

“Aha!”

Curriculum mapping and alignment is a significant school-wide initiative. It is a long-term process that involves a substantial commitment from all stakeholders. While at times it may seem daunting, there are plenty of “Aha!” moments scattered throughout. These mini revelations often occur

during workshops or while exploring the advanced features on the mapping tool. Like trail markers on a rigorous hike, they provide reassurance and give us the stamina to carry on. They remind us that both the journey and the destination are well worth the effort.

The following are just a few of the many “Aha’s” we’ve heard:

We have over two thousand students. As a principal, it’s hard to keep up with what’s going on around campus. Before visiting classrooms, I review teachers’ maps. Knowing essential questions, topics, and standards makes all the difference.

~ high school principal

I used to read *The Polar Express* with my class. As it turned out, so did three other grade levels and seven other teachers. By the time I did it, my kids were “Expressed” out! Now, before using anything, I do a keyword search.

~ 4th grade teacher

For two years straight, we did horribly on the same standards. We ran a Standards Report and discovered that no one was actually teaching them. Wow!

~ middle school assistant principal

What’s in our curriculum guide and what’s in our maps are two entirely different things. It’s like reading *The National Enquirer* and then *National Geographic*.

~ middle school principal

I thought I knew how to map. When we did the calibration workshop I discovered that, as a school, we were all over the place. It’s as though we were speaking different languages.

~ 5th grade teacher

The other day I took a School Snapshot. I shared it with our PTO and they were absolutely blown away. They had no idea how much we did.

~ elementary school principal

Two months before the test, I ran the report “What am I missing?” As it turns out, I was missing a lot. That information saved me!

~ 4th grade teacher

As a brand new teacher, I was scrambling just to keep my head above water. The Master Maps were like a life preserver.

~ 2nd grade teacher

Mapping made me think about the standards in a new way. I had to know them in order to use them. To figure out the relationship between the content, skills, and assessment, I really had to break them apart. It was like dissecting a frog with my students.

~ 9th grade teacher

I love to do projects with my kids. Well, as it turned out, so did all the other teachers on our seventh grade team. As you can imagine, our students were suffering from severe project overload. So we got together with our maps and designed a small handful of amazing interdisciplinary units. Now when we mention projects, our students don't cringe.

~ 7th grade teacher

I used to think that mapping would require me to give up my creativity. It's just the opposite; it's a way to share it.

~ 3rd grade teacher

In the old days, our principal would attend a workshop over the summer; and, based on how much he like it, it would become our professional development for the year. Now we use our maps and performance scores to figure out what we really need.

~ 10th grade teacher

While reviewing our maps, we discovered that we were all using the same generic assessments. For the rest of the year, we worked together to design varied and more effective tools.

~ 5th grade teacher

We used to map the old fashioned way, using butcher paper and markers. All I can say is thank God for technology!

~ middle school principal

When our principal suggested curriculum mapping, I figured it was just another way for them to evaluate us. Now, I see it as a way for them to better support us, and for us to better support each other. It's the classic "work smarter, not harder."

~ 11th grade teacher

We always talk about accountability, but what does it really look like? Mapping your curriculum online and sharing it with educators around the country: that's accountability!

~ high school principal

The other day, I overheard two teachers debating when to introduce analogies. Another group was trying to figure out whether to use a multiple choice test or an essay. And another team was digging for evidence that the "reading across the curriculum" initiative was working. All of them were using maps.

~ elementary school principal

A map is a living, breathing document. As technology changes, as our community changes, as our children change ... so should our curriculum, so should our maps...

~ 8th grade teacher