracked?
6. Are there ways identified that principals can work with teachers (and coaches) to discuss implementation progress and work together on problems encountered?
7. Has the district considered career ladder strategies for teachers to support “growing” teacher leaders?

10. Student Transitions to Higher Education and Careers: *Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education, Career Tech, and with Poverty and Social Services Agencies*

The CCSS were developed from college and career “anchor standards” that serve as the benchmarks for 12th grade students. The CCSS were then mapped backward from the anchor standards to provide a degree of assurance that as students are mastering the standards for their grade level, they will be on track to enter credit bearing entry courses in two- or four-year college programs, technical schools, or the workforce.

To indicate sufficient readiness it is important to develop data feedback systems that cover remediation rates in college and specific technical and career readiness factors from local employers.

It is important that students have a variety of exposures to potential community employers and “high-demand” work in the area, and have opportunities to participate in well organized “career tech” classes and activities.

This component of student transitions should also include important collaboration with career tech, health and social service support organizations, and poverty assistance agencies to provide the broad support students and their families need for success in school and beyond.

Collaboration activities need to occur with:

- community colleges and career tech pathways for students;
- colleges and universities and student preparation with a focus on lessening the need for remediation;
- CSU campuses and other teacher preparation institutions with a focus on improving the preparation of new teachers to teach the CCSS; and
- local health and social support providers with a focus on supporting students and their families during and after education.

Suggested Steps

1. Put in place a mechanism for gathering feedback from community employers on their views of the district's preparation of graduates for jobs.
2. Discuss with local businesses, employers, and community partners the level of proficiency students *should* achieve with the CCSS. Solicit from business and community employers additional skills they see as critical for successful transition to the workplace.
3. Establish regular feedback mechanisms from institutions of higher education to determine the areas of strength and weakness of high school graduates, and the potential remediation needed. The goal is to cut down on needed remediation before attempting college.
4. Be sure that ALL students are being considered and that there are sufficient career tech programs to assist them in becoming employable. The CCSS lend themselves to a rich mix of instruction, performance, both individual and group work, and technical skills preparation that should result in preparation for college and work.
5. Develop agreed-upon indicators of success for career-ready and college and career-readiness that are appropriate for the district and the communities served. Include graduation rate targets and other indicators as added to the state accountability system and as added by the district.⁵⁰
6. Build opportunities for exposure to a wide variety of careers throughout every grade level from transitional kindergarten through grade 12. Align if possible to the CCSS units of study.
7. Provide opportunities for collaboration between high school English/math departments and the IHE (Institutes of Higher Education) faculty at local colleges to review the CCSS, the performance tasks, and to agree on the rubrics for scoring writing.
8. Create 10-year graduation plans (from grade 7 through post-secondary)

50 Such as the attainment of the State Seal of Biliteracy.

9. Build into grades 4-8 exposures to a variety of careers as they pertain to the standards being taught in various units of study.
10. Aligned units of study should incorporate many different examples of work from a broad range of careers.
11. Provide clear information and actively engage parents and students about what course work students need in grades 8-12 in order to be on track for entry into a 4-year college directly out of high school. Review the “a-g”⁵¹ course a requirements in light of the CCSS.
12. Develop opportunities for job shadowing and internships for **high school students** as they consider various career options.
13. Develop opportunities for job shadowing for *teachers* during the summer months to allow for greater real-world connections to careers.
14. Provide parents and students with information on matching career interests with various colleges and majors.
15. Consider working with local colleges to give credit for ways of demonstrating proficiency.
16. Strengthen coordination with:
 - a. Community colleges and career tech partnerships and programs;
 - b. CSU campuses (and other teacher-preparation institutions) regarding the preparation of new teachers to teach the CCSS;
 - c. UC and CSU campuses to address needed student remediation; and
 - d. Poverty, health, and social service agencies regarding the support needed for students in school and beyond.

51 Sequence of high school course that are required by California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) college systems to determine eligibility.

Key Questions and Special Considerations

1. Is there sufficient feedback to determine if remediation needs at the college level (both two-year and four-year) are decreasing? If not, develop process to receive that feedback.

2. Is there sufficient feedback from the business community to inform necessary changes in instructional practices to sufficiently prepare students to enter the workforce?
3. To what extent has the 4th-12th grade instructional program been designed to provide for the integration of rigorous core content instruction with industry-related knowledge and skills as well as a work-based learning component?
4. Is there sufficient coordination for students with community agencies, both while in school and after leaving school, such that issues of poverty, health, and needed social services are addressed?
5. Is there evidence of increased civic knowledge and engagement?

CONCLUSION

Successful implementation of the CCSS and curricula will likely take a sustained effort of seven years or more. Over that time as teachers gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum and students progress through school with increasing levels of instruction using the CCSS the needs of the teachers and students will change.

Teachers will need to continue learning and improving to make their teaching as effective as possible. This will lead to minor and some major changes in the curriculum and in instruction.

This entire effort should be part of a continuous improvement process which involves focused coaching for new teachers, intensive and useful professional development for all teachers, and the formation of professional networks by and for teachers so they might learn from their peers in their school and from those in other schools.

Lastly, continuous improvement entails effective and ongoing communication with all stakeholders.

Leadership Planning Guide: California
Quick Checklist for CCSS and Assessments Implementation

SELECTED Suggested Steps	SELECTED Key Questions and Special Considerations	Current Status
<p>1. Capacity Building and Leadership Development (page 16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Brief the Board on the curricular and instructional and assessment implications of moving to the CCSS. (Include the ELD standards until the ELA/ELD curriculum framework comes out, then use the framework.) <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with teacher leadership best steps to take to begin implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Form a <i>districtwide core leadership team</i> that is well represented by teachers as well as other educational leaders to lead the implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a draft Implementation Plan for the CCSS, working through the core leadership team, and review with the district staff and the board to solicit input. Establish a working timeline for implementation and make it public.^a <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Technology Readiness Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Decide what type of partnerships might be helpful for training and ongoing implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize school support either through the principals or teacher leaders and/or coaches, or a combination of the above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider how this new work (CCSS) fits in strategically with where the district has been going and what it has been emphasizing up to now. <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an established timeline for implementation set by the district showing milestones of progress? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an identified budget sufficient to move to implementation? 	
<p>2. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement (page 19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold a Board workshop . <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and refine a clear and concise message. ^b <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan to address and engage each individual constituent group, especially parents, early, often and throughout the implementation process. <input type="checkbox"/> Brief locally elected officials. <input type="checkbox"/> Be proactive with the press. <input type="checkbox"/> Assist principals with regular "messages" to parents. <input type="checkbox"/> When refining the 'message' consider how the CCSS effort connects and relates to other initiatives the district is engaged in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are individual Board members sufficiently supported to be able to respond to questions from the public on the Common Core, if necessary? <input type="checkbox"/> Are students and parents being assisted in understanding what the instructional shifts in the CCSS will mean to them? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there plans for regularly soliciting input on implementation? 	

^a The California Department of Education has numerous resources posted at www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp. See also Achieve at www.achieve.org and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute "Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments" at <http://www.deliveryinstitute.org/publications>
^b See NEA Policy Brief "Common Core State Standards: A Tool for Improving Education" www.NEA.org/assets/doc/HE/PB30.CommonCoreStandards, and Student Achievement Partners at <http://www.achievethecore.org>

SELECTED Suggested Steps

SELECTED Key Questions and Special Considerations

Current Status

3. Curriculum and Instruction (page 23)

- Discuss with teachers the plan to take apart the CCSS to ensure deep understanding of content and performance expectations.
- Develop a plan for sequencing the Common Core standards and topics across the grades. The CCSS are not always grade-specific; decisions must be made as to what to teach when.
- The literacy strand needs to be reinforced across all subjects—another reason all teachers should be familiar with the CCSS.
- Form teacher groups to analyze the "gaps" in the local curriculum and to decide on what kind of curriculum will best deliver the standards.
- Prepare the district Board to make decisions on what to teach when (curriculum) and the need to focus resources.
- Bring everyone up to speed on the new work to support English Learners by deeply examining the new ELA/ELD curriculum framework which provides context and guidance for the CCSS.
- Develop a plan to review intervention programs and support efforts for special education and special needs students.

- Are the draft Math and English Language Arts/ELD frameworks (or other recognized specifications for instruction, many of which are linked in the frameworks) being used in determining curriculum and instruction?
- Are all teachers clear as to what is to be taught in their classes and how that learning sequences with other classes and grades before and after theirs?
- The curriculum review phase is a good time to discuss how the arts, physical education, and other subjects can be infused with the teaching of ELA and mathematics standards.
- Is the district working with tiered instruction and with Response to Intervention (RTI)? How can tiered instruction be realigned and expanded to support the CCSS for all students?

4. Alignment of Instructional Materials and Electronic Resources (page 29)

- Review the resources on the state "approved" list (due January 2014 for math, and _____ 2015 for English Language Arts/ELD).
- Review the Basal Alignment Project and the work by Student Achievement Partners as decisions are made as to modifying existing curriculum or selecting new curricula.
- Consider electronic resources, including OERs (Open Education Resources).
- Establish grade-level and school-site teams to "unpack" the standards and to assess what needs to be changed and what additions to the existing curriculum need to be made.
- Establish processes by which units of study developed by teachers are reviewed for alignment with CCSS. Include discussion groups with teachers for sharing of units, lessons, and instructional materials.
- Select and utilize a rubric to aid in the textbook adoption process and the selection of electronic resources. Both the ELA/ELD curriculum framework and the math framework have suggested criteria/ rubrics to assist in the review of alignment processes.
- Have specific plans in place to train teachers on the new instructional resources as they become available.
- Consider how materials will need to be adapted for English learners, student with disabilities, and struggling students.
- Clarify what feedback will be gathered and what follow-through will be provided so that continuous improvement will be supported over time.

- Have appropriate and useful metrics (scoring rubrics) been developed to guide the selection of instructional resources aligned to the CCSS, and have the reviewers been trained on these rubrics?
- Regardless of where instructional materials come from, they must be thoughtfully vetted for quality and standards alignment.
- Can the principals explain, concisely and precisely, how new instructional materials will be developed or identified and delivered to each classroom?
- Is the district building on best practice in infusing technology to enhance learning through instructional resources?

SELECTED Suggested Steps

SELECTED Key Questions and Special Considerations

Current Status

5. Professional Development for All (page 32)

- Provide in-depth professional development to math (and other discipline) teachers on the new mathematics curriculum framework, and help them see the connections to what they teach.
- Provide extensive professional development on the revised English language arts curriculum framework.
- Offer deep training for a selected cadre of teachers and principals who will serve as the leaders at the school sites.
- Provide professional development to teachers on every component they will be expected to lead and evaluate.
- Provide some training on the CCSS for ALL staff who touch and influence instruction.
- Work with teachers to form professional learning communities to encourage sharing, collaboration, and learning together. Learning together should include how to improve and how to continuously improve curriculum and instruction.
- Have a plan on how to sustain the professional learning communities over time.
- Consideration should be given to allocating time for teachers to work with each other as well as with content area experts.
- Implement a plan to support principals as instructional leaders working on the CCSS.
- Address Pre-K articulation by providing training for all Pre-K teachers on Kindergarten and first grade standards, building on the Early Learning Foundations.^c
- Address the professional development needs of after-school program staff regarding the CCSS.
- Develop a plan to systematically include all special education staff as well as other special needs staff (including gifted).

- Has the district identified leaders committed to planning, adapting, and delivering Common Core professional development with a focus on equity?
- Does the professional development plan include sufficient time for teachers to collaborate on an ongoing basis? Has this been decided in consultation with teachers?
- Is there a plan to form and support professional learning communities, both in person and online?
- Is there a clearly identified budget for professional development?

6. Student Learning Feedback Systems, New Assessments, Reflection, and Instructional Adjustments (page 37)

- Obtain agreement with teachers and implement systems to track student performance and teacher implementation of the CCSS.
- Develop intermediate and long-term benchmarks as part of a broad district accountability system that is fair and comprehensive, and includes district and school indicators of success.
- Considerable time needs to be spent helping teachers understand and use formative assessments, and to work together to understand the potential uses of such data.
- Make use of interim assessments to guide and adjust instruction.
- Be clear on indicators of success for English learners and for students with disabilities.
- Prepare students and teachers for the new state tests, including explanations and practice test taking.

- Do the principals and teachers have sufficient data on student learning to guide instruction and to modify instruction as needed?
- Is additional training necessary on the various forms of assessment?
- Have sufficient time, resources and professional development been directed to teachers so that they can become proficient users of formative and summative assessment data?

SELECTED Suggested Steps

SELECTED Key Questions and Special Considerations

Current Status

7. Align Instructional Assistance and Support Programs (page 40)

- Ask: how does Common Core implementation impact other district programs and initiatives, such as after-school programs, and what can be done to bring them into alignment?
- Align Pre-K and Transitional Kindergarten programs to prepare for the Common Core in Kindergarten and First grade.
- Take the opportunity to incorporate tiered instruction to maximize the number of students that are achieving standards and to minimize the number of students that need ongoing assistance. Review the changes that can be made to the Response to Intervention (RTI) efforts and to all special education settings.
- Revise and, if necessary, install new intervention programs to align closer to the Common Core

Are the efforts on behalf of English learners clearly aligned to the Common Core?

8. Technology Support for Instruction, Data, and Assessment (page 42)

- See that the gaps that were found through the Technology Readiness Survey are being systematically addressed.
- Step 1: Is there sufficient bandwidth at each school? Analyze the "pipeline" to determine its sufficiency.
- Step 2: Examine the costs for bandwidth and, if feasible, look into forming or joining a "buyers co-op" in order to bring the costs down.
- Step 3: Has the district reviewed and updated systems for data sharing and management?
- Review and update as necessary safeguards for privacy and safe use of the technology. Review district policies and offer training as needed to ensure socially responsible use.
- Give careful consideration to the appropriate technologies for instruction. Ensure that the devices selected can do the desired work.
- Develop plans to train teachers and other staff members on the technologies being utilized.
- Develop and implement a plan for outreach to parents and families regarding technology expectations and opportunities for family engagement.
- Build or revise data systems for high schools as they gather college feedback reports to inform college and career readiness indicators.

- Is there sufficient connectivity and bandwidth for both instruction and assessment at each school?
- Has wireless internet connectivity been extended to every classroom?
- Have teachers and other staff been trained on the technology to be used?
- Have students been trained on the technology to be used for instruction and assessment? Have they had a chance to use it?
- Do all student technology devices support assessment?
- Are the district procedures and capacity sufficient to ensure the necessary flow of data?
- Do students need assistance in learning necessary keyboarding skills? If yes, plan for providing as a priority.

SELECTED Suggested Steps	SELECTED Key Questions and Special Considerations	Current Status
<p>9. Align Instructional Assistance and Support Programs (page 40)</p>		
<p>10. Fiscal and Human Resources Realigned to Support Implementation (page 47)</p>		
<p>Analyze and discuss how funding decisions at the district and school levels reinforce the priority of the CCSS. Redirect funds if necessary.</p> <p>Seek input from teacher leaders, and other stakeholder groups, to develop a fiscal and resource plan for the Board for the district to implement the CCSS.</p> <p>Review hiring practices to ensure new personnel have been initially trained on the CCSS.</p> <p>Review processes for recruiting, hiring, inducting, and supporting as described in "Greatness by Design" (California Department of Education www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf)</p> <p>Consider career ladder strategies for teachers to support teacher leaders.</p>	<p>Does the district budget show clearly the commitment to implementing the standards through professional development, collaboration time, instructional materials, etc.?</p> <p>Have the local institutions of higher education made a commitment to adjust their classes to meet the CCSS?</p>	
<p>11. Student Transitions to Higher Education and Careers (page 50)</p>		
<p>Provide opportunities for students to become more aware of career choices, and provide opportunities to experientially connect with the real world of careers throughout their years of education.</p> <p>Establish mechanisms for gathering input from higher education, the communities served by the district, and the business and community employers on the preparation of district graduates.</p> <p>Establish agreed upon indicators of success for career and college readiness.</p> <p>Set district targets for improving graduation rate.</p> <p>Use additional indicators as added to the state Academic Performance Index (API) as well as locally set indicators of success.</p> <p>Increase or initiate coordination with local health, social support, and other local services to support students during school and beyond.</p> <p>Work with the community colleges in the area, along with apprenticeship programs, trade schools, and others, to develop and coordinate multiple career tech pathways.</p> <p>Work with colleges and universities to cut down on needed remediation at the college level by focusing on the most identified areas of weak preparation.</p> <p>Work with CSU campuses and private universities to improve the levels of preparation of new teachers.</p> <p>Provide parents with information on student expectations for career and college readiness.</p>	<p>How can feedback from institutions of higher education and community businesses be gathered and systemized to give a helpful picture of the desired preparation of HS graduates?</p> <p>Is there sufficient coordination for students, both in school and upon leaving school, such that issues of poverty, health, and social service needs are addressed?</p>	

Leadership Planning Guide: California
**Conceptualization of Ten Key Components across
the Four Phases of Implementation**

Ten Key Components	Four Phases of Implementation			
	Awareness Phase	Transition Phase	Implementation Phase	Continuous Improvement Phase
1. Capacity Building and Leadership Development				
2. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement				
3. Curriculum and Instruction				
4. Align Instructional Materials and Electronic Resources				
5. Professional Development for All				
6. Student Learning Feedback Systems and Assessment				
7. Align Instructional Assistance and Support Programs				
8. Technology Support for Instruction, Data, and Assessment				
9. Realign Fiscal and Human Resources to Support Implementation				
10. Student Transitions to Higher Education and Careers				

