Achieving Long-Term Success With High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

Launching high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) is a major milestone, but it's just the beginning of a longer journey toward lasting instructional change and improved student outcomes. Long-term success requires a sustained effort to strengthen curriculum use across your district through continuous collaboration, ongoing monitoring, and adaptive support.

To build on the foundation laid during your initial implementation, focus on key strategies such as fostering instructional coherence, using insight from early implementation to refine your approach, and setting clear, multi-year goals for continued progress. These are essential to transform your math HQIM adoption into meaningful, lasting improvements for educators and students.

Key Actions to Strengthen and Sustain HQIM Implementation

Build Instructional Coherence

- Update assessments and data systems to align with HQIM.
- Update instructional tools and resources to support HQIM usage and teaching practices.
- Align other district priorities with HQIM efforts to maximize support and impact.

Use Data and Insights to Drive Multi-Year Implementation

- Continuously gather and analyze data from early and ongoing implementation to refine support strategies and professional learning.
- Set clear multi-year goals for each phase of HQIM implementation, informed by early and ongoing insights.
- Monitor progress across sites and provide differentiated support based on schools' implementation stages and needs.

Build Instructional Coherence

One of the biggest obstacles to progress in schools is a lack of instructional coherence. When professional learning, assessments, and classroom observations aren't aligned with core instructional materials, teachers and administrators receive mixed messages about what's important–which leads to inconsistencies in instruction and diminished outcomes for students. By aligning instructional initiatives with HQIM, districts can support stronger, more consistent approaches to teaching and learning. Several districts we spoke with emphasized the importance of building instructional coherence around HQIM to improve instructional quality.

> **"The reason HQIM is so good is because of what it enables you to do. It's good in its own right, too, but what it really does from a systems perspective is allow you to align and go deeper in all these powerful ways. It's an enabling condition for coherent instructional improvement."**
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> **- Elizabeth Cutrona**
> Chief of Staff, Detroit Public Schools Community District (MI)

Several steps you can take to achieve instructional coherence with math HQIM include:

- **Refine Data and Assessment Systems:** Prioritize curriculum-embedded formative and summative assessments and ensure other assessments align with instructional materials to provide meaningful data.
- **Revise Lesson and Unit Plan Protocols:** Update planning and other teacher collaboration tools to ensure consistency with HQIM.
- **Align Classroom Observation Tools:** Ground observations in use of core instructional tools, and focus on how the materials are used to support evidence-based teaching practices and facilitate student learning.
- **Adjust Student Schedules:** Ensure adequate time for instruction with the materials.
- **Restructure Professional Learning:** Align professional development at the district, school, and classroom levels with HQIM.
- **Collaborate With Other Departments:** Align support from multilingual learner programs, African American achievement initiatives, special education supports, and other relevant student services with HQIM.
- **Engage Family and Community Partners:** Include information about HQIM in messaging to families and community partners and offer appropriate support.

If you need additional support with instructional coherence, the RAND Institute's Improving Instructional System Coherence Toolkit: A Resource for K–12 Districts and Schools offers a process for evaluating and enhancing the coherence of your current instructional tools and systems.

Use Data and Insights to Drive Multi-Year Implementation

Approaching math HQIM implementation as a multi-year process, with distinct stages marked by distinct actions and goals, is also critical to progress and success. Building competency with materials and refining the systems that support their effective use is often iterative and takes time. Effective planning, grounded in data, can make a significant difference. Resources like Rivet Education's Instructional Materials Implementation Tool are designed to guide the kind of multi-year planning needed for HQIM success.

Throughout each stage of implementation, data should play a vital role in guiding decisions and driving improvements. Regular observations of instruction and teacher collaboration time allow districts to collect qualitative data on how teachers are using the materials. When combined with survey feedback from teachers, leaders, and other stakeholders, this information can provide a well-rounded view of implementation challenges and successes.

Additionally, student achievement data offers insight into how well the materials are supporting the intended learning outcomes. Systematically gathering and analyzing this data allows districts to make informed adjustments to their professional learning plans, support structures, and instructional strategies at every stage of implementation.

Many districts we connected with initially launched materials with a cohort of teachers or schools. These early adopters provided valuable, real-time feedback and data that helped districts identify both the strengths and challenges of using the materials in practice. This approach also revealed where support systems needed adjustments, allowing districts to refine their strategies before expanding to more schools.

For example, Amarillo Independent School District (TX) piloted new math materials at three of its 37 campuses. "That was a huge learning experience and we were blown away by the results," shares Director of Elementary Academics, Samantha Holder. The insights gained from this pilot helped the district fine-tune its instructional support strategies and improve systems for supporting teachers. As a result, the following year they were able to expand the rollout of materials to 24 additional schools with greater confidence and effectiveness.

As you reflect on the experiences of early adopters in your district, consider the following key questions to guide your learning and make adjustments to your approach:

Key Questions

1. Are teachers using the curriculum consistently and as intended? What feedback are they providing on its use?
2. Are students engaging with the curriculum as expected? What feedback do they have about their learning experiences?
3. What challenges are teachers and administrators encountering, and how can these be addressed?
4. What do the early student outcomes data reveal?
5. Are there any gaps in professional learning that need to be addressed to better support teachers, administrators, or support staff?
6. How effectively are instructional coaches and other staff supporting teachers in implementing the curriculum?
7. Are communication channels functioning effectively between district leadership, school administrators, and teachers?
8. Are the necessary resources and materials consistently available and being used in classrooms?
9. How are teachers collaborating on curriculum implementation? Could this collaboration be strengthened?
10. How well is curriculum implementation aligning with the district's overall instructional goals and priorities? Are there areas where adjustments are needed?

In addition to continuous learning, goal-setting and monitoring practices are also key to intentional progress. Several districts highlighted the importance of defining success at each stage of implementation, and focusing on teacher practice and school systems in addition to student data. For example, capturing video of teachers who are making strong progress with materials or implementing them successfully can provide clear examples of effective practice. Sharing models of teacher collaboration, coaching, and other forms of support also can be powerful in reinforcing goals.

Monitoring the quality of classroom implementation and providing targeted support has been a major focus in Detroit Public Schools Community District (MI). Chief of Staff Elizabeth Cutrona shares their approach to align instructional monitoring efforts to high-quality instruction and curriculum: "We deeply invested in our monitoring tools and developed a robust look-for form that is grade band- and curriculum-specific. This means when a principal is in a second-grade math classroom, the look-for form is responsive to what should be happening in that grade in our adopted curriculum."

Many materials providers offer curriculum-specific observation tools and other resources to help districts monitor classroom practices and other critical adult behaviors, such as planning and data analysis, which are essential for effective implementation of HQIM.

Districts that design systems to monitor instructional practices both within and across schools are better positioned to gauge progress and provide timely intervention and support. Regular collection of district-level data—such as trends from walkthroughs, observations, and teacher feedback—provides districts with a broader understanding of what is working and what needs to be adjusted, including how to better align district resources to drive improvement.

> **"You have to be able to evaluate your program. What do you have in place as a district leader and as a big organization? What are the markers that will tell you whether or not what you're doing is having success? It has to go beyond student outcomes. It also has to include the adults in your schools and what they're doing."**
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> **Dr. Alfonso Romero**
> Senior Director of School Transformation, Math, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools (CA)

To further refine your goal-setting and monitoring your progress with curriculum, consider consulting Instruction Partners' Curriculum Support Guide:

- Key Action II.1 provides specific steps and guiding questions for establishing goals and developing a monitoring plan.
- Goals for Implementation offers sample implementation goals and outcomes for student and staff investment, teacher practice, and student outcomes.
- Progress Monitoring Practices shares progress monitoring best practices, including frequency recommendations.

Leveraging these tools and strategies will not only strengthen your curriculum implementation over time, but also position your district to make lasting improvements in instructional quality and student outcomes.

Want a more supported experience as you drive math HQIM in your district?

If you missed any of the previous articles in our six-part series or would like to share with your peers and colleagues, visit *Driving High-Quality Math Materials: A District Leader's Guide* for insights on the selection and implementation processes of adopting high-quality math materials.