

Developing Local Graduation Standards: A Process for Distilling Standards and Gaining Focus

Purpose: To distill the national or state standards in a content area to 5-8 graduation standards that will be required for high school graduation.

Time: 3-4.5 hours

Roles: Facilitator, Timekeeper, Notetaker/Scribe

1. Review the Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified Pyramid. The facilitator guides the group through the levels of the pyramid. The group discusses the degree to which each level impacts classroom practice and reporting measures. The facilitator reminds the group that the focus for this session is at the “graduation standard” level. (15 min)
2. Review the Design Criteria Chart: Determining Content Area Graduation Standards independently and then discuss as a group. (15 min)
3. Review national or state standards in a specific content area. If desired, review sample graduation standards at this time also. Reviewers should circle, mark or connect standards that they believe fit the criteria of a graduation standard. It is appropriate to consider combining statements, creating statements from headings, or making slight revisions to existing statements to clarify the local graduation standard. (60 min)
4. Share the identified standards in round robin fashion until all possible graduation standards have been stated. Write the proposed standards on chart paper or within a shared on-line document. (10-15 min)
5. Discuss as a group any overlapping standards (referring to the Design Criteria Chart as needed). (30-60 min)
 - a. Are any of the standards too narrow or too broad to be graduation standards?
 - b. Are there any standards that could be combined, without losing their meaning?
 - c. Do the proposed graduation standards remain aligned to the national or state standards document?
6. If there are more than 5-8 graduation standards, use the Design Criteria Chart to discuss as a group any standards that do not meet more than one of the criteria for graduation standards. Eliminations from the list should be discussed and considered collectively. (30-60 min)
7. Review the proposed graduation standards, and discuss any concerns or questions. (20-30 min)



8. Debrief Process. What worked well? What could we improve on for next time? (5 min)
9. Next Steps:
 - a. Small groups identify performance indicators associated with each graduation standard.
 - b. Align assessments to performance indicators / graduation standards.

