Acceleration Roadmap:

Pathway to an Equitable Recovery

May 2021

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

TNTP *reimagine* teaching

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
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Letter from the Commissioner

Dear Massachusetts Educators,

The 2020-2021 school year has been like no other in my career as an educator. I want to extend my thanks to all of you for your hard work on behalf of the students in our Commonwealth, day after day, amid unprecedented challenges.

Despite the herculean efforts of educators and families, we must acknowledge that many of our students are facing unfinished learning heading into the summer and the next school year. While it is not a new challenge for educators to serve students with varied academic needs, the pandemic has made this challenge significantly more pronounced and widespread. To effectively meet the needs of our students – particularly those most impacted by the pandemic – we need to focus on making sure all of our kids receive the culturally responsive support they need be successful in their grade level. At the same time, we need to support students and teachers as they socially and emotionally navigate the trauma they've experienced during the ongoing public health and economic crises.

While the pandemic has presented many challenges and disruptions to teaching and learning, we must also acknowledge the many ways our students grew throughout this past year. Many demonstrated the ability to adapt to constantly evolving circumstances, explore new ways of learning and collaborating, engage in civic processes, and advocate for what they need, among many other skills. The same can be said about the work of our dedicated and talented educators in the Commonwealth. This should be recognized as an important set of assets and expertise to leverage in the coming years. When students and staff begin the 2021-2022 school year, we should welcome one another with genuine curiosity about what each has learned in the last year and what everyone needs to be successful moving forward. This document builds on the practices demonstrated by educators across the Commonwealth this year and provides specific actions you can take during the 2021-2022 school year to address the diversity of learning needs in your classroom.

The strategies in this document are based on a philosophy of learning acceleration, which strategically prepares students for success in the present — *this* week, on *this* content. Past concepts and skills are taught, but always in the context of grade-level learning. Learning acceleration doesn't mean racing through the curriculum, but instead ensuring that students can spend as much time as possible engaging meaningfully with grade-appropriate work. If a student hasn't mastered the earlier skills that are required to complete a grade-appropriate assignment, the student receives "just-in-time support" — giving the student just the right amount of help to move forward, right when they need that help, through scaffolds and coordinated interventions. When this approach includes strong relationship-building efforts, social emotional support, and authentic partnerships with families, we know that we are setting our students up for success.

We have partnered with [TNTP](#), a national education nonprofit that has been supporting districts for more than two decades, to develop a roadmap for acceleration for the state. The **Acceleration Roadmap** sets the priorities needed to accelerate learning in our schools and classrooms. As part of the design process, we heard from educators, students, and community members from across the Commonwealth. We appreciate the time that everyone took to share their experiences and insights with us. Their perspectives helped shape this roadmap.

We know districts, schools, and educators are in different places in their planning and recovery efforts, and many of you may already incorporate many of the action steps outlined here. This guide is organized in a manner that allows you to chart your own course, starting at the beginning, identifying steps you already have in place, and then identifying priority additional steps as soon as your team is ready. The Department is committed to supporting you and will be in touch with webinar and professional learning opportunities over the next few months for you and your school and district administrators to support implementation of strategies in this guide. I look forward to our continued work together on behalf of the Commonwealth's children.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Please consider providing feedback on this roadmap through [this survey](#). Your feedback will inform the content and structure of professional development aligned to this roadmap as well as future DESE guidance.

Introduction

The Acceleration Roadmap is a tool for teachers and school/building administrators in Massachusetts. It is designed to provide a focused and phased approach to supporting students as they begin the 2021-2022 school year, a year that will lay the foundation for accelerated learning over the next several years. The roadmap is organized around three overarching priorities, which are grounded in research and were developed through extensive stakeholder feedback. These priorities are to:

1. **Foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families,[1] [2] [3]**
2. **Continuously monitor students' understanding, and [4] [5]**
3. **Ensure strong grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds when they are needed.[6] [7] [8]**

Within each priority, our approaches are designed to create equitable experiences and outcomes for all of your students in a manner that is affirming of their race, identity, home language, and unique abilities.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools across the country to confront unprecedented challenges. A months-long disruption of school has exacerbated longstanding inequities and opportunity gaps, at a moment when the nation has been grappling with issues concerning systemic racism.

Despite the efforts of teachers, administrators and families, over this past year, many students missed out on critical instructional time, particularly our traditionally underserved students. Simultaneously, students participated in remote and hybrid settings, gaining skills, perspective, and knowledge about their unique ways of learning, and we should approach the fall with the intention of leveraging their expertise to design instruction that meets their needs. The same can be said for the resilience and expertise of our classroom educators.

As we plan to support the diversity of student needs this fall, with a focus on educational equity, a body of research supports the strategy of learning acceleration.

Learning Acceleration	All students receive consistent access to grade-level work with targeted scaffolds to make it accessible.[9]
Traditional Remediation:	Students mainly receive work better suited for earlier grades, based on the misconception that they must master all past concepts before accessing grade-level work.[10]

A common approach to addressing unfinished learning is **remediation**, which is often based on the misconception that for students to learn new information, they must first go back and master everything they missed. In TNTP's report, "The Opportunity Myth," they found the remediation approach of starting the school year with months of prior year content, when used exclusively, practically guarantees that students will actually lose more academic ground. Further, these approaches serve to reinforce misguided beliefs that some students cannot do grade-level work. The students stuck in this vicious cycle are disproportionately students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and those from low-income families.

Schools and classrooms that have been able to break this cycle (as highlighted in "The Opportunity Myth") have embraced a **learning acceleration** approach, which asserts that every student is capable of accessing grade-appropriate work with the right supports, and that regular access to grade-appropriate work is critical to their academic development.[11] Accelerating learning does not mean rushing through curriculum or teaching only certain portions of academic standards. In addition to providing grade-appropriate work, it requires collecting ongoing data on what students know and are able to do, incorporating the scaffolding strategies students need in the context of a school-wide multi-tiered system of support, and simultaneously developing a culture of belonging and inclusivity.

[1] Retrieved from http://studentexperiencenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-We-Know-About-Belonging.pdf

[2] Christenson, S. L., Reschly, A. L., & Wylie, C. (Eds.). (2012). What is student engagement? In *Handbook of research on student engagement.* Springer Science & Business Media.

[3] Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, *86* (1), 163-206.

[4] Harbour, K. E., Evanovich, L. L., Sweigart, C. A., & Hughes, L. E. (2015). A brief review of effective teaching practices that maximize student engagement. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *59*(1), 5-13.

[5] Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know. *American educator, 36*(1), 12.

[6] TNTP. (2018). The Opportunity Myth. Brooklyn, NY: TNTP Retrieved from https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/.

[7] Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H., Pascal, J., & Valdés, R. (2002). Measuring instructional quality in accountability systems: Classroom assignments and student achievement. *Educational Assessment*, *8*(3), 207-229.

[8] Joyce, J., Harrison, J. R., & Gitomer, D. H. (2018). Modifications and accommodations: a preliminary investigation into changes in classroom artifact quality. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-21.

[9] Retrieved 3 June 2020 from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/114026/chapters/Acceleration@_Jump-Starting_Students_Who_Are_Behind.aspx

[10] Retrieved 3 June 2020 from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/114026/chapters/Acceleration@_Jump-Starting_Students_Who_Are_Behind.aspx

[11] https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/different-resources-different-results

Overview of the Roadmap

This roadmap is designed to help educators and administrators plan to accelerate learning for all students during the 2021-2022 school year. It divides the year into four phases:

Phase 1: Diagnostic and Planning	Phase 2: Launch	Phase 3: Progress Monitoring	Phase 4: Reflection and Planning
Before the 1st day of school 2021	September - October 2021	November 2021 - April 2022	May - June 2022

Within each phase, we offer guidance aligned to the three key priorities:

Priority 1: Foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families[12]

This past year has shown us how powerful it is when we leverage entire communities to ensure that every child has the support they need. As school systems plan for the next school year, it's essential to engage students, families, and a wide range of community organizations as full partners. Students' sense of belonging is a critical — and often undervalued — condition for academic success. Students who feel a sense of belonging "feel socially connected, supported, and respected".[13] They trust their teachers and their peers, and they "feel a sense of fit at school." [14] In order to engage with students and their families as authentic partners, we must approach engagement with a focus on equity. This means a) establishing meaningful engagement activities and systems that do not characterize or treat specific parent groups as deficient in their level of engagement or approach to education and b) acknowledging and navigating cultural differences through communication, humility, and sensitivity. [15]

Priority 2: Continuously monitor students' understanding.

To accelerate students' progress, system leaders and educators need to identify exactly what unfinished learning needs to be addressed, when, and how. Accelerated learning requires that students consistently receive grade-level materials and tasks, along with targeted scaffolds that make the work accessible.[16] In order to do this, educators need to have a strategic approach to collecting and using diagnostic data this year, so that they're identifying the highest priority prerequisite knowledge and skills "just in time" throughout the school year. As the Achievement Network states in 3 Principles for Assessments During Instructional Recovery and Beyond, "Data should never serve as a gatekeeper to grade-level content" but should instead inform educators of *how* to support students in accessing the content.

Priority 3: Ensure strong grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds when they are needed.

Students need consistent access to grade-appropriate assignments that will help them master grade-level standards. This is especially important for students who are performing below grade level, who research has shown are the least likely to receive grade-appropriate assignments. In addition to providing grade-appropriate assignments, it's important that teachers use strong instructional practices, including addressing the unique needs of English learners and providing individualized, modified content and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.[17]

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[12] Language and resources in Priority 1 draw on resources created by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) https://ccsso.org/coronavirus
[13] http://studentexperiencenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-We-Know-About-Belonging.pdf
[14] http://studentexperiencenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/What-We-Know-About-Belonging.pdf
[15] https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/equitable_family_engag_508.pdf
[16] Retrieved 3 June 2020 from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/114026/chapters/Acceleration@_Jump-Starting_Students_Who_Are_Behind.aspx
[17] TNTP. (2018). The Opportunity Myth. Brooklyn, NY: TNTP Retrieved from https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/.

How to Use this Roadmap:

❑ **Consider your context:** Throughout this roadmap, resources and tools are organized by priority and phase of the year. The priority-level guidance includes key guiding questions, suggested steps for success, and aligned resources. We recognize that many educators and administrators may already have a plan in place for some or all of the listed action steps. **Given the different places schools and educators are in and the need to set the conditions for sustainable change, we encourage you to review the charts in each phase, identify what you already have in place, and focus on one additional step at a time, working your way down the list as you and your team are ready.** Note that timeframes in the document are approximate and are designed to illustrate when certain key actions may be most effective. Districts and schools should adapt the suggested dates to fit their local context.

❑ **Plan Strategically:** Depending on where each classroom, school, and district is starting from, it may not be feasible to incorporate all of the suggested steps in one year. Rather, the goal of this tool is to help educators and administrators identify high-priority goals and action steps that will best serve students in their unique context and to deepen educators' and administrators' commitment to action steps that they have already implemented. Upcoming webinars from TNTP will support educators' and administrators' use of this guide to set priorities and create an action plan for each phase of the year.

❑ **Sign up for implementation support:** This document provides a list of action steps that can be described as "the what" – key steps that will support learning acceleration in classrooms and schools this upcoming school year. However, we realize that a document alone may not provide sufficient support. Users may also require support in determining the "how": based on a classroom's specific diagnostic data, how might you adjust a pacing guide? How can administrators effectively support change management by leveraging educator voice, strategically staffing to support priorities, and being mindful of educator burnout? These specific "how" elements will be addressed through a menu of professional learning opportunities, available synchronously and asynchronously throughout the summer. You can also suggest additional professional learning topics through our Acceleration Roadmap feedback survey.

Disclosure Statement

Reference in this website to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm, or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public and does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Our office is not responsible for and does not in any way guarantee the accuracy of information in other sites accessible through links herein. For more information, contact: Jacqulyn.M.Gantzer@mass.gov, 781-338-3529.

Key Action Steps for the 2021-2022 School Year

Below is a high-level summary of key action steps for the 2021-2022 school year that classroom educators will find outlined in this Roadmap.

	Phase 1 Diagnostic & Planning Before first day of school '21	**Phase 2** Launch Sept.-Oct. '21	**Phase 3** Progress Monitoring Nov. '21-April '22	**Phase 4** Reflection & Planning May-June '22
Sense of Belonging	• Plan for a welcoming environment, including explicit culturally responsive and SEL instruction. • Gather information on student and family experiences. • Create a family communication plan.	• Monitor attendance and engagement. • Build relationships and conduct regular student check-ins.	• Continue to develop culturally responsive and SEL instruction skills. • Gather student and family feedback to build stronger relationships and instruction. • Drive student learning using the Teacher Instructional Cycle. 	• Provide an end-of-year survey to gather feedback on student and family experiences. • Plan an event that celebrates students' accomplishments.
Monitor Understanding	• Plan an assessment calendar. • Collect available assessment data.	• Use curriculum-embedded assessments. • Participate in school-based data analysis PD.		• Conduct summative assessments. • Share data to support planning for summer learning and the next school year.
Strong Instruction	• Evaluate curriculum against CURATE rubric to ensure grade-level rigor. • Adjust pacing guide to include time for scaffolds while prioritizing grade-level content.	• Set rituals for regular examination of student work against grade-level standards with English learner & special education colleagues. • Plan scaffolding strategies for daily or weekly lessons, where needed.		• Analyze student achievement data to inform areas to adjust next year.

Phase 1 – Diagnostic and Planning Work

Prior to the First Day of School, 2021

PHASE 1 - Priority 1: Set a vision for and establish plans to foster a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families.

In this phase, your goal is to understand previous student and family experiences and needs leading into the 2021-2022 school year. You should review any school survey data that is available, develop a plan to communicate with students' families, and prepare your classroom activities to ensure that you are able to learn about the students and families you will work with this year. Consider using this calendar worksheet to chart your course for the year.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Do students feel welcome in my classroom?	• Set a vision for a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive classroom environment. • Ensure that your vision is built for all students, including students from groups that are commonly marginalized or not part of the dominant culture group. • Engage in learning opportunities to build on your cultural proficiency and sociopolitical consciousness. • Prepare transitional lesson plans that teach grade-level content while incorporating social and emotional learning.	• Review these "Look-Fors" for culturally responsive teaching[18] and culturally responsive SEL to set goals for yourself for the year. • Reflect on DESE's 5 elements of safe & supportive schools. • Use CASEL's three signature practices to foster a supportive environment or use their guide to creating a supportive environment with consistent routines. • Explore TNTP's sample transitional lessons for examples.
Am I seeking student and family input and feedback to inform my efforts?	• Gather information about students' and families' experiences, wellbeing, and engagement needs, providing translation and interpretation where necessary. • Collect previous attendance data for incoming students. • Analyze the information to identify which students and families may benefit from additional relationship building between home and school and what strategies may work best.	• Review results from or adapt TNTP's Learning Acceleration Survey. • Consider using this sample communication template to reach out to incoming families. • Consider using this communication tracking tool to reflect on and monitor your practices of building meaningful partnerships with families. • Adapt resources like the Facilitating Listening Sessions Toolkit that foster two-way communication.
Am I fostering a strong relationship and partnership with all families?	• Create a communication plan that identifies times and methods for when you will establish contact with each family. • Set a communication goal that fits within your plan and unique context, such as establishing a short, positive conversation with at least 90% of your families by the end of the first week of school.	• Reference DESE's Family Engagement Framework to support planning. • Consult this guide for effectively engaging families of English learners. • Consult this guide and resources for beginning positive relationships with families of students with disabilities. • Check your assumptions with the Flamboyan Foundation's Challenging Assumptions Reflection Tool.

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[18] "Culturally Responsive Teaching": Great teaching is culturally responsive teaching: focused on promoting academic achievement, demonstrating cultural competence, and fostering students' sociopolitical awareness.

PHASE 1 - Priority 2: Establish systems to monitor students' understanding.

In this phase, your goal is to make sure you have the necessary assessment tools and data systems to determine *how* you will bring students into grade-level instruction.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Am I collecting timely and relevant academic data from students?	• Update your scope and sequence to include time to collect timely and relevant academic data in a manner that fits your content area. • Work with your school leadership team to plan an assessment calendar, including dates for systemwide screeners and curriculum embedded assessments. • Consider incorporating alternative ways of demonstrating comprehension for beginning to intermediate ELs, such as responding orally instead of in writing and encouraging their use of their home language. • Collaborate with special education teachers to design and reflect on assessments that are aligned to learning goals and free of barriers.	• Use the Standards Navigator to match key content with assessment items. • Use page 14 of this resource to consider the best diagnostic strategy for your content area. With literacy, regular screeners may be helpful. In math, consider whether you can build in unit-by-unit diagnostics that can provide timely information (vs. a lengthy diagnostic at the beginning of year). • If you are using assessments from your school's curriculum, evaluate the quality and adapt them, if necessary. • Implement a valid and reliable screener for early literacy, consulting DESE's literacy assessment page for resources.
Am I analyzing data and using it to plan for instruction?	• Plan for upcoming school data-distribution dates with an understanding of how and when the data will be used to inform instruction. • Collect any available assessment data from the previous year or summer that provides information on potential instruction gaps at the student and/or class/cohort level.	• Add data days to your calendar worksheet or use your preferred planning calendar. • Review data to learn about your students. • Consider following this guide on using Universal Design for Learning[19] (UDL) practices to create formative assessments that are accessible to all students.

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[19] Universal Design for Learning is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. See www.understood.org

PHASE 1 - Priority 3: Review and adjust curriculum and pacing guides.

In this phase, your goal is to review your curricular materials and adjust your pacing guide to prepare to provide grade-appropriate assignments for students.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources

Am I using high-quality, grade-appropriate curricular and instructional materials?	• Evaluate the quality and grade-appropriateness of your current curriculum against the CURATE rubric and make adjustments, where necessary.
	
	• Reflect on your own instructional practice to ensure you are holding high, transparent expectations for all students and supporting the development of students' academic skills and identities as learners.
	
	• Collaborate with English language development teachers and/or instructional specialists to prioritize teaching language skills and vocabulary that are embedded in the curriculum and content standards to accelerate the development of language and content simultaneously.
		• Visit the Massachusetts CURATE website for reports on widely used curriculum materials.
		
		• If CURATE has not rated your materials, consider using these tools:
		  o Evaluate whether your adopted instructional materials are standards-aligned.
		  o Determine if your materials meet the needs of your English learners.
		  o Use this tool to determine if your curricular materials are culturally responsive.
		
		• Refer to this guidance from DESE if your school is planning to change curriculum or if you need to adapt your current curriculum.
		
		• Review tools and resources for addressing the needs of English learners with learning disabilities.

Am I providing differentiated just-in-time interventions to address instructional gaps from last year?	➤ Adapt your pacing guide to include time for just-in-time interventions to fill in learning gaps from last year while prioritizing grade-level content. This includes:
	  • Time at the beginning of the unit to assess the foundational skills needed to master the unit's content and
	  • Time to supplement content to address the identified gaps in foundational skills
	
	➤ Identify language demands and provide linguistic supports to scaffold content for English learners.
	
	➤ Anticipate and plan for potential barriers to learning by designing flexible lessons and learning environments.
		• This resource contains scaffolding strategies that can be used to address gaps in foundational skills.
		
		• Consult these guides for identifying language demands in ELA and math in order to write strong language objectives, and consult this sample template for planning language objectives.
		
		• Refer to the Interactive Blueprint for EL Success for guidance and exemplars of effective planning and practices for ELs.
		
		• Consult these resources for guidance and templates for planning lessons and breaking down barriers to learning with UDL.
		
		• With respect to literacy, consider this resource for supporting students with early literacy skills and this resource for literacy accelerators for older students.
		
		• Provide assistive technology tools and resources in the classroom.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Great teaching is culturally responsive teaching: focused on promoting academic achievement, demonstrating cultural competence, and fostering students' sociopolitical awareness. The following DESE resources can support educators in this work.

➤ Videos of classroom instruction from the Culturally Responsive Teaching Video Library showcase strong culturally responsive teaching by Massachusetts educators in a range of content areas, grade levels, and teaching models from the 2020-2021 school year (remote, hybrid, and in-person).

➤ The Facilitator's Guide: Using OPTIC to Strengthen Understandings of Culturally Responsive Teaching is a video-based platform designed to help educators, evaluators, coaches, and mentors build understanding of what culturally responsive teaching looks like and how to support it through high-quality feedback.

➤ The Culturally Responsive Look-Fors are a set of observable, culturally responsive teacher and student actions aligned to focus elements from the Classroom Teacher Model Rubric.

➤ Videos of classroom instruction from the Video Calibration Library and the companion Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric can help you identify aspects of culturally responsive teaching and consider ways to further integrate it into your practice.

➤ Consider attending workshops on text selection, inclusive and equitable tasks, social-justice oriented tasks, or equitable instruction.

Sign up for implementation support: See our menu of professional learning opportunities and register for relevant sessions to support you in implementing these actions. You can also suggest additional professional learning topics through our Acceleration Roadmap feedback survey.

Phase 2 – Launch

September – October 2021

PHASE 2 - Priority 1: Welcome students and families to your classroom.

In this phase, you will focus on establishing welcoming classroom systems and routines, closely monitoring student attendance and engagement, and communicating frequently with students and families.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Do students feel welcome in my classroom?	• Closely monitor student attendance and engagement. • Engage students in activities that support building early relationships.	• Consult this guide with steps to strengthen student attendance and assignment completion. • Consider using activities from the table below this chart.
Am I seeking student and family input and feedback to inform my efforts?	• Conduct daily or weekly check-ins with students. • Create a communication tracking tool to reflect on and monitor your practices. • Solicit student and family feedback to ensure your efforts are informed by, and reflective of, their values and priorities.	• Use these English learner-friendly Google forms for regular check-ins. • Adapt this sample communication tracking tool. • Consider working with your school to host parent perspectives workshop or partnering with your school's SEPAC or district ELPAC to facilitate. • Incorporate DESE's Adapted Model Feedback Surveys to capture student feedback.
Am I fostering strong partnerships with all families?	• Send home a family letter in their preferred language to explain academic goals for the 2021-2022 school year. • Revisit your initial communication plan and goal; update and revise where necessary to maintain regular, positive connections with students and families who would most benefit from increased relationship building.	• Adapt and send this sample family letter explaining learning acceleration or use these family guides to the standards. • Utilize the Flamboyan Foundation's Challenging Assumptions Reflection Tool.

IDEAS FOR STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Make a plan to implement some of these strategies regularly throughout the school year. Choose the strategies that are most appropriate for your grade and subject area.

Engage students in creating a learner autobiography	Use this relationship mapping strategy to ensure all students have a strong relationship with someone at school	Implement Brain Breaks
Work with students to create If-Then Plans	Support the development of a growth mindset with Rose, Bud, Thorn Journaling	Consult Transforming Education's Trauma-informed SEL Toolkit for strengths-based strategies you can integrate into your classroom.

PHASE 2 - Priority 2: Monitor students' understanding.

In this phase, your goal is to make sure you have the data to determine *how* to bring students into grade-level instruction. Give a limited number of short assessments that prioritize students' wellbeing while giving you the information you need to bring them into your next unit of study.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Am I collecting timely and relevant academic data from students?	• Within your first unit of instruction, use curriculum-embedded assessments that can help monitor student understanding of grade-level content.	• Read this overview explaining the purpose of curriculum embedded assessments. • Read this overview about prioritizing assessment data that is close to instruction. • To map assessment items back to standards, use the standards navigator.

Am I analyzing data and using it to plan for instruction?	• Participate in school-based data analysis cycles and/or professional development.
	
	• Set up systems to collaborate with ESL teachers and/or instructional specialists to analyze formative assessments alongside language proficiency data to identify strengths and areas for growth.
	
	• Set up systems to collaborate with special education teachers to revisit IEP goals, determine progress, and discuss how to leverage students' strengths to achieving their goals.
		• Utilize your school's data analysis forms and templates. If you need examples, consider these:
		
		  o TNTP's Student Experience Assessment Guide and Assignment Review Protocols (also in appendix for all subject areas)
		
		  o EL Education's ATLAS protocol
		
		  o Student Achievement Partners' protocol
		
		  o Chart that contrasts culturally sustaining and culturally destructive dialogue.
		
		• Use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors to understand what ELs at different levels of English proficiency can do in the four domains and what students should be growing toward.
		
		• Use this guidance to co-create strengths-based goals with students with disabilities.

PHASE 2 - Priority 3: Provide grade-appropriate assignments and plan scaffolding strategies.

In this phase, your goal is to prepare and provide grade-appropriate assignments. You might feel tempted to give students work that's below their grade level this year to address what they missed in the prior year. But this traditional approach to remediation often just ensures students will never catch up. Instead, provide grade-level content along with "just-in-time" interventions to fill in learning gaps from last year.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Am I using high-quality, grade-appropriate curricular and instructional materials?	• Evaluate the quality of assignments you are providing to ensure all students have the opportunity to meaningfully engage in high-quality, grade-appropriate content. • Reflecting on your instructional practice, set goals to ensure you are holding high, transparent expectations for all students and supporting the development of students' academic skills and identities as learners.	• See TNTP's assignment review protocols for content-specific guides, and browse examples of low- and high-quality assignments in their student work library. • Use the Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric & video library to set instructional goals for yourself this year. • Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles of engagement, representation, and expression.
Am I providing differentiated just-in-time interventions to address instructional gaps from last year?	• Once you have assessment data, update your pacing guide to identify specific areas where students will likely need just-in-time interventions within each unit. • Proactively plan scaffolding strategies for daily or weekly lessons according to the learning objective, target standard(s), and your students' needs. • Incorporate multiple appropriate entry points that maintain rigorous expectations for students at different English language proficiency levels and for students with learning disabilities.	• Use TNTP's Scaffolding Strategies for general and content-specific strategies. • Refer to DESE's Interactive Blueprint for EL Success and Quick Reference Guides for meaningful and rigorous classroom-level learning opportunities that build on English learners' assets and classroom-level academic and linguistic supports. • Use this step-by-step UDL lesson planning template to identify and address potential barriers to learning for students with disabilities. • Provide instructional materials and texts in accessible formats to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Sign up for implementation support: See our menu of professional learning opportunities and register for relevant sessions to support you in implementing these actions. You can also suggest additional professional learning topics through our Acceleration Roadmap feedback survey.

Phase 3 – Progress Monitoring

November 2021 – May 2022

PHASE 3 - Priority 1: Deepen relationships with students and families.

In this phase, your goal is to utilize data and feedback from students and families to revise and update your engagement plan. You should use systems that allow you to monitor students' and families' experiences continuously and adjust your approaches to target the most effective strategies for the students and families who may benefit most.

Now is the time to go back to your calendar worksheet. Ensure you have built in planning time and instructional time for these steps in each unit throughout the rest of the school year.
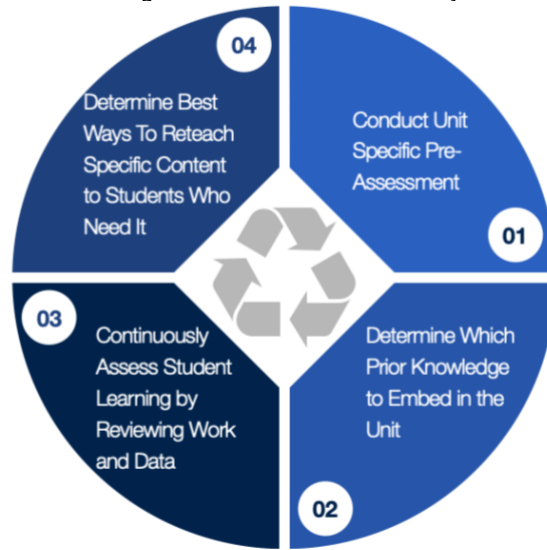
Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Do students feel welcome in my classroom?	• Reflect on and develop your linguistically and culturally responsive teaching practices. • Align your academic objectives to SEL objectives to support development of social and emotional competencies.	• Consult these video resources on culturally responsive teaching to view exemplars, study and reflect on instructional practice, or calibrate with peers using OPTIC to identify culturally responsive teaching Look-Fors in math and ELA. • Use this guide and resource from CASEL for examples of aligning SEL and academic content.
Am I seeking student and family input and feedback to inform my efforts?	• Administer a brief student engagement survey to collect information on student engagement during lessons. • Use the data collected from the student engagement survey to adjust your lesson plans and set a goal for increased engagement in the next unit. • Update your family communication plan to incorporate data from your communication tracker and feedback you've received from families.	• Use or adapt this TNTP student engagement survey. • Reference this sample communication tracker or revisit the one you created in Phase I. • Use or adapt this TNTP stakeholder feedback reflection and planning guide template. • Consider using this Academic Partnering Toolkit for Teachers to continue reflecting on and modifying your approach to equitable and culturally responsive family partnerships.

PHASE 3 – Priorities 2 and 3: Monitor students' understanding & provide grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds.

In this phase, your goal is to monitor student learning and adjust instructional strategies to ensure that all students demonstrate mastery of grade-level content. You may use formal assessment instruments, such as summative end-of-unit quizzes, tests, and projects, but equally important is including formative and in-class assessments in the form of classwork and tasks. The methods you use to monitor students' understanding will be highly specialized for your subject area, grade level, and school. However, all teachers should follow the same instructional cycle to systematically accelerate learning:

Learning Acceleration Instructional Cycle

Cycle Step	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
1. Conduct unit-specific pre-assessment	• Use curriculum-embedded tasks or questions from the unit as a pre-assessment, being sure to assess the aligned standards or prerequisite standards.	• Use tasks and questions from your standards-aligned curriculum • Use the standards navigator to identify prerequisite standards.
2. Determine which prior knowledge to embed within the unit.	• Where gaps are identified, determine prerequisite standards that could be integrated into grade-level units of study to support grade-level mastery.	• Build your knowledge of grade-level standards in your grade as well as those directly above and below yours. These content guides are a useful resource.
3. Continuously assess student learning by reviewing work and data.	• Plan formative assessments for between and within lessons. • Continue to collaborate and seek out the support of instructional specialists (e.g., ESL teachers and special education teachers) to interpret data and monitor the progress of specific student groups.	• Use formative assessment data to guide instruction. • Use or adapt this collaborative protocol for reviewing student work to discuss instructional next steps. • Consult this guidance on best practices for looking at EL student data and making data-informed decisions. • Use the student work library or this collection of student writing samples on OPTIC to calibrate alignment to grade-level standards, either independently or with your peers. • Study your students' writing samples for alignment to grade-level standards.

PHASE 3 – Priorities 2 and 3: Monitor students' understanding & provide grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds.

Cycle Step	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
4. Determine the best ways to reteach specific content to students who need it.	• Focus on one or two instructional strategies that require students to "do the thinking," which will help them build their knowledge and skills and more deeply engage in their learning. • Continue providing various scaffolds, keeping track of which are most effective for specific knowledge and skills and for individual students. • Understand what learners can do with language across subject areas and use what you learn to support equitable access and assessment for English learners. • Provide opportunities for English learners to demonstrate their learning in all four language domains and in their home language, in accordance with their English proficiency level.	• Visit Appendix A: Actions and resources to provide grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds (Phase 3, Priority 3) for a list of instructional strategies. • Revisit TNTP's Scaffolding Strategies to identify which are most effective with your students. • Use the WIDA Can Do Descriptors to understand what ELs at different levels of English proficiency can do in the four domains and what they should be growing toward. • Refer to this guidance to understand the difference between interventions and accommodations for students with IEPs. • Visit the U.S. Department of Education's, Office of Special Education Programs for guidance on Multi-tiered Systems of Support for ELs with and without disabilities.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Your goal is to support students within Tier 1 instruction by using just-in-time instruction and scaffolds. Tier 1 scaffolds are the best way to support mastery when the majority of your students are struggling with a concept or skill. However, you must build classroom systems (or use your school's system) of support to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience.

- Watch or re-watch this intro video about MTSS and the literacy-specific overview here.
- Remember that Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction should be aligned to Tier 1 instruction. Work with your coach or grade-level team to consider what tiers of support will be helpful for your students, but remember, tiers are not locations. It may be helpful to review this resource: Understanding Tier Patterns and Movements Within MTSS.
- Visit this DESE resource page for more information on organizing for tiered instruction.

Sign up for implementation support: See our menu of professional learning opportunities and register for relevant sessions to support you in implementing these actions. You can also suggest additional professional learning topics through our Acceleration Roadmap feedback survey.

Phase 4 – Reflection and Planning

May–June 2022

PHASE 4 - Priority 1: Celebrate students' accomplishments and reflect on students' and families' experiences.

In this phase, your goal is to celebrate students' and families' achievements this year and solicit their feedback to plan for the upcoming school year.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Do students feel welcome in my classroom?	• Summarize helpful information you have gathered throughout the year, including effective strategies for supporting specific students and families. • Work with colleagues to determine the best way to document and share this information. • Plan an event that celebrates students' accomplishments. Consider collaborating with other staff and including families and caregivers.	• Plan for the last 6 weeks of school.
Am I seeking student and family input and feedback to inform my efforts?	• Use end-of-year surveys to gather data from students and families. • Work in teams to analyze the results and determine how effective your practices were in partnering with students and families. • Disaggregate results by student population to identify trends and areas for continued focus.	• Use or adapt TNTP's Learning Acceleration Survey.

PHASE 4 - Priority 2: Assess and analyze student mastery of grade-level content.

In this phase, your goal is to conduct summative assessments that support summer learning opportunities and/or a strong start to next school year.

Key Questions	Steps for Success	Aligned Resources
Am I using effective assessment instruments?	• Conduct summative assessments, including MCAS, that capture student mastery of grade-level content.	• Research on Classroom Summative Assessment.
Am I analyzing data and using it to plan for instruction?	• Collect and analyze results from summative assessments. Work with colleagues to determine the best way to document this information to inform summer programming or next school year. • Analyze whole-class, student group, and individual student results to identify areas to adjust instructional practices moving forward. • Ensure that students' IEP and progress reports accurately reflect each student's growth, current achievement levels, and the most effective methods for supporting them.	• Tips on Organizing Student Data • Follow sound practices for students with IEPs using the IEP process guide.

PHASE 4 - Priority 3: Reflect on instructional practices and set professional learning goals.

In this phase, your goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional materials and strategies in reaching all learners and to start planning for your upcoming year. While your next step will differ for your unique context, with some students continuing in summer learning while others returning next year, your reflection should be similar. You should use student achievement data to inform your analysis.

Although we are all working toward one goal of supporting all learners in mastering grade-level material, your personal reflection will be highly individualized. Map out the next steps that are most appropriate for your personal practices and school context. Commit to a professional learning plan to help you improve your practice next year. Work with your coach or professional learning community to set goals and strategies based on what you learn from your self-reflection. If needed, discuss the need for any new resources (such as high-quality instructional materials) with your principal as soon as possible so they can include your input as they budget for the upcoming school year.

Key Questions	Aligned Reflection Questions
Am I using high-quality, grade-appropriate curricular and instructional materials?	**Equity** → To what extent did your classroom environment (relationships, routines, etc.), materials, and instruction support equity for *all* students? **Content** → Which standards or bands of standards were most difficult for students to master and how might you improve student learning next year? **Materials** → To what extent did you need to supplement your classroom materials and curriculum to support students in mastering grade-level material? What connections exist between trends in student achievement data and your instructional materials?
Am I providing differentiated just-in-time interventions to address instructional gaps from last year?	**Students** → Which students struggled? Which students are furthest behind academically? Which students need and typically benefit from more individualized supports? **Practices** → What connections exist between trends in student achievement data and your instructional practices? What professional practices (such as lesson design and scaffolding strategies) were most and least effective? What are some opportunities to build on or strengthen your practice next year?

Sign up for implementation support: See our menu of professional learning opportunities and register for relevant sessions to support you in implementing these actions. You can also suggest additional professional learning topics through our Acceleration Roadmap feedback survey.

Appendix A: Actions and resources to provide grade-appropriate instruction with just-in-time scaffolds (Phase 3, Priority 3)

Strategy 1: Proactively build academic mindsets with your students.

Teacher Actions	Resources
• Build a classroom culture where students feel comfortable making mistakes in the name of learning and their academic progress is celebrated. • Explicitly teach students about growth mindset and the malleability of intelligence. • Provide "wise feedback"[20] to students that not only communicates high academic expectations but also assures the student they can meet those expectations.	• EL Education: Building the Culture and Structure of "Crew" • Carol Dweck's Education Week commentary on growth vs. fixed mindsets • Edutopia: growth mindset teaching resources • Example phrases for building a culture of error • Intervention Central: How to Help Students Accept Constructive Criticism: Wise Feedback • Stanford: The Mentor's Dilemma and "wise feedback"

Strategy 2: Set clear behavioral and academic expectations for student participation and work.

Teacher Actions	Resources
• Establish routines so students are engaged in work throughout the lesson (including during key transition points such as the start of class or when students finish working on an assigned task). • Implement protocols for how students should complete specific types of work or activities they will engage in regularly, such as how to annotate text or participate during small group work. Set aside time to teach students the protocols when first introducing them and time for students to reflect on their engagement with the protocols on an ongoing basis. • Provide students with examples or rubrics that illustrate what strong participation and work products look like.	• EL Education: "The What, Why and How of Protocols" (including instructions and videos for dozens of protocols) • Great Minds *Wit & Wisdom* Implementation Guide with ELA instructional routines (pp. 96-109) and writing, speaking, and listening rubrics (pages 120-161) • University of Pittsburgh Institute for Learning Accountable Talk Sourcebook instructional routines and talk formats (pages 16-26)

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[20] "Wise Feedback" refers to "feedback…that discourages expectations and attributions of racial bias and minimizes stereotype threat….that refute negative stereotypes by conveying a clear faith in each student's intellectual potential. But they do not impart this message by assigning easier work to ensure student success or by offering heavy doses of unstinting praise." See Cohen, Steele and Ross (2012), especially pages 1302-1303 for more information. https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/the_mentors_dilemma.pdf

Strategy 3: Ask questions and assign tasks that require critical thinking.

Teacher Actions	Resources

● Use the language embedded in grade-level standards to plan questions and tasks that require the appropriate level of thinking for your target standard(s).
 	
● *For lessons that involve a text:* Pose text-dependent questions that focus on the most important details or ideas in a text to deepen students' understanding of what they read.
 	
● Plan activities that immerse students in real-world problem-solving and prompt them to explain and justify their thinking.
 	
● Ask more open-ended questions than closed-ended questions. After asking a closed-ended question, follow up with open-ended questions (such as "How did you get that answer?" or "Why do you say that?").
	● *For lessons that involve a text*:
	
	    ○ Achieve the Core Guide to Creating Text-Dependent Questions and sample literacy lessons
	
	    ○ Teach Like a Champion establishing meaning via text-dependent questions and daily template for close reading
	
	● *Math*:
	
	    ○ Achievement Network Targeting Aspects of Rigor in Math Instruction
	
	    ○ Equitable Math's framework for math instruction
	
	    ○ Gates Foundation Math Design Collaborative formative assessment lessons and summative assessment tasks
	
	    ○ KIPP video on cognitively guided instruction
	
	● *Science*: NGSS Classroom Sample Tasks

Strategy 4: Give all students a chance to do the work.

Teacher Actions	Resources
● When asking questions to the whole class, ensure that all students are responsible for coming up with the answer before you call on someone to respond. ● Set the expectation and provide the materials so that all students respond when answering non-verbally (for example, showing written responses on whiteboards or holding up fingers to represent multiple-choice answer options). ● Assign roles to each student when working in groups to ensure that all students participate.	● Education Week's Total Participation Techniques: An Interview with Pérsida and William Himmele ● University of Pittsburgh Institute for Learning Accountable Talk Sourcebook norms for equitable participation (pages 32-35)

Strategy 5: Check for understanding frequently and strategically.

Teacher Actions	Resources
● Plan to check for understanding of each of the key concepts and/or components in your lesson to make sure students are on track throughout the entire class. ● Vary the ways you ask students to demonstrate understanding to allow for different learning styles and to engage students with the content in multiple ways. ● Use strategies for the appropriate purpose (for example, thumbs up/down is <u>not</u> a reliable check for understanding of content, but it can be effective for showing agreement/disagreement). ● Prompt students to monitor their own understanding and take action when they share that they need support.	● EL Education <u>check for understanding strategies and videos</u> ● The Teacher Toolkit <u>checks for understanding</u>

Strategy 6: Hold high expectations for student responses and ask targeted follow-up questions.

Teacher Actions	Resources
● Draft exemplar responses for questions/tasks to clearly define the bar to which you will hold student responses. ● Set the norm that students are responsible for answering questions and cannot "pass" because they don't know or don't want to answer. ● When students give incomplete or overly simple responses, ask follow-up questions to lead students to a more complete and accurate response. ● When students make an error, ask probing questions to determine the source of their error and help them respond correctly. ● Address trends in misconceptions or errors that you observe in multiple students' work with the whole class.	● EL Education <u>conversation cues</u> ● University of Pittsburgh Institute for Learning <u>Accountable Talk Sourcebook</u> practices that support accountability to accurate knowledge and rigorous thinking (pages 30-32) ● Inside Mathematics video examples of Standards of Mathematical Practice <u>#6</u> and <u>#8</u>

Strategy 7: Facilitate academic discussion and feedback among students.

Teacher Actions	Resources
● Give students many chances to informally share their thoughts and work with one another in every lesson (such as "Turn and Talk" or "Think-Pair-Share" where students discuss briefly with a partner). ● Incorporate opportunities for students to participate in formal discussions or problem-solving protocols in class, and teach students how you want them to participate in such activities. ● Give students a chance to discuss and give feedback on each other's work.	● Teaching Channel videos <u>Strategies for Student- Centered Discussion</u> and <u>Participation Protocol for Academic Discussions</u> ● Great Minds <u>Wit & Wisdom Implementation Guide</u> Socratic Seminar guidance (pages 89-95) ● Teach Thought <u>sentence starters</u> ● Inside Mathematics video examples of <u>Standard of Mathematical Practice #3</u> ● EL Education video <u>Speed Dating Protocol</u>

Appendix B: Important Terms and Concepts

Learning Acceleration and Remediation
Why are we accelerating rather than remediating student learning?
Excerpt from *Learning in the Fast Lane* by Suzy Pepper Rollins4F[21]

Remediation is based on the misconception that for students to learn new information, they must go back and master everything they missed. So, for example, all of the students who are weak in math — probably determined through a pre-test — are herded together and assigned a teacher who will reteach them basic math skills. The students who have the largest gaps and are thus the most academically vulnerable are sent the furthest distance back.

In the end, this remedial model may produce a student who can finally subtract two fractions; unfortunately, that student may now be a junior in high school. While the rest of her classmates moved forward, she moved backward. Reverse movement at a tedious pace with little relevance to today's standard will not catch students up to their peers. In fact, this model may contribute to widening gaps, as stronger students get even stronger while the weaker ones continue to sink further. This failure to move forward can lead to decreased student motivation.

The primary focus of remediation is mastering concepts of the past. **Acceleration**, on the other hand, strategically prepares students for success in the present — *this* week, on *this* content. Rather than concentrating on a litany of items that students have failed to master, acceleration readies students for new learning. Past concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the purposeful context of future learning.

Although the acceleration model does revisit basic skills, these skills are laser-selected, applied right away with the new content, and never taught in isolation. To prepare for a new concept or lesson, students in an acceleration program receive both instruction in prior knowledge and remediation of prerequisite skills that, if missing, may create barriers to the learning process. This strategic approach of preparing for the future while plugging a few critical holes from the past yields strong results.

	ACCELERATION	**REMEDIATION**
Self-efficacy	• Self-confidence and engagement increase. • Academic progress is evident.	• Students perceive they're in the "slow class," and self-confidence and engagement decrease. • Backward movement leads to a sense of futility and lack of progress.
Basic skills	• Skills are hand-picked just in time for new concepts. • Students apply skills immediately.	• Instruction attempts to reteach every missing skill. • Skills are taught in isolation and not applied to current learning.
Prior knowledge	• Key prior knowledge is provided ahead of time, enabling students to connect to new information.	• Typically, does not introduce prior knowledge that connects to new learning.
Relevance	• Treats relevance as critical component to student motivation and memory.	• Relevance is not seen as a priority.
Connection to core class	• Instruction is connected to core class; ongoing collaboration is emphasized.	• Instruction is typically isolated from core class.
Pacing and direction	• Active, fast-paced, hands-on. • Forward movement; goal is for students to learn on time with peers.	• Passive, with focus on worksheets or basic software programs. • Backward movement; goal is for students to "catch up" to peers.

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[21] Retrieved 3 June 2020 from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/114026/chapters/Acceleration@_Jump-Starting_Students_Who_Are_Behind.aspx

High-Quality Instructional Materials and Grade-Appropriate Assignments
What are high-quality instructional materials and why do they matter?

While it is well known that students learn primarily through their interactions with teachers and content, there is a growing body of research that indicates that the quality of curricular materials influences students directly and influences the way teachers teach. In other words, instructional materials have a significant effect on student learning. In general, materials that have been identified as **high-quality instructional materials** (HQIM) have been rigorously reviewed and vetted by academic experts and teachers for alignment to rigorous standards and ease of use. Many states and districts look to third-party curriculum reviewers such as EdReports.org to begin their process of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their materials so that they may make strategic decisions about their current academic program and/or new curriculum adoption. High quality includes eliminating the use of curriculum materials that cause racial harm and trauma. States and districts must ensure that their HQIM are a strategic fit for their students and community, ensuring ALL students have consistent access to grade-appropriate content and are represented in the materials.

All students need regular opportunities to think critically and engage deeply with worthwhile content through **grade-appropriate assignments**. These assignment and student work review tools are intended to help teachers, leaders, and others understand if an assignment is giving students the opportunity to meaningfully engage in worthwhile grade-level content. Using the protocols, you'll first review the quality of the assignment and then analyze students' performance on that assignment. In general, when assigning tasks, educators should be asking:

- Content: Does the assignment align with the expectations defined by grade-level standards?
- Practice: Does the assignment provide meaningful practice opportunities for this content area and grade level?
- Relevance: Does the assignment give students an authentic opportunity to connect academic standards to real-world issues and/or contexts?[22]

Example assignment review protocols are:
- ➢ ELA Assignment Review Protocol
- ➢ Math Assignment Review Protocol
- ➢ Science Assignment Review Protocol
- ➢ Social Studies Assignment Review Protocol

Scaffolding
Scaffolding is a **temporary** support that a teacher provides to help students tackle complex or increasingly complex material or tasks. Scaffolding, if done well, foster a level of **independence** and potential automaticity in students such that the scaffold (chunked texts, visuals, graphic organizers, question stems, etc.) are no longer needed in the future. Scaffolding is often paired with **diagnosing** as effective scaffolding requires a level of **prior knowledge** about the student — their knowledge and conceptions. A scaffold should not change the cognitive demand or lift of the work required by the student.

Prerequisite Skills and Just-in-Time Scaffolding
Accelerated learning requires that students consistently receive grade-level materials, tasks, and assignments, along with appropriate scaffolds that make the work accessible. More specifically, instead of sending students backward to fill in all the potential gaps in their learning, leaders and teachers should focus on filling in only the most critical gaps—and not in isolation, but at the moment they're needed.
These just in time scaffolds address the necessary content knowledge and skills students need to engage in the most immediate work of the grade: the complex text they're reading, the math unit they're studying, the science experiment they're conducting, or the historic time period they're analyzing. While the goal here is to address unfinished learning, these concepts pull heavily from what we know about the science of learning and principles of *interleaving, spaced practice,* and *retrieval practice,* all highly effective, evidence-based strategies that help individuals learn more

- **Understanding the demands of grade-level materials and content.** To begin this process, study the standards alongside year-long scopes and sequences to understand what standards and topics will be covered when, how students will apply their knowledge of the standards, and how they will show that knowledge. This means looking closely at the standards, the topics, and the tasks within a unit and across the year.

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[22] While the first two domains focus more heavily on the extent to which the assignment aligns to grade-level expectations and gives students meaningful opportunities to engage them, the third domain focuses more heavily on the authenticity of what the assignment asks students to do. An assignment's "value beyond school" was one of three domains used by Newmann and colleagues in their study finding significant associations between student assignments and student achievement. See Newmann, F. M., Lopez, G., & Bryk, A. S. (1998). *The quality of intellectual work in Chicago schools: A baseline report*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research

- **Identifying the most critical prerequisite skills and content knowledge students will need** to access that grade-level content when they encounter it throughout the year.

> For example, a ninth-grade ELA teacher might look across the year and note that students will be reading Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* in the fall. The teacher could give students an easier text to read and remove this book from the year-long sequence out of fear that students are too far behind to tackle such a complex text at the beginning of the year. Instead of removing the text and opting for something of lesser value, the teacher could note that tackling this text requires ready-made scaffolds for building students' content knowledge about the topics and time period covered in *Raisin*. Additionally, because Hansberry obscures concepts like the Great Migration and redlining in rich figurative language, the teacher might identify understanding the purpose and meaning of figurative language as a critical prerequisite skill for tackling this complex text. Here we are thinking about the prerequisite knowledge that students need by considering the techniques the author uses to convey key ideas, along with the intentional topical knowledge that the curriculum seeks to build.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

There have been several frameworks developed by scholars in this field to describe an evolving culturally responsive approach. Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings coined the term *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*, an approach focused on supporting learners whose experiences and cultures have been historically excluded from mainstream education to achieve academic success. Later, Dr. Geneva Gay introduced the term *Culturally Responsive Teaching* with a framework that was more focused on classroom practices. Dr. Django Paris expanded further by forming a vision for *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy* that helps students develop a positive cultural identity while engaging in content area studies. Throughout this document, DESE uses the phrase *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, which we define as great teaching that is focused on promoting academic achievement, demonstrating cultural competence, and fostering students' sociopolitical awareness.

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