

Executive Summary

Instructional materials make a difference for student achievement. [Research](#) shows that students learn primarily through their interactions with teachers and content, and that quality curriculum influences classroom practice and ultimately student outcomes. For example, a [2018 study](#) illustrated that teachers using standards-aligned materials engaged students in mathematical practices at a significantly higher rate than teachers who did not use an aligned curriculum.

Educators know how much materials matter, but they do not always have access to the quality content that their students deserve. In a [survey from Scholastic](#), teachers identified having high-quality instructional materials and textbooks as a top funding priority yet [only 18 percent of teachers](#) report that their district's or school's instructional materials are aligned to college and career-ready standards.

When teachers don't have access to great materials, [they spend valuable time](#) searching for them online or creating content themselves. A [2017 RAND analysis](#) found that 96 percent of teachers use Google and 75 percent of teachers use Pinterest to find lessons and materials. These materials are mostly unvetted and of [varying quality](#). Inconsistent access to aligned materials impacts student learning in schools across the country, but is more frequent in [schools that have a higher proportion of low-income students and students of color the most](#), perpetuating inequities.

Because of the critical role materials play in student learning and closing achievement gaps, it is vital for all stakeholders to have a better understanding of the materials market—specifically, whether high-quality, standards-aligned programs are available and how teachers are using them. At EdReports, our 2019 State of the Market research aims to provide just that.

This annual study draws upon data from EdReports reviews, information about publisher and copyright dates, and data from the American Instructional Resources Survey (AIRS) on ELA and math curriculum use during the 2018-2019 school year to better understand the following questions:^{1,2}

- How aligned to college and career-ready standards are the materials on the market?
- What do we know about what is being regularly used in classrooms?
- Is there a relationship between the length of time that an EdReports review has been available for a program and the percent of market share for that program (i.e. does information on curriculum influence purchasing)?

Key Findings

In less than five years, EdReports has reviewed more than 90 percent of the known K-12 mathematics and English language arts materials market.

1. Aligned materials are available

The availability of standards-aligned materials is increasing. Of the core English language arts materials EdReports has reviewed:

- 45 percent meets expectations for alignment
- 37 percent partially meet expectations for alignment
- 18 percent do not meet expectations for alignment

1. The AIRS was fielded to the RAND Corporation's (2019) nationally representative American Teacher Panel in spring 2019..

2. All comparative statistics on the 2018 market are drawn from results reported in the [EdReports State of the Instructional Materials Market 2018 report](#). Our definition of market share is based on the percent of teachers who report using a given curriculum once a week or more in their classroom.

Of the mathematics materials EdReports has reviewed:

- 31 percent meet expectations for alignment
- 28 percent partially meet expectations for alignment
- 42 percent do not meet expectations for alignment

2. Despite availability, aligned materials are not being widely used in classrooms

- Only 16 percent of ELA materials used by teachers in classrooms are aligned
- Only 26 percent of math materials used by teachers in classrooms are aligned

We found a small increase in the percentage of aligned instructional materials used by teachers from 2018-2019. Even small changes in percentage points represent tens of thousands of teachers and hundreds of thousands of students who now have access to high-quality materials.

3. Information about curriculum shapes the market: newer materials are more likely to be aligned

Our data continues to show that newer materials are more likely to meet expectations for standards alignment. Further, the longer programs that meet expectations for alignment are in the field, the more likely they are to be used in the classroom. Our analysis suggests that as more independent information about the alignment and quality of materials has become available, districts and schools are demanding materials that meet these expectations.

4. New data offers a better understanding of the materials market

In addition to learning more about the quality and availability of aligned instructional materials, our 2019 research illuminated more information about the different kinds of materials being used in classrooms. One finding is that even though new materials are more aligned, many schools still have older curriculum in place. For example, in English language arts, 9.2 percent of materials used regularly were published before 2012. These older materials were developed before the adoption of college and career-ready standards. EdReports has not reviewed these materials because they do not claim alignment to the standards that were created after the programs were published. With one in 10 classrooms using materials that are nearly a decade old, this means that millions of students across the country are missing out on almost a decade of innovations, progress, and new content.

A Call to Action

The time to invest in high-quality, aligned instructional materials is now. Over the past five years, materials have improved and access to independent information about available programs has never been higher. We also know more about the impact quality materials can have on preparing students for college and careers.

Many states and districts have committed to robust, comprehensive adoption practices that result in selecting materials that are both standards-aligned and support local needs. As exciting as these stories are, we know there is much more work to be done. The reality that only 16 percent of the ELA materials and 26 percent of math materials used in classrooms are aligned tells us that too few schools have aligned resources, professional learning, and the systemic supports they need. States, districts, and educators must all play a role in ensuring all students have access to the content that can make a difference in their lives.