



## A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards

**American Institutes for Research**  
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

**U.S. Department of Education**  
Office of Vocational and Adult Education  
Division of Adult Education and Literacy

*This guide was prepared for the project:  
Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse  
Contract No. ED-01-CO-0026/0023*

*A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards*

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August 2005

*A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* was developed by the American Institutes for Research as part of the Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse Project under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Contract No. ED-01-CO-0026/0023.

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# Preface

The Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse Project is an integral part of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education's commitment to improve the quality of adult education programs through the development and implementation of content standards. The project was funded in 2003 to assist states in building capacity to develop, align, and implement adult education content standards for English language acquisition, mathematics, and reading. The national project has three technical assistance activities:

- The **Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse** provides easy access to a wide range of standards to assist adult educators in developing content standards for English language acquisition, mathematics, and reading.
- The **Adult Education Content Standards Consortia** enables states to work collaboratively to develop content standards. Consortia partners receive technical assistance from field experts to address specific needs and support one another through national meetings, teleconferences, and an online forum.
- *A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* outlines processes for moving toward standards-based education.

*A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* presents information gathered through a review of literature and research on content standards; discussions with staff from state offices of adult education; and reviews of state, national, and international standards documents. The information and examples may guide state adult education administrators, content experts, professional development staff, instructors, and curriculum/assessment specialists throughout the process of planning, developing, aligning, reviewing, and implementing standards. Readers will find a range of suggestions and references for implementing standards-based education.

The five chapters introduce the components of standards-based reform and the implications for adult education. Content standards are voluntary at a national level, so the guide does not prescribe a process, nor does it recommend content. However, the guide can help users make decisions related to adapting, developing, or implementing standards. The guide includes lessons learned from adult educators and researchers, and each chapter offers practice activities to assist state teams in using the information presented in the text. The appendices provide additional information, a glossary, tools and templates, and references.



# Acknowledgments

*A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* was developed with the help and contributions of many individuals—consultants, advisory committee members, and staff from the U.S. Department of Education and from state adult education offices. Many people willingly shared their time and expertise in standards development, and they provided valuable research materials, suggestions, and recommendations.

We would like to thank the project consultants, Susan Pimentel and Regie Stites, whose research and experience working with state staff helped inform the direction of the guide. The consultants, advisory committee members, and state adult education staff members lent their assistance by allowing us to use examples from their work, reviewing drafts of the guide, and providing feedback and resources. Many suggestions in the guide are based on “lessons learned” by adult educators and researchers.

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# Chapter 1

## ***Moving Toward Standards-Based Education***

*Standards, accountability, assessment, high stakes testing, and outcomes*—all are words we commonly hear and read in the press, on the news, and at work. How people react to these words may differ depending on their roles within the education system and their views about teaching and learning. For many state and local education leaders, *standards* and *accountability* have become the driving force of change within education. Now adult education program administrators focus on *outcome* measures and *assessment* data to guide program improvement.

A missing piece in the accountability system has been defining *what* should be taught and assessed. Content standards fill that gap by describing what learners should know and be able to do. Instructors use content standards to plan instruction, and learners use standards to set learning goals. Standards help instructors and learners develop plans that keep them focused and engaged. People may question whether standardized tests adequately measure learning gains, but learners want feedback on their progress and benefit from ongoing classroom assessment.

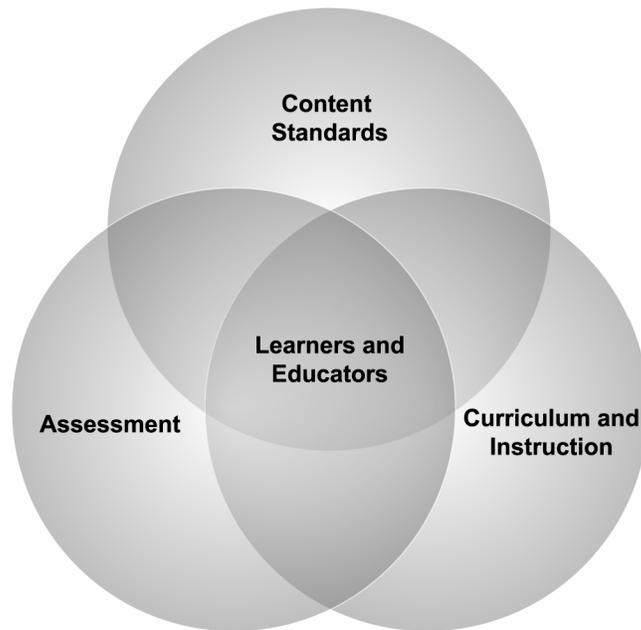
Standards have to reflect learner needs and goals across programs within the state. Therefore, state standards-based reform efforts seek broad participation in determining the goals for student learning. Everyone in the system “should know what is expected, what they will be measured on, and what the results imply for what they should do next” (National Research Council 1999, 3). For best results, learners and educators will work collaboratively with partners in higher education, business, labor, health and social services, community- and faith-based organizations, and the general public to negotiate and articulate the content standards.

Standards-based education provides a structured approach for state adult education agencies and local programs to create a system that explicitly links standards, assessments, and instructional delivery. *A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* uses an integrated model for standards-based education, as shown in exhibit 1.1.

### **Chapter 1 at a Glance**

- Goals of Standards-Based Education for Adults
- Standards Defined
- Overview of the Guide
  - How to Use the Guide
  - Overview of Chapters
  - Additional Features of the Guide
- Practice and Application
- References

**Exhibit 1.1. Model for Standards-Based Education**



*Content standards* drive the system. They clearly state what learners should know and be able to do, and as such, determine what is taught within adult education programs.

*Assessment* serves multiple purposes—monitoring learner progress to guide instruction, measuring how well learners meet the standards, and holding programs accountable for meeting performance goals.

*Curriculum and instruction* focus on what is taught, the instructional design of the program, and the indicators of program quality. Standards guide programs to develop curricula that outline the knowledge, skills, learning activities, and materials that will enable learners to achieve the standards.

*Learners and educators* are at the center of the standards-based model because they have the most at stake in the teaching–learning process. They use the content standards to guide the learning process.

Accountability measures have created an incentive for learners, educators, and administrators to focus on outcomes—the achievement of standards for all learners. Adult education staff at all levels will need professional development. Educators may need to strengthen their content knowledge and skills in

developing curriculum, teaching, and assessing learner progress. State staff may need to update policies and procedures for managing and monitoring grants. Even the professional development staff may need to learn more about standards-based education and plan how to help staff develop the strategies and skills to implement the standards.

## Goals of Standards-Based Education for Adults

Moving forward with standards provides the state with an opportunity to think systemically about change. The development of content standards is a valuable process for (1) negotiating the range of knowledge and skills that learners should have, (2) measuring learners' knowledge and skills, and (3) developing curriculum with a clearly articulated instructional approach and maintaining a strong delivery system. Having a shared understanding of the goals for standards and a common language will allow partner agencies, adult educators, and learners to work more efficiently in planning, developing, reviewing, and implementing the standards across the state.

Developing and implementing standards is a means to

- raise expectations for all learners and communities;
- engage stakeholders in building a common set of goals and vocabulary;
- improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment to consistently reflect best practices within the disciplines and within the field of adult learning;
- enhance professional development to support instruction;
- hold teachers accountable for providing appropriate and high quality education and for strengthening assessment practices;
- articulate adult education goals and possibly align them with those from other departments, agencies, and organizations; and
- raise awareness and visibility in the community and, thereby, increase commitment to the programs and the learners served.



### Voices From Research

“What is common to standards initiatives is the aim to ‘raise the bar’ of learning for all students and to replace the minimum competency model.” (American Council on Education 1999, 20)



### Voices From Research

“Clearly defined standards offer a vision of the knowledge and strategies that all students should develop in the [discipline].” (National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association 1996, 6–7)

The Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter provides an opportunity to identify important reasons for the state to move toward a standards-based education model.

## Standards Defined

Standards have been defined differently within many disciplines and over a considerable length of time, so it is important to clarify definitions and understand how they are used in education reform. Adopting definitions will give the state a head start on its standards development efforts and lay the groundwork for clear communication throughout the process.

Key terms for standards-based education are presented in exhibit 1.2, with examples of how each might be developed in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition (ELA). The definitions provided in this section will be used throughout this guide.

*Content standards* describe what learners should know and be able to do within a specific content area. Content standards

- reflect the knowledge and skills that an academic content area recognizes as essential to the discipline;
- provide a clear outline of content and skills so that programs can develop and align curriculum, instruction, and assessments; and
- do not prescribe class lessons or assignments and are neutral regarding teaching methodology.

If content standards are to inform curriculum development, they must be clear and specific. National and state documents often have content standards written in broad terms followed by indicators or benchmarks that guide curriculum development and instruction.

*Indicators or benchmarks* describe the set of skills that learners need to develop and achieve to meet the more broadly stated standards. Indicators or benchmarks

- provide more detailed information on the specific skills and contexts for learners to meet the standards;

- reference specific performance levels in terms that are concrete and observable;
- serve as checkpoints to monitor learner progress toward meeting a standard; and
- lead to the development of measurable performance standards and assessments.

The chart below provides examples of content standards and indicators in three disciplines.

**Exhibit 1.2. Key Terms Used in Standards-Based Education**

*The guide focuses on three content areas—reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition.<sup>a</sup> This exhibit provides examples of content standards and indicators in these disciplines.*

	Reading	Mathematics	English Language Acquisition <sup>b</sup>
<b>Content standards</b>	Comprehend, interpret, and evaluate informational texts for specific purposes	Use numbers, operations, and number sense to compute, estimate, and solve problems	Express self in written English
<b>Indicators or benchmarks<sup>c</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use parts of a book or manual to locate information</li> <li>■ Identify main ideas and supporting details</li> <li>■ Identify cause and effect relationships</li> <li>■ Follow simple directions to perform a task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Read, write, and order numbers</li> <li>■ Add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers, fractions, and decimals</li> <li>■ Estimate sums, differences, products, and quotients</li> <li>■ Solve problems by using rational numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Complete forms and applications with personal information</li> <li>■ Write lists, messages, notes, and sentences</li> <li>■ Organize sentences in simple paragraphs</li> <li>■ Edit writing for grammar, punctuation, and spelling</li> </ul>

*Note:* Additional terms can be found in Appendix B, Glossary.

<sup>a</sup> Reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition represent the core areas outlined by the U.S. Department of Education in its vision for strengthening adult education. More information can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/adulted/leg/aebblueprint2.doc>.

<sup>b</sup> ELA standards focus on language use rather than knowledge about language.

<sup>c</sup> These two terms can be defined distinctly, but they are often used interchangeably in the field. For simplicity in this guide, the term “indicator” is used, although the authors recognize that some states use the term “benchmark.”



### Voices From Research

“While content standards shape what goes into a curriculum, performance standards set benchmarks—specified levels of achievement—that shape expectations for educational outcomes, provide a basis for measuring learning outcomes, and provide the criteria for imposing rewards and sanctions.” (Stites 1999, 1–7)

*Performance standards* describe how well or to what extent learners meet the content standards. Performance standards

- specify the criteria and evidence to document that a content standard has been met;
- state the level of performance expected to determine progress and often include scoring rubrics to describe the extent to which standards are met (e.g., approaching, meeting, or exceeding a standard);
- include exemplars of learners’ work to help teachers align instruction and assessment at the appropriate level of difficulty; and
- lead to assessments aligned with content standards.

Setting the standards of performance expected of learners is a process that should not be taken lightly. Setting standards should be a collaborative process with stakeholders in which actual samples of learner work and scoring criteria are examined. A strong and credible accountability system in education depends on a clear and coherent curriculum aligned with a performance assessment system.

*Program standards*, in contrast, describe the design, delivery, and management of programs and instructional services. Program standards, also known as indicators of program quality, are perhaps the most familiar type of standard in adult education. Unlike content and performance standards, which focus on what learners should know and be able to do and the extent to which learners can demonstrate their knowledge and skills, program standards focus on the program as a whole.

Indicators of program quality that support standards-based reform might include

- offer sufficient hours of instruction for learners to develop concepts and skills necessary to meet the standards;
- use authentic materials and promote problem solving in contexts relevant to learners; and
- provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to (1) gain knowledge in the content area and (2) develop skills in teaching and in monitoring progress.

In summary, when the standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments are fully integrated and aligned, adult education programs can create learning environments in which learners meet high expectations. These standards work together toward continuous program improvement by

- defining the expectations (content standards);
- guiding curriculum and instruction (indicators);
- setting criteria for assessing achievement (performance standards); and
- providing quality instruction as evidenced by the indicators of program quality (program standards).

## Overview of the Guide

*A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards* presents the steps for moving toward a fully integrated, standards-based education system. Following this introductory overview of standards-based education, goals, and definitions, the guide continues with chapters that address multiple processes for planning, developing, reviewing, and implementing standards within the context of adult education. There is no single prescription for developing and implementing standards that will work for every state. Nor is there a single comprehensive list of content standards, indicators, and performance standards for all program types.

The processes and procedures in developing standards are not necessarily sequential. The guide offers suggestions and examples, but it is not an exhaustive guide for standards development, alignment, review, and implementation. State teams may want to consult other sources and review research literature on standards, education reform, and learning.

The guide provides . . .	The guide does not provide . . .
a description of process	a prescription of steps
suggestions and examples	exhaustive lists of resources
samples for standards in reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition	comprehensive coverage of all the content areas in adult education



### Voices From the Field

Standards can provide a foundation for developing curricula, learning activities, and individualized instruction without being prescriptive. Collectively these standards can

- ensure consistency;
- assist in meeting state performance measures;
- link assessments to curriculum and instruction;
- orient new adult education practitioners; and
- serve as a reference for experienced instructors.

(Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning 2004)



### Tip

See the **references** at the end of this chapter and in **appendix A** for additional research and information on standards-based education.

## ***How to Use the Guide***

Establishing a standards-based education system with all the necessary components is “people work” and requires the dedication of many. This guide is a resource for the numerous stakeholder groups that will plan, develop, review, and implement the content standards. States may be in different stages of development, and they may be adapting existing standards or writing new ones. Regardless of where a state is in the process, state staff should scan the entire guide to become familiar with its contents. State staff members are often the leaders in coordinating standards-based reforms, and they help define the goals and secure the resources for this initiative. Staff can use this guide throughout the process for planning, developing, reviewing, approving, and implementing the standards.



### **Tip**

Individuals participating in the initiative might scan the entire guide, but not everyone will need to read each chapter thoroughly.

A state usually relies on the commitment and expertise of regional and local program staff to represent the perspectives of different types and sizes of programs, different regions and communities, and the various partner agencies and constituent groups. The state staff liaison or standards project coordinator can identify chapters or sections of the guide and additional resources that will help team members gain a better understanding of their role in the process.

The work described in each chapter can directly affect the success of creating systemic change within adult education. State and local programs will need to monitor the implementation continually to verify whether the standards are indeed leading to continuous program improvement and stronger outcomes for learners.

## ***Overview of Chapters***

Each chapter provides information and process considerations for key tasks. Although the chapters present information sequentially, the tasks and processes are interrelated, and the decisions made during one phase of the process will have a direct effect on the tasks in other phases. For example, understanding the key concepts of standards-based education presented in this chapter is essential for planning standards that fit within the context of a state.

Chapter 1, **Moving Toward Standards-Based Education**, introduces readers to standards-based education and the goals of standards within adult education. Key terms are defined, and a model for standards-based education reform is described.

Chapter 2, **Setting the Stage for the Standards-Based Reform Initiative**, provides a model illustrating a systemic approach for standards-based education to promote continuous program improvement and higher learner outcomes. The state agency is responsible for developing a strategic plan and ensuring that policies, procedures, and resources are in place to support the initiative. Often a state will form a committee to plan, organize, and coordinate much of the work. The committee will identify stakeholders and conduct an environmental scan to identify what learners need to know and be able to do as members of families, communities, and workplaces and as learners within adult education programs. The chapter describes how information can be gathered and used for making decisions related to the development process. Chapter 2 closes with suggestions for outlining an action plan to guide subsequent work.

Chapter 3, **Developing Standards to Enhance Learner Achievement**, describes a process for establishing a writing team or teams to draft the standards. The writing team will be responsible for reviewing existing standards and developing a framework for organizing the document. The team will prepare draft content standards and then conduct an internal review to strengthen the drafts. Chapter 3 also describes the importance of alignment and suggests ways to crosswalk curriculum and assessment with the draft standards.

Chapter 4, **Conducting Reviews to Improve Draft Standards**, describes the purpose and value of several different types of reviews to validate, align, and implement a state's standards. The chapter discusses specific strategies for conducting reviews—surveys, focus groups, experts, and field tests—and offers suggestions for selecting reviewers.

Chapter 5, **Implementing Standards-Based Education**, recommends that the state develop a plan to outline the steps for effectively implementing a new system. It suggests strategies for communication and dissemination. The chapter also focuses on professional development and technical assistance to support the effective use and integration of standards within the adult education community. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the standards at both the local and state levels is

## Chapter 1

Moving Toward Standards-Based Education

## Chapter 2

Setting the Stage for the Standards-Based Initiative

## Chapter 3

Developing Standards to Enhance Learner Achievement

## Chapter 4

Conducting Reviews to Improve Draft Standards

## Chapter 5

Implementing Standards-Based Education

Look for these sidebars:



**Tip**



**Voices From the Field**



**Voices From Research**

a critical component for program improvement and for increasing learner outcomes.

### ***Additional Features of the Guide***

Throughout each chapter, readers will find three types of resources in the sidebars. *Tips* offer reminders and helpful hints related to the topic. *Voices From the Field* provide lessons learned from adult educators who have been involved in standards development and implementation. *Voices From Research* refer readers to standards-based educational research that will help guide informed decision making.

Interspersed throughout the text are exhibits that outline key information presented in the text or illustrate samples that state teams can adapt and use for different tasks. Each chapter also includes

- practice and application activities to assist state teams in using the information presented, and
- references for the sources cited in the chapter.

Finally, the guide has the following appendices:

- Appendix A, **White Paper**, provides additional information and references on standards-based educational research.
- Appendix B, **Glossary**, contains key terms used in standards-based education and in this guide.
- Appendix C, **Tools and Templates**, provides sample instruments that states can adapt and use during the planning, development, review, and implementation processes.
- Appendix D, **References and Resources**, lists additional references to support state standards-based education reform initiatives.

## Practice and Application

Identify two or three important reasons for your state to move toward a standards-based education model. Use those reasons to draft a purpose statement for developing standards in your state.

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**At the end of each chapter, look for:**

- Practice and Application
- References



# Chapter 2

## *Setting the Stage for the Standards-Based Initiative*

Although impetus for development of content standards comes from a variety of sources—federal and state education leaders and policy makers, local program administrators, the general public, and the business community—the state adult education agency plays a critical role in moving the standards initiative forward. The state agency lays the foundation needed to support the standards initiative and integrate standards within the larger adult education system. Standards-based education must be an integral part of the adult education system and the state’s continuous program improvement plan.

Chapter 2 discusses the role of the state in laying a solid foundation to promote change. The foundation comprises a number of building blocks that will support a standards-based system, including (1) a vision to motivate the field to work toward a common goal, (2) a strategic plan that articulates the vision, (3) coherent and coordinated policies and procedures that foster a systemic approach to continuous improvement through standards-based education, (4) financial resources that support the initiative, (5) staff to lead the initiative and to develop, review, align, and implement standards, and (6) a mechanism—requests for proposals (RFPs) and grant applications—to communicate to local programs the state’s expectations and policies for standards-based education.

This chapter also outlines an approach to organizing and coordinating the state’s efforts to develop and implement content standards through the creation of a coordinating committee. The chapter focuses on the coordinating committee’s role in identifying priorities for content standards among key stakeholders and in conducting a preliminary review of research on standards-based education and existing adult education content standards. The coordinating committee provides leadership and guidance throughout the standards development process and—with assistance of the state agency liaison—develops an action plan for the initiative and procedures for recruiting stakeholders to participate in the process.

### **Chapter 2 at a Glance**

- Use a Systemic Model for Standards-Based Education
- Lay the Foundation for Standards-Based Education
  - Create a Vision and a Strategic Plan
  - Develop Policies and Procedures
  - Secure Funding and Allocate Resources
  - Allocate Human Resources
  - Develop RFPs and Grant Applications
- Establish Committees and Processes for Developing, Reviewing, and Implementing Standards
  - Form a Committee to Coordinate the Standards Initiative
  - Develop a Mission Statement
  - Survey Key Stakeholders
  - Review Research and Standards to Make Decisions
  - Make Recommendations to the State
  - Develop an Action Plan
  - Recruit Team Members
- Practice and Application
- References

## Use a Systemic Model for Standards-Based Education

Transitioning to standards-based education requires change. State agencies need to plan how they can move forward with the initiative and make standards-based education an integral part of the adult education system. Exhibit 2.1 introduces a model for transitioning to standards-based education by (1) establishing a foundation for standards-based education; (2) exploring sources of influence that affect the initiative; (3) aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with content standards; and (4) supporting the implementation by offering professional development, monitoring local programs, and evaluating the changes resulting from the initiative.

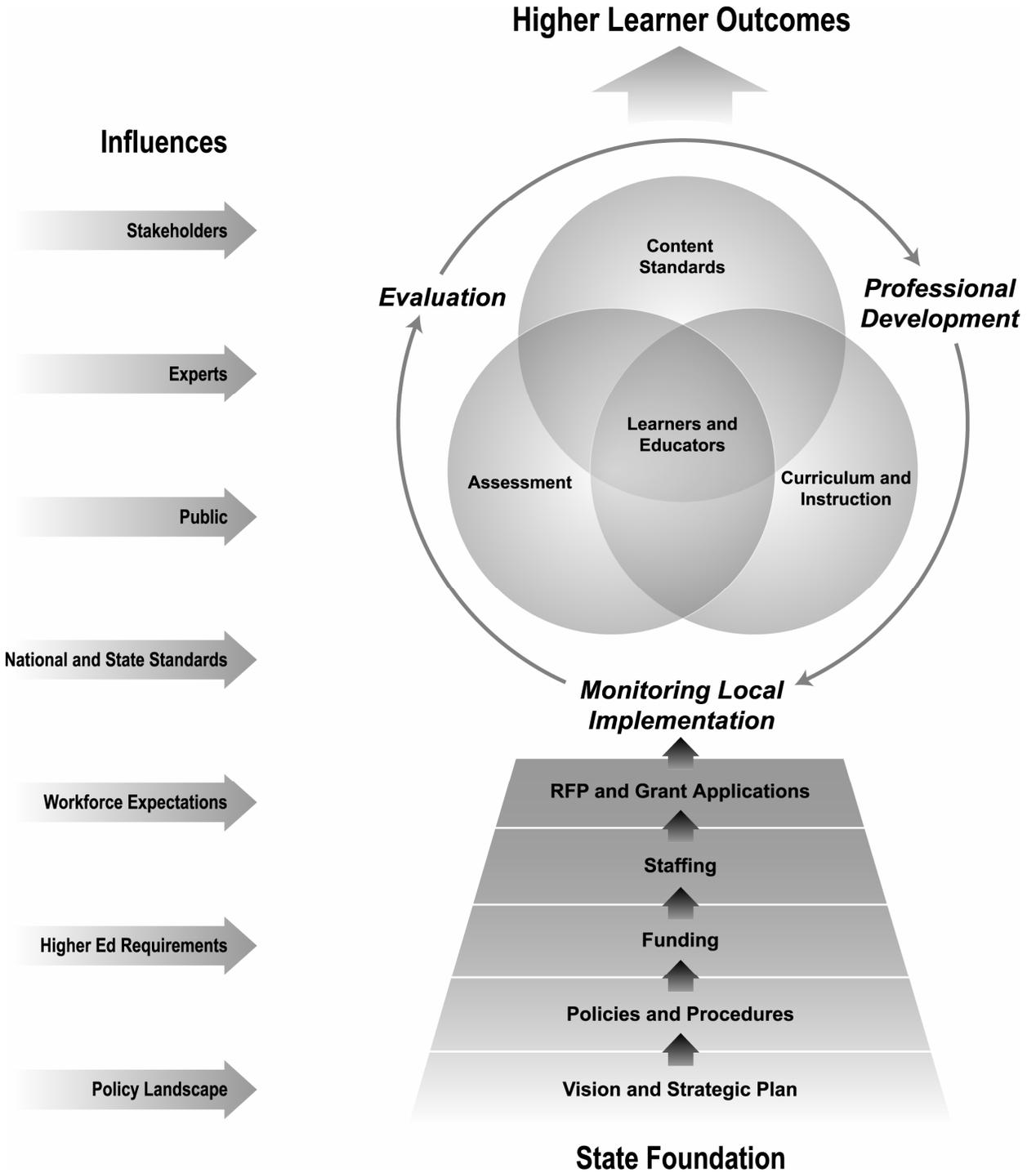
State adult education offices are uniquely positioned to provide the leadership and resources that will lead to systemic program improvement and higher learner outcomes. The model is built on the following key steps.

**Establish the foundation for standards-based education.** The state should facilitate the change process by laying a foundation for standards-based education that articulates a vision with supporting policies and procedures that specifies what needs to be done to implement standards-based education. The vision is articulated through state and strategic plans. The state needs to identify and secure funding for the initiative as well as identify staff at the state and local levels to plan, develop, and review the standards. Before any local program can begin using the standards, the state office has to articulate the state's expectations and policies clearly in the RFPs and grant applications that are released for local program providers. These expectations and policies should be articulated in a formal agreement with local programs that specifies what they must do to implement standards-based education.

**Explore sources of influence that affect the initiative.** Partners and external factors will influence how the state plans, develops, reviews, and implements an integrated standards-based system. The state will need to gather and review information about the state standards policies, workforce expectations, higher education requirements, and existing standards. In addition, the state will need to consult with the general public, experts, and adult education stakeholders. It is important to keep these stakeholders and sources in mind throughout the standards development and alignment processes.

**Exhibit 2.1. Standards-Based Education Model**

*This model illustrates a systemic approach to continuous improvement through standards-based education.*



**Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with content standards.** The model uses interlocking circles to illustrate the integration of the three components. The state needs to work collaboratively with partners to draft and develop standards that reflect what learners need to know and be able to do and that reflect research and evidence-based practice in the content areas. Local programs develop curricula and instructional plans aligned with the standards. Assessments—both standardized and classroom-based—will measure learners’ attainment of the standards. At the intersection of the standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are learners and educators. As the key stakeholders, they are represented in the center of this model that is designed to lead to higher learner outcomes.

**Support the implementation.** Developing standards is only the beginning of the process. Once standards are developed, the state needs to support professional development at the state, regional, and local levels. The state needs to monitor local implementation to assess how well local programs are using the standards to guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Throughout the cycle of change, the state needs to evaluate the effectiveness of the standards system, update the strategic plan continually, and consult with influential program partners.

This chapter discusses the state’s role in laying the foundation for change and assessing the influences that affect the development of standards. Remaining chapters in this guide will discuss the other components of the model.

## **Lay the Foundation for Standards-Based Education**

A strong foundation for standards-based education entails creating a vision for program reform and improvement that is operationalized through state and strategic plans. Policies and procedures must then be in place to support standards-based education. Transitioning to standards-based education will have cost implications, and the state will need to secure and allocate funding for the initiative. In addition, developing, reviewing, and implementing standards involve people. The state should identify staff at the state and local levels who can participate in the initiative as members of a committee to coordinate the standards effort and as members of standards writing and review teams.

As the state undertakes this work, it must consider the broad context in which adult education currently operates. The state agency or designated committee should take the lead in consulting and gathering information from stakeholders, experts, and the general public. In addition, the state should take into account other factors such as policy mandates, higher education requirements, or expectations for success in the workforce as it designs its standards-based system.

This foundation should support the integration of standards-based education within the adult education system. As states move forward, they need to consider the following questions:

- How will content standards be incorporated within the state plan that is submitted to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education?
- How will content standards be integrated within the RFP and grant application process for local programs?
- What mandates will the state put in place related to curriculum and assessment?
- What is the state's role in professional development, and what changes might be needed?
- How will the implementation of the content standards be monitored and evaluated? What tools and data collection procedures will be needed to upgrade current practices at the state and local levels?
- How can the state align the activities it currently supports with what it needs to do to support implementation of standards-based education? How can the state leverage funds from other sources to support the initiative?

These questions are addressed throughout this guide. The following sections discuss the key components for laying a strong foundation for standards-based education at the state level.



### Tip

Creating ownership in the standards process through stakeholder meetings, task force groups, focus groups, and public meetings will move the initiative forward.

## ***Create a Vision and a Strategic Plan***

Before the state can move forward with the initiative, it should create a vision for standards-based education. The vision expresses core values and guiding principles. Effective visions are compelling and exciting and motivate stakeholders to embrace standards-based education as a benefit to all learners. The vision should drive improvements to all aspects of the adult education system—instructional services, professional development, monitoring, and accountability—and be integrated within the state’s policies and procedures. In this way, all stakeholders will be held responsible for moving toward the vision.

The state’s vision may include the following core values:

- Adult education contributes to the community by enabling adult learners to succeed in their roles as family members, community members, workers, and lifelong learners.
- Content standards affect all aspects of adult education.
- Standards-based education improves learner outcomes.
- Content standards drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Research-based practices support adult learning.
- Highly qualified instructors who are knowledgeable about content area and instructional approaches are at the core of the standards-based system.
- Local programs are accountable for implementing standards-based education.

A strong leader can promote the vision and motivate state and local staff to work toward a common goal—the integration of standards-based education within all aspects of the adult education system. The state director and other key staff members must clearly communicate the vision so that all stakeholders see the value of standards-based education. The state director may do this in the state plan and through policy briefs, a strategic plan, and town meetings with stakeholders across the state. The vision must become part of the adult education agenda and be

viewed as a way of strengthening program quality and improving learner outcomes.

The strategic plan articulates the vision by outlining the broad direction the state will take to move toward its vision. The plan drives the policies and procedures to integrate standards within the state’s adult education delivery system, including funding decisions, grant award processes, and programs monitoring. The strategic plan focuses on

- assessing the capacity and resources of the state to fully implement standards-based education;
- gathering stakeholder support for standards-based education;
- outlining a process for developing, reviewing, and implementing standards;
- providing professional development and other supports necessary to implement standards-based education across all programs; and
- monitoring and evaluating local programs.

The strategic plan is a living document that guides the state’s development and implementation of standards and should be revised as the standards initiative moves forward.

### ***Develop Policies and Procedures to Support Standards-Based Education***

Policies developed by the state often include rules on how the state will allocate and spend money and other resources. Policies define the course of action that the state and local programs will take to implement standards-based education. A coherent, coordinated system of standards requires policies and procedures that align with stakeholder expectations and support all components of the initiative. For example, a state may want to establish policies or regulations that stipulate when local programs must begin using the standards and the extent to which state and local funds will support implementation of the content standards.

These policies create the infrastructure of standards-based education and should reflect the content of the state’s strategic

plan. In addition, the policies should reflect legislative actions and other state policies and mandates related to content standards. The policies also should reflect the needs identified by stakeholders within the adult education community.

Policies should reinforce the state’s vision, focus on priorities, and send a clear message about how standards-based education can be sustained—and must be couched in the context of the state policy landscape. To gain a realistic appraisal of the broader state policies related to education, state staff should examine current legislative actions, agency policies, and the state plan for adult education. State actions may have already defined some of the policies for standards development and implementation and thereby set the parameters for an adult education standards-based initiative. For example, the state may have mandated standards-based education with deadlines for development for all educational levels. The state’s department of education or department of labor may have other mandates for content standards that will frame the standards initiative policies. For example, the department of education may have determined content standards priorities or whether adult education standards must be aligned with K–12, postsecondary, or business and industry standards.

State policies and procedures should build capacity at the state and local program levels to translate challenging standards into effective instruction and improved learner outcomes. This may be accomplished by providing financial incentives to local programs and by restructuring financial systems to support standards-based education. Policies for building capacity also may address the following considerations:

- **Recruitment, hiring, and retention of instructional staff.** Policies may relate to setting staff qualifications or competencies or acknowledging instructors whose learners show significant improvement.
- **Professional development.** Policies may involve developing professional development standards, using research-based approaches and materials, providing paid time or release time for professional development, creating an infrastructure to support programs and instructors in aligning curriculum and assessment with standards, and linking professional development to content areas.



### Voices From Research

Standards-based policies can affect student learning only if they are tied directly to efforts to build the capacity of teachers and administrators to improve instruction (National Research Council 1999, 3).

- **Curriculum and instructional services.** Policies may involve promoting curriculum frameworks in content areas and creating resource banks of curricula and other instructional materials to facilitate the transition to standards-based education; or providing sufficient opportunities to learn through more intensive instruction and managing enrollment.
- **Student assessment.** Policies may involve implementing ongoing learner assessments aligned with content standards and statewide assessments linked to standards.
- **Accountability systems.** Policies may involve allocating resources according to program improvement plans and rewarding local programs based on their performance.
- **Learner persistence and transition to employment or higher education.** Policies may involve redesigning the instructional delivery and support systems and collaborating with other agencies and stakeholders.

The transition to standards-based reform has cost implications. The next section discusses the financial resources that the state will need to draw upon for its standards initiative.

### ***Secure Funding and Allocate Resources to Support Standards-Based Education***

An essential element in planning for standards-based education is considering both short- and long-term expenses. Knowing potential costs will enable the state to establish priorities and make decisions about how to approach the standards initiative. For example, cost considerations will help the state determine whether it will be able to develop standards in one or more content areas, hire external experts, field test the standards, and provide professional development for implementing the standards within each region of the state. Knowing the costs will also help the state allocate resources to support the standards initiative.

The state also needs to consider staff resources and identify individuals who will lead the standards initiative, facilitate teams and committees to draft and review the content standards, and support implementation. The state must include in the budget the costs associated with staff participation in the standards effort.

## Costs Related to the Standards Initiative

It is important to consider short-term costs for developing and reviewing standards as well as future costs related to the state's professional development, instructional delivery, monitoring, and accountability systems.

The state, for example, will have upfront costs for planning, developing, and reviewing the standards. It will need to provide support for the following developmental costs:

- travel expenses for state employees and members of committees or teams to participate in the development of content standards
- fees for content standards consultants or facilitators
- stipends for part-time staff participating on the development team or review committees
- costs associated with initial focus groups, interviews, and surveys across the state to gather information and later to review the draft standards
- costs related to field testing the standards in local programs
- the cost of technology to enhance distance communication capacity
- the cost of professional development to enhance content knowledge of the team members and other program staff involved in the process

In addition, the state will need to plan for costs associated with local capacity building to implement the standards. The state will want to ensure that local administrators and instructional leaders have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to take leadership roles during the transition and can garner stakeholder and staff support for implementation of the content standards. The state will need to offer a range of professional development opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels for (1) instructional staff to strengthen subject-area knowledge and develop standards-based curriculum and assessments and (2) administrators to implement the standards.

The state will also need to consider the costs related to implementation and monitoring of standards. A state might provide financial incentives to local programs as they transition to standards-based education. New curriculum and instructional resources might be needed at state, regional, and local levels. Finally, the state will need to update its processes and procedures for monitoring local program implementation of the standards as well as for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate the effectiveness of the standards.

It is best for the state to identify costs at the beginning of the process so that it can thoughtfully prepare to support the standards initiative. To help states think about cost issues, Appendix C, Tools and Templates, includes a sample budget worksheet for the first year of the initiative that identifies potential expenses involved in the process.

### **Financial Resources to Support Standards-Based Education**

As the state considers the costs for implementing standards-based education, it should identify potential resources that could support the initiative. The state can look to multiple funding streams to support standards-based education. The challenge is to think creatively about how to identify and use the funds to develop the standards and build program capacity to implement standards over the long term.

**State leadership funds** from the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Basic State Grants can be used to support one or more of the following leadership activities: professional development, technical assistance, technology assistance, literacy resource centers, monitoring, state incentives, curriculum development, activities of statewide significance, support services, linkages with workforce investment, or postsecondary linkages (WIA, Section 223).

**Incentive award money**, awarded to states that exceed their WIA Title I and Title II performance standards, can be used at the governor's discretion to design a statewide standards-based initiative for learners being served by Title I and Title II programs. Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) can leverage their resources to develop content standards for employment, basic and life skills, and continuing education. LWIB partners can contribute to the costs for professional development and assessment across agencies to create a seamless

system. Partners can offer support services to learners, such as child care, transportation, or counseling related to employment, training, and postsecondary education. When content standards and expectations are aligned across programs, learners have multiple opportunities for learning that can lead to higher outcomes in adult education, workforce education, and postsecondary training (WIA, Section 503).

**Other state and local monies** may include funding streams such as special initiative grants and private or foundation funds. Local programs can contribute to the state maintenance of effort through cost sharing (e.g., salary support, paid professional development, and technology support or classroom space). These funds allow local programs to put systems in place for strengthening instruction, support services, and assessment practices.

**Local grant awards** through state RFPs also can be used for local standards-based professional development and curriculum development activities, as well as for restructuring program delivery to engage learners and promote transition to postsecondary education and employment.

**In-kind contributions** also can support the standards initiative. For example, institutions of higher education may be willing to provide individuals who have content expertise to help facilitate the process, or the institutions may be a source for student teachers who can provide release time for regular instructors who are serving on teams. Local businesses may be able to provide technology support for the development of workforce standards. Community- and faith-based organizations may be able to provide physical space for focus groups, help review the standards for their constituents, or be part of the field test. (See chapter 4.)

To support local implementation of the standards, the state may want to provide financial incentives to local programs through grant awards or a combination of sources to (1) help them transition to standards-based education and (2) reward them for successfully implementing content standards and improving learner outcomes. For example, some states use incentive award and state leadership monies for statewide initiatives, such as curriculum development, online learning, assessment, and increasing high school completion outcomes.

The state may want to think of ways to promote learner persistence so that learners can stay engaged with learning and meet the standards. This might mean allocating funds for support services or strengthening coordination with other agencies to support learners' educational gains and to promote the learner's transition to employment and postsecondary education or training.

Essentially, state leadership funds, incentive award money, grant awards, and in-kind contributions can be used to support the following undertakings:

- professional development for instructors that is closely linked with the content students will be learning
- incentives to local programs to support locally funded professional development activities based on the standards
- electronic-based resources for local program implementation of content standards
- technical assistance to local programs in implementing curriculum and assessment aligned with content standards
- professional development for state staff to monitor and evaluate how programs are implementing content standards

Just as financial resources may need to be reallocated to support the standards initiative, human resources also will have to be reallocated. The next section discusses the roles and responsibilities of state and local staff in moving toward standards-based education.

### ***Allocate Human Resources to Support Standards-Based Education***

Developing, reviewing, and implementing content standards is labor intensive and will involve individuals at both the state and local program levels. Therefore, as the state plans its initiative, it should identify the various activities that need to be conducted and think about the types of individuals that can play various leadership roles.



#### **Voices From the Field**

“Florida used adult education leadership funds to support a practitioner’s task force to develop standards.”  
(Nancy Cordill, Florida Department of Education)



**Tip**

As the state moves forward with this initiative, it should consider the professional development needs of staff at all levels—administrators, trainers, coordinators, instructors, and support staff.

At the state level, program managers and professional development providers are needed to communicate the state’s vision for standards-based education and maintain the state perspective throughout the process. If the state department of education or the agency’s board needs to sign off on the standards, keep their perspectives in mind throughout the process to ward off difficulties down the road.

State program managers can take leadership roles on the coordinating committee and on writing teams, and they can serve as liaisons between the state office and teams involved in the standards development process. State managers and professional development providers disseminate information about the standards and help local programs implement the standards. They also can help identify local programs and staff to draft, review, and field test the standards.

Local program administrators, instructional specialists, coordinators, and practitioners play a hands-on role in developing and implementing the standards. They can serve on standards writing or review teams and may even field test the standards. Decisions that administrators make at the local level will affect the success of the standards implementation efforts. Instructional specialists, coordinators, and practitioners are front-line users of the standards and will need to have a solid understanding of standards-based education.

The state may also want to consider the use of external consultants to assist in developing and implementing standards. These individuals bring expertise and experience that may be necessary for facilitating the standards development process and helping the state agency and other staff reach consensus on various issues related to standards. External consultants may lend credibility to the standards effort and help move the effort forward. Exhibit 2.2 shows the roles individuals may play in implementing standards-based education.

The state should consider its human resource needs, starting with the early planning stages of the standards initiative and continuing through statewide implementation. Individual roles will change as the initiative moves forward. It is important to remember that the standards initiative will take time. Keep in mind that state managers often wear multiple hats and divide their time across several projects, and adult education practitioners are often part-time educators who may have other responsibilities. Consider the kind of support individuals may need to carry out their roles.

**Exhibit 2.2. Planning for the Use of Human Resources**

*This exhibit identifies the types of individuals that will be needed for implementing standards-based education and includes examples of the roles they will play in the initiative.*

Individual	Sample Roles in the Standards Initiative
State agency staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop policies and procedures for implementing standards-based education</li> <li>■ Serve on or lead standards committees or teams</li> <li>■ Assess capacity of the adult education system to implement standards-based education</li> <li>■ Develop and design standards documents</li> <li>■ Identify field test sites for standards</li> <li>■ Provide technical assistance to local programs</li> <li>■ Review grant applications and budgets to see how local programs are addressing standards</li> <li>■ Monitor local programs to assess implementation of standards</li> </ul>
Professional development staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serve on standards committees or teams</li> <li>■ Conduct needs assessment and analyze data for professional development on standards</li> <li>■ Develop training modules related to standards-based education</li> <li>■ Plan, deliver, and evaluate professional development</li> </ul>
Local program administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serve on standards committees or teams</li> <li>■ Set vision for instructional quality and strategic plan for implementing standards at the local level</li> <li>■ Recruit staff and promote professional development focused on standards</li> <li>■ Allocate resources and materials to support standards</li> <li>■ Assess how well standards have been integrated within the local program</li> </ul>
Instructional specialists, coordinators, and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serve on standards committees or teams</li> <li>■ Develop standards-based curriculum and identify resources</li> <li>■ Provide instruction that supports standards-based education</li> <li>■ Develop assessments and monitor student progress in meeting standards</li> </ul>
External consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Facilitate meetings of standards committees or teams</li> <li>■ Review draft standards for specific purposes</li> <li>■ Identify proficiency indicators for standards and corresponding assessments</li> <li>■ Conduct alignment and measurement reviews</li> </ul>

## ***Develop RFPs and Grant Applications***

The state RFP process is the way in which the state communicates its policies in concrete terms. RFPs must articulate the state's expectations for standards-based education. Some states mandate that all programs implement the standards simultaneously. Other states start with a field test and then provide incentives for local programs to gradually phase in standards-based education.

The RFP must provide guidelines so that local programs can adequately prepare their continuous improvement plans in response to state mandates. Applications should require that eligible local providers demonstrate an understanding of the full range of activities for integrating content standards within their programs. Requests for applications may require local programs to address the following factors:

- developing program improvement plans linked to learner achievement
- hiring personnel who can support standards-based education and provide the requisite professional development
- providing curricula and other instructional materials to support content standards
- structuring program and instructional delivery to foster student persistence
- working with higher education and business and labor communities to support transition into postsecondary education, training, or employment
- developing a monitoring system to determine how well the program is aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the content standards
- preparing a budget that will provide sufficient support for professional and resource development to implement content standards

Title II of the WIA identified 12 factors that the state agency must take into account in awarding grants or contracts to local providers. The state agency should request that local programs address factors such as education outcome measures based on content standards, provide sufficient intensity of services and effective instructional

practices to meet the standards, and assure adequate coordination and qualified staff (WIA, Section 231(e)).

## Establish Committees and Processes for Developing, Reviewing, and Implementing Standards

Standards-based education is a major undertaking and will require the state to establish procedures for planning the initiative and for developing, reviewing, and implementing standards. The state will need to establish structures and processes for moving the initiative forward. Individuals involved in the standards development effort need to know what is expected of them to ensure that work goes smoothly, resources are used wisely, and efforts are not duplicated. State agencies are responsible for setting the process in motion.

Many states that have already developed standards established different committees or teams to be responsible for various aspects of the work. Organizing the development and review processes around a system of committees or teams ensures broad participation and allows the state to draw on individuals who have different sets of expertise and experience.

A state might consider organizing an *advisory committee* with leaders from various stakeholder groups who have enough influence to help mobilize resources and set a positive tone for the standards initiative. An advisory committee does not need to be involved in the hands-on planning and development, but the committee members can offer guidance and perspective. Their advice is essential for creating standards that represent the diverse needs in the state. They should be involved early in the process and may need to meet only once during each of the key phases.

The *coordinating committee* usually takes the lead in providing overall guidance for the planning and development of standards and making recommendations to the state agency. Another key group, *the writing team*, actually adapts or drafts the standards. More than one writing team may be needed if the state chooses to develop standards in several content areas. The writing team is also charged with making sure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment can be aligned with the content standards. Exhibit 2.3 outlines an organizing structure with multiple teams and committees and identifies the charge of each group.



### Tip

Have one or more members of the coordinating committee also serve on the writing team to provide the state perspective and to ensure an understanding of the policy and resource parameters guiding the initiative.

**Exhibit 2.3. Teams Involved in the Standards Initiative**

*This exhibit outlines the various types of committees and teams along with their “charge” or overall responsibilities. The third column provides suggestions for membership.*

Committee/Team	Charge	Membership
Advisory committee	To provide overall guidance to the standards-based initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leaders among adult education stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
Coordinating committee	To provide leadership and guidance throughout the development and implementation processes; and to make recommendations to the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State adult education managers</li> <li>■ Professional development</li> <li>■ Lead teachers, curriculum and instructional specialists, or content specialists</li> <li>■ Local program administrators</li> </ul>
Writing team(s)	To research and adapt or write the content standards and indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Instructors</li> <li>■ Content specialists</li> <li>■ Professional development staff</li> </ul>
Validity review team(s)	To conduct reviews of draft standards to ensure that standards represent the most valuable knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed in their adult roles; and to provide feedback to developers. Teams or individuals may review for content validity, bias, and measurability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Content specialists</li> <li>■ Adult learners</li> <li>■ Program managers (state and local levels)</li> <li>■ Instructors, tutors, instructional specialists</li> <li>■ Business community representatives</li> <li>■ Higher education representatives</li> </ul>
Alignment team(s)	To conduct alignment reviews and identify resources for aligning curriculum and assessment with the content standards	<p>Depending on focus of alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Content specialists</li> <li>■ K–12 standards developers</li> <li>■ Curriculum specialists</li> <li>■ Measurement specialists</li> <li>■ Instructors, tutors, instructional specialists</li> <li>■ Professional development staff</li> </ul>
Field test participants	To field test standards to assess validity and implementation of standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Instructors</li> <li>■ Local program administrators</li> <li>■ Professional development staff</li> <li>■ Field test coordinator (may be outside consultant)</li> <li>■ State program managers</li> </ul>

The draft standards will go through a review process that includes feedback from a broad range of stakeholders. A state may establish multiple *review teams* for different types of reviews (see chapter 4). Reviews help the state build consensus around the standards and help determine whether the standards are rigorous, accurate, and appropriate to the needs of adult learners. Review teams share their findings with the writing team for further refinement before the content standards are submitted for state adoption. Upon approval, the state takes the lead in working with professional development providers and local programs for the implementation of the standards (see chapter 5).

From the outset, the state should consider establishing procedures and processes for moving forward with the initiative. These procedures include

- appointing a committee to coordinate the development, review, and implementation of standards; and
- documenting and archiving actions and decisions made during the standards development and implementation processes.

Planning, developing, reviewing, and implementing standards is a complex process that occurs over time. Teams should document and archive all the actions and decisions throughout the process. Multiple decisions will be made, and as new information and ideas emerge, decisions will be revisited. Before the coordinating committee or any team begins to make decisions, it should designate someone to serve as an archivist to keep accurate and timely records of decisions and processes. The archivist may be a state manager who also serves as liaison to the state agency.

To avoid “hearsay” or disputes about what has been decided, the state should set up a process to document and archive summaries or minutes from meetings, draft documents, review materials and findings, and all decisions that are made throughout the process.

In addition, it is important to document the processes, as these may be replicated when the state decides to develop content standards in other areas. Archives of decisions and supporting materials are essential, particularly when staff turnover occurs. Records of the process will help the state pass the baton to other committee members.



### Tip

Archive the following information:

- decisions made
- dates decisions were made
- persons involved in decision making
- results of the decisions
- documents that support the decisions
- different drafts of standards
- minutes or meeting summaries



### Voices From the Field

“Keep good records so if there is a change in staff there is a historical memory.”  
(Bonnie Meyer, Maryland State Department of Education)

The remaining sections of this chapter discuss each of these procedures and provide an overview of the potential roles and responsibilities of the coordinating committee.

### ***Form a Committee to Coordinate the Standards Initiative***

Initiating standards-based education is a large effort involving a number of different teams to write, review, and implement standards. Therefore, it is important for the state agency to think about how to coordinate the effort. One approach, used by many states, is to appoint a standards coordinating committee, or some small group, to act on behalf of the state agency and make recommendations to the agency based on the committee's own work and the work of the other teams.

It is important to keep the coordinating committee to a manageable size—about five to eight individuals—so that it can accomplish its goals. Having a few individuals committed to the process over an extended period of time is far better than having a large group whose members may be pulled in many directions.

A good representative mix on the committee would include people in the following positions:

- **State adult education manager**—to serve as a liaison between the state office and the coordinating committee and to ensure that the state perspective is maintained. Consider soliciting one or two state-level managers, depending on resources available, to be committee members. Someone with measurement expertise is a plus.
- **Professional development coordinator**—to maintain the perspective of translating standards into practice. Consider at least one professional development coordinator at the state or regional level to focus on the professional development system and its role in transitioning to standards-based education.
- **Lead teacher, curriculum and instructional specialist, or content specialist**—to provide a voice from the field for instructional purposes. Involving local practitioners from the beginning will help ensure that standards are developed with the needs of educators and learners in mind and will help practitioners understand how standards are integrated within



#### **Voices From the Field**

“Get a representative group to work together to lay the foundation for the ‘why,’ ‘what,’ and ‘how’ to implement standards.”

(Mary Ann Jackson, Wisconsin Technical College System Office)

the adult education program improvement, instructional services, and accountability systems. Seek individuals who might also have expertise with special populations served within the state adult education system.

- **Local program administrator**—to provide a voice from the field with an administrative perspective. Consider one or two administrators from different types of adult education programs.

The state may want a state manager or specialist, or other state-funded staff member (e.g., a person from the professional development or adult learning resource center), to lead the coordinating committee. Alternatively, the state may want to consider contracting an external facilitator. This decision will depend on the resources available and the criteria the state identifies for the leadership role.

The coordinating committee leader will serve as a liaison to the state agency in establishing guidelines for the development and implementation processes. Ideally, the standards leader will have the following knowledge, skills, and aptitudes:

- knowledge about standards-based and adult education research and practice
- skills in defining goals, leading teams, and coordinating large projects
- ability to negotiate amidst controversy and to keep teams moving forward

Other members of the committee must also develop a full understanding of standards-based education. They often will serve as spokespersons for the standards efforts, making presentations to local program administrators, professional development staff, and instructors. In addition to presentation skills, look for committee members who have the following knowledge, skills, and aptitudes:

- knowledge of the target audiences for standards and how best to meet the needs of diverse audiences
- analytical skills to interpret information gathered from the field and from research



### Voices From the Field

“Find someone high enough to be your standard bearer.”  
(Vicki Prater, California State Department of Education)



### Voices From the Field

“Arizona held an eight-day orientation for design team members facilitated by a standards development expert. The team developed a mission, vision, common vocabulary, and sense of objectivity.”  
(Miriam Kroeger, Arizona Department of Education)



### Voices From the Field

“Wisconsin started off with a one-year planning committee composed of lead faculty, deans, or associate deans from each program. The group, cochaired by the state director, met five times.”  
(Mary Ann Jackson, Wisconsin Technical College System Office)

- knowledge of the state and local delivery systems and an understanding of how standards will affect these systems

Individuals on the coordinating committee must be able to allocate the time and energy necessary to carry out their roles in each phase of the standards development process. Because they are charged with leading the effort on behalf of the state, the coordinating committee members need a thorough orientation to the standards-based initiative and the state context.

Generally, orientation for this group may last for two to four days. The state may choose either to have a state manager conduct the orientation or to contract a consultant who knows standards-based education to facilitate the orientation process. Exhibit 2.4 offers topics for orienting the coordinating committee and other teams the state may organize.

The coordinating committee is charged with providing leadership and guidance throughout the standards initiative. Members gather and analyze information to support decisions that will be made by the state, and they work with the state agency to develop guidelines for the planning, development, review, and implementation processes. The coordinating committee determines the charge for the other committee(s) or team(s) and sets guidelines for their specific tasks. The committee makes recommendations to the state agency throughout the process on key issues, such as whether to adopt or adapt existing standards or develop their own set of standards.

The tasks for the coordinating committee discussed in the next section will help the standards-based initiative move forward. The committee’s work continues throughout the development and implementation processes. These tasks will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

### Exhibit 2.4. *Orienting Committees and Teams*

*This exhibit presents potential topics to consider when preparing state teams to develop, review, and implement standards.*

Given the diversity of the committee and team members, each group will require an orientation to learn its roles and responsibilities as well as understand the state's standards initiative. The time allocated for orientation may vary, depending on the team, the topics, the diversity of members, and state resources.

Orientation provided by the state may include the following aspects:

- **Understanding the state perspective.** Participants may come from local programs or a particular region within the state and may have a different perspective on standards-based education. To work effectively as a committee, all members will need to understand the initiative from a broader, state perspective, including any parameters or non-negotiable issues (e.g., content standards must reflect the K–12 standards).
- **Establishing a common set of definitions and a common language.** Chapter 1 provides a set of definitions for content standards, indicators, and performance standards that state committees may adopt or adapt. A shared understanding of terminology will help ensure clear communication.
- **Establishing norms for working together.** Working as a team with tight deadlines and with members representing diverse interests may be difficult at times. Before work begins, coordinating committee members should develop a set of norms for working together, including how decisions will be made in a manner that will allow them to build consensus around issues that arise. For example, they may agree to (1) be mutually accountable, (2) follow through on assignments, (3) agree to disagree, and (4) be mutually respectful. These norms can be shared with the other teams.
- **Determining frequency and methods of communication.** As members think about the task ahead, they must determine the frequency and length of meetings. The timeline may be dictated by the state timeline for developing standards. Members, for example, may choose to meet once every four to six weeks over a five-month period, with lessened frequency once key decisions are made. States also may choose to work electronically, using online communication systems. Committee and team members may alternate face-to-face with online meetings or teleconferences.
- **Reviewing the change process.** Movement toward standards-based education takes time. Teams involved in the process will need to recognize that change is a process, not an event, and involves multiple levels within the education system. At each level, individuals will need to understand how a new initiative affects their roles and responsibilities, and they need time to buy into this change.



### Tip

Consider these tasks for the coordinating committee:

- Develop a mission statement that sets out the goals for standards-based education.
- Engage stakeholders and gather information.
- Gather and review research.
- Make recommendations to the state for other teams and processes.
- Develop an action plan for standards development and implementation.
- Define a process for recruiting stakeholders to participate on standards committees and teams.

## Develop a Mission Statement

One of the first tasks of the coordinating committee is to develop a mission statement that outlines the purposes and objectives of standards-based education for all adult education programs. The mission statement translates the more global vision set by the state into a tangible, energizing goal that is challenging, yet achievable. The mission statement is critical because it becomes the message that is communicated to all stakeholders. It articulates the significance of adult education to the community at large and helps garner support for the initiative.

The mission statement sets a direction for the state's work, emphasizes the value of standards-based education for adult learners, and inspires commitment to the reform initiative. For example, a mission statement may read:

*Standards-based education serves adult learners by establishing high expectations for quality and accountability, providing the basis for curriculum and assessment, and ensuring that instruction provides the skills and knowledge most valued for learners' success in all their adult roles.*

The mission statement should focus on challenging standards tied to learner goals as well as the goals of the community. Given the multiple voices on the coordinating committee, having an external facilitator may be helpful in achieving consensus on the mission statement. Coming to consensus on a mission statement will communicate what the committee and the state want all adult learners to achieve. And if tensions surface during the process, the committee and teams can always refer back to the mission statement to refocus their efforts.

## Survey Key Stakeholders

Knowing perspectives of key stakeholders, where support lies, and what issues may arise will help the coordinating committee and state teams think strategically before developing standards. Effective implementation of standards-based education requires support from all stakeholders. Therefore, representatives from state agencies, local programs, and the greater community must all be involved in the standards development process.

Stakeholders bring varied expertise and represent different constituencies. Engaging stakeholders from the start will help

- build consensus for standards,
- strengthen credibility in the community and build ownership of the standards,
- build the knowledge base about what learners need to know and be able to do,
- establish priorities,
- identify human and financial resources, and
- identify any tensions that may exist among groups within the state.

One of the key ways that stakeholders help is by participating in an *environmental scan*—a process for obtaining information, thoughts, and opinions from a wide range of people and programs. Stakeholders can provide input that will help establish priorities for standards. Diverse groups may have different conceptions of the purposes or definitions of content standards, the skills and knowledge most valued for adult learners, or the resources required to develop and implement standards. It becomes essential, therefore, to gain a clear understanding of what stakeholders expect from standards-based education and how they can support the initiative. Exhibit 2.5 lists key stakeholders and describes why each is important to the standards initiative.

The environmental scan serves several other purposes as well. It enables committee members to identify potential candidates for the state’s standards development and review teams as well as individuals who may be recommended to the state as members of the advisory committee. The environmental scan is also a first step in identifying the professional development needs of practitioners and administrators.



### Tip

Consider the following method to identify the goal of your standards initiative:

1. Facilitator asks each committee member to complete quickly the following sentence stems:
  - Content standards will help our learners . . . .
  - Content standards will help our state . . . .
  - It’s important that the content standards . . . .
2. Committee members share their ideas and work as a team to create a mission statement.



### Voices From the Field

“Have buy-in in mind from the beginning. Have the community involved in the process to get buy-in.”

(Rose Brandt, Pennsylvania Department of Education)

**Exhibit 2.5. Key Stakeholders for an Environmental Scan**

*This exhibit lists the stakeholder groups to include in an environmental scan and the contributions each can make to this process.*

Stakeholder Group	Contributions
Adult learners	They know what knowledge and skills they have and what they need to learn.
Program managers and other state-level administrators (e.g., in departments of education and labor)	They understand the state context and perspective. The host agency will need to sign off on the standards document, so keeping its perspective in mind throughout the process will minimize later difficulties.
Professional development staff	They provide the content knowledge and a general understanding of standards-based education for program improvement. They play an essential role in implementation because they are often the link from the state to the field and can assist the state in troubleshooting and identifying areas of need.
K–12 standards developers	These individuals understand the process of developing standards and what is expected of high school graduates in core areas.
Practitioners: instructors, tutors, instructional specialists, and coordinators	Front-line users can bring content standards to life or they can ignore them and hope they go away. Specialists may have in-depth knowledge of the discipline, understand the research that supports the discipline, and can guide practitioners in understanding the constructs of the discipline. Involve many practitioners early, and make certain they understand how content standards support student learning and are integrated within the adult education program improvement and accountability systems.
Local administrators	They are key to implementing content standards because they have to make decisions regarding professional development, program improvement, accountability, and funding.
Business community (e.g., staff at the One Stops or workforce investment boards)	They provide insight into the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workplace—an important goal for many adult learners. They also may be able to provide financial support for the development of standards, particularly if the focus is on workplace standards.
Postsecondary education and training	Faculty and administrators at institutions of higher education may have the content expertise necessary for developing quality standards. They also will know what students need for transitioning into higher education.
Community- and faith-based organizations	They represent different constituencies and interact with adult learners in a variety of ways. As members of the community, they can play a key role in publicizing and rolling out standards.

## Develop Questions for an Environmental Scan

The coordinating committee must identify the information it will need to make informed recommendations to the state about standards-based education. Consider collecting information that addresses the following questions:

- What skills and knowledge are most valued for learners' success in the workplace? In the community? As family members? As lifelong learners?
- What resources are needed to support standards-based education, and how can you help?
- What challenges do you see in developing and implementing standards?

It is important to remember that not all questions can be answered by all stakeholder groups. Adult learners, for example, will be able to answer the question about what they believe are the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed, but they probably cannot answer questions about the challenges in implementing standards. Questions should be customized for different groups. For example, an instructional specialist might be asked, “What skills and knowledge are valued for adult learners to succeed in their diverse roles?” A member of the workforce investment board might be asked, “What skills and knowledge are valued in hiring and advancing in today’s labor market?”

Consider gathering information from several individuals within each stakeholder group to ensure that multiple perspectives from each group are heard. For example, gather information from practitioners and local program administrators representing different parts of the state, different types of programs, and differing availability of resources. Similarly, contact members of the business community from different business sectors and different geographical areas. Documenting respondents by demographic and other characteristics will help when analyzing responses.

The Practice and Application section at the end of the chapter provides an opportunity for members of the coordinating committee to think about the kinds of questions they may want to address with different stakeholders in the environmental scan.



### Tip

Reaching out to diverse stakeholders will help create a “healthy mix” of individuals to participate in the standards development process. Support from stakeholders also will provide a wealth of information, assure buy-in, and create synergy for standards development.



### Tip

Document stakeholder responses and questions for future reference.



### Voices From the Field

When Texas conducted focus groups with adult learners, the programs in each region were allowed to set the time and location for the focus groups, thus involving the local programs in the process from the very beginning.  
(Federico Salas-Isnardi, Texas LEARNS)

## Conduct an Environmental Scan

A number of strategies can be used to gather information from stakeholders. Strategies include using focus groups, interviews, online surveys, and document reviews. The choice depends on the state's resources and the expertise available to develop data collection tools and collect the data, as well as the ability of each stakeholder group to spend time responding to requests for information and ideas. Consider using a combination of activities to ensure reaching a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages. To identify the most applicable one, consider these options:

- **Focus groups** allow the coordinating committee to gather in-depth information by probing for further information or asking for clarification of responses from individuals representing different stakeholder groups. Focus groups have the potential advantage of obtaining information from more people than can be obtained from one-on-one interviews. In addition, focus groups often generate other issues as respondents react to one another. The disadvantages include time conflicts that make it difficult to schedule participants and the need for skilled focus group leaders. (Appendix C, Tools and Templates, provides moderator guidelines for focus group discussions and a sample focus group protocol.)
- **Interviews** allow the coordinating committee to gather in-depth information and probe for further information from individuals representing different stakeholder groups. Interviews enable respondents to be deliberate and to summarize their thoughts in their own words. The disadvantages of interviews are that they are labor and time intensive, even if conducted by telephone, and they may be difficult to schedule. Additionally, interviews provide for only a small sampling of stakeholder perspectives.
- **Surveys** (hard-copy or online) can reach larger audiences than focus groups and interviews. Online surveys are often more effective than hard-copy surveys in reaching a large number of stakeholders and soliciting responses. Other advantages of online surveys are that they are cost effective, require little time, and solicit feedback from a large portion of the stakeholder population. The disadvantages of surveys are that the data collected through a survey are limited by the questions asked, the quality of survey design, and the

structure of the survey. Online surveys are limited to stakeholders with access to computers.

- **Document reviews**, of existing materials and publications authored by stakeholder groups (e.g., job postings, national standards, or publications from higher education admissions offices), allow the coordinating committee to gather information without requiring a commitment of time from these groups. The disadvantage is the limited availability of resources that may not be fully representative of the learners in adult education.

**Exhibit 2.6. Strategies for Conducting an Environmental Scan**

*There are several ways to collect information from an environment, as listed in this exhibit. Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages.*

Strategy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allow collection of in-depth information through probing questions</li> <li>■ Generate additional issues as respondents react to one another</li> <li>■ Gather information from more people than one-on-one interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ May be difficult to schedule because of participants' time commitments</li> <li>■ Require skilled focus group leaders</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allow respondents to summarize their thoughts in their own words</li> <li>■ Allow interviewers to gather in-depth information through probing questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Are labor intensive</li> <li>■ May be difficult to schedule because of participants' time commitments</li> </ul>
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Are cost effective</li> <li>■ Require little time to complete</li> <li>■ Solicit feedback from a large portion of the stakeholder population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Require special expertise to design a good survey</li> <li>■ Limit data collected to the survey questions and the structure of the survey</li> <li>■ If online, limit responses to those who have easy access to computers</li> </ul>
Document reviews (e.g., job requirements, college admission requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allow gathering of information without requiring a commitment of time from the stakeholder group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Limit data collected to the resources that can be located</li> <li>■ May not result in data that are fully representative of the group</li> </ul>

## Analyze Results of the Environmental Scan

The purpose of the analysis is to establish priorities for content standards and to ensure that the committee captures the valued skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a variety of adult roles. The analysis also provides information on what resources are available for the initiative and what challenges may be expected. Data analysis can answer the following types of questions:

- Are there similarities and differences within each stakeholder group?
- Are there similarities and differences across stakeholder groups?
- Do responses within each group differ by demographics such as location (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) or by program type (e.g., family or workplace literacy, English language acquisition, or adult secondary education)?

Analyzing results is a two-step process. The analysis will help determine whether individuals within each stakeholder group have similar perspectives and whether perspectives across stakeholder groups are similar. Different perspectives may have implications for developing and implementing the standards.

- **Analyze responses within each group.** A first step in the analysis is to look for trends and issues within each stakeholder group. Determine the frequency of each response to help identify commonalities. If the demographics within stakeholder groups vary, consider stratifying the responses. For example, if local program administrators from different types of programs (e.g., family literacy, workplace literacy, or adult secondary education) respond differently to questions, make note of the differences. Similarly, if instructors from rural and urban areas respond differently to questions, make sure to note the differences.
- **Analyze responses across groups.** The purpose of this step is to determine, for example, if state-level program managers have the same priorities or concerns as local program managers or representatives of higher education.

## Review Research and Standards to Make Decisions

During the planning phase, the coordinating committee will make recommendations and decisions in a number of key areas that will directly affect the development and alignment of standards in the state. Before decisions can be made, the coordinating committee should

- research standards-based education,
- research the content areas, and
- review existing content standards.

Resources should be gathered and a preliminary review conducted to identify which resources are most useful for decision making at the state level. The coordinating committee may want to consider having members review different areas of research, summarize what they find, and report back to the full committee. This will expedite the review process.

### Research Standards-Based Education

Before the coordinating committee reviews the literature, revisit the definitions of content standards, indicators, and performance standards in chapter 1 to ensure that all members are approaching the task with a shared understanding of terms. Using a common language will facilitate communication about standards. A review of the research will help committee members understand the effect that content standards will have on other systems in adult education, such as curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and local program monitoring and accountability. The introduction to this chapter discussed other systems at the state level that also will need to change to support effective implementation of standards, especially professional development.

Much of the research on standards-based education comes from the K–12 system; that research, however, does provide relevant information on the issues involved in standards development and implementation. For example, consider exploring lessons learned in relation to

- gaining stakeholder buy-in and building consensus around the standards,



#### Voices From Research

For an overview of standards-based education with an adult education perspective, read *A User's Guide to Standards-Based Reform: From Theory to Practice* (Stites 1999).



#### Voices From Research

To learn more about the standards development process based on K–12 experiences, consult the following resources:

- *Developing Content Standards: Creating a Process for Change* (CPRE 1993)
- *Raising the Standard: An Eight-Step Guide for Schools and Communities* (Doyle and Pimentel 1999)
- Appendix D for additional references and resources on standards-based education



### Voices From Research

Consult the following sources:

- *Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction* (Kruidenier 2002)
- *Teaching Children to Read* (National Reading Panel 2000)
- *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2000)
- *Standards for the English Language Arts* (National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association 1996)
- *ESL Standards for Pre-K–12 Students* (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages 1997)

- fostering local program ownership of standards,
- determining a manageable number of standards for learners at each level,
- aligning assessments with standards,
- aligning curriculum and instruction with standards,
- building instructors' knowledge and skill, and
- developing performance standards for program improvement and accountability.

### Research the Content Areas

The review and development of standards requires knowing what researchers have identified as the key components and skills for each of the disciplines—reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition (ELA). To ensure that everyone is brought up to speed and that committee members are all on the same page, review recent publications that discuss these content areas. Such a review will help the committee define the core components of each discipline and see how these components relate to the needs of adult learners.

Compare the information found in research to the information gathered during the environmental scan. Consult with subject matter experts who have worked in the K–12 system, teacher development, and adult education. Identify similarities and differences to find trends in the discipline that will help make decisions for developing content standards for adults. In what ways do the state stakeholders and researchers agree on what learners should know and be able to do in content area “X”?

### Research Existing K–12 and Adult Education Standards

Consider conducting a preliminary review of existing national, state K–12, and adult education content standards to determine whether to adopt or adapt other standards or to begin developing new standards within the state. All of the national standards, including K–12 and the National Institute for Literacy's *Equipped for the Future*, were developed through lengthy and rigorous processes with extensive input from researchers, policy makers, administrative leaders, practitioners, business and

industry, higher education, and the general public. Existing state adult education content standards also have had extensive input from stakeholders. Standards from other countries, such as England, Australia, and Canada, are also excellent resources.

The reference section at the end of this chapter and appendix D include sample national and international content standards that the committee can review. Later, the development team will need to conduct a more thorough review of existing standards before the team actually begins to adapt, develop, revise, or write new standards.

The review of standards can be challenging, as standards developers often

- define standards differently,
- base the standards on different approaches to teaching and learning, and
- include different types of supporting materials within their standards document.

Academic and professional organizations involved in standards-based education within the K–12 system have identified criteria for reviewing and developing standards: rigor, specificity, clarity, measurability, comprehensiveness, and manageability. More detailed information on the characteristics of quality standards is provided in chapter 3 and Appendix C, Tools and Templates. These criteria can be used to generate discussion among coordinating committee members as they move through the processes of

- reviewing standards,
- articulating what is important for learners in the state,
- comparing how different standards meet the state’s needs, and
- helping the state make decisions that are based on the reviews.



### Tip

The Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse Web site allows users to retrieve existing content standards documents in math, reading, and ELA or to explore specific content within any set of standards.

Visit the content standards warehouse at:  
<http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/>



### Tip

The standards initiative may take from one to three years, depending on a number of factors, including

- whether the state is adapting standards or developing new standards,
- the extent of the review process, and
- whether the state will conduct a field test of the standards.



### Voices From the Field

“Plan, plan, plan. Have your own plan related to the who, why, where, and how to pay for standards.”

(Mary Ann Jackson, Wisconsin Technical College System Office)

## ***Make Recommendations to the State***

On the basis of the findings of the environmental scan and the review of the literature and existing content standards, the coordinating committee can make recommendations to the state agency about how to proceed with the standards-based initiative and where to focus its efforts. Each recommendation should have supporting documentation in case questions arise. Archiving decisions and processes will be helpful in supporting these recommendations. The state manager on the committee may draft the recommendations with support from other members, as necessary. The state makes the final decision as to the approach for developing standards.

A key recommendation that the coordinating committee must address is whether to adapt existing standards or to have the state develop its own set of standards from scratch. If resources are limited, the coordinating committee might recommend adapting standards rather than embarking on the much lengthier and more complicated process of developing new standards. Whatever recommendation is made, effective implementation of standards always requires a sense of ownership or buy-in from the field.

After reviewing other models, consider whether the approach and framework could be adapted to meet state and local needs. The committee might identify standards with the “potential for adapting” and suggest that practitioners field test them within their programs before making a recommendation for the state. Issues related to field testing are discussed in chapter 4.

## ***Develop an Action Plan***

Once the reviews have been completed and priorities have been established, the coordinating committee is responsible for (1) drafting an action plan for the standards initiative and (2) monitoring progress throughout the development, review, and implementation processes. The action plan serves as a roadmap for the standards initiative. It also allows the state to estimate the time needed for planning, developing, reviewing, and implementing standards.

Developing an action plan requires the coordinating committee to reflect on where the state is in the process, what the committee wants to accomplish, and how it will get there. Developing a plan encourages taking stock of resources and thinking critically

about how resources can be used effectively to achieve goals. The action plan also helps to anticipate potential challenges to reaching those goals and to brainstorm solutions for addressing those challenges so that the process will flow more smoothly.

The dynamics and the amount of time committee members can devote to the task will help the committee decide whether the full committee should work on the action plan or if a smaller subgroup can prepare a draft for consensus within the group. The action plan is a living document and should be reviewed and refined throughout the process. Teams involved in writing, reviewing, and implementing standards should work with the coordinating committee to update and refine the plan. It is a good idea to maintain the plan electronically for the committee to have access to the latest version and to make ongoing revisions.

The action plan has eight elements:

**Goals and objectives** are driven by state-level policies or mandates, stakeholder needs, and research. They should succinctly define what the state intends to accomplish.

**Key action steps** outline how the state will meet the goals and objectives. Key action steps might include

- assessing multiple stakeholders to determine what learners should know and be able to do in mathematics;
- researching essential mathematics skills and processes; and
- reviewing mathematics standards from national groups, K–12, and other adult education programs.

These larger tasks are then broken into smaller subtasks. For example, assessing multiple stakeholders may include (1) identifying stakeholders, (2) developing protocols for gathering information, (3) conducting focus groups of stakeholders, and (4) analyzing information.

**Individuals** must be identified to take the lead in carrying out the action steps to accomplish the goals and objectives. Taking time to clarify who is responsible for each key action step will help move the process forward and allow teams to monitor progress as well as to support one another. Some individuals may be external consultants with whom the state contracts.



### Tip

Include these eight elements in an action plan:

- Identify goals and objectives.
- Determine the key action steps to accomplish objectives.
- Identify individual(s) and resources.
- Set a timeframe for each step.
- Identify potential collaborators and resources.
- Identify projected outcomes.
- Identify facilitating conditions.
- Identify potential challenges and brainstorm potential solutions to overcome obstacles.



### Tip

Remember that the action plan is a working document and will need to be revised over time.



### Voices From the Field

The work group that developed Maryland content standards for adult ESL/ESOL struggled with how to integrate technology and workplace standards with language skills. After much discussion, the state director suggested incorporating existing resources, such as SCANS workplace skills and Maryland's draft technology standards. Thus, even when a stalemate seems to occur, be open to solutions from someone outside the team. (Patricia Bennett, Maryland State Department of Education)

**Timeframes** outline when each action will begin and end. Include timeframes for subtasks as well as for the major tasks. It is also a good idea to post timeframes at committee meetings so that everyone engaged in the standards development and implementation processes knows what is expected.

**Potential collaborators and resources** will provide an idea of who can help in each step of the process and what resources are available or need to be created. Potential collaborators may be members or representatives of local community colleges, local unions, or workforce investment boards. Many decisions and activities are made based on the human and financial resources and supports available. Considering this element helps the committee take stock of what is available and what is required.

**Projected outcomes** indicate what you expect will happen as a result of each step. This planning will help you monitor your action plan and measure your progress.

**Facilitating conditions** are factors that are already available and will help you to reach stated goals. For example, if your state has an active P–16 Council (pre–K through postsecondary council), it might be able to provide support in the development and implementation processes.

**Potential challenges and solutions to obstacles** should be identified early so that contingency strategies can be prepared if difficulties are encountered during the process.

Exhibit 2.7 provides a sample action planning tool and sample task.

**Exhibit 2.7. Sample Action Planning Tool**

Action plans help keep a committee or team focused on the tasks, timelines, and resources. Below is a sample of an action plan.

<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Put systems in place to begin developing standards</li> <li>■</li> </ul> <p><b>Date Developed/Updated:</b> <i>October 2005</i></p>						
<b>Key action steps (with subtasks)</b>	<b>Persons responsible</b>	<b>Potential collaborators and resources</b>	<b>Projected outcomes</b>	<b>Projected timeframe— (start/end dates)</b>	<b>Facilitating conditions</b>	<b>Challenges and solutions</b>
<i>Recruit individuals for the writing team</i>	<i>Coordinating committee  State liaison</i>	<i>Professional networks</i>	<i>15 potential members</i>	<i>October 1–November 30, 2005</i>	<i>Experienced staff in the state</i>	<p><i>Challenge:</i> <i>Time commitments of individuals</i></p> <p><i>Solution:</i> <i>Electronic communication, stipends</i></p>

**Recruit Team Members**

As the coordinating committee develops the action plan and organizes the work, it is important to develop a process for recruiting individuals to participate on the teams that will be developing, reviewing, and implementing standards. Several options are available.

Some states have used a competitive application process to identify individuals for the standards writing team; other states have used an open solicitation through newsletters, electronic mailing lists, professional development events, and word of mouth. Indiana, for example, developed a stakeholder information survey to inform the field and gather names of



### Voices From the Field

Louisiana sought development team members who were certified adult education instructors; who had participated in an adult education study circle; and who had experience in curriculum development in the areas of Adult Basic and Adult Secondary Education, English Literacy/Civics Education, Family Literacy, and Workplace Literacy.

(David Deggs, Louisiana Department of Education)

individuals interested in participating in the standards initiative. That state also developed application forms to solicit participants for its steering committee and development teams. See Appendix C, Tools and Templates, for the applications used by Indiana and for a sample application template that may be modified for use by any team or committee.

Both competitive and open application processes create an awareness of the standards initiative and set up a professional development opportunity for everyone, including those who are new to the state's adult education program. However, open solicitations and competitions take time and effort to organize.

Some states have existing task forces, committees, or work groups that might take on standards development. An advantage of working with established groups is that they usually have experience with larger, complex tasks. In addition, the group members are often respected leaders in the state. Disadvantages are that these groups may not be fully representative of state programs and including them may preclude others from participating. Another alternative is to draw from existing task forces and solicit new members, gaining the benefits of both approaches. This process is less time consuming than starting from scratch and allows the state to hear new voices, expands ownership of the standards, and draws on the expertise of members of other teams at the same time.

Whichever approach the coordinating committee chooses, consider establishing criteria for selecting team members. Consider individuals with diverse perspectives who are willing to work toward a common goal. Include a range of practitioners in the development effort to achieve broad-based support for a set of standards viewed as legitimate. Reach out to all available networks.

With an action plan in hand, the state is now ready to begin the process of actually developing standards. Much of the information gathered by the coordinating committee must be shared with the teams responsible for the development and review of the standards. One or two members of the coordinating committee should participate on the writing team. This participation will ensure continuity as well as an understanding of state policies and priorities, mission, goals, resources, and timeframe for the standards initiative.

## Practice and Application

Consider the following activities to prepare for an environmental scan in your state.

1. Identify stakeholders in your state and draft general questions for the environmental scan.
2. Look at the stakeholders listed in exhibit 2.5. Identify two to three people or agencies from each group whom you can contact for an interview, survey, or focus group.

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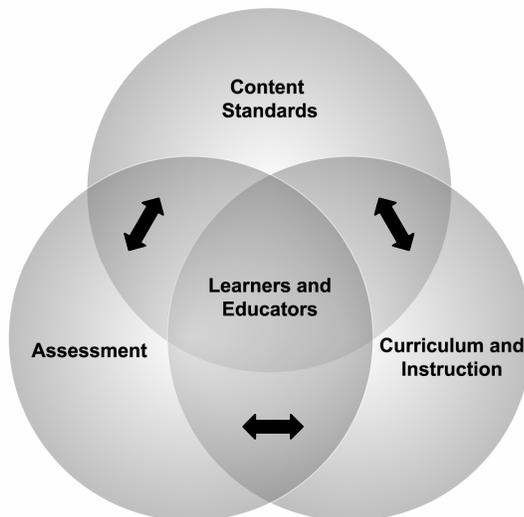
# Chapter 3

## *Developing Standards to Enhance Learner Achievement*

Developing a set of quality content standards can be the most challenging and rewarding part of a state’s education reform initiative. The standards have to set high expectations for all—learners developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, learners with disabilities, learners acquiring English language skills, or learners studying for a high school credential and entry into postsecondary education and employment. The standards have to capture the range of skills and knowledge that adult learners need to carry out multiple responsibilities as members of families, communities, and the workforce.

It is challenging to articulate content standards clearly for the wide range of program types and learners served within the adult education system. Members of the writing team will have to draft standards and outline indicators at each level for adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English language acquisition (ELA). The development process is also rewarding, as the writing team develops the core components of an educational improvement model. The arrows in exhibit 3.1 show how assessment, curriculum and instruction, and content standards have to be aligned and integrated so that educators and learners reach higher outcomes.

**Exhibit 3.1. Model for Standards-Based Education**



### **Chapter 3 at a Glance**

- Organize and Orient the Writing Team
  - Orient the Writing Team
  - Develop an Action Plan for the Writing Team
- Review Existing Standards
  - Crosswalk Standards
- Adapt or Develop Content Standards
- Outline a Framework for the Standards
- Draft Standards
- Align Assessments and Curriculum with Standards
  - Assessment
  - Curriculum and Instruction
- Prepare the Full Standards Document
- Practice and Application
- References

Chapter 3 provides basic guidance for developing standards to strengthen learner achievement. It starts with suggestions for organizing the writing team and orienting its members to the processes and decisions made by the coordinating committee (as outlined in chapter 2) so the team can create a realistic work plan to move forward. This chapter also outlines what should be included in an action plan for the writing team and the process for drafting the standards.

Whether adapting or developing new standards, start with a critical review of existing standards documents to explore the range of possibilities for state content standards. Chapter 3 provides tools and strategies for the writing team to compare documents and review the quality of standards. The examples and exhibits used throughout the chapter are designed to help team members make decisions about the key features of content standards. This chapter also provides suggestions to help the team members make decisions about outlining a framework and approach to organizing the standards and indicators. Throughout the development process, the writing team will need to consider how well curriculum, instruction, and assessment align with the content standards.

The chapter concludes with a checklist to help identify the features that make the full standards document comprehensible and easy to use.

## Organize and Orient the Writing Team

The writing team drafts and develops the standards for each content area.<sup>1</sup> Team membership can range from five to fifteen individuals. The individual selected as team leader will coordinate the writing process, including (1) orienting the team, (2) planning and drafting of standards, (3) making revisions based on reviewers' feedback, and (4) finalizing the full standards document. Ideally, the team leader is someone who also serves on the coordinating committee. Overlap with at least one or two members from the coordinating committee will help ensure that the writing team understands the factors and decisions made previously that have an impact on the development of standards.

Bringing together the right team is essential for standards development. Look for individuals with expertise in the content area(s) and experience in the adult education classroom. Team

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<sup>1</sup> To develop standards in different content areas, the state may have more than one team. For simplicity, this guide will use the singular "team," although a state may have more than one writing team.

members should have an understanding of adult learning from multiple perspectives—those of employers, educators, learners, and community leaders. Team members should also have in-depth knowledge of the state or their local communities. Ideally, the writing team will include individuals who have worked in various capacities and at different instructional levels so they can contribute more broadly to creating a document that effectively serves multiple programs throughout the state. For example, if the state’s adult education delivery system includes colleges, community- or faith-based organizations, and literacy councils, choose practitioners from those various programs to be on the standards writing team. Similarly, look for team members who have experience in workforce development. (See Appendix C, Tools and Templates, for a generic standards team application and a sample application from Indiana.)

The coordinating committee may have already identified a process to select members for the writing team (see chapter 2). As the committee recruits potential team members, consider contacting many people, so everyone has a chance to learn about the scope of work, the timelines, and the challenges before making the decision to join a writing team. Team members should be aware of the iterative nature of standards development work before committing to a writing team.

### ***Orient the Writing Team***

Orientation is the opportunity for the team to take ownership of the writing process. Find a convenient location and a nice workspace, and offer refreshments. Invite a respected leader to welcome the team, set a positive tone for the standards initiative, and create a sense of community. The team leader can guide the writers in developing a set of norms for working as a team and for keeping the writers focused on their charge—developing adult education content standards that

- reflect the needs of adult learners, research, and effective practice;
- guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and
- lead to improved learner outcomes.

Developing standards is a process that should be professionally enriching so that members stay on board and maintain their motivation. Team members will need background information on standards-based education before they begin to review existing



#### **Tip**

When working with diverse groups with strong and different opinions, continually focus on what they share—*helping learners to be successful*.



#### **Voices From Research**

See the Equipped for the Future standard titled “Resolve Conflict and Negotiate” at [http://eff.cis.utk.edu/fundamentals/standard\\_resolve\\_conflict.htm](http://eff.cis.utk.edu/fundamentals/standard_resolve_conflict.htm).

standards, write drafts, provide feedback to others, crosswalk standards for alignment, and make revisions based on the review findings. The process may not be easy, and controversy may emerge because team members bring diverse perspectives.

Team diversity will help ensure that the standards and indicators are appropriate for all learners. Team members need to represent different populations and geographic regions (e.g., urban, suburban, or rural), and they often come from programs with different levels of experience and different access to resources. Everyone on the team needs to recognize that disagreements are inevitable, as the writers bring different perspectives on teaching and learning. They may not immediately agree on matters of content, level of difficulty, presentation, and degree of detail. They may disagree on how well their instruction and assessment practices align with the content standards, and they may fear the change that results from a shift to standards-based education. Negotiating through the conflicts and working toward consensus may take time, but the result will be a better set of standards that can be supported by everyone who participated in the process.

Strategies to help keep the team moving forward include the following:

- Negotiate the tasks, responsibilities, and realistic timelines in a development plan.
- Promote standards as a professional development project (e.g., provide opportunities for team members to be “in the spotlight” at state, regional, and local events; arrange credit for professional development or credentials; and note the value of being published).
- Encourage the use of electronic technologies for document sharing so that team members can work from a distance, communicate frequently, and develop new skills.
- Recognize time and financial needs by offering paid release time, providing substitute coverage, and paying for travel.
- Recognize individual strengths and promote team cohesion.

As the team works through different stages and works toward agreement, the members will be strengthening their capacities as educators. Encourage team members to talk with other practitioners about the standards and their work and to gather feedback from peers. Ideally, some writing team members will



**Tip**

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”  
(Henry Ford)

participate in the review of the draft standards (see chapter 4) and in provision of professional development for implementation (see chapter 5).

### ***Develop an Action Plan for the Writing Team***

Keep the state’s vision statement and strategic plan in mind when developing an action plan that will guide the work of the writing team. The development process is not always linear, nor is it something that the state can initiate without extensive planning. The coordinating committee may have made recommendations that will structure the work of the writing team with regard to content and process. For example, consider the following recommendations for content and process:

#### **Content**

- what stakeholders think learners should know and be able to do within a specific content area

#### **Process**

- federal and state initiatives, policies, and plans that will influence the standards initiative
- timelines
- resource availability
- decisions to adapt existing standards or develop new ones

Exhibit 3.2 illustrates the key steps for developing state content standards.

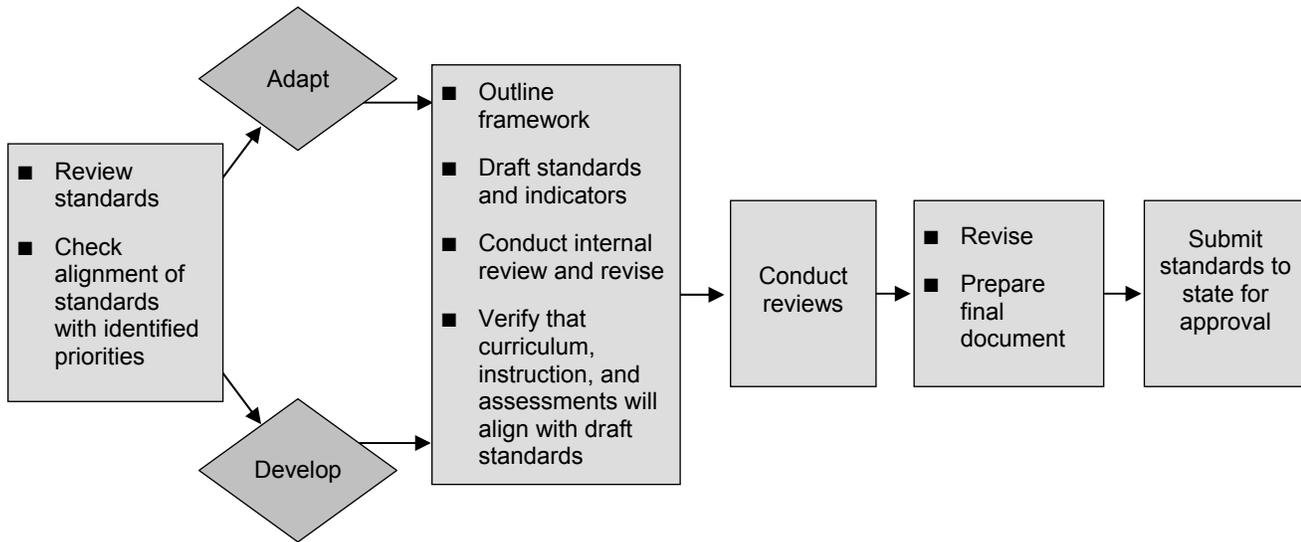


#### **Tip**

Be sure to document all decisions and actions taken during development of content standards. Careful documentation (e.g., agendas and meeting minutes, reviews, drafts, and feedback) will help the team stay on task and help orient new team members once the process is under way.

Documentation is necessary if any part of the standards-based system is ever challenged. The archive is also a historical record that might inform future projects.

**Exhibit 3.2. Steps for Developing Content Standards**



Drafting standards and indicators is a lengthy process that might take up to a year or more. Some states have been successful in drafting standards and indicators by meeting intensely for one or two weeks during instructional breaks, while other states have held monthly team meetings followed by individual or small teams writing one level or one skill (e.g., beginning basic ABE or ELA listening). Writing teams in Virginia and Missouri have used Web-based platforms for drafting standards and indicators. In other states, team members use e-mail extensively for sharing their drafts.



**Voices From Research**

Research into the background of each subject area will help standards developers see how standards are organized and articulated. Be sensitive to the ‘sticky points’ but don’t let that hinder innovation as you develop standards that meet the needs and context of adult learners’ lives.  
(Consortium for Policy Research in Education 1993)

**Review Existing Standards**

The coordinating committee may have conducted a preliminary review of standards and made recommendations to adapt or develop standards. The writing team needs to build on the coordinating committee’s review with a more extensive review of existing standards. Many of the national, K–12, high school completion, and adult education content standards were developed through processes that included extensive input by stakeholders and expert consultants. Existing standards documents can be valuable resources for the writing team. Review national and state standards to get a sense of the variety, depth, and quality of different documents.

### Sample National Standards and Education Models

- Equipped for the Future (EFF)
- American Diploma Project (ADP)
- Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
- National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA)
- Teachers of English to Speaker of Other Languages (TESOL)

### Types of State Standards

- Pre-K–12 standards
- State adult education content standards

Other practitioners from local programs—teachers and instructional leaders—can also participate in the review of existing standards. This more inclusive approach might take longer, but it will help promote buy-in among local program staff from the beginning of the initiative. Reviewers should look at each set of standards with a critical eye to assess how effectively they meet the criteria for quality standards and contexts for learners served within the state’s adult education delivery system.

Using common criteria will help generate discussion among team members and help the state make informed decisions that will shape the standards to be developed or adapted. Criteria checklists not only help focus the reviews, but also become part of the “archive” of information used for making decisions. Exhibit 3.3 describes the essential features to consider when reviewing different documents.



### Voices From Research

#### Review Standards

- Web links to state standards, prepared by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2003): <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/StateContentStandards.pdf>
- Searchable database of K–12 content standards, prepared by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (n.d.): <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>
- Searchable database of adult content standards in the Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse: <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/>

### Exhibit 3.3. Criteria for Quality Standards

Consider the criteria and look for specific qualities when reviewing standards documents.

Criteria	Description
Rigorous	<p>Rigorous standards contain the essential concepts, skills, and sophisticated learning that will allow learners to meet the demands of the 21st century.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ higher order skills, and</li> <li>■ high expectations for all learners.</li> </ul>
Specific	<p>To guide instruction and the development of curriculum and assessment, the standards must provide a strong sense of what learners and teachers are expected to do.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ sufficient contextual detail, and</li> <li>■ enough specificity to assure a common understanding of the expectations at each level.</li> </ul>
Comprehensive and Coherent	<p>A comprehensive set of standards reflects current research and a balanced focus on the knowledge and skills essential to the content area.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a clear progression of skills with increasing levels of difficulty, and</li> <li>■ gaps or missing skills and strategies.</li> </ul>
Clear and Intelligible	<p>For content standards to be meaningful to learners, teachers, and the general public, they have to be clearly written.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ straightforward messages about what learners should know and be able to do, and</li> <li>■ language that is free of jargon and bias.</li> </ul>
Measurable	<p>Content standards have to communicate the same message to multiple readers about what learners know and are able to do.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ sufficient details to provide clear expectations at different levels, and</li> <li>■ indicators that can be measured.</li> </ul>
Manageable	<p>Manageability refers to both the quantity and presentation of the standards.</p> <p><i>Look for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a realistic number of standards and indicators to teach and learn within the time constraints of the adult education system, and</li> <li>■ documents organized in user-friendly format for all stakeholders.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from American Federation of Teachers 2003, Council of Chief State School Officers 2004, Doyle and Pimentel 1999, and StandardsWork n.d.

As individuals and groups review different documents, ask them to consider the following questions:

1. *How well do the standards meet the suggested criteria for quality standards? How well do they meet the diverse needs within the state?*

Review the standards in terms of their rigor, specificity, comprehensiveness, clarity, measurability, and manageability. Some members of the committee might argue that standards should be more broadly stated to allow for different curriculum designs and diverse teaching approaches. Other members might argue that broad standards are subject to multiple interpretations and are, therefore, difficult to assess. Both sides have a point. Teams need to strike the right balance. (See exhibit 3.3 and Criteria for Reviewing Content Standards in Appendix C, Tools and Templates.)

2. *What guiding principles were used to develop the standards? And how well do the standards align with the state's approach to teaching and learning?*

Standards are usually developed with some fundamental beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. The approach a state endorses influences how the content standards are developed and organized. For example, some programs may be more familiar with an *academic* or *skills-based* approach, whereas other programs may be comfortable with a *life skills* approach or a *participatory, learner-centered* approach. The approach selected by the state will have a direct impact on how the standards will be developed and aligned with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

3. *How are the standards organized and presented? What features would the writing team like to incorporate in the state standards document?*

Early in the process, the state needs to make decisions about how to organize the content standards and the full document. Most states strive for consistency across content areas by using the same guiding principles, definitions, terminology, and category headings for each subject area. Reviewers should look for other features in existing sets of standards that will help create a user-friendly document for programs statewide. For example, documents might include glossaries, curriculum and assessment strategies, and learner profiles or vignettes that show how educators have integrated the standards within their practice. State and national



### Voices From Research

*Focus on Basics: Curriculum Development* has several articles that address different approaches to curriculum that might influence how states frame their standards.

(National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy 2003; *Focus on Basics*, Volume 6, Issue C, September 2003, <http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=153>)



### Tip

When reviewing other standards, consider tabbing, highlighting, and noting how the standards are applicable for adult learners in your state. Identify features to adapt or include in your state document.



### Tip

Assigning codes (i.e., alphabetic or numeric system) for the standards and indicators is helpful when crosswalking standards. For example, the American Diploma Project uses letters for strands and numbers for benchmarks. In the English content area, the code “C1” indicates the writing strand (C) and the benchmark (1), “plan writing by taking notes, writing informal outlines, and researching.”

associations also offer supplementary support materials and links on their Web sites.

The Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter begins with an activity that helps the team members identify the criteria to use as they prepare to draft quality standards. The second activity provides an opportunity to explore the standards from two states to identify how they are similar and how they are different.

## Crosswalk Standards

Crosswalking—also known as content mapping—is a strategy the writing team can use to review standards. Crosswalks can be used to compare the content of two documents in a side-by-side table or to compare several documents in a matrix. Crosswalks show connections between documents or systems for the purpose of further discussion and exploration. For this reason, simple crosswalks can be used for identifying the suitability of existing standards for adaptation. Crosswalks can also be used to compare content standards to curriculum, assessment content, or external certification standards.

Crosswalking will take time, but when adapting standards the process can help the writing team begin to

- identify items that require only minor adaptations for adult contexts,
- identify significant gaps that need to be addressed and skills that can be eliminated within adult education contexts, and
- prioritize standards and indicators.

The CASAS National Consortium Content Standards Project developed a crosswalk to illustrate how adult reading standards can be developed across National Reporting System (NRS) educational functioning levels for ABE, ASE, and ESL, as shown in exhibit 3.4.

Crosswalks can be made more sophisticated by adding criteria to assess how well assessments or curricula align with the content standards. Exhibit 3.5 shows how Massachusetts used a crosswalk to assess how effectively a standardized ESL test aligned with the learning standards.

**Exhibit 3.4. CASAS Crosswalk for Reading Comprehension Skills (January 2005 Version)**

The crosswalk below illustrates sample reading comprehension standards by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for ESL, ABE, and ASE.

READING SAMPLE Basic skill content standards with level correlations for ESL, ABE, and ASE	ESL						ABE				ASE		
	1	2	2a	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>R3 General reading comprehension</b>													
<b>R3.2</b> Read basic sight words (e.g., <i>exit</i> , simple words such as <i>the</i> , <i>is</i> )	•	•						•					
<b>R3.9</b> Read and understand simple texts on familiar topics (e.g., short narratives, basic consumer materials)			•					•					
<b>R3.13</b> Read and understand moderately complex texts (e.g., general informational materials, common workplace materials)				•	•				•	•			
<b>R3.17</b> Use contextual clues to interpret text (e.g., signal words, <i>but</i> , <i>first</i> , ... <i>then</i> , <i>unfortunately</i> )						•					•		
<b>R3.18</b> Interpret figurative and idiomatic meanings of words in context.						•	•				•	•	

**Exhibit 3.5. Massachusetts Crosswalk to Determine Skills Measured on Standardized ESL Tests**

The exhibit below is a sample crosswalk showing the alignment of the Massachusetts learning standards with items from the Basic English Skills Test (BEST).

**Key:**

*W* = test item measures the standard WELL

*M* = test item measures the standard MODERATELY WELL

*I* = test item measures the standard INDIRECTLY (i.e., test item is intended to measure something else, but in so doing, measures this learning standard as well)

STRAND	STANDARD	BEST Core Section Sample Listening and Speaking
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>	Second language learners will demonstrate the ability to ...	
	Express themselves orally in English in a variety of contexts for social, functional and self-expressive purposes	<b>17 W</b> 8 “social” (#1–7, 11) 6 “self expressive” (#8, 12, 39, 41, 44) 3 “functional” (#17, 2, 24)
	Use strategies to clarify understanding	<b>1 W</b> (#43), <b>1 M</b> (#18)

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education 2001.



### Voices From the Field

One of Louisiana's early tasks was to review the K–12 standards and develop an initial draft for its adult standards. Staff started by identifying elements in the state's K–12 standards that they liked and then used scissors, tape, paper, and glue to create a draft. State office staff typed up the *standards collage*, which became the first working draft.

(David Deggs, Louisiana Department of Education)



### Voices From the Field

Visit <https://www.casas.org/home/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showContent&MapID=1720> for more information on the CASAS National Consortium Content Standards Project.

## Adapt or Develop Content Standards

The recommendations from the coordinating committee and the findings from the review of existing materials will help the team make decisions about its approach to standards development.

Standards do not have to be developed from scratch, as there are good models to guide the state. The writing team may be charged with adapting K–12 standards or an existing set of adult education standards. And adapting another set of standards may be a more efficient approach. Start by reviewing the potential standards and identifying how well the standards and indicators reflect the knowledge and skills that stakeholders have identified as necessary for adults in the state.

**Adapting K–12 state standards.** Several states have successfully adapted K–12 standards by using the same organizing structure and format and then fine-tuning the language and examples used in the standards. In Louisiana, state adult education staff and the writing team emulated the K–12 standards, where appropriate, to adapt standards to reflect the needs of adult learners in the state. The adapted standards were reviewed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and shared in public sessions before they were submitted for approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

If adapting K–12 standards, the team can use the characteristics of quality standards to focus on revising the language, contexts, and levels as necessary for adult education. Remember that K–12 standards are developed for use with full-time students who attend school over a span of years. Adult education programs will have to prioritize the essential standards for each ABE and ESL level, and they may decide to create a set of standards that focus more on skills development than on content knowledge as required in many K–12 standards. However, it is important for adult education standards to cover both content knowledge and skills, especially for learners preparing to take the General Educational Development (GED) test, which requires knowledge in science, mathematics, and social studies.

**Adapting K–12 national standards.** Standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association, or Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, for example, were developed as models to be adapted for use at the state level (NCTM 2000; NCTE and IRA 1996; TESOL 1997). These standards represent a broad consensus of what is important for

learners to know and be able to do within a specific content area, so they can guide adult educators in outlining the content of a particular discipline. Some of the national standards are broadly stated or provide examples that are very K–12 centered, so state teams need to use a critical eye when adapting these standards for adult education programs.

Other national models, including the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the more recent American Diploma Project (ADP), focus on the knowledge and skills that high school learners need for entry into employment, postsecondary education, and training (U.S. Department of Labor 1991; American Diploma Project n.d.). ADP and SCANS models include many of the same skills that adults need, so these documents can be informative for adapting standards that will prepare adult learners for success in the workforce and for entry into postsecondary education and training.

**Adapting existing adult education content standards.** Several states have reviewed existing state and national adult education content standards and decided that the existing documents are sufficiently similar to the needs identified by their learners and other stakeholders. Both the EFF and the CASAS models were developed specifically for adult learners. The EFF standards (published in 2000) focus on the knowledge and skills adults need to carry out their roles successfully as parents and family members, citizens and community members, and workers. Ohio adopted the EFF model in 2001, and writing teams developed benchmarks for reading, mathematics, writing, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) at the six NRS educational functioning levels. The CASAS National Consortium Content Standards Project (2005) has developed basic skills standards that can be integrated within a competency-based approach.

**Developing new standards.** If the state decides to develop its own adult education content standards, the writing team can use models from other states and the criteria for quality standards to guide the team. Start by creating a vision and a shared understanding for the standards and by using the information gathered from stakeholder groups to outline the skills and strategies learners need for success (as described in chapter 2).



### Tip

Look at the following:

- The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has expectations in different grade clusters (<http://www.nctm.org>).
- The American Diploma Project has benchmarks for transitioning to postsecondary education and employment training (<http://www.achieve.org>).
- Equipped for the Future offers 16 standards for adult learners ([http://eff.cls.utk.edu/fundamentals/16\\_standards.htm](http://eff.cls.utk.edu/fundamentals/16_standards.htm)).



### Voices From the Field

Visit <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=2&Content=13171> to see how the Ohio Department of Education developed benchmarks and then crosswalked the new standards and benchmarks with the state’s previous competencies.

## Outline a Framework for the Standards

Early in the process, each state needs to make decisions about how the standards will be organized. Strive for consistency across content areas by using the same guiding principles, definitions, terminology, and category headings. Using a similar framework across content areas will help keep the writing team focused when drafting the standards. If adapting K–12 standards, the state may specify that adult educators use the same framework, categories, and terminology. Or the writing team might choose to adapt a framework used in another national or state document. Regardless of approach, the information gleaned from the previous reviews can help the team members determine how best to organize their adult education standards.

The writing team in Massachusetts made a conscious decision to use the terminology from the K–12 curriculum frameworks and to organize the learning standards by levels and by strands. The writing team was responsible for drafting the expectations and enabling knowledge and skills as well as identifying the real-life contexts for learners to apply their skills.

Exhibit 3.6 shows how the Massachusetts ABE Mathematics and Numeracy Curriculum Framework is organized.

### Exhibit 3.6. *Massachusetts ABE Mathematics and Numeracy Curriculum Framework*

**Key to reading the Massachusetts framework:**

**Top line:** Learning standard

**Left column:** Expectations for each level

**Middle column:** Enabling knowledge and skills

**Right column:** Examples where learners apply their knowledge and skills

<b>Level 2: Beginning Adult Basic Education Mathematics</b>		
<b>Strand: Statistics and Probability</b>		
<b>Learning Standard: Read and Interpret Data Representations</b>		
<i>At this level, an adult will be expected to:</i>	<i>Enabling knowledge and skills:</i>	<i>Examples where adults use the knowledge and skills:</i>
Identify graphs in available resources	Demonstrate an understanding that a graph is a visual representation	Reading newspapers and magazines
Extract simple information from a list or table	Demonstrate an understanding that tables are arranged in rows and columns; lists can be ordered differently	Using yellow pages Checking an item against a stock list

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education 2001.

Writing teams may want to review other frameworks to identify what will work best for the state. One of the first tasks will be deciding how to categorize the standards and indicators and how to design a logical framework. The following table outlines the reading categories used by CASAS.

<b>CASAS Reading Skill Categories</b>
R1. Applying principles of phonics
R2. Recognizing word structure
R3. General reading comprehension
R4. Interpreting text in format
R5. Using reference materials
R6. Using reading strategies
R7. Using reading and thinking skills
R8. Academic-oriented skills
R9. Literary analysis

Another model, from West Virginia, does not use the terms standards and indicators in the state framework, but the system does include instructional goals and objectives (IGOs) for all programs across the state. The ABE reading IGOs are organized into four areas: phonemic awareness/word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Each IGO has an alphanumeric code related to proficiency descriptors and checklists for classroom assessment. The chart that follows illustrates how the IGOs were coded for monitoring learner progress and includes a box for instructors to note the date on which the learner has demonstrated each skill.

West Virginia ABE Reading—Beginning Literacy R.1 Phonemic Awareness/Word Analysis		Date & Initial
1.1.1	Recognize the concepts of print (left to right, top to bottom, front to back, return sweep).	
1.1.2	Recognize upper- and lower-case manuscript letters of the alphabet and their sounds.	
1.1.3	Identify words with the same consonants/sounds in initial word positions (e.g., <i>car, cow, cat</i> ).	
1.1.4	Manipulate initial sounds to recognize, create, and use rhyming words (e.g., <i>may, say, ray</i> ).	
1.1.5	Identify single consonants/sounds in initial, medial, and final word positions.	
1.1.6	Identify short and long vowels and their sounds.	
1.1.7	Use short vowel sounds to decode one-syllable words.	
1.1.8	Identify “r-controlled” vowel sounds (e.g., <i>ur, ar, ir</i> ).	
1.1.9	Identify two-letter consonant blends in initial and final word positions (e.g., <i>br-, sp-, cl-, -nd, -sk</i> ) and use these to decode one-syllable words.	
1.1.10	Identify two-letter consonant digraphs in initial and final word positions (e.g., <i>ch, sh, th, wh</i> ) and use these to decode one syllable words.	

Source: West Virginia Department of Education 2001.

Finally, two different state frameworks for ELA reading standards and indicators are shown in exhibit 3.7. Note how Arizona started with a broad standard statement and then developed *indicators* and specific *proficiency standards*. Maryland, in contrast, started with a general *proficiency descriptor for each level*, followed by specific language skills. Although the presentations are different, the actual skills included in both sets of standards are quite similar.

There is no single way to design a framework for standards. Some states will use existing models, and others will create adaptations or new models. The Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter provides an opportunity for team members to brainstorm ideas for determining how to organize and format their standards (#3).

**Exhibit 3.7. Comparing ELA Reading Standards from Two States**

*Note how Arizona’s ELAA II and Maryland’s Intermediate Reading levels are organized differently, but they both include similar skills for low intermediate ESL.*

<p align="center"><b>Arizona ELAA (English Language Acquisition for Adults)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Maryland ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)</b></p>
<p align="center"><i>ELAA II</i></p>	<p align="center"><i>Intermediate Reading</i></p>
<p><b>Standard:</b></p> <p>The adult English learner comprehends and communicates in written and spoken English for a variety of purposes.</p>	<p><b>Proficiency Descriptor (at entry):</b></p> <p>Learners can read simple materials in familiar contexts. Learners can comprehend sentences and paragraphs when vocabulary is controlled.</p>
<p><b>Sample Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reads the vocabulary related to the functions in this and all previous levels (Note: functions are clearly stated).</li> <li>■ Reads simplified materials for information.</li> <li>■ Readily reads with young children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sample Skill Standards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Apply simple context clues to determine meaning of new words.</li> <li>■ Recognize most standard words on a personal information form (e.g., employment history, education, references).</li> <li>■ Locate a word, number, or item in alphabetical or numerical order (e.g., phone book, dictionary, directory, index).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Met Proficiency Standard:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uses dictionary to find meaning or spelling of a word.</li> <li>2. Often identifies base words that comprise compound words and contractions.</li> <li>3. Reads short (5–7 sentences), simple stories on familiar topics and responds to factual comprehension questions.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Comprehend simple and compound sentences in authentic materials (e.g., brochures, job announcements).</li> <li>■ Identify the main idea, chronological order, and simple transitions in texts on familiar subjects.</li> </ul>

*Source:* Arizona Department of Education 2004 and Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center at UMBC 2003.



**Voices From Research**

“Decisions about the level of detail and specificity are important. Is it broad enough to allow for many different curriculum designs? Yet, if standards are too broad they are susceptible to multiple interpretations and may lose their potential to promote high quality instruction aligned with policy.”  
 (Consortium for Policy Research in Education 1993, 5)



**Voices From Research**

“Ideally the most highly ranked content standards would focus on truly significant and teachable skills such as a student’s ability to write a powerful, persuasive essay. . .”  
 (Popham 2001, 13–14)

## Draft Standards

Some fundamental questions need to be answered before the writing team begins to draft standards. Should the standards be general, broad statements that become specific through indicators? Or should the standards themselves be specific and measurable? There is no single correct answer. Many national and state content standards start with general statements that represent broader concepts and then use indicators for specific skills and levels. Keeping the standards general gives local programs more flexibility for curriculum development.

As discussed previously, one way to decide what to include is to start with a research or literature review in the content area. Another way is to consult with subject matter experts and practitioners in the field. An approach that combines research, expert opinion, and practitioner wisdom will ultimately lead to standards and indicators that are valid and accepted by practitioners.

A word of caution: When educators brainstorm what learners should know and be able to do, they often create massive lists. When there are too many standards or indicators, learners cannot possibly meet them all. The writing team needs to determine what it is reasonable to hold learners accountable to learn and what it is reasonable to hold teachers accountable to teach.

**Prioritizing.** Another approach for making decisions about what to include (Popham 2001) is for individual team members to first prioritize the standards on a simple scale such as the following:

Potential standard	Not absolutely necessary	Desirable	Essential
1.1			
1.2			

Later, the team convenes to compare the ratings for each standard. Standards generally rated *not absolutely necessary* are eliminated, and those generally rated *essential* are kept. The team can set “cut points” for the standards rated differently in each column, and then discuss them individually. For example, the team can rank the desirable standards again on a continuum from *most important* to *least important*. Ranking might reveal that standards originally rated as desirable may not be necessary, whereas other standards

rated as desirable may really be essential for determining learner progress.

The same set of steps would be used to prioritize and rank indicators at each level:

Indicators	Not absolutely necessary	Desirable	Essential
1.2.1			
1.2.2			
1.2.3			

A state might decide to include many indicators, but only hold learners accountable for demonstrating mastery of indicators that are marked “required” and can be measured through standardized tests. Another strategy is to hold learners accountable for demonstrating mastery of a specified number of indicators within a level. As learners progress, they may be held accountable for more indicators per level. Teachers and learners would maintain the flexibility to negotiate which specific indicators will help individual learners meet their goals and learning plans.

**Showing the progression of skills across levels.** Some state documents use broad, generally stated content standards followed by indicators or benchmarks to exemplify the expectations for each level. As learners move from level to level, the expectations become progressively more complex. Ohio, for example, adopted the EFF standards and then developed benchmarks in reading, mathematics, writing, and ESOL on a performance continuum. The following outline shows how Ohio’s ESOL Speaking Benchmarks become progressively more difficult:



**Tip**

Visit Equipped for the Future at <http://eff.cls.utk.edu>. Click on the Assessment Resource Collection (ARC) button and then select “ARC library” to see how the EFF content standards have been developed into indicators, with examples of performance at each level.

Ohio	Sample Benchmarks for ESOL Speaking
Levels	<i>Communicate using ...</i>
1	basic, emergency, and survival words, memorized phrases, and basic sentences
2	simple phrases and sentences with simple vocabulary
3	sentences on simple topics
4	information on topics from various sources
5	simple information on complex topics
6	information from various sources on complex topics

*Source:* Ohio Department of Education n.d. (ESOL).

Developing the continuum of skills is not always an easy process. One strategy for leveling skills and knowledge is *backward mapping* (Doyle and Pimentel 1999). In backward mapping, the team starts with the highest level of what an advanced ABE, ASE, or ELA learner needs to know and be able to do within a content area. Once the advanced level is outlined, the team works backwards to map out a logical sequence of indicators for the intermediate level. Then the team maps backward from the intermediate to beginner level.

Most states have level indicators—NRS level descriptors or their own state levels, for example—but a few states have consciously decided not to include levels because there is no consensus in the state or because practitioners believe skills develop on a continuum that does not necessarily correspond to instructional levels. In states that have not assigned levels, a concern exists that inexperienced instructors may require more guidance to determine the level of complexity for instructional materials and tasks. Without clear “level” expectations, it is extremely difficult to fairly and accurately monitor progress and determine advancement.

**Reviewing the drafts internally.** As the team is drafting the content standards, it might also want to review the drafts continually within the team. Internal reviews can be informal discussions or they can be written and shared electronically.

The writing team might go through the discussion and feedback process several times. Early in the drafting process, members may also want to share initial drafts with the coordinating committee to be assured they agree with the committee’s recommendations. For each round of draft and internal review, team members should

- keep the criteria for quality standards on hand,
- look for consistency within each level, and
- consider the progression of knowledge and skills from level to level.

Internal reviewers can ask clarification questions and make suggestions that will lead to stronger standards. For example, reviewers might note language that is unclear or an indicator they consider to be biased. Team members might also suggest ways to contextualize the standards so that they are more specific and measurable. Reviewers should look for standards that include higher order skills and that focus on knowledge and skills rather than learning processes. And team members will want to ensure that the draft standards and indicators capture the essential skills and show a clear progression from level to level.

During this internal team review, some standards might be added, eliminated, or moved to another level. Reviewers should state their comments and suggestions as clearly as possible. Feedback is then returned to the writers to make revisions that will strengthen the standards. Ideally, team members will work together to decide how to incorporate the feedback and suggestions. Exhibit 3.8 shows three draft standards, discussion notes from other team members, and the revisions that were made based on the feedback.

The writing team does not need to develop *all* the standards and indicators before seeking feedback from peers. Teachers on the writing team can informally share ideas within their programs to get more ideas and to clarify difficult choices, such as level appropriateness and the specificity for adult contexts. However, do not circulate the drafts widely and leave them open to criticism before they have been reviewed and revised within the team.



### Tip

Focus on demonstrable skills with verbs such as *demonstrate*, *explain*, or *solve*. Avoid learning process verbs such as *explore*, *begin*, or *participate*.

**Exhibit 3.8. Revising Standards and Indicators within the Team**

*Team members reviewed first drafts and provided feedback, which was incorporated in the revisions.*

<b>Adult Secondary Education Level</b>		
<b>First draft ⇨</b>	<b>Discussion and feedback ⇨</b>	<b>Revision</b>
Select and read books by contemporary American authors.	<p><i>Neither specific nor rigorous.</i></p> <p>(a) Will the learners select books representing different genres and writing styles, and at the right level of difficulty?</p> <p>(b) Specify how we will know they read and understand the books.</p>	Select three texts drawn from the “state GED” reading list, and compare the authors’ main messages and the relevance of the texts within contemporary life.
<b>Beginner Level Mathematics</b>		
<b>First draft ⇨</b>	<b>Discussion and feedback ⇨</b>	<b>Revision</b>
Use operations and number sense to compute and solve problems.	<p><i>Not measurable.</i></p> <p>(a) What operations and computations are required?</p> <p>(b) To be measurable, we would need to see a sample problem.</p>	Calculate tips, sales tax, commissions, and percentage increases and decreases.
<b>Low Intermediate ELA Writing</b>		
<b>First draft ⇨</b>	<b>Discussion and feedback ⇨</b>	<b>Revision</b>
Write short paragraphs on familiar topics.	<p><i>Not specific.</i></p> <p>(a) What is short?</p> <p>(b) Statement is too abstract and open to multiple interpretations.</p>	Write about personal experiences with a clear focus, ideas in sensible order, and sufficient supporting detail.

The process of (1) drafting, (2) reviewing, and (3) revising is likely to be repeated several times within the team. After the writing team has finished its internal reviews and revisions, the standards will go through several external reviews to ensure that they are valid and can be implemented across the various program types in the state. Chapter 4 provides more information about the external review process. Depending on the type of recommendations and corresponding revisions, another round of reviews might be necessary before the coordinating committee accepts the standards and submits the document to the state for adoption.

## Align Assessments and Curriculum with Standards

The standards and indicators are only one part of an integrated model for standards-based program improvement. They can be well developed and powerful, but they cannot lead to change without other changes within the adult education system. As part of the development process, the writing team also needs to consider how the assessments will align with the content standards and how current curricula and instructional practices can be aligned with the high expectations generated by the standards.

### Assessment

A comprehensive approach to assessment, which includes a range of assessment instruments, with both nationally standardized tests and alternative or authentic assessments, is designed to meet (1) the need for external accountability and reporting and (2) the need for teachers and learners to monitor progress and plan instruction (Ananda 2000). The following section provides general information on two types of assessment for adult programs: standardized tests and progress monitoring.

**Standardized tests** are important for comparing student data across programs within a state and across the nation. They allow for a comparison of a student's performance with the performance of other students. States use standardized test scores to determine level advancement for the NRS. States also use comparison data for making decisions related to program improvement, identifying promising practices in the field, planning professional development, and, more recently, determining performance-based funding.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Note: Federal funding to the states is based on a complex formula and is not solely based on performance.



### Voices From Research

Metaphors can help illustrate the three core components of standards-based education. Content standards can be seen as

- flags that represent shared beliefs about what learners should know and be able to do;
- rulers to measure learner progress; and
- maps to guide curriculum and instruction.

(Sandrock 1997)



**Voices From the Field**

Visit the Ohio Department of Education Web site at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=966&Content=13630> to view the alignment of standards and associated worksheets.

Visit the Council of Chief State School Officers Web site at <http://www.ccsso.org> and search under “aligning” and “standards and assessments” for research monographs on alignment and for tools to use in aligning instruction and assessments with standards.

When the tests and standards are aligned, the information from standardized tests is valuable. However, when assessments and outcomes are not aligned with the standards and curricula, the data that are reported and compared may not provide a full, fair, and accurate assessment of how well students and programs are performing.

To find out whether standardized tests align with the state standards, the state may create a crosswalk table to compare the standards with test items to identify where there is similarity or disparity. The following table shows a sample crosswalk that Ohio’s adult education staff used to determine whether the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Forms 9 and 10, included items corresponding to Ohio’s reading benchmarks.

**Abbreviated Sample Reading Standards and TABE 9 and 10**

Level 2: Beginning ABE	TABE Survey Plus, Level E	
	Form 9	Form 10
2.2.3. Use decoding skills ... to read.	1	
2.2.6. Use context clues ... to read texts.	2, 10, 17, 22, 23	1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 18

Source: Ohio Department of Education n.d. (TABE).

Note that the TABE Level E test was not designed for beginning level readers and, therefore, includes only one item that focuses on basic decoding skills.

Comparison tables might reveal gaps in the tests or gaps in the standards. For example, staff in Arizona realized that their draft ELA writing standards did not include punctuation, so they added a standard that had been previously overlooked by the writing team. When crosswalking the tests and standards, consider the following questions:

- To what extent does the test address the range of knowledge and skills in the content standards?
- What is included in the test, but is not included in the state standards?
- What standards are not measured by the test?

Keep in mind that standardized tests only sample student performance, so the state may have standards that are not measured by state-approved tests. In adult education, standardized tests are often given after 60+ hours, at the end of a term, or when learners “exit” the program. Thus, test results may not always be available to use in a timely manner to help students learn better while they are still in class.

**Progress monitoring** helps teachers and learners make better decisions about the type of instruction that will work best for a given student or class (National Center on Student Progress Monitoring). Regular monitoring allows learners to see their progress in meeting standards. Furthermore, if learners are making progress on the standards, they should also be making gains on standardized tests that measure skill proficiency.

Several state adult education programs have designed comprehensive, integrated assessment systems with standardized tests for accountability and locally developed assessments for monitoring progress. For example, Arizona has created proficiency standards for the standards at each level so teachers can gauge learners’ progress and determine when learners are ready for the standardized tests. Ohio has a uniform portfolio assessment system for teachers to document learners’ progress on the standards throughout an instructional cycle.

## ***Curriculum and Instruction***

Earlier in this chapter, crosswalks were suggested for reviewing and comparing existing standards to identify similarities and gaps in the documents. An alignment crosswalk can help the writing team assess the extent to which the current curricula and instructional materials align with the draft content standards. The writing team can use the same process to crosswalk current curriculum content, textbooks, teacher-made activities, and resources with the draft content standards. When crosswalking curricula and standards, consider the following questions:

- How well does the current curriculum address the knowledge and skills described in the standards?
- What changes could be made in the draft content standards and indicators to address any content or skill gaps? To address discrepancies with the levels?
- How can curriculum be adapted or developed to address the new standards?



### **Voices From Research**

“New models for curriculum planning and development look much different from the lesson plan formats and scope-and-sequence documents traditionally used. The task is to find or design a model that informs, drives, and enables the attainment of high standards by all students. . . .”  
(NCREL 2000, 8)

Exhibit 3.9 is a sample tool that can be used to identify what curriculum and resources currently exist and what new curriculum and supporting resources may be necessary.

Considering the alignment of curriculum during the development and internal review of the draft standards will provide useful information for the field test review (see chapter 4). The findings of a curriculum crosswalk can also help identify resources and professional development that local program staff will need to prepare for implementation (see chapter 5).

### Prepare the Full Standards Document

State agencies often have publication guidelines that must be followed as well as formats that are recommended for all standards within the state. Sometimes, adult education offices will use the same title that is used in the K–12 system (e.g., *Curriculum Framework* or *Resource Guide*). Other states simply use *Adult Education Content Standards*. Regardless of the name, the writing team needs to identify the features that will make the standards document easy to use.

**Exhibit 3.9. Worksheet for Assessing the Alignment of Existing Curriculum with Draft Content Standards**

Standard	Curriculum (e.g., course content, published workbooks, teacher-made activities)
2.7: Learners use decoding skills to read.	Reading workbook (pp. 16-20) RL1 learning activities #2-5
2.8: Learners use comprehension strategies.	
2.9: Learners identify the main idea of text.	

Take time to brainstorm what instructors would like to find in a standards document. Would readers want to know how the standards were developed and who worked on the team(s)? Do they want to see sample curricula or lessons? Do they want more information on teaching literacy or teaching mathematics? Do they want sample assessments? Even when the team cannot include everything instructors want, the requests will be helpful for identifying professional development and technical assistance needs in the field.

The standards will be used by less experienced instructors as well as those who have been working with adult learners for many years. Most likely, instructors will have a wide range of skills and knowledge in their subject areas. Keep their distinct perspectives and needs in mind when designing documents, and remember they will *all* need professional development for implementing standards-based education. How does the state bring standards to life for teachers and learners? Several states have created extensive resources to help local programs fully shift to a standards-based practice. The Massachusetts *ESL Curriculum Framework* links learner profiles and teacher vignettes with classroom practice, and Arizona's *ELAA Standards* offers sample activities for each level. Both New York's *Resource Guide* and Ohio's *Standards and Benchmarks* include suggestions for ongoing, classroom assessment.

Exhibit 3.10 provides a list of potential sections to consider including during the final design of the standards document. The presentation of the standards and the extent to which the document is user friendly are extremely important. Document design research shows that presentation is an important factor in usability. Documents in which users have to flip between sections can be confusing and frustrating. Always keep the user in mind!



### Voices From the Field

"Ideally, we want a document that is easy to use for the new, less experienced teacher as well as those who have been with the program for years. The goal is how to make life easier by using the frameworks."

(Jane Schwerdtfeger,  
Massachusetts Department of  
Education)

### Exhibit 3.10. Components of a Standards Document

Use this checklist to identify what to include in the state standards document. Check with the state office to identify what must be included and how the document should be formatted (e.g., font size and layout that are accessible for people with disabilities).

Check All That Apply
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to document
<input type="checkbox"/> List of contributors
<input type="checkbox"/> Process for developing the content standards document
<input type="checkbox"/> Approach that guided development of the standards
<input type="checkbox"/> Definitions of terms
<input type="checkbox"/> Definitions or descriptions of levels
<input type="checkbox"/> Description of how content standards are organized (by strands, topics, themes, skill areas, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Content standards
<input type="checkbox"/> Indicators or benchmarks that show progression of skills across levels
<input type="checkbox"/> Numbers or codes to facilitate crosswalking standards and indicators with other documents
<input type="checkbox"/> Performance standards
<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance for alignment with assessments (e.g., assessments for monitoring within the classroom and for accountability reporting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance for alignment with curriculum and instruction (e.g., sample curriculum or sample lessons)
<input type="checkbox"/> Learner profiles and teacher stories
<input type="checkbox"/> Font and layout made accessible for people with disabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Final presentation: print and/or Web-based? (If on Web, in PDF or HTML?) ADA compliance?

## Practice and Application

1. During the review of standards, have team members select two or three standards and indicators that they find to be particularly strong. When the writing team convenes, post the quality standards and identify what makes them strong. Do certain features or expressions indicate quality? Use the quality features the team has discovered as a guide for adapting or drafting state standards.
2. Visit the Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse (<http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/>). Compare two sets of reading standards. Find two similarities and two differences in the approach taken by the sponsor or state.
3. Discuss the sample framework provided in exhibit 3.6. Share ideas about the organization of the state documents reviewed by the team. Brainstorm ideas for organizing the standards, indicators, and levels for your state.

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# Chapter 4

## *Conducting Reviews to Improve Draft Standards*

Before finalizing the content standards, it is critical to conduct a broad review of the draft standards with state and local program staff, content experts, relevant professional organizations, psychometricians, policy makers, community members, and other stakeholders. Through multiple reviews, the state can confirm that the content standards are appropriate, accurate, and complete and that they represent broad-based input. By conducting field and expert reviews, the state can better support the legitimacy of the standards for use in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The review process helps engage the adult education field in the development of content standards, creating field ownership of the standards and providing a context for the implementation of standards-based education. These reviews can also provide an opportunity to test how readily programs can implement the standards and identify the support necessary for effective implementation. Feedback from reviews helps the writing team revise the draft standards and helps the state establish the policies and procedures for statewide implementation.

Chapter 4 discusses three types of review:

- **Validity** reviews are conducted for three purposes: (1) a review of content to determine the extent to which content standards represent the knowledge and skills most valued for adult learners to succeed in their multiple roles; (2) a review for bias to eliminate aspects of the standards that might bias learning for particular groups; and (3) a review for measurability to verify that the standards can be used to assess learner progress and performance.
- **Alignment** reviews help determine the consistency between the draft standards and external benchmarks, curricula, assessments, or other standards within the state.
- **Implementation** reviews are conducted to refine draft content standards and to help identify the processes and

### Chapter 4 at a Glance

- Plan and Manage the Review Process
- Select Reviews for Specific Purposes
  - Validity Reviews
  - Alignment Reviews
  - Implementation Reviews
- Identify Strategies for Conducting Reviews
  - Statewide Surveys
  - Focus Groups
  - Expert Reviews
  - Field Tests
- Use Feedback from Reviews to Finalize Content Standards
  - State Review and Final Revisions
  - Periodic Review and Revision of Content Standards
- Practice and Application
- References

procedures that need to be established for the successful introduction and implementation of the standards.

Validity and alignment reviews may have already been conducted by the writing team as part of the process of drafting content standards (see the Draft Standards and Align Assessments and Curricula with Standards sections in chapter 3). This chapter focuses on the role of multiple stakeholders and experts from the field in conducting the reviews. In addition, this chapter discusses specific strategies that the state can use in conducting reviews:



**Tip**

Keep people informed, solicit input and feedback, and involve as many people and perspectives as possible. Let many voices be heard and expect surprises along the way.

- **Statewide surveys** offer cost-effective ways to elicit feedback from a broad range of stakeholders.
- **Focus groups** allow participants to share and explore ideas orally in an open discussion format.
- **Expert reviews** offer special content and research expertise for evaluating the standards.
- **Field tests** assess how effectively the standards will meet the needs of learners and educators in practice.

No single strategy can provide all the information needed to establish validity, alignment, and feasibility for implementation. Therefore, multiple strategies can be used for each purpose. Exhibit 4.1 identifies some of the strategies used to conduct specific types of review.

**Exhibit 4.1. Strategies for Conducting Reviews**

Strategy	Review Type		
	Validity	Alignment	Implementation
Statewide survey	X		X
Focus group	X		X
Expert review	X	X	
Field test	X	X	X

- A validity review for content may be conducted in a variety of ways—through use of a statewide survey, focus groups, experts, or a field test. A statewide survey combined with any of the other strategies will enable the state to gather more in-depth information. Validity reviews for measurement and bias are best conducted via experts who are knowledgeable in these areas. A field test also can be informative, as it shows how different populations respond to the standards as they begin to develop strategies to assess learner progress.
- An alignment review is conducted by individuals who have experience using the specific documents against which the standards are being aligned. In addition, a field test may be useful in gathering information about the alignment of standards with curricula and assessments.
- An implementation review is conducted through a field test. Participants may engage in focus group discussions or complete surveys to provide feedback during the field test.

The review process, like drafting standards, takes time. It also requires thoughtful planning to enable the state to obtain the feedback necessary to refine the standards.

## Plan and Manage the Review Process

The number and types of reviews that a state will conduct depends, in part, on state policies, requirements, and resources. For example, if a state requires that adult education content standards be aligned with other state standards (e.g., K–12 or workforce standards), then the state must build in time and resources to conduct an alignment review to determine the extent to which the sets of standards are aligned.

In deciding which reviews to conduct, the state should carefully consider its resources in combination with other factors that can affect conducting reviews: size of the state, number and location of adult education programs, timeline for completing reviews, expertise of staff, and political constraints. The state also should consider the kinds of experts needed for its reviews of the standards. Most importantly, it should consider how best to reach the most stakeholders given state resources.

The state should identify someone to coordinate the review process and oversee the development of a plan for conducting the reviews and analyzing the feedback. This coordinator could be a state manager or member of the coordinating committee. If the state plans to conduct several different reviews, it may want to invite different members of the coordinating committee to be responsible for overseeing each type of review. Alternatively, if committee members are not available, the state may consider hiring a private contractor to oversee the review process.

The coordinator of the review process should develop an action plan for conducting the reviews. The following questions may help in developing the plan:

- Are particular reviews mandated by the state?
- What is the state’s purpose in conducting each review? What type of feedback is sought?
- Who will conduct reviews?
- What resources are available/needed to conduct reviews?
- What is the timeframe for completing reviews?
- Which stakeholders or field experts will participate in reviews (e.g., teachers or content specialists)?
- How will feedback from reviews be used? By whom?

If a state decides to hold numerous reviews of different types, the reviews may result in a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data. As mentioned above, the state may consider contracting with an external agency to coordinate the reviews and manage and analyze the feedback.

## Select Reviews for Specific Purposes

This section describes reviews for validity, alignment, and implementation. Each review serves a specific purpose. This section also identifies and discusses representative groups that may participate in each review.

## Validity Reviews

The underlying purpose of any review for validity is to determine the extent to which the proposed standards represent the knowledge and skills most valued for adult learners to succeed in their roles as workers, citizens, family members, and lifelong learners. To this end, validity reviews target the criteria for quality standards (see exhibit 3.3 in chapter 3). This section describes three elements to consider in constructing a validity review—content, bias, and measurability. Each of these elements requires specific criteria to assess the validity of the draft standards for a wide range of learners and program types.

A validity review should include individuals who represent different stakeholder groups and levels of expertise. The selection of reviewers is based on the purpose of the review and the type of feedback that is needed.

*Participants from the field* may include adult learners, instructors, program administrators, content and curriculum specialists, professional development staff, representatives from local businesses and community- or faith-based organizations, and members of relevant professional organizations. To help ensure high-quality, meaningful feedback, the coordinating committee may want to establish the desired make-up of the review groups (e.g., by geographical area, occupation, or program type) and eligibility requirements for participation in the review (e.g., minimum years of experience in adult education or content area expertise). Consider selecting participants from stakeholder membership lists or soliciting nominations from representative stakeholder groups.

### A Note on Validity: What Is It and Why Do We Need to Know About It?

Validity concerns *what* is addressed in the standards and *how well* that content is represented. It is one of the most fundamental considerations in developing content standards. Evidence of validity answers the question:

*Do the standards target the appropriate content?*

Validity should be built into a standards-based education system from the outset; that is, with the development of content standards. Establishing the validity of standards requires a systematic process to determine whether the standards are representative of appropriate and valued knowledge and skills. Documentation of this process and validity evidence become increasingly important if the standards are challenged, typically during the implementation of curricula and assessments or the release of impact data based on the new standards. Document the processes to establish validity so that data will be available if they are needed to support the content standards.

*Participants with specific expertise* may be recruited to review a specific feature of the standards, such as bias or measurability. Individuals with special expertise can provide current, research-based perspectives on content standards and concrete recommendations for revising draft standards and establishing implementation procedures. Expert reviewers can be recruited by open invitation or by recommendation. Look to institutions of higher education and large school districts for recommendations.

**A review for content** can be used to assess (1) the rigor, specificity, comprehensiveness, and coherence of the content of the standards; (2) the clarity with which the standards are written and presented; and (3) the manageability of the standards for teaching and learning. A key to establishing evidence of content validity is to target a representative sample of stakeholders to react to and provide feedback on the draft standards. Content reviews do *not* involve consensus-building procedures. The approach for conducting this type of review is simply to collect all field input regarding the draft standards and provide this input to the writing team for the purpose of finalizing the draft content standards.

Below are some guiding questions for respondents to use in the content review.

- How important is this standard/indicator for learning the content area?
- Does the standard/indicator represent knowledge, skills, or abilities necessary for success in the content area?
- Does the standard/indicator reflect an appropriate level of rigor?
- Is the standard/indicator specific enough to assure a common understanding of learning expectations?

Questions for the content review should focus on the highest level of specificity possible in the standards. In some sets of standards, that level would be represented by the standard, and in other cases, it could be the indicator.

Additionally, respondents should be asked to judge the comprehensiveness of the complete set of standards and to identify content requirements that are missing from the draft standards.

- Is important content missing from the draft standards?
- Is content that is unnecessary included in the draft standards?
- Is the set of standards comprehensive in its coverage of the content area?
- Is the set of standards manageable for teaching and learning?

The Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter includes an exercise that will help the state prepare to conduct a review to validate the content of standards.

**A review for bias**—also known as a sensitivity or fairness review—can be used to identify and eliminate aspects of the draft standards that might bias learning for particular groups. The state should recruit reviewers who have experience and expertise in one or more areas of bias and who are representative of the adult learner population. Issues of potential bias relate to age, gender, race/ethnicity, culture, disability, socioeconomic status, community type, and language.

In reviewing the content of the standards for potential issues of bias, reviewers should consider the following questions.

- Is the set of standards inclusive of all groups served by the content standards?
- Are any groups of adult learners excluded by the set of standards?
- Does the set of standards focus on relevant knowledge and skills rather than beliefs or opinions that are unrelated to the content area?

Feedback from a bias review is then used to refine and finalize the content standards.

**A review for measurability** is used to establish evidence that the draft content standards can be used to assess learner progress and performance. The data gathered from this type of review ensure that the standards are written and presented in a way that allows them to be appropriately and consistently measured. Measurability helps to determine whether the adult learner meets the standards.

#### Issues of Potential Bias

- age
- gender
- race/ethnicity
- culture
- disability
- socioeconomic status
- community type
- language

For a review for measurability, select individuals with experience and expertise in educational measurement. These participants should also have an understanding of the contexts and unique concerns of adult education. Due to the specificity of this aspect of a validity review, only a small group of three to five experts may be needed.

Reviewers need to have a clear understanding of the standards for measuring learner progress. The review is guided by questions such as the following:

- Is the standard sufficiently detailed to provide clear expectations of what the learner should know and be able to do?
- Does the standard specify a learning outcome that can be reasonably measured?

A measurability review takes into consideration the entire range of assessments and tests used by programs, including nationally standardized tests and locally developed informal assessment tools.

### ***Alignment Reviews***

Chapter 3 discussed initial steps taken by the writing team to crosswalk draft content standards with existing state-adopted standards or other external benchmarks. However, a crosswalk is not all there is to alignment. Once the standards have been drafted, alignment reviews are useful in finalizing the standards and preparing for their implementation. There are several purposes for conducting alignment reviews: (1) to determine whether the proposed standards are consistent with other standards within the state; (2) to ensure that the proposed standards are, to the extent possible and appropriate, consistent with other significant policy reforms affecting the state's education system; (3) to determine whether proposed standards are consistent with external benchmarks; (4) to align assessments with the proposed standards; and (5) to align curriculum with the proposed standards.

Participants in alignment reviews should include those with expertise in the content being aligned. For example, if the state mandates that adult education content standards align with the K–12 content standards, recruit reviewers who were involved in



#### **Tip**

An alignment review is not meant to produce documents or systems that mirror each other, but rather to establish that they are in agreement and do not contradict one another in meaning or intent. For this reason, there may be justifiable gaps in content between the items addressed by an alignment review.

the development of the K–12 standards or who have expertise in their implementation.

An alignment review determines areas of congruence, alignment, and contradiction between the draft content standards and the other document(s). In orienting reviewers to their task, carefully review the following concepts:

- **congruence**—coinciding exactly, reflecting the same meaning; often using the same language
- **alignment**—in agreement, complementary; reflecting similar meaning without gaps in content
- **contradiction**—inconsistent with or in opposition; containing conflicting text

It is important that reviewers understand that the draft standards do not need to mirror a document to be aligned with it. The words, phrases, and structure of the draft standards do not need to be exactly the same as those of the other document for alignment to be confirmed. This distinction will be of particular importance if the standards must align with K–12 content standards. K–12 content standards are designed for children and not for adult learners; they are not appropriate for adult education. For this reason, the draft content standards may have a different sequence or extend beyond the scope of K–12 standards while maintaining alignment with them.

When determining alignment, focus the reviewers' task with the following questions.

- Do the draft standards build on the document with which they must align?
- Do the draft standards contradict the document with which they must align?
- Are these documents in agreement, and, where they are not in agreement, is that a conscious and well-rationalized decision?

Areas of contradiction are of most concern and need to be addressed in discussion by the reviewers. Use a consensus-building process to provide one set of recommendations on the alignment of the draft standards. Recommendations of the

alignment reviewers should be clear and complete with explicit suggestions on how to revise the standards to resolve any areas of contradiction.

When conducting alignment reviews, identify all documents or systems with which the content standards must align and allow sufficient time to ensure that each is fully understood by the reviewers. Also, if the draft content standards must align with multiple documents, it is best to conduct and document each alignment analysis separately at different meetings so as not to confuse alignment issues.

**Aligning curriculum** with the content standards is an initial step toward implementing standards-based education. Alignment reviews can be used to clearly and simply communicate connections between the curriculum and the content standards, identify gaps in the content of curriculum, and make suggestions for filling those gaps. It is important for reviewers to recognize that a curriculum is likely to go beyond the scope of the content standards, as the curriculum provides the instructional scope and sequence and includes suggestions for teaching strategies, learning activities, and texts and other resource materials.

**Aligning assessments** with content standards is a complex process and one that is critical to the implementation of standards-based education. Only when aligned with the content standards can assessment provide any clear indications of the impact of standards-based education reform.

Webb (1999) suggests four criteria for judging the alignment between assessment and content standards:

- **Categorical concurrence**—the extent to which content standards and assessment address the same content. Do the same or consistent categories of content appear in both the standards and the assessment?
- **Depth-of-knowledge consistency**—the extent to which content standards and assessment require the same complexity of knowledge. Is what is elicited from adult learners on the assessment as cognitively demanding as what is expected of learners as stated in the standards?
- **Range-of-knowledge correspondence**—the extent to which the breadth of knowledge represented by the standards and that measured by assessment are comparable. Is the span of



### Voices From the Field

“No one test should ever be relied upon as a measure of how much or how well content standards have been taught and learned.”

(Regie Stites, SRI International)

knowledge expected of learners by the standard comparable to the span of knowledge required of learners to correctly respond to corresponding test requirements?

- **Balance of representation**—the extent to which the knowledge represented in both content standards and assessment is equally distributed in both items. Are test items equally mapped across standards and indicators?

## ***Implementation Reviews***

An implementation review helps the state identify the processes and procedures that need to be established for the successful implementation of the standards statewide. It also provides concrete feedback from the field that the coordinating committee and writing team can use to finalize the content standards.

Participants in an implementation review should be instructors, coordinators, and administrators who are broadly representative of state programs in terms of size, geographic location, type, funding, and student diversity. In selecting participants for implementation reviews, it is appealing to recruit staff from stronger programs, and they are often the first to volunteer. However, having only “star” programs participate in these reviews can skew the results and complicate implementation by not providing a realistic picture of how all other programs will be able to apply a standards-based system.

Implementation reviews address the following types of questions:

- How well do the standards translate into curriculum and instruction?
- How well do the standards translate into assessment?
- What aspects of the standards document are particularly helpful?
- What would need to be changed or added to make the standards more useful?
- What are the professional development needs of instructors and administrators in implementing standards-based education?

- What policies and procedures need to be in place to support the successful implementation of standards-based education?
- What materials and other resources are needed to support the successful implementation of standards-based education?

An implementation review also provides insight on the kinds of professional development and technical assistance that programs will require in implementing the standards effectively; the role of the program administrator in supporting the standards; and the materials, resources, and staff necessary for supporting standards-based education. Finally, this review provides concrete feedback from the field that the coordinating committee and writing team can use to finalize the content standards.

## Identify Strategies for Conducting Reviews

A variety of strategies can be used to conduct validity, alignment, and implementation reviews. This section discusses four strategies: statewide surveys, focus groups, expert reviews, and field tests. Often, the best way to conduct a specific review is through a combination of methods. Refer to exhibit 4.1 (earlier in the chapter) for the strategies applicable to particular reviews.

There are some common steps in conducting surveys, focus groups, expert reviews, or field tests. Knowing these commonalities up front can help guide the planning process and combine efforts to save time and money. Below are steps to consider.

- **Recruit participants.** Seek broad representation by soliciting names from different stakeholder groups (e.g., learner and teacher associations, business community members, and education leaders).
- **Recruit materials developers and group facilitators.** Provide the developers and facilitators with background information on standards-based education and the state planning decisions that influenced the development of the draft standards. Members of the coordinating committee can serve as facilitators. They can describe the intent of the standards movement and provide the reasoning behind key decisions made during earlier stages of the development process. Members of the coordinating committee may also



### Voices From Research

The Community Partnership for Adult Learning (C-PAL) Web Site, <http://c-pal.net>, includes a link to the *Basic Guide for Program Evaluation* (McNamara n.d.), which includes valuable information related to survey design, conducting focus groups, and selecting methods.

be able to help identify professionals with expertise in questionnaire design or survey development and suggest key personnel to manage or coordinate the field test.

- **Provide sufficient background information as part of all reviews.** Survey instruments should include a short informational summary of the standards initiative before the specific items listed for response. Members of focus groups, expert reviewers, and field test participants will also need a summary and the draft standards documents to review prior to a focus group, expert panel review, or field test. Having independently reviewed and reflected on the documents before meetings will allow participants to make contributions that are more significant.
- **Orient reviewers to the purpose and format of the review.** Begin a review session with a brief orientation for participants to provide the context for their work. Describe state requirements and expectations regarding the standards, summarize the development of the draft standards, and provide the questions or feedback forms that will be used in the review. It is important that all respondents and reviewers understand the value of their feedback and that it will have an effect on the implementation of the standards.
- **Document feedback.** Accurate and complete documentation of all questions, concerns, and recommendations made by participants during a review is critical to support the decisions for revising and adopting the standards. Record the composition of each review group, the process used during the review, the name of the person who developed or facilitated each review, and the detailed feedback provided.
- **Consider developing and using standardized feedback forms to gather information.** Although forms should be specific to the type and purpose of each review, there may be some common features (e.g., demographic questions, format) that can be used on all forms across reviews.
- **Compile and analyze feedback.** Analyze feedback across reviews by looking for trends and recurrent themes and at ratings for different items. Summarize the findings in a way that can be used easily by the coordinating committee and writing team to make revisions to the draft standards and implementation procedures. For example, it is helpful to



### Tip

Participants in reviews are often interested in the outcomes of their feedback. As a courtesy to review participants, make the summary of findings and final report available to the reviewers. (Susan Pimentel, educational consultant, conference call presentation, March 15, 2005)



### Tip

For any of the reviews discussed in this chapter, documentation is critical. Careful documentation of the make-up of committees, the step-by-step review processes, and the detailed feedback and recommendations will facilitate the adoption of the standards, especially when adoption depends on approval from more than one state agency.

capture the number and types of participants (e.g., experienced administrators or English as a Second Language instructors) that correspond to different ratings and themes that emerge. Compile and organize actual comments made during the review to help guide the revision.

The manager of the review process should keep these common steps in mind as decisions are made on the types and numbers of reviews to conduct. The following sections provide an overview of four strategies—statewide surveys, focus groups, expert reviews, and field tests—that the state may use to finalize the content standards.

### ***Statewide Surveys***

A statewide survey is a cost-effective approach to soliciting input from as many stakeholders as possible in a short amount of time. Consider recruiting respondents through an open invitation and administering the survey via the Internet to reach a broad audience. Surveys are commonly used in reviews for content validity and for implementation.

The review coordinator should work with measurement and evaluation experts to design a survey that solicits the information necessary to validate the standards. Additionally, these measurement experts will analyze and help interpret the findings. If technical knowledge is not available among state staff, consider contracting with an external agency for this work.

Conducting a statewide survey is a specialized process based on overlapping steps. The basic steps are as follows:

1. Design the survey and data collection system.
2. Produce survey materials.
3. Field test the survey with members of the writing team.
4. Advertise and distribute the survey.
5. Maintain the survey (if Web-based).
6. Collect, clean, and analyze data.
7. Compile and report results.

To simplify their task, provide survey respondents with a scale that they can use to make judgments about the draft content standards. For example, in the case of a validity review, respondents might rate the standards for content using the following scale:

- **Essential**—Without competence in this area, learning of the content would be hindered.
- **Very important**—Competence in this area contributes substantially to the overall learning of the content.
- **Somewhat important**—Competence in this area contributes slightly to the overall learning of the content.
- **Not needed**—Competence in this area has no effect on the overall learning of the content or represents knowledge, skills, or abilities that can be learned outside of the classroom.

As described previously, a validity review for content should focus on the level of most specificity in the standards.

## ***Focus Groups***

Convening a focus group, or discussion group, will provide richer feedback on the draft standards than can be gained through a statewide survey. In addition to answering posed questions, participants are likely to raise questions and issues that were not considered previously. Given that this strategy will produce more detailed feedback than a statewide survey, it can be used effectively as a follow-up to survey responses. This combination of statewide survey and focus group is particularly useful in capturing the full range of criteria for quality standards that is the target of a validity review for content. Additionally, focus groups can provide feedback from representatives of most, if not all, stakeholder groups.

In preparing to conduct focus group sessions, carefully consider the number, size, length, and locations (state regions and specific sites) of the sessions in terms of state budget and resources. It is important to hold enough focus group sessions at convenient locations to ensure statewide representation of stakeholders. Consider recruiting participants through an application or nomination process. Depending on the nature of the review, a focus group session may include eight to twelve participants and



### **Voices From Research**

For more information about the design, implementation, and data analysis of focus groups, consult *The Focus Group Kit* by David Morgan and Richard Krueger (from Sage Publications, <http://www.sagepub.com>).



**Tip**

A focus group comprising a single type of stakeholder can often provide more sincere opinions than a mixed group. Adult learners, for example, might not fully express their ideas in a group that includes instructors and administrators.



**Tip**

Feedback from reviews is more often in the form of criticism than praise. If members of the writing team are to facilitate focus groups, be sure to train them to the task so that they are prepared to respond appropriately to negative feedback.

take from three hours to a full day. Plan appropriately for on-site costs (e.g., refreshments) and travel costs.

Determine how many focus groups will be held with a mix of stakeholders (e.g., adult education practitioners, professional development providers, and administrators) and how many with a single stakeholder group (e.g., learners or instructors). A good mix of stakeholders at a focus group session will produce richer feedback, as participants discuss the issues and provide suggestions that take into account their diverse perspectives. Alternatively, there may be times when limiting stakeholder representation will actually provide information that is more truthful.

Consider using members of the coordinating committee and writing team as facilitators of focus groups. Be sure to train facilitators to their task. The purpose of a focus group is to gather both positive and negative feedback. Facilitators should not attempt to redirect or argue with the participants of a focus group. The data collected at focus group sessions are used to inform standards development and implementation procedures.

Staff designated to coordinate the focus groups will want to have protocols developed in advance that address the purposes for the review. Appendix C, Tools and Templates, provides a sample format for developing a focus group protocol. A protocol also will make it easier to organize and analyze information gathered during the focus groups.

If the purpose of the focus group is to review documents, walk the participants through all relevant documents, confirming their understanding of these materials and addressing any questions or concerns that may arise. If specific forms are used to gather participant feedback on the standards, discuss one or two standards and how to use the forms with the group so that participants understand the type and level of feedback being sought.

To ensure that the discussions are accurately captured, it is useful to have a scribe and audiotape recorder. Solicit from the group explicit suggestions for changes to the draft standards whenever possible, and be sure to carefully record these suggestions.

Following each focus group session, compile and analyze the feedback. Once all sessions are complete, analyze the feedback

across sessions. Again, look for trends and recurrent themes, noting the number and types of respondents. For example, the feedback may reveal issues that occur only among experienced instructors or only in rural settings. This type of information will be helpful to the writing team in the revision of the draft content standards and establishment of implementation procedures.

## **Expert Reviews**

An expert review is useful in alignment reviews and validity reviews for content, bias, and measurability, as well as for reviewing draft content standards for legislative or policy issues (e.g., across state departments). Use experts to review a specific aspect of the draft content standards. Expert reviews are valuable because experts are current on the research and are generally familiar with expectations for standards across the nation, so they can provide a broader perspective. In addition, they are independent of the process and thus less likely to be biased.

Experts can be identified by state staff, the coordinating committee, or the advisory committee. As reviewers, experts may not be representative of all stakeholders, and the data collected from expert reviews may be limited to a specific aspect of the standards. However, these reviews provide useful information when paired with other approaches for establishing validity. Before experts begin their reviews, share with them the state's policies and procedures for developing standards and guidelines for reviewing the standards. Guidelines will vary depending on the nature of the review.

If the experts are asked to review materials, make certain these are provided well in advance to allow them to prepare for any discussions or raise any questions. Also consider asking the experts in advance of the review whether there are any resources or supplementary materials that they will need to conduct this work and make those materials available to them.

Expert reviews may involve costs associated with consultant fees and travel. If the state is considering convening a panel of experts, plan appropriately for participant travel, refreshments, and a suitable site. Consider having state staff who serve on the coordinating committee facilitate an expert panel. Ask the panel to examine each element of the standard (e.g., standard, indicator, objectives, supplementary materials) and then the full set of standards. This two-step strategy is important because some issues may not be apparent when examining individual



### **Tip**

Reviews by experts are valuable in helping to establish the validity of the standards because

- experts are current on research and can offer specific recommendations to strengthen the standards,
- experts are usually independent of the development process, and
- experts provide a “stamp of approval” that can be shared with legislators and policy makers.

(Susan Pimentel, educational consultant, conference call presentation, March 15, 2005)

standards or elements of standards. Only when the draft is considered as a whole do some issues become apparent.

After reviewing the standards, discuss the concerns raised by the experts. Carefully document all questions, concerns, citations, and recommendations experts make as they conduct their reviews. Consider using a form to record recommendations, making sure that the experts are explicit about any suggested changes and options for revision. Exhibits 4.2 and 4.3 provide sample feedback forms that experts can use, one form for a bias review and another form for an alignment review.

The documentation from an expert review will be in the form of very specific questions, concerns, and recommendations. Compile all feedback so that the coordinating committee and writing team can easily understand the feedback when they refine the draft content standards. In summarizing the results of an expert review, be sure to note any areas of dissent and by whom among the expert reviewers.

**Exhibit 4.2. Validity Review Feedback Form Focusing on Bias**

*This sample feedback form can be used for conducting a validity review that focuses on bias.*

Item	Standard	Issue	Description	Committee Recommendations	
				Suggested Revision	Comments
1	4.7.a	Language use (gender)	"...man-made..."	Delete "man-made."	If necessary, change to "human-made."
2	8.12.d	Accessibility (disability)	Small print on a computer screen	Provide large print.	Develop alternative formats.
3					

**Exhibit 4.3. Alignment Review Feedback Form**

*This sample feedback form can be used for an alignment review.*

Standard	Alignment			Committee Recommendations	
				Suggested Revision	Comments
2.11: Learners will check own reading comprehension	Congruent		K–12 Standards 3.8, 3.9, 4.6, 5.3, 6.7		Learning sequence differs
	Aligned	✓			
	Contradictory				
Recommendation:		Delete	Retain as is	Revise	
2.12: Learners will become lifelong readers	Congruent				Not measurable
	Aligned				
	Contradictory	✓			
Recommendation:		Delete	Retain as is	Revise	

**Field Tests**

The name—field test—says it all: to test under natural operating conditions. A field test is a small-scale trial, assessing how well the standards can be implemented in educational settings. It provides information necessary for the development and implementation of statewide standards-based education. Through classroom trials and discussions about standards-based curriculum and instruction, state teams learn

- how well the standards meet the needs of teachers and learners,
- what procedures and processes need to be in place to implement the standards effectively, and
- how to revise and finalize the draft standards.

Revisions to the draft standards may include making adjustments related to levels and indicators. Additionally, a field test can be used to help the state determine the kinds of professional



**Tip**

As another opportunity for stakeholder feedback, field testing will help build ownership and buy-in of standards-based education and help prepare for implementation.

development and technical assistance that are needed for implementation.

The coordinating committee can designate a field test manager to oversee all stages of a field test. Ideally, the manager is familiar with multiple methods for collecting data at the program level and with strategies to support field test participants in their tasks. The manager oversees the process and provides the support necessary for an effective field test.

Field testing is a multifaceted process. Therefore, it is important that the field test manager, with input from members of the coordinating committee, develop a plan that addresses all stages of the field test and is feasible given state and local resources. The plan, submitted to the state director for approval, might address the following components:

- **recruitment of participant programs**, including criteria for selecting sites
- **orientation and professional development**, including strategies for supporting staff participation and topics for professional development
- **data collection**, including questions to address and activities and timeframes for collecting data
- **documentation and analysis of feedback**, including strategies for organizing and using feedback

Each component of the plan should identify individuals who will be responsible for carrying out the activities. Therefore, it is important to identify the roles and responsibilities of field test participants, the field test manager, and other state staff from the outset.

The plan should also provide an estimated timeline for conducting the field test. Allocate time for recruiting participant programs, orienting participants to the standards and their roles in the field test, training participants on using data collection tools, collecting data, and analyzing and reporting field test findings. Depending on state and local resources, three to six months is sufficient time to collect preliminary data; conducting a complete field test may require a year or more.

The Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter includes an exercise to help the state plan for a field test.

## Recruit Participant Programs

The first step in a field test is to establish criteria for selecting programs to participate. The coordinating committee can play a key role in identifying the selection criteria. The committee may seek programs based on (1) experiences with new initiatives, (2) size, (3) populations served, (4) geographical location, or (5) delivery provider (e.g., community college, adult school, community-based organization). After the criteria have been developed, the state has several options for recruitment. It can recruit programs by recommendation and/or by invitation based on the recruitment criteria. Whichever option the state chooses, it is important to let participating sites know the time investment that will be required and the resources they will need to commit for the field test.

## Orient and Provide Ongoing Support and Professional Development

Once programs agree to participate in the field test, it is important to orient all participants to their tasks. Orientation may include

- presenting the state's goals for standards-based education,
- reviewing the draft content standards and discussing how they are similar to and different from current practice,
- reviewing the purposes of the field test and the types of data that will be collected,
- defining participant roles in the field test, and
- explaining how the findings from the field test will be used to inform the draft standards and the implementation of a standards-based system.

Field test participants may need professional development and ongoing support to carry out their roles in the review process effectively. Training should be tailored to each type of participant (e.g., instructor, administrator, curriculum specialist) and address task-specific issues and processes. For example, during a field test, instructors may need help in learning how to



### Tip

Offer stipends to participants for the additional work that will be involved during the field test. Remember, most participants work part time with little or no planning time.



### Tip

Field test participants need to understand standards-based education and their role in the field test. Orientation and training provide the opportunity to ask questions and explore teaching and learning in a new way.

develop local curricula, instructional units, and strategies to monitor learner progress that are based on the standards.

Program administrators may also need ongoing support to identify and put into practice local policies and procedures that will support implementation of standards-based education. For example, program administrators may want to set up a mentoring or coaching system to assist instructors in implementing the standards, and they may need support and assistance in setting up these systems.

To support participants, the field test manager should consider convening participant program staff, locally or by region, to help build a learning community and to encourage participants to collaborate, problem solve, and share experiences. The dialogue established during these meetings can be continued via e-mail, an electronic mailing list, telephone, or other distance communication. The manager may also want to conduct debriefing meetings at the program site on a regular basis to identify challenges and successes in implementing the standards. These meetings are another way to problem solve and support participants during the field test.

### **Collect Field Test Data**

One of the purposes of a field test is to help the state determine how well local programs can implement the standards and to identify the kinds of policies, procedures, resources, professional development, and technical assistance necessary for local programs to implement standards-based education effectively. To target these issues, collect data purposefully. Begin by identifying field test questions that address implementation issues. Consider framing the feedback with the following questions:

- How do instructors translate standards into curriculum and instruction?
- How do instructors monitor student progress in meeting the standards?
- What resources and additional professional development would be helpful to instructors and administrators in implementing standards-based education?

For the purposes of validating and revising the draft content standards, develop a set of field test questions for the instructors to consider as they use the standards in the classroom. Consider the following questions:

- What aspects of the standards are easy or difficult to use?
- What language, if any, in the standards is not clear?
- What in the standards should be changed? Deleted? Added? Moved to another level?

Using simple feedback forms and other tools (e.g., observation and implementation checklists, lesson templates, and reflection logs) will make data collection easy for participants. Forms that are unstructured, too complicated, or too long will not be effective, if they are used at all.

Provide clear instructions and train participants on how to use the data collection tools, including who should complete them and when. For example, some forms may be useful when completed after each lesson, unit of instruction, or administration of an assessment. Additionally, the field test manager can provide programs with a timeline for their data collection efforts that indicates when programs should submit feedback to the manager. A timeline will encourage ongoing data collection and help participants plan for the integration of data collection in their practice.

Exhibits 4.4 and 4.5 are sample forms that instructors can complete to provide feedback on their classroom implementation of the standards. Exhibit 4.4—Sample Feedback Form on the Applicability of Standards to Instruction—will help determine the applicability of the standards and indicators to the specific levels of instruction, for example, beginning ABE or low intermediate ABE. Exhibit 4.5—Sample Instructor Feedback Form on Applicable Classroom Activities—can help demonstrate how the standards are addressed by classroom activities, such as resource materials, assignments, and classroom assessments. Appendix C, Tools and Templates, has two sample templates that can be adapted for gathering instructor feedback—the Kentucky Content Standards Review Survey and the Standards Usability Checklist Instructor Feedback Form. Such documentation will be helpful not only for the field test but also for helping instructors to see changes in their classroom practices.

**Exhibit 4.4. Sample Feedback Form on the Applicability of Standards to Instruction**

*This type of feedback form can help determine the applicability of the standards or indicators to specific levels of instruction (e.g., beginning ABE, low intermediate ABE).*

<p>Review the indicators that are appropriate to the instructional level. For each indicator, rate its applicability to the level being taught by using the following scale: applicable, predominantly applicable, slightly applicable, or not applicable. If unsure of a rating, mark "Do not know." Use the comments box to provide additional information or suggestions on the application of the indicator to classroom instruction (e.g., move to different level of instruction or define terms).</p>	
<p><b>Indicator R.1.a: Use sound symbol correspondences to decode new words.</b></p>	
<p>Rating</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Predominantly applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slightly applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not know</p>	
<p><b>Indicator R.1.b: Locate words or items in alphabetical or numerical lists (e.g., books, directories, indices).</b></p>	
<p>Rating</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Predominantly applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slightly applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not know</p>	
<p><i>Note:</i> Adapted from R. J. Marzano and J. S. Kendall. <i>Awash in a sea of standards</i> (Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 1998).  <a href="http://www.mcrel.org/topics/productDetail.asp?productID=120">http://www.mcrel.org/topics/productDetail.asp?productID=120</a> (accessed December 2007).</p>	

**Exhibit 4.5. Sample Instructor Feedback Form on Applicable Classroom Activities**

*Use this form to record instruction and assessment activities for standards and indicators.*

Standard	Classroom Activity/Resources Addressing Standard (e.g., materials, assignment, assessment)	
2.7. Learners use decoding skills to read.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading workbook (pp. 16–20) <input type="checkbox"/> Learning activities to find explicitly taught sounds used in language experience story <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor observation

Another effective strategy for data collection is to conduct a focus group with field test participants. Moreover, interviews or focus groups with a sampling of participants can provide more in-depth feedback and expand on the findings derived from the forms. To conduct interviews or focus groups, identify the major themes in the data from feedback forms and structure the sessions around those themes. Interview and focus group sessions lend themselves to raising new issues that may not have been identified through the feedback forms. Be sure to capture and explore any new issues raised during an interview or focus group. This information may also be useful in adapting and revising the standards and for planning professional development.

**Document and Analyze Feedback**

Documenting findings and processes during the field test is critical, as it supports the decisions on how to revise the draft content standards for final adoption by the state. Documentation also helps to clarify procedures and orientation information and to identify professional development needs for future implementation of the standards.

Just as data collection and documentation are ongoing processes, analyzing the field test feedback also should be an ongoing process. Continually analyzing feedback allows the field test manager to make midcourse corrections or changes to the implementation procedures, as necessary or possible.

The field test manager, or designee, is responsible for analyzing participant feedback as it is collected, noting trends and recurrent issues across participant programs. The size of the trial may determine how many people are needed to do the analysis. It may be too large a task for one person, in which case a group approach might be used. Analyses should be guided by the inquiries made during the field test (e.g., questions asked during interviews or ratings of standards on feedback forms).

Organize feedback by the central purposes of the field test: (1) validating draft content standards and (2) identifying policies, procedures, and professional development for implementing standards. Use the feedback to answer the following overarching questions:

- What do the data reveal about how well the content standards translate into curriculum? Into instruction? Into assessment?
- What training and resources will be helpful for statewide implementation of the content standards?
- What local administrative policies and procedures support implementation of standards-based education?

To understand all the issues, combine different types of data (e.g., open-ended responses, ratings based on a scale, yes/no responses) and data from a variety of sources (e.g., feedback forms, interviews, observations). Some data may produce more questions than answers. Follow up with participating programs, as needed, to help clarify unexplained results.

Review the data collection forms to find suggested revisions for the standards (e.g., content, format, presentation). For example, it may become apparent during data analysis that participants are responding to some aspect of the content standards that had been overlooked or dismissed as unimportant by the writing team. Through classroom observations or responses on feedback forms, it may become evident that programs are consistently misinterpreting or inappropriately applying particular standards or indicators. Such cases may require the writing team to clarify the standards. To facilitate this work, it is helpful for the field test manager to make recommendations to the writing team on how to revise the standards to avoid similar problems during statewide implementation.



**Tip**

It is useful to develop an online list of questions frequently asked by the field test participants. As the list grows, be sure to organize questions in a way that makes the list user friendly (e.g., by date or category). This list will also be a useful tool for other programs once implementation goes to scale.

Analysis can also indicate ways to improve the implementation of standards-based education, especially if participant programs try different approaches to implementing the standards. For example, some programs may decide to use program administrators or instructional specialists to mentor staff in implementing the standards. Other programs may decide to institute biweekly meetings to discuss implementation with staff members. And still other programs may develop an online resource bank of standards-related materials. By comparing data from programs using different approaches, the analysis may show that particular implementation strategies are more effective than others for certain types of programs.

## **Use Feedback from Reviews to Finalize Content Standards**

The coordinator(s) of external reviews will need to compile the results of each type of review and then share the information with the writing team and coordinating committee. The writing team takes the lead on revising the standards based on the survey results, the recommendations of the review committees, and the field test feedback. This is the final stage in which to infuse the standards with the consensus of the field. Team members may not agree with all feedback, but should be encouraged to appropriately act on behalf of the field in finalizing the content standards and document their decisions for these actions.

It is helpful to provide the writing team with guidelines on how to finalize the draft standards. The coordinating committee is responsible for providing these guidelines, which give the writing team three options:

- delete the standard,
- revise the standard, or
- retain the standard as is.

For example, given a survey, the coordinating committee may choose to set a minimum rating of importance that must be met by each standard. Using the sample survey scale in this chapter (see *Statewide Surveys* section), the minimum rating of importance might be set at “very important.” Any standard receiving an average rating of “somewhat important” or “not needed” would be flagged for action by the writing team. The



### Tip

The guidelines developed by the coordinating committee (see chapter 2) become critical during the decision-making stage. Tightly written guidelines will outline clear procedures for accepting or rejecting feedback and reconciling contradictory feedback.

team's course of action (delete, revise, or retain the standard) is determined by the guidelines. For example, if alignment to the Adult Diploma Program (ADP) standards has been mandated by the state, a guideline would be to retain standards that are directly aligned with the ADP standards. If the flagged standard is aligned with the ADP standards and its deletion would bring the set of standards out of alignment, then it should be revised or retained as is. If the flagged standard is not directly aligned with the ADP standards, the team can delete it.

Clear, specific guidelines will ensure that all team members follow common procedures and that state policies are preserved. They will also keep the team from revisiting decisions and issues from previous meetings.

The facilitators of each review should be present to discuss the review processes used and the relevant feedback with the writing team. It is important that the writing team members understand that feedback from the review phase offers suggestions only, and their role is to make final recommendations to the coordinating committee. Suggested revisions from a bias review, however, can have legal consequences and should be seriously considered.

There are two basic steps the writing team needs to take: review the feedback from each review and document all actions taken in response to that feedback.

**Step 1: Review the feedback.** Present feedback from each review separately, to focus the writing team on one issue at a time. Each review is likely to produce a considerable amount of feedback. Provide the team with all feedback (demographic, quantitative, and qualitative data), but focus activities on feedback that requires action.

**Step 2: Document the decisions.** It is useful to have a state staff member from the coordinating committee, as well as a member of the writing team, record all team decisions. Documentation should include the team's actions and support (e.g., citation from document with which standards must align) for each action.

## ***State Review and Final Revisions***

Upon completion of the draft standards, the coordinating committee presents the standards to the appropriate state agency for review, final revisions, and adoption. It may be necessary for members of the various review committees involved in the

development process to serve as expert witnesses, testifying to the state on the work that they did and their support of the content standards.

If the coordinating committee has provided the state with regular progress reports on the development of content standards, there should not be any surprises in this last stage of review and adoption. Be sure to address all state questions and concerns with the documentation from the planning, development, and review phases. Additionally, the state may require impact analyses in deciding to adopt the content standards.

Submit the draft content standards to the state with an implementation plan. The coordinating committee should develop this plan by addressing four key elements for statewide implementation of a standards-based education system: (1) communication of the goals and policies for standards-based education, (2) professional development and technical assistance, (3) monitoring of local implementation of standards, and (4) evaluation of the initiative. Chapter 5 provides more information on state implementation.

### ***Periodic Review and Revision of Content Standards***

One challenge confronting standards-based education reform efforts is establishing a schedule for revision. It may seem premature to plan for changing newly minted content standards, but periodic reviews and revisions will be needed to be responsive to policy and knowledge advances in adult education. The difficulty in revisiting standards development lies not only with the state and local resources involved (i.e., human and financial resources), but also with the time and planning required. Revision timelines must anticipate the significant time it takes for reform to trickle through the system.

### **Practice and Application**

1. A validity review ensures that the standards represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities most valued for adult learners to succeed as workers, citizens, family members, and lifelong learners. One way to conduct a validity review for content is to gather feedback through a focus group of stakeholders. Develop a plan for this type of review,

proposing which type(s) of stakeholders to include and a set of questions that can be used to solicit feedback.

2. Plan for field testing of the standards. Identify potential programs in the state that may participate. Consider types of programs (e.g., family or workplace literacy), types of agencies (e.g., community-based organization, adult school), the characteristics of the program (e.g., satellite site or full-service site with support systems), and the types of adult learners served (e.g., students who have disabilities, immigrants, incarcerated students).
  - a. What other considerations for program selection will the state take into account?
  - b. What incentives will be provided for participation?
  - c. Who will manage the field tests and coordinate data collection, analyses, and reporting?

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# Chapter 5

## *Implementing Standards-Based Education*

The development, review, and adoption of content standards are initial steps toward standards-based reform. The next steps in the process are to support and monitor local programs in their implementation of standards and to ensure that standards are integrated throughout the adult education system.

Implementation begins with an explicit plan from the state for systematically implementing the standards within the adult education system. The plan integrates the state’s vision, policies, and procedures for establishing standards-based education.

The state agency plays a key role in introducing standards to adult education programs and must clearly articulate its expectations for standards-based education for all programs across the state. It needs to determine when and how standards will be implemented in local programs. In addition, it must ensure that standards are not seen as “add-ons” to current practice, but are viewed as the centerpiece for continuous program improvement leading to higher learner outcomes.

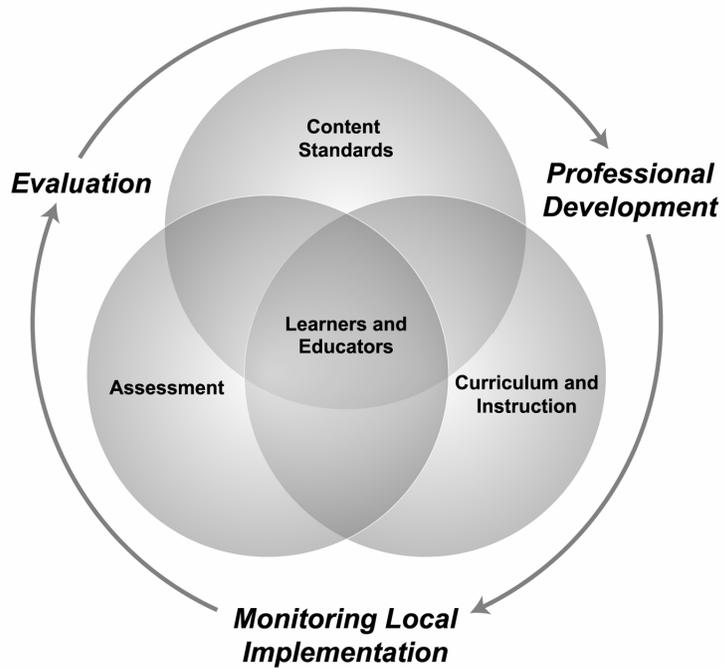
Chapter 5 focuses on issues the state will need to consider as it moves toward implementing standards-based education. It discusses the development of a state plan for introducing standards-based reform and implementing the standards, as well as strategies for communicating the initiative to the field. The state must also determine how to use professional development and technical assistance to support local programs in implementing the standards effectively and how to monitor and evaluate how well standards are integrated at the state and local levels.

The chapter builds on the standards foundation outlined in chapter 2 and the development, alignment, and review of standards described in chapters 3 and 4. This section of the standards-based model focuses on providing professional development and technical assistance, monitoring local programs, and evaluating the standards-based initiative, as illustrated by the outer circle of arrows on exhibit 5.1.

### **Chapter 5 at a Glance**

- Establish a Timeframe for Implementing Standards
- Communicate State Policies and Procedures to Support Standards-Based Education
  - Use Multiple Communication Strategies
  - Customize Communication to Each Audience
  - Disseminate Standards
- Provide Professional Development and Technical Assistance
  - Provide Standards-Based Professional Development
  - Provide Technical Assistance
- Monitor Local Implementation of Standards-Based Education
- Evaluate the State’s Implementation of Standards-Based Education
  - Assess Implementation of Standards-Based Education at the State Level
- Conclusion
- Practice and Application
- References

**Exhibit 5.1. Model for Standards-Based Education**



Before introducing standards, the state needs to plan thoughtfully for implementation. Five key components to include in the state’s implementation plan are:

- Establish a timeframe for local program implementation of the standards.
- Communicate to all stakeholders the state’s goals for standards-based education and the policies and procedures to support those goals.
- Provide professional development and technical assistance so that instructors and administrators have the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the standards.
- Monitor local program implementation of the standards to identify technical assistance needs, make decisions about future funding for programs, or provide rewards to programs that have effectively made the transition to standards-based education.
- Evaluate how standards are being integrated throughout the adult education delivery system.

For each component of the implementation plan, the state will need to set timelines and identify the resources required to implement a fully integrated system of standards-based education. Depending on state and local requirements and resources, as well as the type and degree of changes between the current system and standards-based education, the transition may require one to three years from the date of adoption of the new standards. Finally, keep in mind that strong leadership at the state level is essential for successful implementation.

See the Practice and Application section at the end of the chapter for an activity for developing an implementation plan.

## Establish a Timeframe for Implementing Standards

An issue for the state to consider in implementing the standards is whether all adult education programs will move simultaneously to standards-based education or whether standards will be implemented in phases, with a few programs during each phase. The decision may be contingent on the existence of a mandated timeframe for implementing the standards or the availability of sufficient resources to support implementation of the standards, including the professional development necessary to ensure that assessment and instructional practices are aligned with the content standards.

Benefits of simultaneous implementation include reducing costs through fewer meetings and events (e.g., orientation and professional development workshops), increasing standardization (i.e., all programs receive the same information at the same time), and allowing for statewide implementation in as little time as possible. Monitoring the standards implementation, however, can be a substantial task if all programs implement the standards at the same time.

Gradual implementation requires more time than simultaneous implementation but offers several advantages. It allows programs flexibility, based on their own readiness, in timing the implementation of the standards. Early adopters can serve as models to other programs in subsequent phases of implementation. Also, with fewer programs across multiple phases of implementation, monitoring becomes more manageable, and the state can more easily make midcourse changes if necessary.



### Voices From the Field

Maryland decided to initially introduce and train staff on standards in one-third of the adult education programs. In subsequent years, Maryland will implement the standards in additional programs until all staff are trained and standards are fully implemented statewide. (Patricia L. Bennett, Maryland State Department of Education)



### Voices From the Field

Massachusetts reviews its adult education programs based on a five-year cycle. During the state's first cycle of standards-based education, implementation by local programs was voluntary. Programs had a chance to become familiar with the state's curriculum frameworks and the standards. For the second cycle, implementation of the standards was mandatory and part of program monitoring. (Jane Schwerdtfeger, Massachusetts Department of Education)

If a state decides to phase in standards gradually, it will need to consider which programs should be included initially. A state may want to start with the programs that are most interested in the initiative and want to be involved, or programs that have staff who participated in the development and review of the standards and therefore have an understanding of standards-based education. Beginning with programs with staff who have played a leadership role in the development of the standards will enable these practitioners to build on their knowledge and support their colleagues. In addition, these individuals could serve as mentors for other programs as the state continues to phase in implementation.

Factors that affect whether a state implements the standards simultaneously or in phases may include the size of the state and the number of adult education programs funded. Large states, with many regions or with geographical barriers, as well as states with large numbers of funded programs, may want to consider phasing standards in over time. If the number of programs is initially limited, it may be easier to provide technical support for local program implementation and to monitor implementation. In addition, it is important to determine how ready local programs are to implement standards and whether they have the capacity (e.g., leadership, resources, knowledge, and skills) to implement the standards. In other words, do they have sufficient financial and human resources? Do professional development providers have the knowledge and skills to assist programs in implementing the standards?

Developing a realistic timeline for implementation is essential regardless of whether a state chooses to phase in the content standards gradually or implement them simultaneously in all programs. The amount of time required will vary depending on state resources and the extent to which current systems such as grant awards, professional development, and program monitoring can support the implementation of the standards initiative. When developing an implementation timeline, consider the following questions:

- What policies will support standards-based education? And when will the policies be implemented?
- How and when will the standards be communicated and marketed to different audiences?

- What, when, and how will professional development be provided to support local programs to fully integrate standards within their adult education practices?
- How will local program implementation be monitored and evaluated? When will plans be put in place for monitoring and evaluating based on the content standards?

The state should articulate the approach and timeframe for implementing the standards as it communicates information to the field about its standards-based initiative. States that have developed and implemented content standards have stressed the importance of allowing sufficient time for the change process. Adult educators need time to become familiar with the standards before programs are held accountable for results. States have reported needing from two to five years to fully develop and implement the content standards (see Appendix C, Tools and Templates, for a sample implementation timeline).

Arizona, for example, has developed a set of policies over a four-year period to support the development and implementation of content standards. Once the state decided to move toward standards-based education, state staff worked with stakeholders in the field to identify eight content areas for the standards and the criteria they would use in the development of those standards. The state identified the roles and responsibilities of the individuals who would be involved in the development and implementation process. Additional policies, such as realigning the standards with National Reporting System (NRS) levels and mandating the use of standardized assessment, were phased in over time.

To support the implementation, Arizona embedded professional development related to content standards within its ongoing professional development programs and practices and looked at ways to change fundamentally how professional development was provided in the state. Teachers who participated in the professional development received “hours” toward teacher recertification. Arizona’s implementation timeline (see Appendix C, Tools and Templates) outlines key policy decisions and the related tasks for developing the content standards, providing professional development, and implementing the standards.

## Communicate State Policies and Procedures to Support Standards-Based Education

Consistent, clear, ongoing communication with all stakeholders at the state and local program levels and within the broader community is fundamental to the success of any new initiative. Given the complexity of implementing a statewide, standards-based system, strong and timely communication of the state's goals for standards-based education is of particular importance. Communication about the initiative during the early stages will help stakeholders move through the processes of (1) resisting change, (2) understanding the goals and benefits of standards-based education, and (3) beginning to take ownership of the content standards.

In its communications, the state should articulate how its policies and procedures will support its goals for standards-based education and affect systems at the state and local levels. These policies may affect

- recruiting, hiring, and retaining instructional staff;
- conducting professional development;
- providing curriculum and instructional services;
- assessing student learning;
- holding local programs accountable; and
- supporting learner retention and transition to employment or higher education.

Inform the field about new policies and procedures, including timelines and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for implementing the policies. Show how these policies will foster continuous program improvement and higher learner outcomes.

States have to develop and communicate policies to support implementation of standards-based education that are consistent with their agencies, resources, and delivery systems. Because states operate in different contexts, it is difficult to provide a specific set of policies to follow. However, states may want to consider formulating and communicating policies related to the



### Voices From the Field

“Policies should be communicated well in advance of implementation deadlines.”  
(Karen Liersch, Arizona Department of Education)

timeframe in which all programs must implement standards-based education and incentives to support local program implementation of standards-based education.

The state agency should take the lead in communicating with stakeholders. Draw support from state staff, including professional development providers and state publicity offices, and from the expertise of the advisory committee, coordinating committee, and writing team. Relying on multiple modes of communication will help deliver information quickly to as many stakeholders as possible.

Using a variety of communication strategies will help reach a wide range and large number of stakeholders, develop field support and ownership, create a common language about standards-based education, encourage regular feedback for continuous improvement, and allow for midcourse changes to resolve any problems efficiently and effectively.

### ***Use Multiple Communication Strategies***

Communicating with the field about standards-based education is central to all phases of standards development and actually begins in the early stages of the initiative when the coordinating committee conducts its environmental scan of stakeholders (described in chapter 2). It is during this early phase that the state agency sets the stage for reform and creates the momentum for standards-based education. In its communications, the state should rely on the members of the coordinating committee and writing team, as they are most familiar with the draft standards.

To reach a broad audience, the state should consider

- asking members of the advisory committee to identify representatives from various stakeholder groups (e.g., higher education, business and industry, community-based organizations) to hold public discussions on standards-based education;
- holding discussion groups about standards-based education at local, regional, and statewide adult education meetings;
- asking field test participants to discuss their experience with other practitioners at state and regional conferences and through panel presentations;



#### **Voices From the Field**

Timely communication will increase knowledge and understanding, build commitment and consensus, and encourage stakeholders to be proactive.  
(National Education Goals Panel, n.d.)

- providing an online discussion board and/or state-sponsored electronic mailing list to encourage communication and collaborations between programs and with the state; and
- incorporating information about the standards in an adult education state, regional, or local newsletter.

### ***Customize Communication to Each Audience***

Initially, communication should help programs and other stakeholders gain an understanding of what standards-based education means for adult learners, teachers, programs, and the state. The message should be clear, simple, and focus on the following three key questions:

- What are the goals of standards-based education?
- What state policies support standards-based education?
- How will standards-based education support continuous program improvement?

Stakeholders may raise additional questions, which will then focus communication on issues specific to certain audiences and will help inform the design and delivery of meaningful professional development. To customize communications, consider the following suggestions for different stakeholder groups.

**Adult learners** will benefit most by content standards when they have a clear understanding of how standards will help them meet their learning goals. Incorporate goal-setting activities that stress how learners can be proactive in using the standards to guide their education and ensure they understand the role of assessment in monitoring their own progress. Make sure a variety of communication strategies is used to reach the most learners and that the format of these communications is accessible.

**Program administrators and instructional leaders** will need to understand how standards-based education can improve learner outcomes, improve learner test scores, and increase enrollment as learners recognize that they are making progress. These stakeholders may require detailed information regarding

administrative procedures and policies. For example, they will need a clear understanding of their roles in the implementation process, which includes the delivery of professional development, monitoring of instructional practices and student learning, and possibly even reallocating funds. They also will need to know how to include standards-based education in their grant applications.

**Professional development staff** may need information about the development of the standards to ensure that the original intent of the standards is preserved throughout the delivery of professional development. They also will need to know how standards-based education can be integrated within the overall professional development plan. It is important for them to receive timely communication about any changes to the standards, related documents, and implementation processes and procedures.

**Postsecondary educators** will need to know about standards-based education so they can work effectively with adult educators in establishing supportive linkages to successfully transition adult learners to college and training programs. They should know the types of knowledge and skills they can expect learners to possess upon entry into higher education.

**Legislators and business and community members** share a vested interest in adult learners succeeding in their roles as workers, citizens, family members, and lifelong learners. Communicate to these stakeholders how a standards-based education system (e.g., instruction, assessment, professional development) can improve the literacy and language skills of adult learners and ensure that they are qualified for the workplace and productive contributors to society.

Remember to use simple language to describe the goals of standards-based education to learners and non-educators. Limit the use of educational jargon and focus on the essential benefits of standards-based education to learners, legislators, business partners and the community.

### ***Disseminate Standards***

Once the content standards are adopted by the state, the final version should be disseminated broadly. In deciding how to disseminate the standards, consider who will use them and how best to reach this diverse group. In planning for dissemination of the standards, consider the following:



**Tip**

Adult educators who often teach in diverse locations may prefer to have quality print publications that they can easily carry with them. Make publications attractive and easy to use so that they are not shelved and forgotten.



**Tip**

State affiliates of professional associations and local agencies may want to link their own Web sites to the electronic version of the standards. These links will strengthen statewide communication and dissemination efforts.

- Determine how standards will be published (e.g., hard copy, online, on CD). Standards may be published in multiple formats.
- Decide how instructors, adult learners, community members, and businesses will access the standards documents.
- Identify individuals or groups that will receive hard copies of the standards (e.g., advisory board members, writing team members, adult education program staff).
- Decide what other documents need to be distributed to support implementation of the standards (e.g., state policies and implementation timelines, glossaries, curricula and instructional guides, assessment rubrics) and to whom these supplemental materials must be provided.

Many states rely heavily on the electronic or Web-based publication of their standards and thus can disseminate the standards efficiently by simply providing the field with the URL. In this way, the state can maintain the standards on a state Web site along with any other related documents (e.g., appendices, the timeline for review and revision, correspondence to the field). If the Web site is interactive, be sure that the Web version of the standards is user-friendly, allowing site visitors to navigate the document easily and to print it in part or in full. The standards and any related documents can also be produced on CD-ROMs and distributed at state and regional conferences and through regional professional development centers.

## Provide Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The move toward standards-based education will require substantial changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and possibly even how services are delivered. The state will need to provide professional development and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge and skills of adult education instructors and administrators and to assist local programs in meeting the new standards.

## ***Provide Standards-Based Professional Development***

Professional development promotes change as instructors and administrators gradually acquire a body of knowledge and skills to improve the quality of instructional and administrative practices—and, ultimately, to enhance learner outcomes. The literature on “best practice” in professional development (Garet et al. 2001) indicates that professional development is most effective when it

- is sustained over time,
- focuses on academic subject matter,
- promotes active learning and gives teachers opportunities for hands-on work, and
- forms part of a coherent program for teacher learning and development and is integrated within the daily life of the school.

Consider developing a model for how professional development will be provided to support standards-based education. Exhibit 5.2 provides such an example.

Think about working within the existing state professional development system. Before beginning, however, determine what financial and human resources are currently available for professional development. Also determine whether current professional development providers have the required expertise. If current staff members do not have expertise in standards-based education, consider (1) hiring an external consultant to train state professional development staff and deliver initial professional development offerings, (2) partnering with institutes of higher education that may have teacher preparation programs or subject matter experts who can support the state’s professional development efforts, or (3) partnering with local school districts that have curriculum development expertise and experience in aligning curricula, assessments, and content standards.



### **Tip**

#### **Logic Model of Professional Development**

Quality of professional development program



Increased instructor knowledge and skills



Improved instructional practices



Improved learner outcomes

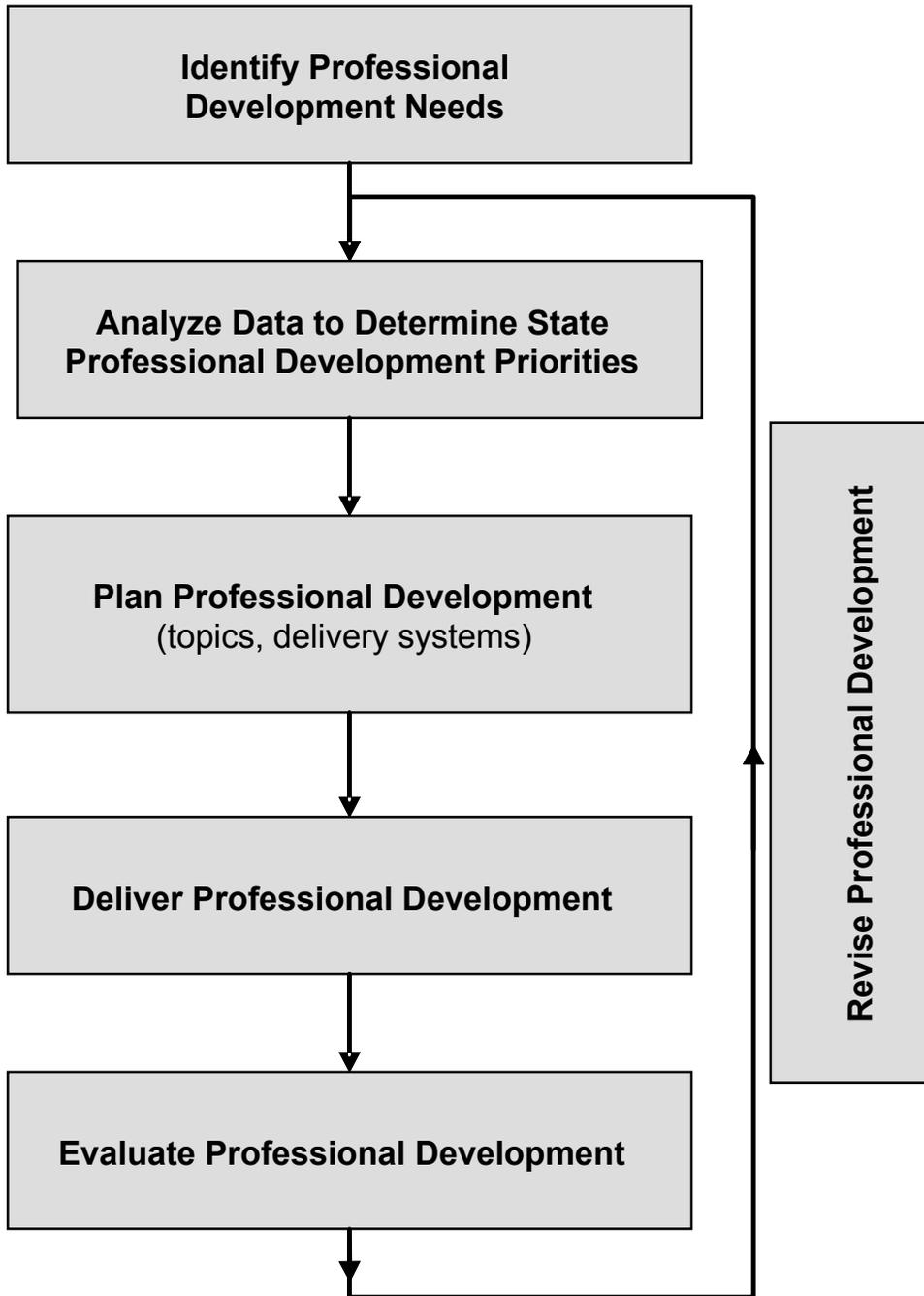


### **Tip**

Building instructor knowledge and skills is a crucial component of successful change.

**Exhibit 5.2. Sample Professional Development Model**

*This professional development model demonstrates how the state’s system will support the implementation of standards-based education. The model has a feedback loop. Evaluation of professional development is used to revise the professional development and inform future offerings.*



There are six basic steps to the professional development model discussed in this chapter. These steps are:

1. Identify professional development needs for standards-based education.
2. Analyze the results of the needs assessment to determine the state's professional development priorities.
3. Plan professional development.
4. Deliver professional development.
5. Evaluate professional development.
6. Revise professional development based on the evaluation.

### **Identify Professional Development Needs for Standards-Based Education**

Needs assessment is an ongoing process. Assessing the professional development needs for standards-based reform is no exception. Opportunities for identifying needs present themselves throughout the activities of the coordinating committee and the various groups that have developed and reviewed the content standards. Some ways of identifying professional development needs are described below.

**Review responses from the environmental scan.** During the planning phase, the coordinating committee conducted an environmental scan to identify priorities for standards (discussed in chapter 2). As stakeholders responded, they also may have raised questions about standards-based reform, definitions of standards, or how the standards will affect their roles and responsibilities. Consider asking the facilitators of the environmental scan to keep a record of the questions posed. That record becomes part of the documentation of the standards development process and is a resource for determining professional development needs. Keep in mind that the environmental scan may have been conducted much earlier, so the data may no longer have the same relevance. Be sure to use such data with caution and in combination with other types of data.

**Review questions and concerns from orientations.** Earlier chapters discussed the need to provide orientation for each of the



#### **Voices From the Field**

“We had to continually assess and work with [the state professional development team] to get them on board. [Standards-based education] changed their work tremendously, and we have to continue to work with them to make sure they understand the ongoing professional development needs as well as the integration of standards-based education in all of their work. ... As an extension of our state staff, it is critical that they support standards-based education and speak as one voice to the field.”  
(Denise Pottmeyer, Ohio Department of Education)



**Tip**

Throughout the development and implementation of standards, certain topics may be controversial. Be sure to document concerns and keep them in mind as potential topics for professional development.

groups involved in the standards development process. It is important to document all questions and concerns raised during orientation and early communication efforts. If members of these groups required additional information, the field in general will likely need more information for implementation.

**Review field test data.** Data from the field test will also help inform standards-based professional development. As the field test manager and coordinating committee analyze the field test data, they should look for trends that identify topics and delivery modes for professional development and educational settings that may require particular services.

**Review requests for technical assistance.** During implementation, trends in the topics and types of technical assistance requested by local programs may emerge. State staff can document and track the number, programs, and specific types of assistance requests. This information can be used to shape future technical assistance and to inform professional development offerings.

**Interview leaders in standards-based education.** Talk with other leaders in standards-based education to learn about successful approaches to professional development. These conversations may suggest ideas and resources (e.g., topics, modules, and other professional development sources) that the state can use to offer standards-based professional development. Other leaders in standards-based education can also be of tremendous support if the state plans to use a new or alternative delivery system, such as online professional development courses.

**Develop a statewide needs survey.** Consider formally administering a statewide needs survey to local program administrators and instructors. Data from the field test and other sources (e.g., interviews, orientations, technical assistance requests) can be used to inform the survey. In designing a needs survey, carefully plan the content, format, and dissemination strategies. These design features can strongly affect response rates. To maximize response rates, make sure the survey is simple, easy to understand, focused, a reasonable length, and disseminated widely. Let respondents know ahead of time how long it takes to complete the survey. Exhibit 5.3 presents sample items to consider for inclusion on a professional development survey.

**Exhibit 5.3. Sample Needs Survey Items**

*Below are sample items to include in a professional development needs survey, including demographic items and questions about content, instructional and assessment strategies, and delivery methods.*

**Professional Development Needs Survey**

**Demographic Information**

Program Area:  ABE  ASE  ELA  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Position:  Instructor  Administrator  Program Coordinator

Years of Experience in Current Position:  0–2  3–5  6–10  11–15  15+

Region of State: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Agency:  Adult school  
 Community college  
 Community-based organization  
 School district

**Please select and prioritize your top two content areas for professional development from the choices below.**

Literacy skills development

Mathematics

Specify content area (e.g., algebra): \_\_\_\_\_

Reading for limited English proficient students

Speaking and listening for limited English proficient students

**Please select and prioritize two topics for professional development from the choices below.**

Monitoring student progress in achieving standards

Developing curricula based on content standards

Planning lessons around standards

Selecting materials to support standards-based education

**Please select your preferred method(s) for professional development.**

Mentoring

Study circles

Online courses

Workshops

Network groups

Summer institutes

Gather only information that can be used and is needed to make decisions for statewide professional development. Build on the current professional development system, focusing on any gaps that may exist in addressing the content standards. The needs survey will help identify topics for professional development events and services, as well as delivery systems for them.

If feasible, use a Web-based survey, as it offers several advantages compared to a hard-copy survey. Web-based surveys provide better accessibility to the field; eliminate printing and mailing costs; and facilitate data collection, compilation, and analysis. Web-based surveys can ease the tracking of responses for follow-up or to send reminders. Additionally, Web-based surveys can reduce the number of items administered by tailoring the items to the individual respondent. For example, if the respondent is an instructor of beginning English language acquisition (ELA), that individual would receive items that are relevant to teaching and to that level of instruction and content area. An administrator, on the other hand, would receive items relevant to program administration.

See the Practice and Application section at the end of this chapter for a suggested process to identify the professional development needs for staff within the state.

### **Analyze Results to Determine the State's Professional Development Priorities**

Analyze data from all needs assessments (formal and informal). Look for patterns and trends in the data that suggest possible priorities for professional development. Priorities may be organized by content areas, instructional and assessment approaches, and professional development delivery methods. When evaluating the information gathered, consider whether differences are observed by

- experience of respondent (e.g., instructors, support staff, administrators),
- region of the state, and/or
- type of program.

Given observable differences, are there trends related to the size of the program, the population served, or specific instructional



#### **Voices From Research**

Information on building capacity through setting professional development and training standards can be found in *State Strategies for Building Local Capacity: Addressing the Needs of Standards-Based Reform* (Massell 1998).

See [http://www.cpre.org/images/stories/cpre\\_pdfs/rb25.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/images/stories/cpre_pdfs/rb25.pdf) (accessed December 2007).

levels? Are the differences attributable to new content required by the content standards?

## Plan Professional Development

Use the results of any needs assessments, including feedback from field reviews conducted during the development of content standards, to plan for statewide professional development. Priorities for professional development will vary among the types of practitioners in the field and their knowledge of standards-based education. Topics are likely to fall into the following broad areas.

**Build adult educators' knowledge of standards-based education.** Adult educators need to understand what is meant by standards-based education and to have a common understanding of terms, state expectations, how standards-based education will affect learners, how it differs from what currently exists, and how it is integrated within the adult education system. Providing professional development on standards-based education early in the implementation process will help build a strong foundation for later efforts to address the standards. Exhibit 5.4 provides sample questions to consider including in an orientation module for standards-based education.

### Exhibit 5.4. Questions for a Professional Development Orientation Module on Standards-Based Education

*The following are samples of the types of questions addressed by an orientation module on the basics of standards-based education.*

- What are the goals of standards-based education?
- How do standards affect learners? Teachers? Programs?
- What is the definition of content standard, program standard, and performance standard?
- What are the implications for flexible, locally driven curriculum and instruction in a standards-based system?
- How are standards integrated within other systems in adult education (e.g., application process, program monitoring and accountability, incentive/award programs, professional development)?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of instructors, administrators, the state, and other stakeholders in making the transition to standards-based education?



### Voices From Research

More information on standards and professional education can be found on the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy Web site, including:

- *Focus on Basics* issues related to standards-based education, staff development, and theories of change.
- Report #26, *The Characteristics and Concerns of Adult Basic Education Teachers* (Smith and Hofer 2003).

See <http://www.ncsall.net>.



### Voices From Research

Research suggests that when professional development is focused on academic content and curriculum that are aligned with standards-based reform, teaching practice and student achievement are likely to improve.

(Cohen and Hill 2000)



### Voices From Research

*Focus on Basics* offers relevant information on content areas and curriculum in the following issues:

- Mathematics Instruction (September 2000)
- First-level learners (August 2001)
- Curriculum development (September 2003)

See <http://www.ncsall.net> for more information about this quarterly publication of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

**Build instructor knowledge in the content areas.** Many instructional positions in adult education are part time, and the experience and expertise of adult educators is diverse. As a result, educators may not have a strong background in their content areas, particularly in content specified by the standards. To enable learners to succeed in a standards-driven curriculum, instructors must be well prepared to teach to the state-adopted content standards.

The content standards define the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities of the discipline for all adult learners. Ideally, instructors will have a strong foundation in the content area on which to build an understanding of the context for learning, the rationale behind it, and how to teach it. However, when content standards are introduced, some instructors may not have the appropriate content knowledge and, therefore, may require ongoing, content-specific professional development. High-quality professional development is essential to filling these gaps in instructor knowledge and skills. To assist less effective or less skilled instructors, consider mentoring, coaching, study circles, and other professional development opportunities that are embedded within the teaching and learning environments.

#### **Develop standards-based curriculum and instruction.**

Translating the standards into effective curriculum and instruction is a large and fundamental task facing local programs and instructors. Professional development can be used to help instructors and administrators determine the alignment of current curriculum to the content standards and then adapt or develop curriculum to address the standards. Instructors will need to learn how to develop standards-based lessons. Professional development provides a critical link from standards to curriculum and instruction—and ultimately to growth in learner outcomes.

**Build skills in developing and using standards-based assessments.** For standards-based education to lead to higher levels of learning and improved outcomes, adult education staff will also need professional development that focuses on assessment and accountability. State and local programs need professional development to explore how ongoing classroom or curriculum-based assessments may be more powerful in helping students achieve. Professional development provides practitioners with guidance on selecting and designing assessment strategies and tools for different purposes and for measuring progress with the content standards.

## Deliver Professional Development

As in communication and marketing, no single approach will effectively reach a diverse population of adult educators across the state, including remote areas. Offering a variety of ongoing, embedded professional development options increases each local program's capacity to become more comfortable and skilled in implementing standards. The state implementation plan should consider a variety of approaches to professional development, including training modules that can be used and adapted continually and throughout the state. Consider offering a combination of the following approaches.

**Workshops.** Regional workshops offer face-to-face interaction between the experts and practitioners. They are most effective when delivered as a series or coupled with other forms of professional development rather than offered as stand-alone events. For example, because of variations in instructors' knowledge, consider offering a series of workshops that build on each other or address different instructional levels. Workshops provide hands-on training with materials and encourage networking among participants.

**Institutes.** Because standards-based education may involve fundamental changes in educational practices, more in-depth professional development delivered over several days may be required. Institutes offer participants the opportunity to build their knowledge base, apply new skills, reflect on practice, and share expertise. Institutes may be organized in strands for new and experienced instructors, or they may offer different strands to address a variety of implementation issues. They may be structured as annual, multiple-day events (e.g., a summer institute) with all adult educators encouraged to attend. Institutes may also be required for all new staff as part of their orientation or preservice training.

**Online courses.** State-sponsored training modules can also be adapted for online delivery. These courses can be developed as self-paced or facilitated sequences. Online professional development offers flexibility in when and how the courses are accessed and increases opportunities for instructors in remote areas or for whom release time is limited.

**Mentors.** Pairing or grouping instructors with a content expert at the program or district level can help provide ongoing support to instructors. Mentors are particularly useful in tailoring



### Tip

Networking among adult educators who participate in professional development is most useful when it continues beyond workshops and single events. Setting up an electronic mailing list during the transition period is an efficient way to continue networking and to encourage programs to support each other.



### Voices From the Field

“As a result of this Standards Institute, ABLE professionals should

“Know:

- what standards-based education means in Ohio
- what their roles are in implementing standards-based education

“Be able to:

- create a crosswalk between assessment instruments and the standards benchmarks
- use lesson planning to assist them in implementing standards-based education into their practice”

Excerpted from the Ohio Standards Institute. For more information, visit <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=13206> (accessed December 2007).



### Voices From Research

See NCSALL's publication list of teaching and training materials for more information on professional development models, such as study circles.



### Voices From the Field

Maryland conducted a three-day train-the-trainer institute for master teachers in eleven programs that were initially implementing ELA standards. Programs were required to submit training plans (e.g., frequency of professional development and approaches to be used) based on program needs. The master teachers worked with the local program administrators to ensure that professional development would take place throughout the program year. Training and implementation were monitored to identify changes in Year 2. (Bonnie Meyer, Maryland State Department of Education)

professional development to the needs of individual instructors. This type of professional development is embedded within the learning environment. Although many educators might think mentoring is for novice instructors only, it can be equally effective with seasoned instructors and administrators as well when using new approaches, curricula, or technologies.

**Network groups.** Local or regional network groups can provide ongoing support to instructors and help encourage peer support. These groups can be facilitated by a professional development staff member or another adult educator. Network groups are most effective when they are focused on a particular content area or program area.

**Study circles.** Consider study circles as an option for focused professional development, embedded within the learning process and offered at the local level. Study circles are advantageous because they offer instructors a structure within which to consider the research, strategies, theory, and practice behind a discipline. Often, practitioners bring examples of local resources and practices to share with others in the group, broadening the knowledge base of all participants. This professional development approach can continue throughout practice.

Professional development is most effective when it is responsive to the ever-changing needs at the local level. It should offer adult education instructors and administrators multiple opportunities through multiple delivery systems. Most importantly, professional development requires ongoing support at both the state and local levels to keep the standards alive and address the continual staffing changes inherent in adult education.

Exhibit 5.5 provides suggestions for several professional development modules related to standards-based education. The exhibit also suggests some online resources.

## Evaluate Professional Development

The evaluation and revision of professional development serves two purposes: (1) to determine its effectiveness in improving participants' knowledge and skills and in improving the quality of instruction; and (2) to assess changes in program and administrative practices. These aspects are discussed briefly in the next sections.

**Exhibit 5.5. Professional Development Modules**

*This chart outlines potential topics for standards-based professional development and some online resources related to each topic.*

Professional Development Module	Suggested Online Resources
Introduction to standards-based education (e.g., types of standards, definitions, change process, integration within adult education system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concept to Classroom’s “Teaching to Academic Standards” Workshop <a href="http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/index.html">http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/index.html</a></li> </ul>
Strengthen subject area knowledge (e.g., reading, mathematics, and English language acquisition) based on gaps identified in instructor knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reading—National Institute for Literacy’s Mini-Course in Reading <a href="http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Intro.htm">http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Intro.htm</a></li> <li>■ Math—Annenberg/CPB: Teacher resources and Mathematics, College/Adult “Learning Math” Series <a href="http://www.learner.org/channel/courses/learningmath/index.html">http://www.learner.org/channel/courses/learningmath/index.html</a></li> <li>■ ELA—Instructional Tools for Adult ESL Instructors <a href="http://www.cal.org/caela/tools/instructional/">http://www.cal.org/caela/tools/instructional/</a></li> </ul>
Aligning curriculum and instruction to standards (e.g., alignment of curricula, materials, and lessons) and developing standards-based curriculum and instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concept to Classroom’s Standards Exploration—“How do I start using standards?” and “Standards in action” <a href="http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/exploration.html">http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/exploration.html</a> <a href="http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/demonstration.html">http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/standards/demonstration.html</a></li> <li>■ <i>How to Develop a Standards-Based Unit of Study</i> <a href="http://www.education.ky.gov">http://www.education.ky.gov</a> (use search box to search for title)</li> <li>■ Ohio’s Standards and Benchmarks: Learning Activities and Curriculum Alignments <a href="http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=13205">http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=13205</a> (accessed December 2007)</li> <li>■ Equipped for the Future’s Teaching/Learning Toolkit <a href="http://eff.cls.utk.edu/toolkit/default.htm">http://eff.cls.utk.edu/toolkit/default.htm</a></li> </ul>
Aligning assessment to standards (e.g., curriculum and classroom-based assessment; standardized assessments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concept to Classroom’s “Assessment, Evaluation, and Curriculum Redesign” Workshop <a href="http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/assessment/index.html">http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/assessment/index.html</a></li> <li>■ Ohio’s Standards and Benchmarks: Assessment Alignment <a href="http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=13205">http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=13205</a> (accessed December 2007)</li> <li>■ Equipped for the Future’s Assessment Resource Collection <a href="http://eff.cls.utk.edu/assessment/default.htm">http://eff.cls.utk.edu/assessment/default.htm</a></li> </ul>



### Voices From Research

See *Evaluating Professional Development: A Framework for Adult Education* (Kutner et al. 1997; <http://www.calpro-online.org/pubs/evalmon.pdf> (accessed December 2007) for a systematic approach to evaluating professional development.



### Voices From Research

“A plan for capacity building initially should focus on bringing together school administrators and staff in a professional learning community.”  
(North Central Regional Educational Laboratory 2000, 11)

**Assess changes in instructional practices.** As noted earlier in this section, standards-based professional development is often designed to build practitioners’ knowledge of standards and content areas and to support practitioners in using standards for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To assess and evaluate these changes, the state agency may want to ask local program administrators and instructors the following types of questions:

- How well can practitioners define standards and apply them in their classrooms?
- To what extent do practitioners consistently provide standards-based instruction?
- How have local programs and staff adapted or developed curriculum and materials to support standards-based education?
- What new assessment practices have been initiated as a result of standards-based professional development and technical assistance?

**Assess changes in program and administrative practices.** To have a meaningful effect on learners, professional development must not only influence instructor knowledge and behavior, but also must bring about change in programs. Standards-based education will affect several program and administrative practices at the state and local levels. To assess and evaluate these changes, the state agency may want to ask local program administrators the following types of questions:

- What program processes (e.g., learner intake, orientation, or collaborations with other agencies to transition learners to higher education or employment) have changed as a result of standards-based professional development?
- To what extent have recruitment, hiring, and preservice training changed to reflect the knowledge and skills instructors need for teaching and assessing learners within a standards-based model?

Plan to continually assess the system and processes for providing professional development as the standards are implemented across programs.

## Revise Professional Development

Ongoing reviews will allow the state to make midcourse corrections that will improve the system. To assess and revise professional development, the state agency may ask professional development providers and instructional staff the following types of questions:

- When, where, and why is professional development being offered? Who is participating? What delivery methods are being used?
- How are the professional development activities helping instructors and administrators transition to standards-based education?
- What additional topics, delivery models, and resources are needed at the state and local levels to sustain change and further development?

To evaluate and revise professional development effectively, the state cannot rely solely on evaluation forms. It is important to model good assessment practices by using multiple strategies to gather information. For example, consider (1) periodic observation of practice to document any changes over time; (2) interviews and focus groups with education leaders, instructors, adult learners, and support staff; (3) instructor portfolios describing and documenting change; (4) new or revised curricula, assessments, and materials; and (5) data showing continuous program improvement.

Use these various sources of evaluation, in addition to ongoing needs assessment, to revise current offerings and to inform the state's overall professional development system. Evaluation and revision of the system is a continual process and should consistently be performed to make improvements.

## ***Provide Technical Assistance***

Standards-based education may require programs to change curriculum, instructional delivery, and assessment of student progress. Such changes are sure to create many program-specific questions and concerns that are not fully addressed by the general professional development products and services offered by the state. The state needs to consider how to meet the ongoing needs of program staff through technical assistance that focuses



**Tip**

The work of the technical assistance team can be facilitated by e-mail and an electronic mailing list so that team members can easily share information and support each other.



**Tip**

To form a technical assistance team, recruit from the development team and train other adult educators as standards specialists.

Budget for stipends or other incentives to technical assistance providers for their ongoing efforts.

on these task-specific requests of a local program. Technical assistance should be both *problem solving*, to address the immediate request, and *capacity building*, to enable local programs to resolve similar problems during implementation.

Technical assistance requests typically relate to program administration and new procedures. For example, a program may request assistance with

- establishing local policies and procedures to implement the content standards,
- interpreting the content standards in a specific context,
- adapting or developing curriculum,
- revising the current instructional delivery system to reflect the content standards,
- providing access to standards-based education for adults with learning disabilities, or
- monitoring instruction to ensure that all teachers are adopting a standards-based model.

Technical assistance may include direct guidance from regional or state standards specialists (e.g., members of the development team and coordinating committee); on-site, subject-specific network meetings facilitated by a state agent or state-recommended educator; or regular site visits from state or regional consultants. Keep in mind that technical assistance is a consultative process and should be tailored to the specific requests of local programs. The type and depth of state technical assistance will be determined largely by individual program needs.

Consider forming a technical assistance team to work with programs. Look for strong regional representation on the team. Offer stipends to support technical assistance providers in what is likely to be a long-term, time-intensive task.

As programs become more sophisticated in their capability to deliver standards-based education, their specific technical assistance needs are likely to change. Also, these same services may be requested by several local programs, and the services requested may form the basis for future professional development. Retain records of technical assistance requests and

the services provided. This documentation will guide revisions to technical assistance and provide evidence of how the state is responding to local program needs.

Similar to professional development, technical assistance should be monitored and evaluated. The information can help programs make decisions related to program services. For example, implementing standards may require local staff to rethink orientation practices if they are considering moving to managed enrollment. Programs may want to develop local curricula rather than rely solely on published textbooks. And teachers may begin to include more explicit progress monitoring in their daily practice so that learners have a better sense of their progress, which might lead to increased learner persistence in the program.

## Monitor Local Implementation of Standards-Based Education

The state agency should assess how well standards-based education is being implemented at the local program level. As local programs transition to standards-based education, changes will be required—some may be minor, and others may be significant. How quickly and to what extent change occurs depends on the knowledge and skills of local instructors and administrators, their access to professional development and technical assistance, and their attitudes toward standards-based education. Areas in which to expect changes include curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

The following questions can guide the state in assessing how well standards-based education is being implemented by local programs:

- Are the content standards fully addressed by curriculum?  
By instruction? By assessment?
- How are local programs supporting standards-based education?
- What evidence is there to suggest that standards-based education is being implemented effectively?
- To what extent are adult learners knowledgeable about standards-based education?



### Voices From the Field

To learn more about using rubrics to assess implementation, see

- *Succeeding with Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning* (Carr and Harris 2001), or
- *Adult Basic and Literacy Education: Program Rubric for Implementation of Standards-Based Education (SBE)*

Visit the Ohio Department of Education website to access these materials at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=966&Content=13630>.

As the state agency begins to assess how well standards-based education is being integrated, it also needs to document the evidence that supports the integration. Regular program monitoring, through both desk reviews and on-site reviews, will allow the state to get a clear idea of a program's progress.

During a desk review, state staff can compare plans for program improvement and standards implementation with reports and other information from the state database. Once the standards are fully implemented in several programs, the state agency can also look for trends in learners' outcomes. Desk reviews allow staff to look at budget allocations and expenses to see how local programs are allocating funds for effective implementation of standards-based education. Desk reviews, especially when they include a program self-review using quality indicators, are also very helpful in planning for an on-site review.

On-site reviews allow state staff to observe how content standards are being integrated within the program and, more specifically, how they are being used in the classroom. On-site visits allow state staff to interview or hold focus groups with staff and adult learners about changes they have noted as a result of the standards initiative. State monitoring teams can gather evidence through multiple strategies. Be sure to make arrangements with local programs in advance of any state site reviews. Exhibit 5.6 provides an overview of some useful strategies for monitoring implementation of standards-based education at the local level.

## Evaluate the State's Implementation of Standards-Based Education

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to the success of any initiative, and standards-based education is no exception. To assess how well standards-based education is being integrated within the adult education system, the state should analyze information from local program monitoring as part of the statewide evaluation of implementation. Findings from the local monitoring should be evaluated using learner outcome data, which is aggregated at the state level.



### Tip

#### From Application to Implementation

If standards-based reform is mandated by the state, build it into the state's existing grant application process. Many states use their annual grant application process for funding all local program activities, but some states prefer a separate application process for new initiatives that require special funding and technical assistance.

**Exhibit 5.6. Sample Strategies for On-Site Program Monitoring**

*This exhibit identifies some common strategies for monitoring local program implementation of standards-based education through on-site reviews.*

Strategy	Process and Considerations
<b>Observation</b>	Visit orientation and intake sessions to see whether the standards are discussed and whether they have an impact on goal-setting. Visit classrooms to see how standards are integrated within instruction and assessment.
<b>Administrator interviews</b>	Conduct interviews with local program administrators to discuss the program’s plan for implementing and monitoring standards-based education. Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ program timelines and improvement plans,</li> <li>■ program processes (e.g., orientation of learners, recruitment and retention, professional development, and learner outcomes), and</li> <li>■ budget allocations and expenditures.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff and learner focus groups</b>	Conduct focus groups with staff and with learners to gather information on what changes have occurred in local programs as a result of standards-based education. Questions to the focus groups might include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What changes have occurred in program delivery (e.g., schedules, orientation, assessment, and other services)?</li> <li>■ What changes have occurred in the classroom?</li> <li>■ What has gone well? And what has been challenging?</li> <li>■ What additional resources are needed (i.e., for instructors and for learners)?</li> <li>■ What would you tell other people about the program?</li> <li>■ What recommendations would you make to improve the program?</li> </ul>
<b>Document and data reviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Review curricula, lesson plans, materials, and assessment tools that are being used to determine whether these materials align with the content standards.</li> <li>■ Review outcome data to identify any changes or trends since implementation began.</li> </ul>

As noted throughout this guide, it is essential that the standards initiative be integrated within all the components of the state adult education system. By ensuring that standards are an integral part of adult education, instructors, administrators, and other local program staff will see that standards are not another “add-on” to their workload but are the centerpiece of an aligned system. Everyone needs to understand that they are accountable for implementing the standards and working toward higher learner outcomes.

### ***Assess Implementation of Standards-Based Education at the State Level***

The state will need to assess how well it is implementing policies and procedures for standards-based education. Monitoring at the state level may focus on the following areas.

- **Program applications.** Examine how well new guidelines for applications for state funding lead to continuous program improvement through standards-based education. Guidelines may focus on program design and scheduling to enhance learner participation and retention; intake and orientation processes; support services and referral systems; and program goal-setting processes. How clearly stated are the new application guidelines? Are there any guidelines that are consistently misunderstood?
- **Professional development.** Review the resources that have been committed to support professional development and consider how well those resources support standards-based education. In determining the effectiveness of professional development, examine all components (e.g., content, materials, providers, delivery methods, locations). What professional development has been provided to assist in aligning curriculum and assessment with the content standards? How is the impact of professional development being documented?
- **Curriculum and instruction.** The state can support standards-based curriculum and instruction in a number of ways. For example, the state can develop curriculum frameworks from which local programs can develop instruction and materials, or develop resource banks of standards-related instructional materials. Evaluate the various ways that the state supports curriculum and

instruction. What policies support local program development of standards-based curriculum? What procedures are in place for developing and sharing standards-based resources across programs? What incentives have been provided to programs that support effective implementation (e.g., financial and technology resources)?

- **Monitoring reviews.** The state should also evaluate the effectiveness of its system to monitor local programs. Data from desk reviews as well as on-site reviews and observations will be useful in making this determination. How have monitoring guidelines been revised to incorporate standards-based education? What professional development has been provided to staff to conduct monitoring reviews that incorporate standards-based education?

The state should appoint a team to assess how standards-based education is being implemented at the state level. Once information is collected, this team can analyze the findings and use this information to prioritize areas for improvement. As with other evaluations identified in this guide, evaluation of the state's implementation of standards-based education is an ongoing process, and the findings should be incorporated within the state's continuous improvement plan. It is the state's responsibility to ensure that its implementation policies and procedures continually reflect an integrated, standards-based system.

## Conclusion

Effective implementation of the standards will take time and effort at both the state and local levels. Standards-based education requires a willingness to effect change that will benefit learners and programs during times of increased accountability—and, unfortunately for some states, decreased funding. Researchers and education reformers continually stress the need for broad-based consensus building, which continues throughout the process and is especially important at the local level, where teachers and learners have to use the standards on a regular basis. Programs need support in many ways: clear policies, adequate funding for change, professional development, technical assistance, and new resources.

Adults will continually need to learn new skills for the twenty-first century, so the content standards cannot be static. With new

education, technology, and workforce demands, the standards will have to be updated. As learner populations and programs change, the standards will need adjustments. If the standards have been aligned with other standards, any change in the other document will necessitate a review for the adult education document. Additionally, changes in the NRS might have implications for state standards (e.g., new standardized test options or changes in the level descriptors).

Change provides an incentive to strengthen our partnerships with employers, higher education, community-based organizations, and other service providers. Because standards-based education is a systemic reform, it provides an opportunity to collaborate and to seek new resources and strategies. Finally, because developing and implementing standards does not prescribe how teachers teach, this is an opportunity to try new approaches that will help adults learn and apply their skills and knowledge in contexts that are truly meaningful—the very ones learners identified during the initial environmental scan that asked, *“What should learners know and be able to do?”*

## Practice and Application

1. Draft an action plan for implementing the new content standards. (See Appendix C, Tools and Templates, to find Sample Action Plan—Implementation.) Identify the subtasks for each of the following state activities:
  - communicating and disseminating standards;
  - professional development;
  - technical assistance; and
  - evaluating professional development, technical assistance, and the extent to which standards are being implemented.
2. Brainstorm, with members of the state professional development system, ideas for developing a statewide needs assessment. What would be the best format? How would you assess both content needs and learning preferences?

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# Appendix A

## ***White Paper: Moving Toward Standards-Based Education***

### **Roots of the Standards-Based Movement**

The standards-based reform movement began in the 1980s with the public response to discouraging reports on the quality of American public education, such as *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983), which unfavorably compared American school performance to that of other industrialized countries. High-level attention was given to public school reform by then-president George H. W. Bush and the agreement of the nation's governors, written up as *The National Education Goals Panel Report: Building a Nation of Learners* (1991). The goals set forth in that document were ambitious, visionary, and sweeping. The signers pledged to improve academic achievement and ensure readiness to learn, adult literacy, and safe schools. President Clinton followed up in 1994 with Goals 2000 legislation, thus taking a further step toward national standards and accountability mechanisms. In 2001, President George W. Bush authorized the No Child Left Behind legislation that further emphasized the focus on accountability and assessment.

Simultaneously, the changing labor market and economy in the 1980s signaled a call to address school reform. A report from the National Center on Education and the Economy (1990), *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages?*, focused attention at the policy and corporate levels on the need for high school reform as well as retraining workers and opportunities for upgrading skills. The U.S. Department of Labor published the report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (U.S. Department of Labor 1991), setting priorities of "high performance workplaces"—those that require flexible thinking, continual training, employee empowerment, responsibility for quality and production management, and teamwork. The training necessary to achieve these workplace skills was considered at odds with the traditional high school



### Voices From Research

“In the new knowledge economy, access to good jobs and earnings [is] driven by the complementarities among [problem-solving and interpersonal] skills, general education beyond high school, occupational preparation, and the resultant access to learning and technology on the job.”  
(Carnevale and Desrochers 2003, 17)

curriculum and performance expectations, which emphasized individual work and isolated subject areas. Similar concerns about the mismatches between schooling goals and new market realities inform the more recent report from the Educational Testing Service, *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K–16 Reform* (Carnevale and Desrochers 2003).

These reports have publicly involved the business community and the U.S. Department of Labor in the school reform conversation. This involvement can be seen in the move in vocational and adult education toward a focus on workforce development and increased calls for accountability. This move was cemented when adult education funding was included in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, pending reauthorization as the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act. This link with labor secures a strong voice for business and industry in education, especially in secondary and adult education—a voice very familiar with the language of standards and accountability.

### ***What Adult Education Can Learn From the K–12 Experience***

Adult education and literacy programs enter an era of standards-based education when leaders in the K–16 educational world are calling for “mid-course corrections” to the standards reforms (Darling-Hammond 2003). The timing of this entrance affords adult education the advantage of learning from earlier successes as well as from missteps and misalignments (Stites 1999).

The standards-based education movement has led to reforms—initiated in K–12 education, such as more transparent public accountability mechanisms, higher expectations for students and schools regardless of local economics—and an increased reliance on standardized assessments and accountability systems that can support comparisons across schools, districts, and states.

These reform efforts and the data derived from their study have yielded positive outcomes, such as the following:

- incontrovertible evidence of the positive impact on student learning from well-trained teachers (Darling-Hammond 1999)
- invigoration of research on best practices for professional development (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999; Darling-Hammond and Sykes 1999; Loucks-Horsley et al. 1998)

- public and policy involvement in educational accountability (Dutro and Valencia 2004; Merrow 2001)
- higher expectations for all students in spite of their ethnicity, economics, ability status, etc. (American Federation of Teachers 2003; Darling-Hammond 2003)

As a result of these outcomes, public education advocacy groups began discussing the allocation of resources necessary to build the capacity for schools and districts to implement standards-based education and for students to be able to succeed in classes with high standards.

Darling-Hammond (2003) suggests three areas to which the standards-based education movement needs to pay attention to accomplish the “mid-course correction” that can rectify some of the traditional and growing inequalities in the American education system and increase the capacity of institutions to offer high quality education:

- *quality and alignment* of standards, curriculum guidance, and assessments
- *appropriate use of assessments* to improve instruction rather than punish students and schools
- development of systems that ensure *equal and adequate opportunity to learn*

Similar to most change efforts, however, the reforms brought about through the implementation of standards have resulted in controversy and unintended consequences. Critics decry:

- overreliance on standardized tests and high-stakes testing (Kohn 2000; Merrow 2001)
- standards that are unrealistic and cumbersome “wish lists” created by content area experts (Marzano and Kendall 1998; Popham 2001)
- early abandonment of the opportunity to learn standards that focused on equitable inputs and resources (NCTE and IRA 1996; Stites 1999)
- misguided sequence of adopting assessment tools before aligning standards and curriculum (Merrow 2001)

These mistakes have taken an uneven toll on educationally vulnerable students (Darling-Hammond 2003) and disadvantaged schools. They have also been seen as a threat to teachers' creativity and to local responsiveness to cultural interests and needs. It is critical that adult educators consider these criticisms and address them openly as the field moves forward with standards-based education; these criticisms will no doubt resurface in local communities and programs.

Adult education has the opportunity to implement standards-based education and strong accountability systems with a maturity balanced by others' experiences and educators' social vision, born of long history of social activism and work with marginalized learners. Standards-based education can be a call to action, not merely from the top policy makers down to the field, but from the field *out* to all stakeholders and students—a call to dialogue on what constitutes quality adult education.

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# Appendix B

## *Glossary*

### **Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE)**

Adult basic education (ABE) and literacy instruction emphasizes basic skills development in reading, writing, mathematics, and problem solving for adults below the eighth grade proficiency level. Adult secondary education (ASE) instruction helps learners prepare to receive a high school credential or for successful entry into employment or postsecondary education and training.

### **Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse**

The Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse is an online repository of adult education content standards documents in English language acquisition, mathematics, and reading. Users can research and retrieve documents by a specific sponsor or author, or they can explore specific content within any given standards. The warehouse is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and can be accessed at <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/>.

### **Academic (or Basic) Skills-Based Approach**

An academic skills-based approach focuses on skill development in reading, writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition. Basic skills curricula usually consist of a sequence of skills that are introduced and practiced at higher levels of complexity as learners advance within the program.

### **Accountability**

Accountability considers the extent to which an individual, group, or institution is held responsible for meeting specified outcome measures. Accountability systems require programs to provide substantiated evidence of student achievement (e.g., educational achievement, entry into employment, receipt of a high school credential) as a condition of funding.

### **Advisory Committee**

An advisory committee often comprises leaders or experts in a content area who represent various stakeholder perspectives and provide overall guidance to a project.

### **Alignment**

Alignment is a documented connection among standards, teaching, learning, and assessment. Alignment is essential to fairness in an accountability system. Only when the components are aligned can programs expect to see higher outcomes and sustainable program improvement.

### **American Diploma Project (ADP)**

The American Diploma Project (ADP) is a joint project launched by Achieve, Inc., the Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. The goals are to (1) determine the English and mathematics skills that high school graduates need to be successful in college and the workplace and (2) help states incorporate those skills into standards, assessments, and high school graduation requirements. ADP outlines college and workplace readiness

benchmarks in English and mathematics and provides samples of how academic standards are used in the real world. See <http://www.achieve.org>.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is process for monitoring and evaluating student performance and achievement. Assessment methods include standardized tests and classroom-based measures such as observations, projects, interviews, portfolios, quizzes, etc. Assessments can be conducted at the individual, classroom, school, district, state, and national levels.

### **Benchmarks**

Benchmarks describe the set of skills and knowledge learners need to develop and achieve to master a content standard. (See also *Indicators*.)

### **Bias**

When the content or language of a document reflects a prejudice or stereotype of a particular group, it may be considered “biased.” Potential bias may hinder learning and can be found in references to age, gender, racial/ethnic, cultural, disability, socioeconomic, community (rural, urban, or suburban), and/or linguistic groups in the population of adult learners to be served by the content standards.

### **CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)**

CASAS is a widely used system for adult education that includes life skill competencies, standardized assessments, curriculum and training resources, and instruments for program evaluation. CASAS assessments can be used with both native and non-native speakers of English to measure basic skills in reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking within functional contexts. See <http://casas.org/casasnewweb/index.cfm> (accessed December 2007).

### **Competency-Based/Life Skills Approach**

A competency-based approach focuses on the functional use of reading, writing, mathematics, and speaking skills in adult contexts. Competency-based or survival curricula offer a list of competencies in topic areas such as consumerism, health, or employment. Learners identify important competencies and then develop the basic reading, math, and language skills they need to complete a real-life or functional task.

### **Congruence**

Congruence occurs when a content standard coincides exactly with the document(s) with which it must align.

### **Content Area**

A content area is a subject or discipline such as reading, mathematics, science, or English language acquisition.

### **Content Standards**

Content standards describe what learners should know and be able to do within a specific content area.

### **Contradiction**

Contradiction occurs when a content standard is inconsistent with or in opposition to the document(s) with which it must align.

**Coordinating Committee**

A coordinating committee provides oversight and leadership throughout the standards-based initiative—planning, developing, reviewing, and implementing the standards. The coordinating committee is responsible for making recommendations to the state.

**Curriculum**

Curricula provide *detailed* outlines of the knowledge and skills for different instructional levels (e.g., a scope and sequence) and serve as a road map for teachers in planning lessons. Curricula often provide suggestions for teaching techniques, learning activities, textbooks, and materials.

**Curriculum Framework**

Frameworks are *broad* outlines of the knowledge and skills that programs use in developing local curricula. Frameworks can guide the development of curriculum but do not specify how to teach.

**EFF (Equipped for the Future)**

EFF is a standards-based reform initiative that collaboratively “mapped out” the roles and critical responsibilities for adults as members of families, communities, and the workforce. The National Institute for Literacy collaborated with hundreds of people in the development of a framework that educators and learners could use in planning learning experiences that meet real-world needs in the 21st century. See <http://eff.cls.utk.edu>.

**Environmental Scan**

An environmental scan is a process for obtaining information, thoughts, and opinions from a wide range of people and programs. It includes literature reviews, formal or informal surveys, focus groups and individual interviews, and reviews of data and documents in the field. Information gathered can help inform decision making and determine project activities.

**ESL (English as a Second Language)**

ESL programs focus on teaching English language and literacy skills to non-native speakers of English. Other commonly used terms include ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), ELA (English language acquisition), and ELL (English language learners).

**Evaluation**

Evaluation involves reviewing, comparing, and judging the quality of work based on established criteria. Summative evaluation is usually done at specified “end points” through formal and often standardized measures. In contrast, formative evaluation is an ongoing process that assesses understanding and skills through a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies.

**Exemplars**

Exemplars are samples of student work that illustrate the type and complexity of performance expected at different instructional levels.

**Field Test**

Field tests are small-scale trials to assess how effectively new products, initiatives, materials, or approaches can be used in a real context. Data collected from the programs that participate in a field test can be used to inform revisions and implementation procedures.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups are structured interviews with 8–12 individuals in which a facilitator guides discussion around a set topic. Focus groups allow the facilitator to ask probing questions to gain an understanding of the participants' reactions, opinions, and suggestions.

### **GED (General Educational Development [test])**

The GED test measures a learner's knowledge and academic skills in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. A certificate is given to learners who attain a passing score on the GED test. A GED is recognized in some states and by some employers as a high school credential.

### **Indicators**

Indicators are measurable behaviors that reflect the skills and knowledge learners need to develop and achieve to master a content standard. (See also *Benchmarks*.)

### **International Reading Association (IRA)**

The International Reading Association is a professional organization for teachers of reading to learners of all ages. NCTE and IRA developed a set of national reading standards called *Standards for the English Language Arts*. See <http://www.reading.org>.

### **National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**

The National Council of Teachers of English is a professional organization for teachers of English and English language arts. NCTE and IRA developed a set of national reading standards called *Standards for the English Language Arts*. See <http://www.ncte.org>.

### **National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)**

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is a professional organization for teachers of mathematics. NCTM has developed a set of national mathematics standards called *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*, which provides guidelines for excellence in mathematics education. See <http://www.nctm.org>.

### **National Reporting System (NRS)**

The National Reporting System is an outcomes-based accountability system for state-administered, federally funded adult education programs. The NRS was designed to meet accountability requirements for adult education programs required by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. See <http://www.nrsweb.org>.

### **Opportunity-to-Learn Standards**

Opportunity-to-learn standards describe or specify the instructional conditions and resources necessary for adult learners to learn and achieve content and performance standards. When provided with sufficient opportunity (e.g., equitable access, appropriate curriculum and materials, adequate facilities, and trained teachers), learners can achieve the necessary knowledge and skills stated in the content standards.

### **Outcomes**

Outcomes are measures of achievement that result from participation in adult education. Within adult education, the NRS outcomes include measures of (1) educational gain in literacy skills; (2) entry into employment, postsecondary education, and training; and (3) high school completion. Adult education programs often track secondary outcomes such as participating in children's education, voting, and obtaining a driver's license.

**Participatory or Learner-Centered Approach**

A participatory approach focuses on the expressed needs and interests of learners. Participatory approaches build on learners' prior knowledge and often use problem-posing techniques to construct meaning generated from texts and situations that adults encounter in life.

**Performance-Based Assessment**

Performance-based assessments are real-life or simulated tasks that require learners to apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate achievement of the indicators or content standards. Performance-based assessments can be in the form of projects, presentations, tests, or writing tasks.

**Performance Standards**

Performance standards describe how well or to what extent learners meet the content standards.

**Performance Descriptions**

Performance descriptions state what students should know and the ways they can demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

**Portfolio**

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of a learner's work to demonstrate acquisition and application of knowledge and skills. Portfolios are used to document and assess performance, achievement, or progress. They often include learners' self-assessments.

**Program Standards**

Program standards describe the design, operation, and management of programs and services rather than individuals' skills and performances. Program standards address a full range of issues related to educational program design and delivery, including administration, staffing, assessment, curriculum, instruction, professional development, support services, intake, and orientation.

**Progress Monitoring**

Progress monitoring is the ongoing review and assessment of a learner's knowledge and skills. Continual classroom monitoring allows instructors to identify strategies and materials that will help learners gain the knowledge and skills to meet the content standards and to meet their goals.

**Reliability**

Reliability refers to the degree to which the results of an assessment are consistent when conducted over time and by different people, or across different tasks that measure the same thing.

**Rubric**

Rubrics are tools that define or describe the criteria for assessing learners' competence on assigned tasks and performances. Rubrics often contain short, narrative descriptions at various levels on a continuum (e.g., emergent, developing, proficient, advanced) and can be used to assess student work as a whole or to assess components of student work. Rubrics can be shared with learners so they understand the criteria necessary for improving their performance. Rubrics are often used to assess written work, oral presentations, project-based products, etc.

### **SCANS (Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills)**

The Secretary’s Commission was formed by the U.S. Secretary of Labor to define the skills all high school graduates should have for employment. SCANS identified competencies in five key areas (Resources, Interpersonal, Information Management, Systems, and Technology) and the foundation of skills that lie at the heart of job performance (Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, and Personal Qualities). See <http://www.bused.org/scans.html>.

### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are the people (or groups of people) with a vested interest in a program or project. Adult education stakeholders include learners, teachers, administrators, school staff, advocacy organizations, community members, higher education institutions, and employers who have a significant interest in public education. Broad stakeholder input is essential for the successful development and implementation of content standards.

### **Standards-Based Education (SBE)**

Standards-based education is a reform effort that defines what is important for learners to know and be able to do (content standards) and aligns assessment, curriculum, instruction, and professional development. SBE provides a systemic model for educational improvement.

### **Standardized Tests**

Standardized tests are formal methods of assessing student performance that use the same content, task-scoring procedures, and reporting procedures for all learners. Standardized tests have empirically determined, quantifiable measures of reliability and studies of their validity. Such tests are popular accountability methods because they allow for comparison across states and programs.

### **Study Circles**

Study circles bring adult education practitioners (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators, or others) together in small group settings to learn about research findings and theories and to explore how the findings can be applied to practice and policy. Study circles are often used for ongoing professional development.

### **Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)**

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., is a professional organization for teachers of English to non-native English speaking learners. TESOL has developed a set of national standards for Pre-K–12 settings. See <http://www.tesol.org>.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure reflects the underlying concept of what it is supposed to measure. Effective assessments must demonstrate their validity through empirical studies that involve comparing their measures with a related measure derived from another source (e.g., another assessment, expert judgment).

# Appendix C

## *Tools and Templates*

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## Sample Budget Worksheet for Content Standards Initiative

*A budget worksheet will help state staff think about and plan for the potential costs and resources to support the standards initiative.*

Expense	Budget Calculation	Estimated Cost	Funding Source or Charge Code
<b>Personnel</b>			
<b>State Staff</b>			
Project oversight			
Coordination of tasks throughout the initiative (e.g., developing work plan, gathering resources, participating in environmental scan, working with writing teams, overseeing the review and implementation processes)			
Professional development			
Support staff			
<b>Local Program Staff</b>			
Pay or stipends for writing team members			
Honoraria for focus groups or reviews			
Field test participation (i.e., local efforts to plan, coordinate, and gather information for reporting)			
Professional development			
<b>Consultants/Contractors (fees and honoraria)</b>			
Advisors			
Facilitators			
Reviewers			
Preparation of professional development materials			
Editing and designing			

Expense	Budget Calculation	Estimated Cost	Funding Source or Charge Code
<b><i>Travel Expenses</i></b> (mileage, airfare, lodging, per diem, etc.)			
Consultant(s)			
Focus groups			
Meeting participants			
Reviewers			
Field test sites			
Professional development events and meetings			
<b><i>Meeting Expenses</i></b>			
Rooms for meetings			
Equipment			
Refreshments			
<b><i>Materials and Supplies</i></b>			
Reference materials			
Supplies (folders, markers, paper, etc.)			
<b><i>Communication Expenses</i></b>			
Software for online meetings and sharing documents			
Telephone			
Electronic survey tool			
Postage			
Photocopying			

## Moderator Guidelines for Focus Group Discussion

*The focus group protocol covers the following seven steps.<sup>1</sup> Focus groups can be used for the environmental scan to gather information about standards from stakeholders and for reviewing the standards document.*

### **1. Introduction**

Present a welcome statement, purpose of the project and the group, and group guidelines or ground rules.

### **2. Warm Up**

Make brief introductions.

### **3. Clarification of Terms**

- A. Explain any terms that might have multiple meanings to the participants. Consult the glossary of this guide for ideas.
- B. Ask for any final questions on format before beginning.

### **4. Questions**

Sequence general questions and follow-up probing questions that might be used. General questions should precede more complex ones. Share questions with co-moderators or aides. Do not try to cover too much ground, and have a question or two in reserve for less vocal groups.

### **5. Wrap Up**

Summarize the major themes (ideas, concerns, recommendations, etc.) that emerged from the conversation.

### **6. Member Check**

Ask for a quick prioritizing of the themes. Ask if anything is missing that needs to be added.

### **7. Closing Statement**

Thank participants. Explain how the information will be used, and tell them who they can contact for additional information. Remind participants that the comments and responses should remain anonymous.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from S. Vaughn, J. S. Schumm, and J. M. Sinagub, *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996).

## Sample Focus Group Protocol

### ***Stakeholder Input: Practitioners: Instructors, Tutors, and Instructional Specialists***

*This sample focus group protocol may be used during the environmental scan to gather information from instructors, tutors, and instructional specialists. It could also be adapted for a focus group to review the standards document. This sample protocol follows the same format as the Moderator Guidelines for Focus Group Discussion.*

#### **Introduction**

Good afternoon, and welcome to our discussion today about developing and implementing content standards. We want to thank you for joining us, and we appreciate that you have taken time away from your busy schedule. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I will be moderating this discussion. Along with me is \_\_\_\_\_, who will be recording this discussion. We are with the [name of organization].

This focus group is one of a series of groups we will be holding around the state with different individuals who have a stake in adult education. We also will be conducting focus groups with learners; professional development staff; state-level program managers; local program administrators; and representatives of the business community, higher education community, and faith-based organizations. As we begin the process of standards development, it is important to understand the different perspectives of all stakeholders.

The purpose of this discussion group is to get your feedback on establishing standards in adult education programs. I have a few questions that I would like the group to discuss, and my role is to keep the discussion on track. I encourage you to give your opinions freely, as this information will help state staff set priorities for standards, understand resources available, and think about future needs for professional development. There is no right or wrong answer to any question.

Before we begin, here are a few guidelines:

- Please, only one person speaks at a time.
- We want to hear from everyone, but not everyone needs to answer every question.
- Although we are using first names here, no names will be attached to any comments. Your individual responses will be confidential. We ask that you help us honor this commitment by not repeating comments made by others outside of this group.
- The discussion will last about one hour.

- We have a full agenda, so I apologize in advance if I have to cut the discussions off at any point. I don't want to be impolite, but I may have to interrupt and bring us back to the main topic if we get too far afield. Or I may have to break in and move us along to the next questions so that we have time to go through all the topics we need to discuss.

## ***Warm Up***

Let's start by introducing ourselves, giving your name, your program area, and what you like best in your role as an adult educator. I will begin. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I taught low intermediate level ABE and am now an instructional specialist in reading. What I like best as a reading specialist is when learners tell me they can read and understand the notices their children bring home from school. It makes them feel proud of their abilities.

## ***Clarification of Terms***

We are going to be talking about different kinds of standards, and we need to be using a common vocabulary. To keep our communication clear, I've posted the definitions we will be using today and that we are using in our work groups. [Direct attention to a posted list of words and definitions. See the definitions from chapter 1 and appendix B.]

Are there any questions about definitions or guidelines before we begin?

## ***Questions***

1. What have you heard about standards-based education?  
(PROBE: What are the goals of standards-based education? Do you have any concerns about content standards?)
2. What should the content standards in reading and mathematics include to enable learners to be successful?  
(PROBE: As members of the community and within the family? For employment? For education?)
3. What kind of support or resources do you think will be needed to implement content standards in your program?  
(PROBE: What professional development will be needed? What materials will be needed?)
4. What suggestions do you have for the process of developing/field testing/implementing the content standards?  
(PROBE: Who would you include in the process? What should be the state role?)

## ***Wrap Up***

Unfortunately, we are almost out of time. I'd like to review what were noted as the main points raised in this group. [Summarize points.] Have I missed anything that you think is critical?

## ***Member Check***

Can we quickly go around the room and do a check on how you would prioritize this list? This is just a quick response. Tell us which two issues you would identify as the most important from your perspective.

## ***Closing Statement***

Thank you for participating in this discussion group. Your input has been valuable for helping us move forward with standards-based education. I want to remind you that we have committed ourselves to anonymity of responses outside of the group. We appreciate your time and want you to know that we will take all this information into account as we move forward with our standards-base initiative.

## Indiana Adult Education Content Standards: Development Team Information and Application

Dear Professional Development Facilitator (PDF):

Research indicates that content or curricula must align with performance expectations or outcomes to be effective. Content standards provide the framework by defining the scope of what is to be taught. Using this framework, adult educators can individualize curricula and the instructional strategies to address the specific needs of adult learners.

Twelve states have developed content standards for adult education. Fifteen more, including Indiana, have been invited to participate in the Content Standards Consortia for the purpose of drafting content standards for their respective states in either ESL or ABE/ASC. Indiana will be drafting content standards for ABE/ASC in Math and Reading during the FY 2005 program year. Our participation in this new initiative reflects our agreement with research-based information regarding the importance of content standards. We will address ESL standards in the near future.

The state team members driving this new initiative are Linda Warner, Cindy Conway, and Lynne Ames. The first meeting of the Consortia took place in Washington, D.C., October 7 and 8, 2004. The primary outcome of that meeting was the development of a state-specific Content Standards Action Plan. Indiana's plan is being provided for your review and information.

States that have already engaged in the content standards development process have learned many lessons. The Consortia states wish to benefit from those lessons that, in turn, have become primary goals. *They include but are not limited to:*

- building consensus and engaging stakeholders
- involving program personnel to include administrators, teachers, and students
- reviewing the research base and being realistic about what's important in adult education
- integrating content standards within ongoing adult education systems
- creating a user-friendly document

We are establishing a content standards development (writing) team and would like to offer you and the instructors in your program the opportunity to be involved with this worthwhile project. Please complete and/or distribute the attached application and submit as indicated. Those participating on the development team will help draft Indiana's Adult Education Content Standards for Reading and Math. The action plan outlines five team meetings (2 or 3 days each) and may require some additional personal time.

There will also be other opportunities as the project moves forward. These include editing the draft standards and field-testing the standards. Please discuss these with your administrator. Decide what role or roles you and your program can play in this important initiative.

## Indiana Adult Education Content Standards: Development Team Information and Application

*I would like to serve on the content standards development (writing) team.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in adult education: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of expertise/teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_

(Use reverse side if needed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other experience with content area: \_\_\_\_\_

(Example: K-12, NCTM, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please consider me for: \_\_\_\_\_ Math Standards Development – Yes / No (Circle one)

Please consider me for: \_\_\_\_\_ Reading Standards Development – Yes / No (Circle one)

Please consider me for: \_\_\_\_\_ Either Math or Reading – Yes / No (Circle one)

The best day(s) for me to meet is/are: \_\_\_\_\_ M – T – W – Th – F – Sat – Sun – (Circle all that apply)

**I am unable to serve on the content standards development (writing) team; however ...**

Please consider me for: \_\_\_\_\_ Editing the Draft Standards – Yes / No (Circle one)

Please consider my program for: \_\_\_\_\_ Field-Testing the Draft Standards – Yes / No (Circle one)

***Please complete and return to:***

***Name, Address, Phone***

## **Generic Content Standards Team Application**

*This form can be adapted for local and state use to recruit standards team members.*

### **Contact Information**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Best days/times to contact:

### **Employment in Adult Education or Related Field**

Position and dates:

Major responsibilities:

### **Relevant Education and Training (Include Content Area Expertise)**

#### **Related Experience**

- A. Standards, curriculum, and assessment
- B. Working on teams or on special initiatives

**Why are you interested in serving? What do you hope to gain and contribute during this initiative?**

#### **Availability (Timeframe fall 2005 through spring 2006)**

Best days of the week for meetings:

Best times of the day for meetings:

## Criteria for Reviewing Content Standards Documents

**Purpose:** This tool is designed to help states and programs review content standards. State planning and writing teams are encouraged to use the tool to stimulate discussion about the criteria and to look for specific examples within standards documents. A preliminary review of other standards will help states make initial decisions about how their standards will be conceived, written, and organized. Later, state writing teams can use this tool to review and revise their draft standards. External reviewers can also use the tool as they evaluate and provide feedback on draft standards documents.

The following pages offer criteria for reviewing standards and indicators. For each area, determine the extent to which the criteria are present. Choices are: no evidence, some evidence, or substantial evidence. The review may be conducted individually or as a team. If conducted individually, come together as a team to share ratings and try to reach consensus. This process will enable team members to discuss the criteria and how important each standard or indicator is to their state. Transfer the ratings to this cover page to facilitate comparison with other standards document and to identify general strengths and weaknesses.

State \_\_\_\_\_ Publication date \_\_\_\_\_

Document name \_\_\_\_\_

Content area \_\_\_\_\_ Levels \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To what extent are criteria evident? (Select rating)

	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
--	-------------	---------------	----------------------

**Rigorous**

**Specific**

**Comprehensive and coherent**

**Measurable**

**Clear and intelligible**

**Manageable**

Concerns and questions

Useful features for the state

---



---

## Rigorous

Rigorous standards contain the essential concepts, knowledge, and skills that can be applied in a variety of contexts. They reflect high-level skills that will allow learners to meet the demands of the 21st century and set high expectations for all learners at appropriate levels.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Require higher order skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The inclusion of verbs such as analyze, synthesize, compare, contrast, generalize, etc.</li> </ul>			
Reflect the knowledge and skills necessary for adults to succeed in the 21st century.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Skills and concepts that prepare adults for success in the community, at home, on the job, etc.</li> </ul>			
Include knowledge and skills necessary for high school credential and entry into postsecondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge and skills included in GED, SCANS, American Diploma Project, College Placement tests, etc.</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Specific

For any set of standards to guide instruction and the development of curricula and assessments, the standards must be specific enough to assure a common understanding of the expectations at each level. Standards should provide sufficient contextual detail and a strong sense of what learners and teachers are expected to do.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Provide sufficient detail to guide curriculum development and instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sample reading passages and math problems that exemplify the type and complexity of the standards at each level of ABE, ASE, or ELA.</li> <li>■ Statements about the essential knowledge and skills without dictating how to teach.</li> </ul>			
Provide sufficient contextual detail and a strong sense of what learners and teachers are expected to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Example for a Beginning ELA standard: "Provide basic personal information (name, address, phone) orally and in writing."</li> <li>■ Example for a Beginning mathematics standard: "Use words, numbers, or pictures to represent equivalent fractions."</li> </ul>			
Include indicators or benchmarks with sufficient detail to develop assessments for classroom use and for accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Active verbs and clear expectations to create assessments.</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Comprehensive and Coherent

A comprehensive set of standards reflects current research and has a balanced focus on the essential knowledge in the content area without any significant gaps. If standards are to lead to a common core of learning across the state, they must provide a clear progression of skills with increasing levels of difficulty.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Represent the breadth and depth of the knowledge and skills within the discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An inclusive set of standards with no obvious gaps or omissions.</li> </ul>			
Include both knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Focus on knowledge and skills (not irrelevant concepts and beliefs).</li> <li>■ Example: Mathematics standards that focus on procedural knowledge, conceptual understanding, and problem solving.</li> </ul>			
Reflect current education theory and research in the content area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The underlying research base that informed the development of the standards.</li> <li>■ Example: Reading standards that include phonemic awareness, phonics, word analysis, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension.</li> </ul>			
Follow a sound progression of skills and knowledge from level to level with increasing levels of difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Standards that are distinct for each level and are not redundant.</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Measurable

Content standards have to be sufficiently detailed to provide clear expectations of what learners know and are able to do at different levels. They specify results that can be measured and communicated to stakeholders.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Reflect learning that can be observable or verifiable in a definable way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Active verbs that focus on learning results such as demonstrate, complete, explain, write, calculate, describe, etc.</li> <li>■ Process words that are measurable. Avoid words such as investigate, explore, participate, or listen.</li> <li>■ Verbs that can be measured precisely. Avoid words such as increase, expand, extend, begin, etc.</li> </ul>			
Differentiate learning to measure each learner’s progress from level to level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Indicators or benchmarks that require a demonstrated performance (ideally with criteria for rating or an exemplar).</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Clear and Intelligible

Content standards are meaningful to students, teachers, and the general public when they are clearly written. Multiple audiences will use the standards, so they need to send a straightforward message about what students know and are able to do.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Use language that is written clearly enough for all stakeholders to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enough contextual detail so that multiple audiences can understand what learners are expected to do.</li> <li>■ Sample activities and passages that exemplify the type and complexity of knowledge and skills required at each level.</li> </ul>			
Use language that is free of jargon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minimal use of technical language.</li> </ul>			
Use language that is sensitive to all adult learner populations and is free of bias.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Nondiscriminatory language.</li> <li>■ Language and examples that reflect the diversity of adult learners in a positive manner.</li> <li>■ Language that does not exclude some groups due to style, grammar, or vocabulary choice.</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Manageable

Manageability of standards considers both the quantity and the presentation of the standards. The number of standards must reflect what is feasible to teach and learn within the time constraints of the adult education system. Content standards need to be organized in a user-friendly format for all stakeholders.

*In reviewing standards and indicators, consider the following:*

Content standards and indicators	Look for . . .	No evidence	Some evidence	Substantial evidence
Include realistic scope and quantity for each level given time constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attainable number of standards, indicators, or benchmarks for each level.</li> </ul>			
Present information in a user-friendly layout and format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Definitions of terms and levels.</li> <li>■ Consistency in presentation (and possibly coding for easy referral to an indicator).</li> <li>■ Tables of contents and page numbers.</li> </ul>			
Are available and accessible in multiple formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Electronic and print versions.</li> <li>■ Accessibility for users with disabilities.</li> </ul>			

Comments and useful features:

Concerns and questions:

## Kentucky Content Standards Review Survey

Please complete the following information prior to responding to the survey. Duplicate for other staff members.

County: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your primary responsibilities (at least 50 percent of time). Please check most applicable:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Instructor—what subject(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_ Instructor's Aide

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Your educational attainment. Please check highest educational achievement:**

\_\_\_\_\_ High school diploma or GED

\_\_\_\_\_ Associate's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Master's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Doctorate degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

### **Overall Impression of the Kentucky Adult Education Content Standards**

After reviewing the entire content standards document, please consider the document as a whole and circle the response that best summarizes your opinion about each of the following statements.

1. The standards document is *written* in a manner that is easily understood.

---

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

2. The standards document is *formatted* in a manner that is easily understood.

---

4 Strongly agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
---------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

3. The introduction to the standards document is useful.

---

4 Strongly agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
---------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

4. The standards document is specific enough to guide curriculum development and selection.

---

4 Strongly agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
---------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

5. The standards document is specific enough to guide instructional strategies.

---

4 Strongly agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
---------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

6. The standards identify knowledge and skills required of and appropriate for adults transitioning to skilled work and postsecondary education.

---

4 Strongly agree	3 Agree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
---------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

7. There are critical knowledge and skills missing from the standards document.

---

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Please identify missing standards:

8. Resources/materials that you currently use will enable you to implement these content standards.

---

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

9. Curricula that you currently use will enable you to implement these content standards.

---

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

10. Assessments that you currently use will enable you to assess these content standards.

---

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Comments (Why? or Why not?):

### **Guided Comments**

1. What *difficulties, concerns, or issues*, if any, did you incur while reviewing the standards?
2. What additional *aids/resources/appendices* would you suggest to enhance the document?

3. What additional *glossary and/or terms* would you like to see defined?
  
4. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 on your *comfort level* with teaching the standards.  
 (“0” = Not at all → “5” = Very comfortable) Why?
  
5. What types of *professional development and assistance* would you like to have available upon implementation of the standards? Please check what applies:

- Online courses
- Web sites
- Videos
- Books
- Resources (please specify)
- Sample lesson plans
- Visiting coaches/coaching visits
- Workshops with follow-up
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe *how you will use* these standards.

**Other Comments**

## Standards Usability Checklist Instructor Feedback Form

*Instructors can complete this form during the validity and field test reviews to assess the characteristics of the standards and identify areas for standards-based professional development.*

**Program Area:**

**Instructional Level:**

### Are the standards ...

	YES	NO
1. Challenging to learners at this level?	___	___
2. Specific enough to be addressed by classroom instruction?	___	___
3. Easy to understand?	___	___
4. Measurable by classroom assessments?	___	___
5. Manageable within the classroom setting?	___	___
6. Appropriate in scope for learners at this level?	___	___

**What additional knowledge, skills, or resources do you think instructors will need to implement the standards?**

## Sample Implementation Timeline

Implementing content standards is not a single, distinct activity that begins after planning, drafting, and reviewing standards. The following timeline illustrates how a state might phase in standards-based education over a three-year period. It outlines the policy decisions, activities, and who might have lead responsibility for the activities.

PHASE	POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>Implementation Phase 1</b>	<b>Policy Decisions: Approve draft content standards, phase in across programs, and ensure state procedures are in place to begin implementation.</b>	<b>State office staff</b>
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Update Strategic Plan and set aside incentive funding for full scale implementation of standards</li> <li>■ Prepare standards document for state approval and dissemination</li> <li>■ Update assessment policies to reflect standards-based reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> </ul>
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prepare promotional information for different audiences (educators, learners, business and community partners, legislators, institutional boards)</li> <li>■ Begin dissemination of content standards</li> <li>■ Identify sites and technical assistance needs to begin Phase 1 implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff and Content Standards Coordinating Committee</li> </ul>
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide professional development to program administrators and adult education staff through regional meetings/conferences, online resources, training of trainers, mentors, etc.</li> <li>■ Begin Phase 1 implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> <li>■ Local program administrators</li> </ul>
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop curriculum and resources with Phase 1 sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Phase 1 site instructional staff and professional development providers</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Phase 2</b>	<b>Policy Decisions: Provide incentive grants for local programs to voluntarily implement content standards.</b>	<b>State office staff</b>
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Repeat Phase 1 professional development for additional programs to initiate standards-based education</li> <li>■ Create resource exchange for curricula, lessons, assessments, and materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> <li>■ Local instructional staff</li> </ul>

PHASE	POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue professional development</li> <li>■ Conduct site visits to gather information and provide technical assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> <li>■ State office staff</li> </ul>
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prepare RFP/grant applications mandating full integration of content standards across the state</li> <li>■ Conduct statewide electronic survey on the use of the standards</li> <li>■ Conduct focus groups as part of site visits and technical assistance to identify future professional development needs and monitoring strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> <li>■ State office staff</li> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> </ul>
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Analyze evaluations and data from professional development, surveys, focus groups, and technical assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation Phase 3 Full Scale</b>	<b>Policy Decision: Require all programs to adopt content standards in new grant award cycle.</b>	<b>State office staff</b>
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Offer Summer Institute: possible topics (1) differentiating professional development for new and experienced staff and (2) monitoring standards implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> </ul>
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Begin program monitoring for Phase 1 sites</li> <li>■ Continue professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> </ul>
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continue technical assistance and resource development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> <li>■ Professional development providers</li> </ul>
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct preliminary evaluation of the implementation to plan mid-course corrections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State office staff</li> </ul>

## Arizona Implementation Timeline

ADE = Arizona Department of Education  
 AE = adult education  
 CS = content standards

ECE = early childhood education  
 NRS = National Reporting System  
 PD = professional development

PS = performance standards  
 S/SS = science/social science  
 SBE = standards-based education

TA = technical assistance  
 tech = technology

	1998				1999				2000				2001				2002				2003				2004			
Policy Decisions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																								
Adopt CS							x																					
Release CS								x																				
Realign levels with NRS									x																			
Deadline to implement SBE											x																	
Assessment policy criteria									x																			
Implement ECE standards													x															
Deadline for curriculum alignment (S/SS)																				x								
Implement assessment policy																			x									
Implement tech CS																					x							
Purchase AE assessments																												

**Appendix C ■ Tools and Templates**

ADE = Arizona Department of Education  
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	1998				1999				2000				2001				2002				2003				2004							
<b>Development/Writing</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>																								
Writing team CS (5 areas)																																
Design team																																
Focus groups (S/SS)												x																				
Market (ongoing team)																																
PS																																
Focus groups (PS)																																
Writing team (S/SS)																																
Writing team (ECE)																																
Assessment team (ECE)																																
Writing team (tech)																																
Focus groups (tech)																																
Revise ELAA CS																																
Assessment team (ELAA)																																
Revise CS (6 areas)																																

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	1998				1999				2000				2001				2002				2003				2004							
<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>																								
PD team																																
Curriculum alignment workshop										x																						
Summer institute											x																					
GED institute																																
Focus groups (ECE)																x		x														
Assessment workshops																																
Local directors training																											x					

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	1998				1999				2000				2001				2002				2003				2004							
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>																								
Focus groups (assessment)											x																					
TA from ADE																																
Standards specialists																																
Assessment teams																																
Assessment recommendations										x				x																		
Assessment training (resource and ADE staff)																			x													
Implement standardized assessment																																
Implement tech standards																																x

## Sample Action Plan—Implementation

*This plan provides an example of steps that might be include in a state implementation plan.*

*Date developed/updated:*

*Objective(s):*

Key Action Steps (with subtasks)	Person(s) Responsible	Potential Collaborators and Resources	Projected Outcomes	Projected Timeframe (start/end dates)	Challenges and Solutions
<b>Communicate goals for standards-based education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop communication strategies</li> <li>■ Develop strategies for dissemination of standards</li> </ul>	State director	Coordinating committee members, professional development staff, writing team members	State and local program staff understand goals and can plan for implementation	January to March	Resistance to change, a) Provide professional development to discuss change process. b) Provide support to programs
<b>Assess professional development needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>					
<b>Develop and adapt professional development modules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>					
<b>Provide technical assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>					
<b>Monitor local implementation of standards-based education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■</li> <li>■</li> </ul>					



# Appendix D

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