WHY MATERIALS MATTER
Through our work we know that **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR KIDS. WHAT IS CHOSEN MATTERS.** Research shows that students learn primarily through their interactions with teachers and content.

**THIS INSTRUCTIONAL CORE IS THE FOUNDATION** for ensuring all kids are college and career-ready and have the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in school and beyond.
“That instructional materials exercise their influence on learning directly as well as by influencing teachers’ instructional choices and behavior, makes instructional materials all the more important.”
- Chingos and Whitehurst, 2012

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.

ONE STUDY SHOWED USING A TOP RANKED PROGRAM IN 4TH OR 5TH GRADE MATH CAN LEAD TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAINS OF 3.6 PERCENTILE POINTS
larger than the improvement of a typical teacher’s effectiveness in their first three years on the job when they are learning to teach.²

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.

WHEN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS USE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

IT CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.
A 2017 study shows that the effect on learning is the same as moving an average performing teacher to one at the 80th percentile.3

HIGH-QUALITY MATERIALS DON’T NECESSARILY COST MORE, BUT OFTEN HAVE BIGGER PAY OFFS.

“TEXTBOOKS ARE RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE AND TEND TO BE SIMILARLY PRICED. The implication is that the marginal cost of choosing a more effective textbook over a less effective alternative is essentially zero.”

(Polikoff and Koedel, 2017)

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CURRICULUM IS 40X MORE COST-EFFECTIVE THAN CLASS-SIZE REDUCTION.\(^5\)

TEACHERS KNOW THAT MATERIALS MATTER, BUT DON’T ALWAYS HAVE ACCESS TO THE QUALITY CONTENT THAT THEIR STUDENTS DESERVE.

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS are cited as a top funding priority for teachers.

Top Five Funding Priorities Identified by Teachers

→ 55% High-quality instructional materials and textbooks
→ 55% Additional staff
→ 47% Digital resources
→ 47% Higher salaries
→ 46% Intervention programs

WHEN TEACHERS DON’T HAVE ACCESS TO GREAT MATERIALS THEY HUNT FOR THEM ONLINE—OFTEN LEADING TO INCONSISTENT QUALITY THAT IMPACTS LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR THE MOST.

TEACHERS SPEND 7-12 HOURS PER WEEK searching for and creating instructional resources (free and paid),\(^8\) drawing from a variety of sources, many of them unvetted.

WHEN TEACHERS DON’T HAVE ACCESS TO GREAT MATERIALS THEY HUNT FOR THEM ONLINE—OFTEN LEADING TO INCONSISTENT QUALITY THAT IMPACTS LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR THE MOST.

A 2017 RAND analysis found that

96% of teachers use Google to find lessons and materials.

Nearly 75% of teachers use Pinterest to find lessons and materials.⁹

WHEN TEACHERS DON’T HAVE ACCESS TO GREAT MATERIALS THEY HUNT FOR THEM ONLINE—OFTEN LEADING TO INCONSISTENT QUALITY THAT IMPACTS LOW-INCOME, STUDENTS OF COLOR THE MOST.

Teachers working in schools that have a high proportion of students who receive free and reduced lunch are searching for materials online at higher rates.\(^\text{10}\)

The assignments teachers select or create tend to be lower quality than what the district or state provided.\(^\text{11}\)

Percentage of assignments on grade-level:

- **34% Assignments provided by district or state**
- **20% Teacher created/selected assignments**


INCONSISTENT ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT IMPACTS STUDENT LEARNING IN SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IN A SINGLE SCHOOL YEAR, THE AVERAGE STUDENT SPENDS **581 OF 720 AVAILABLE HOURS ON ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE NOT HIGH-QUALITY.**¹²

THIS IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR AND STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY WHO HAVE LESS ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY STANDARDS-ALIGNED MATERIALS THAN THEIR PEERS.
A 2015 study found low-income students are less likely than high-income students to have quality content and curriculum in the classroom.

This is particularly significant for students of color and students living in poverty who have less access to high-quality standards-aligned materials than their peers.
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A 2015 study found low-income students are less likely than high-income students to have quality content and curriculum in the classroom.\(^{13}\)

And students of color and those from low-income backgrounds were less likely than white and higher-income students to be in classrooms with grade-appropriate assignments.\(^{14}\)


AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING HIGH-QUALITY MATERIALS DOESN’T END AT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

Nationwide, 40% of COLLEGE STUDENTS (including 66 percent of Black college students and 53 percent of Latinx college students) take at least one remedial course learning skills they were told they’d already mastered in high school.

A recent study found that college remediation costs students and their families $1.5 BILLION ANNUALLY.\(^{17}\)

Graduates who opt for a career straight out of high school aren’t faring much better, with many employers reporting high school graduates are MISSING SKILLS needed to do their jobs well.\(^{18}\)


BUT WHEN TEACHERS HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND THE INSTRUCTION STUDENTS RECEIVE.

A 2018 study illustrated that teachers using aligned materials engaged students in mathematical practices at a SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RATE than teachers who did not have access to aligned curriculum.¹⁹

...WHEN TEACHERS HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND THE INSTRUCTION STUDENTS RECEIVE.

“When students who started the year off behind grade level were given more grade-appropriate assignments, stronger instruction, deeper engagement, and higher expectations, the gap between these students and their higher achieving peers began to narrow substantially.”

EdReports’ mission is to increase the capacity of teachers, administrators, and leaders to seek, identify, and demand the highest quality instructional materials. Explore hundreds of free reports and learn more about why materials matter for students and their futures.