Teacher Professional Learning

How do I interpret my results?

Your results show that your system does not appear to have all the necessary conditions and practices in place to support high-quality teacher professional learning, based on the findings from the case study systems profiled in our report. As you review your results and our suggested next steps, keep in mind that ensuring *alignment* across the three elements has been one of the keys to success in the systems we studied. In other words, it's not enough to approach each element in isolation; it's important to consider how aspects of your practices in one element impact your practices in another.

For example, in our case study systems, there are often very clear ties between how the rigorous curricula being provided, serves as the focus of any expert-led collaboration time, and is used as the basis for growth-oriented feedback practices. Having a tight cohesive strategy across all three elements is what helped our case study systems transform their teacher professional learning.

What are my next steps

This diagnostic is not designed to be evaluative—instead we hope the data presented here sparks strategic conversations among your colleagues and highlights ways in which you can develop your system's particular professional learning strategy. See how your teacher professional learning practices compare to our case study systems, and check out our detailed action steps and suggested resources in the tabs in this results section to help unpack what this might mean for your system.

RIGOROUS CURRICULA

System leaders provide school leaders and teachers with rigorous and coherent curricula, instructional resources, and assessments aligned to College- and Career-Ready Standards.

Overall Score

	Needs Most Improvement	Needs Improvement	Close to Best Practice	Best Practice
A. Engage teachers to promote ownership and usage				
B. Ground professional learning in rigorous curricula				
C. Invest in coherent & rigorous curricular supports				

EXPERT-LED COLLABORATION

Teachers are organized into teams, led by content experts, that have adequate time, support, and culture of learning to collaborate effectively on instruction.

Overall Score

	Needs Most Improvement	Needs Improvement	Close to Best Practice	Best Practice
A. Ensure team collaboration time is used well				
B. Organize content-focused teaching teams				
C. Provide sufficient time for teams to collaborate				

Teacher leaders and other content experts provide frequent, growth-oriented feedback to teachers to improve instructional practice.

Overall Score

	Needs Most Improvement	Needs Improvement	Close to Best Practice	Best Practice
A. Create high-impact teacher leader roles				
B. Develop strategic teacher feedback practices				
C. Invest in school-based instructional experts				

System leaders provide school leaders and teachers with rigorous and coherent curricula, instructional resources, and assessments aligned to College- and Career-Ready Standards.

ACTION STEPS: A. Engage teachers to promote ownership and usage

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. Teachers participate in the selection, adoption, and adaptation of all system-provided curricular supports and assessments.

Case study systems found that directly engaging teachers throughout the decision-making process was an effective way to promote usage, ownership, and responsibility over the selected curricula and materials.

No Answer

2. The system regularly collects data on teacher usage and satisfaction with system-provided curricular supports and assessments to inform improvements.

Case study systems found that having structures in place, e.g. surveys, strong feedback loops with school leaders and teacher leaders, etc., helped them gather feedback on curricula usage, satisfaction, and other data that could support the continuous improvement of provided materials.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Teachers and instructional experts need time to explore new curricular supports and practice how to use them. Leaders in our case study systems empowered strong teachers to participate throughout curricula adoption and adaption, typically working under the direction of district instructional experts with a stipend provided for their time.

If you find that teachers are struggling to adapt your system-provided curricular resources, you may want to consider ways to engage teachers in helping to develop, evolve, and improve resources over time so that they remain relevant and useable for teachers. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps

✓ Establish or leverage a curriculum advisory team of high-performing teachers to participate in assessing the quality of existing materials and selecting, reviewing and adapting new materials. Develop a calendar for engaging these teachers, considering remote and in-person venues, in discrete activities to strengthen curricula and instructional supports and deploy these into classrooms.

✓ Create structures and systems that regularly gather usage statistics and user feedback. Systems we studied sought feedback through formal surveys, teacher advisory committees, and frequent school visits and feedback conversations between school-level and district staff. Use teacher feedback to continually evolve and improve curricular supports over time.

Resources to explore

Louisiana Department of Education's Curriculum Implementation Scale [pdf]
http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/Superintendents-Collaboration/curriculum-implementation-scale.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards: A Transition Guide for School-Level Leaders, an implementation guide intended for use as a reference and planning tool for school leadership teams
http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/implementation-common-core-state-standards-transition-guide-school-level-leaders

System leaders provide school leaders and teachers with rigorous and coherent curricula, instructional resources, and assessments aligned to College- and Career-Ready Standards.

ACTION STEPS: B. Ground professional learning in rigorous curricula

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. Professional learning opportunities such as workshops or teachers PD days are focused on helping teachers understand how to use system-provided curriculum, assessments, and other instructional materials in their classrooms.

Case study systems found that in addition to providing easy access to rigorous curricula and aligned assessments, it was also to provide teachers with targeted-support and training specifically designed to help them use and deliver those curricula and assessments in their classrooms.

No Answer

2. Professional learning opportunities such as workshops or teachers PD days are aligned to system-provided scope and sequence and pacing guides to provide real-time support that teachers can immediately put to use in their classrooms.

Case study systems found that the timing of professional learning opportunities was just as important as the content of those sessions and worked to ensure that teachers were getting support on the specific topics at the right time.

No Answer

3. Teaching teams spent most of their collaboration time working together on adapting and improving their usage of curricular supports and assessments.

Case study systems found that teacher collaboration time was often most effective when teams were working together to plan and improve their usage of texts, units, tasks, and/or lesson plans.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Good teacher professional learning is specific to the actual, standards-aligned curricula from which teachers teach, which helps them improve instruction. Our case study systems ensured that all professional learning efforts were grounded in high-quality, rigorous curricula and assessments.

If you find that your teachers need more support in delivering standards-aligned instruction, you may want to consider aligning the rest of your professional learning efforts to your curriculum and assessments. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps

✓ Create professional development opportunities for teachers that are specific to individual curricula and assessments (e.g., trainings that help teachers adapt specific units for the needs for their students, workshops that help teachers unpack student assessment results in real-time and identify ways to adjust instruction). These opportunities may be run by experts on the specific content being taught, either from your system or a third-party partner.

✓ Create time for leaders with expertise in specific curricula to push into teaching teams, where they can provide direct support and coaching in the work of planning and adjusting instruction.

✓ Develop guidelines or frameworks that are grounded in what high-quality, standards-aligned instruction looks like—both in general and for specific grades and subjects, based on the curricula being taught—that teachers and experts can use as the basis for observation and feedback.

Resources to explore

Common Core Knowledge & Practice Survey, a tool that enables educators to reflect on their instructional practice and understanding of the Common Core and provides ways for teachers and teams to improve the alignment of their practice to CCRS
http://achievethecore.org/page/1104/common-core-knowledge-and-practice-survey

Guidepost for Excellent Teaching Norming Session, in which leaders norm on what excellent teaching looks like and how to observe and coach teachers on such instruction
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7_UVQqtUj7VN0pFamFjSHpYYzQ/view

Student Achievement Partner's Instructional Practice Guide
http://achievethecore.org/page/2730/instructional-practice-for-the-ccss

Danielson Framework for Teaching
https://www.danielsongroup.org/framework/

TNTP's Core Rubric
http://tntp.org/publications/view/tntp-core-teaching-rubric-a-tool-for-conducting-classroom-observations

RIGOROUS CURRICULA

System leaders provide school leaders and teachers with rigorous and coherent curricula, instructional resources, and assessments aligned to College- and Career-Ready Standards.

ACTION STEPS: C. Invest in coherent & rigorous curricular supports

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. The system vets curricula using proven third-party tools (e.g., iMet, EdReports) to ensure alignment to College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) and a high level of instructional rigor in ELA, Math, and other priority subject areas.

The systems in our case study found that vetting curricula for rigor and alignment was challenging, so they actively sought high-quality external tools and resources to support their vetting process: For example, iMet, EdReports, or the Louisiana Dept. of Education's Assessment Rubric.

No Answer

2. Teachers can easily access system-provided scope and sequence, unit plans, daily lesson resources, and other curricular supports that are aligned with CCRS in ELA, Math, and other priority subject areas.

To see an example of these sort of instructional materials in Grades 3-8 English Language Arts, please see the Louisiana Department of Education's ELA Guidebooks 2.0

No Answer

3. Teachers can easily access instructional guidance tools, for example, lesson prep protocols, video model lessons, etc. that support them in the rigorous application of curricular materials.

Case study systems found that simply providing teachers with more curricula materials wasn't enough to transform their practice, they also needed to provide teachers with support and guidance for how to use and apply the curricula effectively in their classrooms.

No Answer

4. Teachers have access to system-provided common formative and interim assessments in ELA, Math, and other priority subject areas that are aligned to CCRS, state assessments, and provided curricular materials.

Case study systems found that it was extremely useful for schools and teachers to have a common set of system-wide assessments to help gauge student progress and adjust instruction as needed over the course of the year.

No Answer

5. Teachers, instructional experts, and school leaders have access to a common platform or tool that analyzes interim assessment results quickly and distributes reports that enable them to make meaning of this data and adjust instruction accordingly.

Case study systems found that giving teachers access to timely data reports following interim assessments helped them better engage in the work of analyzing student responses, identifying and unpacking student misunderstandings, and identifying potential next steps for instruction and student intervention.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

To support teachers in meeting the new instructional challenges that come with CCRS, leaders in the systems we studied provide comprehensive curricular supports such as daily lesson resources, lesson prep protocols, and formative and interim assessments, that are deeply grounded in the relevant standards and support the needs of a diverse student population.

If your system does not offer a full suite of vetted, high-quality, rigorous curricula and assessments, you may want to consider providing additional materials and guidance for your teachers to support them in making better instructional decisions. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps

✓ Select a proven third-party tool, such as iMet or EQuIP, and evaluate your curriculum and related assessments. Consider starting with one grade level/subject combination that is indicative of the quality of curricula and assessments across the district. Based on the results, consider extending the analysis to other grades and subjects and developing a plan for acquiring more rigorous curricula with deeper supports for teachers.

✓ If you find your system lacks high-quality materials, explore your options for acquiring new curriculum and assessments. The systems we studied used a combination of purchased materials from traditional publishers, adaptation of publicly available Open Educational Resources (OERs), and copying, adapting, or creating new materials in-house. Assess your most urgent curricular needs and engage your Academic team to determine the best option for each gap.

✓ If high-quality materials exist, engage your Academic team to distribute scope and sequence, unit plans, lesson plans, and other curricular supports that are aligned with CCRS in ELA, Math, and other priority subject areas. To improve uptake, identify and engage a group of high-performing teachers in distribution and rollout of materials.

✓ Work with school leaders and instructional coaches to ensure teachers have access to instructional guidance tools, for example, lesson prep protocols, video model lessons, etc., as well as a venue for reviewing these tools, to support teachers in the rigorous application of curricular materials.

✓ Engage your Academics team, including school support and school leaders, to distribute common formative and interim assessments in ELA, Math, and other priority subject areas that are aligned to CCRS, state assessments, and provided curricular materials.

Resources to explore

To vet the alignment of curricula and assessments to ensure alignment to CCRS:

EdReports, a Consumer Reports-style system that rates instructional materials on alignment to the Common Core
http://www.edreports.org

IMET, a rubric to determine if instructional materials are aligned to the Common Core
http://achievethecore.org/page/738/instructional-materials-evaluation-tool-imet

EQuIP, a rubric to determine if a specific lesson or lesson plan is aligned to the Common Core
http://www.achieve.org/EQUIP

Assessment Toolkit, which helps determine if district, school, or teacher-developed assessments are aligned to the Common Core
http://achievethecore.org/page/606/assessment-evaluation-tool-aet-list-pg

MasteryConnect, which provides teachers tools for formative assessment of core standards, monitoring & student progress, and reporting student mastery to parents & administrators
http://www.masteryconnect.com/

Louisiana Department of Education's Assessment Rubric
http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/curricular-resources

Potential sources of rigorous, CCRS-aligned curricula:

EngageNY
http://www.engageny.org/

Expeditionary Learning 3-8 ELA
http://commoncoresuccess.eleducation.org/curriculum

Eureka Math
https://greatminds.org/math

Learnzillion
https://learnzillion.com/

Zearn
https://www.zearn.org/

BetterLesson
http://betterlesson.com/

EXPERT-LED COLLABORATION

Teachers are organized into teams, led by content experts, that have adequate time, support, and culture of learning to collaborate effectively on instruction.

ACTION STEPS: A. Ensure team collaboration time is used well

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. Content-focused teaching teams work with instructional experts (e.g., an academic dean, assistant principal, instructional coach, or teacher leader) to plan instruction and analyze student data to ensure that content and skills are taught to the correct level of rigor.

Case study systems found that teaching teams used their time more effectively when they were supported and guided by instructional experts who are deeply familiar with content standards and have a track record of success teaching in the content area they are supporting.

No Answer

2. Teaching teams have a clear purpose and use meeting agendas and collaboration protocols to ensure that collaborative planning time is used well.

Case study systems found that providing some simple framework and tools, for example, sample meeting agendas, rubrics outlining effective collaboration practices, and protocols for how to facilitate meetings often helped to focus teachers' and experts' time during collaborative planning time. They also collected ongoing feedback on these tools in order to improve them over time and maximize their use.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Beyond creating time for collaboration, organizing teaching teams, and providing instructional support, case study systems feature structures, systems, and practices that support the effective use of shared planning time and promote ownership and accountability for the outputs of teacher collaboration.

If you are looking for ways to improve the effectiveness of teacher collaboration across your schools, you may want to consider investing in materials and practices to focus teachers' and experts' collaborative time. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps for SCHOOLS

✓ **Provide protocols and tools to support collaborative time**

- Work with your teachers and instructional experts to create or adapt supporting materials, such as facilitation guides, for teaching teams to use during their collaborative time. These materials should enable teams to work together productively and leave the time with concrete materials and/or next steps to deliver high-quality instruction.

- Assign progress-monitoring owner(s) to each team who are responsible for ensuring shared-content teaching teams adhere to agreed upon protocols, produce desired lesson plans, and rely on them in their respective classrooms.

- Leverage your data systems to ensure that teaching teams can regularly access student data. Work with teachers, instructional experts, and data experts in your system to make sure you can track the data that is most helpful for teachers and create reports that enable teachers to analyze student data and make any necessary adjustments to their instruction.

✓ **Develop strong adult culture:** Ensure that teaching teams are using their collaborative time effectively by developing a strong adult professional learning culture and providing tools to support success. Ways to do this include:

- Strengthen professional adult culture by explicitly building and sustaining relationships. This may take place through a summer institute to lay the foundation, ongoing book studies of strong teams, and regular team building during collaborative time.

✓ **Assign expert support to teams:** Identify and assign coaches, administrators or teacher leaders with specific content expertise to each teaching team. These leaders can assist teachers as they develop common lesson plans and formative assessments, analyze results of formative assessments, and identify opportunities for intervention and adjustments to instruction.

- Select experts who are deeply familiar with the content standards and have a track record of success teaching in the content area they are supporting.

- Ensure that experts' schedules are structured so that they can be available to a content-focused teaching team for the full duration of its collaborative time. Limited instructional expertise in a building may require staggering collaborative time over the course of the day, or rotating when it's scheduled on each day of the week (e.g., grade 6 ELA on Monday, grade 7 ELA on Tuesday, etc.), to ensure available experts are able to push in.

- Ensure that experts' schedules are structured so that they can be available to a content-focused teaching team for the full duration of its collaborative time. Limited instructional expertise in a building may require staggering collaborative time over the course of the day, or rotating when it's scheduled on each day of the week (e.g., grade 6 ELA on Monday, grade 7 ELA on Tuesday, etc.), to ensure available experts are able to push in.

✓ Assigning progress-monitoring owner(s) to each team who are responsible for ensuring shared- content teaching teams adhere to agreed upon protocols, produce desired lesson plans, and rely on them in their respective classrooms.

Next Steps for SCHOOL SYSTEMS

✓ Invest in training and professional growth for instructional experts, focused both on continuing to grow their content knowledge as well as effective adult learning and facilitation techniques.

✓ Support schools in selecting school-based instructional experts.

✓ Create teacher leadership structures that include stipends and release time for teachers to take on instructional expertise roles in their buildings.

Resources to explore

ERS School Designer offers tools to help schools implement strategic school designs.
https://www.erstrategies.org/school_design/

Achievement First's Intellectual Preparation Protocol
http://www.achievementfirst.org/index.php?id=2208

Achievement First's Looking at Student Work Protocol [pdf]
http://www.achievementfirst.org/fileadmin/af/home/Newsletter_Images/Recruit_Newsletter/Achievement_First_LASW_Protocols.pdf

| EXPERT-LED COLLABORATION | Teachers are organized into teams, led by content experts, that have adequate time, support, and culture of learning to collaborate effectively on instruction. |

ACTION STEPS: B. Organize content-focused teaching teams

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. All teachers who work toward the same grade and content-based academic standards, including teachers who work with English Learners or students with disabilities participate in a shared-content teaching team.

Case study systems found that organizing shared-content teaching teams helped to ensure that all instructional staff, regardless of the students they work with, are aligned on the required level of rigor in a particular content area and can access support on how to use the relevant curriculum.

No Answer

2. Teacher teams collaboratively plan lessons, analyze the results of common assessments, decide how to adjust instruction and structure interventions.

Case study systems found that teacher collaboration time was often most effective when teams work together to plan and improve their usage of texts, units, tasks, and/or lesson plans.

No Answer

3. Members of each teaching team are deliberately assigned in order to combine the knowledge and expertise needed to achieve student learning goals.

Case study systems found it was helpful to balance available instructional expertise across teams and achieved this by being very thoughtful in how they assigned individual teachers to teams.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

As much as possible, teachers in the systems we studied work in shared-content teams (i.e. same grade and subject) that meet for 90 minutes each week. During this time, teachers collaboratively plan lessons, analyze the results of common assessments, and adjust instruction, under the guidance of a school-based content expert (i.e., teacher leader, coach, school leader).

To promote and strengthen teacher collaboration in your system's schools, consider providing supports for school leaders and their teams to organize teachers into content-focused teams. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps for SCHOOLS

While most schools have some type of teaching team, few construct shared-content teams. Ideally, a teaching team includes all educators focused on the same grade and content-based academic standards, including teachers who work with English Learners or students with disabilities. To build shared-content teams, school leaders can:

✓ Identify the specific positions that will belong to each shared-content team.

✓ Determine who your top content experts are and how you will assign them to teams to distribute expertise.

✓ Identify a dedicated meeting facilitator for each team to ensure clear agendas and decision-making protocols result in high-quality work products. This role is distinct from that of the content expert.

Next Steps for SCHOOL SYSTEMS

✓ **Develop or find high-quality protocols** for use of team time, with a focus on developing work product that can be used by teachers (e.g. lesson plans, assessments, plans for differentiation based on student performance).

✓ **Support small schools:** Help small schools who may have many grade- and subject- singletons to create cross-school shared content teams by supporting cross-site collaboration and investing in virtual collaboration tools.

✓ **Provide data:** Ensure schools have the right data about their teachers to balance expertise on teams. This may include teacher performance or experience data. Some of our case study systems developed specific application processes to assess content expertise.

Resources to explore
ERS-UP Academy Video shows shared-content teams in action
https://www.erstrategies.org/library/shared-content_teams_at_up_academy_video

ERS Ashley Park Prezi shows how to strategically compose teaching teams
https://www.erstrategies.org/library/ashley_park_teaching_teams

ACTION STEPS: C. Provide sufficient time for teams to collaborate

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. How long is your teacher year?

How many days are teachers do teachers typically work each year? Please include all instructional days, teacher professional development days, summer pre-work days, etc.

No Answer

2. How long is your teacher day?

How many hours do teachers typically work each day? This may vary based on the teacher and the school schedule; try to estimate the average for a typical teacher in your system.

No Answer

3. How many minutes of Individual Planning Time do your teachers typically have per day?

This may vary based on the teacher and the school schedule; try to estimate the average for a typical teacher in your system.

No Answer

4. How many minutes of collaborative time do your teachers typically have per week?

How many minutes do teachers have each week to work together to plan lessons, analyze data, and discuss student work?

No Answer

5. How many days in the typical teacher year are devoted solely to Professional Learning?

How many days a year do teachers have fully dedicated to professional learning activities? Please do not include any administrative non-teaching days like summer prep days, pre-service days, parent conference days, etc. or any additional days specifically set aside only for new teachers.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Total Annual Teacher Hours
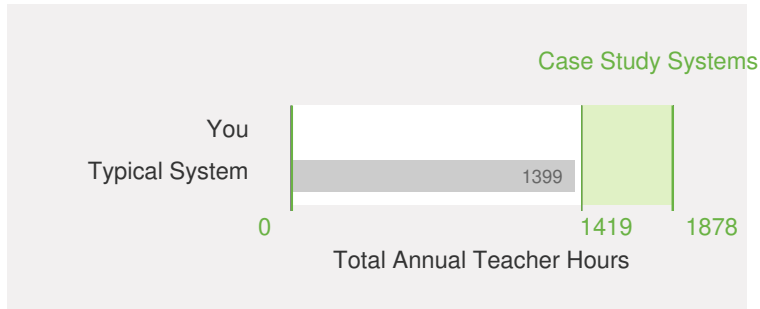
We estimate that over the course of a year, teachers in your system work approximately 1399 hours less than what we commonly observe and 1419 hours less than in case study systems. You may want to revisit district policies and/or collective bargaining agreements to give your teachers the time required to collaborate without sacrificing student instructional time.

Distribution of Teacher Time outside the Classroom

In the systems we studied, teachers spend more time working with their peers and less time in individual planning and/or prep periods. This collaboration by and large occurs within shared-content teams that focus their work around common curricula and assessments.

Teachers in case study systems have at least 90 min of collaborative time each week and 8-10 professional learning days each year to collaborate and work with their teaching teams. Your system currently has 54 fewer minutes of weekly teacher collaborative time and 75 fewer annual professional learning days. You may want to consider restructuring how you use teacher time outside of the classroom to give your teachers more opportunities to collaborate with peers and instructional experts.

Next Steps for SCHOOLS

Re-work your master schedule to ensure that teaching teams have at least 90 minutes of collaborative time each week, as well as additional opportunities for school-wide collaboration (e.g. monthly data days). Ways to do this include:

✓ Repurposing and/or reorganizing existing teacher time outside the school day.

✓ Stacking existing planning and non-instructional blocks to create longer consecutive blocks available for collaborative planning. This may require all students in a given grade level to attend encore/electives or technology labs at the same time.

✓ Repurposing existing teacher planning time during the school day as collaborative time.

✓ Adding new planning blocks on some or all days. If you choose to add blocks *within your existing school day*, this reduces the number of sections that students have available for core instruction, which in turn can result in higher class sizes. To mitigate higher class sizes in core subjects and ensure sufficient coverage during the day, a school may choose to hire additional teachers for electives, rotate students through a technology lab staffed by teaching assistants or paraprofessionals, or rely on community partners. You can determine the right trade-off based on your school's needs. You could also add new planning blocks on some or all days by *extending the teacher school day*.

✓ Scheduling early release for students one day a week, or relying on community partners for coverage one afternoon per week. This will free all instructional staff for an extended period at the same time weekly. Note that this approach will require lengthening the student day on other days during the week to avoid a loss of instructional time.

Next Steps for SCHOOL SYSTEMS

✓ **Identify benchmarks:** Identify local and state benchmarks on the length of the teacher day and year to determine how you compare

✓ **Extend teacher day if necessary:** Open a dialogue with your teachers (and their union representatives) about extending the teacher day and year to betters support teacher professional learning

✓ **Provide professional learning days:** Consider providing at least 8 professional learning days/year. Ways to do this include:

- Repurpose existing administrative professional learning days, such as summer prep days, by auditing how this time was used in previous years to determine whether their usage is aligned to district priorities

- Negotiate additional professional learning days into your collective bargaining agreement (CBA)

✓ **Support school scheduling:** Support schools in providing at least 90 min/week of collaborative time and additional opportunities for school-wide collaboration. Ways to do this include:

- Provide technical support to principals as they build their schedules, including sample schedules and support on how to adapt existing schedules

- Ensure that schools that want to pursue new schedules to support increased collaborative time have operational support, e.g. transportation that's flexible enough to pick up kids later or earlier

- Negotiate additional flexibilities into the CBA so that school leaders can repurpose existing teacher independent planning time

- Negotiate additional teacher time into the CBA that can be used for collaboration

Resources to explore

ERS School Designer offers tools to help schools implement strategic school designs.
https://www.erstrategies.org/school_design/

Edutopia video shows collaborative time in action at Hood River Middle School in Oregon
http://www.edutopia.org/practice/collaborative-planning-integrating-curriculum-across-subjects

NCTL Time for Teachers report profiles collaborative Lesson Planning in 5 schools
http://www.timeandlearning.org/publications/timeforteachers

NCTQ Teacher Contract Database
http://www.nctq.org/districtPolicy/contractDatabase/customReport.do#criteria

ERS DREAM
https://www.erstrategies.org/dream

DCPS LEAP Handbook [pdf]
http://www.wtulocal6.org/usr/2016/pdf/LEAP Handbook 2016-2017.pdf

Whitepaper: Igniting the Learning Engine
/library/connected_professional_lear

Teacher leaders and other content experts provide frequent, growth-oriented feedback to teachers to improve instructional practice.

ACTION STEPS: A. Create high-impact teacher leader roles

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. High-performing, experienced teachers are recruited via a rigorous selection process to act as school-based instructional content experts.

Case study systems found that creating opportunities for high-performing, experienced teacher leaders to take on the responsibility of supporting teams of teachers often helped to extend the reach of excellent teachers and was also an effective way to increase school-based instructional expertise without hiring additional staff positions.

No Answer

2. Teacher leader roles are a formal part of the system's teacher career and compensation pathways, with established roles and responsibilities and corresponding compensation ranges.

Case study systems have found it helpful to centrally define the stipend or salary ranges for different teacher roles in order to align amounts to the level of responsibility and expertise required as well as the value of the investments they displace.

No Answer

3. Teacher leaders receive sufficient training and ongoing supervision and have time built into their schedules for observations, debriefs, meeting facilitation and related prep.

Case study systems found that for teacher leaders to be effective in their roles, they needed time to review draft lesson plans, synthesize the most important feedback, analyze student data across classrooms, and design training to meet teachers' common development needs. This additional time can come in the form of release periods from direct instruction, or stipends to pay for additional time beyond the teacher day.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

College and career-ready standards require coaching that is highly content-specific, embedded in the curriculum that is relevant to a teacher's grade and subject matter. Traditional leadership models in schools, where the principal and a small number of administrators are charged with providing the majority of instructional expertise, are now unlikely to meet teachers' needs. Leaders in case study systems have invested in developing high-impact teacher leadership roles that enable school leaders to distribute school-based instructional expertise and ensure that all teaching teams have access to an instructional content expert during collaborative time.

If you're looking for ways to strengthen school-based instructional leadership, consider our suggestions below on how to create successful, sustainable, and scalable teacher leadership roles that also accelerate teacher and student learning and enrich the teaching career.

Next Steps

✓ Work with your system's HR team to clarify the goals and purpose of teacher leadership in your system and define the roles and responsibilities teacher leaders will play to support that purpose. Teacher leaders in our case study systems focused on supporting and coaching other teachers, leading teams to share the work of instruction, responding to student learning needs, and improving teaching practices. Engage multiple stakeholders throughout this process, including teachers themselves.

✓ Build the case for your teacher leadership program and ensure a smooth implementation by identifying potential concerns early on and making any necessary adjustments to district policies, union contracts, expense and payroll systems to address these issues. If your teacher leadership program already exists, consider gathering feedback from participants to identify opportunities for improvement.

✓ When selecting teacher leaders, deliberately and rigorously recruit, select and reward excellence.

● Review your system's existing teacher career pathways and compensation system to ensure it allows for this type of deliberate and rigorous selection process.

● Budget for stipends to teachers serving as Teacher Leaders facilitating cycles of observation and planning and/or collaborative time. The amount varies, but best practice is to provide a stipend for teacher leaders to both compensate them for the time beyond their regular work required to prepare for and manage cycles and collaborative time, and to recognize their instructional accomplishments as part of the school and/or district's career path.

✓ Ensure that teacher leaders have dedicated time in their schedules to prepare for observations, debrief sessions and collaborative planning meetings, as well as release time and processes that make it possible for these teacher leaders to contribute what they are developing and learning back to the TL learning community.

✓ Measure performance and student-learning impact of teacher leader roles for the purpose of improving selection and support and recognizing strong results.

Resources to explore
Public Impact Opportunity Culture
http://opportunityculture.org/

ERS Teacher Leadership and Career Pathways Checklist
https://www.erstrategies.org/news/effectively_integrating_teacher_leadership_into_the_system

Learning Forward's A Systematic Approach to Elevating Teacher Leadership [pdf]
https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/a-systemic-approach-to-elevating-teacher-leadership.pdf

Denver Public Schools Teacher Leadership & Collaboration
https://vimeo.com/142668833

Teacher leaders and other content experts provide frequent, growth-oriented feedback to teachers to improve instructional practice.

ACTION STEPS: B. Develop strategic teacher feedback practices

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. How many hours is a typical teacher observed as part of the formal teacher evaluation process?

Please include the total amount of time required across all formal observations for the teacher evaluation process (e.g. 30 minutes twice a year = 1 hour total).

No Answer

2. How many additional hours of informal observation does a typical teacher receive in a year?

Please include the total amount of time for any informal observations that occur above and beyond the formal observation requirements of the evaluation process.

No Answer

3. How many hours of formal feedback or coaching with school-based content experts (e.g. academic dean, assistant principal, coach, or teacher leader) does a typical teacher participate in over the course of a year?

This includes any time set aside to discuss the results of the observation. Instructional content experts are those who are deeply familiar with content standards and have a track record of success teaching in the content area they are supporting. Experts usually come in the form of (a) administrators: principals, assistant principal, or specialized dean or director role, (b) Instructional coaches, and/or (c) teacher leaders.

No Answer

4. How many hours of informal feedback or coaching with an instructional content expert does a typical teacher participate in over the course of a year?

This includes the amount of time set aside to debrief and identify opportunities to adjust practice. Instructional content experts are those who are deeply familiar with content standards and have a track record of success teaching in the content area they are supporting. Experts usually come in the form of (a) administrators: principals, assistant principal, or specialized dean or director role, (b) Instructional coaches, and/or (c) teacher leaders.
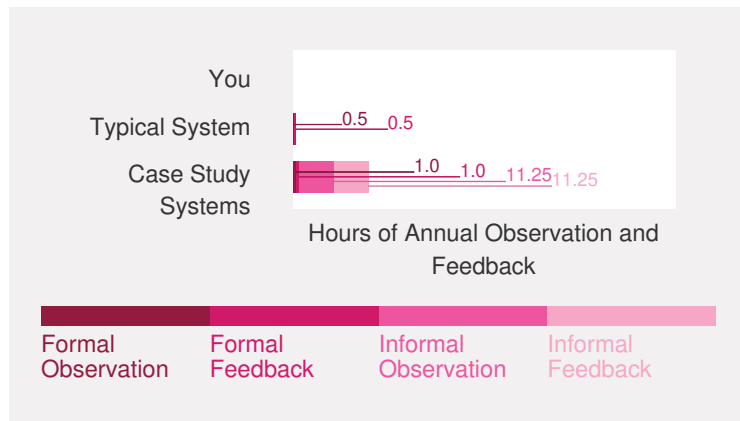
No Answer

5. Teachers regularly observe their peers' classrooms, ideally on a biweekly basis, in order to see model practice and provide feedback.

Case study systems found that creating opportunities for teachers to observe peers' classrooms and do walkthroughs at other schools helped create foster strong collaboration practices and a growth-oriented professional learning mindset.

No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Total Annual Observation and Feedback Time (in hours)

	Hours of Annual Observation and Feedback
You	
Typical System	0.5 0.5
Case Study Systems	1.0 1.0 11.25 11.25

Formal Observation — **Formal Feedback** — **Informal Observation** — **Informal Feedback**

Your system offers 24.5 fewer hours of teacher observation and feedback than we found in our case study systems. You may want to consider creating or extending informal observation and feedback cycles so that teachers are engaging with an instructional expert at least once every other week. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps

Set expectations for, and ensure schedules enable, regular cycles of observation and feedback: In the systems we studied, teachers receive most of their coaching outside of formal observations and debriefs. Instead, they integrate ongoing cycles of informal observation and growth-oriented feedback so teachers can receive frequent support from instructional experts in the building and build trusting relationships with them.

✓ Set expectations with teachers and instructional experts for how much time they will invest in formal and informal observation and feedback sessions:

- Formal observation: 30-60 min/year

- Formal debrief/feedback: 30-60 min/year

- Informal observation: 15-20 min/week

- Informal debrief/feedback: 15-20 min/week

✓ Help teachers and instructional leaders ensure that this observation and feedback time is reserved, on an ongoing basis, on their calendars, and that they have an appropriate space to meet and discuss the teacher's progress and development needs.

✓ Focus on building trust and a growth mindset among the adults in your building. Demonstrate through your own actions that regular observations are supportive, rather than evaluative.

✓ Consider using video to enhance observations and/or enable coaches to "see" classes when they're not there. The practice of recording instruction can also significantly enhance the coaching experience because coaches and teachers can observe the footage together later as part of their debrief discussion.

Resources to explore

TNTP offers a number of resources to support Observation & Feedback, from tools to help guide observations to trainings on how to have difficult conversations
http://tntp.org/teacher-talent-toolbox/view/observation-and-feedback

> Brief: Feedback (coming soon)
> #

Teacher leaders and other content experts provide frequent, growth-oriented feedback to teachers to improve instructional practice.

ACTION STEPS: C. Invest in school-based instructional experts

YOUR SCORE

Your responses

1. How many teachers does each school-based instructional expert (e.g., an academic dean, an assistant principal, a coach, a teacher leader) typically support?

Teacher support load may vary based on the position and the school; try to estimate the average for a typical instructional expert in your system.

No Answer

2. What % of time do school leaders, including principals and assistant principals, spend on supporting instruction (e.g., observing instruction, coaching teachers, etc.)?

This may vary based on the position and the school; try to estimate the average for a typical school leader in your system.

No Answer

3. School-based content experts (e.g. academic dean, assistant principal, coach, teacher leader) have sufficient time to prepare for their teacher support duties, with the ideal amount of prep time being at least the same length of the meeting, observation, or debrief they are preparing to facilitate.

Case study systems found that instructional experts need time to review draft lesson plans, synthesize the most important feedback, analyze student data across classrooms, and design trainings to meet teachers' common development needs.
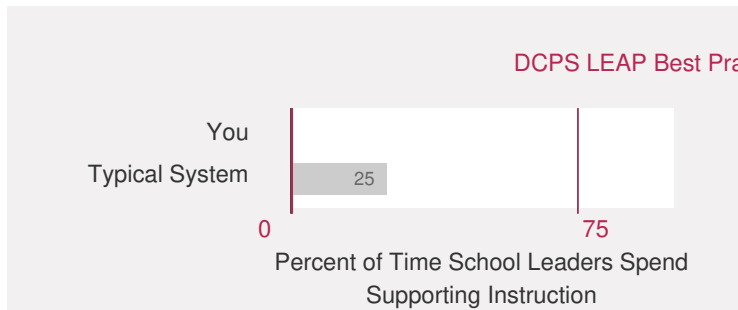
No Answer

How does your system stack up?

Teacher Support Loads

Case Study Systems

You
Typical System

| | 30 |

0   12   22

Typical # of Teachers Supported by Experts
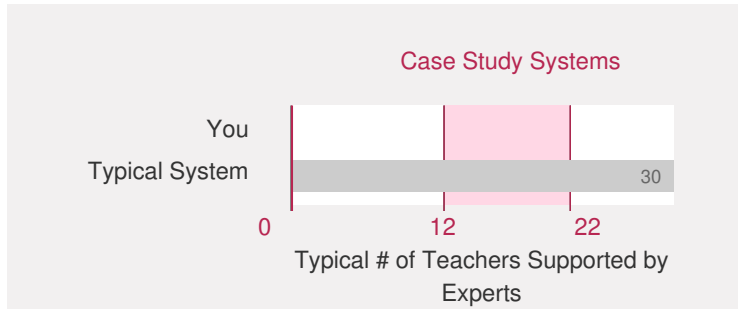
Instructional experts in your system are asked to support 100% fewer teachers than their peers in our case study systems. The ideal teacher support "load" is 12 to 22 teachers per instructional expert. Although this ratio may vary across schools, leaders in our case study systems work to minimize the variation by creating teacher leadership roles that create opportunities for high-performing teachers and more evenly distribute school-based instructional expertise. See our suggested next steps below

School Leader Time on Instruction

DCPS LEAP Best Practice

You
Typical System

| 25 |

0   75

Percent of Time School Leaders Spend Supporting Instruction

School leaders in your system spend 75% less time supporting instruction than their peers in the systems we studied. Leaders in these systems have redesigned school leader roles, developed more distributed forms of school leadership via teacher leader roles, and even invested in new roles, like "Director of School Operations," to maximize the amount of time school leaders have to support teachers in improving instruction. Depending on your vision for the principal's role, you may want to consider restructuring the role of school leaders to enable them to invest the majority of their time and efforts on teacher professional learning. See our suggested next steps below.

Next Steps

✓ **Reduce teacher support loads:**

- Re-evaluate current staffing plans and – if expertise exists – consider allocating more instructional expert positions in the school to reduce the average teacher support load. To be truly effective, full-time coaches and administrators should have a caseload of no more than 12-22 teachers whom they are responsible for coaching, facilitating content-focused collaborative time, and evaluating through formal observations.

- Adjust schedules so instructional experts have sufficient release time for observations and debrief for the teachers they support.

- Ensure your instructional experts have and use tools and protocols to guide them in observations and debrief sessions.

- Look for opportunities to provide additional training and supervision for instructional experts, to ensure they and the teachers they support are generating maximum value from their time together.

✓ In keeping with your instructional vision, **support school leaders in playing an instructional role:**

- Incorporate into the school leader evaluation system a clear structure for monitoring and holding principals and assistant principals accountable for cultivating a strong professional learning culture at their school.

- Clearly and deliberately define school leader roles to distribute instructional leadership and enable more attention to professional learning in the building.

- Ensure that school leaders have the support they need to do their jobs well, including sufficient release time for observations and debrief, tools and protocols to use this time well, and ongoing training and supervision.

Resources to explore

DC Public Schools LEAP Handbook—guidance on release time [pdf]
http://www.wtulocal6.org/usr/2016/pdf/LEAP Handbook 2016-2017.pdf