The schools and districts that we have seen making the most effective transitions to the Common Core have made deliberate choices about how they achieve the right level of rigor on their interim assessments. They are engaging in an inclusive process for developing assessments that reflect those choices as well as aligning their communication and support with those choices. The case study in this section described the experience of Springfield Public Schools in Massachusetts creating assessments that set clear expectations and help align what is being taught in the classroom with what the Common Core demands.

The following questions can help district and school leaders put the lessons from Springfield into action so that they are creating consistent, transparent expectations for teachers’ use of assessment as they transition to the Common Core:

1. Do you have an explicit plan, down to the level of individual standards, for how interim assessments will evolve to meet the level of rigor demanded by the Common Core? Would the average teacher in your school or district be able to explain this plan?

2. Have the right stakeholders across your organization been included in your process for designing and developing interim assessments? Have you balanced expertise in what the Common Core demands with on-the-ground perspective of what’s being taught in the classroom?

3. In what ways have assessment and curriculum been used to shape each other and to build the expertise of leaders across the district in the content of the Common Core standards?
In ANet partner schools that are having the most success with the transition to the Common Core, leaders are actively spending time explaining why the Common Core will help students succeed and tying that explanation back to the school’s existing culture, instructional priorities, and goals for students.

As you’ll see in the case study illuminating one element of our Leader Actions Rubric, the leadership team at Neighborhood House Charter School in Dorchester, Massachusetts worked with teachers to build a culture of achievement through their framing of the Common Core.

### Leader Actions Rubric

**BASIC PRACTICE**

- Sets goals without engaging teachers and an overwhelming set of priorities; expresses low confidence in the data.
- Feels complacent or lacks urgency about changing results.
- Management rhythms and expectations are inconsistent, and lack follow-through.
- Addresses many topics in PD such that teachers interpret feedback only through formal evaluation.
- Reflection happens annually; planning focuses on management of business as usual functions.

**INNOVATING PRACTICE**

- Sets goals with teachers based on individual student growth potential in a way that is meaningful for students and teachers.
- Models and expects urgency, helps teachers and students view what is hard as an opportunity for growth.
- Uses consistent management routines to support teacher success in researching and addressing each student’s needs.
- Creates development plan for teachers, based on yearly strategic plan.
- Plans personal time to target high impact teacher/leader development needs; does long-term planning with stakeholders.

### Teacher Actions Rubric

ANet partner schools utilized the Teachers Actions Rubric during their implementation of the Common Core by providing support and resources that will help educators build their capacity to plan from the new standards. The case study describes the important choices UP Academy of Boston made to help their teachers plan from standards. In the full paper, we also provide a chart with some of the highest quality resources our school partners have utilized to help them transition to the Common Core.

### Teacher Actions Rubric

**BASIC PRACTICE**

- Internalize a Data Orientation
  - Unproductively challenges the interim assessment and data analysis process.
- Plan from Standards
  - Doesn’t use pacing guide or assessment calendar to ensure that assessed standards will be taught.
- Analyze Data
  - Gets overwhelmed by the data – doesn’t know where to start or gets sidetracked by details.
- Adapt Instruction
  - Research plans are focused on reviewing material, not trying new instructional methods; execution has minimal impact.
- Reflect, Learn, and Adjust
  - Can’t explain what changed in student learning after the lesson.

**INNOVATING PRACTICE**

- Constantly uses evidence to gauge student progress; sends out data sources in addition to what is provided.
- Sequences standards to target content above the level of rigor of the standards; plans different learning sequences for student subgroups.
- Evaluates trends in data through the lens of specific student subgroups. Has an opinion about whole and sub-group priority standards.
- Adapts and executes overall instructional plans to target instruction to individual student needs.
- Constantly evaluating each student’s progress/gaps and root causes using data and student evidence.

The following questions can help school and district leaders utilize some of the resources and techniques that UP Academy has used to help teachers master and plan from standards:

1. How frequently do you set aside time for teachers to examine standards and assessment items collaboratively? How much time do you give them in each session?
2. What is the right balance of support and independent work for your teachers? Are you providing that balance by drawing on the highest quality resources available?
3. What are you doing to empower teachers as leaders of these sessions? How are you giving teachers the tools and opportunities to become expert in select standards or subjects?