



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Curriculum Development Process:
Phase 3





Phase 3: Develop the Curriculum

Once drafted, the instructional vision for the specific content area is used to drive the work of developing the curriculum anchored in a high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to support implementation. As the team works through this phase, the focus is on what teachers across the school/district would need to see reflected in curriculum documents and instructional resources to work toward the instructional vision.

Step 1: Identify, Evaluate and Select HQIRs

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) defines High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) as materials that are:

- Aligned with the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*;
- Research-based and/or externally validated;
- Comprehensive to include engaging texts (books, multimedia, etc.), tasks and assessments;
- Based on fostering vibrant student learning experiences;
- Culturally relevant, free from bias; and
- Accessible for all students.

High-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) are a means by which local curriculum **aligned with the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*** becomes an actionable foundation for districts and schools to foster **vibrant student learning experiences** for all. A local curriculum anchored in a HQIR supports the learning goals, outcomes and core competencies students must demonstrate to reach the grade-level expectations within the *KAS*. It also provides teachers with an array of pedagogical supports to help meet the needs of all learners.

The process of identifying, evaluating and selecting a primary HQIR involves multiple steps to ensure decision-makers select resources that will serve local priorities and meet the needs of all learners as articulated in the instructional vision. This work may be completed by the district curriculum team or delegated to a sub-committee formed to undertake this task. If a sub-committee is charged with the evaluation and selection of the HQIR, members of that team must understand the instructional vision to ensure the selected resource aligns to that vision. In addition, the sub-committee should receive ongoing support and collaboration with the curriculum team throughout the selection process.

The four-step selection process outlined below is general in nature and can be applied to any content area. For more content-specific support for selecting HQIRs, KDE's consumer guides provide an overview of the standards-aligned markers and characteristics of high-quality



content-area instructional resources, as well as specific tools and resources. A consumer guide is currently available for [Reading and Writing](#), [Mathematics](#) and [Science](#).

Determine Selection Criteria

To help determine selection criteria, the curriculum team should use the instructional vision developed in Phase 2 and KDE’s characteristics of HQIRs as their guide. They should also engage educators and stakeholders upfront in meaningful ways to reflect the many voices of the district (including families, students, teachers, support staff and community members). Taking time to gather this input will help build support for and investment in the work and ensure the perspectives of those affected by the selection decision inform the process.

Key Questions

- **Stakeholder Inclusion Considerations:**
 - How will we communicate the importance of selecting a primary high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to support development of the local curriculum?
 - How will we gather stakeholder input to help inform possible selection criteria?
 - What do we want to learn from each stakeholder group?
 - How are we going to get this input?
 - Who is responsible for gathering input?
 - When and how will we see the collected information? (Instruction Partners, 2019)
 - How will stakeholder input inform drafting of the selection criteria?
- **Selection Criteria Considerations:**
 - How well do the selection criteria represent the most important aspects of the instructional vision?
 - Alignment to the *Kentucky Academic Standards*
 - Alignment to Current Research
 - Local Context
 - How are important local initiatives and pedagogical practices (e.g., portrait of a learner, project-based learning, cooperative learning, standards-based grading) represented in the selection criteria?
 - Based on the instructional vision, what specific supports are needed in a resource to help teachers make the instructional shifts necessary to provide the desired student experience?
 - If an instructional resources consumer guide is available for the content area, have the markers been used to cross-check the instructional vision and selection criteria?

Key Tool(s)

- [Developing Selection Criteria](#)
- [Data Collection Tool](#)



- [Sample Stakeholder Questions](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Identify Potential HQIRs

Once the team has determined the selection criteria, the next step is to identify **research-based and/or externally validated** resources for review. Educators have more options than ever from which to find instructional resources to try to meet their local priorities; however, in such a crowded marketplace, finding high-quality instructional resources that are aligned to the KAS and meet specific school and district needs can be difficult.

The KDE has published a list of approved Tier 1 core comprehensive high-quality instructional resources for reading/writing and mathematics. A core comprehensive instructional resource is one that serves as the primary means of instruction in a content area for a grade level or course. This list serves as the starting point for district curriculum teams to identify potential HQIRs they may want to further explore for adoption consideration. While all vendors on the approved lists meet the KDE standards for high-quality instructional resources, districts and schools should carefully review materials to determine which HQIR best meets the local instructional vision and the needs of the teachers and students in the district.

EdReports.org also serves as a critical support for curriculum teams to research available evidence-based materials. EdReports provides free reviews of K-12 instructional resources and offers comprehensive information about indicators of quality, including standards alignment and usability, from a number of publishers. For reading/writing and mathematics, curriculum teams can access reviews for resources they may want to further explore from the state-approved lists. **For science, EdReports is the recommended starting point for identifying potential resources for adoption consideration.**

If a district is interested in adopting a resource that does not appear on KDE's approved lists and is unrated by EdReports or is not currently green-rated, the district has a greater burden to curate:

- (1) **substantial evidence of both KAS alignment (using the [Instructional Resource Alignment Rubrics](#), as applicable, or a vendor crosswalk to the KAS) and**
- (2) **the research-basis demonstrating external validity and reliability.**

The resource selection and accompanying evidence basis will need to be shared as an off-list notification, per KRS 156.445, to kdertextbooks@education.ky.gov. **The district also must monitor implementation results of the off-list resource to determine its impact on student learning at the local level.** Please note: This notification is required for off-list Tier 1 core comprehensive resources only, not supplemental resources.



For content areas not reviewed by EdReports, consider exploring reputable vendors and open-source materials to identify potential resources for further evaluation. Contacting other districts or schools to gather anecdotal information can also help ground findings in a Kentucky context.

After identifying HQIRs of interest, the team is ready to narrow the choices down to those that have the potential to meet the instructional vision and the needs of the teachers and students in the district. The narrowing process allows the team to not only learn about potential resources through research but also to compare characteristics of resources to determine how well they can serve the selection criteria.

Key Questions

- **For Content Areas Reviewed by EdReports:**
 - Reading and Writing and Mathematics:
 - Based on KDE’s approved list, which 2-3 resources do we want to further evaluate using our selection criteria and EdReports reviews?
 - Science:
 - Based on EdReports reviews, which resources for this content area are rated green according to indicators for their three gateways?
 - Of the green-rated resources, which 2-3 do we want to further evaluate using our selection criteria?
- **For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports:**
 - Based on initial reviews using the district instructional vision and selection criteria, which 2-3 content area resources merit further evaluation?

Key Tool(s)

- [KY HQIR Approved List for Reading and Writing](#) / [KY HQIR Approved List for Mathematics](#) / [KY HQIR Recommended List for Science](#)
- [EdReports Reports Center](#)
- [How to Read an EdReports Review](#)
- [EdReports Compare Tool](#) and [Compare Tool Overview](#)
- [Video Tutorial: Navigating EdReports to Identify Potential HQIRs](#)

Evaluate Potential HQIRs

Once two to three potential resources have been identified, the district should establish a process for examining each of the resources being considered to determine the best option for meeting the local selection criteria. As a part of the process, the team will need to create an organizer around their selection criteria to capture evaluation notes. For content areas not



evaluated by EdReports, the key tools below (e.g., Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics) can support curriculum teams in conducting their own evaluation.

Because HQIRs are **comprehensive** and include a range of **texts, tasks and assessments**, teams should also engage publishers to request samples and set up presentations. The time spent with publishers can be used to have them answer questions the team has developed that specifically align to the instructional vision and the identified selection criteria.

Key Questions

- **Review Considerations:**
 - How will the team collect evaluation notes and final ratings? What format for an organizer might work best (for evaluation organizer examples, please see Key Tools).
 - What is the timeline team members will have to conduct the reviews?
 - Who will set up meetings with vendors and what questions will guide those conversations (Sample HQIR Vendor Questions in Key Tools below)?
 - What materials/resources will reviewers need access to and how will they get access?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will stakeholders be provided opportunities to review and give input on the 2-3 potential high-quality instructional resources under consideration?

Key Tool(s)

- [Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics](#) (Used to support resource evaluation in content areas not reviewed by EdReports.)
- [Sample HQIR Vendor Questions](#)
- [Sample Evaluation Organizers](#)
- [Procurement Information for Resource Selection](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Select HQIR(s)

The evidence gathered from the evaluation process is used to inform the review team as they make a final selection. Resource review teams should examine the evidence collected from the evaluation activities in light of the identified selection criteria. **Ultimately, no one primary instructional resource is likely to provide the full supports necessary to reach the grade-level expectations within the KAS, the local instructional vision and the identified selection criteria.** Districts may select a primary HQIR and then make necessary adjustments as needs are identified throughout implementation. The [Instructional Resources Alignment Rubrics](#) and the [Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines](#) can help inform selection.

Once made, the decision, the rationale for it and next steps should be shared to all stakeholders. Finally, a plan should be established for the procurement and distribution of the



resources to get them into teachers' hands and for the team to use as they move into developing the curriculum documents.

Key Questions

- **Selection Considerations:**
 - What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of identified HQIR options (selection criteria, alignment to stakeholder feedback, initial and recurring costs, vendor supports, etc.)?
 - What work will need to be engaged to implement each option, and what are potential implications of the choices on other initiatives and on staff capacity?
- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**
 - How will a rationale for the selected primary HQIR be communicated to stakeholders?
- **Logistical Considerations:**
 - Where will we store the materials before distribution can occur?
 - How will we inventory materials once they arrive?
 - How will we inventory and track materials once they are distributed to schools?
 - Where and how will the school and/or district distribute the resources (Instruction Partners, 2019)?

Key Tool(s)

- [Decision-Making Options](#)
- [Sample Consensus Protocol](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)

Step 2: Develop Local Curriculum Document

The goal of this step is for the team to develop a curriculum document that lays out a coherent instructional experience within a course or grade level, one that systematically builds students' knowledge, understanding, and skills aligned to the *KAS* and reflects the values of the instructional vision. The curriculum document also serves as central guidance for all instructional staff who support and supervise teaching and student learning. It also should be seen as a "living document" that is revised as the district moves through the stages of implementation (launch, early, ongoing).

For Content Areas Adopting a Primary HQIR

All high-quality instructional resources will require some degree of adjustment to fully reach the grade-level expectations within the *KAS*, the local instructional vision and the identified selection criteria. Needs for adjustment to the primary HQIR may be identified prior to implementation but are more likely to emerge as the resource is used over time. **To ensure any adjustments made to the HQIR maintain the integrity of what made it high-quality to begin**



with, districts are encouraged to implement the HQIR as intended during early implementation to build an understanding of the resource and its intended design. As districts move into ongoing implementation, understanding of the HQIR allows for “smart adjustments” that maintain the resource’s integrity while optimizing its fit within the local curriculum.

An effective curriculum document is revised as a district moves through the stages of implementation and should ultimately:

- Identify the *Kentucky Academic Standards* assessed in a unit;
- Provide quick links to key resources from the HQIR (i.e., assessments, instructional supports);
- Identify gaps in the *KAS* and supplemental resources intended to address them;
- Establish which expectations are “tight” or “nonnegotiable” (e.g., common texts, tasks, assessments and pacing windows);
- Indicate unit duration as determined by the HQIR, its fit within the logistics of the local context and any “buffer time” allotted to address the range of student learning needs;
- Indicate which pedagogical practices from district initiatives (e.g., portrait of a learner competencies, elements of project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, cognitive strategies, standards-based grading) are to be embedded and where this is to occur; and
- Provide access and ease of use to support navigation.

The Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas with Primary HQIRS provides an organizational tool districts can use to fully represent all aspects of the local curriculum as it evolves over time, those provided by and those supplementing the primary HQIR.

For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports

For content areas in which a green-rated primary HQIR may not yet be available, the district may need to develop a more detailed local curriculum document that lays out a coherent instructional experience within and across grade-levels using the district-selected instructional resources. The curriculum document needs to clearly signal where key curricular elements are addressed for each unit/module from the selected resources to ensure full alignment to the *KAS* and the local context. *The Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas Without Primary HQIRS* provides an organizational tool districts can use to represent essential aspects of the local curriculum when having to draw from multiple resources.

Key Questions

- **For Content Areas Adopting a Primary HQIR**
 - What process will be used to gather data and educator feedback each year to inform potential revisions to the local curriculum document? Who will be responsible for



making revisions based on data/feedback (i.e., content area curriculum team) and communicating out those changes?

- How will any needs for HQIR adjustment (e.g., addressing gaps in the *KAS*, embedding pedagogical practices from local initiatives) be addressed within the local curriculum document as it evolves across the stages of implementation?
- For any identified needs for adjustment to the HQIR, what additional resources and/or supports will teachers need to ensure students experience the content in a way that fulfills the instructional vision?

- **For Content Areas Not Reviewed by EdReports**

- How are standards bundled within units around big ideas or questions to anchor student learning and build students' knowledge, skills and understanding over time, and to help avoid students seeing standards as a set of isolated information, skills or processes?
- What curricular elements and features should be accounted for in the local curriculum document to move toward the instructional vision for teaching and learning in the content area? Possible curricular elements to consider include:
 - *KAS* assessed in each unit, sequencing standards and showing how they are bundled;
 - Key grade-level text(s) and tasks;
 - Common assessment (formative and summative);
 - Pedagogical practices; and/or
 - Evidence-based instructional supports/scaffolds.
- For standards that appear in multiple units, when are they assessed for mastery? When are they supporting standards?
- Is the pacing appropriate, and does it provide flexibility for teachers to respond to student needs?
- How will the curriculum document clarify common expectations for each identified curricular element and indicate where those are located within the district-selected instructional resources to ensure full alignment to the *KAS* and local context?

- **Revision and Feedback Considerations:**

- What process will be used for reviewing and revising the curriculum document so all aspects of the curriculum are viewed by both the vertical and grade-level teams to ensure coherence and quality across grade levels?

- **Stakeholder Inclusion:**

- How will district leaders gather staff feedback (i.e., clarity, organization, usability) on the completed curriculum documents and use the feedback to guide possible revisions prior to implementation?
- How will the curriculum document be made readily accessible to all staff?



Key Tool(s)

- [Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas with Primary HQIRs](#)
- [Curriculum Document Template for Content Areas without Primary HQIRs](#)
- [Pedagogical Practices Mapping Tool](#)
- [Communication Plan Template \(Phase 3\)](#)



Reference

Instruction Partners. (2019). *Curriculum Support Guide*. Retrieved from <https://curriculumsupport.org/>

