

KSDE Survey of District/Curriculum Leaders in Implementing the Kansas Standards

2015



Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many Kansas educators and administrators who shared their knowledge and insights with us. Our thanks for their dedication to making a Kansas education the best it can be. We hope the attached report informs local discussions about how best to improve professional learning.

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Introduction

In October 2010, the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) voted to adopt the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards (KCCRS). As part of the application process for Race to the Top funds (RTT) and the NCLB waiver standards implementation started during 2010-2011 school year and would end with full implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Essentially, at the time of KSBE adoption, the new KCCRS or Kansas Standards represented 85 percent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) taught to K-12 students, combined with 15 percent of Kansas additional locally determined standards. One key differences contained in the new Kansas Standards was the large amount of attention paid to high-level skills such as

- thinking critically;
- applying concepts learned;
- communicating well;
- using evidence, including data, beginning in the early grades.

These standards were designed to raise the bar ensuring students were ready for college, career training, and the workplace. This essentially means that any student graduating from a Kansas high school is capable of completing a credential program or pursuing post-secondary education. Also, the student will successfully complete first-year college courses without remedial coursework.

Since 2010, KSDE has coordinated efforts with individual districts to ensure that Kansas teachers and principals are fully supported with dynamic tools and resources which provide the

information needed to help all students achieve Kansas Standards. Educators and district leaders have worked together to develop curricula, instructional materials, and lessons plans tailored to the unique needs of their students, and in turn, brought these standards to life. Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, KSDE has rolled out new assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, History Government Social Studies (HGSS) and Science aligned with the Kansas Standards which measure students' progress toward the meeting these standards. As a result, the CSAS team decided to conduct a series of surveys to collect information from district/curriculum leaders, principals, and teachers on the implementation status of the Kansas Standards. These surveys include:

- *Survey of Kansas District/Curriculum Leaders on Implementing the Kansas Standards,*
- *Survey of Kansas Principals on Implementing the Kansas Standards;*
- *Survey of Kansas Teachers on Implementing the Kansas Standards.*

The purpose of these surveys were to collect information about the current status of Kansas Standards implementation at district, school and classroom levels, including Readiness of Implementation (e.g. awareness, resources, professional learning, and communications), the Level of Implementation (e.g. incorporating strategies and time, changing in instructions and changes in students), and to identify future Challenges of Implementation.

This report presents the results of one of the three surveys, that is *Survey of Kansas District/Curriculum Leaders on Implementing the Kansas Standards* conducted in May 2015. The results of surveys for principals and teachers will be reported separately however all three reports will be analyzed to determine trends around Kansas Standards implementation. These

results will cumulate into the next steps needed by KSDE in designing, delivering and coordinating professional learning to the field.

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Executive Summary

KSDE has conducted a series of surveys to gather information on the current status of implementing the Kansas Standards across the state, as well as to identify issues and challenges confronting continued implementation of these standards. This district/curriculum leaders' survey is the first of the three surveys, conducted in February 2015. Some key findings from this survey are highlighted below

Resources for Professional Learning.

'District or School Training or Coaching' (63%), 'Service Centers' (56%), and 'Teachers in Collaborative Study and Practice Groups' (49%) are the top three main resources of professional learning on the new standards for most of districts, while two or more resources are often applied simultaneously.

In addition to the professional learning opportunities outside schools, 81% of district/curriculum leaders report that their teachers spend 1-3 hours weekly (or 1.55 hours per week) within schools on 'Lesson planning aligned with the KCCRS', and the same numbers on 'Collaborative planning for aligning curriculum' is 70% (or 0.96 hour per week). Less time, however, is spent on 'Content-focused trainings around the KCCRS' and 'In-class coaching focused on KCCRS instruction' (0.36 hour and 0.27 hour per week respectively). Therefore, it is not surprising to learning that large proportions of our district/curriculum leaders desire more professional trainings focused on "better integrated" (60%) and "in-depth, detailed" (56%) content, and "more opportunities to practice" (53%).

Although multiple communication channels/sources about professional learning opportunities are usually available to district/curriculum leaders, the top three most preferable ones are information from KSDE's 'monthly email updates' (74%) and 'list servers' (45%), 'webinars' (53%) and 'recorded videos and webcasts' (45%), suggesting more preferences are given to trustful and regularly updated information about implementing the standards.

Statuses of School/Classroom Level Implementation of the Standards.

Although it is often challenging to obtain first-hand school/classroom level information from district/curriculum leaders, the majority of our respondents (either themselves or their colleagues) have observed schools/classrooms (92% in ELA, 94% in Math, 88% in HGSS and 89% in Science) and have some something to say about how the new standards changed instructional practices in schools/classrooms. In general, over 90% of classroom teachers 'frequently' or 'sometimes' made changes to adapt the new standards, though 'frequently' usually represents a higher level implementation. More precisely

- In ELA, 44% teachers frequently 'create learning experiences that built knowledge using informational texts', while 33% of them frequently 'structure opportunities for students to have conversations and develop arguments based on texts'.
- In math, 65% teachers frequently 'structure class time for students to develop procedural skill and fluency in math operations', 39% of them frequently 'create opportunities for students to apply math to real-world situations', and 33% of them frequently 'link content within and across grades'.

- In HGSS, 54% teachers frequently ‘invite students to connect social studies topics to contemporary issues and events’, while 35% of them frequently ‘structure opportunities for students to make claims and support them using evidence and arguments’.
- In science, 41% teachers frequently ‘build students' abilities to act, reason, and communicate like scientists, and 31% of them frequently ‘coordinate content within and across grades to foster a progression in student learning’.

Obstacles to Adapting the Standards.

Top three challenges to deepening the implementation of the standards were generated as below

- 1) Teachers are not given time to adapt instruction (56%),
- 2) Lack of coaching, mentoring, and high quality training (54%), and
- 3) Lack of resources (47%), according to our survey respondents.

Methodology

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) conducted its district/curriculum leaders' survey on the implementation of the Kansas Standards from February 9th, 2015 to February 25th, 2015. During this time period, all district/curriculum leaders across the state of Kansas were sent an email survey. Those districts that did not initially respond were sent a reminder email on February 19th, 2015. Of the 286 districts in Kansas, 179 districts responded to the survey for a response rate of about 63%. Participants include 106 (59%) curriculum leaders, 64 (36%) superintendents, 41 (23%) principals, 40 (22%) professional learning leaders, 20 (11%) teachers, and 24 (14%) other district level staff¹. Statistical tests (z test with adjust p-values (Bonferroni's method); See Appendix B: Test 1-7) suggest that this sample has statewide representatives of district leaders across all districts on district size (of teachers, students, classrooms), NCES locations, poverty levels, and ratios of student/teacher and class/teacher.

¹ Total percentage may over 100 as many participants may play multiple roles.

Detailed Findings²

Major focuses of this district/curriculum leaders' survey are on

- 1) professional learning received and desired by district/ curriculum leaders,
- 2) observed classroom level implementation of the standards, and
- 3) challenges fronting future implementation of the standards.

Available Resources for Professional Learning

Apparently, 'District or School Training or Coaching' (63%), 'Service Centers' (56%), and 'Teachers in Collaborative Study and Practice Groups' (49%) are the top three main resources of professional learning on the new standards for most of districts, although multiple resources may be applied in the same time. 'KSDE Summer Academies,' as one of the major state level training opportunities, however, is only reported accessible by a quarter (25%) of the total of survey respondents.

Table 1 (%)

What have been your organization's primary resources in adjusting instruction to teach the KCCRS? (Select only the 2 most important)	
KSDE Summer Academies	25
Service Centers	56
Individual Study	26
Teachers in Collaborative Study and Practice Groups	49

² Row and/or column percentages may not total to 100 percent due to:

1. The rules applied to reach the nearest whole numbers (rounding)
2. Multiple selections of items
3. The inclusion of invalid answers

Professional Association Conferences and Workshops	23
District or School Training or Coaching	63
Web-based trainings	7
Don't know	<1
Other:	<1

'Content-focused trainings around the KCCRS' (31% or 0.36 hour per week) and 'In-class

Time Spent on Professional Learning Activities. As far as the time spending on professional learning is concerned, eighty-one percent respondents report that their teachers spend 1-3 hours weekly (or 1.55 hours per week) on 'Lesson planning aligned with the KCCRS', and the same numbers on 'Collaborative planning for aligning curriculum' is 70% (or 0.96 hour per week), although it seems less time spent on coaching focused on KCCRS instruction' (24% or 0.27 hour per week

Table 2 (%)

On average, in your district, about how many hours per week are teachers given for the following activities?					
	0 hr.	1 hrs.	2 hrs.	3 & 3+ hrs.	Mean
Collaborative planning for aligning curriculum:	30	51	12	7	0.96
Content-focused trainings around the KCCRS:	69	28	2	1	0.36
Lesson planning aligned with the KCCRS:	19	36	15	30	1.55
In-class coaching focused on KCCRS instruction:	78	21	2	1	0.27

Desirable Resources of Professional Learning. What are the desirable professional learning on the new standards? The answers from district/curriculum leaders seem very clear: "better integrated" (60%) and "in-depth, detailed" (56%) content, and providing "more opportunities to practice" (53%). This suggests that the implementation of the new standards

has moved into the stage requiring more detailed, integrated and deeper content-oriented information to support daily instructional practice.

Table 3 (%)

What are the most important improvements KSDE could make to future training around the KCCRS? (Check all that apply.)	
Focus more on in-depth, detailed content	56
Extend the duration of the trainings	13
Better integrate content across subjects and grades	60
Give participants more opportunities to practice new techniques	53
Don't know	11
Other:	5

Favorable Communication Sources About Professional Learning. As far as the methods that district/curriculum leaders prefer to be communicated around issues regarding professional learning on and implementation of the new standards are concerned, ‘Monthly email updates’ from KSDE seems to be the most favorable one (74%), while many other methods are also quite acceptable, such as ‘Webinars’ (53%), ‘Recorded videos and webcasts’(45%), ‘KSDE list serve’(45%), ‘Annual conferences’ (40%) and ‘Dedicated pages on KSDE’s website’(39%). This suggests the needs of multiple communication sources in the field.

Table 4

(%)

Please select your most preferred methods for receiving communications from KSDE about KCCRS trainings and implementation news. (select all that apply)	
Webinars	53
Monthly email updates	74
Annual conferences	40
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	17
Professional learning communities around subjects	32
Dedicated pages on KSDE's website	39
Recorded videos and webcasts	45
KSDE list serve	45
Other	2

Observed Classroom Level Implementation

It is challenging to obtain classroom level information of implementing the new standards from district/curriculum leaders, because it may request a lot of field observations and investigations. Therefore, our questions around this issue tend to be more general than specific. Luckily, majority of our respondents have either themselves or their colleagues observed classroom (92% in ELA, 94% in Math, 88% in HGSS and 89% in Science) and had some ideas about how the new standards changed instructional practices in the classrooms.

Table 5

(%)

In the last year, have you, or a colleague reporting to you, observed following classes in your district?		
	YES	NO
English Language Arts (ELA)	92	8
Mathematics	94	6
History, Government, and Social Science (HGSS)	88	12
Science	89	11

Changing Instructional Practices on English Language Arts (ELA) Classes. About one third (33%) of the respondents who observed ELA classrooms by themselves and/or by their colleagues reports that teachers frequently ‘structure opportunities for students to have conversations and develop arguments based on texts’, and, in contrast, the percentage for frequently ‘create learning experiences that built knowledge using informational texts’ is 44%.

Table 6

(%)

In your or your colleague's ELA class observations, did the teacher(s):			
	Frequently	Sometimes	No
structure opportunities for students to have conversations and develop arguments based on texts?	33	63	4
create learning experiences that built knowledge using informational texts?	44	53	3

Changing Instructional Practices on Mathematics Classes. Compared to changing instructional practices in ELA classes, the change in math classes seems greater. About two thirds (65%) respondents report that teachers frequently ‘structure class time for students to develop procedural skill and fluency in math operations’, 39% of them observed that teachers

frequently ‘create opportunities for students to apply math to real-world situations’, though the same percent for ‘link content within and across grades’ is slightly lower (32%).

Table 7 (%)

In your or your colleague's math class observations, did the teacher(s):			
	Frequently	Sometimes	No
link content within and across grades?	32	61	7
structure class time for students to develop procedural skill and fluency in math operations?	65	32	3
create opportunities for students to apply math to real-world situations?	39	58	3

Changing Instructional Practices on History, Government, and Social Science (HGSS) Classes.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (54%) report to observe teachers frequently ‘invite students to connect social studies topics to contemporary issues and events’, and the figure for frequently ‘structure opportunities for students to make claims and support them using evidence and arguments’ is 35%.

Table 8 (%)

In your or your colleague's HGSS class observations, did the teacher(s):			
	Frequently	Sometimes	No
structure opportunities for students to make claims and support them using evidence and arguments?	35	57	8
invite students to connect social studies topics to contemporary issues and events?	54	43	3

Changing Instructional Practices on Science Classes. Slightly more than two fifths (41%) of respondents observe their teachers frequently ‘build students’ abilities to act, reason, and communicate like scientists’. The observation rate of teachers frequently coordinating ‘content within and across grades to foster a progression in student learning’, however, is comparatively lower (31%), as it is in math classes (32%).

Table 9 (%)

In your or your colleague's science class observations, did the teacher(s):			
	Frequently	Sometimes	No
build students' abilities to act, reason, and communicate like scientists?	41	55	4
coordinate content within and across grades to foster a progression in student learning?	31	59	10

Obstacles to Adapting instructions to the Standards

The number one obstacle for adapting instructional aligning to the standards is time for adapting, ‘Teachers are not given time to adapt instruction’, account for 56% of the respondents. The number two obstacle is ‘Lack of coaching, mentoring, and high quality training’ (54%), and the number three is ‘Lack of resources’ (47%).

Table 10

(%)

Currently, what are the top three challenges to deepening the implementation of the standards in your school? (Please select no more than 3)	
Teachers are not given time to adapt instruction	56
A weak culture of collaboration	16
Lack of principal support	3
The Board and community do not support the KCCRS	2
The staff do not support the KCCRS	3
Lack of resources	47
Lack of coaching, mentoring, and high quality training	54
There are no obstacles.	10
Other	17

Conclusions

The survey result presented in this report will lead us to some general conclusions on the implementation of the new standards, especially on such aspects as resources for professional learning, school/classroom level changes on instructional practices, and challenges for future implementation.

Resources for Professional Learning

'District or School Training or Coaching', 'Service Centers', and 'Teachers in Collaborative Study and Practice Groups' are the top three main resources of professional learning on the new standards for most of districts, while two or more resources are often applied simultaneously.

Most school teachers spend 1-3 hours weekly or 1-1.5 hours per week on such within schools learning activities as 'lesson planning aligned with' and 'collaborative planning for

aligning curriculum to' the standards, though relatively less time is spending on 'in-class coaching' and 'content-focused trainings', which are reported as the top two desirable resources for our survey respondents.

Although multiple sources are usually available, district/curriculum leaders show more preferences on trustful and regularly updated information about implementing the standards from KSDE's 'monthly email updates' and 'list servers', 'webinars' and 'recorded videos and webcasts'.

School/Classroom Level Changes on Instructional Practices

Based on the observations of our respondents and/or their colleagues, great majority of classroom teachers 'frequently' or 'sometimes' make changes in their instructional practices to adapt the new standards. More attention, however, is paid to the cases of 'frequently' making changes as it usually represents a higher level implementation.

In general, teachers made more instructional changes on building contacts between students' learning and their real life experiences (e.g., 'built knowledge' and 'have conversations' using informational texts in ELA, 'create opportunities for students to apply math to real-world situations' in math, 'structure opportunities for students to make claims and support them using evidence and arguments' in HGSS, and build students' abilities to act, reason, and communicate like scientists in science), than on integrating content aligning with the new standards to higher level learning such as 'coordinate content within and across grades to foster a progression in student learning'.

Obstacles to Adapting the Standards

Teachers are not given time to adapt instruction, lack of coaching, mentoring, and high quality training, and lack of resources are reported as the top three obstacles in fronting a deepen level implementation of the new standards, according to our survey respondents.

References

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Appendix

Questionnaire of Curriculum Leaders' Survey as Sent Out on 02-09-2015

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Ready or Not: Teaching the College and Career Ready Standards

A needs assessment for professional learning

In the last year, have you, or a colleague reporting to you, observed English Language Arts (ELA) classes in your district?*

- Yes
- No

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English Language Arts

In your or your colleague's ELA class observations, did the teacher(s)*

	no	sometimes	frequently
structure opportunities for students to have conversations and develop arguments based on texts?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
create learning experiences that built knowledge using informational texts?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add Item ▾

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Math

In the last year, have you, or a colleague reporting to you, observed math classes in your district?*

- Yes
- No

Add Item ▾

Math

In your or your colleague's math observations, did the teacher(s)*



	no	sometimes	frequently
link content within and across grades?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
structure class time for students to develop procedural skill and fluency in math operations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
create opportunities for students to apply math to real-world situations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add item ▼

History/Government

In the last year, have you, or a colleague reporting to you, observed history/government classes?*



- Yes
- No

Add item ▼

History/Government

In your or your colleague's history/government class observations, did the teacher(s)*

	no	sometimes	frequently
structure opportunities for students to make claims and support them using evidence and arguments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
invite students to connect social studies topics to contemporary issues and events?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add item 

Science

In the last year, have you or a colleague reporting to you, observed science classes?*

- Yes
- No

Add item 

Science

In the science classes you or your colleague observed, did the teacher(s)*



	no	sometimes	frequently
build students' abilities to act, reason, and communicate like scientists?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
coordinate content within and across grades to foster a progression in student learning?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add item 

What have been your organization's primary resources in adjusting instruction to teach the KCCRS? (Select the most important)*



- KSDE Summer Academies
- Service Centers
- Individual Study
- Teachers in Collaborative Study and Practice Groups
- Professional Association Conferences and Workshops
- District or School Training or Coaching
- Web-based trainings
- Don't know
- Other:

Add item ▼

If you've used web-based training, which one have you used most?*



- Wested's Pepper
- ASCD Common Core Webinars
- Pearson's Online Professional Learning
- VESi Virtual Education Software
- School Improvement Network's Edivation (The New PD 360)
- The Master Teacher's Common Core PD Now
- We have not used web-based training.
- Other:

Add item ▼

What are the most important improvements KSDE could make to future training around the KCCRS? (Check all that apply.)*



- Focus more on in-depth, detailed content
- Extend the duration of the trainings
- Better integrate content across subjects and grades
- Give participants more opportunities to practice new techniques
- Don't know
- Other:

What are your roles? (check all that apply)*



- Curriculum Director
- Principal
- Teacher
- Superintendent
- Professional learning leader
- Other:

Add item

In your district, what are the biggest obstacles to adapting instruction to the KCCRS? (select all that apply)*



- Teachers are not given time to adapt instruction
- A weak culture of collaboration
- Lack of principal support
- The Board and community do not support the KCCRS
- The staff do not support the KCCRS
- Lack of resources
- Lack of coaching, mentoring, and high-quality training
- There are no obstacles.
- Other:

Add item

On average, in your district, about how many hours per week are teachers given for the following activities?



	0	1	2	3 or more
Collaborative planning for aligning curriculum:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content-focused trainings around the KCCRS:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesson planning aligned with the KCCRS:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-class coaching focused on KCCRS instruction:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Add item

Please select your most preferred methods for receiving communications from KSDE about KCCRS training implementation news. (select all that apply)



- Webinars
- Monthly email updates
- Annual conferences
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Professional learning communities around subjects
- Dedicated pages on KSDE's website
- Recorded videos and webcasts
- KSDE list serve
- Other:

To assess professional learning needs in the field, we need to know your district's zip code (you will remain anonymous).*

Add item