

# Identifying Essential Standards

*What Do We Want Students to Know & Be Able to Do?*

Spring 2020

Grade-level teams work with a facilitator to identify essential standards.

Overview:

1. The *why* behind essential standards
  2. Identify draft grade-level essential standards
  3. Engage in vertical alignment (at future meetings)
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1. Establish the *Why Behind Essential Standards*
    - a. What is an essential standard?
      - i. *“A carefully selected subset of the total list of the grade-specific and course-specific standards within each content area that student must know and be able to do by the end of each school year in order to be prepared to enter the next grade level or course” (Ainsworth, 2010, p. 323)*
      - ii. Determines the viable and guaranteed curriculum for each child by the end of the grade
      - iii. Expect all children to learn at high levels
      - iv. Ensures that *each teacher* provides this so *all kids* have equal access
      - v. Will help special education teachers to focus instruction to the essentials
    2. Identify draft grade-level essential standards
      - a. **The coach/facilitator explains the criteria for choosing essential standards and what these criteria mean:** The criteria include
        - i. Endurance
          1. A standard should have **endurance**, which is something students must know for the long haul and will likely need for years after they learn it.
        - ii. Leverage
          1. A standard should have **leverage**, which is when it crosses into more than one subject area.
        - iii. Readiness
          1. A standard should have **readiness**, which is when it is a prerequisite skill for something taught later that unit or that year.
        - iv. Prioritized for high-stakes assessments

1. A standard should be ***prioritized for high-stakes assessments.***
- b. The coach/facilitator decides how to divide the standards
  - i. In language arts, break into these chunks. Work through one at a time
    1. Reading
    2. Writing
    3. Speaking and Listening
    4. Language
- c. The coach/facilitator provides an opportunity and time for individual team members to reflect on their own beliefs about what's important.
  - i. Each team member quietly, with no discussion, reads through their set of standards and applies the 4 criteria (endurance, leverage, readiness, priority for high-stakes assessments). *This is to be done during the meeting, not before the meeting to ensure the amount of time spent on each standard is similar.*
  - ii. Each teacher highlights the standards that you feel are essential.
- d. Coach/Facilitator guides the process and guide team members to build consensus on which standards will be a draft list of essentials
  - i. Work collaboratively to reach a consensus for each standard. *(Consensus is when everyone's voice is heard & the will of the group is obvious, even to those who disagree. This is not simply a vote. After consensus is reached, all agree to support it.)*
    1. Are there standards for which all agree?
    2. Are there standards that no one selected?
    3. Work to reach a consensus on the rest of the standards
      - a. Do the selected standards meet the selected criteria?
      - b. Explain your thinking using these standards.
  - ii. It is suggested that a team choose  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the standards as essential in each area.
- e. Coach helps to adjust the list, if necessary
  - i. Examine the current data and identify important areas of difficulty
  - ii. Do the selected essential standards address areas of difficulty for which a high percentage of students are not reading proficiency?
  - iii. Decide if the identified areas need to be represented
- f. Examine end-of-year released tests to become familiar with the expectations students must meet to be proficient
  - i. District or state tests (FORWARDS, MAP?, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium specifications, etc.)
- g. Vertically align standards (at a future date)