

High-Quality Instructional Materials and Curriculum-Based Professional Learning As A School Improvement Strategy

In order to graduate college and career ready, every student needs access to instruction focused on grade-level academic standards, coherence throughout their K-12 education, and educational equity. We define equity as every student having access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.

Mounting evidence suggests that providing teachers with access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials and curriculum-based professional learning can result in improvement in student outcomes, making this a research-based school improvement strategy. DPI believes the following research meets [ESSA's definitions of moderate or promising evidence](#). Research findings show that:

- most students do what they are asked to do, but few of their assignments are aligned to grade-level work as defined by academic standards ([The New Teacher Project, 2018](#));
- standards-aligned curriculum combined with curriculum-focused professional development are associated with statistically significantly higher student performance and educator understanding of academic standards, while providing educators with generic strategies divorced from their curriculum makes it less likely they will apply their learning and impact student achievement ([Taylor et al., 2015](#));
- providing teachers with any curriculum or set of instructional materials without also providing them with professional learning focused on how to implement those materials effectively to meet the needs of all students will not impact student achievement ([Blazar, D. et al., 2019](#));
- professional development for teachers should be connected to practice with a focus on content and curriculum ([Blank, de las Alas, and Smith, 2007](#));
- the teachers who benefit the most from having access to high-quality curriculum and support to implement that curriculum are new teachers or teachers teaching out of field ([Jackson, C. and Makrain, A., 2016](#)) and we know that in Wisconsin, teachers who are new or teaching out of field are more likely to be teaching students experiencing poverty and students of color ([DPI, 2015](#));
- high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to state standards can reduce variability in the quality of instruction across classrooms and help boost student achievement, but teachers often do not have materials that are aligned to their state's college- and career-readiness standards ([SREB, 2017](#));
- consistent use of a standards-based curriculum over multiple years of a student's education could have a major cumulative impact ([Steiner, 2017](#)).