

Selecting Instructional Materials

How to select high-quality 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 those curricula. 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 can 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 to ensure a strong implementation of the materials.

Here are suggested steps a district can follow to select high-quality 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 roles of committee members (advisory/decision making/representative)
 - Set meeting schedule according to 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 (i.e. [EdReports](#), or [What Works Clearinghouse](#))
 - [Montana Content Standards](#) -OPI's standards pages have content-specific recommendations
5. **Evaluate materials**
 - Ensure materials support your school/district continuous improvement goals, including the needs of ESSA defined subgroups such as English learners and special education.



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- Ensure the inclusion of the unique cultural heritage and contemporary portrayal of American Indians. (Use [Evaluating American Indian Materials for Classroom](#) to 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 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 for 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.



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