



Early Literacy Curriculum Evaluation

Comprehensive Curriculum	<i>Benchmark Education Advance</i> (Benchmark Education Company, 2022)
Review Date	1/31/2024
DPI Approval Status	Meets criteria WI Act 20 (2023)

Required by 2023 WI Act 20

Components	Evidence	Y/N
Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Phonological Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a clear scope and sequence for phonological awareness skills, including a scope and sequence document, a program support guide, and a phonics scope & sequencePresents phonological awareness instruction using the gradual release of responsibility model, incorporating teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practiceOffers multimodal activitiesShares ideas for corrective feedback	Y
Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a clear scope and sequence for phonemic awareness skills (e.g., scope and sequence document; program support guide; phonics scope & sequence)Presents phonemic awareness instruction using the gradual release of responsibility model, incorporating teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practiceOffers multimodal activitiesShares ideas for corrective feedbackIncludes articulation videos at all levels	Y
Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a clear scope and sequence for phonics (e.g., scope and sequence document; program support guide; phonics scope & sequence)Offers explicit instruction, including direct instruction, modeling, guided practice (including small group, partner, and independent practice focuses; see daily lesson plans; Benchmark Phonics Overview pg. 6; Gradual Release Model Must be Used Effectively, pg. 18; Gradual Release in Action; and the top box on pg. 29 for gradual release for third grade)Bridges phonics instruction to reading and writingUtilizes letter cards and magnetic letter tilesProvides foundational skills lesson presentation slides	Y

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers weekly strategies to support above-level students in phonics; these strategies are found under the additional resource section • Includes cards and manipulatives (e.g., alphabet chart, picture word cards, phonics work mats, high-frequency word cards, sound-spelling cards) • Shares ideas for corrective feedback • Provides decodable texts to practice decoding skills for students in grades K-2, and for students who need support in grade 3. Students in grades K-1 also have “I Read” passages in their “My Reading and Writing” student consumable 	
<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Oral Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a scope & sequence for phonics (e.g., scope and sequence document; outlined in integrated speaking and listening documents K-1, 2, 3-6; unit vocabulary plans for general academic and domain-specific oral vocabulary) • Supports oral language through the gradual release of responsibility model (providing opportunities to engage in conversations with partners, in small groups, and with the whole class) • Offers suggested language objectives with integrated support for multilingual learners • Embeds practices that support language across contexts, including listening and speaking protocols/routines (e.g., turn and talk, constructive conversation protocols) 	<p>Y</p>
<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Building Background Knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides clear scope & sequence for building background knowledge (e.g., building knowledge year-long plans per grade level K-3, research skills to meet grade level expectations grades 2-3, unit vocabulary plans for general academic and domain-specific oral vocabulary) • Launches each unit with an introductory video • Includes visual charts for ten topic strands • Supports building background knowledge through read-alouds and big books in grades K-1 • In grades K-3, students have a read-aloud handbook aligned to topics to help build background knowledge, academic vocabulary, listening comprehension, and metacognitive strategies • Shares titles of additional authentic texts to further support knowledge building • Offers knowledge-building library sets • Research and inquiry projects are offered in each grade level to analyze different aspects of a topic in greater depth; projects become progressively more challenging across the curriculum and grade levels • Includes an opportunity for students to develop knowledge and vocabulary around a social studies, science, and language arts topic in each unit. • Captures learning within a knowledge blueprint (graphic organizer) • Includes inquiry and research opportunities to extend topic 	<p>Y</p>

	<p>knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures learning opportunities using familiar routines (e.g., introduction to essential question, vocabulary, and knowledge blueprint; construction of knowledge blueprint; discussion of the blueprint/scaffolded instruction toward culminating task; independent and collaborative tasks to demonstrate knowledge and build toward culminating unit task; research and inquiry project; culmination tasks to demonstrate knowledge through listening, speaking, reading, and writing) 	
<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Vocabulary Building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear scope & sequence for vocabulary building (e.g., scope and sequence document; vocabulary plans for general academic and domain-specific oral vocabulary) Identifies word bank words for lessons Offers practice related to word bank words each week within texts for close reading, building vocabulary activities, discussions, and completion of the constructing knowledge blueprint; discussing essential questions and enduring understandings; and completing knowledge-building tasks Provides a contrastive analysis tool outlining syntax-grammar to support morphology Offers explicit vocabulary instruction, including direct instruction related to pronunciation, meanings, and application within the context of the text being read Includes scaffolds to support learning (e.g., vocabulary word study log, analogy graphic organizer, Frayer Model, concept web) 	<p>Y</p>
<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear scope & sequence for writing instruction (e.g., scope and sequence document; grade-level year-long writing plans related to daily writing in response to reading, end-process writing, research and inquiry projects, and on-demand writing in response to reading for each unit) Includes sample anchor charts Offers explicit instruction (i.e., engaging thinking, reading and analyzing a prompt, modeling, guided practice, preparing for independent writing, independent and small group writing and conferring, sharing and reflecting) Includes writing responses to reading, using text-based evidence Offers instruction in genre, text structure, handwriting, and grammar Develops handwriting skills through systematic and explicit instruction, including cursive starting in 2nd grade Offers strategies for writing workstations Includes instruction in the writing process Offers scripts to support teachers during writing conferences and direct instruction Provides research-based routines (e.g., shared writing) Teaches writing behaviors 	<p>Y</p>

<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Reading Fluency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a clear scope & sequence for reading fluency (i.e., scope and sequence document) • Offers students opportunities to reread complex core texts multiple times throughout the unit to support fluency • Provides prompts for corrective feedback • Builds fluency skills within applying the gradual release of responsibility framework (e.g., modeling fluency; reading for fluency and transfer, and building fluency activities) • Shares read-alouds to model appropriate fluency - rate, accuracy, expression, and prosody • Structures fluency lessons systematically by progressing from simple to more complex, building from single-word accuracy to phrase, sentence, and then entire text • Offers students weekly practice of fluency skills • Supports building reading fluency through building strong decoding skills • Includes research-informed fluency practices (e.g., reader's theater, paired reading, choral reading of poems, decodable texts) • Prompts for modeling and immediate feedback 	<p>Y</p>
<p>Systematic & Explicit Instruction in Comprehension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a clear scope & sequence for comprehension (i.e., scope and sequence document) • Applies explicit instruction practices within and across lessons • Addresses metacognitive strategies and skills needed to comprehend and build knowledge • Offers students opportunities to demonstrate comprehension skills through reading responses and discussions • Supports conceptual learning through the vertical progression of knowledge-building unit topics and essential questions • Provides strategies for supporting constructive conversations • Includes a guide to text complexity • Includes teaching and learning strategies for supporting comprehension (e.g., graphic organizers, shared reading, anchor charts, text discussion, reader's response journal, read-aloud extending activities, retelling routines) 	<p>Y</p>
<p>Adheres to the prohibition of three-cueing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows a specific scope and sequence for phonics instruction. • Requires learners to apply their knowledge of phonics to solve unknown words. 	<p>Y</p>

Additional Considerations

Item	Evidence	Y/N
Aligns to the Wisconsin Standards for ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects standards, but a specific correlation to the WI Standards for ELA (WI DPI, 2020) is not evident • Provides anchor texts that have been aligned to the rigor of grade-level standards 	N
Provides organized and easily accessible lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a scope and sequence for each grade level organized by units and includes a weekly outline of readings, skills, and strategies. • Identifies the essential question, enduring understandings, word bank for building knowledge, and research and inquiry project for each unit • Offers a program support guide (e.g., anchor texts and knowledge-building topic sets, skills development, building knowledge and vocabulary, writing, support for exceptional learners) 	Y
Provides supports for multilingual learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides unit introduction videos (K–6) in the digital library/whole group • Offers suggested language objectives for vocabulary, language forms and functions, academic language skills, and grammar in each unit • Provides integrated English language development strategies at three intensity levels in every lesson • Shares strategies to scaffold the first reading with alternative ways to read unit anchor texts with students. • Includes language transfer supports in phonics lessons (K–2) and grammar in context lessons (2–6). • Shares real-world perspectives • Includes sentence frames • Includes a multilingual glossary with images, definitions, sample sentences, and vocabulary word translations in nine languages 	Y
Offers options to purchase the curriculum in a language other than English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers the following resource in the Spanish: <i>Spanish Benchmark Adelante 2023</i> 	Y
Provides embedded professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers guides to support professional learning • Offers opportunities for contracting professional development in the preferred formats and timelines of a district • Offers different layers of professional learning 	Y
Offers embedded assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a suite of formative and summative assessment materials • Provides a yearly assessments planning guide • Offers weekly and unit assessments • Includes a building knowledge evaluation tool 	Y

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes interim assessments and performance tasks • Offers an online assessment platform • Provides various resources to support screening and progress monitoring of foundational reading skills 	
Offers scaffolds and/or tips for differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides strategies for differentiation • Includes supports for exceptional learners (i.e., multilingual learners, students with special needs, and high-ability learners) • Provides lessons for small group and independent practice • Includes scaffolds for diverse learners 	Y
Provides students with engaging authentic and decodable texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists texts for each unit within a “components at a glance” section • Provides content-rich texts that appear to be publisher-developed • Includes decodable texts • Includes lists of optional trade books aligned to each unit • Offers both print and digital texts 	N
Supports for families/caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides home-school connection letters (including multilingual options) • Includes an "at-home" weekly reading log 	Y

Ratings from Outside Sources

Item	Notes	Y/N
Ed Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment: Meets • Usability: Meets • Foundational Skills: 84/88 • Building Knowledge: 66/72 	Y
Approved by at least one other state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO: Meets • CT: Meets • GA: Meets • MN: Eligible for consideration 	Y
Publisher Self- Evaluation	https://widpiprd.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/TS-EarlyLiteracyCurricula/DocLibPublishers/Benchmark%20Education%20Company%20LLC/Benchmark%20Education%20Company%20LLC-terms-of-service-self-evaluation.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=EEpKqW	Y
WI Early Literacy Curriculum Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 responses • Overall: 2.83 (council will come back to this later) 	

DPI Notes:

- Adopted in MMSD multi-language programs <https://isthmus.com/news/news/a-return-to-phonics/>

Glossary

Building background knowledge: Refers to the information that children learn and store in their memories, including details about themselves, other people, objects, and the surrounding world, encompassing beliefs, values, rules, and expectations within children's cultures, environments, and languages (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning, 2022, p. 3).

Explicit instruction: Refers to an instructional model whereby a teacher gradually decreases the level of support to students through starting with a clear, memorable model, followed by guided practice supported with positive corrective feedback, utilizing preclude language to enable successful task completion, ultimately release the students to apply the learning independently (Graham et al., 2017; WI DPI, 2020a, p. 40).

Instruction in comprehension: Refers to the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Extracting meaning is to understand what an author has stated, explicitly or implicitly. Constructing meaning is to interpret what an author has said by bringing one's "capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences" to bear on what he or she is reading (Shanahan and others, 2010).

Instruction in writing: Refers to the "process through which people communicate thoughts and ideas... can include beginning scribbles, drawings, random letter strings, single-letter spellings, invented spelling, or complete sentences and paragraphs... also can include students dictating ideas to an adult or peer for transcription" (Graham et al., 2018, p.42).

Oral language development: Refers to developing a "system of words and word combinations used to communicate with others through speaking and listening" (Foorman et al., 2016; Kosanovich et al., 2020, p. 1).

Phonemic awareness: Refers to the skills of identifying, isolating, blending, segmenting, and manipulating (adding, substituting, deleting) phonemes (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).

Phonics: Refers to the "relationships between sounds and words; this includes alphabetic principle, decoding, orthographic knowledge, encoding, and fluency" (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).

Phonological awareness: Refers to the skills of word awareness, rhyme recognition, repetition and creation of alliteration, syllable counting or identification, onset, and rime manipulation (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).

Reading fluency: Refers to reading with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody (WI DPI, 2020b, p.76).

Systematic instruction: Refers to "intentionally teaching identifiable skills within a scope and sequence" (WI DPI, 2020a, p. 44).

Three-cueing: Refers to "...any model, including the model referred to as meaning, structure, and visual cues, or MSV, of teaching a pupil to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues or memory."

Vocabulary building: Refers to knowing words and word meanings, encompassing both expressive (words said or produced) and receptive vocabulary (words heard and understood) (Kosanovich, 2020, p. 1).