

**Creating Coherence:
Common Core & Teacher
Evaluation**

**Strategic Data Project
Spring Convening**

April 23, 2014



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About Education First

VISION

Education First believes that a child educated in America will be well-prepared for a world of constant change, learning and opportunity. Income and ethnicity will no longer determine the quality of education students receive. Our public education and postsecondary systems can—and will—prepare every student for success in college, careers and life.

MISSION

Education First strives to improve public education by helping leaders to innovate, think bigger and achieve more on behalf of students. Our work always gives our clients—educators, policymakers, nonprofits and funders—greater knowledge and stronger skills to succeed.



Objectives

- To provide high-level orientation to Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments
- To describe how CCSS and teacher evaluation and support systems are—and are not—connected at the state and local level
- To point to productive paths forward

Common Core 101: Political Context



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Strange Political Bedfellows

- **Far right:** established & well-funded
 - “Obamacore”
 - Election-year issue
 - At odds with traditional, pro-business base of Republican party
- **Far left:** emergent
 - Small but vocal groups of parents
 - Unions backing off previous support



Losing the Signal for the Noise

So the debate is about...

- Federal overreach/loss of local control
- Corporate/private interests
- Testing backlash
- Data privacy



Did You Just Say Data Privacy?

But wait, you might protest:

- States, not the federal government or test vendors, own and control their student data
- Common Core and teacher evaluation systems have accelerated—but did not begin—movement to build SLDS
- PARCC and Smarter Balanced privacy policies approved by state officials—adhere to federal and state privacy laws

Yet still...

83 bills in 32 states this legislative session address student data privacy. Key topics include state data privacy officers and bans on biometric data and third-party data collection

inBloom (and all other ) third-parties) prohibited from collecting student data to provide timely information to educators in NY (required under RTTT)

Narrowly defeated  legislation in GA would have cut off teachers' access to many student data points including previous test scores and attendance



Losing the Signal for the Noise, *continued*

....instead of:

- The need for college- and career-ready standards for *all students* in global economy

- How to shift the system to support teachers and students to meet more rigorous expectations for college and career

- How to make those system shifts in ways that connect and reinforce—rather than crash into—concurrent reform efforts, especially teacher evaluation and support systems
 - Teachers are rightly confused and concerned
 - Fundamentally about teacher learning
 - Require collaboration across departments



Common Core 101: Select Policy & Implementation Issues



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Common Core Shifts in ELA/Literacy

Shift 1	Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction	Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts—50/50 in grades K-5; less prescriptive, but with greater attention to literary nonfiction and social studies and science content, in grades 6-12.
Shift 2	Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text , both literary and informational	Students engage in rich conversations and write using evidence carefully pulled from a text or multiple texts. Rather than asking students to respond solely based on prior knowledge or personal experience, the standards expect students to answer and support their responses with information, ideas, arguments and details from text.
Shift 3	Regular practice with complex text and its academic language	Students read complex, grade-appropriate texts and build the vocabulary—words that appear in a variety of content areas—they will need to meet the demands of college and careers by the end of high school.

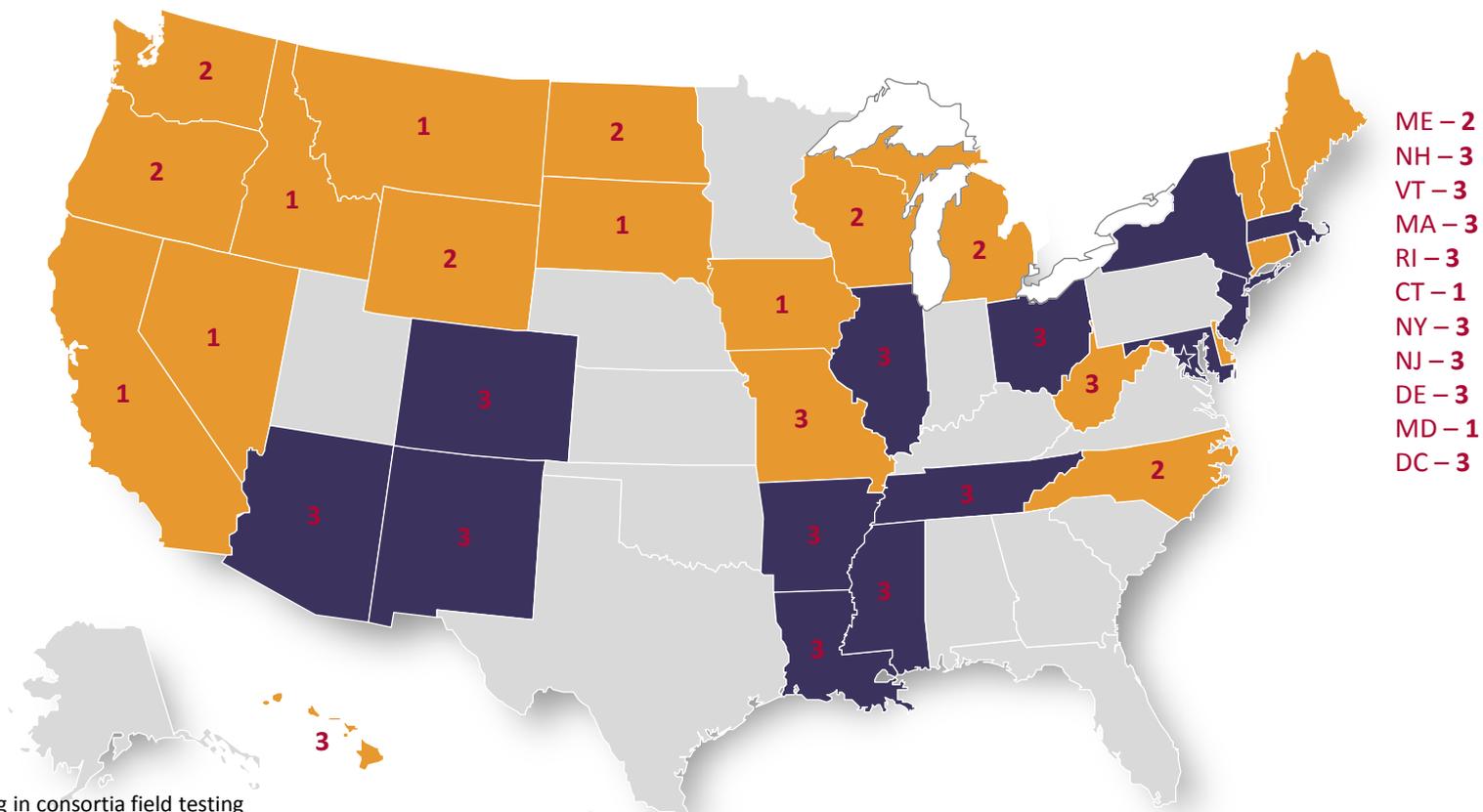


Common Core Shifts in Mathematics

Shift 1	Focus strongly where the standards focus	Teachers significantly narrow and deepen the scope of how time and energy is spent in the mathematics classroom. They do so to focus deeply on the major work of each grade so that students create strong foundations in conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency and application to problems inside and outside the math classroom.
Shift 2	Coherence: think across grades and link to major topics within grades	Principals and teachers carefully connect the learning within and across grades so that students can build new understanding onto foundations built in previous years. Major topics, such as displaying data, become a grade-level focus instead of detracting from the focus as a supporting topic only.
Shift 3	Rigor: in major topics pursue with equal intensity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• conceptual understanding• procedural skill and fluency• application	Teachers support students' ability to access concepts from multiple perspectives so that math becomes more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures. Students are expected to have speed and accuracy with simple calculations; teachers structure class time and/or homework time for students to memorize, through repetition, core functions. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply math in context both inside and outside the math classroom.



State Participation in Consortia Field Testing – Spring 2014



- ME – 2
- NH – 3
- VT – 3
- MA – 3
- RI – 3
- CT – 1
- NY – 3
- NJ – 3
- DE – 3
- MD – 1
- DC – 3

- Not participating in consortia field testing
 - KS and KY are developing their own tests
 - FL, IN and PA are planning to withdraw from the consortia and have not yet made decisions on their tests for 2014-15
 - AK is a Smarter Balanced Advisory State but will not be field testing
 - AL, GA, MN, NE, OK, TX, UT and VA are not members of consortia
 - SC began but suspended field testing as it plans to withdraw

- Smarter Balanced field testing (21)
- PARCC field testing (15, including D.C.)
- 1 Replacing current state tests with consortia field tests (6) (only select schools in NV)
- 2 Allowing districts or schools to volunteer for consortia field tests in addition to current tests (10)
- 3 Administering both current state tests and consortia field tests to randomly selected districts/schools (22)



College Placement

- More than **two-thirds of states do not have a commonly agreed-upon score on an admissions or placement test** (e.g., ACT, SAT, ACT's Compass, College Board's ACCUPLACER, state- or institution-developed assessments) for entry-level, credit-bearing mathematics and English courses in their public two- and four-year colleges and universities.
 - In other words, different institutions within the same state may use different tests and draw different conclusions from the test results
- Several researchers have suggested that a **common cut score could smooth disconnects** between K-12 and higher education systems and better help students navigate both systems successfully.
- The work by the PARCC and Smarter Balanced consortia is intended to create a common understanding of **both college placement and readiness** criteria, as well as provide a direct link between K-12 and college expectations.
- Performance on the high school summative PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments will signal whether or not students have the content knowledge and skills to succeed in credit-bearing first-year college courses without remediation.



Getting Under the Hood:

Early Implementation Lessons in Leading Districts

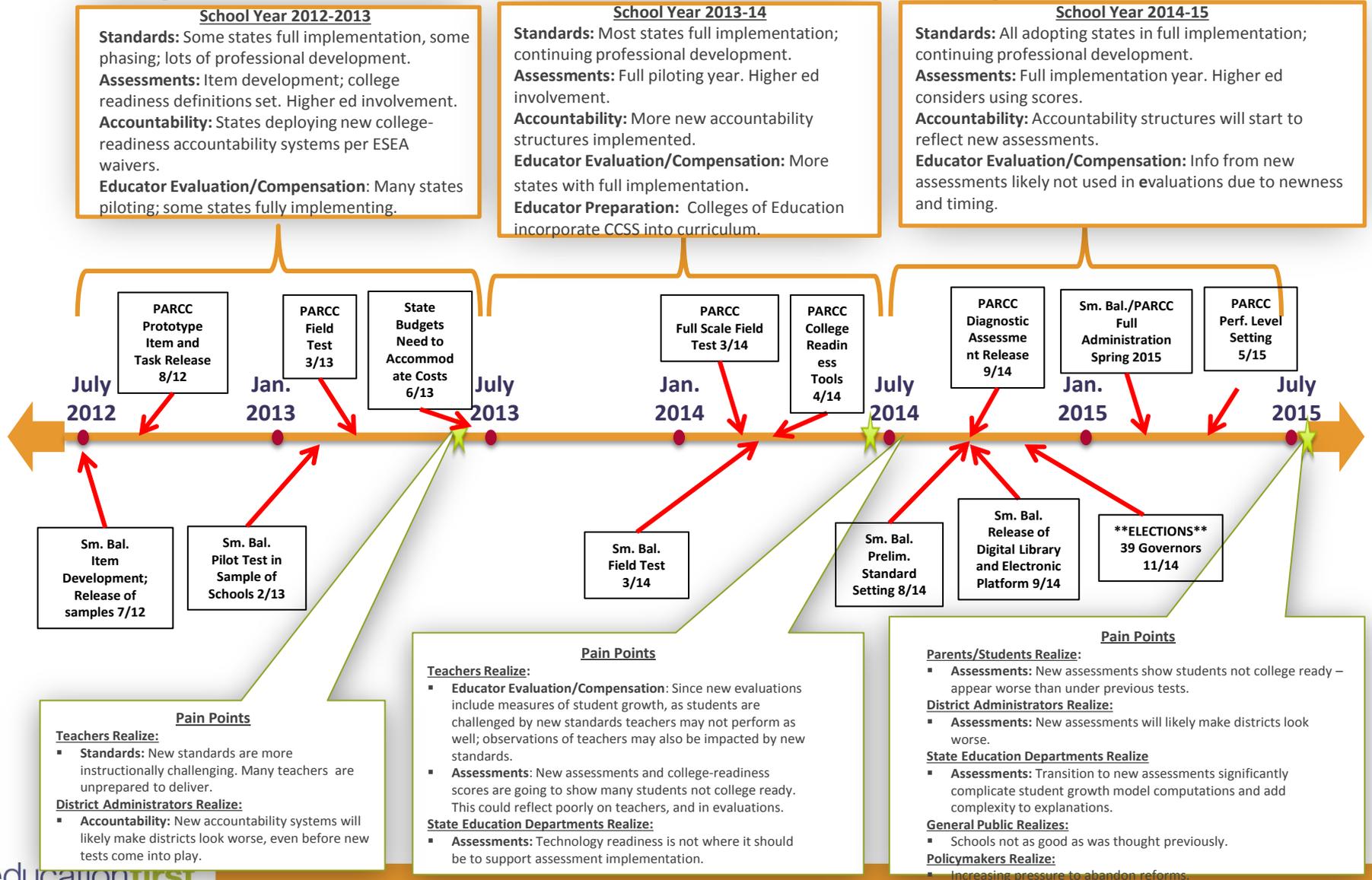
- **Pain points**
 - Lack of high-quality instructional materials
 - State and district assessments don't yet measure the standards
 - Professional development for teachers and other key players still focused on learning what standards are, haven't yet pushed to how to integrate into practice
- **Advice and cautions**
 - At the local level, duck the politics & do the work
 - Effective leadership at multiple levels key
 - Principals lead on instruction (observations!)
 - Hiring of principals and coaches key
 - Invest considerable time needed to develop aligned curriculum
 - Focus on aligned professional development content & structures
 - Beyond workshop model
 - Repeated carve-out time for engaging with student work

Common Core & Teacher Evaluation: Reform Timeline





Projected Timeline of Education Reform Implementation



The Path Forward



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Big Idea: Follow Through with Smart Execution

- Adjust, don't abandon
- Seize opportunity to move the needle for all kids
- Acknowledge that it's a lot to handle on the ground right now
- Make smart adjustments to earn the good will and breathing room necessary to do the hard work ahead together
- Communicate, communicate, communicate



What Smart Execution Looks Like in SEAs and LEAs: Integrating Common Core and Teacher Evaluation

- 1. Connect instructional materials and assessments with Common Core**
 - E.g.: encourage selection of high-quality, aligned diagnostic and formative assessments and performance tasks, especially for SLOs
- 2. Connect observation rubrics with Common Core to enable better instruction**
 - E.g.: Streamline, refine and/or prioritize teaching standards and evidence collection to place greater emphasis on teacher understanding and use of appropriate Common Core-aligned grade/subject content and content-specific instructional strategies
- 3. Align time, people, technology and money to implement Common Core, assessments and teacher evaluation systems**
 - E.g.: Link leadership, coaching, feedback and professional learning systems to support Common Core-aligned teaching and learning
 - E.g.: Update existing program management and communication processes and routines to enable better communication, more collaboration and reduced siloes among LEA and SEA staff
- 4. Focus and involve teachers, principals and other stakeholders in state and local efforts to improve integration of the reforms**
 - E.g.: Assess progress and involve LEAs, principals, teachers and other stakeholders to continuously improve reform implementation



What Smart Execution Looks Like in SEAs and LEAs: State Examples

Integration Focus Area	State Practice
1. Connect instructional materials and assessments with Common Core	New York State educators can access a resource to learn strategies for engaging in collaborative conversations about Common Core-aligned assessments for use in the educator evaluation system at the local level.
2. Connect observation rubrics with Common Core to enable better instruction	Louisiana educators can access a Video Library to locate videos of real teachers in their classrooms teaching Common Core-aligned lessons while being observed using the state's observation rubric. These videos are sortable by grade level, subject area, and observation rubric component and rating.
3. Align time, people, technology and money to implement Common Core, assessments and educator support and evaluation systems	Massachusetts LEAs can apply for grants to integrate the state's educator evaluation system and curriculum frameworks. Receiving LEAs must focus on curriculum and planning and involve both teachers and school leaders in their proposed grant activities.
4. Focus and involve teachers, principals and other external stakeholders in state and local efforts to improve integration of the reforms	Kentucky publishes a series of Professional Growth and Effectiveness System newsletters every 2-4 weeks to provide educators with resources, updates and information related to the linkages between implementation of Common Core and teacher effectiveness policies.



What Smart Execution Looks Like in SEAs and LEAs: Promoting Cross-Department Collaboration

Got silos? Ways to break them down:

- Assess and refine theory of action for how standards, assessments and educator evaluation and support systems are integrated
- Hold regular cross-team meetings that include operations and content leaders to align on priorities, co-develop plans and resources, and synchronize timelines
- Streamline the number of messengers and frequency of communications between the agency and the field
 - Streamline disconnected multiple newsletters to the field
 - Designate clear points of contact between the SEA and LEAs, LEAs and schools

Creating Coherence

Sarah J. Barzee Ph.D.

Chief Talent Officer

CT State Department of Education

Why Coherence?

- Systems change is complex;
- Complex change is non-linear; “non-linear messiness” (Fullan, 2001);
- Coherence is part and parcel of that complexity and can never fully be achieved (Fullan, 2001);
- We can either support OR hinder implementation; poor implementation= disruptive reform...which benefits neither educators nor students;
- Need to explicitly explore/locate the interdependencies between/among initiatives to avoid fragmentation that results in frustration, anxiety;
- The most powerful coherence is a function of having worked through the ambiguities and complexities of hard to solve problems

Challenges

- CSDE leadership team all relatively new...takes time to get the individual offices up and running...takes time to build the team
- confluence of new “initiatives” ...simultaneous and all moving QUICKLY
- Things moving quickly...no time to collaborate
- Lacking organizational structures to promote coherence making
- Thinking and acting in silos (or “cylinders of excellence”
- shared understanding of systems change (coherence)

Foundations for Creating Coherence

- Vision
- Clear Outcomes
- Theory of Action
- Understanding of Systems Change/Change Theory
- Organizing Framework
 - Ambrose: Managing Complex Change
 - Philosophy-Policy-Structure-Practice
- Shared Vision/Purpose/Goals/Value
- Value Coherence; Value Collaboration
- Focus
- Time
- Timing

CSDE Efforts to Create (internal) Coherence

- Weekly Collaboration meeting across divisions (Academic, Talent, Turnaround etc.)
- Weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting with the Commissioner
- Bi-Weekly Scheduled Academic/Talent Office meetings with the Chiefs and Division Directors
- Talent/Academic Offices have collaborated on various tasks (CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching; Assessment Literacy, SLOs)
- Learning Forward facilitation of cross division coherence (Academic/Talent)
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders facilitation of cross division coherence

CSDE Efforts to Create (external) Coherence

- Monthly Development Team Meetings (RESCs, CAS, CSDE Talent Office)
 - added a rep from the Academic office more recently
- Facilitation by Center on Great Teachers and Leaders with the GTL Coherence Tool/process
 - RESCs
 - CT Association of Schools
 - UCONN..Neag School of Education
- Cross State Learning Collaborative (partner with Maryland)...CCSSO

Final Thoughts

- Timing matters
- It's hard work
- It's messy
- Have to keep at it
- all parties have to see the value of coherence
- persistent coherence is a dangerous thing B/C creative ideas and novel solutions often occur when the status quo is disrupted (Fullan 2001)

Creating Coherence Overview

Connecting Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems to the Common Core

Meghan Zefran and Lauren Matlach

April 2014

Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

at American Institutes for Research ■



Mission

The mission of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) is to foster the capacity of vibrant networks of practitioners, researchers, innovators, and experts to build and sustain a seamless system of support for great teachers and leaders for every school in every state in the nation.

Toward Coherent Instructional Support



Introducing the Core Instructional Practices

- Drafted by American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Contains a set of content-specific teaching practices that, if enacted by teachers or teams of teachers, should help all students attain mastery of the Common Core State Standards by the end of Grade 12
- Based on research and practice
- Developed in collaboration with teachers, curriculum experts, teacher educators, assessment developers, and other experts
- Meant for use in systems-alignment work

Four Steps to Creating Coherence



- Step 1: Identify the instructional practices that support the Common Core State Standards implementation.
- Step 2: Determine how well the observation tool supports the Core Instructional Practices.
- Step 3: Review and refine professional learning supports.
- Step 4: Decide on next steps for revising, enhancing, or staying the course on teacher evaluation and professional learning reforms.

Example of Systems Review: Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric

Core Instructional Practice	Professional Practice Framework	Professional Learning Initiatives, Offerings, Programs, and Supports
MCIP-1	Explicit Connections: 2a, 3a	Direct Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common planning time across subject areas for teachers ▪ State-sponsored online workshops that focus on designing lessons for particular standards ▪ EQulP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) rubric ▪ Ongoing professional learning communities to review assessment data
	Implicit Connections:	

Creating Coherence in the Field

State/District	Approach
Idaho	Brought together a handful of districts and educator preparation programs to work through the systems alignment.
Arizona	Built state-level capacity and piloted with a sample of districts.
Rhode Island	The teachers union and district-level evaluators used the Core Instructional Practices to identify “high-leverage” teaching practices in their teacher evaluation rubric.
Rochester City Schools	Using the process to inform development of professional learning model in transformation schools.

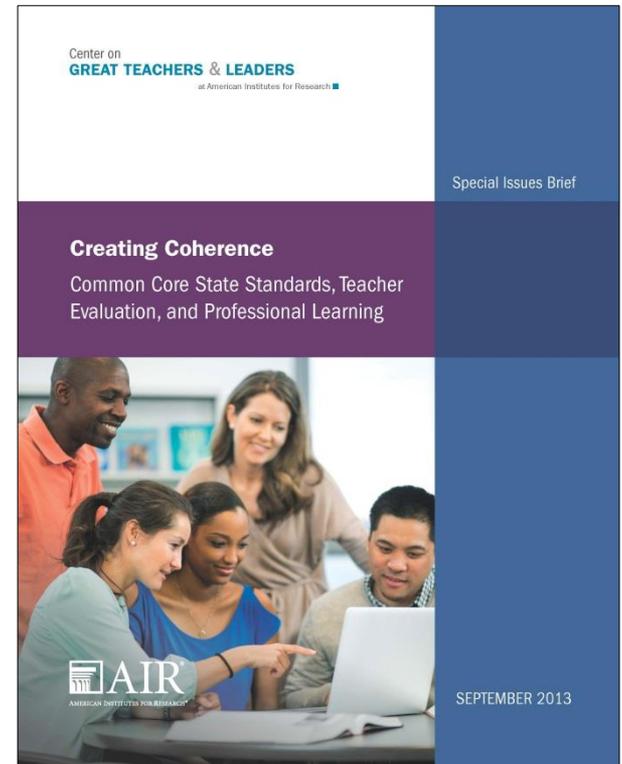
Creating Coherence

Special Issues Brief

Read this brief for more in-depth information on creating meaningful coherence across three interdependent education reforms: Common Core State Standards, teacher evaluation, and professional learning.

Available online:

<http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/CreatingCoherence.pdf>



Meghan Zefran
mzefran@air.org

Lauren Matlach
lmatlach@air.org

Contact the GTL Center!
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
877-322-8700
gtlcenter@air.org
www.gtlcenter.org | www.air.org



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