

Driving High-Quality Math Materials: A District Leader's Guide

Series Articles

1. Establishing a Curriculum Adoption

2. Changing Instruction With Intention

Leading Effective Adoptions

4. Selecting the Right Curriculum and Tools for Your District

5. Launching Your Implementation

6. Strengthening and Sustaining Your Implementation

Leading Effective Adoptions

It's important to have a clear vision for instruction in a specific content area before starting the process of selecting new materials. While this series focuses on math, these principles can be applied to all content areas. Such a vision sets district-wide expectations for teaching and learning math, establishes shared standards for high-quality math instruction, and defines goals for student success beyond quantitative performance. It serves as a guide for decision making and plays an invaluable role in selecting and implementing materials.

Key Actions for Leading a Successful Math Materials Adoption

Develop a Clear Vision



Start by establishing a clear, content-specific vision that reflects your district's beliefs about math instruction and student learning.

Engage Stakeholders



Include a variety of stakeholders including district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and additional educational partners in developing your vision.

Map Selection and Implementation



Use your vision to guide math curriculum evaluation and selection and plan for implementation.



Develop a Clear Vision

Creating a content-specific instructional vision is a crucial first step in transitioning to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). Using this framework to define your district's mathematics instruction, as well as drive your math materials selection, ensures that the materials chosen align with your educational goals.

Spending time up front to build your instructional vision is key to the long-term success of new math materials. Many districts we spoke with endorsed the "go slow to go fast" approach, emphasizing that it's essential to define what high-quality math instruction looks like for your district before seeking out new curricula. Once you know what you are working toward, you can align your materials search to those goals.

“

“[District leadership] needs to set a vision through a collaborative process and then ask their content experts to provide the look-fors and requirements for what it means in the content area and materials. Otherwise, how do we know that what we want for kids is in common?”

- John Drake

Endowed Director of the Teaching, Learning, and Instructional Leadership Collaborative, at the Orange County Department of Education (CA)

”

If your district is in the vision-setting stage of materials adoption, these resources can help:

- [EdReports: How to Articulate an Instructional Vision](#) includes recommendations for approaching vision setting within your district, links to [sample vision statements](#), and content-specific guiding questions for ELA, Math, and Science.
- [Instruction Partners: Vision Setting: A Can't Miss Step for Curriculum Implementation](#) offers guidance on developing a content-specific vision grounded in your district's goals for instruction.



Engage Stakeholders

Enacting a strong and impactful vision for instruction relies on stakeholder involvement and investment. Actively collaborating with teachers and educational partners ensures your vision is widely supported and accepted. Investing in professional learning for all stakeholders on research-based instructional strategies and approaches to math instruction strengthens your vision by equipping district leaders and educators with a shared knowledge base. This collaborative approach also makes it easier for stakeholders to support materials that match your instructional vision.

A district in Texas began their successful journey to HQIM well before they considered adopting new math materials. As part of their 2019 strategic plan, they convened a task force of district leaders, school leaders, instructional specialists, teachers, and other stakeholders. Over the course of a year, this task force collaborated with a leading national technical assistance provider to engage in professional learning on mathematics instruction and to build a clear vision and framework for K-12 math instruction.

The resulting vision and framework emphasize conceptual development, productive struggle, and student ownership of learning. When ready to adopt new math materials, this framework provided them with a lens to critically evaluate options and make the best selection for their district.

The key questions below will help you consider stakeholder engagement in developing your vision.

Key Questions

1. **How will we ensure broad stakeholder representation in crafting our vision?**
2. **What must stakeholders know to contribute effectively?**
3. **How will we build collective knowledge and expertise?**
4. **How will we maintain ongoing communication and feedback throughout the vision-setting process?**
5. **Can we lead this process ourselves, or do we need support from an external partner?**



Map Selection and Implementation

Once your content-specific vision is set, you can start planning for your materials selection. Using your vision to guide your selection criteria allows you to evaluate math curriculum for quality and alignment with district expectations about math instruction and students' experience. It shifts the focus from "Is this a high-quality curriculum?" to the more important question of "Will this high-quality curriculum support our goals for educators and students?"

Multiple support partners recommend vision-setting as a part of planning and executing a successful transition to new materials. Instruction Partners and Rivet Education both offer step-by-step planning tools to help districts carry out a vision-driven approach to materials selection and implementation.

- Rivet Education's [Instructional Materials Implementation Tool](#)
- Instruction Partners' [Curriculum Support Guide](#)

A strong instructional vision not only shapes your priorities for materials but also sets you up for implementation success. A shared vision builds investment in selected materials, fosters alignment among district leaders, site leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders, and drives instructional coherence at both the district and site levels.