Florida Materials Navigator

REVIEW AND SELECTION

Designing Effective Test Runs

A District Planning Guide



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Use this guide to design a district test run that produces meaningful evidence about how instructional materials function in authentic classroom settings before an adoption decision is finalized.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A TEST RUN?

A **test run** is a structured opportunity to collect evidence about how instructional materials function in authentic classroom settings before adoption decisions are finalized.

What materials review can tell you.

A close review can show what students are asked to do, what teachers are expected to, and how the program is designed.

What a test run adds.

A classroom test run can reveal how students actually engage, where teachers need support, what implementation implications emerge, and what surprises the team.

What test runs can help districts learn

- How students respond to instructional tasks and routines
- What instructional moves the materials ask teachers to make
- What opportunities and challenges emerge during instruction
- What implementation supports appear necessary
- What additional questions should be investigated before a decision is made

What test runs cannot establish

- Whether the materials will improve achievement across the district
- Whether every teacher will implement the materials successfully
- Whether one program is unquestionably the best choice
- Whether one lesson or one classroom experience represents an entire program

Defining Success

Success is not flawless execution. A successful test run produces useful evidence that helps the district deepen its evaluation and understand what adoption and implementation may require.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide supports district teams in designing a complete test run plan for instructional materials under consideration for adoption. It is intended to help teams move from a general idea of trying materials in classrooms to a deliberate process for gathering and using evidence.

By the end of this guide, your team will have defined

- The purpose of the test run and the questions it should answer
- Which materials, classrooms, teachers, grade-levels, or courses will be included
- How participants will be prepared and supported
- What evidence will be collected and how it will be documented
- District Do's and Don'ts that establish common expectations
- How evidence will be examined and used in the adoption process
- Roles, responsibilities, communication, and time for the full test run process

Use with the Field Guide

The separate **Field Guide: Designing Effective Test Runs** provides the research-based foundation for this work. This planning guide translates those principles into district decisions, structures, and working spaces.

A test run should be intentional from the beginning

The strongest test runs begin with a clear purpose, collect evidence around shared criteria, include thoughtful preparation and support, and examine findings collectively in light of district priorities. Test run evidence should inform the final recommendation, but it should not independently determine it.

Who should be part of the district team designing a test run?

STEP 1 Define the purpose and learning questions

Begin by identifying what the district needs to learn from classroom use that cannot be learned through materials review alone. A clear purpose keeps the test run focused on evidence rather than preference or general impressions.

Start with the adoption process

- What important questions remain after the district has started the materials review?
- Which district priorities would benefit from classroom-based evidence?
- What information would help the committee better understand the implications of recommending each program?
- What questions can only be answered by seeing or experiencing the materials in use?

Draft the purpose of your district test run. What do you need to learn, and how will that learning inform the adoption process?

Develop focused learning questions

Keep the number of questions manageable. Each question should be specific enough to guide evidence collection and broad enough to reveal meaningful patterns across classrooms.

Learning Question	Why this matters to our decision	Evidence we may need

Keep the purpose visible

Every participant should understand what the district is trying to learn and how test run evidence will be used. A test run should not be presented as a vote, a teacher evaluation, or a stand-alone decision process.

STEP 2 Design the test run

The decision should create conditions that allow the district to learn something meaningful about each program while recognizing that a short test run cannot reproduce full implementation.

Determine the scope

Planning Decision	District Decision
Materials to be tested	
Grade levels or courses	
Schools and classrooms	
Length and timing	
Lessons or units	
Order or rotation of materials	

Aim for fair and meaningful conditions

- Select lessons or units that are reasonably representative of each program
- Be intentional about including content informed by district data, identified areas of need, and teacher content knowledge.
- Create comparable expectations for preparation, instructional time, evidence collection, and support
- Include a range of teachers, schools, grade levels or courses, and student experiences when feasible
- Avoid drawing conclusions from one especially strong or especially difficult classroom experience
- Document important differences in test conditions that may affect interpretation

What design choices will help your district make fair and meaningful comparisons across the materials being considered?

STEP 3 Prepare and support participants

Teachers and observers need enough preparation to engage authentically with unfamiliar materials. The purpose is not to reproduce full implementation training or expect teachers to become experts on the materials. Instead, participants should understand the materials well enough to deliver the lesson as intended, see how the materials function as a whole, understand the expectations for the test run, and know what evidence to notice.

Teacher preparation should address

- The purpose of the test run and the district learning questions
- The instructional design and routines needed to facilitate the selected lesson or unit
- What participants would preserve from the materials and what adaptations are permitted
- How evidence will be collected
- Where teachers can go with questions before and during the test run
- How the district will protect teacher trust and make clear that the test run is about learning from the materials, not evaluating the teacher

Participant support plan

Support or Preparation	Who provides it	When it occurs	What participants need

Build in check-ins

Short check-ins give participants a place to surface questions, share implementation challenges, and calibrate evidence collection. They can also help the district distinguish between a challenge created by unfamiliarity and a challenge that may reflect a larger implementation implication.

When and how will participants have opportunities to ask questions, share challenges, and calibrate their evidence collection?

Sunshine Law Consideration: Districts should ensure that all test run discussions, deliberations, and committee conversations are conducted in accordance with applicable Florida Sunshine Law requirements, including requirements related to public meetings when applicable.

STEP 4 Plan evidence collection

Collect evidence intentionally around the district learning questions. Participants should gather evidence using common criteria rather than relying on personal preference or general impressions.

Potential evidence categories

Student Experience How students engage with tasks, directions, representations, discussion, practice, and supports.	**Teacher Experience** What teachers are asked to understand, prepare, facilitate, monitor, and decide during instruction.
Lesson Feasibility How pacing, materials, routines, transitions, technology, and preparation function in real classroom conditions.	**Instructional Moves** The teacher actions the materials prompt and the kinds of student thinking those moves make possible.
Implementation Supports What professional learning, planning time, technology, resources, or leadership support may be needed.	**Questions and Surprises** What emerged that the district did not anticipate and may need to investigate further.

Evidence collection plan

Learning Question	Evidence Source	Who Collects It	How It Will Be Recorded

Evidence is not interpretation

Ask participants to separate what they observed or experienced from what they think it means. This distinction helps teams examine patterns before making judgments or recommendations.

STEP 5 Establish District Do's and Don'ts

District Do's and Don'ts create shared expectations for how the test run will be prepared, facilitated, observed, interpreted, and used. They are especially important when many teachers and schools are participating because they help protect the quality and consistency of the evidence.

Develop expectations across five parts of the process

- Preparing the test run
- Teachers facilitating the test run
- Observing and collecting evidence
- Making sense of the evidence
- Using the evidence

Essential considerations

Purpose Make the purpose of the test run and the intended use of evidence clear to everyone involved.	**Fairness** Create conditions that allow each program to be tested in a fair and meaningful way.
Teacher Trust Make clear that the district is learning about the materials, not evaluating the teacher.	**Common Criteria** Ensure participants gather evidence around the same agreed upon questions and criteria.
Evidence Distinguish observable evidence from opinions, preferences, assumptions, and early conclusions.	**Patterns** Look across lessons, classrooms, and sources before drawing conclusions.
Student Experience Make space to understand students' experiences without treating short-term achievement data as proof of program quality.	**Decision-Making** Use test run evidence to inform, but not independently determine, the final district recommendation.

Draft your district do's and don'ts

Part of the Process	Do	Do Not
Preparing		
Facilitating		
Observing and Collecting Evidence		
Making Sense of Evidence		
Using Evidence		

STEP 6 Make sense of the evidence

Test run evidence is most useful when it is examined collectively and interpreted in light of the district's priorities, other adoption evidence, and the limits of the test run itself.

Before discussing conclusions

- Organize evidence by the distinct learning questions and common criteria
- Look for patterns that appear across multiple classrooms, teachers, or other evidence sources
- Identify evidence that is inconsistent or conflicting
- Separate implementation challenges from judgments about program quality
- Name what remains uncertain or requires additional investigation
- Consider how district context may have shaped the experience

Avoid overclaiming

One lesson, one classroom, or one difficult experience should not be treated as representative of an entire program. Short term student achievement data should not be used as proof of program quality.

Evidence synthesis

What the evidence suggests	What remains uncertain	Implementation Implications	Questions to investigate

Connect the findings to the adoption process

How will test run findings be shared with the adoption committee, and how will the committee use them alongside other evidence?

STEP 7 Complete the District Test Run Plan

Use the summary below to bring the major decisions from this guide into one district plan. This page can serve as the working overview for everyone involved in the test run.

1 Purpose

What are we trying to learn, and how will the evidence inform the adoption process?

2 Learning Questions

What specific questions will guide the test run?

3 Scope and Design

Which materials, grade-levels or courses, schools, classrooms, lessons, and timelines are included?

4 Participant Roles

Who will facilitate, observe, support, collect evidence, synthesize findings, and communicate results?

5 Preparation and Support

What training, resources, check-ins, and points of contact will participants receive?

6 Evidence Collection

What evidence will be collected, by whom, and using what common tools or criteria?

7 District Do's and Don'ts

What shared expectations will protect the quality, fairness, and usefulness of the test run?

8 Evidence Synthesis and Use

How will findings be analyzed, shared, and incorporated into committee deliberations and the resulting recommendation?

DISTRICT TEST RUN PLAN: Roles, timing, and communication

Key roles and responsibilities

Role or Responsibility	Person or Team	Key Responsibilities

Test run timeline

Milestone	Target Date	Owner	Notes

Communication and transparency

Audience	What they need to know	When and how it will be shared

How will participants know where to direct questions or surface challenges during the test run?

How and when will finding be communicated to the adoption committee and other stakeholders?

Transparency Check

Stakeholders should understand the purpose, process, expectations, and intended use of findings before the test run begins.

Appendix A

Essential design considerations

Use these considerations as a final check when drafting or refining your District Do's and Don'ts. They reflect the core issues that can most directly affect the quality and interpretation of test run evidence.

Purpose Is the purpose of the test run clear to everyone involved? Is it clear how the evidence will be used?	**Fairness** Will each program be tested under conditions that allow for a fair and meaningful comparison?
Teacher Trust Is it clear that the test run is intended to learn about the materials, not evaluate the teacher?	**Common Criteria** Will participants gather evidence around the same agreed upon criteria?
Evidence Will participants distinguish observable evidence from opinions, preferences, and assumptions?	**Patterns** Will the process prevent conclusions based on one lesson, one classroom, or one especially strong or difficult experience?
Student Experience Will the district examine students' experiences without treating short-term achievement data as proof of program quality?	**Decision-Making** Is it clear that test run evidence will inform, but not independently determine, the district's final recommendation?

Final reflection

Which of these considerations needs the most explicit language in your district plan?

Appendix B

Additional design considerations

These additional considerations can help districts strengthen the process when the test run is large, complex, or distributed across many schools and participants.

Transparency How will the purpose, process, expectation, and findings be communicated to stakeholders?	**Interpretation** How will participants be guided to examine patterns of evidence before making judgments or recommendations?
Implementation Challenges How will the team examine implementation challenges carefully rather than assuming difficulty means the materials are weak?	**Check-Ins** Where will participants have opportunities to ask questions, share challenges, and calibrate their learning?
Bias How will participants recognize and manage preferences or prior opinions about the materials?	**Representation** Does the test run include a range of teachers, schools, grade-levels or courses, and student experiences?
Teacher Preparation What do teachers need to understand and experience before facilitating the materials?	**Focus** Are participants staying focused on questions that can only be answered by trying the materials in the classrooms?

Use these prompts to strengthen your plan

- Does one of our existing Do's or Don'ts already address this consideration?
- Should we strengthen or clarify an existing expectation?
- Do we need to add a new expectation?
- Is this consideration relevant to our district context and test run design?

Final Review

Check the plan for coherence

Review the complete plan before launching the test run. The pieces should work together as one coherent approach to gathering evidence.

- ❏ Our purpose is specific and connected to questions that classroom use can help answer.
- ❏ Our test run design gives each program a fair and meaningful opportunity to be experienced.
- ❏ Participants understand that the process is intended to learn about the materials, not evaluate teachers.
- ❏ Teachers receive enough preparation and support to engage authentically with unfamiliar materials.
- ❏ Evidence collection is tied to common learning questions and criteria.
- ❏ Our Do's and Don'ts address preparation, facilitation, evidence collection, interpretation, and use.
- ❏ We have a plan for looking across evidence and identifying patterns, uncertainty, and implementation implications.
- ❏ We are clear about how test run findings will inform committee deliberations and the resulting recommendation.
- ❏ We have identified roles, timing, communication, and next steps.

Before you begin

What needs to be clarified, revised, or communicated before the district launches the test run?