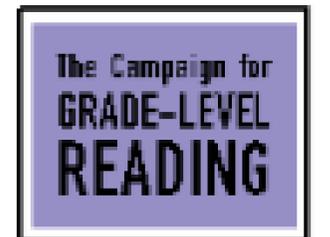
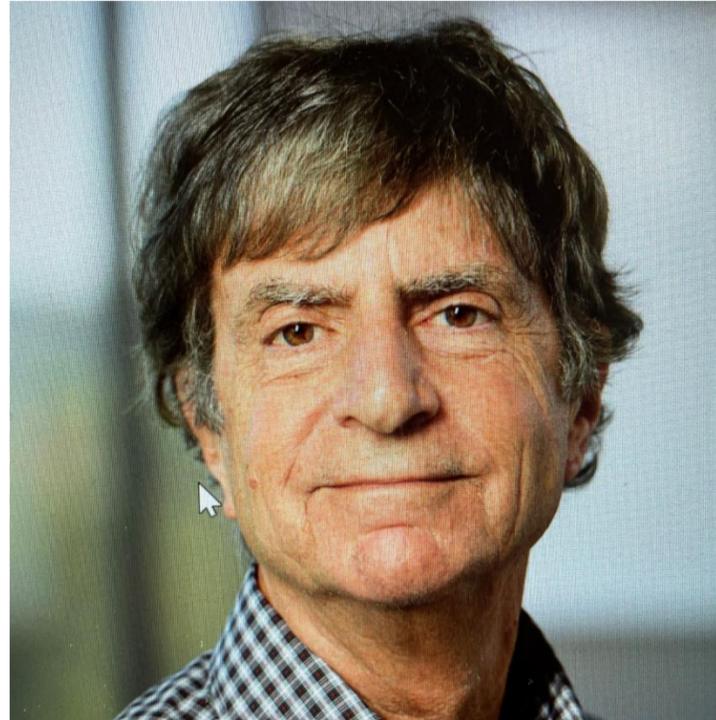


Curriculum at a Crossroads: Evidence and What Works

September 30, 2025



Panelists



Steven M. Ross Ph.D.
*Professor and Director
Center for Research and
Reform in Education
Johns Hopkins University*



Teresa Eliopoulos
*Policy and Strategy Lead
EdReports*



Janine Walker-Caffrey, Ed.D.
*Chief Academic Officer
EPS Learning*

Panelists



Bren Elliot, Ed.D.
*Associate Superintendent
Student Life and Innovation
The School District of Philadelphia
Pennsylvania*



David Pinder, Ed.D.
*Superintendent of Schools
Juvenile Services Education Program
Maryland*



Shawn Stover, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Rockingham County Schools
North Carolina*

Panelists

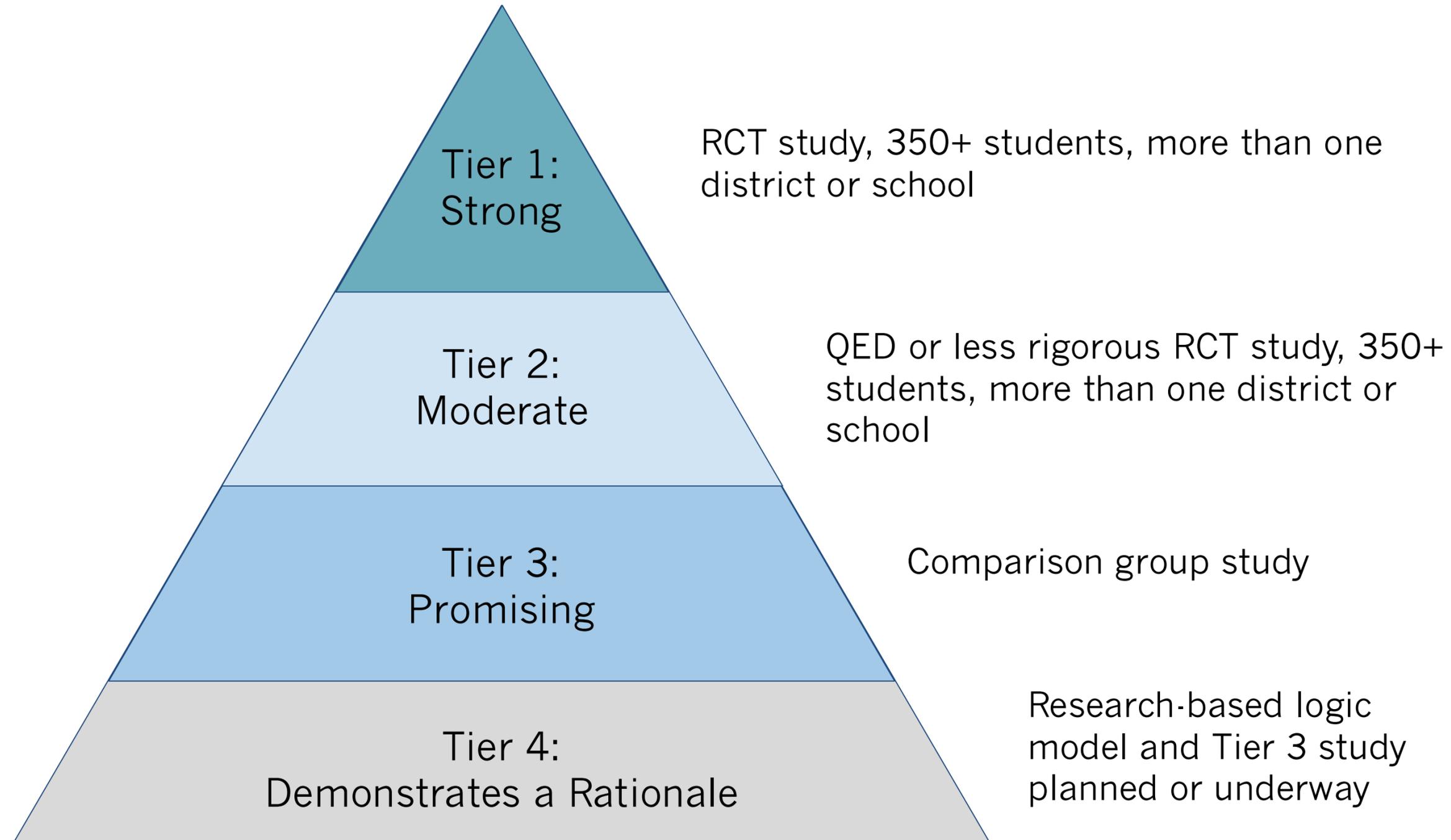


Amanda Alexander, Ph.D.
Consultant

ESSA Tiers

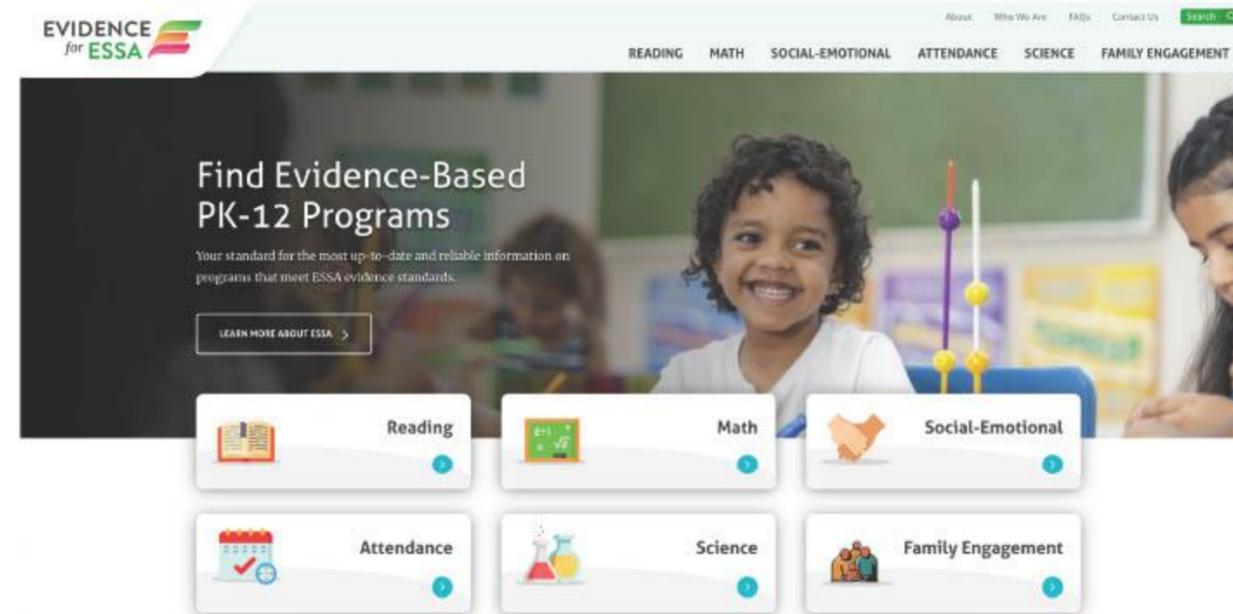
Dr. Steven M. Ross

ESSA Tiers of Evidence



FIND RESEARCH-PROVEN PROGRAMS

Evidence for ESSA is a free web resource that enables educators to make decisions based on actual student learning outcomes rather than appealing marketing claims. Programs for K-12 schools are rated based on a comprehensive, up-to-date review of all available outcome research. Educators can search for effective programs in key academic areas such as reading and math, as well as in non-academic areas like attendance and social-emotional learning, filtered by grade level and target group.



- **Continuously Updated:** Access the only resource that consistently meets the rigorous research standards of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- **Extensive Database:** Explore detailed information on over 1,100 programs offered to schools and classrooms.
- **Proven Impact:** Join over 1 million viewers since 2017 and see why 102,000 users chose us last year—averaging 7,500 visitors each month.
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PERSONALIZABLE

Sortable by research strength, demographics, and other features.

CONTACT US

evidenceforessa@jhu.edu
or give us a call!
410-616-2374





Evidence-Rich Educator-Led. Free.

Curriculum at a Crossroads: EdReports
September 30, 2025





EdReports is a non-profit organization that increases the capacity of teachers, administrators, and leaders to seek, identify and demand the highest quality instructional materials. Drawing upon expert educators, our reviews of instructional materials and support of smart adoption processes equip teachers with excellent materials nationwide.

What is EdReports' Role?

EdReports serves as a trusted, educator-led independent review organization. Our free and public reviews:

- Provide transparent, evidence based criteria and information, serving as a benchmark for state and district processes
- Encourage state and district reflection and conversation about quality, alignment, and usability

Most importantly, EdReports is a place to start in order for states and districts to make informed decisions

1,120+
reports published



OVER

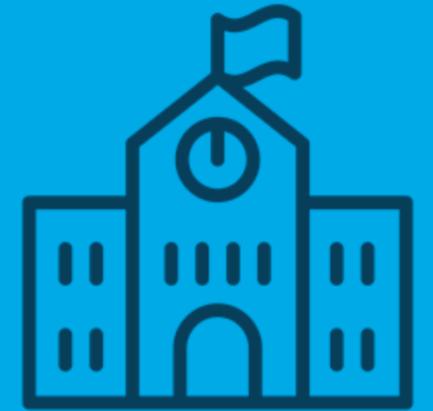
20
million

students impacted



124

of the largest
200 school districts
using EdReports



43

State DOEs
Have drawn on
EdReports work to
promote HQIM

1000+

reviewers from
50 states



EdReports
Impact



OVER

40

publishers making changes
based on our reviews



Edreports.org/reports

The screenshot shows the EdReports website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Explore Reports', 'Our Process', 'Resources', 'Impact', and 'About Us'. Below this is a search bar and a 'Showing 278 Results' indicator. On the left, there are filter options for Subject, Grade Level, Format, Alignment, Teacher and Student Supports, Review Tool Version, Publisher, Supporting Documents, and Additional Filters. The main content area displays three report cards for 'UFLI Foundations', 'OpenSciEd Physics', and 'OpenSciEd Chemistry'. Each card includes the publisher's logo, subject, grade level, release date, and a 'View Full Report' button. The UFLI Foundations report shows 'Meets Expectations' for Gateway 1 and Gateway 2. OpenSciEd Physics shows 'Meets Expectations' for Gateway 1, Gateway 2, and Gateway 3. OpenSciEd Chemistry shows 'Meets Expectations' for Gateway 1, Gateway 2, and Gateway 3.

CRITERION 1A - 1F

Texts are worthy of students' time and attention: texts are of quality and are rigorous, meeting the text complexity criteria for each grade. Materials support students' advancing toward independent reading.

17/23

- Criterion Rating Details

The instructional materials reviewed for Grade 6 partially meet the criteria that texts are worthy of students' time and attention, are of quality and are rigorous, and support students' advancing toward independent reading. Anchor texts are of publishable quality and reflect the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards. Texts have the appropriate level of complexity for the grade; however, not all of the text selections support students' increasing literacy skills over the course of the year. Materials expose students to a broad range of text types and disciplines and include a volume of reading so students can achieve grade-level reading proficiency by the end of the year.

INDICATOR 1A

Anchor texts are of publishable quality and worthy of especially careful reading and

4/4

- Indicator Rating Details

The instructional materials reviewed for Grade 6 meet the criteria for anchor texts especially careful reading and consider a range of student interests.

Students are exposed to a variety of texts that are worthy of careful reading and have won major literary awards. The nonfiction texts include articles and texts vocabulary, and text features worthy of engagement.

Examples of publishable, high-quality texts include:

- In Unit 1, students read an excerpt from *Does My Head Look Big in This* by R. It is a first-person story about the challenges a Muslim student faces in school. It is an identity from a female teen perspective. It contains rich language.
- In Unit 2, students read the Newbery Award-winning novel, *Hatchet* by Gary Soto about survival.
- In Unit 5, students read an excerpt from *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor, a winning author and book with high interest and a relevant and important theme.
- In Unit 6, students read an excerpt from *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman. This is a Book for YA winner. It is high interest, diverse, relevant, and has relatable characters.
- In Unit 8, students read an excerpt from *Journey to the End of the Earth* by Bruce Goldstone of high interest and contains rich language.

Update How Results Are Shown

ALPHABETICAL | TEXT QUALITY | BUILDING KNOWLEDGE | ALIGNMENT | USABILITY

MyPerspectives (2017)

Published By: Pearson | Date Published: 5/19/2017 | [View These Reports](#)

GRADE LEVEL	TEXT QUALITY	BUILDING KNOWLEDGE	ALIGNMENT RATING	USABILITY RATING
Sixth Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Seventh Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Eighth Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32

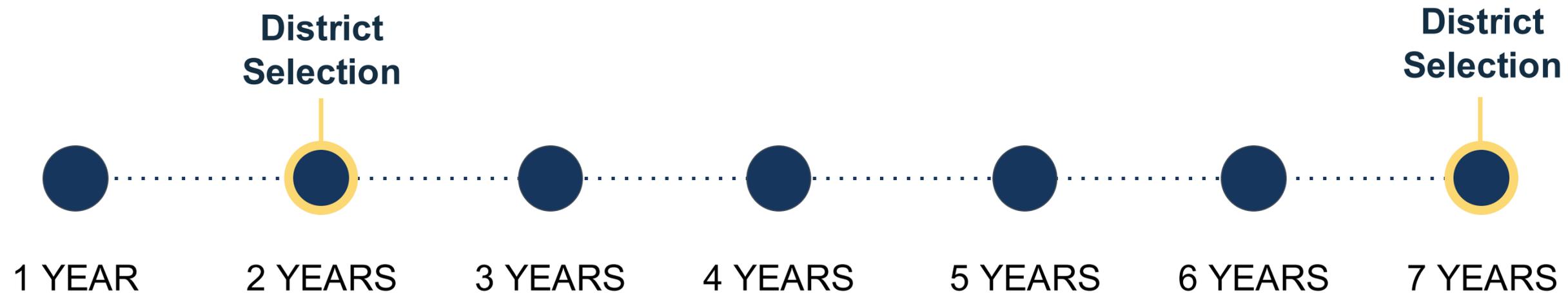
Wit & Wisdom (2016)

Published By: Great Minds | Date Published: 6/8/2017 | [View These Reports](#)

GRADE LEVEL	TEXT QUALITY	BUILDING KNOWLEDGE	ALIGNMENT RATING	USABILITY RATING
Third Grade	41/42	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Fourth Grade	41/42	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Fifth Grade	41/42	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Sixth Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Seventh Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32
Eighth Grade	36/36	32/32	Meets Expectations	34/32

Materials Matter

Materials selection is a high-stakes, legacy decision.



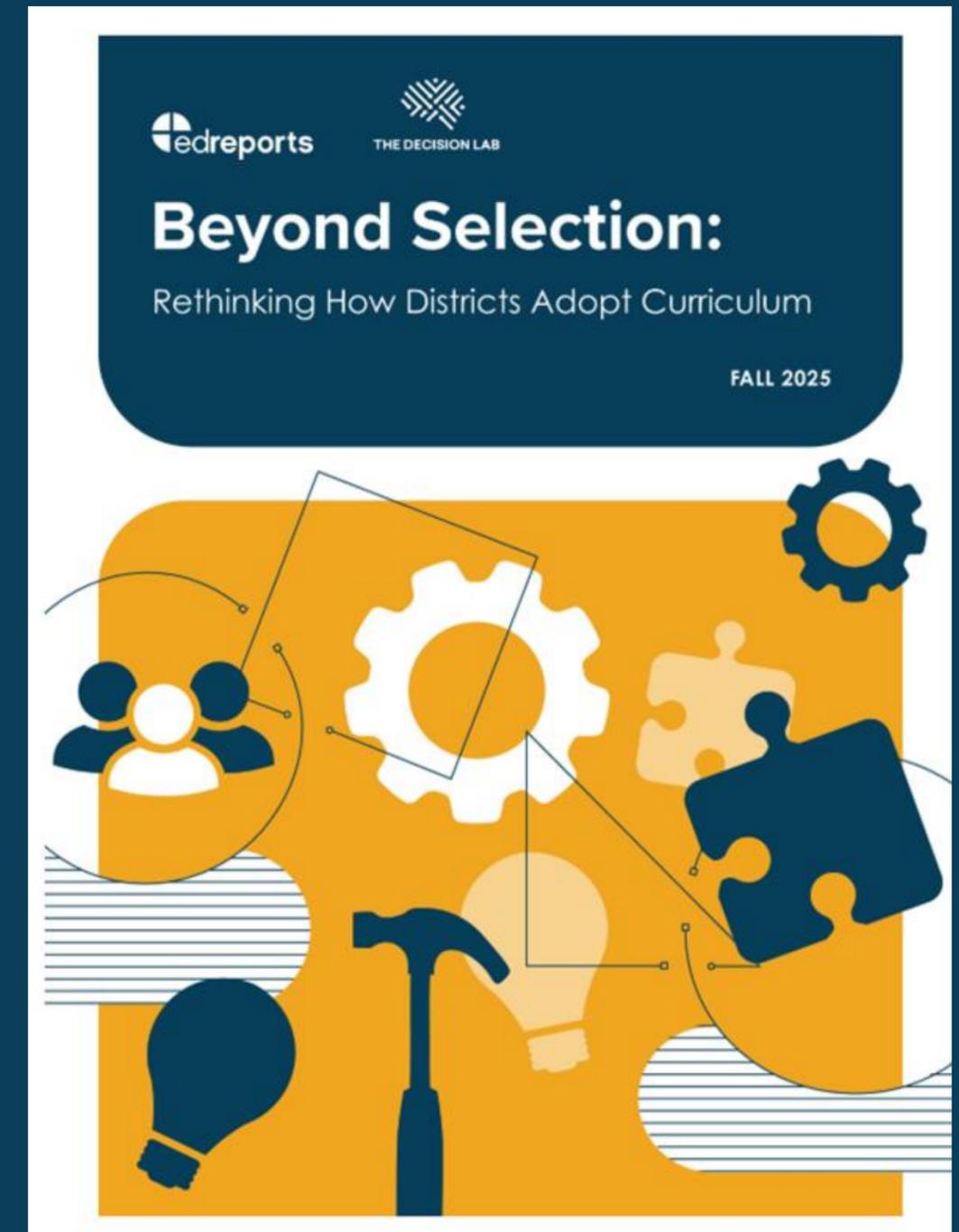
Nationally, on average, states and/or districts adopt materials once every five to seven years. A district can miss the opportunity to serve a generation of students by selecting the wrong material. Imagine a student who experiences at least seven years of education with materials that do not support deeper learning.

Beyond Selection:

Rethinking How Districts Adopt Curriculum

EdReports and The Decision Lab conducted a comprehensive survey of over 250 district leaders and educators to gain deeper understanding of the factors influencing district adoption of HQIM.

<https://www.edreports.org/resources/article/beyond-selection>



What did we find?

District Leader Agreement with Curriculum Adoption Statements

● STRONGLY AGREE
 ● AGREE
 ● NEUTRAL
 ● DISAGREE
 ● STRONGLY DISAGREE

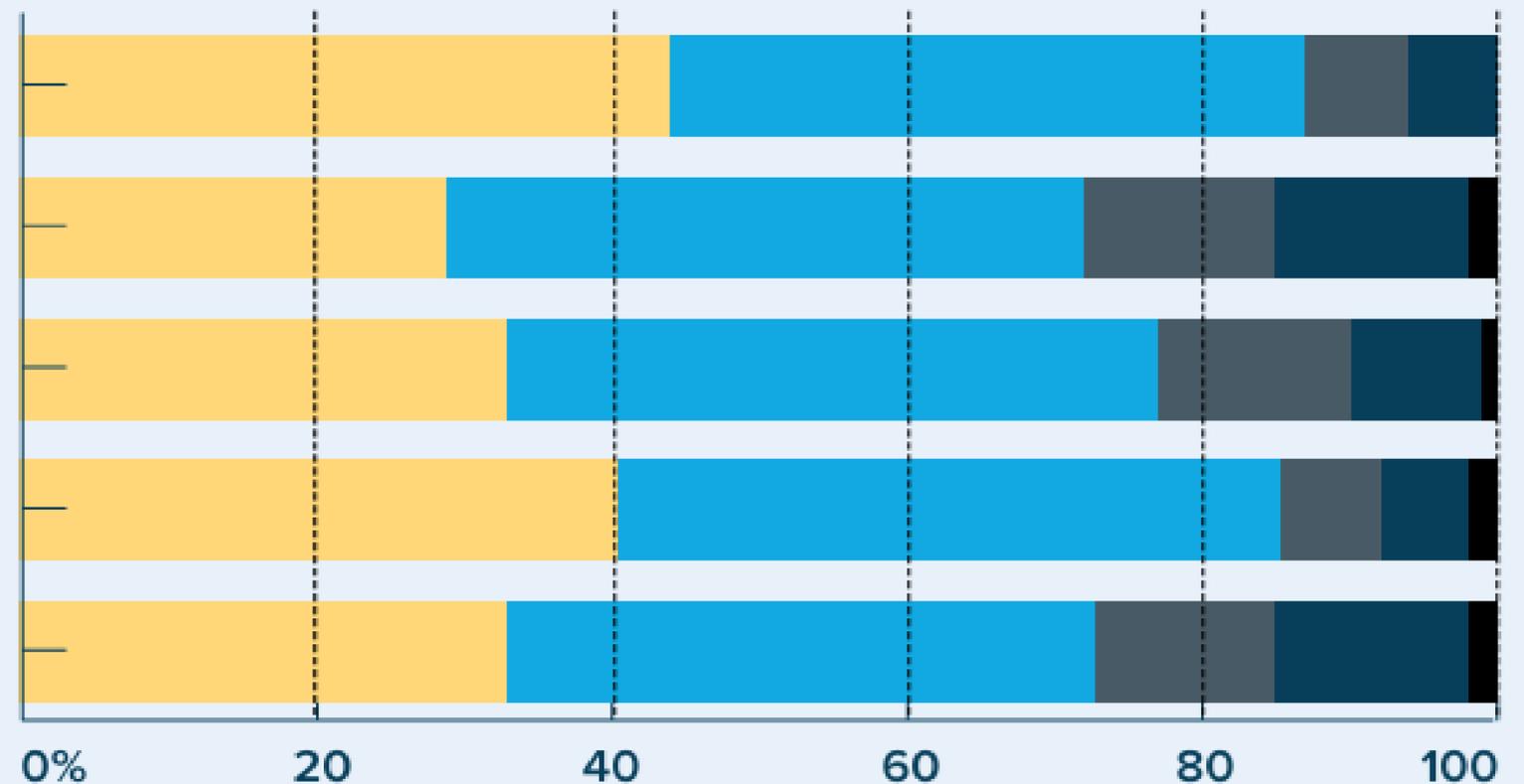
Strong alignment that instructional materials matter

Confidents in district's ability to identify/adopt HQIM

Strong alignment on criteria for idenifying HQIM

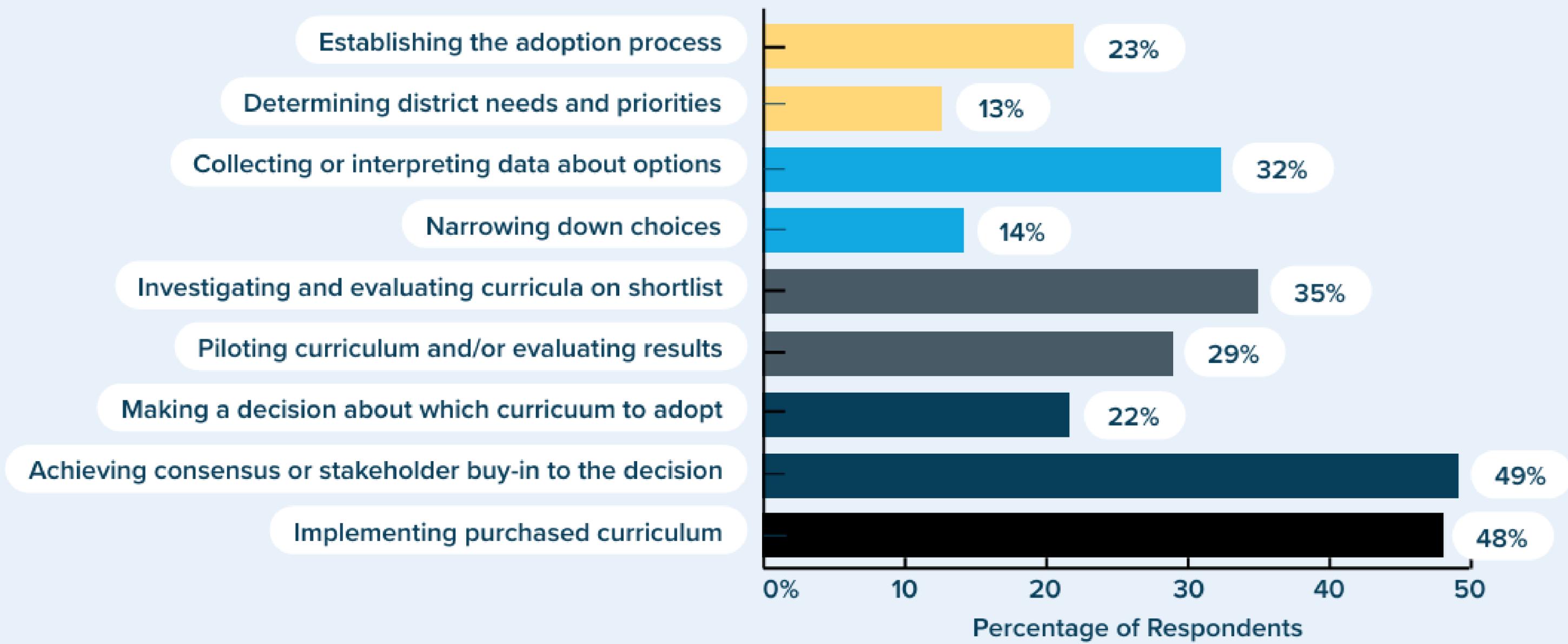
District consults data/evidence to inform adoption

District establishes evaluation criteria before review



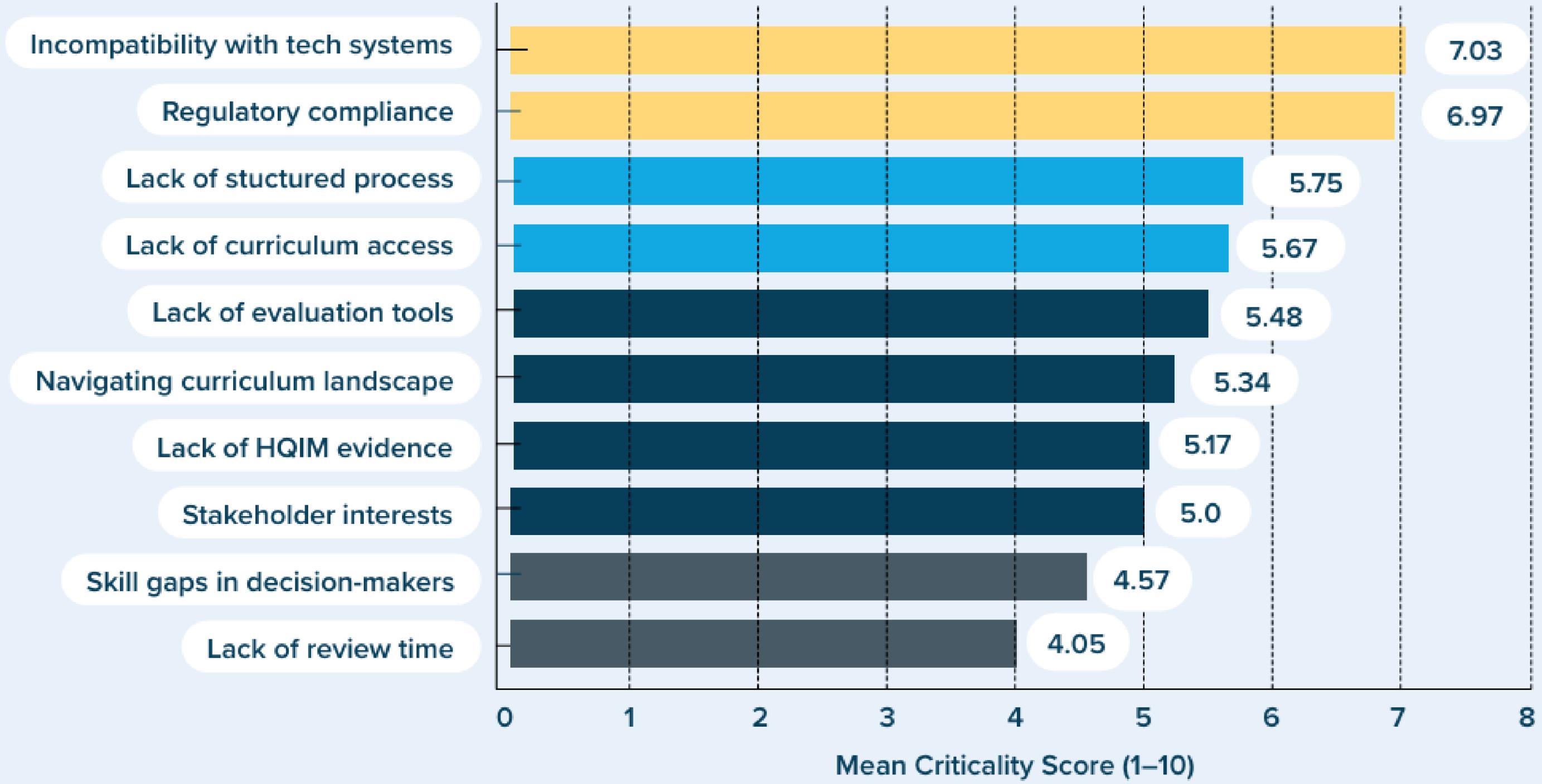
District-Reported Challenges by Curriculum Adoption Phase

Adoption Phase ● EARLY ● EARLY-MID ● MID ● MID-LATE ● LATE



Note: Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected each option in a "Select all that apply" format. Totals may exceed 100%

District-Ranked Curriculum Adoption Challenges



Note: the score is the mean of an ordinal ranking of each challenge amongst the ten options with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest score possible

Calls to Action

- **Establish strong foundations early** by understanding local, state, and federal requirements and assessing technology infrastructure compatibility before beginning material review
- **Design comprehensive adoption processes that plan for implementation from day one** rather than treating selection and implementation as separate activities.
- **Center educator voice while building broad stakeholder consensus** through structured engagement processes.
- **Leverage external expertise strategically** for high-value, complex aspects of adoption while maintaining local decision authority.



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