

Instructional Materials Selection Guidance



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INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION GUIDANCE

Introduction

Selecting instructional materials is one of the most critical decisions a district will make. Finding instructional materials that are aligned to the Kansas Curricular Standards and that meet the needs of your district can be overwhelming, particularly when examining a crowded marketplace. This guide aims to help teachers and administrators feel confident that their choices will positively impact students' academic experiences and achievement. **The Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) believes that both the materials and the process used to select those materials matter.**

KSDE believes that:

- The selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials, supported by ongoing professional learning, is a transformative school improvement measure.
- Decisions regarding curriculum and instructional materials should be made at the local level, with support and resources provided by the KSDE. These decisions should prioritize the expertise of educators while incorporating the perspectives of students, families, and the community.
- Instructional materials should be aligned to the Kansas Curricular Standards, attend to the vision for Quality Instruction, and be based on research.

KSDE recommends the selection process occur across three phases:



The guidance below is designed to assist districts with prioritizing time while maximizing choice and flexibility. While the guidelines and actions are not exhaustive, they can be customized to address local needs as your district moves through the stages of selecting, adopting, and implementing high-quality instructional materials. The actions include links to tools and resources that offer additional support to ensure the materials selection process is thoughtfully planned, transparent, and well-documented.

For content-specific guidance, see the KSDE Instructional Materials Selection Guidance for ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies.

Phase 1: Plan



1.1 Determine your process.

Develop guidelines for the selection process and create a selection committee.

Actions:

- Develop a theory of action for the selection process; be prepared to [articulate the purpose](#)¹ and goals for the new materials.
- Define the parameters of your selection process (e.g., budget, timing, decision-making, process, policy, technology needs, class schedule restraints, etc.).
 - Determine if there are district, state, or federal policies or requirements that need to be considered (e.g., RFP procedures, procurement requirements, etc.).
 - Think ahead to materials implementation to determine professional learning needs that might influence selection. For example, consider internal capacity vs. need for professional learning from a publisher, as well as potential costs of implementation support from publishers.
- Create a [timeline](#)² from selection to launch.
- Assemble a selection committee, ensuring that the committee includes student, teacher, leader, and family/caregiver voice.
- Determine and communicate how you will [make a final decision](#)³ (e.g., single-decision-maker, committee voting committee/stakeholders, or [consensus](#)⁴).

¹ Instruction Partners. (2019). *Key Messages for Maintaining High Expectations for Students*. Curriculum Support Guide. <https://curriculumsupport.instructionpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Key-Messages-for-Maintaining-High-Expectations-for-Students.pdf>

² Instruction Partners. (2019). *Selection Timelines*. Curriculum Support Guide. <https://curriculumsupport.instructionpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Selection-Timelines.pdf>

³ EdReports.org. (2020, April 1). *Making Your Decision: A Resource to Support Your Materials Adoption Process*. EdReports. <https://edreports.org/resources/article/making-your-decision-a-resource-to-support-your-materials-adoption-process>

⁴ Cox, D. (2018, June 14). *5 Keys to Successful Consensus When Selecting New Curricula*. EdReports. <https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/5-keys-to-successful-consensus-when-selecting-new-curricula>

1.2 Develop your lens.

Establish criteria for new instructional materials, grounded in an instructional vision for the content area.

Actions:

- Refer to your district-level instructional vision to guide your process. This vision describes what high-quality teaching and learning looks like in the content area being selected, and the vision should be standards-aligned and attend to the instructional shifts reflected in college-and-career ready standards.
 - If your district has not developed an instructional vision for the content area of the materials being selected, leverage the ***KSDE Vision for Quality Instruction for the content area***.
- Use a variety of data points (e.g. assessment data, classroom observation data, perception data, etc.) to analyze the current state of instruction in the content area compared to the vision.
- Use your instructional vision and analysis of your district's starting point for key levers, including educator experience, support and collaboration, to determine if there are additional review criteria that should inform the selection of instructional materials.
 - Determine if learning gaps exist across student groups (students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students of color, students experiencing poverty, etc.) and decide if access to specific supports should be prioritized in new instructional materials.

1.3 Build skill.

Build the capacity of stakeholders and selection committee members so they have the expertise to engage in the selection process.

Actions:

- Provide professional learning for the selection committee to create a shared understanding of the importance of high-quality instructional materials (HQIMs), content-specific characteristics of HQIMs (the "lens", or review criteria, determined in the previous step of this guide), and how HQIMs support the instructional vision.
- Consider how stakeholders *beyond* the selection committee will understand why new instructional materials are being selected, including the timeline from selection to launch.
 - Provide learning experiences that help stakeholders develop a shared understanding of the instructional shifts, the instructional vision, and evidence-based practices within the content area being selected.

Phase 2: Study



2.1 Know and narrow your choices.

Identify a short list of instructional materials that will be deeply evaluated for alignment to the instructional vision.

Actions:

- Review relevant state policy (if applicable) and ***KSDE Instructional Materials Selection Guidance for the content area*** prior to selection of new instructional materials.
- Learn about instructional materials available for the content area being selected.
 - For additional content-specific insight, contact the ***KSDE Program Manager*** to learn more about high-quality instructional materials for the content area being selected.
 - Consider contacting similar sized districts to gather information about the instructional materials they are using.
- Establish a set of questions that the selection committee can use to narrow your district's initial list of materials to consider. As the first "filter", these questions should align with the parameters and instructional vision identified in Phase 1.
 - For example, if access to translated materials is non-negotiable for your district, one of the "filter" questions might be: "Do the instructional materials include Spanish translations for student-facing deliverables?"
 - For suggested questions, see the ***KSDE Instructional Materials Selection Guidance for the content area***.
- Apply your district lens via the "filter" questions to decide which instructional materials (between 2-4) you will study more deeply.
 - Leverage information from independent reviews of instructional materials (e.g., [EdReports](https://www.edreports.org/)⁵, [Louisiana Believes](https://doe.louisiana.gov/school-system-leaders/instructional-materials-reviews/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews)⁶, [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/)⁷, etc.) to compare materials' features, alignment, or key anecdotal insights. For content-specific guidance on using third-party reviews as part of your selection process, see the ***KSDE Instructional Materials Selection Guidance for the content area***.

⁵ EdReports.org. *EdReports*. <https://www.edreports.org/>

⁶ Louisiana Department of Education. *Curricular Resources Annotated Reviews*. Louisiana Believes. <https://doe.louisiana.gov/school-system-leaders/instructional-materials-reviews/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>

⁷ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *CUrriculum RATings by TEachers*. <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>

2.2 Investigate the materials.

Study the 2-4 sets of high-quality instructional materials selected.

Actions:

- Establish a [structure and process](#)⁸ that enables selection committee members to deeply study each set of materials.
 - Before your investigation of the materials, identify (1) what you want to learn about each set of materials, (2) which stakeholders should provide feedback, and (3) who will be engaged in the investigation.
- Determine your approach to investigating the materials. For example, will you investigate the materials using a book study, [a field test or pilot](#)⁹, PLC or grade-level review, or through a publisher presentation? Or will you use some combination of the four?
 - Note: KSDE recommends using a combination of the approaches above. If a publisher presentation is included, it should be done *after* selection committee members have done their own independent investigation.
- Determine what kind of professional learning may be needed for the selection committee or field test/pilot teachers as they investigate the materials.
- Request samples of the materials and alignment documentation to the Kansas Curricular Standards from publishers, and set up presentations (if needed).
 - Use publisher-provided standards alignment documentation alongside third-party reviews (where available) and KSDE non-negotiables to study each set of materials.
 - Use time with publishers to have them answer questions from the selection committee that specifically address local priorities and context as well as any strengths and gaps identified by the selection committee.
- Use the data gathered in this step to further narrow the list of prospective instructional materials, if possible.
 - Determine if there is a need for additional feedback from the field test/pilot teachers or follow-ups with the publishers.

⁸ EdReports.org. (2020, April 1). *4 Ways to Investigate Instructional Materials Under Consideration*. EdReports. <https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/4-ways-to-investigate-instructional-materials-under-consideration>

⁹ EdReports.org. (2020, April 1). *Lessons from the Field: Best Practices for Piloting Curriculum*. EdReports. <https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/lessons-from-the-field-best-practices-for-piloting-curriculum>

Phase 3: Act



3.1 Make a decision.

Make a final selection, develop a communications plan, and create a strategy for getting materials in educators' hands.

Actions:

- Review the evidence collected throughout your investigation. In this review:
 - Compare the strengths and gaps of each option,
 - Analyze the feedback from stakeholders, including the field test or pilot teachers,
 - Assess the work needed to successfully implement each option and consider the implications of that on other initiatives and staff capacity, and
 - Consider the materials-based professional learning that may be necessary to implement the new instructional materials.
- Use your decision-making process to make a final selection.
- Communicate the decision, implications, and next steps to all stakeholders.
- Plan for the procurement and distribution of materials.

3.2 Plan for Implementation.

Develop an implementation strategy that prepares and supports teachers and leaders to implement the materials.

Actions:

- Develop a materials-based professional learning strategy, starting with how teachers and leaders will “get to know” the materials through sustained professional learning that centers how teachers will learn to use the new instructional materials.
- Communicate the plans for short- and long- term professional learning that support implementation of the new instructional materials (e.g., teacher and leader professional learning, adjustments to the district's assessments or evaluation tools, classroom observation tools, or progress monitoring methods).
 - Consider how teachers new to the district and/or new to the profession will be trained on materials in subsequent years or even a few months into the first year of implementation.
- Use the ***KSDE Instructional Materials Implementation Guidance*** to develop and execute a thorough plan for sustained implementation.



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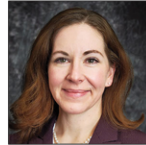
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