



Turnkey Guidance for Standards and the Instructional Cycle: A Resource for P-3

Goal: To provide school administrators and teachers with a planning tool to structure meetings and conversations about the elements that support the prekindergarten to 3rd Grade (P-3) instructional cycle within the context of New York State's Next Generation Early Learning Standards.

Objectives: At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Articulate key messages about the Next Generation Learning Standards for young learners.
- Define and distinguish between learning standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Describe implementation challenges.
- List strategies for managing challenges.

Materials Needed:

- Pre-Meeting Assignment (Handout or Digital Access): [Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards](#)
- Handout: [A Resource for Understanding the Relationships Between the State Standards and the Prekindergarten to 3rd Grade Instructional Cycle](#)
- Handout: Discussion Scenarios Sets
 - [Standards and the Instructional Cycle Discussion Scenarios - Set 1](#)
 - [Standards and the Instructional Cycle Discussion Scenarios - Set 2](#)
 - [Standards and the Instructional Cycle Discussion Scenarios - Set 3](#)
- Flipchart paper or projected notes

Optional Materials:

- *Optional* Presentation, [Standards and the Instructional Cycle: A Resource for P-3 Presentation](#)
- *Optional* Pre-Meeting Assignment Video: [Standards, not Standardization: The Early Learning Standards and Diverse Populations](#)

Time:

- Approximately 2 hours

The times given for each activity can be adjusted to meet the needs of participants.

Instructions: Plan a professional development session that includes P-3 teachers, specialists, coaches, aides, and others supporting P-3 education to:

- Review the Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards.



- Learn about the relationships and distinctions among learning standards and the instructional cycle with a focus on the nature of children’s learning and development in P-3.
- Explore scenarios to facilitate discussions of issues related to the P-3 standards implementation.
- Explore local solutions.

Prior to the meeting:

1. Ask participants to read through the pre-meeting handout, [Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards](#), and highlight statements and/or concepts that resonate most with them. *Time: approximately 10 minutes*
2. Provide participants the option of also viewing a presentation about the Introduction, [Standards, not Standardization: The Early Learning Standards and Diverse Populations](#). *Time: approximately 50 minutes*
3. Explain that the key messages and concepts will be discussed at the professional development session.

If you choose to use the optional slides for your meeting(s), customize as needed. Review the guidance provided below and adjust times to fit your needs.

STOP 1: INTRODUCTION (3-5 minutes):

Introduce the purpose and goals of this professional development to participants.

1. State the purpose:
Today, we’ll focus on the elements that support the P-3 instructional cycle within the context of New York State’s Next Generation Early Learning Standards.
2. Introduce the goals:
By the end of the meeting, we should be able to:
 - Articulate key messages about the Next Generation standards for young learners.
 - Define and distinguish between learning standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
 - Describe common implementation challenges.
 - List strategies for managing challenges.

STOP 2: KEY MESSAGES AND CONCEPTS (20 minutes):

1. Ask the group to take out their marked-up copy of the [Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards](#) from the pre-meeting assignment.
2. Split the group into pairs and ask pairs to take turns sharing key messages/concepts that resonated with them.
3. Return to the whole group. Ask each pair to share up to three key messages/concepts with the whole group, recording key messages/concepts on chart paper or electronically on a projected screen.
4. Discuss the following:



- Did you notice any common themes across the groups?
- Why do you think it was important to emphasize these messages/concepts?
- Did these seem to be about standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, or a combination?
- Why do you think it's important to make those distinctions?

STOP 3: STANDARDS FOR LEARNING AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE (5 minutes):

1. Distribute Handout: [A Resource for Understanding the Relationships Between the State Standards and the Prekindergarten to 3rd Grade Instructional Cycle](#). Explain that the illustration on the front depicts the elements of the instructional cycle and their relationships and the back provides a deeper narrative description of each. Highlight the following:
 - Student learning is at the center, signifying all students and their respective educational needs.
 - The double arrows between student learning and the three elements remind us that students are active participants and at the core of the instructional process.
 - While the state standards serve as a framework, the elements within the instructional cycle are cyclical in nature and work together in multiple ways.
 - State standards provide a framework for districts to develop and vertically and horizontally align local curriculum.
 - Curriculum, instruction, and assessment function together in an ongoing manner, where one regularly informs the other in a *plan – teach – reflect – adjust* pattern to support student learning.

STOP 4: DEFINING STANDARDS, CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT (30 minutes):

1. Divide staff into teams (pairs or larger, depending on the size of the group) so that you end up with at least four small groups.
2. Assign each team either standards, curriculum, instruction, or assessment (you may end up with more than one team per element).
3. Ask each team to carefully read the narrative descriptions for the assigned element.
4. Using chart paper or projected notes, ask each team to prepare a mini-presentation (two-to-five minutes) on their element for the whole group (presentation times will vary).
5. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to help the group define and distinguish between the elements and to highlight any P-3 nuances.
6. Ask each team to present their lesson to the whole group.



Break: 5-10 minutes

STOP 5: DISCUSSION SCENARIOS (30 minutes):

1. Distribute Handout: Discussion Scenarios Sets 1-3 so that each small group ends up with one set.
2. Split the group into small teams of 4-5. The teams should be large enough to promote active discussion. Depending on the size of the group, you may decide not to split the group into teams.
3. Explain that there are three sets of scenarios but that each team will be looking at one set of five. Explain that these are real scenarios from across the state and that they are common.
4. Ask the teams to read through the five scenarios individually.
5. Ask the group to discuss the scenarios in their teams using the guiding questions:
 - Which element does this relate to most?
 - Is this based on a state or local decision/assumption?
 - How would you address the challenge?
6. Ask each team to assign a reporter who will report out to the whole group.
7. Whole group report-out: Ask each team to state the scenario and summarize the discussion. You may choose to limit the report out to one or two scenarios per team, depending on time limitations.
8. Discuss the following:
 - What surprised you about the scenarios?
 - How do you think these scenarios relate to standards implementation?
 - Why do you think it's important for us to think about our local instructional cycle as we gear up to implement the new standards?
 - Were you able to connect the challenges highlighted in the scenarios with the introduction and the resource we reviewed today?

STOP 6: FINAL WRAP-UP ACTIVITY (20 minutes):

1. Reflect on today's professional development session. Discuss the following as a whole group and record answers:
 - What are our strengths?
 - In what areas do you think we could use support as we begin learning about the Next Generation Standards? Why?
 - What structural/administrative supports do you think we might need to address these challenges?
2. Close by telling participants:
As we dive into the revised standards, we will use these ideas to inform our local implementation.

Note: If you prefer to use a script to deliver this professional development, a [discussion planner](#) is available via the Northeast Comprehensive Center.