**Curriculum Talking Points and FAQ on Selection**

*This resource outlines the frequently asked questions that systems encounter from stakeholders at this stage, including talking points and relevant research.*

As you plan to communicate the curriculum decision to stakeholders, it is important to develop common language and talking points for the Selection Team to use in communication. The following represent some of the potential topics that may emerge in this process, along with key talking points and specific questions that stakeholders may raise.  With all communication, it is essential to refer back to the Core Beliefs that the Selection Team developed to guide the selection process and implementation.

**Key Overall Talking Points**

***To build the rationale behind why a change is being made...***

* We believe curriculum and instructional materials are a key component to making sure all students are successful within our schools and system.
* Stronger instructional materials can help get students excited to learn and be more invested in their instruction.
* Effective instructional materials can make teaching more sustainable for teachers by providing them with the resources they need for instruction and lessen the amount of time required to plan each lesson.

***To explain the selection process...***

* We believe the decision about what materials we use is critically important and has broad implications for our students, teachers, and schools.
* We developed a rigorous selection process to help us make this important decision and ensure that we took the time to consider all of our options.
* A Selection Team comprised of teachers, parents, and administrators worked together to develop selection criteria, review the options, try out the options to see what worked, and came together to make a decision about which materials best met our needs.

***To explain the decision of which materials were selected...***

* We are excited to adopt X curriculum because it:
	+ Aligns to our vision for instruction and includes lots of opportunities for students to work collaboratively with one another [include language relevant to your instructional vision].
	+ Is one of the top-rated set of materials on EdReports, an organization comprised of teacher experts who evaluate curriculum for their alignment to the standards and their usability.
	+ Was highly effective in our initial pilot of the materials and we saw high levels of student engagement and interest in the lessons and overall instructional materials.

***In anticipation of questions about implementation...***

* Our goal is to provide regular updates and communication to all stakeholders throughout the process and we wanted to announce this key milestone in our process.
* We know that the selection of quality instructional materials is just one component of good instruction, and we still have a lot of work to do to plan for an effective implementation of the materials.
* You can expect that there will be more information, training, and resources forthcoming as we develop our implementation plan for the curriculum.  You can expect more information by X date.

**Frequently Asked Questions and Example Response Language**

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| **FAQs** | **Example Response Language** |
| Why are we choosing a new curriculum? | *“We know that our community is a special place, and that we have established a warm and joyful culture for students, teachers, and families. The work we do is challenging and ever evolving, so it is critical to sometimes step back and take stock of where we are and where we want to go. Our goal is to provide the best possible learning experience for all of our students, and we know we still have work to do to improve student success across all schools. We believe that strong curriculum and instructional materials are a key component to our approach to ensure all students are successful, and we’ve heard from teachers, leaders, and families that there is a desire for higher quality materials that can better support our students.”* |
| (If there is a previous curriculum) What is wrong with the curriculum we are currently using?  Why do we need to change?  | *“We have been using our current curriculum for a long time and have heard from many teachers and leaders across schools that the curriculum is not meeting our needs. That curriculum was adopted at a time when we had different standards, and it is important for us to have a curriculum that reflects the current standards and will ensure all of our students have access to instructional materials that will enable their success.”* |
| What was the selection criteria we used?  |  *“We put together a set of selection criteria to objectively evaluate each of our options and make an informed decision.  Our selection criteria included the alignment of the materials to the standards and our instructional vision, the usability of the materials for teachers, how the materials differentiated for English language learners and students with IEPs, and the cultural relevance of the materials for our student population, among several other criteria, like cost, effectiveness in other schools, and training implications. We believe the criteria we used enabled us to implement a rigorous selection process to find the best curriculum for our students.”* |
| Who was involved in the decision making process? How were parents and families included in this process?  | “*The Selection Team comprised of teachers, parents, leaders, and community members who all engaged in the process and provided input along the way as to what materials would be best for our schools.”* |
| How did we make the decision for what curriculum to choose?  | *“We developed a set of selection criteria that we used to evaluate each of our options. The Selection Team went through a rigorous process of training, observing lessons, talking with teachers, and reviewing the materials to ensure that we chose the right materials for teachers and students. Ultimately, each Selection Team member voted on which curriculum they thought would best meet our needs, and we selected the curriculum that the majority of people chose.”* |
| Why did we choose this particular curriculum?  | *“We are excited to announce that we will be adopting X curriculum in ELA and X curriculum in math for the 2019 school year. Because we had a chance to gather input from teachers and students, we believe that these curricular choices will be the best fit for our unique community. The rich and diverse selection of texts within the ELA curriculum will ensure that our students are being challenged to engage with complex texts, while still ensuring that they are seeing our population represented in those texts. Our ELA curriculum puts a premium on collaborative problem solving, which allows us to maintain our unwavering commitment to increasing student talk throughout the building.”* |
| **Implementation Questions*** What will be the expectations for use?
* When will we be trained on the new curriculum?
* What is the timeline for the roll-out?
 | *For all implementation questions, you can use the following response:**“We know that quality instructional materials are just one component to good instruction, and we still have work to do to plan for an effective implementation of the materials. At this stage, we are beginning to develop our implementation plan in coordination with the implementation team. We want to make sure we have a strong plan that sets everyone up for success, but have not made any decisions yet about what this will look like.  We are committed to ongoing, regular communication with everyone, and you can expect that there will be more information, training, and resources forthcoming as we develop the implementation plan for the curriculum.”* |

**Research Resources**

In recent years, new research has emerged on the role of curriculum and the potential impact it can have on student achievement.  These are a handful of key talking points and research resources that can be integrated into your overall talking points and communication plan.

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| **Talking Points** | **Research Resources** |
| Instructional materials are a key component to making sure all students are successful.  | [Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core](https://www.brookings.edu/research/choosing-blindly-instructional-materials-teacher-effectiveness-and-the-common-core/)[The Opportunity Myth](https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/) |
| We ask our teachers to engage in a herculean task every day and want to make their work more sustainable. | [Failing by design: How we make teaching too hard for mere mortals](https://edexcellence.net/articles/failing-by-design-how-we-make-teaching-too-hard-for-mere-mortals) |
| Instructional materials have been shown to improve student achievement by providing students with access to more rigorous and aligned instruction.  | [Simplifying Teaching: A Field Experiment with ‘Off the Shelf’ Lessons](https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/papers/2016/WP-16-11.html)[Big bang for just a few bucks: The impact of math textbooks in California](https://www.brookings.edu/research/big-bang-for-just-a-few-bucks-the-impact-of-math-textbooks-in-california/) |
| Strong instructional materials paired with embedded professional learning for teachers can lead to sustained improvement for students.  | [What We Teach Matters](https://learningfirst.com/reports/what-we-teach-matters/) |