

CT Curriculum Development Guide

The Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide (CCDG) is an instrument designed to lead the planning, review and development of PK-12 curriculum.

Using an inventory of components recommended for all PK-12 curriculums, the guide provides a common language and structure for curriculum design in an effort to increase consistency within and among programs, districts, schools, grade levels and subject areas statewide.

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) consultants will follow the guide when working with districts or providing feedback about district curriculum. In this way, the CSDE intends to improve communication between districts and the Department, while empowering districts to inventory and plan their own curriculum design.

The CCDG should not be used as an evaluation tool. Rather, it should be part of the process of determining curriculum development priorities and distinguishing between immediate, short-term and long-term next steps.

To use the guide, mark the appropriate indicator as it applies to the curriculum being inventoried. Then, record corresponding comments to show how the marked indicators for the curriculum being inventoried exceed, meet or do not meet the stated goals. Finally, review the results, consider your program/district initiatives and set goals for further curriculum development.

Note: Hyperlinked text is included throughout this document to provide links to Web sites for related resources, links to sample curriculum documents within and beyond Connecticut, and links to definitions of terms provided in the glossary. Sample lessons are also included to show how some of the ideas from the given indicators can be found in a curriculum. To meet a given indicator, however, the idea ought to be woven throughout the curriculum.



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District/Program Name			
Reviewer(s)		Date Curriculum Reviewed	
Content Area		Date(s) BOE Adopted Curriculum	
Grade Levels/Ages/Courses Reviewed			

I. Curriculum Development and Support

This section of the guide addresses district-level planning that is essential to [curriculum](#) development. Evidence may be presented from related documents, such as a curriculum development plan or a professional development plan.

The following are important aspects of curriculum development and should be evidenced.	Yes, there is evidence.	No, there is not evidence.	Comments/Next Steps
A. A philosophy and/or mission statement about the teaching and learning of all students (including special education and ELL students) across all curriculums guides the curriculum development (general philosophy sample , content specific philosophy).			
B. An overall plan for curriculum development exists, involves stakeholders and indicates where each curriculum area is in the development, implementation, or evaluation cycle with timelines. Plans for data-driven evaluation of the curriculum at the district/program level and for the content areas are also included (plan sample 1 , plan sample 2).			
C. A defined model (e.g., Understanding by Design , Making Standards Work , Balanced Curriculum , The High/Scope Approach) governs the curriculum.			
D. A system to orient teachers and administrators in the use of the curriculum includes professional development and training of new staff as needed.			
E. A list of current references/research guided the curriculum development (references sample 1).			
F. A plan showing alignment with a standards-based report card/child profiles.			

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II. Curriculum Components

This section of the guide proposes elements likely to be part of planning high-quality curriculum for all learners. These elements represent current professional understanding of what it means to plan so all learners have opportunities to achieve. Many of the elements are supported in education literature. Indicators are categorized as Goal or Advanced. Check those indicators that are evident in the curriculum. To meet either category, all indicators in the category must be checked.

Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments/Next Steps (Reference the bullet you are commenting on.)
<p>A. Alignment to Standards <i>— the matching of district grade level/course level/learner expectations to standards</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The curriculum aligns with the current state/national standards. <input type="checkbox"/> The curriculum aligns with current state grade-level expectations (when available). <input type="checkbox"/> The curriculum aligns with current state/national assessments (e.g., CMT, CAPT, SAT, Preschool Assessment Framework, Career and Technical Education Assessments). <input type="checkbox"/> The curriculum aligns with other state level resources (e.g., CMT Handbooks, CAPT Handbooks, Guide to EC Program Development, CALI or SRBI). 	
<p>B. Learner Expectations (locally designed or CSDE GLEs) — <i>statements about what students should know and be able to do</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learner expectations state what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level/course/program. <input type="checkbox"/> Learner expectations are prioritized to reflect district/program goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Learner expectations are included and organized into units/themes/chapters (based on the district’s curriculum model, as appropriate) for a set period of time (e.g., six weeks for unit 1). For ECE, learner expectations are organized developmentally (unit sample 1). <input type="checkbox"/> Learner expectations address all six levels of cognitive domain (Bloom’s taxonomy). <p>ADVANCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learner expectations are organized in three stated levels of priority from the most important to the least important based on the big ideas. 	

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Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments/Next Steps (Reference the bullet you are commenting on.)
<p>C. Pacing — <i>the order in which skills and concepts are sequenced along a continuum of development</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Within grade level clusters (e.g., PK-2, K-5, 6-8, 9-12), skills and concepts evolve sequentially from grade to grade and/or course to course. <input type="checkbox"/> Skills and concepts are sequenced along a continuum of development PK-12. <input type="checkbox"/> Big ideas/concepts are stated for each unit/theme/chapter. <input type="checkbox"/> Timelines are included for each unit/theme/chapter (N/A for ECE) (timeline sample). <p>ADVANCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A curriculum matrix (graphic)/scope and sequence showing either topical, thematic or skill development PK-12 is included (matrix sample 1, sample 2). 	
<p>D. Embedded Literacy — <i>reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting across all content areas</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting) instruction is systematically embedded at each grade level within this content area, as evidenced by inclusion of targeted instructional strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting) activities are embedded at each grade level within this content area (unit sample 2). <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of culturally responsive texts is evident in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> nonfiction, <input type="checkbox"/> fiction and <input type="checkbox"/> nonprint materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Examples of text selections at varied readability levels are evident at each grade level. <p>ADVANCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is vertical alignment of expectations for literacy at each grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> There are opportunities for assessment of selected literacy skills at each grade level. 	

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Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments/Next Steps (Reference the bullet you are commenting on.)
<p>E. Embedded Information and Technological Literacy — <i>skills related to information, media and technology across all content areas</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The use of information and technology to support and improve the teaching and learning processes is embedded at each grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Using, searching and evaluating Internet sources and information are embedded at each grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Content specific technology and technology applications are specified. <p>ADVANCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is vertical alignment of expectations for information and technological literacy at each grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> There are opportunities for assessment of selected information and technology literacy skills at each grade level. 	
<p>F. Teaching Strategies — <i>the plan for and the actions by the teacher to engage students in learning the content</i></p>	<p>GOAL</p> <p>Every unit/theme/chapter/series of learning activities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> information about common misconceptions and teaching strategies to address them; <input type="checkbox"/> suggestions for teaching strategies to support learners who struggle; <input type="checkbox"/> suggestions for teaching strategies to support the extension of the learning, beyond the lesson objectives; <input type="checkbox"/> research-based teaching strategies (e.g., similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, nonlinguistic representation, advanced organizers); <input type="checkbox"/> guidance about classroom environments conducive to learning (e.g., seating arrangements, safety, social interactions); <input type="checkbox"/> opportunities for varied approaches and choice for learners (e.g., tasks, resources, product formats); <input type="checkbox"/> a variety of teaching and grouping strategies based on student learning needs, preferences, interests, learning styles, intelligences, and cultures; <input type="checkbox"/> specific strategies to address ELL students; <input type="checkbox"/> specific strategies to address students experiencing learning, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties; <input type="checkbox"/> current event connections; <input type="checkbox"/> interdisciplinary connections; and <input type="checkbox"/> teaching strategies aligned with the learning activities. (lesson sample 1) 	

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Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments/Next Steps (Reference the bullet you are commenting on.)
<p>G. Learning Activities — <i>cognitive experiences that help learners perceive, process, rehearse, store, and transfer new knowledge or skills</i></p>	<p>GOAL Every unit/theme/chapter/series of learning activities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> activities sequenced to target the content in the learner expectations; <input type="checkbox"/> activities promoting higher order thinking and problem-solving; <input type="checkbox"/> multiple types of learning opportunities (e.g., group and individual projects, centers, simulations, role playing, performances, debates, demonstrations, discussions, modeling, inter-disciplinary, authentic experiences); <input type="checkbox"/> activities differentiated to address prior knowledge, learning styles, interests and the developmental stages of the learners; <input type="checkbox"/> opportunities for authentic application of new learning in or out of the classroom; <input type="checkbox"/> specific activities to address 21st century skills (e.g., communication, creativity, problem solving, self-direction); and <input type="checkbox"/> ways to use information and technology to enhance learning, increase productivity and promote creativity. (lesson sample 2) 	
<p>H. Assessments — <i>the ways to measure and monitor a learner’s progress and guide instructional decisions</i></p>	<p>GOAL Every unit/theme/chapter/series of learning activities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> assessments aligned with the content in the learner expectations; <input type="checkbox"/> assessments aligned to the learning activities; <input type="checkbox"/> multiple methods for assessing (e.g., pre/post, formative and summative, observations) the range of levels of cognitive domain; <input type="checkbox"/> grade level or department-generated common assessments (formative and summative); <input type="checkbox"/> use of schoolwide and districtwide rubrics; <input type="checkbox"/> information about how assessments are applied to ELL students or students experiencing learning, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties; and <input type="checkbox"/> opportunities for self-assessment and monitoring. <p>ADVANCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> strategies for including families in the assessment process. 	

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Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments/Next Steps (Reference the bullet you are commenting on.)
I. Resources — <i>materials that support learning</i>	GOAL Every unit/theme/chapter/series of learning activities includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> suggested resources aligned with the content in the learner expectations; <input type="checkbox"/> a variety of resources that address the age, skill-level and readiness of learners; <input type="checkbox"/> suggested print and non-print resources; <input type="checkbox"/> suggested learning supplies and equipment resources (e.g. manipulatives, technology); and <input type="checkbox"/> explanations for the use of included resources. 	

III. Organization

This section of the guide outlines the expectations for the usefulness of the curriculum document for all internal and external communities.

Curriculum document addresses	Indicators reflecting goal and advanced performance	Comments (Reference the bullet about which you are commenting.)
A. Ease of use — <i>factors related to organization and usability</i>	GOAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The document uses a common format with other curricula in the district. <input type="checkbox"/> Grade-level documents include district PK-12 components (e.g., philosophy/mission, research and references, scope and sequence). <input type="checkbox"/> The document is paginated. <input type="checkbox"/> The document is in identified sections. <input type="checkbox"/> All identified sections are connected to ensure coherence among the whole document. <input type="checkbox"/> The document is available in multiple formats (e.g., electronically, hard copy) to every teacher. <input type="checkbox"/> The document is available in multiple formats (e.g., electronically, hard copy) for families. ADVANCED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The document is available in languages reflective of the community. <input type="checkbox"/> The document is electronic and dynamic to allow for continuous improvement. 	

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Commendations:

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

Recommendations:

Short-term Next Steps:

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

Long-term Next Steps:

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

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Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide Glossary

alignment: The degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, instructional materials, professional development and accountability systems reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards.

assessment: The measurement of knowledge, skills and beliefs to determine the level of student achievement in a particular content area (e.g., performance-based assessments, written exams, quizzes).

big idea: Key generalization or enduring understanding that students will take with them after the completion of a learning unit.

CAPT: Named the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, this criterion reference test is given to 10th grade students in the areas of math, reading across the disciplines, science and writing across the disciplines.

CMT: Named the Connecticut Mastery Test, this criterion reference test is given to students in grades 3 -8 in the areas of math, reading and writing and in science for grades 5 and 8.

cognitive domain: One of three types of learning domains; knowledge (cognitive), skills (psychomotor) and attitude (affective).

common assessments: A broad term for assessments that are given routinely to all students in a grade and/or content area and that are the same for all students in a grade or course. Common assessments may be summative or formative.

common misconceptions: Flawed ideas that many believe (e.g., humans get warts from toads).

content specific technology: Instruments that are specific to a discipline (e.g., graphing calculators for math or science).

culturally responsive text: Texts that positively reinforce cultural identity and have affirming views of individuals of diverse backgrounds, including African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians and Hispanic Americans. Historically, literature written by and for these groups of people generally lies outside of the literary canon, recommended book lists and the school curriculum.

curriculum: Guaranteed course of study and learning objectives that integrates standards, instructional strategies, materials and assessments to ensure that all students are able to achieve standards. In this document, we are referring to written curriculum.

data-driven: Using data to determine strengths and prioritize areas in need of improvement to inform instruction, curriculum and policy decisions to positively affect student achievement.

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dynamic: Usually in an online format, adjustments can be made to make the curriculum useful and continually improved.

ECE: Early childhood education inclusive of birth to PK programs.

ELL: English language learners.

formative assessment: Process used by teachers to determine how to adjust instruction in response to student needs, and by students to adjust learning strategies. Formative assessments are used to inform and adjust instruction and are not used to evaluate student progress for a grade.

grade-level expectations (GLE): A description of what students should know and be able to do at the end of a grade level.

higher order thinking: Based on the idea that some types of thinking require more cognitive processing than others and also have more generalized benefits. In Bloom's taxonomy, for example, skills involving analysis, evaluation and synthesis (creation of new knowledge) are thought to be of a higher order—involving more complex judgmental skills—than the learning of facts and concepts, which require rote memory and recall. Higher order thinking is more difficult to learn or teach but also more valuable because such skills are more likely to useable in novel situations (i.e., situations other than those in which the skill was learned).

languages reflective of the community: Languages commonly spoken among individuals in a social group or geographical area.

long-term next steps: Actions that require the further development of the curriculum or improvement of the curriculum development plan and training to implement the curricular changes.

mission statement: A short, written passage that clarifies the beliefs of a school district about the nature of learning and the need for educational services to meet student learning needs.

philosophy: A common belief system that guides policy and practice, e.g., *All students can learn.*

readability levels: The measurement of the textual difficulty or reading difficulty level of a book determined by a readability formula (e.g., calculated by the average number of sentences and syllables per hundred words). Some commonly used readability formulas used to determine readability levels include Fry Readability Formula, Spache Readability Formula, Dale-Chall, and the Lexile Framework for Reading.

rubric: Scoring guide composed of set criteria and related levels of proficiency that is used to evaluate a student's performance, product or project.

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SAT: The SAT Reasoning Test is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned, published and developed by the College Board.

scope and sequence: Defines what should be taught, to what depth and when it should be taught.

short-term next steps: Actions that can be taken immediately or within this school year with minimal adjustments to the existing curriculum or curriculum development plan.

scientific research-based interventions (SRBI): The use of educational practices, which have been validated through research as effective, for improved student outcomes. Educational practices that are implemented in a school or district which, through data analysis, demonstrate effectiveness (also known as Response to Intervention).

stakeholders: A person, group, organization, or system that affects or can be affected by an organization's actions (e.g., business, families, board members, etc.).

summative assessment: Assessments that are employed mainly to assess cumulative student learning at a particular point in time (e.g., unit tests, finals, the Connecticut Mastery Test, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test).

targeted instructional strategies: Purposefully selecting and employing specific processes that maximize learning opportunities

technological literacy: Computer skills and the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity and performance.

technology application: Any program, whether software or online-based, that aids in the completion of a task.

vertical alignment: Specific learner expectations that are built upon one another to ensure that fundamental knowledge is established, skills are mastered, gaps are eliminated, and that there is increasing sophistication and rigor across grade levels. When curriculum is vertically aligned, teachers have a clear understanding of what students should have already learned, what they currently have to teach, and what students will learn in future courses or years.