



# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PARTNER GUIDE

## Interview Guide

This document provides guidance to schools and school system leaders in preparing for and conducting interviews with potential professional learning partners they have found in the **Professional Learning Partner Guide** (PLPG). These questions are just suggestions for your conversation and should be used or modified to reflect your local district context.

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

Key questions to ask PL providers	Things to look for in their response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Has your organization worked with districts/schools like mine in the past? If so, can you describe the partnership and the services you provided? How did your services improve student achievement there?</li><li>* What were some of the challenges you encountered working with a district/school like mine, and how did you overcome them?</li><li>* Describe how your PL will help our district embody anti-racist practices in our classrooms.</li><li>* What conditions (e.g. school-based instructional coaches, daily planning time, monthly PD days, etc.) or nonnegotiables would you like to see in place in my district/school to ensure a successful partnership?</li><li>* We already have X systems in place in our district to support teachers and school leaders. Can you talk a bit about the extent to which you would be willing to coordinate with us or align your practices with ours?</li><li>* We're already working with X organization who is providing Y services. Can you talk a bit about the extent to which you would be willing to coordinate with them to ensure all the work aligns? What might that look like?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* PL provider communicates a clear focus on equity and a belief that <i>all</i> students can and deserve the opportunity to engage with meaningful, grade-level work. Look for elements of this belief in PL providers' responses to these questions. For example, the provider talks about how it helps teachers understand the importance of providing grade-level texts to all students with the proper supports.</li><li>* PL providers should be able to give you specific and concrete responses in plain language that leave you feeling clear and confident that they're not thinking through these questions for the first time. For example, in response to the question about conditions, a PL provider whose model focuses on building the capacity of leaders might state that the math instructional lead must be willing to join a weekly, 45-minute check-in with the coach assigned to their school and the principal needs to join a monthly check-in.</li><li>* Before you hop on the phone, give some thought to which parts of your preexisting vision, priorities, systems, and structures you're willing and able to amend and which you aren't. Be upfront with the PL provider about those and their willingness to better understand and work within your context and constraints. For example, do you already have a strong observation tool that is specific to your HQIM (e.g. <b>Zearn's Classroom Walkthrough Guide</b>) or aligned to the <b>shifts</b> (e.g. <b>Instructional Practice Guides</b>)? If so, you might require that your PL provider uses that to observe and provide feedback to your teachers rather than introducing a new tool of their own.</li></ul>

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Key questions to ask PL providers	Things to look for in their response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Where have you seen your services go wrong or not work? Why?</li><li>* How does your organization train your facilitators to be experts on HQIM? How are they evaluated?</li><li>* What percentage of your contracts are renewed?</li><li>* Can I see materials from a professional development your group has executed? Can I see a video clip of one of your facilitators?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* PL provider clearly communicates a desire to improve its services, has a concrete plan to measure effectiveness, and provides compelling anecdotes/data around how evaluation data has changed facilitation practices over time.</li></ul>

## QUESTIONS RELATED TO HQIM IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

Phase of support	Key questions to ask PL providers	Things to listen for in their response
<p><b>Adoption PL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What is your organization’s vision for excellent instruction? On what is this vision based (i.e. body of research, etc.)?</li> <li>* Can you give me an example of how your organization has helped a current or former client design and execute a process for adopting HQIM that was aligned to their vision for excellent instruction? What was the learning series you took them through?</li> <li>* Can you give me an example of how your organization has assisted a current or previous client with stakeholder engagement during the process of adopting high-quality instructional materials? What stakeholder groups did you involve and how did you support the client in getting them on board?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* PL provider can articulate a clear, compelling, and content-specific vision for the type of work they expect to see <i>all</i> students doing in classrooms every day as well as the key teacher actions that lead to this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This vision should reflect an equity lens and a belief that all students deserve and are able to achieve at the highest levels. It should also reflect a belief that all students need to engage with grade-level work every day.</li> <li>● It should also align to the <b>shifts</b> (ELA/math), <b>math practices</b>, or the <b>3 Dimensions</b> (science), and the standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>* PL provider succinctly describes the steps of how they supported a district in designing and executing an effective adoption process that led to the selection of HQIM aligned to the district’s vision. Listen for steps such as defining a process and timeline, convening and training a review/selection committee, developing a vision for excellent instruction, adopting/developing/modifying a rubric that aligns to the vision, leveraging reliable and nationally recognized resources to identify HQIM (e.g. <b>EdReports</b>, <b>Louisiana Believes</b>), reviewing materials, piloting materials, procuring materials, distributing materials.</li> <li>* Listen for an implicit or explicit nod to why stakeholder engagement matters. The PL provider should identify a diverse group of stakeholders who are likely to play a role in or who influence the adoption of instructional materials in their client’s system (e.g. teachers, administrators, students, parents, school board, etc.) and should briefly describe the steps they walked their client through to help them get those stakeholders on board.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Launch PL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Who is the audience for these types of services/sessions, and how are they grouped accordingly?</li> <li>* Can you give me an example of how you've helped a current or former client communicate the link between their adopted HQIM and their vision for excellent instruction?</li> <li>* Can you give me an example of how you've helped a current or former client ensure their teachers and leaders understand the approach and structure of our adopted HQIM? What does that learning series look like?</li> <li>* Describe how you help clients organize and plan for the logistical considerations of launching new high-quality instructional materials.</li> <li>* How do you help leaders understand the steps they need to take to effectively manage change as it pertains to implementing HQIM?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* PL provider succinctly describes how they believe high-quality instructional materials support teachers to achieve the articulated vision (e.g. by increasing the likelihood that students engage with grade level work) and can share ideas for plans that effectively invest all stakeholders in the work.</li> <li>* PL provider's response reveals that they understand the major attributes of the adopted HQIM, including the approach to critical content within and across grades, how it is structured (lessons, domains, units, etc.), and major features (such as typical/consistent lesson features and opportunities for measuring student progress through screeners and assessments). This should include their recommendations on what occurs before the start of the school year and what will take place throughout the school year.</li> <li>* PL provider communicates a belief that <i>all</i> students have the ability to and deserve the opportunity to engage with meaningful, grade-level work. For example, the provider talks about how it helps teachers understand the importance of providing grade-level texts to all students despite their race, background or ability with the proper support.</li> <li>* PL provider offers a planning tool for logistical considerations that ensures a smooth launch of the high-quality instructional materials. This should include items such as budgeting/pricing, securing print materials, accessing digital components/resources, number of copies needed per class or per student, timing of distribution, and planning replenishment cycles for damaged books/materials.</li> </ul>

Phase of support	Key questions to ask PL providers	Things to listen for in their response
<p><b>Ongoing PL for Teachers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How does your PL help teachers continually see the connections between effective implementation of the HQIM and the broader vision for excellent instruction beyond the adoption and launch phases?</li> <li>* How are your services differentiated for different groups of teachers? Or when teachers struggle beyond the initial implementation? How do you handle varying needs in what may be tight or limited timeframes?</li> <li>* Can you send me an example of a template or protocol that you encourage teachers to use to help them prepare to teach units and lessons from X HQIM?</li> <li>* How does your PL equip teachers to address the needs of students with unfinished learning using HQIM-embedded supports?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* PL provider uses each of their engagements with teachers — coaching conversations, workshops, etc.— to reground teachers in the vision for excellent instruction and help them reflect on the degree to which the way they're implementing those materials is bringing that vision to life in their classrooms. For example, in what ways are teachers adapting the questions in the HQIM, and how do those adaptations support or inhibit students' mastery of grade level work?</li> <li>* PL services are appropriately grouped by subject and grade band to provide content specific training to teachers. Additional coaching services are available for teachers who could benefit from additional support.</li> <li>* PL provider supplies resources that focus on helping teachers prepare to teach lessons from their HQIM (e.g. annotate the teacher notes to indicate places where specific students will need additional scaffolding); PL provider equips teachers to use these resources in individual and collaborative planning time.</li> <li>* Listen for evidence that the PL provider believes the end goal is to ensure all students — including those who struggle — are able to engage with grade-level (as opposed to below grade level) work.</li> <li>* PL provider places a premium on equipping teachers to use the HQIM-embedded supports to address the needs of students with unfinished learning (as opposed to introducing a whole new set of supports that live outside the curriculum) and is able to give a couple of examples of these types of support (e.g. using intervention time to have students who lack background knowledge on the topic of an upcoming unit in the curriculum read and discuss a few, simpler texts on that topic)</li> </ul>

Phase of support	Key questions to ask PL providers	Things to listen for in their response
<p><b>Ongoing PL for Leaders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How does your PL help leaders articulate and stay focused on ways effective implementation of our HQIM support a broader vision for excellent instruction?</li> <li>* How are your services or coaching for leaders differentiated based on their varying levels of expertise with HQIM?</li> <li>* How does your PL help leaders in effectively and systematically planning for the smooth implementation of HQIM (for example, taking into account funding/budgeting, class schedules, lesson planning policies, etc.)?</li> <li>* How does your PL support leaders in monitoring the effectiveness of implementation and providing feedback to teachers? What rubric/tool does your organization recommend for this, how are leaders trained and normed, and how are teachers introduced to its expectations?</li> <li>* What are the classic pitfalls of implementation that you help leaders ID and overcome?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Listen for evidence that the provider supports leaders to frame instructional messages to staff in the context of the HQIM as a way of supporting the overall focus and reinforce primacy of the curriculum (e.g. highlighting effective examples of implementation during faculty meetings).</li> <li>* PL provider provides differentiated coaching opportunities to school leaders to support them with their unique implementation or leadership challenges.</li> <li>* PL assists leaders in assessing school functions for alignment with HQIM (e.g. does the time set aside for the ELA block align with the expectations of the curriculum, has an expectation been communicated for how teachers should approach lesson planning, etc.)</li> <li>* PL provides training, norming opportunities, and on-going coaching with a rubric or other classroom walkthrough tool that is specific to your HQIM (e.g. <b>Zearn’s Classroom Walkthrough Guide</b>) or aligned to the <b>shifts</b> (e.g. <b>Instructional Practice Guides</b>), or <b>math practices</b>, including a suggested plan for communicating this tool and its expectations to teachers.</li> <li>* PL provider is able to identify pitfalls in implementation that leaders may encounter and demonstrate how their PL services will help them to proactively plan for these obstacles.</li> </ul>