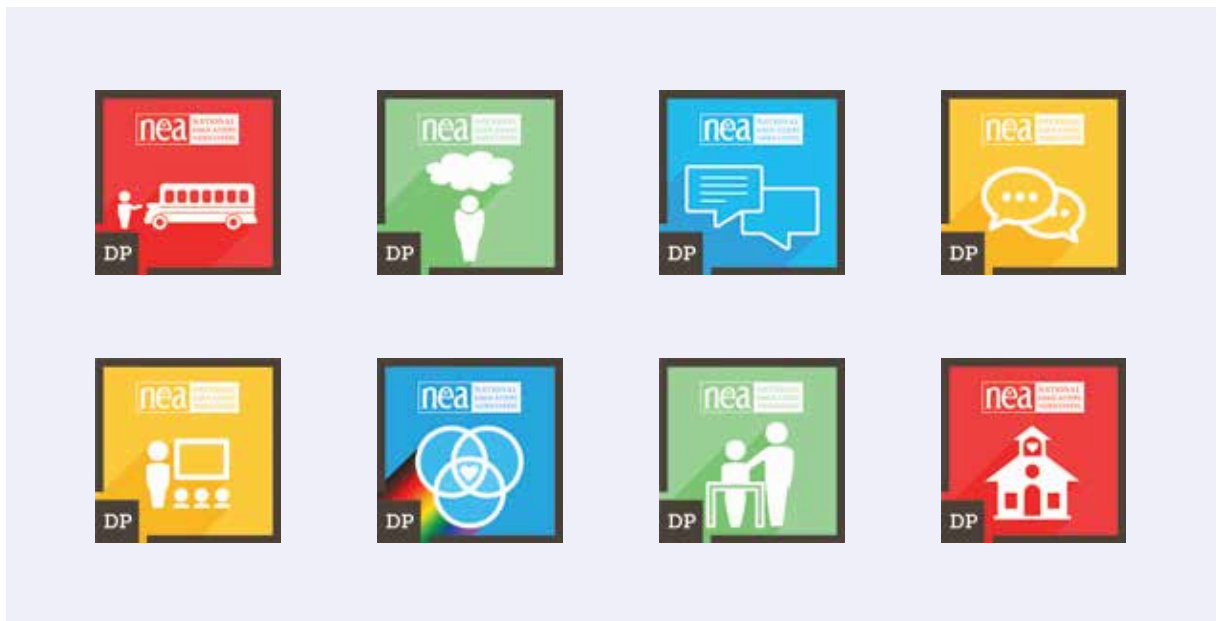


NEA MICRO-CREDENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING TOOLKIT



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The key to affiliates' ability to engage members in professional learning is providing a successful micro-credential implementation support model that brings educators together in collaborative groups—like professional learning communities (PLCs)—to focus on common learning goals. Based on NEA's experiences, supported micro-credential engagement resulted in a higher percentage of awarded micro-credentials—53 percent awarded without support and 87 percent awarded with support.

This toolkit is designed to help affiliates think through the many decisions and tasks associated with implementing micro-credentials with a group of educators. The toolkit has three sections: Ready to Plan, Ready to Launch, and Ready to Implement. Each section has one or two corresponding resources listed below to help affiliates imagine the components of a successful micro-credential implementation. This planning toolkit is intended to be used as a discussion guide and may be adapted to meet local needs and goals.

Directions for using this toolkit: Make an electronic copy of this document. Rename it and share with your planning team, perhaps via a Google Doc or Sharepoint. Feel free to customize the toolkit as it is intended to be used as a guide.

CONTENTS

Readiness Checklist	4
Ready to Plan.....	5
Study available micro-credentials	5
Ready to Launch	8
Micro-credential timeline considerations.....	8
Micro-credential promotional/recruitment materials	9
Micro-credential survey sample questions	10
Ready to Implement.....	11
Implementation support: Virtual community using edCommunities.....	11
Implementation support: Newsletters.....	11
Tips for choosing your micro-credential	12
Tips for studying the submission guidelines for micro-credentials.....	12
Tips for preparing your submission, part 1	12
Tips for preparing your submission, part 2	12
Resources for sharing.....	13
Videos and infographics.....	13
Papers, blogs, and articles.....	13
Micro-credential implementation next steps.....	14
Follow-up	15

Readiness Checklist

Use the following checklists to determine readiness in the three phases of micro-credentials implementation. Additional spaces may be needed for considerations and tasks unique to your context.

✓	Ready to Plan	✓	Ready to Launch	✓	Ready to Implement
	<i>A checklist to determine readiness to move toward preparing for a launch</i>		<i>A checklist to determine readiness to launch micro-credentials with educators</i>		<i>A checklist to determine readiness to implement micro-credentials with educators</i>
	Clearly understand the value proposition of micro-credentials		Set timeline for project (recruitment, initial training, submission deadlines, target dates for use of data)		Hold initial launch event/meeting
	Articulate the goals and objectives for implementing micro-credentials		Determine project model. Align the model to goals and objectives (individuals micro-credentials, stacks, combos, etc.)		Provide support (coaching sessions, open office hours, online discussion boards, newsletters, etc.)
	Determine organization's capacity to implement the project (time, personnel, mission, etc.)		Prepare promotional materials for recruitment (slide decks, emails, infographics, etc.)		Poll participants on micro-credentials to be submitted to prepare reviewers for those micro-credentials (if needed)
	Secure support from key leaders (e.g., local leaders) and others involved for this project to get underway		Set times/dates for info/promo sessions to recruit pilot participants (face-to-face, virtual, newsletters, announcements, etc.)		Provide regular encouragement (e.g., tips and strategies, deadline reminders, testimonials, etc.)
	Identify micro-credential coordinator(s)		Recruit participants		Obtain results from micro-credential submissions
	Study available micro-credentials to align with goals and objectives for the implementation and/or related work		Finalize and share list of participants, as necessary (affiliate leaders, school/district leaders, etc.)		Survey pilot participants at end of submission period; hold debrief sessions (participants, coordinators, support staff, etc.)
	Identify how to support micro-credential participants, and who will be responsible for providing it		Survey participants (baseline data and general information)		Compile submission and survey results and takeaways from debrief session
			Plan launch event		Share results, as needed (e.g. affiliate leadership, district officials)

Ready to Plan

Study available micro-credentials

There are over a hundred micro-credentials sorted into different stacks on the NEA micro-credential platform (nea.certificationbank.com). To begin selecting the micro-credentials for your implementation project, start by answering the following questions:

Identify your target. Micro-credentials demonstrate competence. Do you imagine educators demonstrating competence of skills already mastered or will they first develop these skills, then gather evidence to demonstrate this new skill? Time, commitment, and support are essential in skill development. **Decide if this matters.**

What are your micro-credential implementation goals? Do you have other initiatives in place to align the work with existing goals?

Decide on your strategy for selecting micro-credentials. **Identify THREE important criteria.**

1.
2.
3.

Micro-credential implementation models

When developing an appropriate micro-credential implementation for your context, consider the following: supports, location, and currency. Carefully study each chart below. Mix and match these supports, location, and currency components to build your optimal micro-credential implementation model. Be certain to align your model to the goals and objectives for micro-credentials implementation.

Affiliate Name:

Goals and objectives for your micro-credential implementation:

Supports	Description of supports to be provided
Independent	Educators engage in micro-credentials independently with little or no support provided. Participants study guidelines, prepare evidence, and submit portfolios on their own.
Basic Support	<p>Educators engage in micro-credentials with light-touch support. Basic support generally includes ONE of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Face-to-face (F2F) meeting ▶ Weekly/bi-monthly email reminders with tips and strategies for micro-credential submission success ▶ One or two sessions of open office hours (virtual or F2F) to answer questions and provide support ▶ Release time for participants to prepare submissions (independent work time or group work time)
Standard Support	<p>Educators engage in micro-credentials with light-touch support. Standard support generally includes TWO of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Face-to-face meeting ▶ Weekly/bi-monthly email reminders with tips and strategies for micro-credential submission success ▶ One or two sessions of open office hours (virtual or F2F) to answer questions and provide support ▶ Individual coaching sessions (phone, email, video conference, F2F) ▶ Release time for participants to prepare submissions
Ultimate Support	<p>Educators engage in micro-credentials with light touch support. Ultimate Support generally includes ALL or MOST of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Face-to-face meeting ▶ Weekly/bi-monthly email reminders with tips and strategies for micro-credential submission success ▶ One or two sessions of open office hours (virtual or F2F) to answer questions and provide support ▶ Individual coaching sessions (phone, email, video conference, F2F) ▶ Release time for participants to prepare submissions
Online Learning Lab/Professional Learning Community	Educators participate in an online professional learning community (PLC) available 24/7 to participants (e.g., edCommunities). The lab or community is facilitated by experienced online facilitators or coaches who consistently provide a high level of support and encouragement throughout the micro-credential process. (Some of the bullets above may be used in virtual space in addition to the threaded discussions in the online space.)
Support reallocation	Professional learning time reallocated for the micro-credential implementation (e.g., PLC time during school day, embedded professional development (PD) days or time, common planning time, etc.)
Support allocated	Professional learning time created for the pilot (e.g., PLC time during school day, embedded professional development days or time, common planning time, etc.)
Other	

Location	Description of micro-credential participants' location
No location specified	Educators are recruited from general affiliate membership and opt into the pilot based on individual interest.
Rural	Pilot participants teach/work in rural schools.
Suburban	Pilot participants teach/work in suburban schools.
Urban	Pilot participants teach/work in urban schools.
Rural and Urban/Suburban	Pilot participants teach/work in both rural and urban or suburban schools.
Other	

Other info	Description of the micro-credential participants
Grade level	
Subject area	
Years of service	
Type of educator	

Currency	Description of the currency, or incentives, for engaging with micro-credentials
State affiliate recognition	The state affiliate recognizes the participant in a unique manner.
District professional development credit	The local school district recognizes the participant's effort by awarding professional development credit.
State continuing professional development credit	Depending on the state certification and licensure requirements, educators may receive continuing professional development credit to be used toward licensure renewal.
Graduate credit	In partnership with a local university or college, graduate credit may be awarded for completion of micro-credentials IF the state and/or district professional development regulations allow it.
Pay increase or stipend	An affiliate may be able to include compensation provisions within collective bargaining agreements or district/affiliate memorandums of understanding.
Advisory role	The participant is asked to reflect on his or her experience and provide an affiliate or district with advice and perspective.
In lieu of district/school led PD	Participants can opt out of some or all of the district or school led PD and use the time to work on a NEA micro-credential. Participants may also be able to use NEA micro-credentials in lieu of other professional learning activities designated by the district.
Other	

Ready to Launch

Micro-credential Implementation Timeline Considerations

Add considerations for setting a timeline below:

Set timeline for implementation (recruitment, initial training, submission deadlines, target dates for use of data)

- When is the best time for educators to engage with micro-credentials?
- When is capacity (available staff or members) optimal?
- Do micro-credentials need to be implemented in conjunction with other work?
- Is there a target date/time for applying the lessons learned into continuing micro-credential work?

Implementation Timeline

Activity	Dates
Recruitment <i>List all times, dates, locations</i>	
Initial meeting and/or training <i>Time, date, location</i>	
Survey participants	
Coaching sessions/support sessions	
Submission deadline	
Survey participants/reflection meeting with participants	
Final report <i>Compile data and takeaways and draft report or summary</i>	
Share implementation report or summary	

Micro-credential Implementation Promotional/Recruitment Materials

Videos and Infographics

When developing an appropriate micro-credential implementation for your context, consider the following: supports, location, and currency. Carefully study each chart below. Mix and match these supports, location, and currency components to build your optimal micro-credential implementation model. Be certain to align your model to the goals and objectives for micro-credentials implementation.

- ▶ Start Earning Micro-credentials—Learn the basic concepts on micro-credentials in this one-minute video www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdWRkl8rDiU
- ▶ Professional Learning Journey Infographic—An articulation of the promise of micro-credentials throughout an educator’s professional trajectory <http://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/micro-credentials-full-size.png>
- ▶ Earn Micro-credentials Graphic—A graphic illustration of the steps for earning a micro-credential https://i1.wp.com/digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Micro-Credential-Infographic_2.jpg

Papers, Blogs, Articles

- ▶ Micro-credentials for Teachers: What Three Early Adopters Have Learned So Far, Jenny Demonte www.air.org/resource/micro-credentials-teachers-what-three-early-adopters-have-learned-so-far
- ▶ Micro-credentials: Driving teacher learning and leadership, Barnett Berry and Karen Cator www.teachingquality.org/micro-credentials-driving-teacher-learning-leadership
- ▶ Micro-credentials: Ushering in teacher-driven performance assessments in the age of ESSA, Barnett Berry www.teachingquality.org/micro-credentials-ushering-in-teacher-driven-performance-assessments-in-the-age-of-essa
- ▶ Four signs it’s time for micro-credentials, Barnett Berry www.teachingquality.org/four-signs-its-time-for-micro-credentials
- ▶ Personalized Learning...for Teachers! by Center for Teaching Quality community members www.teachingquality.org/personalized-learning-for-teachers
- ▶ Transforming the Classroom with Micro-credentials, Pat Deklotz <http://digitalpromise.org/2016/03/16/transforming-the-classroom-with-micro-credentials>
- ▶ Micro-credentials for Impact, 2017 <https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/micro-credentials-for-impact.pdf>

Micro-credential Survey Sample Questions

General questions

- ▶ Which micro-credential did you submit?
- ▶ How well did the required evidence prove competence?
- ▶ Who might be most interested in submitting this particular micro-credential?
- ▶ Why did you choose to submit this micro-credential?
- ▶ How did this experience compare to other professional learning? Why? What might make it better?
- ▶ What support did you need to complete your submission? Was it provided?
- ▶ Was the process worth doing? Would you do it again? Will you submit for another micro-credential? Why or why not?

The process

- ▶ How clear are the guidelines?
- ▶ How involved is the process for compiling the evidence?
- ▶ Who else must be involved in completing the submission? Students? Other teachers/colleagues?
- ▶ Were the word limits adequate?
- ▶ Did the prompt help provide evidence of competence in the area?

The content

- ▶ What type of content is addressed?
- ▶ What is the level of need for that type of content in our school, district, affiliate, etc.?
- ▶ What level of expertise is required to complete this micro-credential?

The application

- ▶ What applications does the micro-credential process might have on particular skills? Leadership development? Collaboration?
- ▶ Who is the primary beneficiary when a classroom teacher earns a micro-credential? Secondary beneficiary? Others? How do you know?
- ▶ What additional skills did you develop or improve in the submission process for this micro-credential?
- ▶ Would you recommend this opportunity to others? Why or why not?

Ready to Implement

Micro-credential implementation support: virtual community using edCommunities

The most effective support strategy for successful micro-credential implementation is to provide participants with a highly functioning virtual learning community. This facilitated community serves as the hub for conversations, information, and support for the pilot. A virtual community can thrive on most any user-friendly digital platform. Yet, without a skilled virtual facilitator, a virtual community will not flourish.

[Instructions for edCommunities](#) - How to join guide.

Micro-credential implementation support: Newsletters

Participants benefit from regular correspondence with virtual facilitators. Below are seven sample newsletters to be shared on biweekly with implementation participants. The newsletters provide tips and strategies on the following topics:

- ▶ Choosing a micro-credential
- ▶ Studying the guidelines
- ▶ Preparing a submission, part 1
- ▶ Preparing a submission, part 2
- ▶ Resources for sharing
- ▶ Making meaning of the micro-credential process
- ▶ Micro-credential pilot's next steps

Tips for choosing your micro-credential

Create your criteria. Before you begin to review the micro-credentials available, decide what you want from this experience. *Do you hope to develop a new skill?* Look for micro-credentials that inspire you to learn about something new and master that skill. *Do you want to demonstrate expertise you have already developed?* Find micro-credentials with skills you believe you've already developed. Other considerations: Are you looking for a particular topic? Should you combine this effort with other professional growth goals? Are you part of a team working on this project? Write down your criteria. Once you start searching the choices, notes will help.

Gather a reasonable number of choices. There are over 100 NEA micro-credentials available. Decide how many you'd like to consider. What is a comfortable number of choices? Two? Three? Five?

Once you narrow your choices, give them some thought. Sometimes you'll need to make decisions quickly. Is this one of those times for you? Take time to reflect on your decisions. Consider these questions: What has been on your mind? Where have you placed your professional focus lately? Which micro-credential(s) match up? Which do not?

Seek another perspective. Others know you and your work. Ask for input. A trusted colleague, instructional leader, or mentor might have the perspective to help you make your final decision.

Share your choice. Sharing a decision with someone always makes it feel more “official.”

It's not final until it's final. Remember, you can always change your mind!

Tips for studying the submission guidelines for micro-credentials

Read carefully. Ignore the fact that you “read” this document when you were making your decision. Now, it's a new ballgame. Make a conscious effort to read every word of this document carefully. Repeat after me: I WILL NOT BROWSE THIS DOCUMENT!

Print the submission guidelines. Sometimes reading the guidelines on a computer screen doesn't allow the tactical interaction some need to process information.

Use active reading strategies. For example, circle items needing clarification. Underline what you fully understand. Highlight what you already have evidence to support or know exactly how you will answer.

Study the rubric. Use active reading strategies. Remember, your submission hinges on your ability to provide evidence according to the standards provided. Seek help if you are unclear about any part of it.

Tips for preparing your submission, part 1

Schedule benchmarks. Each component of the micro-credential will require time and effort. Map out your tasks. (e.g., research, practice of the skill, drafting the context, gathering evidence, writing the reflection, revising, peer input, etc.) Schedule deadlines for each portion of your submission. Stick to your timeline.

Draft your context (part 1 of your submission) before you begin gathering your evidence. This strategy will help you focus on the exact skill you must demonstrate to earn the micro-credential. Rather than writing this after you gather evidence, draft it first. You can always revise. In fact, revisions are part of the process.

Gather more evidence than you need. If you are required to submit video or audio evidence, gather numerous samples. If you put all your eggs in one recording, you may end up disappointed.

Answer ONLY what you are asked. You have a lot to say. Resist the urge to share everything. Answer ONLY what you are asked. You have a tight word limit. Don't waste words on anything outside the requirement.

Tips for preparing your submission, part 2

Find a critique partner. Another eye is always helpful. Ask specific questions of your critique partner. Think about what you need from the critique. Do you need feedback on particular sections? Do you need help with grammar? Do you need an opinion on how well your evidence demonstrates the competency and addresses each component of the rubric? Be as specific as possible. Find a special way to thank them for their effort.

Offer to critique for someone else. One of the best ways to find a critique partner is to offer to critique someone else's submission.

Give it a rest. Put the micro-credential work down for a few days. Revisit your work with fresh eyes.

Resources for Sharing

Videos and Infographics

[Start Earning Micro-credentials](#) - Learn the basic concepts on micro-credentials in this one-minute video.

[Professional Learning Journey Infographic](#) - An articulation of the promise of micro-credentials throughout an educator's professional trajectory.

[Earn Micro-credentials graphic](#) - A graphic illustration of the steps for earning a micro-credential.

Papers, Blogs, and Articles

[Micro-credentials for Teachers: What three early adopters have learned so far](#), Jenny DeMonte

[Micro-credentials for Impact](#), Learning Forward

[Micro-credentials: Driving teacher learning & leadership](#), Barnett Berry and Karen Cator

[Four signs it's time for micro-credentials](#), Barnett Berry

[Personalized Learning...for Teachers!](#) CTQ community members

[Transforming the Classroom with Micro-credentials](#), Pat Deklotz

Micro-credential implementation next steps

Reflecting on the micro-credential process

If you haven't submitted your micro-credential yet, revisit the previous newsletters as you begin to wrap up your journey. If you've submitted your micro-credential, you are ready to reflect on the process.

First, congratulations! Your dedication to this process is worth celebrating.

Take a few moments to reflect on the following questions:

- ▶ What applications does the micro-credential process might have on your skills? Leadership development? Collaboration?
- ▶ Who is the primary beneficiary when a classroom teacher earns a micro-credential? Secondary beneficiary? Others? How do you know?
- ▶ What additional skills did you develop or improve in the submission process for this micro-credential?
- ▶ Would you recommend this opportunity to others? Why or why not?

Follow-up

Make time to survey participants. Sample survey questions are listed above. Extend the discussion by convening a focus group for a conversation about their experience. Provide questions to the group beforehand and record the session. Again, use some of the sample questions above or create your own questions to learn what you need to know from the implementation process.