

6 Conditions for Success

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Implementation



While research confirms that implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) aligned to rigorous standards leads to notable learning gains for students, only 40% of teachers report that they are using curricula that are “high-quality” and well-aligned to learning standards.¹²³ Many districts have responded to these statistics by prioritizing the adoption of high-quality curriculum. Identifying and selecting high-quality curriculum is the first step, but implementing it well is just as important.

Implementation of new instructional materials requires change at all levels of the system. CORE Learning partners with districts and schools to support them with building the systems and processes needed for sustainable implementation of high-quality English Language Arts (ELA) and Math instructional materials that produce equitable student outcomes.

CORE Learning utilizes a set of conditions that districts should focus on developing for successful HQIM implementation:

- 1. Implementation Team**
- 2. Intentional Launch**
- 3. Professional Learning**
- 4. Communication**
- 5. Impact**
- 6. Sustainability**

¹ Chingos, Matthew, and Grover Whitehurst. 2012. “Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core.” Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution.

² Jackson, C. Kirabo and Alexey Makarin. 2016. “Simplifying Teaching: A Field Experiment with Online Off-the-Shelf Lessons.” National Bureau of Economic Statistics, Working Paper No. 22398.

³ Educators for Excellence. Voices from the Classroom, 2020. e4e.org/teachersurvey.

1. Implementation Team

A cross-functional, diverse District Implementation Team ensures leaders at the highest-level are sponsoring the work and committed to making it district a priority.

Best Practices

- Identify key members from the district content office, professional learning, research, other subject matter experts and principal supervisors who will support and monitor the implementation.
- Plan for robust implementation management that is ongoing with weekly and monthly work sessions over multiple years.

Key Questions

- Which stakeholder groups must be represented on the district's implementation team?
- How will the district recruit members and ensure ongoing engagement with the team?
- Who is sponsoring this work and who will be the main driver of the work?

2. Intentional Launch

A strong launch ensures districts and schools are prepared to implement the new curriculum.

Best Practices

- Set instructional vision, goals, and strategies for the adopted curriculum.
- Create and articulate curriculum implementation expectations that outline non-negotiables and places of flexibility.
- Develop a strategy that outlines coherence and alignment of other district initiatives.
- Design an implementation plan that prepares for change management, buy-in across key stakeholders, and articulates a multi-year vision for curriculum implementation outcomes.

Key Questions

- Has the district set expectations for how the curriculum should be implemented and communicated those expectations to site leaders and teachers? If not, which key stakeholders should begin this work?
- How will the district ensure the curriculum implementation initiative is aligned with other initiatives and remains a priority?
- Has the district developed a rollout plan for the new curriculum?

3. Professional Learning

Prioritize a multi-year professional learning strategy and plan that supports all stakeholders.

Best Practices

- Provide job-embedded professional learning tailored for teachers, instructional coaches, and school and district leaders on the adopted curriculum.
- Plan for consistent walkthroughs to ensure curriculum implementation integrity and progress towards goals.
- Provide ongoing coaching and feedback to teachers and leaders.

Key Questions

- How will the district ensure ongoing collaboration and learning opportunities for teachers and leaders?
- How will the district ensure classroom walkthroughs are continuous and remain a priority at the school level?
- Does the district have a coaching model and plan for ongoing coaching and feedback?

4. Communication

A strong communication strategy ensures transparency, feedback opportunities, and ongoing curriculum implementation updates for all stakeholders.

Best Practices

- Communicate implementation decisions and rationales frequently and early.
- Develop a communication plan that outlines what needs to be communicated and to whom, when it should be communicated, and the method of communication.
- Celebrate wins and progress on implementation goals.

Key Questions

- How will the district ensure a two-way communication channel is in place?
- What have been the most successful communication strategies the district has used and are those strategies adaptable to curriculum implementation?
- What communication challenges can the district plan and solve ahead of time?

5. Impact

Ongoing monitoring and measurement of progress towards curriculum implementation ensures districts meet their goals and engage in cycles of continuous improvement.

Best Practices

- Analyze data needs and create a plan for collecting ongoing curriculum implementation data.
- Identify metrics, tools, and methods that will be used to measure the impact curriculum implementation has on district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and student outcomes.
- Align data collection to inform cycles of continuous improvement at each level.

Key Questions

- Which key metrics will be used to ensure the district and schools are making progress towards implementation goals and student outcomes?
- How will the district define a successful curriculum implementation over time?

6. Sustainability

A sustainability plan ensures effective curriculum implementation over time and outline support and resources needed for the future.

Best Practices

- Prioritize sustainability from the beginning to ensure a district-wide system is in place that promotes coherence and alignment.
- Build and maintain tools and resources that will support managing the implementation and supporting all stakeholders.
- Focus on building internal capacity through systems such as train the trainers.

Key Questions

- How long has the district budgeted for curriculum implementation and how will the district sustain the work once the budget has been reached?
- Does the district have the resources and infrastructure to begin internal capacity building that will sustain the work for years to come?

About CORE Learning

CORE partners with educators to strengthen the foundations of teaching and learning, ensuring all students experience a rigorous, relevant, and inclusive public education. Get in touch with us at curriculum@corelearn.com for more information about our Curriculum Adoption and Implementation services.