Selecting Instructional Materials that Align to Montana's Content Standards

Why Review Your Instructional Materials?

Change in education is something we can all count on! That is why the regular review of instructional materials is essential for ensuring up to date content and learning experiences. In fact, Montana's school accreditation rules require that school districts review curricula every five years while also reviewing the materials necessary for implementing that curriculum. You can reference ARM **10.55.603 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT** for specifics.

Selection Process

Selecting instructional materials is one of the most critical decisions a district will make. Finding instructional materials and resources that are aligned to Montana's Content Standards and that meet the needs of your district can be overwhelming, particularly when examining a crowded marketplace. Instructional materials include a wide variety of formats, from print to digital software, online resources, manipulatives, and any other item students will use. The steps below are designed to help districts prioritize time while maximizing choice. Through a clearly defined selection process, districts are able to determine how strongly instructional materials are aligned to Montana's Content Standards and ensure the inclusion of Indian Education for All. Additionally, the process highlights where the district will need to provide additional support in order to ensure a strong implementation of the materials.

Suggested Steps to Select Evidence-Based Instructional Materials:

1. **Establish district process, parameters, and timeline** to review curriculum and instructional materials at least every five years, or consistent with the state standards revision schedule.
   - Determine how/when to collect community input.
   - Create a communication plan.
   - Solidify timeline and budget parameters.
2. **Create a curriculum review group** consisting of a variety of stakeholders such as educators and trustees, administrators, students, specialists, parents, community, and tribal representatives.
   - Define the roles of committee members (advisory/decision making/representative).
   - Set a meeting schedule according to the timeline.
3. **Engage educators early and often** around key research and resources to establish priorities for material selection.
   - Review student achievement data (i.e., SBAC, ACT, local benchmarks and formative assessment data).
   - Identify district/school priorities for instructional materials and curriculum.
   - Inventory already existing materials and resources.
4. **Collect key evidence-based research and resources**.
   - Use nationally known, evidence-based curriculum selection reports and reviews (i.e., EdReports, or What Works Clearinghouse).
   - The OPI's Montana Content Standards pages have content-specific recommendations.
   - Evaluate which tier of evidence the materials meet under ESSA. Information on tiered levels may be found on individual provider pages.
5. **Evaluate materials.**

- Ensure materials support your school/district's continuous improvement goals, including the needs of ESSA defined subgroups such as English learners and special education.
- Ensure the inclusion of the unique cultural heritage and contemporary portrayal of American Indians. (Use [Evaluating American Indian Materials for Classroom](#), and identify supplemental resources.)
- Develop/create a rubric to assess the materials ([Sample Criteria Rubric for Selecting Instructional Materials](#)).
- Use a materials based-discussion process to help guide discussion ([Sample Materials-Based Discussion](#)).
6. **Make a decision,** and present to your Board of Trustees for approval**.** (Follow your district's policy.)
7. **Create a rollout and implementation plan.**
   - Determine professional learning needs to address and support implementation for administration and teachers.
   - Develop a plan to inform your community about the new curriculum ([Letter Template](#)).
8. **Continue to assess the effectiveness of the selected instructional materials and implementation** through teacher, student, and parent feedback, as well as student achievement.

ESSA Tiers of Evidence

Evidence-based activities, strategies, or interventions are those that demonstrate a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on the listed criteria. When selecting evidence-based instructional materials, you may want to reference the ESSA tier of evidence for the resources in your selection process. All tiers require ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Evidence Levels:

- ➤ **Tier I: Strong Evidence-** Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study.
- ➤ **Tier II: Moderate Evidence-** Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study.
- ➤ **Tier III: Promising Evidence-** Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlation study with statistical controls for selection bias.
- ➤ **Tier IV: Demonstrates a Rationale-** Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

For a quick reference on evidence-based definitions, districts can use [this large-print definition](#) provided by the IES. [This tool](#) provided by the Midwest REL provides a crosswalk between ESSA levels of evidence and existing clearinghouses, such as the WWC commonly used by educators.

Selecting Materials that Incorporate Acceleration

Gone are the days of remediation, catch-up, and cramming skills in isolation. Such strategies have proven ineffective and often detrimental to student learning. Acceleration is an equal-access, just-in-time model that is focused on identifying, celebrating, and building upon the assets students bring to the learning experience. [Learn more about acceleration](#).