No Child Left Behind

State-specific

Resource Kit

for

School Leaders

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Please visit www.LeaderEd.com and click on Curriculum Matrix on the navigation bar to view sample charts from the Curriculum Matrix for your state.

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Chapter I

Our Changing World

Why *No Child Left Behind* Matters

No Child Left Behind was signed into law on January 8, 2002.

The federal government's landmark and bipartisan 2001 legislative renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *No Child Left Behind*, will have a profound impact on every school district, school building, and classroom in the country. While the actual legislation is some 1,400 pages in length, the key provisions appear to boil down to a few critical components, notably:

- Every child in the country at specified grade levels must achieve state-determined and tested levels of proficiency in math and language arts by the 2005-06 school year. They will then need to reach predetermined proficiency levels in science starting in 2007-08. Proficiency will be defined on a state-by-state basis.

- Every school must come up with a plan for adequate yearly progress (AYP), which will provide annual benchmarks for ongoing improvement in performance for *all* students.

- The AYP benchmarks will need to be met, not only by the total student population, but also by nine subgroups, broken down in the categories of gender, racial/ethnic minority (four groups), disability, limited English proficient, low income/economically disadvantaged, and migrant.

- All schools must employ "highly qualified teachers."

- Ten percent of Title I funds must be spent on professional development.

While there may be debate over a number of elements included in the legislation, the concept at the heart of *No Child Left Behind* is both highly laudable and highly consistent with the mission of the International Center for Leadership in Education since its inception in 1991 – achieving a rigorous and relevant curriculum for *all* students. Nonetheless, moving from the *concept* of NCLB to measurable and sustained improvement for every student will be difficult.

There are many people who feel that the challenges of NCLB – to have all students reach proficiency – are too steep and that the legislation is

doomed to failure. While schools may not succeed in bringing every student to the proficient level, two overriding truths exist:

1. We can provide a better education for many students.

2. The push for higher standards has continued unabated since 1983 and is not going to go away.

Therefore, the International Center recommends that the doubters "get over it and get on with it." The demand for higher student achievement, whether it comes from NCLB, state standards, state tests, tech-prep, school-to-work, Total Quality, site-based management, or any other initiative, will not fade away. It will be part of the culture of American schools for the foreseeable future.

We at the International Center have spent the last 12 years identifying individual schools across America, as well as abroad, which have been most successful at achieving high academic standards for *all* kids through a relevant education. In the process, we have learned a great deal about the characteristics that need to be in place for this goal to be achieved.

Two areas are central to our findings about what schools can do to promote academic growth for all students:

- make decisions about curriculum priorities based on data

- provide instruction that is congruent with students' learning styles and interests.

Many schools that struggle to improve proficiency for all students are data rich but analysis poor. Conquering the instructional overload is a hallmark of highly successful schools.

Data-based Decision Making about Curriculum Priorities

In the national quest to raise standards over the last several years, every state has added more and more to the menu of what it expects classroom teachers to do as far as curriculum and instruction are concerned. Highly successful schools have recognized that they cannot just keep adding to the load. They have decided to take some things off the plate and to base those decisions upon good data.

These schools have brought focus to their instructional programs by using data to answer two simple questions:

1. What is on the test?

2. What will students need to know and be able to do once they leave school.

Please see Chapter IV for the Curriculum Matrix for your state.

Knowing the answers to these key questions is critical if instructional and curricular priorities are to be set.

Over the past several years, in cooperation with subject-matter and curriculum specialists in individual states, the International Center has correlated state tests to state standards/benchmarks/performance indicators in mathematics, science, and English language arts. This data is referred to as the **Curriculum Matrix.** In addition, the International Center conducted its Curriculum Survey of Essential Skills with 18,000 educators, parents, business representatives, and community stakeholders to obtain their opinions on which curriculum topics in these subjects are essential, nice to know, or not important for students in their post-school responsibilities. This information is also included in the Curriculum Matrix.

When everything in the curriculum is a priority, nothing is a priority.

The International Center undertook this effort because we saw so many schools in which everything in the curriculum was a priority and therefore nothing was a priority. The International Center's research shows that equal weight is not given to every state standard/benchmark/performance objective when it comes to a state's testing program. Furthermore, according to the national survey, the relative importance of the standards varies in terms of what students need for success in adult life. If students are to reach proficiency and make adequate yearly progress, schools need to have access to data that will assist them in identifying what is most important to teach.

Standards-based Reading Proficiency vs. Real-world Reading Requirements

While a gap exists in secondary school between some students' reading levels and the instructional materials used, an even more alarming disconnect can be found between student levels and real-world reading requirements. Table IV-5 lists just a few of them under Personal Use Reading, Newspapers, and Career Clusters.

Table IV-5
Lexile Measures: School and the World Beyond

Lexile Measure	High School Students middle 50% at midyear	Classroom Materials middle 50%	Personal Use Reading	Newspapers	Career Clusters Entry-level 75th percentile
1700L					Law & Public Safety (1740)
1600L					
1500L					Ag./Natural Resources (1510)
1400L			Safety Manual for Spa (1390) Aetna Health Discount Form (1360)	Reuters (1440) New York Times (1380) Washington Post (1350) Wall Street Journal (1320) Chicago Tribune (1310) Associated Press (1310)	Education & Training (1370) Transp./Distr./Log. (1350) Arch./Construction (1340) Manufacturing (1310) Business and Admin. (1310) Health Science (1300) Retail/Wholesale (1270) Hospitality & Tourism (1260) Scientific Res./Engr. (1250)
1300L		Grades 11/12 1100-1300	Medical Ins. Benefit Pkg (1280) Application-Student Loan (1270) Federal Tax Form W-4 (1260)		
1200L	Grades 11/12 940-1210	Grade 10 1100-1200		USA Today (1200)	Human Services (1200) Arts/AV Tech/Comm. (1190)
1100L			G.M. Protection Plan (1150)		
1000L					
900L	Grade 10 905-1195				

Chapter V

State Curriculum Matrix Data

Overview

The Curriculum Matrix is also included in two resource kits with staff development activities for teachers: *Achieving AYP Using State-Specific Curriculum Matrix Data* and *Improving Performance for Special Education Students — with Curriculum Matrix Data for Achieving AYP*

This chapter contains the Curriculum Matrix that crosswalks your state standards to your state assessments and to the Curriculum Survey of Essential Skills. Several charts precede the Matrix. These charts, described below, provide background and summary information to help you interpret the data in the Curriculum Matrix.

State Information Resources

The State Information Resources chart indicates where the International Center found information about the state standards/strands/goals/areas of study/knowledge indicators/objectives/benchmarks, and/or performance indicators. It also gives the source of the assessment data used in the Curriculum Matrix. The International Center assembled a State Development Team to assist in the review and analysis of Curriculum Matrix data.

Curriculum Matrix Summary

The Curriculum Matrix Summary chart provides a summary of the crosswalks of the standards/benchmarks, etc. to the state assessments and to the Curriculum Survey of Essential Skills national rankings.

The International Center can provide assistance in interpreting and using Curriculum Matrix data. Please contact us with questions or requests.
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- The first column identifies the discipline and the tests, by grade level, that were researched.
- The next two columns identify the number of broad-based areas and subcategories in the state standards that correlate to the grade level.
- The fourth column offers summary information about the match between the state assessment and the standards. The numbers under the H (high), M (medium), and L/No Q (low, which means no questions) designations indicate the number of standard subcategories (benchmarks, indicators, etc.) that are tested on the state assessment.

- In the last column, the standard subcategories are crosswalked to the Curriculum Survey of Essential Skills. H (high) is the label for the top 35 ranked essential skills; M (medium) labels the skills ranked between 36 and 70; and L (low) means the essential skill was ranked 71 or above. The numbers under H, M, and L indicate how many standard subcategories matched essential skills at that level. A standard subcategory is also included under L if there was no match to the essential skills.

Chapter IV contains a complete listing of the essential skills for English language arts, mathematics, and science in rank order. On the Curriculum Matrix, the letter e (English), m (mathematics), or s (science) precedes the rank number.

Adjustment to Curriculum Survey Science Topics

The science essential skills need a special notation. After the Survey was disseminated, it was found that the list of science topics lacked three areas. These topics were added to the essential skills, and a team of teachers determined that they would have ranked High if they had been included.

s114 (Not Ranked)	Know and apply the principles of scientific inquiry. (Implicit are the processes of prediction, estimation, developing hypotheses, drawing conclusions, evaluation, and following ethical principles and professional procedures.)
s115 (Not Ranked)	Plan and apply real or hypothetical models and constructions to facilitate investigation and learning and the solution to practical problems.
s116 (Not Ranked)	Understand the impact upon society and the environment of scientific and technological discoveries and the contributions of scientists. Understand how society may accept or reject scientific discoveries based upon need or refusal to change.

The Principal as Instructional Leader

Principals can help develop teachers by consciously setting the example for high standards. Principals should ALWAYS model what is important and what is expected. The principal sets the tone for the school.

For example, if the principal thinks it is important for teachers to smile and speak to students, the principal must always smile and speak to students, and to teachers, and to parents. If principals want to improve student academic performance and close the achievement gap, they must demonstrate actions that indicate this is a priority.

Professional staff development for teachers should be planned and implemented on a regular basis. Principals should attend staff development workshops with teachers. Not only does this send a message that the workshop is important, but also it gives the administrator firsthand knowledge of best instructional practices.

Additionally, and of equal importance, principals must monitor instruction daily and provide regular feedback to teachers. It is incumbent upon the principal and other building-level administrators to provide ongoing teacher growth and renewal.

The principal must monitor instruction daily and provide regular feedback to teachers.

To ensure that no child is left behind, principals must ensure that instructionally, no teacher is left behind. To facilitate effective teacher growth and development, ongoing observations and feedback are critical.

A primary component of a successful school is a principal who frequently observes and monitors instruction. Some education experts recommend that principals spend at least 50 percent of the school day monitoring instruction.

The 5 by 7 Plan

One method to assure that principals are observing teachers and providing input is the 5 by 7 Plan. This plan guarantees the principal will spend at least 35 minutes a day observing instruction. While this is a far cry from 50 percent of the day, it is a solid starting place, and it is probably more time than the average principal currently spends observing instruction. The main purpose of the plan is to enable the principal to assess and support teachers in their instructional practices. The plan can be implemented by principals of large high schools as well as small elementary schools, with modifications made based on school population.

Every day, visit five classrooms for seven minutes each.

Here's how it works. Every day, visit five classrooms for seven minutes each. This is more than a "walkthrough," which typically lasts from a few seconds to a couple of minutes. Seven minutes will provide a more in-depth understanding of what is observed and increase your ability to offer specific, fair feedback. Carry index cards with you and keep a daily record of classrooms that you visit.

Write specifics on the card. Record a summary of your observation, noting what was positive and a suggestion for what you want to see more frequently or less frequently. If you are uncertain of the purpose of a practice, lesson, or strategy, write a question on the card. Establish how you want teachers to respond to your questions, e.g., via e-mail, note, etc.

Give positive feedback and address negative practices or actions that you observe. Remember that silence is a sign of acceptance.

Although it is important to give positive feedback, it is equally important to address negative practices or actions that you observe. A good adage to remember is that "silence is a sign of acceptance." For example, if you notice that a teacher constantly sits behind his/her desk and you say nothing, he or she will assume that this is acceptable and continue the behavior.

Talk to but do not distract or disturb students. Ask them if they understand the assignment, what the objective of the lesson is, if they know how to get extra help if needed, etc.

What Students Say about Their Academic Success

In the attempt to understand what motivates high-achieving students who might otherwise be stereotyped for failure, International Center staff interviewed students who attended schools that serve communities with high poverty. All the students came from low-income homes; most were minority; many were highly mobile, moving from school to school; and some were from families where English was spoken as a second language. The students were enrolled in grades 4 through 12 in public, alternative, and charter schools throughout the country. They were chosen to be interviewed because they were performing at high academic levels.

All were asked the same set of questions. International Center staff then looked for common attitudes, experiences, and circumstances that led the students to high achievement.

The following responses to many of the questions asked are composites of the common elements in the students' answers. Also included are the comments or circumstances that gave individual students an interesting or meaningful insight to the question.

"We were told you do well in school. Do you?"

Students at all grade levels said "yes," they did well and were good students. They were confident of their ability and pleased with their success, but they were not competitive with other students in working for high grades. They also said that there were others in their classes who may be smarter, but that didn't bother them.

"How do you know you are doing well, and have you always done well?"

Most students said they knew they were doing well by their report card grades, tests, and grades on papers and projects. But more important were comments made by teachers, parents, and other students. Several said that when they finally understood what was being taught after struggling to learn they became "excited" and "happy" with themselves.

Many of the middle and high school students indicated that they had not always done well but could point to a specific time or event that caused them to begin to achieve at a higher level. In **every** case, a teacher who was considered "special" by the student was central to changing the student's achievement pattern. And the event involved an academic achievement where the teacher took the time to talk with the student about it.

Many of students indicated that they had not always done well. In every case, a teacher was central to changing the student's achievement pattern.

"When did you first realize you were smart?"

Most students said that they realized they were smart sometime between third and fifth grade. When asked how, they said it was a teacher who told them and that message gave them a new outlook on themselves as well as the expectation that they could be successful in school. Sometimes other significant people in their lives whom they respected pointed it out to them: an aunt, grandmother, an older brother or sister. A few indicated that a parent or someone in the community mentioned it.

One student who was born in Mexico would walk to school with his older brother and listen to the class through a window. The teacher spied him outside and invited him in even though he was not of school age. The student credits that teacher for giving him the first boost to achieving well in school. Later, the family moved to the US and the student struggled to learn English in elementary school, even with ESL instruction. He said that his best teachers for beginning English were commercials on television. They taught him the words for familiar objects.

Another high school student said it was his third grade teacher who encouraged him. He knew that she liked and respected him, and he thinks she is the best teacher in the world. She is now retired, but they go out for lunch every year to renew their friendship.

Characteristics of Success in Closing the Achievement Gap Checklist

1. We have a strong belief in and commitment to the concept that "All students will achieve" (not "can" but "will" achieve). ❑ Yes ❑ No

- This attitude is evident in mission statements, in headings on memos and school communications, in posters in classrooms and hallways, on student work and awards for academic achievement, and most importantly, in all conversations with staff and students. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- There is a sense of urgency; no time is to be wasted in reaching for this goal. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- The attitude is pervasive. There are no apparent dissenters. Teachers and staff persist in their belief through difficulties and setbacks. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- Much leadership and time has been devoted to achieving unanimity on this attitude, upon which all other strategies, programs, and activities are built. ❑ Yes ❑ No

Comments

2. Curricula and instruction are standards-based, and high expectations for achievement are held for all students. ❑ Yes ❑ No

- Curricula have been redesigned and are updated regularly from analyses of state standards, assessments, and available instructional time. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- More emphasis is placed and time spent on the core subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics than on other subjects. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- There is agreement among teachers on what is to be taught and on the overall program of instruction both in subject areas and at grade levels. ❑ Yes ❑ No
- Early literacy is emphasized through early childhood education programs and family involvement. ❑ Yes ❑ No

Comments

3. **Data is collected in an organized and purposeful fashion and used to make instructional decisions at the school and individual student level.** ❑ Yes ❑ No

    - The system for data collection, analysis, and decision making is tailored to the individual school and is designed and operated by school staff. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - There is frequent assessment of student progress. Less-than-expected performance is not considered failure but rather a signal to provide other and varied means of instruction. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - A broad range of intervention programs is available immediately when a student fails to meet expectations. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - Assessment practices are uniform within the school. Teachers frequently exchange papers to be corrected in an effort to reach agreement in evaluating student work and setting standards. ❑ Yes ❑ No

Comments

4. **The teaching staff is competent in subject-matter knowledge, pedagogy, classroom management skills, and ability to relate positively to students and fellow faculty members.** ❑ Yes ❑ No

    - All students are actively engaged in the learning process. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - Teachers are uniformly committed to setting high expectations for students and taking responsibility for helping all students achieve. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - Teachers are involved as professionals. They keep up with new ideas in their fields and employ innovative and effective instructional strategies as the need arises. Professional development is a significant schoolwide emphasis. ❑ Yes ❑ No
    - Faculty teamwork is a way of life. ❑ Yes ❑ No

Comments