



Alignment Examination Tool

This alignment examination tool can be used for any of the core content areas. The tool is designed to help members of the district leadership team compare conditions and practices in their district and schools to those in high-performing districts and schools. The tool assesses five of the Working Systemically components (standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and resources), with one page dedicated to each component.

State Standards	Expectations about the knowledge and skills that students should have at each grade level (K–12) in order to become proficient in the content area.
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- How well does the local school system support the use of standards to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
 - Examine what high-performing schools do to support effective use of standards (on the left).
 - Underline those elements that are well supported by the local school system and circle those elements that are not well supported by the local school system.
 - Use data from the Working Systemically Survey and other sources to describe the level of support provided by the local school system. Use the data to cite specific examples, where possible, in the space provided for evidence of how the local system compares.

High-Performing System	Evidence of How the Local System Compares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State standards are explicitly used to align the content area curriculum and assessments that are used for instruction. There is a clear expectation that all students will be proficient in the content areas outlined in the state standards. Ongoing, job-embedded professional development is provided so all educators understand the content area standards and are able to use the standards to guide their work. Frequent follow-up and monitoring is provided to ensure that content area instruction is focused on helping every student achieve the goals and benchmarks outlined in the state standards. 	

Rating

- Use the evidence cited above to rate the overall quality of systemic support for the use of standards to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

There is little or no evidence of systemic support for activities or initiatives.	Activities are being implemented, but gaps still exist in the system.	Systems are in place, but implementation is not consistent.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.
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Curriculum	A guide for instruction that provides teachers with clear goals, objectives, and strategies for supporting student proficiency.
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- How well does the local school system support the use of a high-quality curriculum aligned to state standards?
 - Examine what high-performing schools do to support high-quality curriculum (on the left).
 - Underline those elements that are well supported by the local school system and circle those elements that are not well supported by the local school system.
 - Use data from the Working Systemically Survey and other sources to describe the level of support provided by the local school system. Use the data to cite specific examples, where possible, in the space provided for evidence of how the local system compares.

High-Performing System	Evidence of How the Local System Compares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The content area curriculum is clearly aligned with state standards as well as state and local assessments. The content area curriculum provides clear goals and a scope and sequence at each grade level so that each teacher’s role in instruction is understood. Educators work collaboratively to examine and improve the content area curriculum on an ongoing basis. All educators participate in professional development to ensure that the content area curriculum is taught effectively and consistently. Instruction in the content area is frequently monitored to ensure alignment with curriculum. 	

Rating

- Use the evidence cited above to rate the overall quality of systemic support for the use of high-quality curriculum aligned to state standards.

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
There is little or no evidence of systemic support for activities or initiatives.	Activities are being implemented, but gaps still exist in the system.	Systems are in place, but implementation is not consistent.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.

Instruction	The decisions teachers make and the approaches they use to teach students skills as well as the philosophy that drives those decisions.
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- How well does the local school system support high-quality instruction?
 - Examine what high-performing schools do to support high-quality instruction (on the left).
 - Underline those elements that are well supported by the local school system and circle those elements that are not well supported by the local school system.
 - Use data from the Working Systemically Survey and other sources to describe the level of support provided by the local school system. Use the data to cite specific examples, where possible, in the space provided for evidence of how the local system compares.

High-Performing System	Evidence of How the Local System Compares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area instruction is clearly aligned with the standards, curriculum, and assessments. Content area instruction is designed to ensure that students are engaged in meaningful instructional activities. All teachers demonstrate high expectations for every student to perform proficiently. All teachers take personal responsibility for helping every student achieve their full potential. Teachers tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of diverse learners. Teachers participate in ongoing professional development activities that enable them to provide high-quality content area instruction that supports student needs. Classroom instruction is frequently monitored to ensure teachers are providing high-quality content area instruction that supports student needs. 	

Rating

- Use the evidence cited above to rate the overall quality of systemic support for the use of high-quality instruction.

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
There is little or no evidence of systemic support for activities or initiatives.	Activities are being implemented, but gaps still exist in the system.	Systems are in place, but implementation is not consistent.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.	

Assessment	All formal and informal tests of skills and knowledge related to proficiency.
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- How well does the local school system support the use of high-quality assessments aligned to state standards?
 - Examine what high-performing schools do to support high-quality assessments (on the left).
 - Underline those elements that are well supported by the local school system and circle those elements that are not well supported by the local school system.
 - Use data from the Working Systemically Survey and other sources to describe the level of support provided by the local school system. Use the data to cite specific examples, where possible, in the space provided for evidence of how the local system compares.

High-Performing System	Evidence of How the Local System Compares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All content area assessments are clearly aligned with the curriculum, instruction, and state standards. All educators understand and are able to interpret content area assessment data. A variety of formal and informal assessments are used regularly to monitor students' progress and to identify individual student learning needs. Teachers collaboratively study student data and decide on appropriate adjustments to lessons. Data from content area assessments are organized and arrayed in a user-friendly format, then shared in a timely manner with all stakeholders, including parents. High-quality professional development is provided to ensure that all staff understand the content area assessments and know how to interpret and use assessment data to guide instruction. Content area instruction is monitored to ensure that teachers are using assessment data to inform instruction. 	

Rating

- Use the evidence cited above to rate the overall quality of systemic support for the use of high-quality assessments aligned to state standards.

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
There is little or no evidence of systemic support for activities or initiatives.	Activities are being implemented, but gaps still exist in the system.	Systems are in place, but implementation is not consistent.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.	

Resources	Resources for instruction (such as textbooks, resource books, technology, and content area programs) as well as resources for professional development (such as time for collaboration, instructional leadership, networking opportunities, and training opportunities).
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- How well does the local school system support the effective use of professional and instructional resources?
 - Examine what high-performing schools do to support effective use of resources (on the left).
 - Underline those elements that are well supported by the local school system and circle those elements that are not well supported by the local school system.
 - Use data from the Working Systemically Survey and other sources to describe the level of support provided by the local school system. Use the data to cite specific examples, where possible, in the space provided for evidence of how the local system compares.

High-Performing System	Evidence of How the Local System Compares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The materials available for content area instruction are aligned with and clearly support the district’s curriculum and state standards. Materials used for content area instruction are high quality and their use is supported by research. Teachers ensure there is adequate time for uninterrupted instruction in the content area. Time is provided for regular collaborative meetings among teachers and administrators to discuss content area instructional issues related to instruction. A content area curriculum leader is available to provide instructional support for teachers. Teachers regularly participate in professional development activities that support effective content area instruction and impact student achievement. Instruction in the content area and professional development activities are monitored to ensure that time and resources are used as effectively as possible. 	

Rating

- Use the evidence cited above to rate the overall quality of systemic support for the effective use of professional and instructional resources.

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
There is little or no evidence of systemic support for activities or initiatives.	Activities are being implemented, but gaps still exist in the system.	Systems are in place, but implementation is not consistent.	System support is consistent—all stakeholders are included in activities or initiatives.	