



USNS + Forefront

Implementation Toolkit

Introduction

Welcome to Forefront!

We're excited to support your school or district as you implement the Universal Screeners for Number Sense (USNS) and Forefront.

A successful Forefront + USNS implementation leads to visible and measurable positive impacts on learning. This starts with clarity about the assessment process and establishing structures to analyze results. A successful implementation leads to targeted instruction, improved communication, and buy-in from families.

This toolkit will be your guide to leading an implementation that will have lasting positive impacts. It outlines recommended implementation steps, highlights available resources, and shares additional guidance to support your work with the USNS.

While this toolkit focuses on the Universal Screeners for Number Sense, Forefront helps schools to manage a wide variety of educational data, across all subjects. For guidance on a broader implementation across Forefront's features, [access the full implementation toolkit](#).

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Identify Your Key Stakeholders

Implementation Lead

The implementation lead is Forefront's primary contact and helps coordinate the implementation within a school or district. This role may vary from a curriculum director to a teacher leader. The implementation lead serves as the local liaison for Forefront and coordinates communication with colleagues as needed.

Rostering Contact

IT or Other Designated Contact

Depending on your account configuration, rostering may be managed by your IT team, the implementation lead, or a third party. Identifying the rostering contact is a required step in the configuration process.

Leadership

District and School Leadership

Leader engagement, both instructional and administrative, is necessary for a successful implementation. It is key for teacher buy-in and meaningful use of the data. Site and district level leadership are encouraged to participate in the kick-off meeting, data check-in, and end-of-year reviews. Additionally, many learning resources and professional development opportunities are developed specifically for site and district leadership.

Teachers

General Education, Intervention, and Special Education

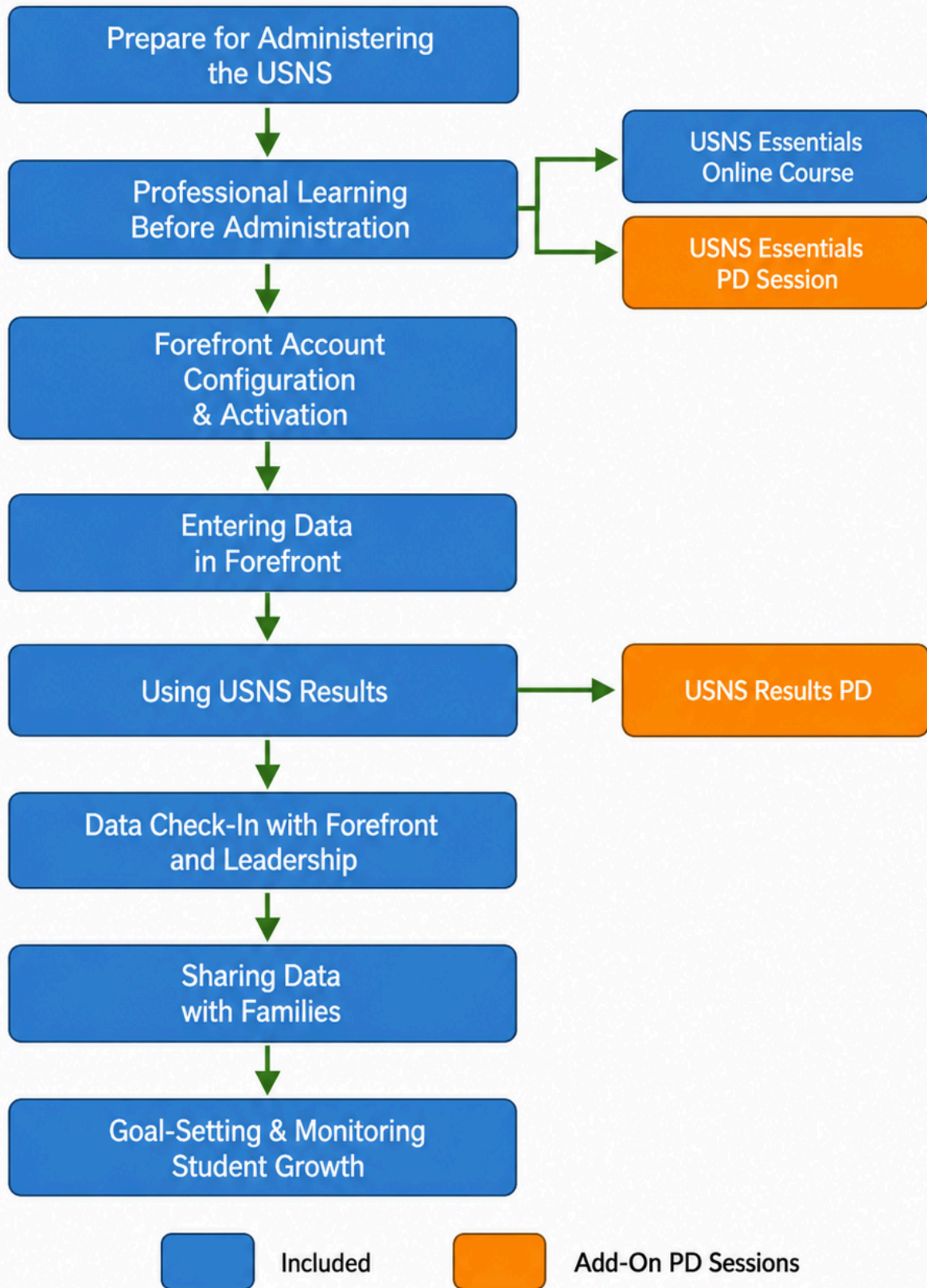
Teachers are the foundation of a strong implementation, and Forefront was designed with them in mind. The implementation process is streamlined to help teachers quickly understand and use Forefront. As teachers enter data, they are able to identify trends, better understand student thinking, and determine next steps for instruction.

Learn more about user roles within Forefront.

[Read more here.](#)



Implementation Road Map



Prepare for Administering the USNS

Set Assessment Windows

The Universal Screeners for Number Sense are intended to be administered as universal screeners by classroom teachers. The suggested windows below allow teachers to conduct approximately one assessment per day and complete an entire class over 3-4 weeks.

It is recommended that the teacher who will be working most directly with the students be the one to administer the assessments. For this reason, a broad window allows teachers to complete one or two assessments per day and finish the entire class in time.

Please note that Forefront does not include a feature for scheduling assessment windows.

Fall USNS Assessments

Fall screeners should be administered during the first weeks of school. Districts should build in enough days for teachers to assess approximately one student per day.

For schools with July or August start dates, the goal is typically to complete assessments before the end of September. For schools with September start dates, completion before the end of October is generally appropriate.

Indiana Schools (2026-27): Complete fall assessments by October 16, 2026.

Midyear USNS Assessments

Midyear assessments should begin in late November or early December and conclude before the end of January.

Indiana Schools (2026-27): Complete midyear assessments by February 12, 2027.

Spring USNS Assessments

The spring assessment window typically runs from early April through the end of the school year. Earlier administration is encouraged so that teachers have time to respond instructionally to results.

As formative assessments, the USNS are most valuable when schools build in time for instructional response and targeted support.

Indiana Schools (2026-27): Complete spring assessments by June 18, 2027.

Planning for USNS Administration

As your team prepares for administration, consider the following questions:

- When can classroom teachers complete the interviews?
- How much time should be scheduled?
- What materials are needed?
- What professional learning should happen before administration?
- When will teams discuss the results and plan for instructional responses?

Who Should Administer the Assessments?

Best Practice

The USNS assessments are intended to be classroom assessments administered by classroom teachers. Whenever possible, the educator who works most directly with the student should conduct the assessment. While the quantitative data is helpful, listening to student thinking and observing student responses often provides the most valuable instructional information.

Teachers and instructional specialists or coaches may choose to team up to complete the assessments. Some teams find that combining groups for certain activities can free the classroom teacher to assess students. Coaches may also support teachers during instructional times so the teacher can pull students for assessments. Some schools are able to provide roaming substitutes to make this possible.

Alternative Administration Models

Schools may consider flexible approaches to support assessment administration while keeping classroom teachers closely connected to the process.

One option is task-by-task administration. In this model, the teacher completes portions of the assessment with all students one task at a time. For example, each of the fall assessments includes counting tasks. Teachers may complete these with students while the rest of the class works independently, during transitions, or during choice time. Teachers often find that they can administer counting and numeral identification tasks by moving around the room and talking with students, rather than having students come to a center. This can help keep interruptions to a minimum.

If classroom teachers need additional support with assessment administration, consider the following approaches:

- Students who are expected to need significant support may be assessed by an interventionist.
- Paraeducators or other instructional support staff may administer assessments for students expected to excel on the assessment.
- For students expected to perform in the low-middle ranges, it is particularly important that classroom teachers conduct the assessments. These interviews often reveal unexpected insights and provide a deeper understanding of student thinking.

While flexible solutions can help ensure that each student is assessed, a coach, interventionist, or other specialist should not assess whole cohorts of students. A primary goal of the assessment process is for classroom teachers to connect with and learn about their students.

Assessment Time Guidelines

The USNS are not timed assessments. The suggested ranges below are intended to provide students with adequate time while helping schools maintain a manageable assessment schedule.

Assessment times can vary student to student, particularly those that are struggling, and teacher-by-teacher. Although it can be challenging, limit questioning beyond the scripted interview. This helps keep assessment times manageable and results more reliable. This also reduces inconsistencies in interviews with students. General guidelines for expected timeframes follow below:

Fall Interview Time Guidelines

- Kindergarten: 3-5 minutes
- Grade 1: 4-6 minutes
- Grade 2: 5-7 minutes
- Grade 3: 6-8 minutes
- Grade 4: 7-9 minutes
- Grade 5: 8-10 minutes
- Grade 6: 9-11 minutes

Midyear and Spring Assessments

The midyear and spring assessments include both interview and written components.

Interview portions are generally shorter than fall interviews. Schools can use the lower end of the fall interview ranges as a planning guide.

Written Component Guidelines

Kindergarten through Grade 3

- Approximately 30 minutes
- Do not exceed 60 minutes

Grade 4

- Approximately 30-60 minutes
- Do not exceed 60 minutes
- The “F Tasks” section may be administered separately
- Allow approximately 20 minutes for “F Tasks”

Grades 5-6

- Approximately 30-60 minutes
- Do not exceed 60 minutes
- The “F Tasks” section may be administered separately
- Allow approximately 30 minutes for “F Tasks”

Please note that the fifth grade spring assessment includes only a written component.

Materials Preparation

Appendix A includes materials preparation checklists for the fall assessments and links to the midyear and spring checklists. These lists outline the materials needed by grade level for the interview-based components of the USNS.

Teachers may choose to use the provided note catchers to record observations, responses, and scores during administration. Other teachers may prefer to use Forefront’s interview tool to capture notes and scores directly during the assessment process. Using Forefront streamlines data entry and allows teachers to access reports immediately after administration; however, please use what works best for your team.

For additional guidance on data entry, refer to the “How to Enter Data” support article:
<https://forefront.education/support/how-to-enter-data/>

Professional Learning Before Administration

Schools and districts vary in their familiarity with interview-based assessments. Building in time before administration helps establish the purpose, improve scoring reliability, clarify expectations, and support consistent implementation.

USNS Essentials: Self-Paced Online Course

For Forefront clients, the *USNS Essentials Self-Paced Online Course* is a free, on-demand introduction designed for teachers and instructional leaders. In approximately 60 minutes, participants learn how to correctly administer the assessments, use the rubrics to score consistently, and begin using results to inform instruction.

The course is designed to be practical and immediately applicable, helping educators understand both the logistics of administering the USNS and the instructional purpose behind them. Participants receive a certificate upon completion. This option works well for schools that need a flexible way to prepare staff ahead of assessment windows.

Schools and districts generally approach the course in one of two ways. Some teachers complete the course independently prior to administration. This approach allows for flexible scheduling and helps establish a shared baseline understanding across staff.

For stronger implementation, we recommend completing the course as a grade-level team. Working through the modules together creates space for discussion, supports consistency in scoring decisions, and helps teams align administration practices

USNS Essentials [Online Course](#)



USNS Essentials [PD Session](#)



before assessments begin.

USNS Essentials: Live PD

The USNS Essentials professional learning option, available virtually or in person, provides a more interactive and collaborative implementation experience. Ideally delivered to grade-level teams, this professional learning focuses on helping educators build confidence and consistency with the assessments. Teams practice scoring student responses, discuss administration expectations, interpret results together, and connect assessment outcomes to instructional planning.

This option is especially valuable for schools looking to strengthen scoring reliability and build shared understanding across classrooms.

Forefront Account Configuration & Activation

Account Configuration

Once your purchase has been finalized, Forefront's client team will configure your account.

If your district rosters through Clever or ClassLink, your IT department can request a roster connection through those services. If your district uses local logins or Google OAuth, users can log in directly at: app.forefront.education/login

Forefront is designed to support more than USNS data collection. If your district plans to collect additional classroom assessment data or import benchmark, interim, or state assessment results, your Forefront representative will guide your team through additional configuration during a kick-off meeting.

Course Configuration

Courses include:

- Standards views (lenses)
- Assessments
- Handouts and printable documents

For USNS-only implementations, districts may use default course configurations. For more customized configurations, Forefront's team will provide support during setup.

Entering Data in Forefront

For interview-based assessments, teachers typically use Forefront's interview tool to:

- Read prompts
- Score responses
- Capture observations during administration

Some teachers may prefer to use paper note catchers, especially while becoming familiar with the USNS.

Both approaches are supported with Forefront.

Using the Interview Tool

Selecting “Interview” opens a view that includes both the assessment script and scoring rubric.

Teachers can:

- Read prompts directly from the tool
- Enter scores for each task
- Capture notes and observations

Using the Spreadsheet Tool

Teachers use the spreadsheet tool to enter results from written assessments.

Some teachers also choose to enter interview results from paper Note Catchers into the spreadsheet view after administration.

As data is entered, Forefront color-codes proficiency by question and automatically calculates totals.

The spreadsheet tool also provides direct access to the Next Steps documents.

Using USNS Results

The USNS assessments involve teachers directly in the assessment process, giving them opportunities to listen to student thinking, capture performance data, and identify instructional needs. It is important to build in dedicated time for grade-level teams to review assessment results together. These times should be communicated in advance of the screening window. This protected provides teachers with a target date, a purpose for the assessment, and accountability.

Protected collaboration time to look at results from the USNS assessments then allows teachers to:

- Discuss evidence of student learning
- Identify trends and instructional priorities
- Plan responses and targeted supports

Interpreting Scores: Overall Performance

The overall performance bands provide a quick initial indicator of student performance before teams dig into specific skills or tasks.

- **Green - Proficient** - Student performance indicates readiness for grade-level work.
- **Yellow - Approaching Proficiency / Basic** - Student performance suggests targeted support may be beneficial.
- **Orange - Needs Support / Below Basic** - Student performance indicates additional assessment and targeted instruction may be needed.

- **Red - Needs Support / Well Below Basic** - Student performance indicates significant instructional support is needed.

The overall proficiency bands are criterion-referenced and are calculated from item-level performance.

Overall performance bands can help teams:

- Quickly identify students needing support
- Identify students who may require additional assessment
- Visualize growth over time for students and cohorts

Forefront’s reporting tools also allow districts to compare results against national and local norms through the Global Cohort. Learn more about the Global Cohort in the following section.

Interpreting Scores: Norm-Referencing

Norm-Referencing with Forefront

Forefront’s Global Cohort allows schools and districts to compare the results of groups, classes, grade levels, and individual students to peers across the nation for norm-referencing. The Global Cohort is a dynamic cohort that reflects current assessment results and refreshes each July. Individual student, class, school, and district performance can be compared to the USNS Global Cohort over time to gain perspective and better understand how a student performance compares to grade-level peers nationally.

The purpose of norm-referencing is to provide additional context for interpreting student performance. Forefront’s de-identified, aggregated data sets allow schools and districts to compare local results to a broader national data set.

Through Forefront’s reporting tools, teams can compare student performance to national and local norms, view percentile rankings by assessment and grade level, and analyze performance trends across cohorts. Norm-referencing should be used alongside classroom evidence, instructional observations, and item-level analysis to better understand student needs and growth.

**Please note that when assessments are cloned and modified, those results can no longer be compared to the national cohort.*



Interpreting Scores: Item Analysis & Standards Analysis

Item analysis and standards analysis help teachers better understand student performance in the context of specific tasks and skills.

Questions to guide data discussions include:

- What are the Tier 1 instructional needs?
- Are there groups of students who would benefit from targeted support?

- Are there students who need individualized intervention?

Whole Group Instruction

If half or fewer students demonstrate proficiency on a task, the concept likely requires additional whole-group attention.

Short routines that can be effective instructional responses include:

- Number talks
- Mental math routines
- Counting routines
- Warm-ups and games

Small Group Instruction

Small group instruction is especially helpful for targeted skill development.

Examples may include:

- Numeral identification
- Counting development
- Addition and subtraction
- Place value understanding

Small groups can provide focused support while helping students continue participating meaningfully in whole group instruction.

Individualized Targeted Instruction

Some students benefit from highly individualized instruction focused on specific concepts or skills.

These supports may range from:

- Brief “micro-interventions” during transitions
- Manipulative-based instruction
- One-on-one strategy discussions

The goal is to provide responsive instruction that helps move students forward from their current understanding.

USNS Next Steps Documents

Forefront’s embedded *USNS Next Steps for Instruction* resources help teachers connect assessment results to instructional responses. These resources compile instructional activities and supports from a variety of high-quality sources, including:

- Graham Fletcher’s 3-Act Tasks
- Berkeley Everett’s Math Flips
- NRICM Mathematics Project

USNS Next Steps

[Learn More](#)



- Math Recovery Community Resource Hub
- Desmos Classroom
- PhET Simulations from CU-Boulder
- Teaching Student-Centered Mathematics

These resources make it easy for teachers to plan meaningful instructional responses and are included with all Forefront software subscriptions.

Data Check-In with Forefront and Leadership

Following assessment administration and collaborative teacher review, data check-ins provide an opportunity for leadership teams to step back and look at broader trends.

These sessions support district and school leaders in:

- Interpreting trends across classrooms or schools
- Reviewing instructional strengths and needs
- Planning implementation, leadership, and instructional next steps

Recommended Timing

After Fall Assessments

A fall data check-in can help teams:

- Interpret initial results
- Prepare for collaborative teacher discussions
- Identify early instructional priorities

After Fall and Midyear Assessments

A second check-in after midyear assessments allows teams to:

- Review growth trends
- Identify areas of progress
- Determine additional supports or adjustments

Who Should Attend?

Recommended participants include:

- Principals
- Assistant principals
- Instructional coaches
- Team leaders
- District leadership

USNS Results PD (Add-On)

After fall or midyear assessments, districts may choose to participate in a guided USNS Results professional learning session.

During this session, teams learn how to:

- Use Forefront reports to visualize trends
- Identify Tier 1 and Tier 2 instructional needs
- Access and use USNS Next Steps resources
- Determine instructional responses based on assessment data

Learn more about this PD opportunity here:

<https://forefront.education/project-view/usns-results/>

Sharing Data with Families

Forefront’s printable family letters help schools strengthen communication with families and keep them informed about student progress in mathematics.

Letters include:

- Personalized student performance information
- Suggested at-home activities
- Additional support resources

Teachers can access family letters through the Documents tab in Forefront. District leadership can edit and create custom letters with the Handout Editor tool, included in both the Basic and Premium plans.

Learn more about the handout editor in this expert coaching session: <https://forefront.education/project-view/handouts/>

Goal-Setting & Monitoring Student Growth

When setting goals, consider the following three factors:

- Fall assessment results
- Historical district performance
- Forefront Global Cohort data

Goals should be ambitious, realistic, and grounded in available evidence. How-to statements, directly

USNS Results *PD Session*



Family Letters *How-To Article*



adjacent to the goals, should be written to ensure that teachers commit not only to the goal, but specific actions that will be taken to achieve those goals.

Overall performance levels can help teams establish end-of-year goals and monitor progress over time. Find below sample end-of year goals to serve as a starting point for building and district goal-setting with the USNS assessments.

Sample End-of-Year Goals

- No students will finish the year in the lowest two performance categories.
- Students currently performing at Level 2 will progress to Level 3 by spring.
- Students will either progress to a higher performance level or maintain Level 3 performance.

Supporting Goals

Supporting goals focus on specific skills, tasks, or Number Sense Lens facets. These goals are often more actionable than broad performance goals and should guide instructional planning. Classrooms should generally focus on no more than two or three supporting goals at a time.

Examples may include:

- Students maintaining proficiency with forward number word tasks
- Students demonstrating proficiency in place value

Teams may find that overall goals are best supported with a specific supporting goal. For example:

All students will perform in the proficient or basic category on the Spring USNS. This will be supported by every student being proficient with the verbal counting and numeral identification tasks.

Continue the Learning

Explore our Learning page and Knowledge Base for articles, video tutorials, and FAQs. Do you have questions, feedback, or need support? Email us at support@forefront.education. We're excited to support you and your team throughout your implementation!

Learning Hub

[Access Now](#)



Knowledge Base

[Access Now](#)



Appendix A: Materials Preparation Checklists

Access the full materials preparation checklists here:

<https://forefront.education/support/materials-preparation-checklists-for-usns/>

Fall Screeners

Kindergarten

- Note catchers (one per student)
- Quick Script (teacher copy)
- Detailed script (as needed)
- Number and dot cards
- Seven counters of one color and three of another
- Paper or plate for counter tasks

First Grade

- Note catchers (one per student)
- Quick Script (teacher copy)
- Detailed script (as needed)
- Number cards
- At least 15 counters
- Opaque cover for counters

Second Grade

- Note catchers
- Quick Script
- Detailed script
- Cards for question prompts
- Twelve counters of one color

Third Grade

- Note catchers
- Quick Script
- Detailed script
- Cards for question prompts
- Twelve counters of one color

Fourth Grade

- Note catchers
- Quick Script
- Detailed script
- Number and dot cards

- Pencil and paper
- Number lines

Fifth Grade

- Note catchers
- Quick Script
- Detailed script
- Number and other cards
- Number lines

Sixth Grade

- Note catchers
- Quick Script
- Detailed script
- Number and fraction cards
- Operation cards
- Visual cards

Midyear Screeners

Refer to the above-linked support article for full grade-level materials lists.

Spring Screeners

Refer to the above-linked support article for full grade-level materials lists.