

# Leveraging High-Quality Instructional Materials to Support Student Success

## What are high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)?

HQIM are rigorously reviewed curriculum materials aligned to state academic standards that include:

- evidence-based strategies,
- inclusive practices, and
- embedded teacher supports.<sup>1</sup>

HQIM provide an effective lesson structure and flexible pacing for teachers to best support learning for all students.<sup>2</sup> The materials take into account the needs and experiences of diverse learners who are actively literate, critical thinkers, and engaged in the community.<sup>3</sup>



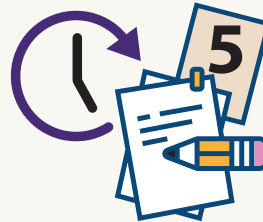
## Why use HQIM?

Research suggests that use of high-quality instructional materials paired with professional learning supports is associated with improvements in student achievement.<sup>4</sup>

▶ Each week, U.S. teachers spend an average of:



seven hours searching for free or paid instructional materials and



five hours creating their own instructional materials.<sup>5</sup>

▶ In Arkansas, 82 percent of Arkansas elementary teachers and 91 percent of secondary teachers report developing curriculum materials from scratch.<sup>6</sup>



**82%** of elementary teachers



**91%** of secondary teachers

▶ With access to HQIM, teachers can use their time and energy to focus on delivering content and engaging all their students in lessons.

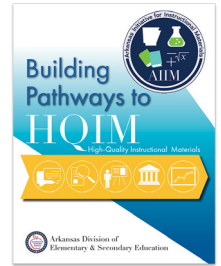
▶ Since the pandemic disrupted learning for students across the United States, multiple states have used COVID-19 relief funds to purchase HQIM to offset learning loss.<sup>7</sup>

# The Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM)



In Arkansas, the Department of Education implemented the Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM) to ensure that every student in Arkansas has equitable access to HQIM, grade-level instruction, and responsive practices. By improving instruction, Arkansas seeks to ensure that students receive the education and support necessary to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

AIIM provides a variety of supports to educators, such as the [Building Pathways to HQIM](#) guidebook, which is designed to help school teams establish a districtwide process to communicate, educate, and build awareness of the value of HQIM. Arkansas's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education partnered with EdReports to develop a [catalog of HQIM](#) from which districts can select curricula to implement in their schools.



Other AIIM supports include professional learning opportunities to build educators' capacity to identify and implement HQIM at every stage of a student's K-12 experience.

Arkansas has identified five key priorities to support the implementation of HQIM: **Communication, Signaling Quality, Professional Learning, Educator Preparation, and Data & Analysis.**<sup>8</sup>



## Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest's Building Pathways to Student Success Partnership

Through the Building Pathways to Student Success partnership, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest is collaborating with the Arkansas Department of Education to support AIIM through:

- 1. Technical assistance and coaching.** REL Southwest is holding a series of virtual coaching sessions to help the Arkansas Department of Education develop a plan for conducting a statewide evaluation of AIIM. Through the coaching sessions, REL Southwest is building the department's capacity to develop a survey that will assess the implementation of AIIM. The survey will be part of a larger evaluation plan that includes a logic model for the initiative, research questions, and a fully articulated plan for answering the research questions. Ultimately, the evaluation will help the department monitor program implementation, progress, trends, successes, and challenges.
- 2. Applied research.** REL Southwest will investigate the impact of AIIM on student outcomes by measuring student achievement (test scores), college and career readiness (ACT® score of 19 or above), and college enrollment before and after AIIM's implementation.

<sup>1</sup> Arkansas Department of Education. (2023). *Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM)*. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-initiative-for-instructional-materials-aiim>

<sup>2</sup> New Mexico Public Education Department. (2023). *Instructional materials*. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/instructional-materials/>

<sup>3</sup> Arkansas Department of Education. (2023). *Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM)*. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-initiative-for-instructional-materials-aiim>

<sup>4</sup> Hill, H. C., Lynch, K., Gonzalez, K. E., & Pollard, C. (2020, January 27). Professional development that improves STEM outcomes. *Phi Delta Kappan*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1241766>

Jackson, K., & Makarin, A. (2018). Can online off-the-shelf lessons improve student outcomes? Evidence from a field experiment. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 10(3), 226–254. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20170211>

<sup>5</sup> Arkansas Department of Education. (2023). *Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM)*. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-initiative-for-instructional-materials-aiim>

<sup>6</sup> Arkansas Department of Education. (2023). *Building pathways to high quality instructional materials*. <https://aredreports.ade.arkansas.gov>

<sup>7</sup> Schwartz, S. (2022, September 20). The case for curriculum: Why some states are prioritizing it with COVID relief funds. *EducationWeek*. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-case-for-curriculum-why-some-states-are-prioritizing-it-with-covid-relief-funds/2022/09>

<sup>8</sup> Arkansas Department of Education. (2023). *Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM)*. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-initiative-for-instructional-materials-aiim>

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This document was prepared under Contract 91990023C0003 by Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest, administered by the American Institutes for Research. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Institute of Education Sciences (IES) or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.