Common Core State Standards

Implementation Progress and Capacity Survey Data Analysis

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VERMONT
AGENCY OF EDUCATION

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Thank you to the 148 educational leaders who responded to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Survey. The largest group of responses (40%) came from elementary principals with curriculum directors (24%) comprising the next largest group.
Superintendents (8.11%), middle (19%) and high school principals (12%), special education directors (6.08%), and teacher leaders (8%) also completed the survey.

Different regions of the state were represented. Southern Vermont (Rutland, Windsor, Bennington, and Windham) accounted for 32% of responses while the north (Grand Isle, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, Essex, and Caledonia) contributed 27%. Central Vermont (Chittenden, Washington, Addison, and Orange) provided 40% of the responses.

The survey was aimed at providing data to answer two questions:

- Where are school systems along a continuum of implementation of the CCSS?
- What are the implications for professional learning opportunities provided by the Agency of Education for SY 2015 – 2016?

System Alignment & Systems Change

Vermont adopted the CCSS in August 2010. At this point, 30.14% of respondents have a clear implementation plan with defined roles while 20% have a plan that includes supports and resources for those schools with the highest needs. If the "fully implemented" data are combined with "nearly implemented," these figures rise to 73% and 64% respectively.
Thirty-nine percent indicated that they have strong leadership teams coordinating this work. Once again, the figure rises substantially to 71% when combined with the "nearly" category. In 12% of these supervisory unions or districts (SU/SD), data is collected and analyzed to track the progress of implementation efforts. Seventeen percent of leadership teams meet regularly to review implementation progress in relation to their plan.

In the SU/SD of respondents, 80% of educators "usually" or "always" use CCSS aligned mathematics materials and assessments while for English Language Arts (ELA) the figure is 73%. Respondents indicated that 32% of educators in their systems have only "partially" incorporated instructional shifts for mathematics into their practice. In ELA, instructional shifts are only "partially" incorporated by 33% of educators.

Educator Supports

Priorities identified for future professional learning opportunities include: multi-tiered systems of support, proficiency-based learning, Universal Design for Learning, and effective use of data to influence practice. Interdisciplinary unit planning, mathematics instructional shifts, and performance-based assessments appear to be the second level of need.

Face-to-face meetings/workshops were identified as the preferred delivery model although respondents did comment about the challenge of releasing teachers from classrooms.
Webinars and self-pacing modules were also selected as viable models. Comments in this section, however, clearly indicate that job-embedded professional learning is a priority for many educators. Regional meetings, school visits, hybrid courses, and coaching were also mentioned. Additionally, some respondents encouraged the Agency to use outside partners to deliver professional learning opportunities.

Student Supports

Instructional practices and supports that allow all students to be successful are "fully" implemented in 10% of the respondents' systems. Three percent "fully" implement practices and supports that are effective in closing achievement gaps, while 6.9% "always" use evidence-based practices in a tiered system to improve outcomes. A number of comments in this section addressed the challenges of meeting the diverse needs of all students.

Communication

According to respondents, 40% have "nearly" or "fully" implemented an internal communication plan with a specific focus on CCSS implementation. This figure drops to 29% for external communication to various stakeholders.

Final Comments

When asked about challenges, approximately 41% of respondents cited time for professional learning and collaboration among teachers as the most significant impediment to full implementation of CCSS. Thirteen percent identified the lack of resources aligned to CCSS as an issue. Administrative turnover, the number of current initiatives/initiative fatigue, as well as the rigor of the new standards were also mentioned as challenges.

Not surprisingly, many respondents thought that time and aligned resources including assessments would help to support successful implementation of CCSS. Intentionally connecting initiatives or fewer initiatives, regional collaboration, and a climate to support the continual growth of teachers were additional responses.

Regional offerings were recognized as the professional learning opportunities that were accessed the most to support implementation of CCSS. Within the comments section, 30% referenced the Vermont Professional Learning Network's sessions (http://vermontpln.org/) as regional meetings they had attended. Twenty-five percent indicated the use of content coaches to support educators. Private consultants were also key for a number of SU/SDs. Websites for instruction that were identified include Achieve the Core (http://achievethecore.org/), Great Minds Foundation (http://orgs.tigweb.org/the-great-minds-foundation), Engage NY (https://www.engageny.org/), the Teaching Channel (http://tinyurl.com/k985yt6), Illustrative Mathematics (http://tinyurl.com/l9lqeal) and the Literacy Design Collaborative (http://ldc.org/). Coursework and professional learning sessions through our state colleges, the Vermont Mathematics Initiative (http://tinyurl.com/mu5ygeu), the Vermont Writing Collaborative (http://vermontwritingcollaborative.org/), the Green Mountain Writing Project (http://www.uvm.edu/~gmwp/), the Ongoing Assessment Project (http://www.ogapmath.com/), the Higher Ed Collaborative (http://www.vthec.org/), the Bridging Project (http://tinyurl.com/m9bt6zf), and ASCD (http://tinyurl.com/kdrbhac) are also viewed as valuable supports for implementation efforts.

Implications for the Work of the Agency

As Agency staff plan for the 2015-2016 school year, some suggestions from the survey that should be considered include:

- Share tools for determining stages of implementation and models of effective implementation.
- Differentiate support for schools according to stage of implementation and size of school.
- Analyze resources/curricula to determine alignment with CCSS.
- Provide a social site for sharing units of study.

- Provide support for using data effectively.
- Deliver professional learning opportunities in a timely sequence rather than isolated events.
- Investigate professional learning opportunities that do not remove teachers from their classrooms
- Consider the range in the size of schools in Vermont when developing professional learning opportunities—some educators can bring professional learning opportunities back to their system since structures are in place that allow that to happen; teachers in small schools may be the only teacher at their grade level and that creates challenges for dissemination of information to a larger group as well as opportunities for collaboration.
- Define the role of effective coaches.
- Create networks for coaches to allow them support one another and effectively disseminate information and resources.
- Share research about effective coaching and provide professional learning opportunities for coaches.
- Analyze assessments for alignment with CCSS.
- Support use of the Digital Library.

Questions Generated by the Data

- What is the role of the Agency in a Vermont professional learning system? Does that role differ according to content areas?
- What is Agency's role with curriculum?
- What does a quality SU/SD implementation plan look like?
- What does embedded professional learning look like in small schools or schools without coaches?
- What does an effective system with coaches look like?
- What supports are needed to enable teachers to transition to a coaching role?

Implementation of the CCSS is well underway in many school systems in Vermont, however, there is still substantial work to be done. This summary of the CCSS Implementation Progress and Capacity Survey data provides key observations of the data as well as implications for the work of the Agency. Please refer to the actual survey data for additional information.