Florida Materials Navigator

SETTING A VISION

# Developing a Vision for High-Quality Mathematics Instruction

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## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A "VISION FOR MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION"?

A vision for mathematics instruction describes a shared, coherent picture of what high-quality teaching and learning should look like in every classroom.

A strong vision goes beyond a general statement or set of broad goals. It:

- Centers the daily experiences of students and teachers
- Articulates what meaningful mathematics learning looks and feels like
- Defines what educators should see and hear in classrooms
- Provides a common language for instructional decision-making

When done well, a vision is not just a statement. It is a practical tool that guides action across a system.

## A VISION AS THE FOUNDATION FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ADOPTION

This work is especially important in the context of selecting and implementing high-quality instructional materials.

Your vision will serve as a continuous thread throughout the adoption process:

### Materials Review and Selection

- Your vision clarifies what matters most when evaluating materials
- It helps teams move beyond surface features to instructional alignment

### Professional Learning

- Your vision defines what teachers need to understand and be able to do
- It shapes the focus of training and support

### Implementation

- Your vision establishes what should be visible in classrooms
- It guides feedback, coaching, and instructional leadership

**Continuous Improvement**

- Your vision provides a reference point for reflection and refinement
- It helps teams identify where practice aligns or diverges from expectations

When a vision is clearly defined and consistently used:

- Decisions become more coherent
- Implementation becomes more focused
- Instruction becomes more aligned across classrooms

## WHAT THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU DO

This guide supports your team in developing a working vision for mathematics instruction that is:

- Grounded in the experiences of students and teachers
- Anchored in clear values and beliefs about teaching and learning
- Connected to the Mathematical Thinking and Reasoning Standards (MTRs)
- Aligned to your district's strategic plan and instructional priorities
- Translated into specific, observable classroom practices

This is an initial draft, not a final product.

Your vision will be strengthened over time through:

- Classroom-based evidence
- Stakeholder input
- Ongoing reflection and revision

# Developing a Vision for High-Quality Mathematics Instruction

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide supports district and school-based teams in developing a working vision for high-quality mathematics instruction.

This is an early-stage process designed to:

- Build internal alignment
- Clarify instructional priorities
- Ground future decisions in shared beliefs

This guide does not aim to produce a final vision. Instead, teams will develop a working draft that will be refined over time through:

- Classroom observations and learning walks
- Stakeholder engagement (students, teachers, families)
- Ongoing reflection and iteration

## CENTERING STUDENT AND TEACHER EXPERIENCE

Strong instructional visions are grounded in the daily realities of classrooms. Before defining values or writing vision statements, teams should anchor their thinking in the experiences of students and teachers.

Individually reflect, then discuss as a team:

**Students**

- What does a meaningful and rigorous math experience feel like for students?
- When students are deeply engaged in mathematics, what are they doing?
- What opportunities should all students consistently have in math classrooms?

**Teachers**

- What does it take for teachers to create those kinds of student experiences?
- What enables strong instruction? What gets in the way?
- What kinds of instructional decisions are teachers regularly making?

**Synthesize:**

- What patterns or themes are emerging?
- Where do you notice alignment or tension between current experiences and desired experiences?

## IDENTIFYING VALUES AND DEVELOPING BELIEFS

Teams often jump directly to writing vision statements, which can result in broad or generic language. Instead, begin by clarifying what you value, and then translate those values into beliefs about teaching and learning mathematics.

### Step 1: Identify Core Values

Use the prompts below to generate a list of values related to mathematics instruction:

- What do we believe all students deserve in their math experience?
- What aspects of mathematics learning are most important to prioritize?
- What do we want to be true in every math classroom?

Capture a set of value statements:

- "We value..."

### Step 2: Develop Belief Statements

Translate your values into clear belief statements:

- "We believe..."

Push for specificity. Strong belief statements:

- Describe what is true about teaching and learning
- Avoid vague or overly broad language
- Reflect instructional priorities, not just aspirations

### Step 3: Consider Instructional Implications

For each belief, ask:

- If this belief were consistently enacted, what would instruction look like?
- What would teachers and students be doing differently?

This step ensures that beliefs are connected to practice.

## Connecting Beliefs to Mathematical Thinking and Reasoning Standards (MTRs)

The Mathematical Thinking and Reasoning Standards (MTRs) provide a concrete anchor for understanding high-quality mathematics instruction in our Florida context.

### Review your belief statements and consider:

- Where do your beliefs clearly align with the MTRs?
- Where do the MTRs push or extend your current thinking?
- Are there any gaps between your beliefs and the expectations of the MTRs?

### Discuss:

- How might your beliefs need to be refined or expanded?
- What new insights emerge when considering this alignment?

This step is intended to deepen understanding, not to evaluate compliance.

## Drafting Your Vision (Working Draft)

Now begin developing a working vision that reflects your values and beliefs.

### Part 1: Draft a Vision Statement

Develop a concise statement that captures:

- The desired student experience in mathematics
- The role of instruction in shaping that experience

This does not need to be final or polished, but it should:

- Reflect your core beliefs
- Be clear enough to share with others for feedback

## Part 2: Define "Look-Fors" Across Key Groups

A strong vision goes beyond a statement. It clearly describes what the vision looks like in practice.

For each group below, define specific, observable "look-fors."

### STUDENTS

- What are students doing during math instruction?
- What kinds of thinking are they engaging in?
- What evidence would show that students are experiencing rigorous and meaningful mathematics?

### TEACHERS

- What instructional moves are teachers making?
- How are teachers facilitating student thinking and discourse?
- What decisions are teachers making in real time?

### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS (COACHES, ADMINISTRATORS)

- What are leaders prioritizing and supporting?
- What are they looking for in classrooms?
- How are they reinforcing the vision through feedback and support?

Push for specificity and observability.

| STUDENTS | TEACHERS | LEADERS |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | |

**Avoid:**

- General statements (for example, “students are engaged”)

**Prioritize:**

- Concrete descriptions (for example, “students explain their reasoning and respond to the reasoning of others”)

### Checking for Coherence

Review your work as a complete set:

- Do your look-fors clearly reflect your beliefs?
- Does your vision statement align with what you described in practice?
- Are there contradictions or gaps?
- Is anything stated in a way that is too vague to act on?

Revise as needed to improve alignment and clarity.

## Remember, This is a Working Draft

This vision is intentionally incomplete.

As your team continues this work, you will refine and strengthen your vision through:

**Classroom-based evidence**

- Learning walks
- Observations of current practice

**Stakeholder input**

- Students
- Teachers
- Families

**Ongoing iteration**

- Revisiting and refining beliefs and look-fors
- Strengthening clarity and alignment

Your current draft should be:

- Clear enough to share
- Specific enough to guide next steps
- Flexible enough to evolve