

EdReports.org

Launching an Independent Nonprofit to Support Better Information on Instructional Materials

OVERVIEW

EdReports.org, a new independent nonprofit designed to improve K-12 education in the United States, will launch in fall 2014. Because mathematics is the gatekeeper to later success in life, and because all American teachers and students should have access to learning materials of the highest quality, this nonprofit organization will begin by publishing reviews of K-12 mathematics curricular materials, beginning with analysis of their alignment to the mathematics Common Core State Standards. Over time, EdReports.org's reviews will expand to include teacher feedback and measures of efficacy in raising student achievement.

The nonprofit is chaired by Harvey Mudd College President Dr. Maria Klawe. Expert educators will create the criteria and conduct all reviews. Education First is incubating the new nonprofit through its launch in fall 2014.

WHY START WITH MATH?

We are sending higher numbers of young people to college than ever before, yet graduating fewer—and mathematics skill is often what holds young people back. By every global measure, K-12 students in the United States lag in mathematics behind students around the world. Large achievement gaps among socioeconomic and ethnic subgroups persist. And despite many valiant efforts, long-term trends show only modest improvement. Mathematics proficiency matters greatly: It opens the door to high school graduation, college readiness, college graduation and the jobs of today and the future. The stakes are high; vast improvement in mathematics understanding by all students is needed.

WHY NOW?

This moment in history is a pioneering phase in education ripe with possibility:

- Over three decades of knowledge and research mean we know more than ever before about how people learn mathematics.
- The Common Core State Standards, now in 40-plus states, represent a tremendous step to higher expectations and increased achievement in the U.S.
- Many existing and emergent examples of technology indicate promise to support great leaps in math teaching and student performance. These digital materials are proliferating rapidly at the same time that tremendous gaps exist in student and school-based capacity to access interactive digital materials.

WHAT WILL EdReports.org DO?

With the advent of the Common Core State Standards, districts and states are being swamped with new and repackaged math instructional materials. Without reliable information, American school districts will make uninformed purchasing decisions and the needle on student performance will remain unmoved.

EdReports.org's theory of change is that reliable information against quality criteria in a quickly changing marketplace helps educators make better purchasing decisions, which will raise the quality supply of materials, and which will improve student performance.

The new organization will be a nonpartisan, independent source of clear, comparable and reliable data on which units, courseware and textbooks (at least a year's worth of teaching material) best represent the rigor, coherence, focus and mathematical practices in the Common Core State Standards. EdReports.org will publish "consumer reports"-style reviews so that teachers, principals and district and state officials charged with purchasing materials can make more informed purchasing choices.

This new organization will gain traction and experience in evaluating alignment to Common Core. Over time, EdReports.org will add teacher feedback on which materials most nimbly and deeply support teaching and learning, and which factors seem most influential in improving student learning. Reviews in other subjects, such as English language arts, also will be added over time.

FOR EDUCATORS, BY EDUCATORS

EdReports.org's work will be led and conducted by outstanding classroom educators, principals, district leaders and state administrators. The majority of members of the board of directors will be school, district and state educators. Hundreds of educators are participating in the spring "listening tour." Expert practitioners will compose and lead the "content review teams" to analyze the quality and alignment of instructional materials. In the future, thousands of educators will weigh in on the materials' usability and quality by providing online user feedback.

By engaging educators to conduct the reviews, EdReports.org aims to be a premier professional development experience for educators to become expert in standards-based instruction.

IMPACT

EdReports.org's goal is to become an independent, trusted organization that will produce compelling evidence about what constitutes quality K-12 materials. These evaluations will demonstrate their value to those charged with spending taxpayer resources on instructional materials. They will inform purchasing, teacher and student use, and continuous improvement of materials design going forward. Over time, teachers and students will have the highest quality learning materials because demand for them will improve.

Ultimately, the use of high-quality materials recommended by EdReports.org will contribute to increased academic achievement by American students.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

This spring and summer, EdReports.org will:

- Conduct a nationwide "listening tour" to learn from the organization's key audiences—teachers, school administrators and state education leaders who identify and purchase instructional materials—to shape the nonprofit's activities.
- Invite the brightest minds in education—especially expert teachers and curriculum experts—to finalize the EdReports.org criteria and conduct reviews of textbooks and digital instructional materials.
- Recruit a world-class founding board of directors who represent a diverse cross-section of accomplished and courageous educators who are committed to education excellence. In addition to Maria Klawe, Former Massachusetts State Superintendent David Driscoll, Maryland State Superintendent Lillian Lowery and Education Trust Vice President Sonja Santelises are confirmed board members.
- Hire an experienced and entrepreneurial Executive Director who will lead the organization from kickoff to successful implementation.

SUPPORTERS

The nonprofit's initial funders are the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

For more information please contact info@EdReports.org

Coming soon: www.EdReports.org