

 **Instructional Materials during Remote Learning:**

**Reflection and Preparation Tool**

School systems across the country rapidly transitioned to remote learning in spring 2020, as the novel COVID-19 virus caused school shutdowns nationwide. As district leaders prepare for the potential for ongoing interruptions to school during the 2020-21 school year, this tool is an opportunity to reflect on their current context to prioritize the highest leverage actions that can support remote learning. While this moment in time makes the importance of high-quality materials starker, curriculum adoptions are a long-term investment that will have an impact on teaching and learning in your district over the next five to seven years. Given that, it is important to consider the immediate context of remote learning as well as the longer-term context beyond re-entry this fall.

 **What is this resource?**

This tool is focused on the availability, accessibility, and use of high-quality instructional materials, in order to support district teams in making decisions about curriculum that will meet the needs of their district for re-entry in the fall and the return to in person learning in the future. Materials provide the foundation for student learning and become even more critical when students are learning at home with remote instruction and support from teachers. In planning and preparing for next school year, many leaders are considering the quality and alignment of the materials currently used in the system as well as how those materials translate to remote learning. This tool guides district leaders to consider the context of and interaction between three critical elements: instructional materials, the school system, and the community.

This resource is grounded in four pillars, which reflect our current context and a return to in-person instruction:

1. All students deserve high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to college and career-ready standards.
2. Every teacher deserves high-quality instructional materials that free them to use their talents and passion to reach students.
3. High-quality instructional materials should reflect districts’ content-specific visions for teaching and learning as well as   the local context and priorities of students, families, and communities.
4. Instructional materials alone are not the answer. For materials initiatives to be effective, educators need job-embedded professional learning grounded in the materials they use in their daily practice.

**How should this resource be used?**

The reflection and preparation tool is designed to be used by a team of leaders at the district or school level. Teams should include individuals with knowledge of instructional materials in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, those with insight into the technical capacity of the district, and those with deep knowledge of the context of the communities the district serves.

The tool is comprised of 4 sections:

1. *High Quality Instructional Materials*: In this section you’ll find templates for ELA, math, and science. In this section, you’ll need to complete the reflection for each content area.
2. *School System Landscape*: You only need to complete the section once, as the statements span all content areas.
3. *Community Experience*: You only need to complete the section once, as the statements span all content areas.
4. *Putting it all together and preparing for next school year*: This section guides you in a synthesis of your reflections across the previous sections and provides a framework to guide you in your preparations for next school year.

We recommend that teams engage in discussion across each section of the reflection tool: instructional materials, system context, and community experience. Given the depth of the reflection portion of this tool, the team could convene, virtually or in-person when safety allows, and collaboratively work through all three sections. This would require a longer working session, likely at least 2 hours.

Alternatively, different subsets of the team could discuss and complete sections in small groups, then bring their reflections to the whole group discussion. This approach could shorten the whole-group working session time (we’d recommend lengthening the planning session by 30 minutes to include a debrief of the reflection) while requiring 60-90 minutes of small group work time to complete the reflection. No matter the meeting structure, teams should approach each section from an asset orientation, rather than a deficit orientation. The intent of the reflection is not to assign blame or rehash past mistakes, but to understand the context in order to move forward effectively.

The preparation section of this tool is designed to consider the current context in order to prioritize areas of focus for the next school year. This section will require an additional working session of at least 90 minutes. We recommend the same group who engaged in the reflection process participate in this working session, so the takeaways and trends from the reflection are at the forefront during planning.

**Part 1. High-Quality Instructional Materials**

This section provides an opportunity to reflect on the quality and alignment of instructional materials, the support available for diverse learners, and the accessibility of materials for remote learning. This reflection can help you understand the strengths and gaps of your materials. For each statement, consider the extent to which it has been true across your system during the previous school year, including during the pandemic: all, most, some, or none.

There is a section focused on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, each with the same set of statements to consider. You may want to make additional copies of the section to use for other content areas (e.g. social studies, fine arts, etc.).

You may choose to bring together a team of leaders to work through the sections together or parse the reflections to be completed by leaders from each content area.

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| **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS** |
|  | **Current Status** | **Evidence and/or Details** |
| ***Access to and use of aligned materials*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Teachers **have access to** high-quality materials that reflect strong alignment to state standards, attend to the markers of quality instruction & the instructional shifts required by the standards, and are comprehensive and coherent. *Consider EdReports’ review of materials to determine alignment, understand strengths and gaps of current* [*materials*](https://edreports.org/reports)*.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers **consistently use** high quality instructional materials (see characteristics above).*We intentionally did not define consistent use here and recommend discussing your definition as a team for consistency across content areas.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials offer tutorials, videos, or other integrated supports to help educators understand and/or utilize the materials. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Supports for all learners*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for students with IEPs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for multilingual learners. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials support a teacher’s ability to differentiate lessons, tasks, or other content for students. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Accessibility for remote learning*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide print options for student-facing materials that could be utilized for in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials can be accessed virtually through multiple devices (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.), either through their design or incorporation into a technology solution.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide instruction so students can work independently (or with an adult at home).  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide formative assessment opportunities that can provide information to make instructional decisions during in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials include resources in multiple languages for families or caregivers to support learning, whether in person or at home.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **MATHEMATICS** |
|  | **Current Status** | **Evidence and/or Details** |
| ***Access to and use of aligned materials*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Teachers **have access to** high-quality materials that reflect strong alignment to state standards, attend to the markers of quality instruction & the instructional shifts required by the standards, and are comprehensive and coherent. *Consider EdReports’ review of materials to determine alignment, understand strengths and gaps of current* [*materials*](https://edreports.org/reports)*.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers **consistently use** high quality instructional materials (see characteristics above).*We intentionally did not define consistent use here and recommend discussing your definition as a team for consistency across content areas.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials offer tutorials, videos, or other integrated supports to help educators understand and/or utilize the materials. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Supports for all learners*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for students with IEPs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for multilingual learners. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials support a teacher’s ability to differentiate lessons, tasks, or other content for students. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Accessibility for remote learning*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide print options for student-facing materials that could be utilized for in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials can be accessed virtually through multiple devices (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.), either through their design or incorporation into a technology solution.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide instruction so students can work independently (or with an adult at home).  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide formative assessment opportunities that can provide information to make instructional decisions during in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials include resources in multiple languages for families or caregivers to support learning, whether in person or at home.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **SCIENCE** |
|  | **Current Status** | **Evidence and/or Details** |
| ***Access to and use of aligned materials*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Teachers **have access to** high-quality materials that reflect strong alignment to standards informed by the Next Generation Science Standards and/or *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* and attend to the markers of quality instruction required by the standards, and are comprehensive and coherent.*Consider EdReports’ review of materials to determine alignment, understand strengths and gaps of current* [*materials*](https://edreports.org/reports)*.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers **consistently use** high quality instructional materials (see characteristics above).*We intentionally did not define consistent use here and recommend discussing your definition as a team for consistency across content areas.* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials offer tutorials, videos, or other integrated supports to help educators understand and/or utilize the materials. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Supports for all learners*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for students with IEPs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide guidance and support for multilingual learners. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials support a teacher’s ability to differentiate lessons, tasks, or other content for students. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Accessibility for remote learning*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Materials provide print options for student-facing materials that could be utilized for in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials can be accessed virtually through multiple devices (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.), either through their design or incorporation into a technology solution.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide instruction so students can work independently (or with an adult at home).  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials provide formative assessment opportunities that can provide information to make instructional decisions during in person and remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Materials include resources in multiple languages for families or caregivers to support learning, whether in person or at home.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part 2. School System Landscape**

This section provides an opportunity to reflect on the current context within your school system, including your vision and expectations for instruction, communication during remote learning, technical support and capacity, teacher support and collaboration, and students’ experience during remote learning. Some of these sections may highlight opportunities to strengthen practice in the upcoming school year, others may be areas of focus for years into the future. The technical capacity section may inform future choices about specific instructional materials. For each statement, consider the extent to which it is true across grades and content areas within your system: all, most, some, or none.

We recommend completing this section with a team of leaders who have insight into each of these areas of your system’s work. Where possible, we also recommend gathering feedback from building leaders, teachers, and students to inform your responses within this section.

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| **School System Landscape** | **Current Context** | **Evidence and/or Details** |
| ***Vision, expectations, and communication*** | **In all grades & content areas** | **In most grades & content areas** | **In some grades & content areas** | **In no grades & content areas** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Clear, well-communicated vision for teaching and learning that translates to remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Explicit expectations for the use of materials in remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clearly communicated expectations **for teachers** about whether instruction will occur asynchronously, synchronously, or a combination. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clearly communicated expectations **for students** about whether instruction will occur asynchronously, synchronously, or a combination. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clearly communicated expectations **for families and caregivers** about whether instruction will occur asynchronously, synchronously, or a combination. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Technical support and capacity*** | **In all grades & content areas** | **In most grades & content areas** | **In some grades & content areas** | **In no grades & content areas** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Systems are in place to understand student engagement during remote learning. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers have necessary technical and pedagogical skills to teach remotely. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School and district staff are prepared and able to support teachers with the technical aspects of remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mechanisms in place to assess and address barriers to remote teaching and learning, including gathering feedback from students and families. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Teacher professional learning & collaboration*** | **In all grades & content areas** | **In most grades & content areas** | **In some grades & content areas** | **In no grades & content areas** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Teachers have opportunities to plan lessons, look at student work, and/or share best practices during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers have opportunities to engage in professional learning on materials during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| School and district staff are prepared and able to provide coaching and support to teachers during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Student experience during remote learning*** | **In all grades & content areas** | **In most grades & content areas** | **In some grades & content areas** | **In no grades & content areas** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Students are given regular feedback on their work during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have opportunities to collaborate and engage with peers during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have regular opportunities to share feedback on their experience with remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part 3: Community Experience**

This section includes an opportunity to reflect on the experiences within your community, including the accessibility of materials and technology and communication and support for families and caregivers during remote learning. The communication and support section may illuminate opportunities to strengthen the partnership with families and caregivers in the upcoming school year. The accessibility section provides important context that can guide decisions made about instructional materials and structures for remote learning (e.g., digital or analog, synchronous or asynchronous). For each statement, consider the extent to which it is true for families within your community: all, most, some, or none.

We recommend completing this section with a team of educators who represent the diversity of school communities within your system and who are closest to the perspectives of students and families. In this section, it is particularly important to gather feedback from building leaders, teachers, families, and students to inform your responses.

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| **Community Experience** | **Current Context** | **Evidence and/or Details** |
| ***Accessibility of materials & technology*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Families and caregivers are able to successfully access materials during remote learning to support students. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have consistent, individual access to devices on which to engage in instruction at home (it may be helpful to note the most prevalent devices in the details column: phone, tablet, laptop, desktop). |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have consistent, reliable internet access at home.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Communication and Support*** | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** | **Don’t know** |  |
| Families and caregivers receive regular communication (at least weekly) from teachers.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students and families have regular opportunities to provide feedback during remote learning.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tutorials, videos, or other integrated supports are available to help families and caregivers understand and/or utilize instructional materials. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part 4: Putting it all together and preparing for next school year**

After completing the reflection sections above, bring your full planning team together to examine and discuss your responses in each section. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. Links are provided throughout to resources that can guide you as you complete your next steps.

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| **What strengths can you build on as a system?** | **What are the most pressing areas to strengthen as a system?***Consider which are priorities this fall v. over the next several years.* | **What context do you need to consider as you begin planning?** |
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Based on your reflection and team discussion, consider which of the following profiles below best reflects your district’s current state. Use the guiding principles to establish what you will prioritize as you move forward with preparations for the fall. Prioritize solutions that have the highest leverage and require the lowest lift, placing your community and students at the center of your discussion and planning.

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| **Profile** | Materials in at least one content area have **weak alignment** to the standards and instructional shifts and/or your district **does not provide comprehensive instructional materials in one or more content areas**.  |
| **Guiding Concepts*** ***Prioritize selecting high-quality materials:***the principles of quality teaching and learning are still true even when making the move to remote learning or a hybrid model. All students deserve high-quality, standards-aligned materials regardless of their learning environment. Ensuring teachers and students have quality materials is the first step toward high-quality instruction.
* ***Concentrate on essential content areas first*:** your district office and schools  likely do not have capacity to adopt and implement new materials in multiple subject areas in the same year. We recommend staggering adoptions and prioritizing based on student data and specific needs.
* ***Select high-quality instructional materials for core instruction*:** engage educators across your system in a strong adoption process. Pay special attention to your communities and their content-specific needs (e.g., opportunities for multilingual learners to engage in mathematical discourse, texts that tell diverse stories from a diverse set of authors).
* ***Consider system infrastructure and community access as part of your local priorities for adoption*:** your reflection in those two sections above can help guide the programs you consider; without technical capacity within the system and consistent device and internet access in your community, a program with significant digital components is likely not a strong fit for you.

**Where to Go Next*** [Use this tool to develop a district-specific lens to bring to your adoption.](https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/data-collection-tool)
* Based on your timeline and capacity for selecting new materials, use our guidance here.
* [Read this selection from the US Department of Education’s Re-imagining the Role of Technology in Education (2017).](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16JO7AHbGhm9XZqb-sfo3w_WESble4L-8/view)
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| **Profile** | Materials reflect **strong alignment** with the standards and instructional shifts, but **do not clearly translate to remote learning,** e.g., you responded none or some to several of the statements within the *accessibility for remote learning* section.   |
| **Guiding Concepts*** ***Do not assume that you need to purchase new materials.***
* ***First, understand the features of your materials:***evaluate the technical and digital features of the quality materials you have. Reach out to your publishers to gather information about the best ways to make the materials work in a remote setting.
* ***Consider system infrastructure and community access to determine how to support educators to use materials for remote learning*:** focus on opportunities identified within the system landscape section as well as community access as you make a plan to translate materials to a remote setting.
* ***Make and communicate a plan for remote learning*:** include clear communication with and expectations for school leaders, teachers, families/caregivers, and students.

**Where to Go Next*** Use evidence in our new reports to examine your materials and the features to support remote learning.
* [See how one state supported districts in implementing materials during school closures, including both low-tech and high-tech approaches.](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/covid-19-resources/louisiana-continuous-education-toolkit---guidance-and-tools.pdf)
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| **Profile** | Materials reflect **strong alignment** with the standards and instructional shifts, but the **technical features of your materials are not a match for your system landscape** and/or **community access**, e.g. your system does not have the infrastructure or capacity to support remote learning with your materials and/or your students and families do not have access to devices and/or internet to support remote learning digitally. |
| **Guiding Concepts*** ***Understand your community’s remote access*:** consider your community’s experience using your responses within that section of the reflection tool
* ***Develop a plan:*** think about the support your teachers and students will need for remote access to teaching and learning, whether digitally or analog.
* ***Focus on opportunities to strengthen your system’s technical capacity and capacity to support remote learning*:** use your responses in the *school system landscape* section to find those areas that are the most need/highest leverage, then find those that would be easiest for your team/district to enact.

**Where to Go Next*** Use our new report evidence to examine how your materials work can work in both a digital and print format.
* [Survey your teachers and communities to gather additional information about stakeholders’ needs using Pivot Learning’s Equitable Learning Recovery Toolkit](https://www.pivotlearning.org/learning-recovery-toolkit-download/).
* [Read this selection from the US Department of Education’s Re-imagining the Role of Technology in Education (2017).](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16JO7AHbGhm9XZqb-sfo3w_WESble4L-8/view)
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| **Profile** | Materials reflect **strong alignment** with the standards and instructional shifts and their **technical features align with your system’s capacity** and community access, but they are **inconsistently implemented**.  |
| **Guiding Concepts*** ***Set clear policies and expectations:*** this includes the expectations for the use of materials, grounded in a strong instructional vision for teaching and learning in each content area, as well as the expectations for school leaders.
* ***Develop a plan for teacher professional learning:***focus on learning the instructional routines featured in the materials, lesson preparation and how those routines/lessons translate to remote learning environments; be sure your plan uses the summer as well as extended opportunities throughout the school year and provides opportunities for collaboration.

**Where to Go Next*** [Use Phase 2 of Instruction Partners’ Curriculum Support Guide to develop plans to support strong curriculum implementation.](https://curriculumsupport.org/phase-ii/)
* [Develop policies for implementation and communication using Instruction Partners’ Policy Toolkit](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dmDrVqKOI0T2KOMD2jEwhy4gxtI3cFeN/view).
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| **Profile** | Materials reflect **strong alignment** with the standards and instructional shifts and **translated well to remote learning**.  |
| **Guiding Concepts*** ***Develop a plan for teacher professional learning:*** focus on using data to make strategic adjustments to the instructional materials so that they meet the needs of all students.
* ***Establish opportunities for collaboration among teachers*:** provide teachers with ongoing coaching and support. Think about how your professional learning communities and/or accountable learning teams can serve as a mechanism for collaboration in a virtual environment.
* ***Focus on deepening instruction:***when teachers have a solid handle on the routines and practices in the materials, give them time and support to make strategic adjustments to the materials based on what they are learning from their students.

**Where to Go Next*** [Plan for accelerating students’ learning when they return using TNTP’s Learning Acceleration Guide.](https://tntp.org/covid-19-school-response-toolkit/view/learning-acceleration-guide)
* [Consider how to utilize your coaches or instructional specialists in a virtual setting.](https://learningforward.org/webinar/learning-from-coaches-end-strong-begin-stronger/)
* [For more resources about engaging multilingual learners in a remote setting, see this guide from English Learner Success Forum.](https://www.elsuccessforum.org/resources/using-multilingual-resources-to-support-english-learners-remote-learning)
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