

Inquiry-Based Learning Policies, Procedures, and Practices

The purpose of this tool is to show how a state, district, or school might initiate inquiry-based learning approaches in schools.

Consider This Sample Scenario

The state, as part of its accountability plan, included inquiry-based learning outcomes as an indicator of school quality in its secondary schools. As part of the transition, state leaders revisited the policy and outlined a set of procedures to support districts and schools in attaining the knowledge, resources, and other supports that they need to implement inquiry-based learning. They also provided guidance on assessments that can capture student mastery of inquiry-based learning outcomes. Finally, state leaders created a resource hub for school districts that have examples of inquiry-based learning assessments.

District leaders responded by determining their own policy support and procedures. They worked with teacher leaders to establish professional learning opportunities in which teachers discuss inquiry-based learning strategies and collaboratively develop lessons and assessments for content areas and grades. Building leaders are provided with protocols and strategies for supporting teachers and students to determine the need for additional support. A district curriculum leader is assigned to each high school to support implementation.

District leaders also created a mentor-mentee program in which a teacher who is new to inquiry-based learning is paired with a teacher who regularly practices inquiry-based learning in the classroom. With the help of the district curriculum leader, all teachers are able to schedule time to visit another teacher's classroom during an inquiry-based learning activity. The superintendent leads the effort by ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices support inquiry-based learning outcomes.

Activity

What policies, procedures, and/or practices will need to be developed and/or changed when implementing an inquiry-based instructional initiative? How will they be communicated and implemented?

After reading the sample scenario, complete the first half of the chart, Planning for an Inquiry-Based Learning Initiative, which details state, district, and school actions that support inquiry-based learning. Fill out the second half of the chart with potential challenges to implementing inquiry-based learning. Analyze these actions to help determine supportive policies, procedures, and practices.

Planning for an Inquiry-Based Learning Approach

Actions That Support Inquiry-Based Learning

At the State Level	At the District Level	At the School Level

Possible Resources for Implementing Inquiry-Based Learning

At the State Level	At the District Level	At the School Level

