The State Board adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, the decision was made to craft a set of Pennsylvania (PA) Core Standards tailored to meet our state specific needs in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as for Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects. A group of Pennsylvania educators crafted the PA Core Standards, which mirror the academic rigor of the Common Core State Standards, are attainable for students, practicable for teachers and districts, and reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards.

While the PA Core Standards focus on the content and rigor of the four Core State Standards, the new standards meld the language and style of PA Academic Standards to yield a high quality set of pre-kindergarten through grade 12 standards in mathematics and English Language Arts. The standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their Kindergarten through grade 12 educational experience so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in work-force training programs.

Full implementation of PA Core Standards requires a planned effort on the part of LEAs. The tools provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education are intended for guidance purposes only. Educators are free to utilize the resources and tools that fit their redesign plans. The standards continue to be the foundation upon which to build a locally designed curriculum. Crosswalks, training modules, and other online resources offer options to meet the expectations of PA Core Standards. Both the Standards Aligned System portal and local intermediate units are resources upon which LEAs may rely for additional training and information.

Beyond state test scores and national assessments, the imperative for PA Core implementation is preparing our children to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce. To that end, there is much work to be done. Although prior standards reflected quality and relevant content, the new standards are beyond *the next new thing*. The rigor of the new standards is deserving of a major shift in thinking about curriculum and delivery.

LEAs can utilize the four guiding strategies and key questions included in this document as they begin to create, develop, and enhance their local PA Core Standards Implementation Plan.

Four Guiding Strategies for LEAs:

1. Design and establish systems of effective communication among stakeholders to continuously identify areas of need and disseminate information.
    - Q1: Who are the stakeholders?
    - Q2: How will we identify areas of need?
    - Q3: What evidence will demonstrate effective communication?
    - Q4: How will information be disseminated?
    - Q5: How will we make the cycle of reflection continuous?

2. Facilitate continuous high quality professional learning opportunities for educators who are prepared to teach and assess to the rigor and depth of PA Core Standards.
    - Q1: How will needs assessment, school improvement and multi-dimensional data inform the professional learning plan?
    - Q2: How will we use data from Pennsylvania's Educator Effectiveness framework to plan for professional learning?
    - Q3: How will we assure that the professional learning is continuous and sustainable?
    - Q4: How will we measure implementation of teacher learning?

3. Evaluate and align existing curriculum, instruction, supporting materials and resources, and assessments to PA Core Standards; create new assets as necessary.
    - Q1: How does the rigor of our existing curriculum compare to the state's model curriculum?
    - Q2: How do our local assessments align to the Pennsylvania Core Standards and Webb's Depth of Knowledge?
    - Q3: Do our resources provide students access to the rigor and content of the Pennsylvania Core Standards?

4. Build in a cycle of reflection to support continuous improvement.
    - Q1: What are the protocols for examining district data?
    - Q2: How do we determine what data to collect and examine?
    - Q3: How do we stay current with research and best practices that inform continuous improvement?