

# The Core Practice™ Framework

## ACT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

### High-Quality Instruction

#### Theme 1

Curriculum &  
Academic Goals

Study and use the district's written curriculum to plan all instruction.

Set expectations and goals for teaching and learning based on the district's written curriculum.

Provide clear, prioritized learning objectives by grade and subject that all students are expected to master.

#### Theme 2

Staff Selection, Leadership,  
& Capacity Building

Collaborate as a primary means for improving instruction.

Select and develop teachers to ensure high-quality instruction.

Provide strong principals, a talented teacher pool, and layered professional development.

#### Theme 3

Instructional Tools:  
Programs & Strategies

Use proven instructional tools to support rigorous learning for students.

Promote strategies and build structures and schedules to support academic rigor.

Provide evidence- and standards-based instructional tools that support academic rigor for all students.

#### Theme 4

Monitoring Performance  
& Progress

Analyze and discuss student performance data.

Monitor teacher performance and student learning.

Develop and use student assessment and data management systems to monitor student learning.

#### Theme 5

Intervention &  
Adjustment

Use targeted interventions or adjustments to address learning needs of students.

Use targeted interventions to address learning needs of teachers and students.

Respond to data through targeted interventions or curricular/instructional adjustments.

### Classroom Core Practices

### School Core Practices

### District Core Practices

### District Learning Objectives

### State Standards/Common Core Standards

## ACT College and Career Readiness Standards

## The Path to Readiness: It Takes a System

As our research suggests, no single program or isolated reform can substitute for a coherent, long-term, system-wide approach to improving teaching and learning. We all want our students to graduate prepared to take on future opportunities with success. So, what are consistently higher performing schools doing to place more students on the path to college and career readiness?

The **Core Practice Framework**, built upon the study of more than 550 schools across 20 states, identifies the core practices that distinguish a higher performing school from its average performing counterparts. We study the practices of those schools and school systems that have more success in preparing their students for college and careers than their peers who serve similar student populations. Our ongoing research supports the Framework and adds content and information to each of the core practices below.

## Practices of Higher Performing Schools

The Core Practice Framework outlines the evidence-based educator practices at each level of a school system—district, school and classroom—that will help all students master high standards. The Framework focuses on five themes:

### Theme 1: Curriculum and Academic Goals

**District Practice:** Provide clear, prioritized learning objectives by grade and subject that all students are expected to master.

**School Practice:** Set expectations and goals for teaching and learning based on the district's written curriculum.

**Classroom Practice:** Study and use the district's written curriculum to plan all instruction.

### Theme 2: Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building

**District Practice:** Provide strong principals, a talented teacher pool, and layered professional development.

**School Practice:** Select and develop teachers to ensure high-quality instruction.

**Classroom Practice:** Collaborate as a primary means for improving instruction.

### Theme 3: Instructional Tools: Programs and Strategies

**District Practice:** Provide evidence- and standards-based instructional tools that support academic rigor for all students.

**School Practice:** Promote strategies and build structures and schedules to support academic rigor.

**Classroom Practice:** Use proven instructional tools to support rigorous learning for students.

### Theme 4: Monitoring: Performance and Progress

**District Practice:** Develop and use student assessment and data management systems to monitor student learning.

**School Practice:** Monitor teacher performance and student learning.

**Classroom Practice:** Analyze and discuss student performance data.

### Theme 5: Intervention and Adjustment

**District Practice:** Respond to data through targeted interventions or curricular/instructional adjustments.

**School Practice:** Use targeted interventions to address learning needs of teachers and students.

**Classroom Practice:** Use targeted interventions or adjustments to address learning needs of students.

Another layer behind the Framework, the Critical Actions, provides additional support for educators by outlining how to successfully implement the key components of each core practice.

