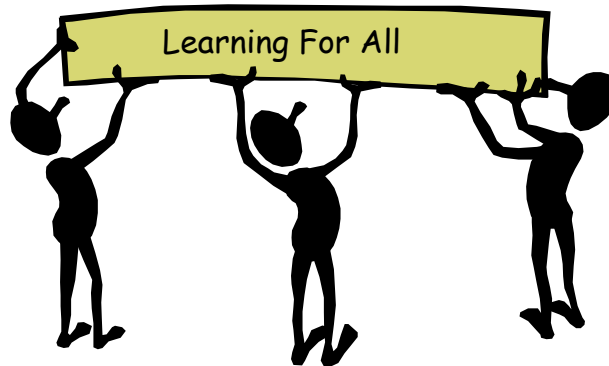


# Helping Teams Get Clear on the Essential Standards



Cherokee Bend Leaders  
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## Agenda

1. Understanding the role of essential standards in a PLC
2. Understanding how essential standards impact pacing
3. Identifying essential standards—the protocol
4. Using essential standards in the work

### Critical Questions Teams Ask

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they can?
- What will we do if they can't?
- What will we do if they already can?

### Essential Standards

Essential standards are ones that all students must know and be able to do by the end of the year. Common formative assessments are based on these standards. (They often are called power or priority standards.) You guarantee that students who do not **(yet)** master these standards receive **time and support**.

### Criteria for Essential Standards

**Endurance:** knowledge and skills that are valued beyond a single test date. For example, understanding text structures that authors use so that they can more easily comprehend complex text.

**Leverage:** knowledge and skills that are valued in multiple disciplines such as how to interpret data tables and graphs in an informational text.

**Readiness:** knowledge and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade level or next unit of instruction such as letter-sound recognition.

### Protocol

A protocol is a step-by-step process teams can use to effectively do their work. Protocols stay on task and on time.

Protocol for Identifying Essential Standards			
Step	Description of Step	Expected Product	Coaching Role
1.	The team discusses the three criteria they will use to choose their essential standards: endurance, leverage, and readiness for the next level of learning and prioritized for high-stakes assessments	Team members will have a common understanding of how to determine which standards will be on their list and which ones will not be on their list.	The coach prepares some examples of standards that the team will be working with that might meet the criteria and those that likely will not.
2.	The team considers how to chunk the standards if necessary. For example, in ELA the first chunk can be the reading and reading foundations standards, the second chunk the writing standards, and the third chunk the language and speaking and listening standards.	For each chunk, the team will have a draft list of those standards they find most important.	The coach prepares the materials the team needs, determines when this will happen, and facilitates conversations if possible.
3.	Each team member independently works through a chunk of standards and chooses those that (s)he believes fit one or more of the criteria.	Each team member marks his/her copy of the standards marked up with those that (s)he believes are essential. Team members should complete this step while they are together, so one person doesn't spend a long time on this step. The more time a teacher takes, the harder it is to narrow the standards to the essentials.	This is a time for personal reflection. In order for each member to have a voice in the process, it's important that (s)he has takes the time to consider which are the most important standards. Encourage team members to avoid conversation until everyone has had a chance to go through all of the standards.
4.	The team builds consensus on the standards, making sure all team members are involved in the process. Some standards will start with total agreement (everyone believes it IS or IS NOT essential), but the majority involves discussion.	The team develops a rough draft list of essential standards, which represents the collective thinking of the team after discussion.	While we want team leaders to take a leadership role on this process, the coach can support and help teams when they get stuck. The coach can observe the process across the whole school and ensure teams effectively use it.

5.	The team examines data about student performance. Are there areas of particular strength or weakness? If so, the team ensures their essential standards reflect this by adding additional standards to shore up the weaknesses.	Team members make changes to the draft list that reflect strengths and weaknesses.	Looking at data can be intimidating for teams that don't do this on a regular basis. The coach should have a conversation with the team about the facts first. He or she should allow team members to talk about their inferences after they acknowledge the facts. This makes the process less threatening.
6.	The team uses documents released by the district or state to ensure that the expectation drafted align to the expectations for students. These might include test specifications, blueprints or documents developed by the standards writers. For example, if assessment blueprints how an emphasis on text-dependent questions, it's important that the team reflects this emphasis in their draft list.	The team can change or add to the rough draft list it puts together in order to effectively reflect what students must be able to do on high-stakes test. .	Sometimes teachers are reluctant to spend too much time on these documents thinking they might be "teaching to the test." Coaches can explain the difference. Teachers also may feel inadequate in interpreting the blueprints and proficiency expectation documents. Coaches should be prepared to help interpret and explain these documents.
7.	Team members work with the other teams in their school to vertically align their essential standards.	Coaches create a final draft list of essential standards for each team in the building, which reflects the outcomes of each of the previous steps.	Coaches can facilitate this step in order to make sure everyone's voice is heard.

## Step 1: Make the Criteria Clear

### Criteria for Essential Standards

**Endurance:** knowledge and skills that are valued beyond a single test date, such as point of view and place value

**Leverage:** knowledge and skills that are valued in multiple disciplines, such as reading informational text in other subject areas and unit rate problems in math that are used for science

**Readiness:** knowledge and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade level or next unit of instruction, such as letter-sound recognition

\*\*\*Take 15 minutes to read the section about “Major Work of the Grade” at the beginning of the standards.

## Step 2: Chunk the Standards

K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Counting and Cardinality						
Numbers and Operations in Base 10						Ratios and Proportional Relationships
			Numbers and Operations—Fractions			The Number System
Operations and Algebraic Thinking						Expressions and Equations
Geometry						
Measurement and Data						Statistics and Probability

## Step 3: Solo Thinking

The first round will take a little longer. Give them about 10 minutes of quiet time before you have them start building consensus.

## **Step 4: Come to Consensus on The Chunk You're Working on**

**Consensus:** A group has arrived at consensus when two criteria are met:

1. Points of view have not merely been heard, but have been actively solicited.
2. The will of the group is evident *even to those who most opposed it.*

*--Learning by Doing, p. 32*

### **Ways to Come to Consensus**

- If everyone believes it is **essential** or **not essential**, the decision is easy!
- If one or more teachers have a different opinion, listen to the reasons (e.g., is it introduced rather than mastered?).
- Read standards for grade levels before and after yours.
- **Clarify *why* by using the criteria: endurance, leverage, and readiness.**
- Consider if there are other standards that are similar.


### **Step 5: Examine Your School's Data**

Have recent data available for teams to examine. What are the areas of strength and weakness.

### **Step 6: Examine released documents from the state test**

Math emphases are important as well as the math progressions.

### **Step 7: Vertically align the standards across the school.**



Step	Action	Anticipated Time of Completion
1	All teams write their draft list of essential standards on chart paper and post it in a location accessible to everyone. The best way to do this is to cluster all grade levels or courses in one area of the room. For example, in an elementary school aligning its ELA standards, teams post all these standards, from kindergarten through fifth grade: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.	Fifteen minutes
2	One representative from each team gives an elevator speech (two minutes) sharing any important considerations his or her team makes in choosing essential standards. For example, a kindergarten representative may explain that the team chooses many more phonemic awareness or phonics standards than any other cluster because it believes these are the most important standards for all students to learn at their grade level.	Fifteen minutes
3	The coach or facilitator asks all participants to “walk the wall,” paying particular attention to the standards before their grade level or course and those after their grade level or course. Notice any gaps or redundancies.	Fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on how much the teams talked about this work before the meeting.
4	The coach or facilitator should take some time with the entire group looking at each cluster and responding to any noted gaps or redundancies. If teams agree, they can make changes.	Thirty to forty minutes
5	The coach or facilitator asks teams to pair up by having two grades or courses work together. The coach or facilitator asks the team to consider questions (see figure 1.3, page XX) that apply to their standards. Encourage participants to add or delete standards as they make decisions.  You might provide participants with the following sentences stems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We wondered . . .</li> <li>• We noticed . . .</li> <li>• We wish . . .</li> </ul>	Twenty minutes
6	The coach or facilitator then asks the group to change which team they’ve paired up with, giving them a chance to talk with teachers in the grade level or course before and after theirs. For example, if a second-grade team worked with first grade in step 5, they will work with third grade in step 6. Discuss the same alignment questions (see figure 1.3, page XX).	Twenty minutes
7	The coach or facilitator asks the following question, “If a student attends our school or district and only learns these standards, would the student be prepared for the next level?”	Ten minutes

**Figure 2.2: Protocol for vertical alignment of essential standards.**

Figure 2.3 (page XX) provides example discussion questions for vertical alignment of English language arts standards. In working with schools as they engage in this process, we have found that having some general questions

for teams to consider before they finalize their list of essential standards helps participants feel confident that they’ve chosen the right standards.

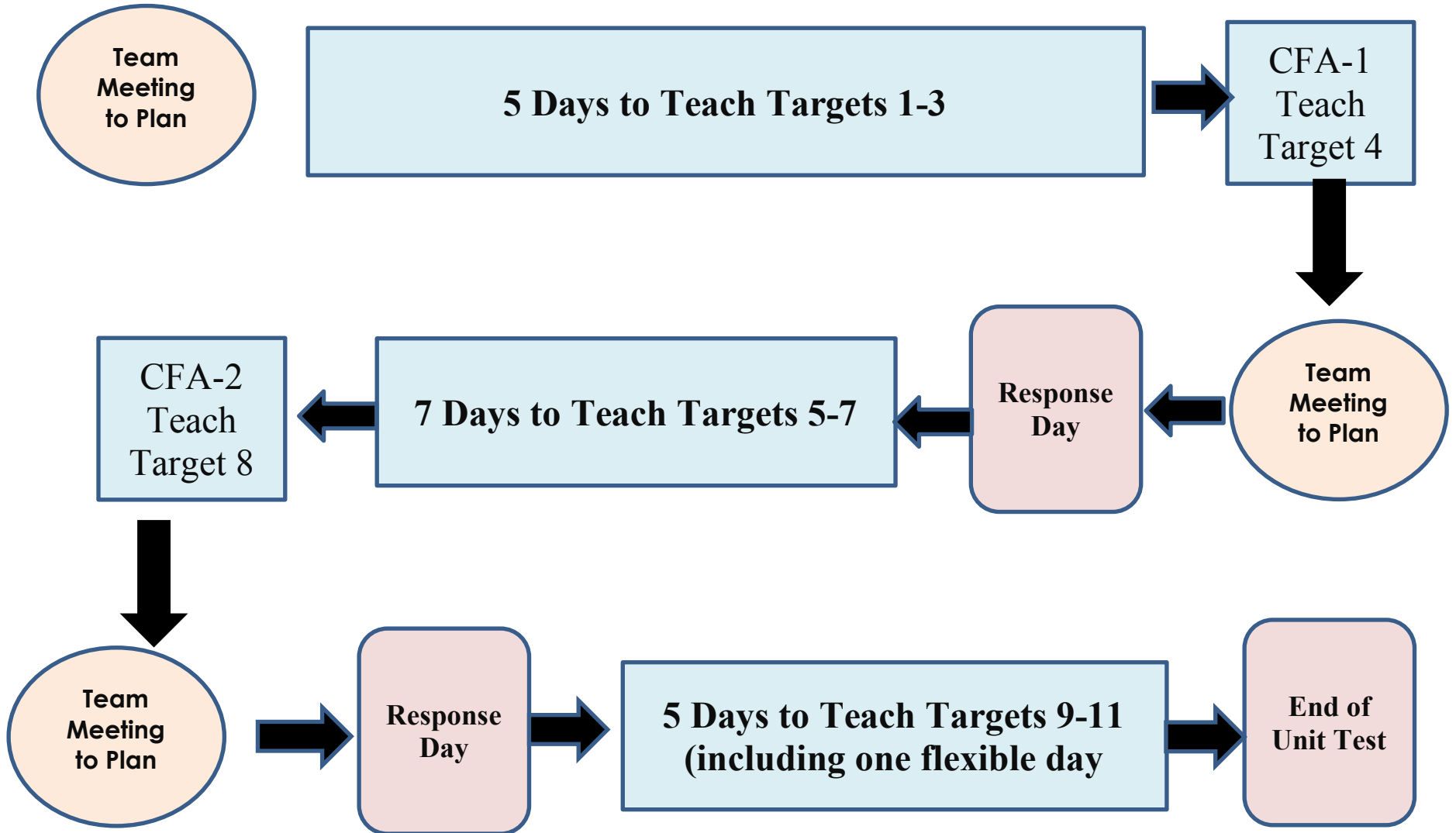
## Coaching Tips

When working with teams to identify essential standards, coaches often encounter some of the following challenges. The following are four ways to facilitate team reflective conversations and decisions making through the use of questions.

1. The team deems everything as essential: The coach should ask, "What standards do you feel must be guaranteed?" In other words, the coach is helping teams identify what skills would prevent students from being ready for the next grade level or course.
2. It's not a grade level standard, or it's only a portion of a standard: The coach should ask, "Is this truly a standard for this grade level? Is the entire standard represented or only a portion of a standard?" For example, a team might include a standard that is an expectation for a previous or future grade level. A team may write down a portion of the standard rather than the entire standard, which represents the full expectation for learning.
3. The rigor isn't represented: The coach should ask, "Have you identified highly prioritized standards that we know are on high stakes assessments? Will the identified essential standards contribute to the staircase of proficiency from grade level to grade level within the school?"
4. The list doesn't address content-relevant literacy standards: This challenge applies primarily to secondary-content teams other than English. When it appears the coach should ask, "What type of literacy skills are necessary for your students to demonstrate their knowledge of the context? Will you require them to read key documents, research information, or write to communicate their understanding of concepts and ideas?"



## Developing a Unit Plan to Include Common Formative Assessments



## Pacing the Math Standards

1. Choose the template that was created for your grade level standards: Kindergarten, first/second, third/fourth/fifth, or sixth.
2. Consider the number of units you will use and identify them by name at the top of the template.
3. Place the standards into the boxes that correspond to which unit the standard will be taught. If a standard is taught in more than one unit, annotate it to show what part of the standard is taught in the unit. For example: In a third grade unit on developing strategies for addition and subtraction you might list "Solve real world and mathematical problems involving perimeters of polygons, including finding the perimeter given the side lengths, finding an unknown side length, ~~and exhibiting rectangles with the same perimeter and different areas or with the same area and different perimeters.~~" The entire standard might be placed in a later unit titled "Solving Problems Using Shapes".
4. Make sure that every standard has at least one spot in the curriculum.
5. After choosing the essential standards, highlight or annotate those in some way in your curriculum guide.
6. Indicate the math practices you plan to emphasize in each unit.
7. Determine the number of days you need to assign to each unit allowing time to assess and use corrective instruction for essential learning targets.
8. Begin developing common formative assessments for the essential learning targets unit by unit. This may take several years to complete, but each year your team will improve its practices.
9. As you develop CFAs, note them into the pacing guide where it suggests "evidence of mastery."

# Math Pacing Guide—Kindergarten

Essential Standards	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:
Counting and Cardinality						
evidence of mastery						
Numbers and Operations in Base 10						
evidence of mastery						
Operations and Algebraic Thinking						
evidence of mastery						
Geometry						
evidence of mastery						
Measurement and Data						
Evidence of mastery						
Connections to Math Practices						

# Math Pacing Guide—Grades 1 and 2

Essential Standards	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:
Numbers and Operations in Base 10						
evidence of mastery						
Operations and Algebraic Thinking						
evidence of mastery						
Geometry						
evidence of mastery						
Measurement and Data						
evidence of mastery						
Connections to Math Practices						

## Math Pacing Guide—Grades 3,4, and 5

Essential Standards	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:
Numbers and Operations in Base 10						
evidence of mastery						
Numbers and Operations-- Fractions						
evidence of mastery						
Operations and Algebraic Thinking						
evidence of mastery						
Geometry						
evidence of mastery						
Measurement and Data						
Evidence of mastery						
Connections to Math Practices						

# Math Pacing Guide—Grade 6

Essential Standards	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:	Unit:
Ratios and Proportional Relationships						
evidence of mastery						
The Number System						
evidence of mastery						
Expressions and Equations						
evidence of mastery						
Geometry						
evidence of mastery						
Statistics and Probability						
Evidence of mastery						
Connections to Math Practices						