



2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning

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RE
RIVET
EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

Rivet Education's mission is to define high-quality, curriculum-aligned professional learning and create tools and services that support state and local education agencies in putting that definition into practice for teachers. We do this because we believe that high-quality professional learning (HQPL) is key to ensuring that teachers are well equipped to provide students with the educational opportunities they want and deserve.

We know from an increasing body of research that when you teach students using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), they learn more and perform better. [1] We also know that these improvements in learning can be greatly enhanced if the instructional materials are paired with ongoing HQPL. [2] However, there is less data on the extent to which teachers have access to HQPL across the country and on the barriers leaders face in providing quality training to teachers.

Rivet partnered with Benenson Strategy Group to answer these questions through a three-month study of the professional learning marketplace. Through surveys and interviews with over 400 school and school system leaders and teachers, we discovered that:

- Teachers want curriculum-aligned professional learning provided by experts that responds to their needs, is collaborative, and is ongoing;
- While teachers are being provided with regular opportunities to participate in professional learning, only 1 in 3 teachers find it to be useful;
- Leaders share teachers' definitions of what professional learning should be. However, they face challenges and competing priorities that make it hard to provide professional learning that meets their definitions; and
- Leaders also struggle to access reliable information about the quality of professional learning providers and services in the marketplace.

Based on our research, Rivet released a narrative and set of recommendations for school and school system leaders to provide all teachers with the resources and support they need to be confident in their classrooms and skillfully use their instructional materials. **Read on to learn more.**

Introduction

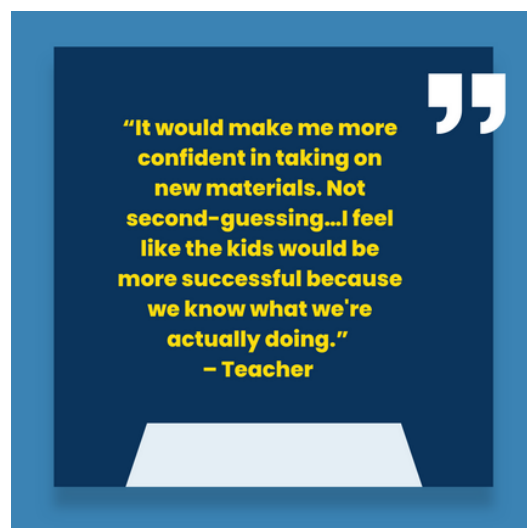
Across the country, too few students leave their K–12 experience equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed. This is partly because many students spend too little classroom time on meaningful work and instead work on assignments that ask little of them and do not reflect grade-level expectations. A study by TNTP shows that in a single school year, the average student in the nation spends 581 of 720 hours – or more than 80% of their learning time – on assignments that are not high-quality or on grade level. [3]

WHILE 70% OF STUDENTS ASPIRE TO CAREERS THAT REQUIRE AT LEAST ONE YEAR OF COLLEGE, ONLY 17% ARE MASTERING GRADE-LEVEL CONTENT THAT WILL PREPARE THEM FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK. - TNTP'S OPPORTUNITY MYTH

Students' lack of access to high-quality work is not due to a lack of extreme effort on the part of teachers, schools, and school systems. In reality, local and state education agencies often struggle to pinpoint the strategies necessary to quickly impact students' instructional experience at scale.

Rivet Education believes that an investment in high-quality instructional materials and aligned professional learning is one of the most important investments schools and school systems can make to impact the quality of instruction in classrooms. However, improving instruction is hard work and results won't appear overnight. Teachers must have strong support from their district and school leaders, peers, and even a professional learning expert to skillfully use their materials. When teachers are set up to succeed, students have the best chance at success. Understanding what teachers want and need in their professional learning is a critical step in providing the support they deserve. Further understanding the barriers or challenges education leaders experience in providing HQPL to teachers is also important in understanding the professional learning landscape.

The **2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning** market report, [narrative](#), and [recommendations to the field](#) highlight key insights on the current state of the professional learning marketplace and how we can collectively work to provide teachers with high-quality, curriculum-aligned professional learning.



2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning

What Teachers Want

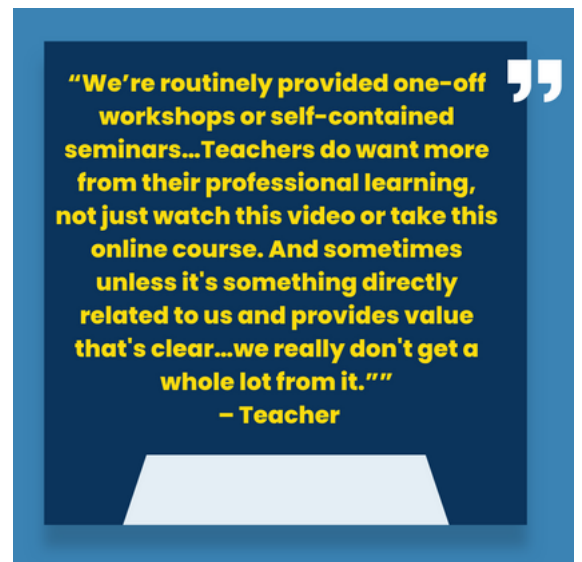
Across the country, teachers have a strong desire to participate in professional learning that will help them be confident in their classroom, specifically when using new high-quality instructional materials.

According to the study, 96 percent of teachers believe that the number one factor leaders should consider when planning professional learning is whether it will help teachers effectively use their instructional materials. [4]

A growing body of research supports this belief. Multiple studies point to the positive impact that curriculum-based professional learning can have on teachers and students. Specifically, this type of professional learning, anchored in the context of teachers' everyday work, improves teachers' abilities to engage students with rigorous content and grows teachers' understandings of relevant content and content pedagogy. [5]

In addition to wanting curriculum-aligned professional learning, teachers want professional learning that offers them a chance to collaborate with their peers, is responsive in real-time to their needs and the needs of their students, and gives them the freedom to choose topics that are aligned with their professional learning goals. However, our research also confirmed that simply providing teachers with curriculum-based learning is not enough.

Nearly 90 percent of ELA and math teachers in our study indicated that they are provided with professional learning focused on their instructional materials, [6] with 46 percent saying they received professional learning at least one time per month and 30 percent saying they had support two to three times per month. [7]

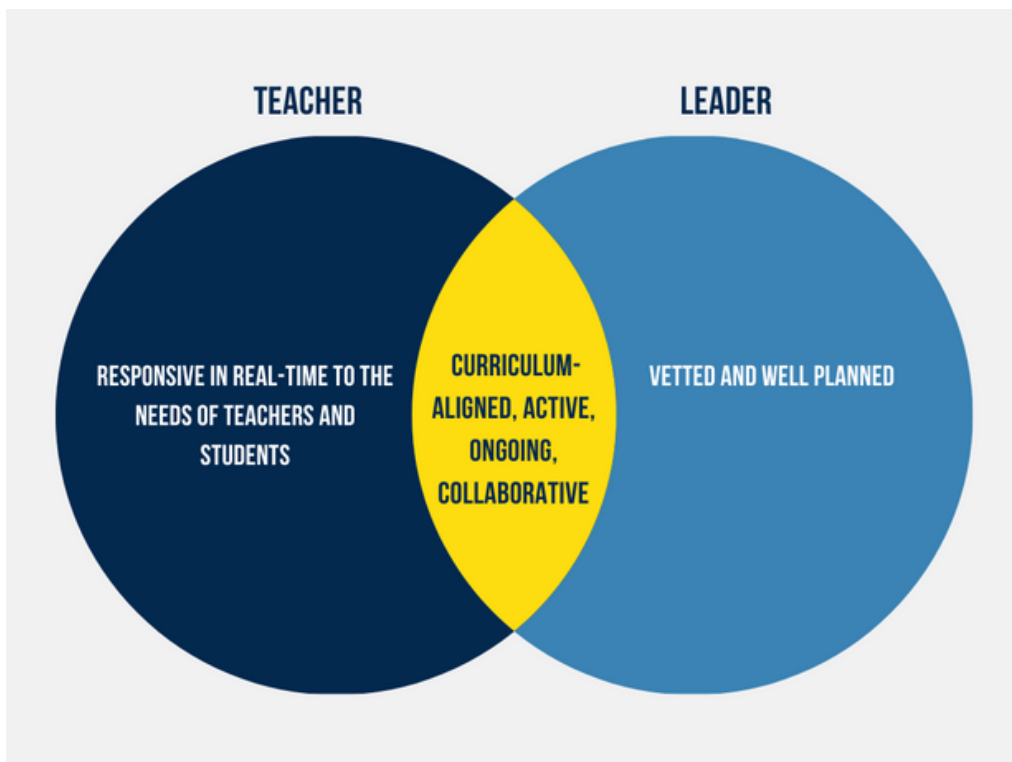


Yet, only 1 in 3 teachers believes that it has helped them a lot. [8] The quality of professional learning matters.

Barriers to Providing High-Quality Professional Learning

According to the study, 57 percent of leaders agree that professional learning must be active, ongoing, and focused. [9]

They also agree that professional learning should provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate and practice with each other. While leaders share teachers' views of what professional learning should be, the study illuminates the fact that leaders face challenges and competing priorities that make it difficult to provide professional learning that meets this definition.



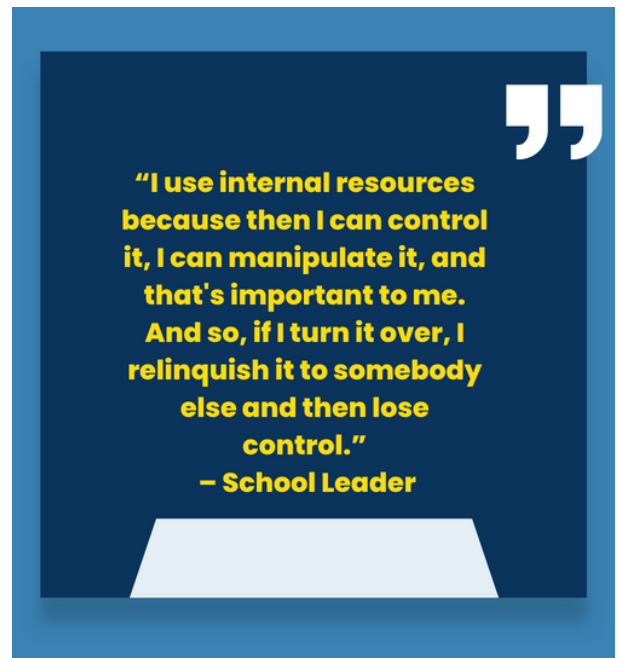
Moreover, one in three system leaders reported that they feel frustrated, anxious, or confused when it comes to planning professional learning for their schools. [10]

They are anxious about choosing professional learning that will engage teachers and fear that one bad experience will cause teachers to write off professional learning altogether. Therefore, they default to professional learning that has been previously evaluated and reviewed and is planned well in advance. [11]

Further complicating these frustrations is a lack of information about the quality of providers and services in the marketplace. Therefore, 75 percent of the professional learning provided by leaders in the study is conducted in-house. [12] While in-house professional learning can be high-quality professional learning, there are specific times when it may be less effective.

Supporting educators through the challenges of implementing a new curriculum requires expertise that is often hard to find internally because these materials are new to everyone in the school or school system. Therefore, the early stages of this work may require a temporary departure from schools' and school systems' typical strategies of relying on in-house support.

According to the study, leaders fear bringing in outside expertise because they are concerned that the services will not be customized or relevant to the unique needs of teachers and students within their school or school system. And due to a lack of financial resources and time, they are fearful that bringing in an outside expert will be wasteful all around. [13]



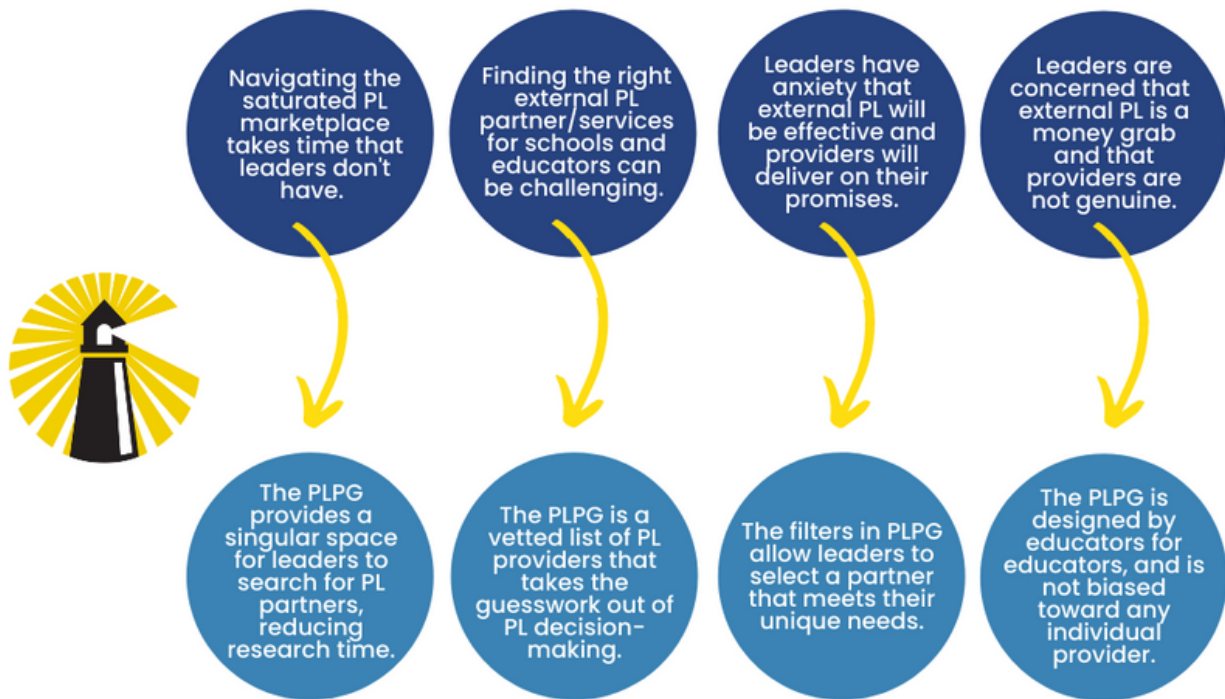
Recommendations to the Field

Based on the research findings, Rivet has outlined the following four recommendations for professional learning decision-makers to ensure that all teachers in schools and school systems have access to frequent high-quality professional learning:

- 1 Provide teachers with curriculum-aligned professional learning that is engaging, collaborative, and responsive to their needs;
- 2 Develop a professional learning plan with a deliberate and cohesive scope and sequence rather than one that addresses disconnected concepts or strategies. Professional learning without a clear plan and follow-up is ineffective;
- 3 Beyond traditional workshops, teachers need regular coaching and collaborative planning time to ensure that they have the support needed to skillfully use their materials; and
- 4 Expand the capacity of your professional learning team by partnering with an outside expert to support your unique curriculum needs.

Beyond these recommendations, the study highlighted that the [Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) (PLPG) can be a valuable resource for leaders who are looking for quality professional learning services and providers, even if they currently rely primarily on internal support or are satisfied with their current instructional materials. [14] The PLPG conducts unbiased evaluations of organizations to determine whether they have the skill and expertise necessary to support educators with curriculum-based professional learning. This helps leaders quickly identify external partners who are qualified and can serve as extensions of their internal team.

Professional Learning Pain Points



Professional Learning Partner Guide Solutions

Conclusion

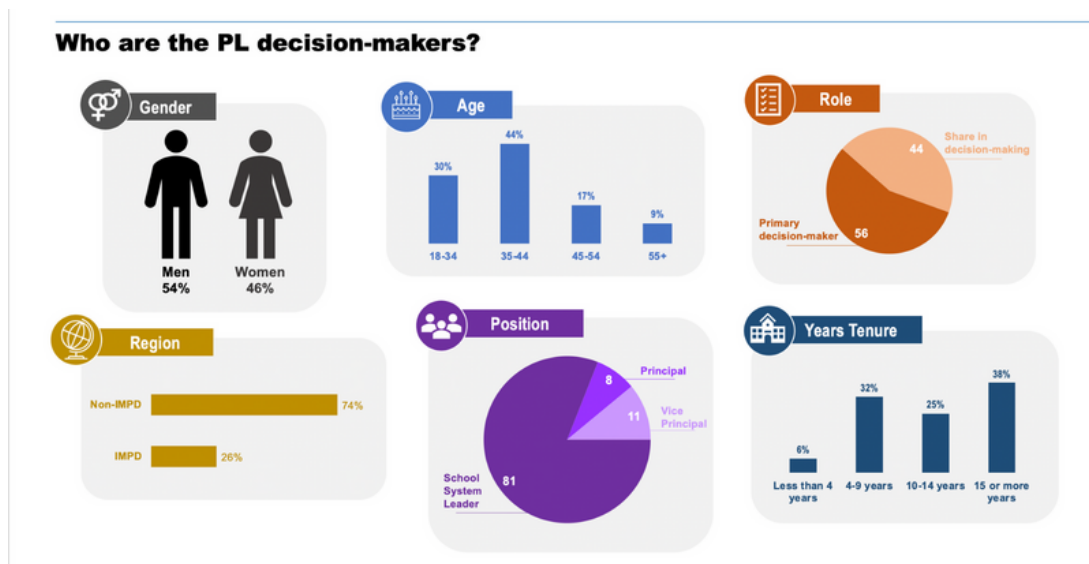
In keeping with our mission, the 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning market report and accompanying narrative are designed to build national awareness of the need to provide teachers with more effective, curriculum-aligned professional learning. We aim to make it easier for leaders to partner with organizations, like those in the [PLPG](#), who have the expertise to help teachers use their instructional materials with confidence.

If you are interested in learning more about this research or need support in planning or executing a high-quality professional learning strategy in your state or school system, contact us at info@riveteducation.org.

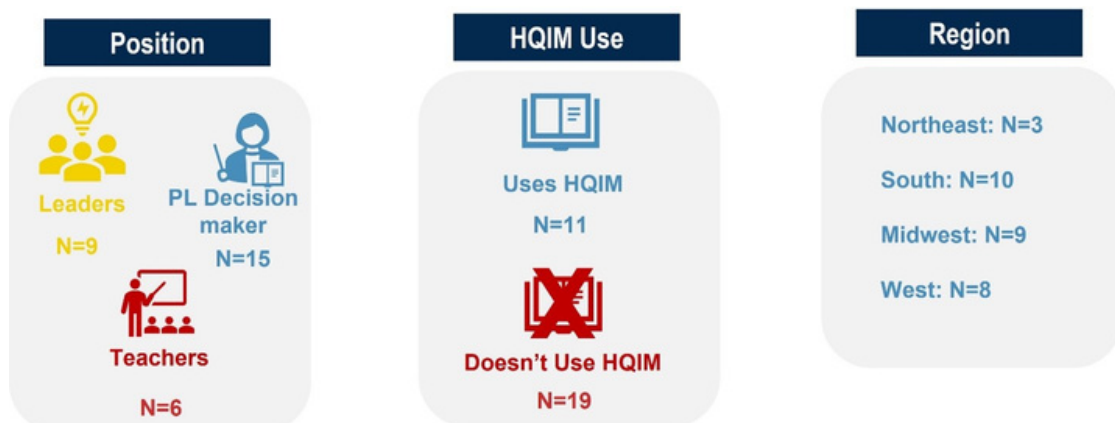
Appendix A: Study Methodology

Thanks to the [generosity](#) of Overdeck Family Foundation, Rivet Education partnered with Benenson Strategy Group (BSG) to conduct research on the professional learning marketplace. Over a three-month period, BSG engaged nearly 450 school and school system leaders and teachers across the country in quantitative research and qualitative conversations about the state of the professional learning marketplace, school and district professional learning decision-making processes, and motivations for providing curriculum-aligned professional learning to teachers and leaders. The study was conducted in two phases.

Phase 1: A 20-minute online survey of 380 school and school system leaders and teachers that generated findings on the current state of professional learning, the professional learning marketplace and decision-making process, and interest in the Professional Learning Partner Guide.



Phase 2: 45-minute in-depth interviews with 30 professional learning decision-makers, school leaders, and teachers to develop a national narrative around high-quality professional learning and ultimately change planning behaviors.



Appendix B: Meet Our Partners



BENENSON STRATEGY GROUP

Benenson Strategy Group (BSG) is a global strategic research consultancy that takes lessons learned from the highly competitive world of politics and applies them to our client's biggest challenges. BSG believes that research needs to go beyond just collecting data – it should provide meaningful, relevant, and actionable insights that impact campaigns, categories, and industries. Their political background affords them the ability to understand how opinions are formed, and how they can be changed, uncover the hidden architecture of opinion to understand conflicting values and how they can resolve or leverage them, and be analytically aggressive.



OVERDECK FAMILY FOUNDATION

Overdeck Family Foundation was established in 2011 by John and Laura Overdeck with the goal of providing all children the opportunity to unlock their potential. The Foundation focuses exclusively on enhancing education, funding efforts both inside and outside of school in the areas of early childhood, informal STEM education, and K-9 programs that include supporting teachers and leaders and student-centered learning environments

Appendix C: Bibliography

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- 6** Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q10 r1 and r2 Would you say that you have been provided with professional learning that focuses on helping you effectively use instructional materials for your subject areas.
- 7** Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q11 In the school year so far (2021-2022), how frequently, if at all, have you participated in professional learning activities?

Appendix C: Bibliography

8 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q13 You mentioned that you've received professional learning from your school system this school year. How helpful do you consider the professional learning that you've received from your school system?

9 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q33 Below is a list of statements one could make about professional learning. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each.

10 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q35 How do you typically feel when making decisions about professional learning for your school/school system?

11 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q33 Below is a list of statements one could make about professional learning. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each.

12 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q24 would you say that teachers in your school/school system have been provided with professional learning that focuses on helping effectively use instructional materials for their subject areas?

13 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q35. How do you typically feel when making decisions about professional learning for your school/school system?

14 Rivet Education (April 2022). 2022 Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning, Q23. How satisfied are you with the instructional materials that teachers are using in the classroom? Q24. And would you say that teachers in your school/school system have been provided with professional learning that focuses on helping effectively use instructional materials for their subject areas? Q37. If there was a free resource that evaluated high-quality professional learning providers and could be used to guide you in searching for professional learning partners for your school/school system, how interested would you be in using it for future decisions about professional learning?