



MATERIALS ADOPTION GUIDANCE

Adoption Overview

All students deserve high-quality materials. Less than 20 percent of the materials in use in classrooms are aligned to standards.

What you select and how you select matters. Schools and districts have more options than ever from which to find high-quality materials that meet their local priorities. The selection process is a critical lever for ensuring that quality materials are adopted and then used well in classrooms. Common adoption practices, such as relying on publisher presentations or teacher's manuals set out for quick exploration, are simply not good enough.

We believe that:

- Selecting materials is a decision worthy of study and prioritization
- Local context and instructional vision should drive decision-making
- Educator voice and expertise must be at the center of the decision
- Materials should be aligned to high standards, attend to instructional shifts and innovations, and be based on research
- Professional learning and implementation need to be considered from the beginning of the selection processes

[EdReports.org](https://edreports.org) works with teams across the country to implement the steps below, improve their selection processes, and find the right materials for their students and teachers. Explore the [case studies](#) to see how different districts have applied these key steps. Additional activities, resources, and protocols we use with teams are embedded within the steps for you to use or adapt within your own process.

Step 1 - Establish Your Process

District leaders set guidelines for the adoption process and gather a committee.

Action Checklist:

1. Develop goals and a theory of change for the adoption; prepare to articulate the purpose and goals for new materials.
2. Define the parameters of your adoption (e.g., budget, timing, decision-making process, tech needs).
3. Create a timeline and milestones that extend from adoption through launch.

4. Assemble an adoption committee composed of diverse stakeholders, including teachers, content area specialists, and school leaders, who will work through the rest of the process with district leaders.

Related Resources:

[Data Collection Tool: A Resource to Support Your Materials Adoption Process](#)

[Sample Instructional Vision Statements](#)

[Materials Adoption 101: Engage Educators Upfront](#)

[Making a Great Adoption Decision](#)

[3 Ways a Small District Can Harness the Power of EdReports.org](#)

[Building Capacity and Consensus Through a Teacher-Led Materials Adoption](#)

[Using EdReports Reviews to Support an Educator-Led Adoption Process](#)

**Step 2 -
Develop
Your Lens**

Examine your data and local context in order to establish priorities for considering new instructional materials.

Action Checklist:

1. Engage the committee in professional learning experiences to ensure their work is grounded in a shared understanding of why materials matter and the content-specific characteristics of instructional materials.
2. Establish an instructional vision for the content area of your adoption to guide the process. An instructional vision describes the district's instructional aspirations and articulates what teaching and learning look like in the content area.
3. Analyze your current state: where are you currently against the instructional vision, considering data such as student achievement, classroom observation, teacher experience, etc.?
4. Codify your district priorities: use your instructional vision and current state analysis to establish additional review criteria (beyond alignment to standards and instructional shifts) that will inform investigation of instructional materials.

Related Resources:

[Adoption Committee Recommendations](#)

[Redefining Engagement: How Baltimore City Public Schools Transformed its Approach to Adopting Instructional Materials](#)

**Step 3 -
Know and
Winnow
Your Choices**

Understand the market and work toward identifying a subset of programs that can be deeply investigated.

Action Checklist:

1. Learn about the available programs in your grade and content area using EdReports.org.
2. Conduct initial research (online, telephone, email).

	<p>3. Use the EdReports compare feature and read reports to learn more about how well materials meet expectations for alignment and other characteristics of quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact other districts or experts to gather anecdotal information about programs. ● Apply your district lens to this research and decide which two to four programs you plan to study more deeply. <p><i>*Note: We recommend steps 1-3 happen before you dive into any materials or engage more deeply with publishers.</i></p> <p>Related Resources:</p> <p>Guiding Questions for Wining Instructional Materials Under Consideration How to Use EdReports Reviews to Support an Educator-Led Adoption Process Adopting New Curriculum? 3 Ways to Narrow Your Options</p>
<p>Step 4 - Investigate the Materials</p>	<p>Engage in a thorough, hands-on study of the two to four high-quality programs you’ve selected.</p> <p>Action Checklist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish the structure and process for this next phase of research, which focuses on deep study of each of the programs you’re considering. Start by asking yourselves: 1) what do we want to learn about how the materials address our priorities, and 2) what is the best way to learn this? 2. Reach out to publishers to request samples of the materials and set up future presentations. Use the time with publishers to have them answer questions the committee has developed that specifically address your local priorities, as well as to discuss strengths and gaps identified in the reports. <i>*Note: You may end up winnowing your list to an even smaller number after speaking with the publisher representatives.</i> 3. Determine what kind of professional learning will be needed for those engaged in investigating the materials. For example, if you are piloting to learn about the time it takes to teach a full lesson, the professional learning needed from the publisher might simply be to walk through the lesson “must-dos” and “may-dos.” <p>Related Resources:</p> <p>4 Ways to Investigate Instructional Materials Under Consideration Lessons from the Field: Best Practices for Piloting Curriculum Big Changes in Rural Wisconsin: Improving the Instructional Materials Selection Process The Power of Engaging All Educators During an Instructional Materials Adoption</p>
<p>Step 5 - Make a Decision</p>	<p>Use evidence collected during the investigation to make a final selection. Develop a plan to communicate the decision and get materials in teachers’ hands.</p> <p>Action Checklist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine the evidence collected from your investigation in light of the priorities and additional

criteria you've established.

- Compare the strengths and gaps of the options
- Analyze feedback from stakeholders
- Assess what work you'll need to engage in to implement each of your options and consider the implications on other initiatives and staff capacity

2. Use your decision-making process to make a final selection.

3. Communicate the decision and next steps with all stakeholders.

4. Plan for the procurement and distribution of the materials.

Related Resources:

[Making Your Decision: A Resource to Support Your Materials Adoption Process](#)
[Building Capacity and Consensus Through a Teacher-Led Materials Adoption](#)

**Step 6 -
Implement**

Develop and execute a plan to prepare teachers and leaders to implement the materials and assess the progress of implementation.

Action Checklist:

1. Create an ongoing professional learning plan that includes "getting to know" the materials as well as sustained professional learning that directly focuses on how teachers will learn to teach using the new materials.
2. Articulate plans for short-term and long-term activities to support implementation (e.g. teacher and leader professional learning, necessary adjustments to district assessments, classroom walkthroughs to monitor implementation) and expectations for use.
3. Establish feedback systems so professional learning can be responsive to teachers' needs.
4. Ensure there is a structure and adequate time for the district staff who will train and support teachers to learn the materials themselves.
5. Include in your professional learning plans the specific training site leaders will need to support teachers with timely, appropriate feedback.

Related Resources:

[Launch and Implementation Planning for Your Adoption Process](#)
[Selecting Great Materials is Not Enough](#)
[7 Best Practices for Launching Curriculum During Interrupted Schooling](#)
[Refining your Implementation](#)