



IQI: Staying the Course in New Orleans

2021 Report



NEW SCHOOLS
FOR NEW ORLEANS

Letter from Chief of Schools Jawan Brown-Alexander

Dear School Leaders,

Just four years ago, less than 20% of New Orleans public schools were using the highest-quality, Tier 1 curriculum for English Language Arts. Today, over 70% are and nearly 80% are using Tier 1 Math curriculum.

As a former school leader myself, I know how hard it can be to juggle the many competing demands of the role. But I also know, as you all do, that our children deserve the best possible academic materials. I have been grateful to be a part of helping your schools adopt and implement them.

Over the past few years, I have seen your teachers do incredible work with their Tier 1 curricula. I have also gotten to bear witness to professional development hubs in areas such as supporting students with special needs and adopting technology amidst a pandemic. I am continually motivated and inspired by your efforts.

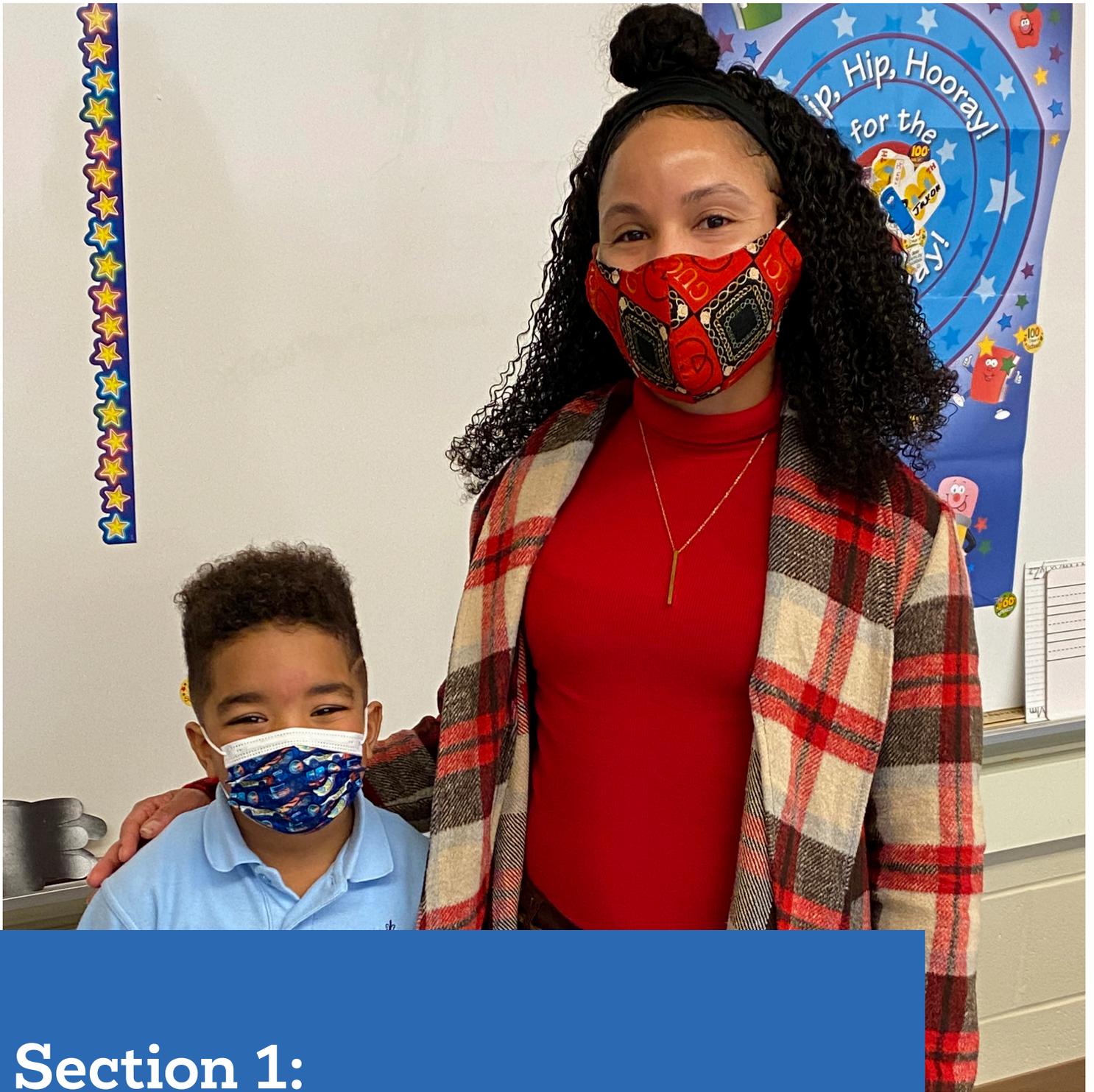
This report shares updates on our collective work. We discuss our goals, our new offerings, share reflections from local leaders, and more. As always, I am eager for your feedback, input, and reflections.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jawan Brown-Alexander
Chief Schools Officer
New Schools for New Orleans





Section 1: Where We Stand

How are schools in Louisiana improving academic outcomes?

NSNO's Local Focus

"We help schools make the curricular and instructional shifts necessary to meet more rigorous academic standards."

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) strategy to improve student learning outcomes includes three key efforts:

- 1. Implementation of more rigorous Louisiana Student Standards in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies
- 2. Use of LEAP 360 assessments aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards
- 3. Implementation of Tier 1 curricula aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards



Why does Tier 1 matter?

Our foundational research has shown that curriculum is deeply important and can substantially impact student learning, outcomes, and results over time.

In 2012, the Brookings Institute found that a strong curriculum has a measurable impact on student learning and that the effect may be especially pronounced for certain historically disadvantaged groups. Additional research has shown that access to rigorous coursework increased achievement for Black and Latinx students.

How does IQI support schools' academic improvement strategies?

The Instructional Quality Initiative (IQI) was launched in 2018, in partnership with LDOE, to support school's implementation of high quality Tier 1 curriculum aligned to Louisiana State Standards.

1. Increase the number of schools using aligned Tier 1 curriculum in the areas of ELA, Math, and Science

- Since 2018–19, NSNO has awarded over \$12 million in grants to schools for IQI activities in partnership with LDOE.
 - In 2020 – 21, 66% of New Orleans schools received funds to engage in IQI activities to support curriculum implementation.
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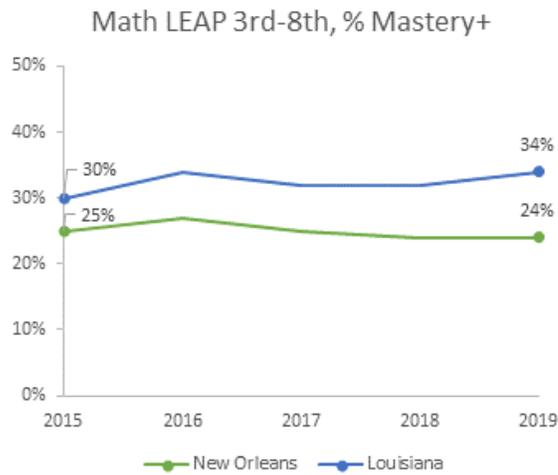
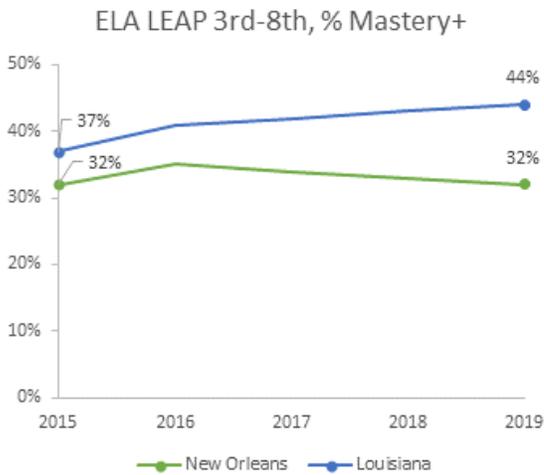
2. Provide curriculum implementation support to leaders and teachers by creating collaborative spaces for teachers and leaders

- Partnerships with Implementation Experts: Facilitate relationships between schools and training providers to grow schools' capacity to appropriately implement Tier 1 curricula.
 - Hubs and Collaboratives: Convene professional learning communities to promote sharing and implementation of best practices.
 - Over 72% of schools identified as CIR/UIR participate in some form of IQI activities in 2020–21.
 - IQI's Own Continuous Improvement Strategies: educator surveys, school walk-throughs, routine check-ins, external evaluator reports.
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3. Increase student proficiency in core subjects for K–12 students

- Though curriculum is just one aspect of a school's instructional approach, some of New Orleans' academic results may be related in part to the use of Tier 1 curricula.
- Continued implementation and supports will be critical to improve outcomes.

LEAP 3RD-8TH, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING MASTERY AND ABOVE AS OF 2019



Spring 2020 LEAP data are not available. Spring 2021 LEAP data are pending.

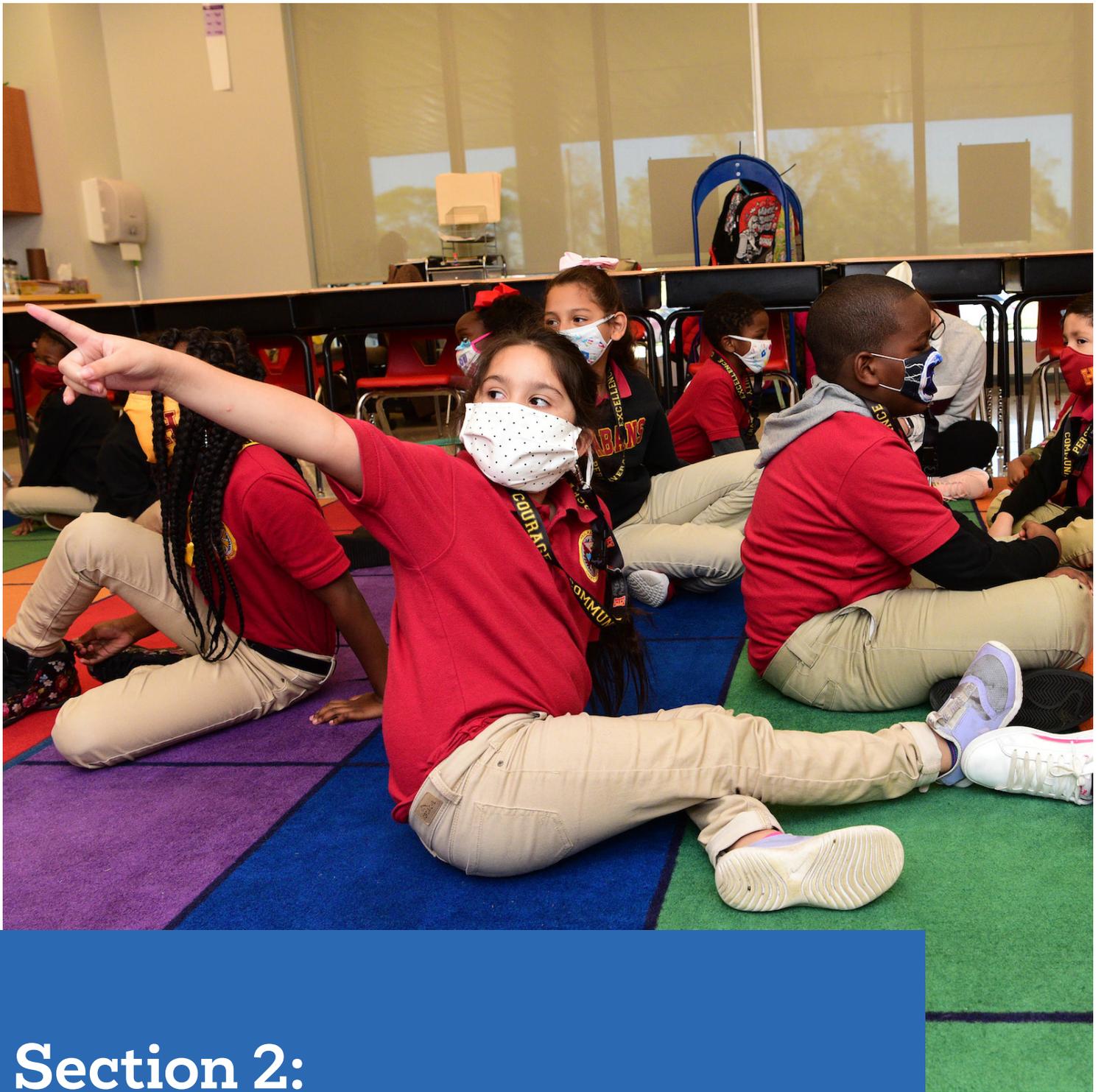
There is unfinished learning due to COVID-19, but we are staying the course.

We know that student learning has been impacted in the 2020–21 school year.

- Data says that approximately 30% of students missed 10 or more days of school this year.
- Schools' interim benchmark assessment data suggest that students' academic performance declined this year compared to the prior year.

Amidst all this uncertainty, implementation of high quality, Tier 1 curriculum must remain a priority.

- When schools shifted operations to virtual instruction, our curriculum implementation experts and support went virtual as well.
- School teams continued to integrate best practices and adopt new protocols to sustain a rigorous, yet flexible approach for the year.
- Schools kept an eye on performance, including subgroup data, to adapt to meet students' real-time needs.



Section 2: Progress in Implementation

More schools are using available Tier 1 curriculum.



Over 85% of New Orleans schools have implemented some form of Tier 1 curricula as of 2020–21.

The table below shows the percentage of schools that have implemented available Tier 1 curricula; these data also approximate the same percentage of all New Orleans students served in these schools.

Percentage of Schools Implementing Tier 1 Curricula

SCHOOL YEAR	ELA	MATH	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
2017–18	18%	47%		
2018–19	56%	63%	<i>Was not yet available</i>	<i>LDOE has not yet identified Tier 1 curricula in this subject area.*</i>
2019–20	67%	76%		
2020–21	71%	78%	48%	
Change Over Time	+53%	+31%	<i>First available in 2020–21</i>	<i>Proposed state standards are currently under review by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).</i>
Curricula Examples	Expeditionary Learning Guidebooks Wit and Wisdom	Eureka Ready Math Zearn	Amplify Science PhD Science IQWST	

**Resources exist, but are not yet fully vetted curriculum.*

IQI helps schools move in the right direction.

Instruction Partners conducted the citywide annual curriculum implementation review. The 2019–20 report continues to highlight the overall benefits of the IQI:

Vision Alignment

80% of surveyed teachers agree that the curriculum generally helps students learn what they need to know.



Teacher Support

Teacher focus groups revealed that they found support and feedback most helpful if they are delivered frequently and in applicable, bite sizes.



Rigorous Instruction

75% of ELA classrooms met or exceeded grade level expectations/ engaged in grade level texts.

87% of math classrooms are focused on grade level tasks and standards.



We continually improve our approach.

Participant feedback and real-time observations inform how NSNO improves IQI implementation.

Supports for All Learners

FEEDBACK:

Less than 20% of teachers thought that Tier 1 curricula provided adequate considerations for students with special needs and English learners.

SOLUTION:

Launched new Special Education / Response to Intervention and English Learner Hubs

Continued Implementation Support

FEEDBACK:

Classroom and planning observations reveal that some teachers require continued guidance on how to fully implement curriculum as designed.

SOLUTION:

Enhanced vendor access to increase training and guidance

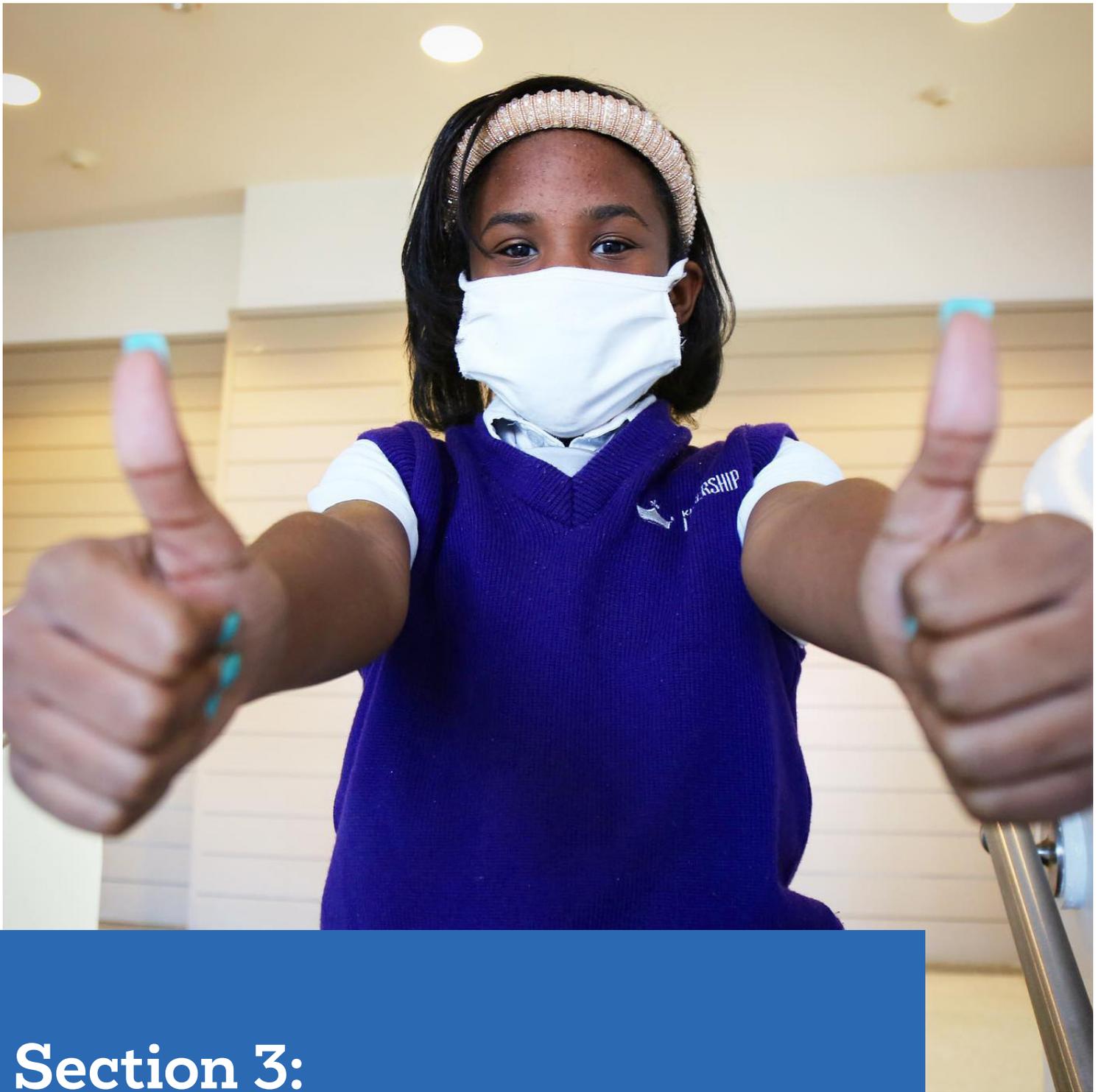
Continued Implementation Support

FEEDBACK:

Teachers report wanting more time with peers, including master teachers and instructional coaches, to plan how to best use and norm new curricula.

SOLUTION:

Recommendations to schools to provide additional planning time;
Enhanced access to vendors to increase training and guidance



Section 3: Spotlights and Work Ahead

More schools are partnering with curriculum implementation experts.

NSNO has facilitated the partnerships between schools and curriculum implementation experts to grow in-school capacity to adopt and implement new curricula across grades and subjects.

The table at right shows the percentage of schools that are using these partnerships; some schools have opted into different supports to implement curricula.

SCHOOL YEAR	% OF SCHOOLS PARTNERED WITH VENDORS
2017-18	<i>Not yet available</i>
2018-19	34%
2019-20	62%
2020-21	67%
Change Over Time	+33%
Vendor Examples	ANET Instruction Partners Leading Educators TNTP

Vendors provide direct curriculum implementation training to teachers and leaders.

Vendors also coach and support through classroom observation and feedback cycles.

How do Curriculum Hubs meet schools' changing needs?

The 2020–21 Hubs (shown at right) evolved to provide the pedagogy, systems, content, standards, and data support that is necessary to progress schools through the different cycles of implementation successfully.

- Yearlong community of practice led by Tier 1 Vendor partners
- Engages teachers, instructional coaches, and leaders
- Continuous learning and feedback cycles

Special Education / Response to Intervention



FOCUS AND DESCRIPTION:

Best practices to ensure all students can access Tier 1 curricula; includes Special Education / Response to Intervention audit and ongoing coaching.

Technology



FOCUS AND DESCRIPTION:

Focus on synchronous and asynchronous technology support to virtual instruction

Data Collaborative



FOCUS AND DESCRIPTION:

Focus on accountability structures and school level benchmark data analysis

English Learners



FOCUS AND DESCRIPTION:

Best practices to prepare teachers serving English learners to master content standards

Nola Science Institute



FOCUS AND DESCRIPTION:

Hands-on activities and teacher development focused on STEM

Hub Participant Spotlights: Alexandra Mossing

SCHOOL AND ROLE

Hynes

Social Studies

Teacher

CHALLENGE

Integrating
technology with
Tier 1 curriculum

HUB SOLUTION

Technology Training
Collaborative: 1-1
training technology
expert

OUTCOMES

Classes now develop
their own digital
media

Alexandra Mossing teaches social studies at Hynes Charter School. She has been in the classroom for a decade but is always seeking to come up with new ways to reach her students. This year, NSNO's Instructional Quality Initiative has helped her do so, even as she faced the immense barriers of teaching through a pandemic.

Mossing was introduced to IQI through the Instructional Technology Training Collaborative, which is focused on virtual teaching and learning, and led by AXI Education Solutions. Marcus Stein is the representative from AXI. He is a former New Orleans educator himself.

Instead of hosting all-school professional development (PD) sessions, Marcus opens up times for one-on-one or group meetings with educators to target their specific needs. This is key for many teachers, who often find him on their planning periods or lunch breaks.

"It's not another PD where people are saying 'you must be here at this time, and we're going to tell you about Nearpod [an online learning tool]. Maybe you want to use Nearpod, maybe you have no use for that at all. Instead, Marcus says 'bring me what you've got, bring me what you need, and I'll be there for you.'"

Mossing's own question centered around a program called Flipgrid, which allows students to make short videos of themselves. She thought it could be a great educational tool, but didn't know much about it, and didn't have the time to learn.

When she signed up for time with Marcus, she wrote that she was hoping to use the program. By the time they met, he was ready to teach her.

"He was so enthusiastic and he was like, 'I can walk you through it,'" Mossing explains.

He did a demonstration of the program for her and helped her sign up. Now, her classes are using it in creative and exciting ways. They've made slam poetry videos, and recently, they made short poetry clips in the voice of historical figures.

"I'm getting such better participation with tools like this," Mossing says. "I didn't have the capacity to figure it out for myself, but that's all it took, talking to Marcus for fifteen minutes. And it was awesome. There are a lot of teachers in our building who have had that experience."



Hub Participant Spotlights: Amanda Sullivan

SCHOOL AND ROLE

FirstLine Schools
Director of Student Supports

CHALLENGE

Tailoring professional development opportunities to better serve students with special needs

HUB SOLUTION

SELF Hub: Trainings available to both educators and administrators

OUTCOMES

Integration of best research practices; adapting interventions for inclusion even through virtual learning spaces

As the Director of Student Support Services for FirstLine Schools, Amanda Sullivan works with educators across all five FirstLine schools. Together, they support special education and response to intervention (RTI), programming for students learning English, mental health services and counseling, and more.

For Sullivan and her colleagues, then, IQI has brought some welcome support. They are part of the Special Education and RTI “hub,” led by Special Education Leaders Fellowship (SELF). The hub includes both professional development sessions and coaching for each school team. The hub is for the RTI and special education coordinators, but also for principals and assistant principals, so school leaders are fully engaged in these practices. SELF’s founder, Aqua Stovall, has led most of the sessions.

“We love SELF...they definitely have brought the best research practices and made the tools that are great, that I would want to make, but I don’t have the time. And with the tools already there that we can access, we can start up conversations around these practices,” says Sullivan.

For FirstLine, this enabled them to think through the way they provided interventions, or targeted supports, to students.



Hub Participant Spotlights: Ryan DeRouselle

SCHOOL AND ROLE

Community Academies
Special Education Director

CHALLENGE

Tailoring professional development opportunities to better serve students with special needs

HUB SOLUTION

SELF Hub: Trainings available to both educators and administrators

OUTCOMES

Integration of best research practices; adapting interventions for inclusion even through virtual learning spaces

Ryan DeRouselle is the Special Education Director at Community Academies. He is responsible for the special education programming at the network's four schools: Lafayette Academy Middle School, Lafayette Academy Lower School, Esperanza Charter School, and Foundation Preparatory Charter School.

"NSNO partnered with SELF, the Special Education Leader Fellowship, to make hubs all across schools in our networks....the hubs are very impactful," he says.

In these "hubs," leaders from across schools, including principals, assistant principals, special education and response to intervention (RTI) coordinators come together for professional development and training led by SELF.

"I'm responsible for being a part of those hubs in the capacity of being an administrator, and our responsibility is to help drive the conversation about what is happening, what isn't, and be transparent about the barriers we are facing in our schools. And they [SELF] are offering supportive practices."

This year's hubs have also included support for navigating educators' work in light of COVID-19.

"The hub has been a great benefit...helping us to navigate through the pandemic, in our 'new normal,'" says DeRouselle. "When advocating for students with exceptionalities or who have 504 plans in this virtual space, there are many different barriers that exist, but the partnership with the hub has allowed me to...do what we need to do to meet the needs of all our students. Inclusivity truly grounds the work."



IQI is a system-level strategy to support student success.

In an effort to meet student needs through uncertain times, in fall 2020, NSNO supported the development of schools' Distance Learning and Reopening plans.

- Sustained focus on quality instruction
 - Tier 1 curriculum
 - School-based benchmark assessment strategy
 - Researched strategies to address impact of trauma on both students and staff
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As we look to fall 2021, NSNO will continue to support schools to help them stay the course.

- Continue important partnerships with LDOE and NOLA-PS, including investment of over \$4 million to support school implementation
- Continue to explore and launch new ancillary support hubs
 - Trauma-informed instruction and support approaches
 - K-3 Foundational Literacy Hub
- Enhanced vendor partnerships
 - Technology implementation
 - STEM Library Lab, STEM NOLA



Our Commitment to Adoption and Implementation

NSNO remains committed to helping schools adopt and implement Tier 1 curriculum, and we offer the following supports:

1. Providing supplemental grants to support school curriculum implementation
2. Launching curriculum hubs, collaboratives, institutes, and summer support opportunities that meet current needs
3. Connecting schools with national vendor partners



We would love to hear from you! Please reach out if you have any questions. In addition, please check out our IQI newsletter to keep up to date on all that we offer.

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Partners



Teaching Lab





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