

DISTRICT READINESS TOOL

Before launching a professional development program for educational assistants (EAs), it's important to check if your district has the right structures, funding, and support established. These steps and guiding questions will help you think through what's needed for a successful, long-term program.

Step 1

Complete the questionnaire on the next page.

Step 2

Total the responses and use them as a foundation for deeper discussion and understanding within your school, district, or region. Which categories received low ratings, and which received high ratings? What evidence supports these ratings? Who should be involved in the decision-making process, and do their ratings align with yours? What steps are necessary to strengthen readiness in the areas with lower scores?

Step 3

For further discussion, it may be helpful to evaluate the factors unique to your context and the potential risks and rewards, considering how much the district stands to gain from training and the challenges posed by the conditions for implementation.

A ROADMAP FORWARD

Lower scores in any of the subcategories may indicate additional support is needed in those areas. If there is a lack of consensus among decision-makers, it is likely that the necessary framework for implementing an autonomous professional development program is not yet in place. However, the results can still be valuable in guiding and refining your professional development and staff engagement efforts. Cultivate is available to collaborate with you to ensure the success of these initiatives.

Identify Champions: Who will lead and oversee the EA training initiative?

Secure Funding: Where can we get the financial support needed?

Plan Training Sessions: How will we roll out initial and ongoing training?

Establish Clear Communication: How will we keep EAs and staff engaged and informed?

Build Support Structures: What mentorship, coaching, and collaboration opportunities will we provide?

Evaluate & Improve: How will we collect feedback and refine the training over time?

Complete the [Digital District Readiness Tool](#) here.

	Disagree					Agree						Disagree					Agree				
Structural Readiness	1	2	3	4	5	Leadership & Support Readiness	1	2	3	4	5										
Our district has a clear vision for how EAs fit into professional development goals.						Our district has professional learning communities (PLCs) and/or mentorship structures that could support EA training.															
Our district can integrate EA training into existing professional learning structures.						Our district ensures that teachers and EAs engage in aligned learning so that all staff receive consistent communication on practices.															
Our district policies, contracts, and agreements dictate professional development requirements for EAs. (Union, HR initiatives, Retention policies)						Our district has leaders, including building administrators, special education coordinators, and/or instructional coaches, who can support educational assistant training.															
Our district has someone appointed to organize and coordinate EA training and the dedicated time and capacity to lead this work long-term.						Our district has a staff person who is familiar with the roles and responsibilities of EAs and can lead onboarding and coaching.															

Score: /20

Score: /20

Financial Readiness	1	2	3	4	5	Communication and Collaboration	1	2	3	4	5
Our district has a budget for EA training, or could secure funding through various accounts (i.e. Title funds, Literacy funds, and Special Education/Diverse Learners funds).						Our district has a plan to keep educational assistants, teachers, and administrators informed and engaged in communication regarding training.					
Our district has explored funding options such as grants, state and federal funds, and district resources.						Our district has a system in place for educational assistants to share feedback or concerns about training with school leadership.					
Our district has accounted for all costs, including allocated FTE, training materials and resources, and compensation for educational assistants' time.						Our district has a system to track educational assistants' progress and ensure they receive specific support.					
Our district has allocated funds for professional development in the past, and this approach could be replicated for our classified staff, including bus drivers, lunch supervisors, and paraprofessionals.						Our district has a system for communicating roles and responsibilities to educational assistants and revisiting them as they change.					

Score: /20

Score: /20

Training Content and Implementation	1	2	3	4	5	Sustainability and Long-term Impact	1	2	3	4	5
Our district has a way to solicit feedback and input on topics relevant to EAs.						Our district has a plan for sustaining EA professional development beyond the initial training, including a process for revisiting the PD series at the beginning of each year.					
Our district has a plan for intermittent follow-up support and coaching, which will be facilitated on a specific schedule (ie: monthly, quarterly)						Our district has a system for recognizing exemplary educational assistants and is aware of the professional expertise that our educational assistants already possess.					
Our district has a system in place to measure the effectiveness of the training, using methods such as retention rates, student outcomes, classroom observations, and other relevant indicators.						Our district will assess whether the training is making a difference for educational assistants and students through measures such as feedback, performance evaluations, student outcomes, and classroom observations.					
Our district listens to staff regarding what training methods work best for them (ie asynchronous or synchronous) and has staff in place to support the training.						Our district has a system in place to adapt and improve the training based on feedback, including adjustments to presentation style or content topics.					

Score: /20

Score: /20

As you interact with the tool, record notes, questions, and observations here.