

Curriculum Purchasers Comprehensive Journey Map

Overview of Curriculum Adoption Journey Map

From the outside, school district purchasing for core curriculum can seem like a mystery. This research focused on uncovering the steps in the purchasing process to increase understanding around how decisions with significant consequences for students are made.

This resource focuses on identifying an <u>exhaustive process of</u> the steps a district may go through in identifying, evaluating and choosing a core curriculum. This is not meant to describe any particular district's process but instead increase understanding of the processes districts may engage in.

Read this to:

- Understand the processes districts may engage in when choosing a core curriculum.
- Learn about barriers and drivers to evidence ue in decision making.

SAMPLE & METHOD

01

Over 300 core curriculum purchasers at the district level were interviewed and surveyed.

02

Mapping of the steps in the core curriculum adoption process.

TIME TO READ 10 minutes

Reading guide: Evidence-exhaustive journey map

The journey map outlines **key touchpoints** and **substeps** of **decision-making** in the core curriculum purchasing process, from recognizing a market or district signal, all the way to purchase and implementation. The map captures an exhaustive list of **all consulted sources of evidence** at a given substep.

A deep dive into the barriers and drivers per substep is conducted.

Touchpoint

A key step that edtech purchasers would experience along the journey of bringing a product to the district.

Decision Points

Substep

Specific decisions made or actions taken by the purchaser that are associated with a given touchpoint.

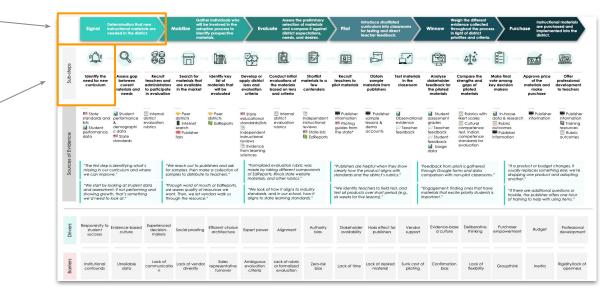
Substep Elements

Sources of evidence

Evidence that is engaged at a substep touchpoint, denoted by an icon.

Barriers & drivers

Structural and psychological determinants that influence a particular substep.





















Pilot















Identify the need for new curriculum

Assess gap between current materials and needs

Recruit teachers and administrators to participate in evaluation

Search for materials that are available in the market

Identify key list of materials that will be evaluated

Develop or apply district lens and evaluation criteria

Shortlist Conduct initial evaluations of materials to the materials a few based on lens contenders and criteria

Recruit teachers to pilot materials

Obtain sample materials from publishers Test materials in the classroom

Analyze stakeholder feedback for the piloted materials

Compare the strenaths and gaps of piloted materials

Approve Make final price of the vote amona key decision materials makers and make purchase

Offer professional development to teachers

State standards and lists Student performance data

Student performance demographic rubrics data State

standards

Internal district evaluation

Peer districts Internet search Publisher

fairs

Peer districts EdReports

State educational standards/lists

Independent instructional reviews

Evidence from learning sciences

Internal district evaluation rubrics

reviews State lists EdReports

Independent

instructional

information Piloting guides from the state*

Publisher

Publisher sample lessons & demo accounts

Observational evidence Teacher feedback

··· Teacher feedback

Student feedback Usage data

Student

assessment

arades

scales Cultural competence test, Indian competence standards for

evaluation

Rubrics

with likert

research Rubric outcomes Publisher information

data &

In-house

Publisher Publisher information

Training resources Rubric outcomes

"The first step is identifying what's missing in our curriculum and where we can improve."

"We start by looking at student data and assessment: if not performing and showing growth, that's something we'd need to look at."

"We reach out to publishers and ask for samples, then make a collection of samples to distribute to teachers."

"Through word of mouth or EdReports, we assess auality of resources we want. Then, we let vendors walk us through the resource."

"Formalized evaluation rubric was made by taking different components of EdReports, Illinois state website materials, and other rubrics."

"We look at how it aligns to industry standards, and in our school, how it aligns to state learning standards."

"Publishers are helpful when they show clearly how the product alians with standards and the district's rubrics."

"We Identify teachers to field test, and test all products over short period (e.g., six weeks for five lessons)."

"Feedback from pilots is gathered through Google forms and data comparison with non-pilot classrooms."

"Engagement: finding ones that have materials that excite priority students is important."

"If a product or budget changes, it usually replaces something else; we're dropping one product and adopting another."

"If there are additional guestions or trouble, the publisher offers one hour of training to help with using items."

Drivers

Sources of Evidence

Barriers

Experienced Responsivity to Evidence-Social Efficient choice Expert Authority Stakeholder Halo effect for Vendor Evidence-Deliberative Purchaser Professional decision-Alignment Budget proofing publishers student success based culture architecture power bias availability troaque based culture thinking empowerment development makers Ambiguous Lack of rubric Sales Confirmation Rigidity/lack of Institutional Unreliable Lack of Lack of vendor Zero-risk Lack of desired Sunk cost of Lack of representative evaluation or formalized Lack of time Groupthink Inertia confounds data communication diversity bias piloting bias flexibility openness material turnover criteria evaluation



































Identify the need for new curriculum

Responsiveness to student success indicators sparks decision to adopt new materials to close achievement gaps

"We use data: annual data, trimester data, math test three times a year. Have now adopted a screening system to screen their student to see if they're on grade level, and if not, what to do."

Institutional confounds, such as small adoption committees or renewals based on cyclical mandates, can impact adoption by taking precedence over renewals that are based on responsiveness to student needs

"Every 5-6 years, should identify if curriculum is meeting student needs."

67% of respondents reported that new curriculum adoptions are driven by cycles.

Assess gap between current materials and needs

Evidence-based district cultures that understand the problem or need to be addressed through relying on data can help to facilitate the process of honing in on need identification in a more accurate manner

"To identify needs, we do it internally, through formative assessment, formative or summative data."

"Data is a big thing in our district; we believe it's more accurate than just what another district or website says."

Unreliable data due to external forces that might confound key sources of evidence, like achievement scores, makes gap assessment challenging to accurately pinpoint

"Our great results don't come from our schools; because kids come from middle to higher class families with better support systems - tutors and things like that - it muddles the data."

Adoption committee

Teachers

Students

Adoption committee

Curriculum student advisory committee

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Recruit teachers and administrators to participate in the evaluation process

Experienced teachers and administrators who are familiar with a district's process help to make the procurement procedure more efficient as they have a better grasp of what curriculum elements to critically consider to address the gap

"To facilitate standards alignment among everyone, familiarity and experience with the product helps with winnowing."

Lack of communication between EdTech and curriculum teams can result in a poorer understanding of each others' needs, which can inhibit the search for curriculum that aligns with teams' needs

"Communicating [with teachers] is difficult - people don't read the emails we send them."

Search for materials that are available in the market

Social proofing, the act of looking to similar districts to understand what works and what doesn't, can help support curriculum choices that are better tailored to the district

"The most useful evidence is talking to other schools to see their experiences."

80% of core curricula respondents agree that districts should consider peer recommendations in adoption.

Lack of vendor diversity results in large publishers, often those with a higher market share (e.g., MacMillan, Pearson) eclipsing alternative options available to curriculum purchasers; such alternatives may unknowingly be a stronger fit for a district's gap

"Real big publishers seem like that they have the majority of the market share and I wonder if that's good or bad."

Identify key list of materials that will be evaluated

Efficient choice architecture such as filtering selections for technical specifications, compatibility with existing infrastructure, among other features, can help with narrowing in on materials more efficiently

"Starts with EdReports; has to be all green to meet minimum expectation."

"EdReports helps us narrow our focus, instead of looking at whatever curriculum we can simply find."

Sales representative turnover can make it difficult to easily request for product information, suitable to a district's context, due to the lack of prior district relationships with sales representatives

"Used to talking to one person and then work with somebody else another year, transition isn't easy."

"Developing a relationship is important so they understand who we are and what our needs are."

Teachers

Administration

Adoption committee

External decision makers

External consultants

Adoption committee





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Develop or apply district lens and evaluation criteria

Expert power that's obtained by leveraging experts in the field who have deep knowledge about various content types can help with developing proper criteria related to adoption decisions, both in the present and in the future

"We more rely on experts in the field - contractors or consultants - who have experience in different content areas."

Ambiguous evaluation criteria, noticeable through a lack of district procedure or state-standards that aren't accessible, can make it difficult to decide on curriculum elements specific to district needs or gaps

"We are pretty decentralized and are looking to aetting into more close alianment."

Standards alignment ranked **1st** in core curricula feature prioritization.

Conduct initial evaluations of the materials based on lens and criteria

Alignment within the district as to which criteria is most pertinent or important better supports an objective and efficient curriculum evaluation process

"Difference of opinion, difference of outlook, difference of teaching style is always a challenge - we developed a rubric to make it less subjective."

Standards alignment ranked **1st** in core curricula feature prioritization.

Lack of rubric or lack of formalized evaluation process can lead to decision-making becoming very idiosyncratic and unstandardized, stretching the time and resources needed to facilitate curriculum adoption

"I think that's tough - you have some folks that are very standards-driven, and some folks are more individualized- or instruction-driven, and then you have that diversity focus, and they're more focused on that."

Shortlist materials to a few contenders

Authority bias given to experts' suggestions, in places like EdReports, can help sway high-quality shortlisting since districts often attribute greater accuracy to the information given by such experts, with the awareness of their completed research

"Learned about EdReports by accident, motivated to use them due to them being research based"

60% of core curricula respondents reported they use EdReports in curricula adoption.

Zero risk bias, which circulates around new or unestablished materials, generates reluctance among districts to pilot it for purchase since it's a material that has no reviews; this can result in districts inadvertently missing high-quality products

"Teachers are not risk takers or first adopters - you have to come in with a product that solves a problem is reliable, "has to be a Toyota and not the first iteration of a Tesla."

Adoption committee

Country office

External consultants

Technology team/I.T.

Director

Special Education specialists

Adoption committee

Adoption committee

































Recruit teachers to pilot materials

Stakeholder availability of having teachers available and open to testing new instructional materials in the classroom, is a catalyst to starting and fully completing pilots, and eventual adoption

"Not enough human capital - not enough teachers."

"Biggest challenge, time. A lot of teachers just don't have the time to sit down and try out products."

Lack of time can severely impact piloting timelines, and not having enough time may confound perspectives on the efficacy of the product

"Are teachers really having the time to really try them?"

"Teachers don't want to work overtime to try out new things."

Obtain sample materials from publishers

Halo effect, a positive impression from supportive publisher sales reps who may have prior established connections. can steer the district towards preferring materials - that may be of high-quality - offered by that publisher

"Feel like a lot of the sales reps I know them well, I can call them up and say 'hey, what do you got.'"

Lack of desired material, such as curriculum with specific qualities, may inadvertently pressure purchasers to have to consult other sources that may be of lower quality

"While culturally responsiveness of current curriculum exists, it's hard to find something comprehensive. We might find something that checks boxes, but end up still needing to find supplement."

Test materials in the classroom

Vendor support during pilots maximizes the use of the product, which maximizes the satisfaction and confidence that the district has in their adoption process for a particular product

"It is important how comprehensive and caring the customer service department is."

Sunk costs relate to the probability of piloted materials being adopted because the nature of pilots are often intended to confirm its efficacy in the district context; preconceived efforts or perceptions can be difficult to change among decision makers

One in two core curricula respondents agree that the curriculum piloted is also the one adopted.

Curriculum coordinators

Teachers

Publishers

Curriculum coordinators

Teachers

Students

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Analyze stakeholder feedback for the piloted materials

Evidence-based district cultures are more likely to have the appropriate tools or procedures to correctly calibrate measures of instructional material efficacy and gather feedback on experiences with the materials

96% of core curricula respondents agree that their district should consult data or evidence to inform core curriculum decision.

Confirmation bias, the selective examination of information that validates opinions, can incorrectly skew adoptions to products that may not be best suited to resolve the district gap or need

"We don't necessarily use formalized data - more so perception data."

Compare the strengths and gaps of piloted materials

Deliberative thinking that's scaffolded through formalized procedures helps districts make the purchase with confidence and under clear terms, arriving at a balanced and objective determination

"The curriculum advisory teams pilots at least two sources and ranks them using a likert scale."

"The rubric is reviewed to ensure the curriculum meets all of their requirements, and the teams further narrow on options."

Lack of customization flexibility for instructional materials limits the district's vision to have content that suits their unique needs and challenges, within their context, limiting the scope of materials that they can consider for adoption

"Customization is important - don't need to keep reinventing the wheel to get something incremental out of it."

Make final vote among key decision makers

Purchaser empowerment, especially among senior, final decision-makers, can help to reinforce confidence in opinions, evaluations, and the subsequent purchasing decision

"Could go to business office of superintendent when budget is to be adjusted but it's always my recommendation that comes up the chain."

Groupthink can arise when individuals don't have space to develop their own opinions on materials, resulting in similar preferences because their judgment is informed by proximity with others; this leads to a lack of diverse perspectives contributing to adoption

"Final decision is by consensus - team works together so much that they often have similar opinions."

Adoption committee

Adoption committee

Principals

Superintendent

Assistant superintendents School board

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Siana

Mobilize

valuate

ilot

































Approve price of the materials and make purchase

Budget provides districts with the financial freedom to approve adoptions, with a lesser concern on contents that might need to be cut; this provides a luxury of faster adoptions, especially when there are critical gaps

"Paying for access is an issue. I don't really find orgs or big organizations that often, that really understand what we're trying to do and are just looking to make money as much as they can and are not as responsive as they need to be."

Inertia, the subjective switching costs perceived by individuals when considering new adoptions, may result in the inclination to stick to the status quo which may delay adoption and subsequent scaling

"Teachers do not like change - as much as they want to be flexible, they still push back against learning something new."

Professional development offered to teachers

Professional development for core and supplemental materials, especially those delivered via technology, helps increase teacher confidence as related to implementation

"Professional development is the biggest thing; before, many of them just did not take the time to learn it, but through the pandemic they HAD to learn it and learn it fast - this gave better confidence to use technology."

Rigidity or lack of openness to novel materials are to be anticipated because teachers are used to teaching from certain materials; this may inhibit curriculum scaling across the district

"It does not matter if a product is ten times better, you always have a small group that does not want to change."

"There's incredible resistance within schools and cultures around improvement."

Superintendents

School board

Instructional coach

Publishers sales representative

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