**Attachment 1: Request for Applications for Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation (IMQE) Pilot**

# **1.1 Vision and Purpose of IMQE Pilot**

The subject of this request for applications is to identify a group of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) who will join the Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation (IMQE) pilot. Participating LEAs will receive exclusive access to the early phases of this innovative project.

Written into statute in 2017 (Texas Education Code § 31.081 and § 31.082), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will facilitate the independent analysis of instructional materials to evaluate their quality. The results of this analysis will be made available to support LEAs in making their own, local, high-quality decisions about which instructional materials to purchase by providing clear, transparent, and user-friendly information about the quality of instructional materials.

This process will complement and augment the established State Board of Education’s (SBOE) TEKS-alignment process, designed to capture what percentage of standards are met. All materials reviewed for quality will also be reviewed through the SBOE’s TEKS alignment process, and the results of the SBOE process will be featured as a part of the quality reviews.

Together, these two processes are designed to provide LEAs with robust information to help them select the instructional materials that best meet their local needs. LEAs will continue to have complete autonomy to decide if, and how, they use the reviews as part of their local review and adoption processes.

# **1.2 Benefits of Participation**

LEAs who are selected to join the IMQE pilot will gain access to the following benefits:

* Exclusive access to the completed pilot quality reviews for English language arts and reading (ELAR) 3–8 by May of 2019 which they can use to inform their purchasing decisions for 2019–2020 and/or 2020–2021
* The opportunity to nominate educators to serve on the quality review teams. Selected reviewers receive free, high-quality professional development, for which they will earn CPE credit, and are paid a stipend for each completed review
* An invitation to the Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation Summit, which will take place once the portal is established. Additionally, pilot LEAs may receive selection preference in a future Request for Letters of Interest to receive grant funds to offset travel costs to the Summit. Additional details will be determined based on available funding.

The IMQE pilot begins in January 2019 and ends in May 2019.

# **1.3 Background**

## *Instructional Materials Matter*

Teachers and students deserve the highest quality instructional materials that not only align to the TEKS but also reflect research-based instructional practices that provide teachers with the support they need to challenge their students and inspire them to learn and grow. LEAs across Texas are eager to purchase the best materials for their teachers and students, a desire which is backed by the growing body of research showing the positive impact that selecting a high-quality curriculum has on student outcomes.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Unfortunately, free information about the quality of materials is often unorganized, unreliable, and difficult to access. Additionally, reviewing instructional materials is a time-consuming process for the teachers who serve on their LEAs’ review committees. As a result, too often, teachers do not have access to instructional materials that are fully aligned to the standards and reflect deep content and best-in-class pedagogy.

A recent study by the Center for American Progress revealed that only a third of the 30 largest districts in the U.S. use top quality instructional materials according to two nationally recognized review systems.[[2]](#footnote-2) The absence of strong, research-based instructional materials leads teachers across the nation to turn to searching the internet where it is exceptionally difficult to discern important but sometimes subtle differences in quality and where low-quality materials abound.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## *Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation Portal*

The TEA aims to make it easier for LEAs to select high-quality instructional materials that provide teachers with a strong foundation and allow them to focus their time and energy on what matters most—bringing lessons to life for all students. The online Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation Portal will support LEAs’ local review processes by providing clear, transparent, and user-friendly information about the quality of instructional materials—similar to a *Consumer Reports*® for instructional materials.

The online IMQE portal that houses the reviews will:

* provide free, transparent, and user-friendly information about the extent to which materials reflect research-based pedagogy and support the learning of all students;
* leverage Texas-specific rubrics designed by local educators and other content experts to fit the Texas context and reflect the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS);
* display easy-to-use reviews completed by teams of Texas educators with deep knowledge of content and pedagogy;
* make it easy for LEAs to search for material based on local needs; and
* may increase the ease and efficiency of LEAs’ local review processes, thereby reducing the burden on teachers and other review committee members.

## *Instructional Materials Quality Evaluation Pilot*

**TEA will pilot the IMQE process with English language arts and reading (ELAR) core instructional materials for grades 3–8.** The goal of the IMQE pilot is to collect feedback from LEAs, publishers, and other Texas stakeholders on the IMQE process to ensure it meets the needs of Texas educators. Therefore, the pilot is designed to mirror, to the extent possible, the official IMQE portal so TEA can collect real-time, actionable feedback. This will allow TEA to hone the review process and refine the Texas-specific quality rubric which will be used to evaluate materials. It will also ensure that the information the reviews provide for the official launch of the portal is valid, reliable, and helpful to LEAs across Texas.

Instructional materials submitted by publishers during the pilot phase of this work will be evaluated by teams of Texas educators using the **pilot rubric for ELAR 3–8** (<https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539627015>). The goal of this rubric is to ensure reviews provide Texas educators with valid and reliable information about the quality of materials, and it was developed with the help of feedback and input from more than 450 Texas educators and stakeholders. For more information about how this rubric was developed, please review the **rubric memo** (<https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539627016>).

For more information about the IMQE pilot, please review the **FAQ document** (<https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539627017>).

# **1.4 IMQE Pilot Activities**

LEAs who are selected to participate in the IMQE pilot will:

* + 1. **Use the quality reviews to inform local purchasing decisions for ELAR instructional materials <REQUIRED>**

*Estimated time commitment: 3–5 hours*

LEAs who participate in the IMQE pilot are agreeing to consider the pilot ELAR 3–8 quality reviews as part of their local review process. These reviews will be released exclusively to IMQE pilot LEAs in May 2019. Therefore, pilot LEAs must agree to one of the following options for at least a subset of their schools:

**Option 1: Local review in summer 2019, purchase for 2019–2020.** Use the pilot reviews to conduct a condensed local review process between May 2019 and July 2019 in time to purchase ELAR 3–8 materials for the 2019–2020 school year.

**Option 2: Local review in 2019–2020, purchase for 2020-2021.** Delay their local review process for ELAR 3–8 instructional materials until the 2019–2020 school year in time to purchase materials for the 2020-2021 school year.

**\*NEW BASED ON LEA FEEDBACK\* Option 3: Local review in 2018–2019, purchase for 2019–2020.** Conduct their local review process for ELAR 3–8 instructional materials as normal during the 2018–2019 school year. Delay making final purchase decision until May 2018, and use pilot reviews to check the results of their local process. Based on information in reviews, finalize purchasing decisions for the 2019–2020 school year.

For future proclamations, TEA will work to ensure the quality review process aligns to the timeline for the SBOE’s TEKS alignment process so that reviews are available in November each year.

TEA is eager to use information and feedback from the IMQE pilot to improve future review cycles. At the end of the pilot, participating LEAs will be asked to provide TEA with rationale for their adoption and purchasing decisions. Note: LEAs will maintain complete local control over purchasing decisions and are not required to purchase materials reviewed in the pilot. This information will only be used to help TEA improve the quality evaluation process in the future to best meet LEA needs. This feedback will not be used for any other purpose within the agency.

*Considerations for LEAs selecting option 2 above*

LEAs choosing to pause adoption for one year will still be required to teach the new TEKS in the 2019–2020 academic year. TEA will provide resources to help LEAs identify and understand the differences between the current standards and revised standards so they can appropriately supplement instruction during the one-year transition. LEAs should also take note of the following assessment timeline for new standards:

* Spring 2020 – Assessments will only include items that test both the current ELAR standards and the revised ELAR standards
* Spring 2021 – Assessments will include items that test all new ELAR standards

Lastly, if an LEA chooses to delay local purchase decisions for ELAR 3–8 materials for one-year, and therefore has unused money in their instructional materials and technology account, the district may carry forward any remaining balance to the next biennium, pursuant to TEC 31.0212(d).

* + 1. **Nominate educators to serve on the review teams <OPTIONAL BY 10/22/18>**

LEAs had the opportunity to nominate educators to serve on the review teams. The deadline for this was October 22, 2018. Educators who were nominated by pilot LEAs by October 22 received preference in the rigorous selection process to become a reviewer on the instructional materials review teams. Selected reviewers will receive intensive training and ongoing professional development and support, for which they will earn continuing professional education (CPE) credit. Following the training (January 11-13, 2019), reviewers will work in small teams to collect evidence and conduct quality reviews of both print and digital ELAR 3–8 instructional materials.

Upon successfully completing the six-month review process, reviewers will receive a stipend of $1,250 per program reviewed. IMQE reviewers will also receive an additional stipend of $625 for attending the initial reviewer training and $625 for completing the ongoing professional development for a total of $1,250. Additionally, team leads will receive $1,000 to compensate them for the additional time, responsibility, and training associated with this role.

* + - Total for IMQE reviewers who complete all trainings and all reviews: $2,500
		- Total for IMQE team leads who complete all trainings and all reviews: $3,500

Reviewers will complete the majority of the work virtually. Reviewers can expect to spend approximately 6–8 hours per week over the course of six months. The ELAR 3–5 and 6–8 review teams are expected to complete at least one (1) review between January 2019 and May 2019. In some instances, a review team may be asked to review changes to a set of materials that have been updated by a publisher. In these instances, reviewers will receive a pro-rated stipend based on size of request.

* + 1. **Provide the TEA with feedback on the IMQE <REQUIRED>**

*Estimated time commitment: 4 hours*

Participating LEAs will have the opportunity to help shape the design and functionality of the IMQE by providing the TEA with feedback throughout the 2018–2019 school year. Feedback will be collected in a variety of ways including but not limited to surveys, focus groups, email, and calls. TEA will use the feedback provided by LEAs in the IMQE pilot to improve the functionality and usability of the IMQE. Estimated commitment of one (1) hour per month between January 2019 and June 2019 for a total of approximately four (4) hours.

**D. Submit a plan to support strong implementation of new instructional materials <REQUIRED>**

*Estimated time commitment: 1–2 hours[[4]](#footnote-4)*

No less than three (3) months before teachers begin using new 3–8 ELAR instructional materials, LEAs in the IMQE pilot must submit a plan that outlines how they will support implementation.

At a minimum, LEAs must have a plan for:

1. Purchasing and distributing all essential components of the selected instructional material to schools and teachers in a timely fashion and removing lower-quality and/or redundant materials.
2. Providing all ELAR 3–8 teachers with introductory training that builds their familiarity with the structure, approach, and key components of their instructional materials.
3. Monitoring the quality of implementation so that administrators can provide additional, targeted support to teachers, as needed.

TEA and ESCs will partner with LEAs in the IMQE pilot to provide additional support and guidance related to implementation. Supports may include but are not limited to in-person and virtual trainings for teachers and administrators, help identifying high-quality providers of curriculum-specific professional development, and tools to help administrators monitor the quality of implementation.

TEA is in the process of designing a Quality Instructional Materials Summit. Pilot LEAs will receive the first set of invitations to this event. Additionally, pilot LEAs may receive selection preference in a future Request for Letters of Interest to receive grant funds to offset travel costs to the Summit. Additional details will be determined based on available funding. More details will be coming soon.

# **1.4 IMQE Pilot Application**

The IMQE pilot application has four components:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component** | **Due Date** | **Optional or Required** | **Estimated Time to Complete** |
| * 1. **Attachment 2: Notice of intent to apply**
 | Monday, Oct. 1(deadline passed) | Optional | 2 minutes |
| * 1. **Attachment 3: Reviewer nomination form**
 | Monday, Oct. 22(deadline passed) | Optional | 1 hour |
| * 1. **Attachment 4:** [**LEA information form**](https://tea.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2bEFqLzxtzkafpr)
 | Friday, Jan. 11 | Required | 2 hours |
| * 1. **Attachment 5:** [**Assurances**](https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539625550)
 | Friday, Jan. 11 | Required | 15 minutes |

# **1.5 Project Timeline**

| **Academic Year** | **2018–2019** | **2019–2020** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** |
| **IMQE Pilot (ELAR 3–8)** |
| TEA releases [pilot 3–8 ELAR rubric](https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539627015) to all LEAs |   |   |   |  |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training for review team members |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Review teams complete pilot reviews of ELAR 3–8 materials |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| IMQE pilot LEAs receive exclusive access to pilot reviews |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| IMQE Summit for pilot LEAs[[5]](#footnote-5) |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Option 1: IMQE pilot LEAs use 3–8 reviews to complete expedited local review process |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Option 2: IMQE pilot LEAs delay ELAR 3–8 adoption and use reviews during 2019–2020 local review process |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Option 3: IMQE pilot LEAs use pilot reviews to finalize purchasing decisions for ELAR 3–8 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| IMQE pilot LEAs provide feedback on design of IMQE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Full Launch (ELAR K–12)** |
| TEA releases draft K–2 and 9–12 ELAR rubric to LEAs |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training for review team members |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| TEA publishes reviews of K–2 and 9–12 ELAR instructional materials in the online IMQE portal |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |

# **1.6 IMQE Pilot Application Next Steps**

| Step | Details  | Date  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pilot Application Released  | TEA released IMQE pilot application  | Thurs., Sept. 20, 2018 |
| Questions from Applicants Due | Submit all questions related to this request for applications to specialprojects@tea.texas.gov, attention: Brian Doran, subject: IMQE - Application Question - <LEA NAME> | Wed., Sept. 26, 2018(DEADLINE PASSED) |
| Informational Webinar | TEA hosted a webinar to address questions on September 28, 2018 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. CDT. | Fri., Sept. 28, 2018 |
| Notice of Intent to Participate | Submit completed Notice of Intent to Apply (see Attachment 2). | Mon., Oct. 1, 2018(DEADLINE PASSED) |
| TEA Posts Responses to Questions | TEA responded to all submitted questions and send to applicants who submitted a Notice of Intent to Participate | Tues., Oct. 2, 2018 |
| Reviewer Nominations | TEA will accept reviewer nomination forms on a rolling basis. Applicants are encouraged to submit their nominations as soon as possible but no later than October 22, 2018 (see Attachment 3). | Nominations accepted on a rolling basis but no later than Mon, Oct. 22, 2018(DEADLINE PASSED) |
| IMQE pilot application due  | TEA will accept pilot applications on a rolling basis.Complete the LEA information form online ([see Attachment 4](https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539625549)).Complete the IMQE assurances ([see Attachment 5](https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539625550)).Email the assurances to specialprojects@tea.texas.gov, attention: Brian Doran, subject: IMQE - Application Question - <LEA NAME> | Applications accepted on a rolling basis but no later than Fri., Jan. 11, 2019  |
| TEA Announces Pilot LEAs | TEA announces IMQE pilot LEAs | TEA will announce pilot LEAs on a rolling basis but no later than Fri., Feb. 1, 2019 |

# **1.7 Application Evaluation Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated based on the degree to which they are complete and reflect a willingness and ability to participate in the IMQE pilot. The evaluation rubric to select IMQE pilot LEAs in included below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Strong | Solid | Weak  | Points |
| Completeness of application | Application is complete (10 points) | Application is 90-99% complete (5 points) | Application is less than 90% complete (0 points) | /10 |
| Interest in improving quality of instructional materials within local LEA | LEA expresses a strong interest in improving the quality of instructional materials available to their teachers (5 points) | LEA expresses an interest in improving the quality of instructional materials available to their teachers (3 points) | LEA does *not* express an interest in improving the quality of instructional materials available to their teachers (0 points) | /5 |
| Interest in supporting state in development of new, innovative tool to review the quality of materials | LEA expresses a strong interest in supporting state in the development of new, innovative tool to review the quality of materials (5 points) | LEA expresses an interest in supporting state in the development of new, innovative tool to review the quality of materials (3 points) | LEA does *not* express an interest in supporting state in the development of new, innovative tool to review the quality of materials (0 points) | /5 |
| Ability of LEA to use pilot reviews of 3–8 ELAR instructional materials | LEA articulates a clear plan to use the pilot ELAR 3–8 quality reviews to inform their local review and purchasing processes for all applicable schools (10 points) | LEA articulates a clear plan to use the pilot ELAR 3–8 quality reviews to inform their local review and purchasing processes for some applicable schools (5 points) | LEA does *not* articulate a clear plan to use the pilot ELAR 3–8 quality reviews to inform their local review and purchasing processes (0 points) | /10 |
| Total | *NA* | *NA* | *NA* | **/30** |

1. Steiner, David. (2017, March) Curriculum Research: What We Know and Where We Need to Go. StandardsWork [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Partelow, Lisette and Shapiro, Sarah. (2018, August 29). Curriculum Reform in the Nation’s Largest School Districts. *Center for American Progress*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Opfer, V. Darleen, Kaufman, Julia H., and Thompson, Lindsey E. (2016). Implementation of K–12 State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy: Findings from the American Teacher Panel. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Creating a strong plan for implementation of new instructional materials will require longer than the 1–2 hours necessary to send it to TEA, but creating the plan is part of LEAs’ typical planning and is not unique to participating in the IMQE pilot.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Date subject to change; to be finalized in February 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)