COURSE DESIGN AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of carefully crafted course design and the selection of effective instructional materials that are well aligned to Washington State K–12 Learning Standards cannot be overstated.

- District course designs should be regularly reviewed to ensure their ongoing alignment with state law, teaching and learning standards, and research-based best practices.

- Selection and adoption of appropriate instructional materials for all content areas must be well planned and implemented in every Washington district to assure equitable access to high-quality core instruction and, as appropriate, strategic and intensive intervention supports matched to student needs.

It is our hope that this guide serves a twofold purpose:

1. To provide a cyclical strategy for the regular review of courses based on district needs.

2. To provide state policies, guiding questions, useful resource links, and district examples, which will help define best practices for considering instructional materials both for supplemental use by individual teachers and schools and for core-instructional materials for a district.

In many cases, districts may be in the position of knowing for certain they will be adopting new core instructional materials. If that need is a given, districts may spend less time in the initial phases of the cycle or include considerations that are addressed in a later phase earlier in the process. For this specific case, the document tries to call out where those changes might occur.

Please note that core instructional materials adoption process examples for specific content areas are included in the Appendices. These documents include content-specific resources.

The contents of this guide are not all-inclusive or exhaustive in the type of considerations and resources needed to fully implement a system for regular course design. Districts differ throughout the state, and an exact process for one district may not be effective in another.

This resource can and should be adapted meet the goals of the district.

Course Design is the process that includes identifying and sequencing essential content supporting students' skill development towards state learning standards. Course design involves providing appropriate instructional materials, professional development, and support systems for teachers as they implement the course.
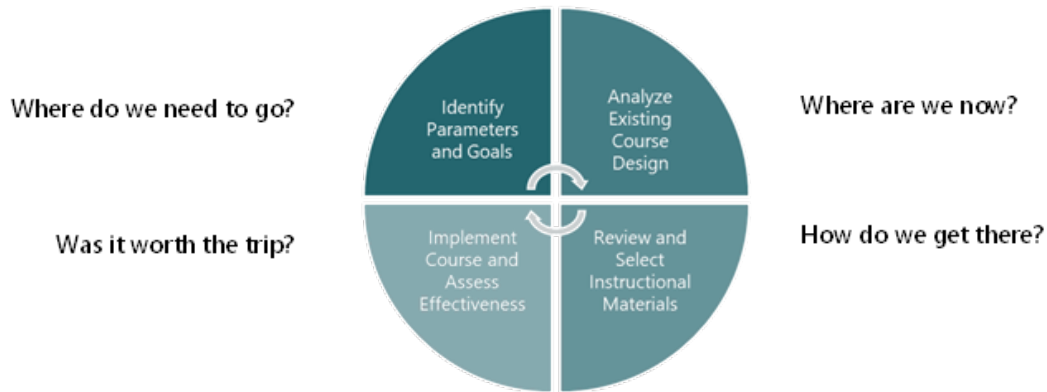
Instructional Materials include all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as learning resources to help students to acquire facts, skills, and/or to develop cognitive processes. Types of instructional materials include core, alternative core, intervention, supplemental, and temporary supplemental.

These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.

COURSE DESIGN REVIEW CYCLE

Gone are the days of the seven-year review cycle. Districts are now recommended to establish a regular cycle of course design review based on student need, updated content, rapidly changing demographics, and funding.

Phase 1: Identify Parameters
- Identify applicable state laws and federal guidelines - learning standards, graduation requirements, etc.
- Know the rules of the road – gather school board policies related to instructional materials selection and adoption and district procurement procedures.
- Define what an effective course will look like - agree upon success metrics and reporting tools.
- Understand your district capacity with regards to budget, time, staff, and technology.
- *If a core instructional material adoption is pending, much of the initial planning for the effort may be done during this phase.*

Phase 2: Analyze Existing Course Design and Goals
- Understand where you are currently – consider effectiveness of course design and alignment of instructional materials to state learning standards by analyzing student data, soliciting input from teachers, and leveraging existing instructional materials reviews.
- Based on the assessed needs, consider your options. Choices will fall along a spectrum that includes a minor instructional materials refresh, selecting appropriate instructional materials to fill gaps, or a complete course overhaul.
- If a core instructional material s adoption is pending, assemble the instructional materials review team and develop your communications strategy.

Phase 3: Review and Select Instructional Materials
- Know your district needs – consider student population, technology capacity, professional learning strategy, district educational priorities and goals.
- Search critically and review with recognized rubrics for the evaluation of instructional materials.

Phase 4: Implement Course and Assess Effectiveness
- Repeat the cycle on based on student need, changing demographics, and funding.

Phase 1: Identify Parameters and Gather Resources

Where do we need to go?

Effective planning and gathering the current laws and requirements are essential when considering instructional materials and supports for your district courses. Below are key elements to identify and links to resources that districts may find helpful.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If a core instructional materials adoption is pending, much of the initial planning for the effort may also be done during this phase.

Laws and Requirements

Make sure district is adhering to applicable Washington state laws and Federal guidelines:
- legal requirements for school instructional materials selection
- course graduation requirements
- federal accessibility requirements
- professional learning requirements

RCW 28A.150.210	Basic education - Goals of school districts
RCW 28A.150.220	Basic education - Minimum instructional requirements – Rules
RCW 28A.320.230	Legal requirements for district selection and approval of instructional materials
RCW 28A.150.230	District school directors' responsibilities
RCW 28.A.640.020	Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination
WAC 392-190-055	Textbooks and instructional materials, elimination of bias
RCW 28A.320.170	Tribal history and culture
RCW 28A.300.600	Professional learning
Washington State Graduation Requirements	OSPI
Special Education Resource Library	OSPI
Roles and Responsibilities for Course Design and Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption	OSPI

RCW (Revised Code of Washington) | Washington State Legislature

WAC (Washington Administrative Code) | Washington State Legislature

Content areas in the Basic Education Act where standards must be taught:
- The Arts
- English Language Arts
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

Content areas that relate to the goal in the Basic Education Act that schools must integrate technology literacy and fluency and understand the importance of work and finance:
- Computer Science
- Educational Technology
- Financial Education

Districts must implement the related learning standards in any stand-alone educational technology, computer science, environment and sustainability education, or financial education courses.

Standards from additional content areas not named as a primary goal in Basic Education Act must be integrated to the maximum extent possible. See RCW 28A.655.070

Content-specific state laws may be found on the OSPI web page for each content area.

Washington State Learning Standards

The Arts (2017)

Career and Technical Education Pathways

Computer Science (2018)

Early Learning & Development Guidelines

Educational Technology (2018)

English Language Arts (2011)

English Language Proficiency (2021)

Environment and Sustainability (2009)

Financial Education (2016)

Health and Physical Education (2016)

Mathematics (2011)

Science (2013)

Social Studies (2018)

World Languages (2015)

District Policies

Know the rules of the road. Gather school district policies for:
- instructional materials selection and adoption
- ownership of teacher-created content
- use of open educational resources
- district procurement/acquisition procedures

School board policy on instructional material selection and adoption
- Model Policy 2020/2020P: Course Design, Selection, and Adoption of Instructional Materials | Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)

District policy with regard how to manage teacher-created content.
- Model Policy: Copyright and Open Licensing Policy | OSPI

District procurement procedure for core instructional materials. *Consider any guidelines/restrictions/impacts for print, digital, blended, or Open Educational Resources.*
- OER Considerations for School Districts | OSPI OER Project

Success indicators/Metrics

Based on district educational goals for success, define what an effective course will look like. Identify and agree upon indicators of success, monitoring tools, and reporting process. Consider:
- professional learning
- equitable delivery of quality content to ALL students

Washington State Testing | OSPI

Washington Healthy Youth Survey | OSPI, Health Care Authority, Department of Health

Ninth Grade Student Success Best Practices and Strategies | OSPI

OSPI-Developed Assessments:
- the Arts
- Social Studies/Civics
- Health and Fitness
- Education Technology

District benchmarks or assessments

Teacher performance assessments and observations

Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program | OSPI

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your district is certain that new core-instructional materials will be chosen, begin the planning process for a formal instructional materials review and adoption process outlined in Phase 3: Select and Adopt Core Instructional Materials *Core material selection and adoption SHOULD NOT happen every time you review your district course design*.

Phase 2: Analyze Existing Course Design

Where are we now?

Course designs should be evaluated, adapted, and developed on a continuing basis to determine if your instructional materials across the spectrum from supplemental resources to core instructional material meet student needs.

Though not always possible, a comprehensive review of kindergarten through grade 12 course design and instructional materials is the most effective and thorough approach to curriculum improvement. An advantage to a K–12 approach is to bring coherence to district efforts for overall school improvement by encouraging vertical and horizontal alignment of standards, instruction, and assessment across the system.

Course Design Committee

Assemble a team to consider current course design. A course design committee could consist of:
- district curriculum director
- teachers and data coaches
- as appropriate, external content area experts, tribal partners, or Educational Service District representatives

Potential tasks could include:
- examine alignment to Washington State Learning Standards and effectiveness at meeting district learning targets and goals for student success
- review current data to identify course strengths and challenges
- solicit teacher feedback on instructional materials, fidelity of implementation, areas where improvement is needed or areas that are working well, professional learning needs
- solicit student feedback on engagement and connection to content

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Washington State Report Card | OSPI

District level assessments

Interim assessments for Smarter Balanced

Example: Content Area Need Survey | Washougal School District

Example: Student Survey of Curriculum and Learning | Mead School District

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- If there is agreement that there is an identifiable need for new instructional materials (based on data, committee examination, and teacher feedback), assess the gap between where the district/school is currently and where they need to be to meet state and district goals.
- Document the process for analysis of existing course design and communicate the need to district stakeholders.

Minor Refresh – Supplemental Instructional Materials
Instructional materials are in good shape, aligned to standards, student performance is good, and teachers are prepared. District would like to include supplemental resources to increase engagement or to focus on specific ideas.

Fill Gaps – Supplemental Instructional Materials
Current instructional materials do not quite meet standards but with some additions they could. This may include adding resources like lessons, units, or formative and summative assessment tasks.

Complete Overhaul – Select and Adopt Core Instructional Materials
Existing instructional materials are out-of-date, not aligned with standards, and ineffective tools for students and teachers. A new option is required.

Phase 3: Select and Review Instructional Materials

How do we get there?

There's a growing body of research finding that instructional materials can have as large an impact on student outcomes as teacher quality or reduced class size (see Research Links below). Because of this, it is important to help provide guidance to state, district, and school level leaders in the selection of instructional materials that are aligned to standards, address education goals and are accessible for all students.

Today's instructional materials include resources delivered via different methods and carrying different types of licenses outlining permitted use. Remember that the criteria used to judge quality and alignment to state learning standards needs to be the same, regardless of whether the materials are print or digital, open or all rights reserved copyright.

For the purposes of this document, we'll be focusing resource suggestions towards the goal of selecting and adopting new core instructional materials; however you will find the section on review instruments useful for supplemental resource selection as well.

Research Links

Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core | Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings Institution

The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform | Center for American Progress

Implementation of K–12 State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy: Findings from the American Teacher Panel | RAND Corporation

Definitions

Instructional Materials are all materials designed for use by students and their teachers as learning resources to help students to acquire facts, skills, and/or to develop cognitive processes. These instructional materials, used to help students meet state learning standards, may be printed or digital, and may include textbooks, technology-based materials, other educational media, and assessments. They may carry different licensing types from open to all rights reserved.

> **Core Instructional Materials** are the primary instructional resources for a given course. They are district-approved and provided to all students to help meet learning standards and provide instruction towards course requirements.

> **Alternative Core Materials** are the primary instructional materials for a given course that are used with a subset of students. These materials are intended to replace approved core materials and may be used for specialized course offerings or flexible learning environments.

> **Intervention Materials** are designed to support strategic or intensive intervention for students who are at risk of not meeting established learning standards. Intervention materials are used with students to accelerate progress toward particular learning goals based on systematic assessment, decision-making, and progress monitoring.

> **Supplemental Materials** are used in conjunction with the core instructional materials of a course. These items extend and support instruction. They include, but are not limited to, books, periodicals, visual aids, video, sound recordings, computer software and other digital content.

> **Temporary Supplemental Materials** are those items used in conjunction with the core instructional materials of a course that are of interest or value for a short period of time and are chosen within district-established guidelines.

Understand District Needs and Capacity

Establish district learning goals – quality criteria beyond alignment to state learning standards. Some potential areas to consider:

- Equitable delivery of quality content to ALL students. Consider your teacher and student demographics and identify any specific instructional material considerations.
- Teaching behaviors your district has defined as important and that instructional materials need to support.

Other considerations regarding district needs and capacity:

- Technology considerations if used to deliver content (e.g., student access to devices and internet in school and at home).
- District comfort level with pulling together resources to create their own course curriculum? Availability of appropriate material available?
- Determine if piloting or field testing is advisable.
- District capacity to provide professional learning opportunities. Consider teacher experience level and union contract's position about materials and professional development around curriculum/instructional materials.

Roles and Responsibilities for Course Design and Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption | OSPI

Knowing Your Starting Point Data Inventory doc and pdf | EdReports and California Curriculum Collaborative

Building an Effective Process for Evaluating Instructional Materials — doc and pdf | Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) ELA and Math State Collaboratives

District policy regarding the selection and adoption of instructional materials.

Model Policy 2020/2020P: Course Design, Selection, and Adoption of Instructional Materials | Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)

Accessibility | SETDA Guide to Quality Instructional Materials

OER Considerations for School Districts | OSPI OER Project

Material Adoption Tips from Washington districts

Material Adoption Tips from OSPI

Materials Adoption 101: Engage Educators Upfront | EdReports

Identify and Engage Stakeholders

- Define roles and responsibilities of stakeholders impacted by instructional materials selection and adoption.
- Craft a communications strategy that outlines goal, purpose, and timeline to key stakeholders within district, within community, within review team, and across instructional materials developers.

Template communications plan | Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

Template timeline | Student Achievement Partners -Achieve the Core

Assemble an Instructional Materials Review Committee (IMC)

- Select a diverse team that can evaluate the material through different lenses.
- Develop a collective understanding of the process with the team of reviewers.
- Build solid understanding and calibrate around what good instructional materials look like prior to beginning review.

Top 5 Tips for Building and Training Your Review Team | Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

Building the Right Review Team | Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

Survey Stakeholders

- Obtain feedback from teachers and students on their needs and wants in a new core instructional material.

Sample Math Instructional Material Teacher Survey
doc and pdf | Fife School District/Student Achievement Partners

Sample ELA Instructional Material Teacher Survey
doc and pdf | Fife School District/Student Achievement Partners

Determine Review Instruments

- Define the instructional materials options that will meet your district need.
- Determine what rubrics and review instruments will be used to make the final selection.
- Establish acceptance criteria for instructional materials.

Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET) | Student Achievement Partners
Full–course review of mathematics or ELA

EdReports Evidence Guides and Review Criteria | EdReports
Full-course review of mathematics, ELA, and science

EQuIP Rubric for Science | created by Achieve currently housed at NGSS
Deeper dive into individual lessons and units

EQuIP Rubric | created by Achieve currently housed at Student Achievement Partners
Deeper dive into individual lessons and units for mathematics and ELA

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies | OSPI
Deeper dive into individual lessons and units – social studies

Technology Review Guiding Questions — doc and pdf | OSPI

Administration Review Guiding Questions — doc and pdf | OSPI

Screening for Biased Content in Instructional Materials | OSPI
Model screening tool to help school districts comply with Washington state nondiscrimination law that requires screening criteria to identify and eliminate bias in all instructional materials as part of any adopted instructional materials policy.

Train the Instructional Materials Review Committee

- Build an understanding the content-specific Washington State Learning Standards.
- Define the instructional practices that your district has identified as important and that the instructional materials need to support.
- Understand the IMET and/or EQuIP review process.

Examine Existing Reviews from Trusted Sources

Narrow the field of instructional materials options to review to a manageable level for your district.

Independent Reviews of Instructional Materials by Educators | EdReports

Curricular Resources and Annotated Reviews | Louisiana Department of Education

Obtain Materials to Review

Clarify your district needs.

- Be specific about materials, professional development, etc., the publishers/developers need to provide.
- Determine technology requirements, if applicable

If appropriate, build in time to provide guidance prior to developers submitting materials (may be combination of RFP or other formal document along with a webinar or other opportunity for publishers to ask questions, etc.)

> Direct publisher contacts
>
> [Openly licensed options for district adoption consideration (ELA, mathematics, science)](#) | OSPI OER Project
>
> Vendor Technology Checklist [doc](#) and [pdf](#) | Puyallup School District

Conduct Review

- Establish regular meetings of review committee.
- Assign reviewers material review assignments and due date.
- Clarify reporting procedure and arbitration pathway if reviewers disagree on scores.
- In addition to the review of the full core instructional material, have a team from each grade review a selected unit from each curriculum using the EQuIP review process.
- Report progress with stakeholders as decided upon in communication plan.

Final Recommendations and Reporting

- Generate documents to communicate process.
- Document reviewer results and metrics used to identify recommended curriculum.
- Communicate recommendations and next steps to key stakeholders.
- Present to Instructional Materials Adoption Committee and/or school board and follow your district procurement process to obtain materials.

Create an Implementation Strategy

- Consider initial resource training, sustained professional learning, and resources and strategies to help families support students with their learning.

> [*Aligned* Blog |](#) Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core
>
> [Active Implementation Hub](#) | National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)

Phase 4: Implement Course and Assess Effectiveness

Was it worth the trip?

Here are some areas for districts to consider:

- Are educator supports in place to promote successful implementation and continuing professional learning?
- Were the changes you made impactful to teaching and learning in a positive way?
- Do the selection instructional materials support shifts in instruction and evidence of student engagement and achievement?

Assessment

- Conduct ongoing assessment of effectiveness of curriculum.

Washington State Report Card | OSPI

OSPI-Developed Assessments:
- the Arts
- Social Studies/Civics
- Health and Fitness
- Education Technology

Smarter Balanced Assessment System
ELA and mathematics

Mathematics Assessment Resources | OSPI

ELA Assessment Resources | OSPI

Science Assessment Resources | OSPI

Ongoing Implementation

- Refine your implementation strategy that includes initial resource training, sustained professional learning, and resources and strategies to help families support students with their learning.
- Determine how you will measure the effectiveness of your professional learning strategy with the instructional materials.

Instructional Practice Toolkit and Classroom Videos | Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

Aligned Blog | Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

Reviewing is a Journey | Granite Falls School District and Student Achievement Partners - Achieve the Core

APPENDICES

A: Mathematics Core Instructional Materials Adoption

B: English Language Arts Core Instructional Materials Adoption

LEGAL NOTICE