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A lesson for the common core standards era from the NCTM standards era: the importance of considering school-level buy-in when implementing and evaluating standards-based instructional materials.

Middleton, James A. (ed.) et al., Large-scale studies in mathematics education. Cham: Springer (ISBN 978-3-319-07715-4/hbk; 978-3-319-07716-1/ebook). Research in Mathematics Education, 17-44 (2015).

Summary: As educators begin to implement new curriculum standards like the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, data from earlier reform efforts can provide critical information about what factors contribute to or impede the ability of new instructional materials to improve student learning. We used data from a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded Local Systemic Change (LSC) initiative to investigate how school principal and teacher buy-in impacted the effectiveness of two middle school curricula designed to implement the NCTM Standards. We found that, compared to matched Comparison schools, Treatment schools with the highest buy-in saw substantial gains in mathematics achievement, whereas Treatment schools with the lowest buy-in saw substantial declines in mathematics achievement.

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