

## VERMONT



### *Adopted Common Core State Standards in 2010*

#### Vermont School Demographics

Total #Schools	318	
Total #Students	88,690	
Total #Black Students	,697	2%
Total #Hispanic Students	1,424	2%
Total #Asian/Pac Islander	1,742	2%
Total #Two or More Races	2,319	3%
Total #White Students	81,259	92%
Total #Free and Reduced Lunch	33,639	38%
Total #ELL	1,348	2%
Total #Students with Disabilities	13,904	16%

When Vermont adopted Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, state education officials knew it was going to be a big shift for teachers and that they would need time to transition. They put together a five-year phase-in model with the goal that, "Each Vermont educator will have an equitable opportunity over time to develop an understanding, appropriate to his or her educational responsibilities, of the Common Core State Standards and their application to curriculum, instruction and assessment."

#### Stakeholder Engagement

It was an ambitious goal and one they knew they would need assistance in achieving. Soon after adopting the new standards, they convened stakeholders to begin developing

strategies to implement the standards across the state with fidelity. The first item of business this stakeholder group requested originally was a crosswalk between Vermont's Grade Expectations, the state's previous standards, and the Common Core. However, staff at the Vermont Agency of Education felt a crosswalk was not appropriate. They thought that while the previous standards were solid and provided a good foundation, the differences were so significant moving to Common Core they needed a new approach.

**To improve equitable access to professional development, the Vermont Agency of Education created the Vermont Professional Learning Network (PLN) which was first awarded to a collaborative of three regional educational agencies.**

Education leaders decided they needed to increase awareness of the standards and the changes that would be required of teachers, administrators, and students. They created an Implementing Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (ISAAC) to help with this work. The diverse group included agency staff and experts from the field, including superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, special education teachers, and career and technical education educators. ISAAC worked with agency staff to develop and distribute information about the new standards through the various channels they had access to through their professional organizations and local districts. They also worked with the agency on the development of a five-year phase-in for implementing the new standards in schools.



Phase-in Plan	
The Vermont timeline for implementing the Common Core spanned five years and consisted of 4 phases:	
Phase 1	2010-12 school years. Aimed at building educator awareness of the new standards, beginning a dialogue with the field about what Common Core State Standards entailed and how it may impact them.
Phase 2	2011-13 school years. Intended to take a close, hard look at the standards and examine the instructional shifts and change to local systems.
Phase 3	2013-14 school year. Time to develop and align curriculum, and aligning instruction and assessments.
Phase 4	2014-15 school year. Full implementation.

leadership and strategies for effectively implementing the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. Through hosting virtual and multiple in-person professional learning opportunities at different sites in Vermont, the PLN helps to meet the needs of leadership teams throughout Vermont.

Agency staff feel they have been making strides in providing support to leadership teams, but know work must still continue. A survey from 2015 showed that 80 percent of respondents said they “usually” or “always” use Common Core aligned mathematics materials and assessments, while 73 percent said they did so for English language arts.

Vermont adopted the Next Generation Science Standards in June 2013. They say the experience they had with implementing the Common Core in ELA and mathematics has helped them navigate the implementation of the new science standards. They are following a similar implementation plan in many ways and are applying lessons learned to ease the transition.

### Equitable Implementation

Some districts are in a better position to engage in professional development with educators, while others simply don’t have the resources. To improve equitable access to professional development, the Vermont Agency of Education created the [Vermont Professional Learning Network](#) (PLN) which was first awarded to a collaborative of three regional educational agencies. By bringing together resources at scale, the PLN was able to provide online and face-to-face training opportunities for educators throughout the state including regional trainings, virtual learning modules, webinars, online courses, and other resources that are available at <http://www.vermontpln.org>.

The focus of the work for the PLN is primarily to provide support to educators on instructional



## VERMONT - DISTRICT



### *Lamoille South Supervisory Union*

#### Lamoille South Supervisory Union

Rural  
K-12  
3 Districts  
9 Schools  
1,800 Students  
30% Free and Reduced Lunch

The Lamoille South Supervisory Union (SSU) provides administrative services to three local districts in rural Vermont for the towns of Elmore, Morristown, and Stowe. Each of the towns constitutes its own separate school district with its own, locally elected board.

In 2011-12 school year, soon after Vermont had adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the administrative staff at Lamoille SSU began looking at the implementation plan set out by the state education agency. As they reviewed the standards and began to plan on how they would provide professional development for teachers in the three separate districts, they decided to create Curriculum Camp, which is essentially a boot camp for teachers to immerse themselves in the standards.

Using Title IIA funds, they created a four-day workshop in June 2012 immediately following the last day of school. They put together a curriculum and instruction council, consisting

primarily of teachers, one from each building within the Lamoille SSU, and representing all content areas. The council helped to determine how they would implement the standards within the districts and what teachers needed in terms of professional learning.

The first camp was very specific to English language arts and mathematics and was spent unpacking the standards and studying the implications of the instructional shifts at various grade levels. The teachers developed strategies together over those four days on how they would handle the instructional shifts and also what resources teachers would need in the future. They began to identify major themes in the Common Core and focused heavily on reading complex texts. That first year, teachers worked intensely on adjusting the rigor of reading and finding multiple sources for additional text in the content areas. The second year focused on argumentative writing. Writing teachers worked with their colleagues in math, physical education, and the social sciences to discuss how they could teach argumentative writing in their specific content areas.

Teachers are not required to attend the Curriculum Camp, but in 2015, 97 percent of the professional staff chose to receive the additional professional development. They receive a stipend check, separate from their contractual work, for the four extra days of intense training.

"The first couple of years we got just the core teachers," said Valerie Sullivan, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. "It's a really positive experience. Personally, if we required it as part of the contract, I'm not sure we'd have such a positive atmosphere. They want to be here and learn."

During the first few years, the Curriculum Camp was focused on the standards and what they



mean to the various content areas. Now, the camps are progressing to mapping out the standards and showing teachers where the different standards will occur in their courses and focusing on assessments by helping teachers in the districts determine what proficiency looks like in the various schools and grade levels.

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At the end of every day at Curriculum Camp participants are asked to fill out a survey to provide feedback on the day's activities. They are also asked to complete another survey at the end of camp, which Curriculum and Instruction staff use to begin developing the next year's camp. The Curriculum Council now works throughout the entire school year to develop the camp. They review the feedback beginning in the fall and start to plan how to best meet the teachers' needs.

Using this feedback has allowed them to really focus in on what teachers want. Initially, the course offerings were very much one size fits all. Now, they are more sophisticated in meeting demand in choices and offerings. This year, there will be a greater focus on assessment.

"They feel like they are being recognized as the professionals they are and they like having the time set aside to really do the hard work to implement this well in their classrooms," said Sullivan. "One hour meetings each week just won't cut it. They feel honored and respected, like they are being supported by their team to really do their jobs well."