Aligning People, Time, and High-Quality Instructional Materials

A Path to Instructional Excellence

RIVET EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

Too often, school systems treat academics and staffing as separate efforts when they are deeply intertwined. Integrating strategic staffing practices[1] with high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)[2] implementation can significantly improve instructional quality, teacher satisfaction, and student learning outcomes. However, educators often overlook the connection between the two.

To realize the full potential of HQIM, schools must align their staffing strategies to support instruction at every phase—by preparing new teachers to use HQIM, giving current teachers the time and support to use it well, and empowering experienced educators to lead HQIM-focused professional learning. These phases are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Based on insights from practitioners, expert advisors, and national research, this report elevates three essential, actionable steps that education leaders can take to integrate these often siloed workstreams:

Prepare pre-service teachers to teach with HQIM by embedding HQIM into every stage of teacher preparation.

Establish school schedules that support strong HQIM implementation by prioritizing collaborative planning using HQIM, protecting instructional time, and creating opportunities for student support.

Develop leadership pathways that provide opportunities for effective teachers to lead HQIM-focused professional learning and coaching for peers and pre-service candidates.

PURPOSE

This report offers a practical vision for how leaders at every level can bridge the gap between HQIM implementation and staffing structures to improve teaching and learning. Specifically, it aims to:

- Break down silos between academic initiatives and staffing strategies, positioning them as mutually reinforcing systems.
- Showcase bright spots at the school system and campus levels where staffing strategies actively support HQIM implementation.
- Offer concrete, actionable recommendations to district and campus leaders, technical assistance (TA) providers, state education agencies (SEAs) and policymakers, education preparation providers (EPPs), and philanthropy.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Though not a panacea, a growing body of research suggests that providing teachers with HQIM is a more impactful, cost-effective, and scalable path to improving student outcomes than many other interventions (Learning First, 2018). Strong instructional materials increase the likelihood that students have the opportunity to engage in grade-level work every day and allow teachers to focus their efforts on bringing lessons to life for students.

However, research has also shown that simply dropping off a stack of new instructional materials in teachers' classrooms or handing them the login credentials for a maze of digital resources is not enough to improve student outcomes. Implementation matters, and implementation is only as strong as the conditions that support it (Blazar et al., 2019).

RAND's American Instructional Resources Survey (AIRS) reveals that only 60 percent of teachers say that they use their HQIM "regularly," meaning for at least 50 percent of their instructional time, and only 35 percent of teachers report that they use their HQIM "intensively"—for more than 75 percent of instructional time (Doan et al., 2025).

Teachers cannot fully leverage HQIM when they are:

- Underprepared by their pre-service programs to understand and use HQIM.
- Overwhelmed by unrealistic schedules and workloads that do not provide adequate planning time during the school day.
- Unsupported in professional learning and coaching, partly due to a dearth of qualified leaders to provide that support.

The issues underlying these challenges lie at the intersection of academics and staffing.

> With the new curricula, we have handed teachers a tool much more complicated than any smartphone, one that holds great promise but requires complex behavior changes. And we have largely left them to figure it out on their own. – Kane & Steiner, 2019

Challenge 1

Pre-service teachers are underprepared by educator preparation programs to understand and use HQIM.

Most educator preparation programs (EPPs) relegate HQIM-specific practice to school systems, which limits the readiness of early career teachers and increases the burden on school-based support systems.

- Most EPPs do not define HQIM fluency as a core competency. Instead, EPP coursework often focuses on decontextualized teaching strategies (e.g., inquiry-based learning), rather than training candidates to internalize, adapt, and deliver lessons using HQIM.
- Because graduates work in districts that use different HQIM, EPPs often hesitate to align coursework with any one program. Moreover, the field has not had a clear, transferable set of HQIM-related skills for candidates to master that are applicable across programs.
- Teacher candidates whose EPPs emphasize lesson planning as the hallmark of teaching can be frustrated and ill-prepared to use HQIM.
- Pre-service teachers rarely see HQIM used well during field placements, especially when mentor teachers improvise with supplemental materials or lack HQIM expertise themselves.
- EPPs do not consistently partner with school systems to ensure the HQIM they expose teacher candidates to via coursework aligns with local adoption patterns, especially in high-need subject areas and schools.
- Observation and evaluation tools for pre-service teachers rarely reinforce or assess HQIM implementation.

Challenge 2

School schedules are not designed to prioritize collaborative planning using HQIM, protect instructional time, or create opportunities for student support.

These challenges compound, making instructional materials harder to implement—especially for teachers working in under-resourced schools.

- The amount of instructional time teachers have in a day, in a week, and across a year does not account for HQIM pacing guidance, leaving teachers to "fit in" lessons by cutting, skipping, or condensing content. For example, testing windows and holiday seasons cut into the number of instructional days, and an ELA HQIM may require a daily 75-minute block, but the school schedule only provides 60 minutes.
- Teachers often lack protected planning time during the school day. When they do have planning time during the school day, it is frequently fragmented across the week (15–30 minutes here and there) making it hard for teachers to engage in deep HQIM study or data-driven planning that requires uninterrupted time.
- Even when planning time is provided, it is not always focused on preparing to teach using HQIM. Instead, teachers often spend it on logistical tasks, administrative updates, or compliance-driven meetings rather than unit internalization, lesson rehearsal, or HQIM-specific data analysis.
- School schedules often make it difficult for teachers to observe and provide feedback to peers; even when coaching is provided, it is disconnected from HQIM (e.g., suggesting student engagement strategies outside of those already provided by the HQIM).
- Teachers are often required to wear many hats (e.g., lunch duty, dismissal duty, parent liaison, interventionist, etc.). The resulting workload and fragmented schedule give them little time to plan for effective HQIM use, undermining instruction and fueling turnover.
- Multi-grade or multi-subject teachers face compounded challenges, as they must plan across multiple HQIM products with limited time and support, often without common planning partners.
- Teachers report feeling isolated when they are the only ones using a given HQIM in their grade or subject, making collaborative planning nearly impossible.
- There is often no staffing infrastructure to support flexible regrouping for intervention, so reteaching and small-group instruction are inconsistently delivered—even when student data indicate a need.
- Support staff are rarely trained in HQIM or deployed strategically to safeguard instructional time, assist with planning, or provide student support.

Challenge 3

Teachers are unsupported in professional learning and coaching, partly due to a dearth of qualified leaders to provide that support.

Even when schools want to provide strong professional learning, staffing and scheduling limitations often prevent teachers from receiving sustained, HQIM-aligned support that helps them grow in their craft and encourages them to stay in the teaching profession.

- In many schools, there is not enough time in the schedule for both regular collaborative planning and individualized coaching. As a result, leaders often have to choose between protecting time for teachers to plan together or pulling them for coaching or feedback, leaving both supports under-resourced or inconsistent.
- Coaches are often stretched too thin—not just by the number of teachers they support but also because staffing shortages frequently pull them into other roles like substitute coverage, limiting their ability to provide consistent, HQIM-aligned coaching.
- Professional development is often "one size fits all," rather than differentiated by content area, experience level, or the HQIM a teacher uses—making it less relevant and more challenging to apply.
- Teachers rarely receive regular, HQIM-specific coaching, especially in high-need schools, where support roles are frequently underfunded or reassigned mid-year.
- Few systems have formalized roles for teachers to lead HQIM-focused professional learning, meaning much of the instructional leadership burden falls on principals or instructional coaches who do not always have deep experience using HQIM.
- Scheduling constraints often isolate teachers by content or grade, limiting peer-to-peer observation and collaborative coaching opportunities that could support HQIM implementation.
- High turnover in leadership and coaching roles disrupts continuity, making it difficult for teachers to receive sustained support in using their HQIM over time.
- Few career pathways exist for teachers to take leadership roles with meaningful responsibility and compensation. This lack of opportunity contributes to teacher attrition and leaves schools without HQIM-focused peer coaches.
- Weak leadership pipelines also result in ineffective mentorship for pre-service candidates and overwhelm existing teachers, for whom mentoring is an added burden.

A SHARED VISION: ALIGNING PEOPLE, TIME, AND HQIM

In a future-oriented school system, all new and veteran teachers are equipped, empowered, and supported to use HQIM effectively. This means:

- Pre-service teachers enter the profession with exposure to HQIM and practice using HQIM to plan effective lessons.
- Teachers have collaborative planning using HQIM, protected instructional time, and opportunities for student support.
- Great teachers grow into roles where they lead content- and HQIM-focused professional learning and coaching for peers and pre-service teachers.

Said another way,

IF

- Pre-service/educator preparation programs prepare teachers to teach using HQIM throughout coursework and clinical experiences.
- School system and campus leaders design school schedules that prioritize collaborative planning using HQIM, protect instructional time, and create opportunities for student support.
- School system and campus leaders develop leadership pathways that provide opportunities for effective teachers to lead HQIM-focused professional learning and coaching for peers and pre-service candidates.

THEN

- Pre-service teachers will enter the field better equipped to deliver high-quality instruction.
- Schools will be able to build sustainable instructional pipelines that meet staffing demands.
- In-service teachers will become more effective and remain in the profession longer.
- *All* students will learn more, better, and faster.

KEY ACTIONS AND AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

To bring this shared vision to life, education leaders must take three key actions that align staffing with HQIM implementation.

1. **Prepare pre-service teachers to teach with HQIM** by embedding HQIM into every stage of teacher preparation.

2. **Establish school schedules that support strong HQIM implementation** by prioritizing collaborative planning using HQIM, protecting instructional time, and creating opportunities for student support.

3. **Develop leadership pathways** that provide opportunities for effective teachers to lead HQIM-focused professional learning and coaching for peers and pre-service candidates.

The tables below detail specific actions that educator preparation programs (EPPs), school and school system leaders, state education agencies (SEAs) and state policymakers, technical assistance (TA) providers, and philanthropy can take to bridge the gap between HQIM implementation and staffing structures to improve teaching and learning.

Note that the brevity of the actions below belies the amount of strategic thinking, partnership, and work required to accomplish some of them. EPPs and education leaders at the school, school system, and state levels who choose to integrate strategic staffing and HQIM implementation might consider partnering with a TA provider with deep expertise in this area.

1 Prepare Pre-Service Teachers to Teach with HQIM

Why It Matters: Pre-service teachers trained in HQIM are more likely to deliver rigorous instruction from day one, accelerating student learning and boosting teacher confidence and retention.

> Teachers trained in High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) through their educator preparation programs enter the classroom with a clear advantage. They know how to internalize and deliver rigorous curricula from day one, saving time and maximizing impact. Instead of scrambling to piece together lessons, they're ready to teach with purpose, aligning instruction to student needs and driving meaningful learning from the start."
>
> - Misty Rieber, Chief Academic Officer, Lubbock ISD

Role-Specific Recommendations

Prepare Pre-Service Teachers to Teach with HQIM	
Who	**What**
Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)	• Identify the most commonly used HQIM in high-placement districts, especially in high-need subject areas and schools within those districts. • Update **methods courses** to ensure aspiring educators 1) understand how HQIM contributes to better learning outcomes for all students; 2) can effectively plan for instruction using HQIM; 3) can effectively deliver instruction using HQIM. • Prioritize placing pre-service teachers in schools and with mentor teachers who use HQIM. • Align **rubrics and other tools used to evaluate and provide feedback to pre-service teachers** to HQIM implementation practices (e.g., shift emphasis from writing lesson plans to internalizing lessons from HQIM).
School and School System Leaders	• Share with EPPs that provide pre-service teachers the HQIM your school is using. Explain to those EPPs why it is important that EPP coursework focuses on using HQIM rather than creating novel lesson plans. • Determine which teacher pipeline models (e.g., apprenticeship, residency, student teaching) you can leverage and how the preparation of pre-service candidates in your school(s) can both prepare them for future roles and contribute to HQIM implementation today (creating planning time for other teachers, delivering responsive student support, etc.). • Build HQIM expertise and experience into mentor teacher requirements. • Ensure mentor teacher training reinforces, rather than contradicts, HQIM implementation efforts (e.g., emphasize mentors' role in supporting unit and lesson internalization rather than creating novel lesson plans).

Role-Specific Recommendations

Prepare Pre-Service Teachers to Teach with HQIM	
Who	**What**
School and School System Leaders (cont..)	• Provide mentor teachers with adequate time and **compensation** to account for additional responsibilities. • Provide time and structures for mentor and pre-service teachers to plan collaboratively using HQIM. • Ensure that the **feedback** and coaching that pre-service teachers receive—from mentor teachers and others—focus on building their ability to use HQIM effectively.
State Education Agencies (SEAs) and State Policy Makers	• Update **teacher preparation standards**, program approval requirements, and **program renewal requirements** to require EPPs to integrate HQIM across **methods courses and clinical experiences**. • Require that pre-service clinical experiences focus on HQIM to ensure new teachers gain hands-on, HQIM-aligned experience in real classrooms. • Provide **training** for EPP faculty on HQIM, including site visits to see HQIM implementation in action. • Create **mentor trainings** aligned to HQIM and instructional leadership best practices that school systems can use to train mentor teachers. • Advocate for **legislation** that facilitates these changes.
Technical Assistance (TA) Providers	**For TA Providers Working with Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs):** • Support EPPs in embedding HQIM into **coursework and methods instruction**, ensuring teacher candidates develop deep HQIM fluency. • Help EPPs design clinical experiences that give candidates extended, hands-on practice using HQIM in real classrooms. • Facilitate partnerships between EPPs and districts using strategic staffing models—such as co-teaching, residency, or apprenticeship placements—to meet districts' staffing needs (e.g., middle school math) and support HQIM-aligned clinical learning.

Role-Specific Recommendations

Prepare Pre-Service Teachers to Teach with HQIM	
Who	**What**
Technical Assistance (TA) Providers (cont...)	**For TA Providers Working with School Systems:** • Help districts assess and strengthen their teacher pipelines by partnering with EPPs that prepare candidates to meet districts' staffing needs (e.g., middle school math) and teach with HQIM. • Guide districts in designing staffing and **scheduling** models that incorporate teacher residents in ways that expand planning time for current teachers using HQIM, protect instructional time, and provide opportunities for student support. • Support districts in building financially sustainable models that **compensate** teacher residents and ensure pre-service candidates receive the time, mentorship, and support needed to become HQIM-ready on day one. • Help school systems evaluate the effectiveness of staffing models in supporting aspiring teachers' HQIM implementation and adjust based on data.
Philanthropy	• Support district and educator prep program partnerships that integrate HQIM into **coursework** and expand practice-based training through residencies and apprenticeships. • Fund technical assistance for school system–EPP partnerships to design and pilot new approaches to HQIM-aligned preparation and strategic staffing, leveraging residents and apprenticeships, with a clear path to sustainability and scale. • Invest in evaluation partners to conduct formative research that helps districts, EPPs, and TA providers learn about the effectiveness of strategic staffing models on HQIM implementation in real time and generate insights to inform state and national policy. • Prioritize sustainability from the start. Fund only those efforts—whether partnerships, pilots, or technical assistance—with a clear path to long-term affordability, integration into existing systems, and scalability beyond the grant period.

2 Establish School Schedules That Support Strong HQIM Implementation

Why It Matters: Teachers need time to plan, instruct, and provide additional student support— all using HQIM. Strategic staffing is critical in ensuring collaboration and planning for HQIM implementation does not happen "off the clock" or on teachers' own time. Schools must intentionally schedule time during the school day for teachers to co-plan with colleagues using HQIM, observe instruction using HQIM, analyze student work from HQIM, and plan for and provide student supports that are responsive to real-time student needs and help them access the grade-level content in HQIM. This can happen during collaborative planning blocks and through shared coverage arrangements. Furthermore, instructional blocks must be uninterrupted and be long enough to accommodate the adopted HQIM; otherwise, teachers will constantly have to figure out what to cut, breaking the intentional design of the instructional materials and short changing student learning.

There are three main questions school and school system leaders must answer when creating school schedules that prioritize collaborative planning using HQIM, protect instructional time, and create opportunities for student support:

1. **When will planning, instructional, and support time happen?**
2. **Who will lead the planning, instructional, and support time, and how will they be trained and compensated**
3. **Where will the students be, and what will they do while their teachers are in collaborative planning time?**

1. *When* will planning, instructional, and support time happen?

- **Planning:** There is not yet a robust research base to answer the question of how much time teachers need to plan effectively, and the answer likely depends on myriad factors such as how long a school has been implementing an HQIM, how long an individual teacher has been teaching and using an HQIM, whether teachers loop with their students, etc. Interviews with practitioners suggest that, ideally, teachers would have the following time to internalize and prepare to teach modules/units and lessons from their HQIM:
    - ~Quarterly full-day opportunities for deep module/unit studies on PD days (or other release time opportunities).
    - ~Monthly half-day opportunities for ongoing module/unit study on PD days.
    - ~Twice-weekly 45-75 minute professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on lesson internalization and rehearsal, and analyzing student performance during or outside the student day.

- **Protected instructional blocks:** Teachers need uninterrupted time for core instruction using their HQIM. This requires that leaders design schedules with teaching blocks that match the number of instructional minutes required by the HQIM. Additionally, pacing across units and lessons is notoriously tricky, especially in the first 1–2 years a teacher uses a new HQIM. Therefore, leaders must be prepared to help teachers figure out what to do when they inevitably fall behind on pacing. Publishers often offer guidance in this area.

- **Time for responsive support:** When teachers use comprehensive HQIM for Tier 1 instruction, more students will master grade-level content, reducing the need for frequent Tier 2 interventions. However, it is highly unlikely that HQIM will meet the instructional needs of every student at every point in time. Therefore, educators must plan how and when students who need additional support will receive it. Crucially, *no matter when the additional time happens, educators must ensure it is deeply connected to and priming students for the Tier 1 work they will be asked to complete in class.* This includes planning for the use of supplemental instructional materials, which many districts adopt or require but rarely build time for in their master schedules. Without protected time, these materials often become an afterthought—undermining their intended role in supporting access to grade-level instruction (CEMD, 2023). Leaders can use the following structures to create time for responsive support for students:
    - Intervention or reteaching blocks
    - Flex time built into the day/week
    - Before or after-school **tutoring**

2. *Who will lead* the planning, instructional, and support time, and how will they be trained and compensated?

Various educators can lead effective planning, instructional, and support time. The important thing is that those educators have clear expectations from their leaders on how the time should be spent (i.e., collaborating with peers to analyze student work and prepare to teach modules/units and lessons from their HQIM) and deep expertise in the content area and HQIM. Strategic staffing models can result in the following budget-neutral roles:

- **Teacher leaders with a hybrid teaching and coaching schedule** provide peer support during the school day by leading collaborative planning and offering HQIM-aligned feedback.
- **Lead teachers with a "regular" teaching schedule** support colleagues day-to-day and model HQIM instruction in their classrooms when their schedules allow it.
- **Co-teaching with residents and apprentices** expands classroom capacity and creates space for small-group instruction, lesson internalization, or peer modeling.
- **School-based instructional coaches** offer job-embedded support through real-time coaching, co-planning, and modeling aligned to HQIM.
- **District-based instructional coaches shared between schools** deliver targeted HQIM support during key implementation moments, such as new unit launches or early adoption phases.

3. *Where will the students be*, and *what will they do* while their teachers are in collaborative planning time?

Strategic staffing requires thoughtful planning for how students will continue learning while their teachers are engaged in other essential responsibilities—planning collaboratively, receiving coaching, or supporting peers. Leaders might consider using the following roles and structures to ensure students remain engaged in structured, purposeful learning so that instructional momentum continues:

- Residents, apprentices, or paraprofessionals who support instruction and coverage.
- Enrichment staff or elective teachers who provide non-core experiences.
- Flexible grouping strategies using interventionists or co-teachers to pull small groups.
- Community partners or tutors who deliver high-quality academic support.
- Thoughtful scheduling that pairs course-alike teams for staggered planning or intervention time.

School systems can use different permutations of the answers to these three questions to create a schedule that fits their local context, needs, and resources.

Role-Specific Recommendations

Establish school schedules that support strong HQIM implementation.	
Who	**What**
School and School System Leaders	• **Audit** current schedules to assess how much time teachers have for **collaborative planning**, protected instruction, and responsive student support, and talk to educators to determine how they actually use that time. • Design **master schedules** to include regular **collaborative planning** blocks for grade-level or content-alike teams, protected time for uninterrupted instruction, and flexible time for responsive student supports. • Set clear expectations for how educators should use **planning** and student support time. • Use all adults in the building (e.g., paraprofessionals, enrichment instructors, residents, apprentices) and creative scheduling (e.g., block scheduling, banking time) to create extended time for planning and responsive student support. • Reduce teacher workload by eliminating or reassigning non-instructional duties—such as administrative tasks, lunch duty, and excessive paperwork—to other staff or appropriate technology tools (e.g., AI), freeing up time for instruction. • Train school leaders to build **strong PLCs** that support HQIM-aligned planning, instructional delivery, and use of student data to plan and deliver student supports. • Identify, train, and compensate teacher leaders to facilitate content-specific PLCs, lead **collaborative planning**, and support peer reflection tied to HQIM.
State Education Agencies (SEAs) and State Policy Makers	• Update **school design policies** to give districts flexibility to redesign schedules, roles, and staffing models that expand teachers' time for HQIM-aligned planning, instruction, and student supports. • Fund and evaluate pilot initiatives that explore new ways to organize adult time in schools—including staffing models that incorporate paraprofessionals, residents, apprentices, and instructional support roles to reduce teacher workload and increase instructional capacity.

Establish school schedules that support strong HQIM implementation.	
Who	**What**
State Education Agencies (SEAs) and State Policy Makers (cont...)	• Build awareness of effective models by identifying and sharing **examples** of how districts structure time and staffing to promote planning, protected instruction, and responsive student support. • Invest in the scale and sustainability of promising staffing models that improve HQIM implementation by providing funding and technical assistance to adapt and expand them across diverse contexts.
Technical Assistance (TA) Providers	• Help schools and systems connect their academic and talent strategies by aligning HQIM implementation, professional learning structures, staffing models, and **schedules** to give teachers time to plan, deliver, and support students using HQIM. • Share concrete examples of how other systems organize adult roles and responsibilities to reduce teacher workload and expand instructional capacity. • Support school and teacher leaders in strengthening PLC structures, improving the use of **collaborative planning time**, and aligning student support with HQIM implementation. • Provide tools and coaching to help districts **audit** how teacher time is currently used and reallocate time toward high-impact instructional activities tied to HQIM.

Establish school schedules that support strong HQIM implementation.	
Who	**What**
Philanthropy	• Avoid investing in expensive professional learning or staffing models that collapse without continued grant funding. Instead, focus on helping districts reallocate existing resources with targeted technical assistance and modest catalytic funding to design sustainable models. • Identify and elevate school systems that have successfully redesigned schedules, roles, and staffing models to give teachers more time for HQIM-aligned planning, instruction, and student supports. • Support efforts to reduce teacher workload by funding innovations that shift non-instructional responsibilities to support staff or technology, freeing up teachers' time to focus on high-impact instructional work. • Invest in professional learning infrastructure that ensures the time teachers gain is supported by strong facilitation, HQIM-aligned coaching, and data-informed collaboration. • Provide resources to scale and adapt effective school-level models that expand instructional capacity by strategically using paraprofessionals, residents, apprentices, and other support roles. • Fund formative research and evaluation that helps districts and partners learn from implementation, refine their approaches, and inform broader policy and system design.

3 Develop Leadership Pathways

Why It Matters: Providing leadership opportunities for effective teachers has a multitude of benefits:

- Leadership roles support staffing and instruction simultaneously. Teacher leaders not only improve instruction but also reduce pressure on administrators, mentor pre-service candidates, and extend the reach of effective teaching in schools with staffing shortages.
- Teachers are more likely to stay when they have opportunities to grow. Strategic leadership pathways—especially those with clear roles, compensation, and protected time—support retention and reduce churn, particularly in high-need schools.
- Leadership roles only work when supported by a schedule and structure. Without time built into the day for teachers to lead, even the best leadership models fall short. Co-teaching, common planning time, and flexible coverage make leadership doable.
- Sustainable models matter. Too often, teacher leadership relies on short-term funding or informal arrangements. When systems embed these roles into staffing plans, they can scale and sustain them across schools—not just in grant-funded pilots

Role-Specific Recommendations

Develop Leadership Pathways	
Who	**What**
School and School System Leaders	• Set a **vision for a leadership pipeline** that clearly states that all staffing decisions and policy changes are made to strengthen academics through HQIM implementation. Make this vision part of how leaders make hiring, role design, and resource allocation decisions. • Define leadership roles based on instructional needs—not just titles. Ensure that each role (e.g., PLC lead, mentor teacher, resident coach) is tied to supporting HQIM use, improving lesson delivery, or analyzing student learning data.

Develop Leadership Pathways	
Who	**What**
School and School System Leaders (cont...)	• Design **hybrid roles** that allow effective teachers to lead HQIM-aligned planning, coach peers, and mentor pre-service candidates—within the school day. Use coverage models, co-teaching, or scheduling adjustments to make time for these responsibilities. • Only place pre-service teachers with mentor teachers who have used HQIM effectively. • Ensure **mentor teacher training** reinforces, rather than contradicts, HQIM implementation efforts (e.g., mentor roles in supporting unit and lesson internalization, not lesson planning). • Use **teacher leaders** to provide training and support on effective HQIM use across schools and departments. • Design **compensation** and evaluation systems to recognize teacher leadership. • Provide training to PLC leaders and coaches on effective HQIM-focused PLCs and coaching, including training on the HQIM itself.
State Education Agencies (SEAs) and State Policy Makers	• Update **school design policies** to give districts flexibility to redesign schedules, roles, and staffing models that expand teachers' time for HQIM-aligned planning, instruction, and intervention. • Fund programs that prepare teacher leaders who serve as content and HQIM leaders in schools. • Share examples of leadership and **compensation models** that support strong HQIM implementation.

Develop Leadership Pathways	
Who	**What**
Technical Assistance (TA) Providers	**For HQIM-based professional learning TA providers** that typically work with academic or instructional teams to strengthen content, coaching, and collaboration around HQIM. • Design professional learning that fits within the school **schedule**. Ensure **collaborative planning**, coaching, and training structures are supported by available time and roles—not just layered on top of them. • Collaborate with staffing and HR teams, as well as with strategic staffing TA providers, to ensure new or redefined roles (e.g., lead teachers, mentors), including time and support for leading HQIM-aligned work. • Bridge the divide between academics and operations. Help districts align professional learning with staffing and scheduling decisions to support teachers in their new roles and implement their learning. **For strategic staffing TA providers** that often support HR, talent, and operations teams in redesigning roles, schedules, and compensation systems. • Ensure every new or restructured role includes a plan for professional learning. For example, when a teacher is promoted into a lead role, help districts define the training and coaching needed for success. • Understand the HQIM and instructional model in use. Work with professional learning providers and academic leaders to ensure staffing plans enable teachers to plan, teach, and collaborate around the HQIM. • Support cross-department coordination. Bring HR, operations, and academic leaders together to co-design staffing and support systems that reinforce—not compete with—HQIM implementation.

Develop Leadership Pathways	
Who	**What**
Philanthropy	• Invest in professional learning and staffing models that districts can sustain. Avoid funding roles or PD structures that rely on temporary dollars. Instead, help districts redesign how they use existing resources—pairing modest catalytic funding with support to build time, roles, and support systems that can last. • Support professional learning and staffing technical assistance (TA)—and require collaboration. Funders should expect TA providers to work together to align roles, **schedules**, and professional learning around HQIM. • Hold grantees accountable for cross-functional implementation. Whether funding TA or districts directly, expect coordination between academic and HR teams to design sustainable, instructionally aligned systems. • Fund pilots that test scalable, affordable models. Focus on district–EPP partnerships, school-based leadership roles, and team-based staffing approaches that build lasting capacity. • Invest in learning. Support research and formative evaluation that helps systems learn what it takes to implement HQIM well—and adapt in real time. • Elevate and adapt bright spots. Share what is working while investing in local design that can scale without relying on significant philanthropic investments.

QUESTIONS FOR CONTINUED INVESTIGATION

As this work progresses, critical questions remain for further exploration:

- How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the actions described in this report and sustain and scale the most effective ones?
- What leadership, data, and communication practices help academic and HR/talent teams align around shared instructional goals?
- What are the minimum viable conditions under which HQIM implementation efforts begin to "stick" at the school level?
- How might schools and school systems leverage AI to lighten teachers' non-instructional workload in ways that protect more time for planning, instruction, and differentiation using HQIM? Are there other viable, innovative ways to decrease the overall workload on teachers and increase the time for collaboration and planning for HQIM-related instruction?
- What is the minimum threshold of weekly planning time needed for effective HQIM implementation, and how does that vary by subject, role, or experience level? What training, tools, and resources are needed to use weekly planning time effectively?
- How might teacher residencies and teacher apprenticeships prepare pre-service teachers more effectively in HQIM while providing added capacity for existing teachers to engage in collaborative planning?
- Schools' and school systems' workforces constantly evolve—often mid-year. How can they be nimble in strategic staffing models while staying true to their academic vision? How can SEAs, TA providers, and philanthropy support this adaptability?
- Student assessments can provide teachers with data that helps them meet students' learning needs; however, schools' and school systems' assessment systems often take up an excessive amount of instructional time and are misaligned with HQIM. How would student assessment and related educator supports need to change so that educators—pre-service teachers, lead teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.—have the data and the time they need to teach effectively using HQIM?

CONCLUSION

HQIM is a promising lever for improving student outcomes. However, realizing the full impact of HQIM requires more than adoption—it requires strategic alignment of people, time, and support. Education leaders can better support teachers by integrating staffing and instructional systems. In doing so, they elevate instruction and create more sustainable roles for the teachers students depend on.

Bridging strategic staffing and HQIM is not a luxury—it is a necessity. It is how we ensure that excellent instructional materials translate into excellent instruction in every classroom, for every child.

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END NOTES

1. **Strategic staffing practices** include strategic recruitment and hiring (e.g., residencies, apprenticeships), selective placement of teachers (e.g., assigning the strongest teachers to the highest-need schools, subjects, and student populations), strategic use of compensation and incentives (e.g., implementing differentiated pay for teacher leadership roles or specialized responsibilities), teacher leadership and career pathways (e.g., building career ladders that recognize and reward growth, helping retain high-performing educators) and data-Informed decision-making (e.g., analyzing teacher effectiveness and student outcome data to guide staffing decisions).
2. **High-quality instructional materials (HQIM)** 1) are aligned to college- and career-ready standards; 2) build knowledge systematically across grades; 3) are practical and supportive for teachers to use, including providing daily lesson plans, clear guidance for implementation, embedded assessments, and strategies for differentiation; 4) promote equity and access for diverse learners, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities; 5) allow for meaningful professional learning so teachers can implement them with fidelity. Though different states have different ways to determine which materials are high quality, "green" on **EdReports** is widely recognized as the national standard.
3. Most teacher training programs include clinical practice supervised by a qualified mentor. Residencies, apprenticeships, and student teaching are three models that consist of varying lengths of sustained, supervised clinical practice. Typical durations range from one semester of student teaching to one year of residency to multi-year apprenticeships with progressive wages for the apprentice. **This New America resource** has a helpful graphic that compares various models.

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