



Regional Initiative to Build State Capacity Toward College and Career Readiness and Success: Making It Real

Overview

Context/Need: All five states in the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC) region (DE, DC, MD, NJ, and PA) are RttT states and have ESEA flexibility waivers. Through these programs and others, all have committed to the principle of ensuring College and Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) for their students. Yet so much of the landscape around CCRS is still emerging, and each of the MACC states is grappling with how to define their vision of CCRS and “make it real.” An essential series of policy questions each state must address includes:

- What does CCRS mean for defining what students should know and be able to do, and at what points in their educational and career trajectories?
- How will the State measure CCRS so as to know if students are reaching the agreed-upon expectations?
- What pathways and supports for college and career preparation—policies, programs, and structures—can the State put in place to help students meet CCRS expectations?

As College and Career Readiness and Success is a broad domain, states must also consider how to reach across their State Educational Agencies as well as engage other stakeholders in their efforts to define, communicate, and implement strategies to make CCRS real.

Technical Assistance Activities: The MACC@WestEd will offer a program of regional technical assistance to SEA leaders in its 5 states designed to build each state’s capacity to more fully and effectively address the policy questions above. Building on an initial webinar in August 2013 where SEA leaders shared their state’s progress and sticking points around CCRS, our states have expressed the value and interest they have in working with their peers to discuss issues and approaches and to share successes, challenges, and lessons learned in this area. MACC@WestEd will facilitate these peer-to-peer interactions and, in coordination with the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, help frame discussions, broker expertise, share examples from other states, provide decision making tools, and the like based on national research and experience.

A workgroup of small teams of CCRS leaders from each of the MACC states, facilitated by MACC@WestEd, is envisioned. While the ongoing activities of the workgroup will be determined by the members, two initial meetings are proposed:

Meeting #1: Developing an Operational Definition of College and Career Readiness and Success (Summer 2014). At this first workgroup meeting, state teams will begin to specify the expectations for what students should know and should be able to do based on their state's overall vision for CCRS. Beginning with each state's existing CCRS definition, as well as materials and resources provided by the MACC@WestEd and CCRS Center and an exemplar from another state, each state team will begin to develop operational definitions of CCRS. State teams will also formulate plans for continuing to develop, refine, or communicate these CCRS student expectations within their state.

Meeting #2: Aligning measures of CCRS with expectations for students (Fall 2014). At this second workgroup meeting, state teams will convene to examine measures that are or could be used to assess the state's progress toward its vision of CCRS. This meeting will be convened and facilitated by the MACC@WestEd in cooperation with the CCRS Center, who will bring their national expertise, frameworks, and tools to the group's work.

Interim and continuing activities beyond these two meetings will be determined by the workgroup members, based on their needs and interests. Possibilities include continuing periodic workgroup convenings to discuss topics or issues of interest, potentially including strategies for implementing CCRS; developing a shared workspace of relevant reference resources and/or asynchronous conversations among states; and state-specific technical assistance from the MACC@WestEd to facilitate a state's progress in realizing its CCRS initiatives.

It is recommended that each SEA appoint a team leader and small number of core team members for this workgroup who are expected to coordinate the State's CCRS initiatives. Because of the nature of CCRS, these workgroup members may represent staff focusing on standards and curriculum, career and technical education, student population subgroups, data/accountability, higher education, early childhood education, or other areas. State workgroups are also welcome to invite additional people to particular workgroup activities or events as appropriate to the topic.