

IMPACT STORY

Supporting an Inclusive and Effective Process for Revising California's Teaching Standards

Teacher professional standards provide a fundamental framework for guiding, assessing, and supporting teachers' professional growth and practices with the aim of ensuring that each student has access to rigorous and equitable teaching and learning. Since their inception in the 1990s, the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) have been widely influential in California policy and practice.

In 2019, leaders from the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) decided that the 2009 CSTP needed updating to remain relevant and useful. Updating the CSTP presented a complex, politically sensitive challenge for the CDE and CTC.

They needed to bring together a diverse group of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to consider the use, application, and revision of the standards to ensure that they reflect current research and practices, while addressing student needs.

The Region 15 Comprehensive Center (R15CC) played a vital role in this multifaceted process. Guided by R15CC facilitation, CDE and CTC team members (referred to as the SEA planning team) joined together as collaborators who led a

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I found that this work brought my understanding of where education needs to go into much clearer focus.

—CTSP Workgroup Member



diverse workgroup and solicited input from educational partners in the field.

Ultimately, the process yielded updated standards that reflect the most current research, center equity more strongly, and provide a new structure to support effective implementation.

Facilitating Strong Collaboration Among a Diverse Group of Experts

Beginning in March 2020, the SEA planning team, with R15CC support, engaged in an application and selection process to identify workgroup participants with diverse perspectives, content expertise, and professional experiences. The final workgroup included a total of 31 members representing 24 different organizations from across the state—including schools, districts, county offices of education, institutes of higher education, and other educational organizations.

Fostering strong collaboration between people from such varying backgrounds required expert facilitation, a central role the R15CC played during the revision process. In addition to co-planning and co-facilitating the workgroup meetings with the SEA planning team, the R15CC provided content coaching, conducted research syntheses, and supported the process for addressing public input. The R15CC guided the design and facilitation of the workgroup meetings to build a collaborative culture, create a safe place for members to share their perspectives and expertise, and ensure the completion of scaffolded tasks.

Professional Learning During the Revision Process

The R15CC supported a complex and iterative approach to revising the CSTP that centered around the workgroup's three identified focus areas for its revision process:

- Equity, access, and inclusion
- Social–emotional support
- Teaching in a variety of contexts, including virtual

The revision process involved a considerable number of people, large commitments of time, the review of other states' and educational organizations' standards, cycles of revising, receiving feedback, and revising again. To maximize the impact and usefulness of these engagements, the R15CC intentionally guided the SEA planning team to design them as professional learning opportunities in addition to work sessions. The CSTP workgroup members indicated this process enabled them to learn from one another and grow as educators.

Soliciting public feedback was vital to ensure that the revisions were authentic and included voices from the field. The draft standards were posted on the CTC's website in January and February 2021, with an accompanying feedback survey co-developed by the R15CC. During this period, over 800 comments representing 27 California counties were submitted. To ensure that the three priority areas were carefully considered, several groups were specifically asked to provide feedback, including the California Teachers

“[R15CC leads] have made the process of engaging in deep thinking and collaboration easy!”

—SEA Planning Team Member

Association, CTC workgroups that support the needs of English learners and that focus on social–emotional learning, and the Special Education Division at CDE.

The R15CC synthesized the feedback so it could be more easily digested and considered by the workgroup teams for additional revisions and to ensure the resulting standards would reflect the needs of California educators. In between each workgroup session, the R15CC looked across the six standards to reduce redundancy and increase coherence.

By providing high-quality support and assistance, the R15CC aimed to build the capacity of the planning team members from CDE and CTC. To do so, the R15CC used a purposeful process design, which included activities that increased the team's knowledge base and skills. To build skills for carrying out the work virtually, the R15CC utilized a scaffolding approach by first modeling the work, then engaging in the work together, and, finally, stepping back so that the SEA planning team could apply their new skills with support from the sidelines.

Revised Standards Poised to Have a Major Impact on California Teaching and Learning

Even more important than the highly successful revision process itself is the enormous potential for long-lasting impact of the revised standards, including reaching California's more than 300,000 teachers who impact nearly 6.2 million students. The revised standards are grounded in the best possible evidence from research and practices across the country, as well as input from multiple field groups with extensive expertise and ranges of experience.

Accordingly, the standards now better reflect the language and **current realities in California schools**. These standards more intentionally address teaching practices that attend to issues of equity, inclusion, and access, as well as the integration of important social–emotional learning practices. In addition, the standards are designed to more clearly articulate expectations at multiple stages of the professional teaching continuum; to be more relevant; and to ensure that all students are served equitably, particularly historically underserved groups. Finally, the revised standards build on the lessons learned from the pandemic to include considerations about effective distance- and virtual-learning practices.

For more information about the Region 15 Comprehensive Center, visit the [Center's webpage](#).