

Prioritizing, Mapping and Monitoring the Curriculum

What can you expect to get from this module?

This module helps participants gain a deeper understanding of the state and/or national standards they use and then apply that knowledge to classroom practice. In school teams, participants prioritize, map and monitor the curriculum.

What *shouldn't* you expect to get from this module?

This module does not provide detailed information on any particular state or national curriculum standards; instead, it focuses on broad concepts that apply to a variety of state contents.

Who should take this training?

This module is for school leaders and potential school leaders. The audience may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders and others who are members or potential members of the school's instructional leadership team. **NOTE:** In order for this training to have significant impact, the principal **MUST** be part of the school team being trained. In addition, it is beneficial to include district staff involved in curriculum support.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module:

There are no formal prerequisites for this SREB module; it is considered one of the foundational modules for the SREB leadership series.

What will you have to do to get the most from this module?

Participants must commit to attending as a team, completing the prework, attending two initial days, completing homework assignments and attending two separate follow-up days. It is important for teams to have time to reflect and apply what they have learned between the initial training and the follow-up sessions.

Big Ideas in This Module

- In our zeal to cover as much content as possible and rush through our course materials, we sometimes lose sight of which skills and knowledge are most critical for all students to master.
- To improve student achievement, you must prioritize and then focus on the most important standards.
- To truly have an impact, a prioritized curriculum must clearly communicate exactly what each standard means and how important it is.
- Constructing essential questions is a way for a school team to clarify the meaning of each standard.
- Curriculum maps are like road maps that communicate what a given group of students has been learning, what they are working on now and where they are going. Maps can help identify gaps between what is essential and what is taught. Maps are great tools for vertical alignment.
- There is a near-endless variety of formats for curriculum maps. Different maps can be used to structure, record and communicate any aspect of the curriculum teams want to work on.
- At any given school, there are four possible curricula: the one that is planned, the one that is taught, the one that is learned and the one that is tested.

Module Design. *Prioritizing, Mapping and Monitoring the Curriculum* is a four-day workshop (2+1+1). It also includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.

Prework. The prework has three assignments. First, participants ask 10 fellow teachers to complete a survey about curriculum standards — their importance, their use and student mastery of them. Second, participants read an article on how standards can improve student achievement, and answer questions about it. Third, they are asked to bring a copy of their curriculum to training.

Introduction: The Opportunity to Make a Difference (two hours, 30 minutes). In this overview, participants learn about the research that supports the idea of a prioritized curriculum. They learn why prioritization is critical to their school's success in student achievement. Methods used in this section include discussion of a video ("Failing Grade"), a reading, a discussion of research findings, an individual reflection and a group summary. In an activity, participants learn about standards from a student's perspective.

Prioritizing the Curriculum (six hours, 30 minutes). This section extends from Day One through Day Two. Participants learn key elements of a prioritized curriculum, what a curriculum looks like when it is properly prioritized, supporting structures that must be in place for a prioritized curriculum to be effective and how to facilitate the process. They also learn about the importance of essential questions, how to construct them, and how to use that information as part of the unpacking process that helps teachers to understand, prioritize and teach to curriculum standards. Participants examine examples of each step in the process and then practice, using the curriculum standards that they brought with them. By the end of this section, participants will have a plan for working with the rest of the school to prioritize the entire curriculum.

Homework. Participants must implement the plan that they developed and return to Day Three with a prioritized curriculum, complete with essential questions.

Mapping the Curriculum (five hours, 30 minutes). On Day Three, participants first share their homework learning points and prioritized curricula. Then they learn the many ways that curriculum maps can be used and how they help ensure that the prioritized curriculum is followed. The next step is for participants to learn a process for leading a school team in mapping the curriculum. Participants are exposed to many different mapping samples that address different purposes. They are asked to evaluate each map in terms of whether it meets criteria for effective curriculum maps and then apply that same process and criteria to their own curriculum mapping.

Homework. Participants leave Day Three with an assignment to go back to their school and facilitate the curriculum mapping process. They are instructed to bring their results, along with learning points from the process, to the final day of training.

Monitoring the Curriculum (three hours, 30 minutes). Participants spend the first 90 minutes of Day Four acting as critical friends, as they share the results of their curriculum mapping. They learn how to effectively monitor the curriculum, and then they learn basic ways to gather evidence and create their own plans.

Summary and Portfolio Assignments (one hour). Participants submit a portfolio that contains team products as well as individual reflections and narratives on curriculum monitoring.