

January 2021

# TPS Live and Learn Prekindergarten Program Summary

## Section 1. Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines Alignment

- [Proclamation 2021 List of Materials Adopted by the State Board of Education](#)

Domain	Student	Teacher
Social & Emotional	100.00%	100.00%
Language & Development	100.00%	100.00%
Emergent Literacy Reading	100.00%	100.00%
Emergent Literacy Writing	100.00%	100.00%
Math	100.00%	100.00%
Science	100.00%	100.00%
Social Studies	100.00%	100.00%
Fine Arts	100.00%	100.00%
Physical Development	100.00%	100.00%
Tech Apps	100.00%	100.00%

## Section 2. Integration of Content and Skills

- Materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections that are integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day; however, there is no clear guidance for teachers on using the activities throughout the school day.
- Materials utilize some high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration and somewhat support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.
- Materials do not fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure and include some guidance that supports the teacher's delivery of instruction.
- Materials are somewhat supported by child development research on children's development within and across all domains.

### **Section 3. Health and Wellness Associated Domains**

- Materials do not include direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills; students practice social skills in a variety of activities throughout the day.
- Materials include some guidance for teachers on classroom arrangements that promote positive social interactions.
- Materials include some activities to develop physical skills, fine motor skills, and safe and healthy habits.

### **Section 4. Language and Communication Domain**

- Materials provide some guidance on developing students' listening and speaking skills as well as expanding student vocabulary.
- Materials do not include strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge.

### **Section 5. Emergent Literacy: Reading Domain**

- Materials provide some opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, including through authentic text conversations.
- Materials provide limited instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills, alphabetic knowledge skills, and print knowledge and concepts.
- Materials include some variety of text types and genres across contents that are high quality and at an appropriate level of complexity; a variety of approaches are used to develop student comprehension of texts, but limited support and guidance are offered to teachers.
- Materials do not include strategies to support ELs with their reading skills.

### **Section 6. Emergent Literacy: Writing Domain**

- Materials do not include some experiences through which students can engage with writing.
- Materials do not instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.
- Materials provide limited support for fine motor development alongside and through writing.

### **Section 7. Mathematics Domain**

- Materials occasionally provide activities including concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations, but the materials do not follow a logical continuum between the three.
- Materials sometimes build on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.
- Materials do not intentionally develop young children's ability to problem solve, use number sense, and build academic math vocabulary.

## **Section 8. Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Technology Domains**

- Materials do not purposefully build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world.
- Materials build social studies knowledge through the study of culture and community.
- Materials expose children to some fine arts through exploration.
- Materials do not provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience or explore and use various digital tools.

## **Section 9. Progress Monitoring**

- Materials do not include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools and guidance for teachers and students; materials do not include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Materials do not include guidance for teachers or administrators to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools.
- Materials do not include frequent and integrated progress monitoring opportunities.

## **Section 10. Supports for All Learners**

- Materials include some guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions intended to maximize student learning potential.
- Materials provide some instructional methods that appeal to different student learning interests and needs.
- Materials do not include accommodations for linguistics commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.

## **Section 11. Implementation**

- Materials do not include a year-long plan with practice and review opportunities that support instruction.
- Materials do not include implementation support for teachers and administrators; implementation guidance does not meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations. The materials do not include a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence.
- Materials do not provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school.
- The visual design of student and teacher materials is distracting nor chaotic.

## **Section 12. Additional Information: Technology, Cost, Professional Learning, and Additional Language Supports**

- The publisher submitted the technology, cost, and professional learning support worksheets.

**2.1** Materials are cross-curricular and integrated in an authentic way to support students' unified experience throughout the day.

- Materials include specific, intentional, and purposeful cross-curricular connections to create a unified experience for students.
- Materials name which domains are purposefully developed or reinforced in each learning activity.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Some cross-curricular lessons integrate the different domains in an authentic way, but often these lessons do not reference the guidelines from the other domains. Teachers must infer how the material is integrated since it is not referenced directly. While some materials are specifically organized by domain, generally, the curriculum is not organized by unit or daily lesson plan. This does not create a unified experience for students throughout the day.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials are listed by domain and sometimes describe how the learning activities will be reinforced and developed. At the top of each lesson, there is a section describing the connections to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG), including the domain, skill, and outcome. For example, in the "Language and Communication" Domain, Lesson 1, the heading at the top of the page states, "Lesson 1: A. Listening and Comprehension Skills. From birth, children begin learning by listening to the world around them." The paragraph continues with a description of the Listening and Comprehension Skills as directly stated in the TPG: "1. Child will show understanding by responding appropriately. 2. Child shows understanding by following two step directions. 3. Child shows understanding of the language being spoken by teachers and peers."

At times, the Teacher Edition does not mention which lessons and activities integrate additional domains. While the TPG are stated before each lesson, there is no in-lesson reference to which guidelines are being reinforced. Sometimes the guideline overview includes skills that are not actually covered in the lesson. For example, in the "Emergent Literacy" Domain, Lesson 1, the lesson guidelines include pre-reading skills, self-selection of books, recognizing text has meaning, sentences separated by words, combining words to make a compound word, blending syllables, and rhyming. All of these guidelines are listed as being taught in Lesson 1; however, not all are taught. In this lesson, students discuss the book *Olympic Games* with the questions, "What can you see?" and "How many characters do you see?" Students work in small groups and make up a story about one or more of the characters. Students also discuss the table of contents, objects, and position words. During a teacher model, she points out how the text

rhymes, contains four words per sentence, and the word *run* appears three times in this section. Before moving on, she says, “this word has one syllable, the letters in the word *run* are /r//u//n/.” The teacher is applying various skills listed in the guidelines, but students do not have the opportunity to practice these skills. While there is instruction, there is no development or reinforcement. Other skills mentioned, like self-selection of books, do not seem to be integrated into the lesson.

That being said, there are some lessons that demonstrated cross-curricular integration. For one, math lessons often include cross-curricular integration like children jumping while counting, navigating through an obstacle course when learning location words, and using physical movements when learning about colors. As another example, Lesson 4 in the “Science” Domain integrates reading through two reader books: *Dylan Michael and His Musical Friends* and *Ella Violet and Her Big Sister, Amelia Rose*. The lesson overview states that students will focus on physical science guidelines related to investigation, description, and discussion. These books are located in the “Teacher Reader Activity Master” (TRAM) and include a variety of associated activities. The activities include counting, tracing, music, letter recognition, writing letters, family, and cooking. *Dylan Michael and His Musical Friends* is split up into chapters, and Chapter 4 includes an assessment in the area of math, English language arts, writing, and science. Some of the pages contain activities; some include text and pictures, while others only contain text. The lesson does not explain how to split up the book for instruction, and the specific lesson does not explain how the non-science activities relate to the prekindergarten guidelines.

The book *Ella Violet and Her Big Sister, Amelia Rose* includes 51 pages of science, counting, math, tracing letters, drama, singing, and self-care activities. The main focus of the book is learning about the five senses. The first activity in this book is a subtraction word problem. Next, the big sister, Amelia Rose, is teaching her sister about the five senses. She draws a picture of a body to help her sister understand. In a later activity, students trace the five senses to practice their fine motor skills. This practice is integrated into a health lesson when children practice brushing their teeth and washing their hands. Although many of these lessons integrate different content areas, this does not occur with most lessons.

**2.2** Materials utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration.

- Texts are strategically chosen to support content and skill development in multiple domains.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Most of the texts presented are written by unknown authors. The materials also do not provide a wide variety of texts to use across multiple domains. Instruction does not utilize popular and current children’s literature or classic children’s literature.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher Reader Activity Master” (TRAM) references the many genres included in the curriculum: nonfiction and fiction books, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. However, most books fall into the fiction category; there is one short non-fiction book about firefighters and less than five books that integrate poems, songs, or nursery rhymes. The nonfiction text, *Firefighters*, is seven pages long but does not contain any photographs. It includes information about firefighter drills, the gear they must wear, and how they make a fire safety plan. This book, like many others, does not have a listed author. Books are often used across multiple lessons and are sometimes as long as 50 pages. Most books include related content activities but rarely do lessons describe how to present the books.

All books included in the curriculum are unique to this adoption. There are no classics, early childhood favorites, or popular current titles one may expect to find in a prekindergarten classroom. While texts serve as a foundation for lesson design, some follow Kindergarten Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Common Core Standards. The beginning of the Teacher Edition does include an additional list of 28 books suggested for general instruction. These texts are authored by well-known authors like Dr. Seuss and Maurice Sendak. However, there is no guidance detailing how these books support the themes, develop reading comprehension, and extend learning across curricular areas. These books are not provided in the adoption package and would have to be purchased separately.

Some of the books used throughout instruction have minor inconsistencies. For example, the book *Elizabeth Claire’s Magic Carpet*, used in five lessons, talks about rainbows and the colors of the rainbow. First, the teacher describes how to remember the rainbow’s colors using ROY G. BIV (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). The text includes two images of a magic carpet where the colors green and blue are reversed in order. Additionally, in this lesson, students sing a song about the rainbow. The song lists the color order as red, yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, and blue. The song adds pink and uses the word purple instead of violet. This inconsistency will make it challenging for students to master the intended objective.

Some of the books provided in the materials were used to support content. For example, in the story, *Benjamin the Elephant*, the title page of the story states teachers will read the story aloud, ask the children to identify the main characters, and have students create a classroom zoo mural. Children will also be able to draw, label, and list a fun fact about each animal. The story is divided into seven chapters, each chapter represents one page, and the final page includes a song called "Dylan's Song." Another book used for content instruction is *Christopher and His Animal Brigade*. This fiction book is used across four lessons and includes a story, some nonfiction facts, and related activities. Book topics cover science, family, traditions, color, and art. Like some other texts in the curriculum, this book does not list an author. Three texts provide opportunities for students to identify sensory words like color and size. These texts are *Dylan Michael and His Musical Friends*, *Ella Violet and Her Big Sister Amelia Rose*, and *Elizabeth Claire's Magic Carpet*. The series of books align with Transitional Kindergarten (TK) standards and not the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The texts even state that the objective of the books is to ensure TK students arrive in Kindergarten with the skills they need for Kindergarten math, science, and English language arts content. Other texts include activities that are not developmentally appropriate according to the Prekindergarten Guidelines. The book *Poetry in Motion* by Marion Lewis is a collection of short poems that repeats sport words like *run*, *kick*, *jump*, and *swim*. The activity itself is developmentally appropriate; the class reads the text together, and the teacher facilitates discussion before, during, and after reading. However, the activity at the end of the text requires students to write a summary about their own families. This activity is not developmentally appropriate per the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

**2.3** Materials support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.

- Materials include a variety of opportunities for purposeful play that promotes student choice.
- Materials provide guidance to teachers on how to connect all domains to play.
- Materials provide guidance to teachers on setting up and facilitating activities to meet, reinforce, or practice learning objectives.
- Materials have an intentional balance of direct (explicit) instruction and student choice, including purposefully planned learning centers, as appropriate for the content and skill development.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide some opportunities for purposeful play that promote student choice; however, many of the lessons and activities are guided by the teacher. The materials do not provide guidance on how to connect all the domains to play. Some guidance for setting up and facilitating activities is provided, but information on when learning centers should be changed or revisited is not provided. The materials do not provide a balance of content and skill development. They provide many opportunities for direct instruction but few for student choice except in varying learning areas; however, the materials do not provide guidance regarding how to utilize the learning centers throughout the year to reinforce or practice learning objectives. Additionally, none of the lessons across domains give the teacher guidance to utilize independent play areas to continue the student learning and practice of skills and concepts.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The Teacher Edition lists the various ways in which the materials include purposeful play, but not all lessons include play opportunities. The subheading “Power of Play” in the Teacher Edition states, “play is vital for all students in the early years setting,” that students should have opportunities for daily indoor and outdoor play, and that spontaneous play opportunities enable children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and creatively. The materials are organized by domain. Lesson 5 of the “Social Emotional Domain”—the “Brainsprouts Child Initiated Activities”—does note an opportunity for play, stating that students broaden and deepen their knowledge through play as they use paint, brushes, and paper to create self-portraits or collages with cards, papers, and other textiles. Students can also paint creatures or characters by fingerpainting and add details with pencils after the paint dries. There are over thirty Brainsprouts activities referenced in the remainder of this domain, and each activity page includes questions to extend learning, assessment, and keywords for teacher use as children play.

The materials do not provide guidance on balancing instruction or include student choice across all domains since many lessons are teacher-guided. For example, in Lesson 1 of the Emergent Writing Domain, the teacher talks about “writing through flashcards” instead of modeling writing, allowing students to write along with the teacher in a shared writing experience, and then allowing students to write authentically by themselves. This structure is repeated in Lesson 7 in the Science Domain, where there is a full page of teacher scripted discussion about pollution and how students can reduce, reuse, and recycle but no opportunity for student practice with choice. Students create a poster to represent associated keywords: *earth*, *resource*, *pollute*, and *recycling*.

The materials contain some other resources that promote child play. Books in the Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM), such as *Olympic Reader 2 Poetry in Motion*, provide opportunities for children to act out animals, draw animals, and create habitats. However, guidance on how to set up areas for these activities in the classroom are not evident. The materials recommend setting up a “nursery” with 17 different areas; a book/reading area, carpet area, craft area, ICT area, literacy/writing area, malleable area, mark making area, math area, music and drama area, outdoor area, quiet area, role playing area, sand area, small world area, and water area. In these areas, students practice various skills to support learning, but these learning areas/centers are not referenced in all domains, nor do the materials give guidance on how to link content or skills being taught via direct instruction to the learning centers. Materials are unclear about how centers should be implemented in the lessons. The material’s recommendations are limited to information on “What you need” in an area and provide “Adult Interaction” activities to use in the area/center.

“Student Journal 2” includes some lessons that discuss play but do not necessarily use play as a vehicle for academic learning. One activity has the teacher say, “in small groups, create a ball game that you can play together. Talk about your ideas and suggestions. If other people have different ideas, perspectives, and feelings, talk about these nicely. It is very important to listen to each person in the group and understand that other people might think and feel differently to you. Work together to create the ball game.” In this case, students are creating a game to build social and emotional skills.

#### 2.4 Materials fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure.

- Materials specify whether they are for three or four-year-old children.
- If intended for use for both three and four-year-old children, materials include a variety of options that clearly differentiate instruction for level of development.
- Materials provide differentiated use recommendations for half day and full day prekindergarten programs.

### Does Not Meet 0/4

The program does not clearly reference when particular lessons are for three or four-year-old children. The materials address the different age groups in varying ways throughout the product, sometimes by referencing children as “younger” or “older,” sometimes by months, but rarely by actual age in years. The materials contain one example of a typical day’s schedule intended to represent a full-day program; there is no guidance on how to differentiate for a half-day program. A personalized pacing service is available upon request.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The material differentiates the age groups, either by referring to students as *younger* and *older* or in line with “Brainsprouts” lessons that reference a chart regarding what children of 30–50 months and 40–60+ months should be able to do. However, the materials are not consistent when referring to the different age groups and do not provide guidance on using the materials with one age group or the other. Lesson 1 of the “Social Emotional Domain” is the only lesson that uses the term three-year-olds when mentioning simple visual timers and rewards charts with stickers. This guidance can be found under the heading for students “working at or above expectations.” Differentiation for three-year-olds includes older children who can incorporate more responsibilities in the classroom, like putting out snacks, setting the table for lunch, or feeding classroom pets. The materials do not include a variety of options that clearly differentiate instruction in the lessons for the level of development. For example, the color mixing lesson plan has a section for differentiation and states younger children could mix the paint under 1:1 adult supervision while older children would mix three colors of paints to try and create the three secondary colors.

The activities do not include specific guidance for teachers to understand how to support and encourage a responsive interaction to nurture young children’s dispositions to learn. Sometimes domain-specific lessons include written guidance; otherwise, the materials do not look different from younger to older students. For example, in the “Emergent Literacy Domain” Lesson 2, there is no mention of different lessons for 3- and 4-year-olds. The lesson has the students self-select one book. Then, the student reviews their book and answers some questions about

the book, such as, “What is the story about?”, “Why has the author created this book?”, “What pictures do you see?” and “Do the pictures help you know what the text says?.” There is no differentiation for 3- and 4-year-olds.

The materials only provide one schedule that is meant for full-day prekindergarten programs. Materials do not identify the lessons that work best with a half-day program versus a full-day program. The materials do not provide daily or weekly overview lessons for the year, and the schedule that is included does not guide the teacher in planning and making instructional decisions for the program.

**2.5** Materials include detailed guidance that supports teacher’s delivery of instruction.

- Guidance for teachers is evident and provides explicit instructional strategies for teaching prekindergarten skills.
- Materials include detailed and explicit guidance for teacher and student actions that support student development and proficiency of content and skills.
- Materials provide detailed guidance for connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials contain some explicit, appropriate instructional strategies for prekindergarteners, but others lack specificity. The materials provide limited information about what behaviors to look for in student actions to monitor student development of content and skills. The materials sometimes mention prior knowledge in lessons but do not always state how teachers should use it to connect it to new student learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The introduction section of the materials contains a development continuum for teachers to understand what skills students at 30–50 months and students at 40–60+ months should display in the areas of personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. However, materials do not regularly reference this continuum to assist teachers in supporting student development and proficiency of content and skills.

The Mathematics Domain provides the instructional strategies to count using one-to-one correspondence by pointing and saying the number. Lessons recommend teachers use their fingers when counting with students and practice counting through hands-on activities like playing with clay during centers. Teachers integrate counting practice into everyday routine activities and sing counting songs. In Lesson 1 of the domain, teachers use objects and pictures of vehicles to work with students’ counting skills. In Lesson 3, teachers use counters to do subtraction word problems for subtracting 0–5 objects from a set. The materials state manipulatives are not always needed to complete math; rather, students can employ mental math. Though the materials mention concrete models and verbal word problems, they do not guide teachers to know and identify when students should move onto mental math without objects. The lesson does not provide detailed examples of child behavior for teachers to look for.

In the Reading Domain, materials recommend pre-reading instructional strategies such as viewing and talking about pictures, brainstorming in small collaborative groups, and looking at book print features such as the title, headers, introductions, keywords, and graphics. The “Activity Guide” in the “Starter Kit” includes an “Alphabet Line” as visual support to reinforce the alphabet in both upper and lower case letters. Engaging in hands-on participation and active learning, students receive a card to arrange in alphabetical order collaboratively. Students select letters, name them, and then think of a word that begins with the selected letter. The teacher explains to students which letters are vowels or consonants. The students later play games in small groups to extend this learning requiring each student to think of something around a given theme that begins with a letter of the alphabet. However, some of the instructional strategies used within the materials are not supported by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, primarily the use of worksheets and flashcards. The materials include repetitive guidance at the end of multiple lessons across all domains for the teacher to write keywords on the board; students make flashcards for these keywords. Lessons outline items to be included on the fronts and backs of the cards.

Some lessons, like those found in the “Teacher Reader Activity Master” (TRAM), include detailed guidance for teachers. For example, the lesson titled “Underground Gardening” begins with a detailed overview of the lesson and a list of materials. Together, students prepare a two-liter bottle for a sprouting plant. They care for the plant until it sprouts, move their plants together to create a *forest*, and then use a hand lens to look for organisms. Throughout the lesson, there are suggested student responses, reminders, and answers written in red.

The materials provide some guidance for connecting students’ prior content knowledge and experiences to new learning, but the materials also rely on assumed student background knowledge. For example, the “Scientific Reasoning” section of the “Teacher Edition” states, “...the work...builds upon the experiences and background that children are likely to have had.” One lesson in the section states that students should know “how to ask questions about the world around them.” That being said, some lessons do cover prior information; for example, read alouds cover topics such as family, playing, colors, and numbers, and the materials provide activities, pictures, and songs that build on children’s current level of understanding when learning a new concept or developing new vocabulary. Another example can be found in “Writing Domain” during the “Animal Dice Game.” In this activity, students use animal dice as a stimulus for speaking and listening. The first paragraph under “Discussion Points” states: “show students each of the animal shapes in turn and ask them to identify each animal. Ask students to suggest what they already know about each animal, such as where it lives, what it eats, etc.” The next section of the lesson moves into the animal description and discussion prompts. Beyond the cited paragraph, there are no additional prompting questions, potential misunderstandings, student actions, or connections to new learning.

In some cases, the materials attempt to connect to students’ prior knowledge by mentioning prior lessons. In these cases, they do not always state how to review prior information. For example, Lesson 3 of the Math Domain lists the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and states that teachers should review the work completed in Lessons 1 and 2. In Lesson 3, the teacher writes numbers 1–10 in order on the board, including each number’s word representation. The materials suggest that teachers review letter sounds if students demonstrate difficulty with the numbers’ word representations but do not directly reference instructional strategies or

information necessary to review the previous lessons or letter sounds. Students then review the terms as a class and make flashcards. There are no additional instructional strategies for teachers to employ if a child cannot write or make flashcards.

**2.6** Materials are supported by child development research on children’s development within and across all domains.

- Materials include a clear description of how the curriculum is supported by child development research.
- Materials provide research-based guidance for instruction that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach.
- Cited research is current, academic, relevant to early childhood development, and applicable to Texas-specific context and demographics.
- A bibliography is present.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials do not provide a clear description of how they are supported by child development research. The research included is limited, some reference other age groups older than prekindergarten students, and the provided bibliography remains general. The materials provide some research-based knowledge but do not guide teachers to use that research to enrich educator understanding of early child development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The introduction to the product states that the materials were created by an organization of a group of teacher-writers working in the United States and the United Kingdom and that the materials’ content references the Sustainable Development of Goals of the United Nations. References for researched data from the Early Learning Foundation are included and licensed to appear in this program; however, further information is not referenced in the Teacher Edition. The materials focus on the four principles essential for all early year practitioners to consider: the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, and learning and development. In addition to the Early Learning Foundation, the materials are also partnered with Action Based Curriculum, Didax, and NEST.

The cited research does not include early childhood experts and sources that are acclaimed within recent years. The research cited does not include a connection to Texas and the diversity of language spoken by children and families in many areas of the state. Some of the experts mentioned in the text include Marion Lewis, a published author of Career and Technical Education Law; Forensic Science; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics projects; Nikola Boyd, the author of many of the reader activity books within the program; and Dr. Brad Christensen, also a

STEM instructional designer and a professional development leader at CeMast. None of the experts cited state any direct experience or expertise with early childhood education.

The provided “Live and Learn Bibliography” lists texts and resources in the curriculum. The authors are limited to Marion Lewis, Brad Christensen, AB Curriculum, Didax, and NEST. Lewis, J. is cited as the author of *Christopher Stephen and His Animal Brigade*, and Lunn, L. is cited as the author of *Archway*; their credentials are not provided. Beyond the author, the resource’s title, and the publishing company, no additional research information is provided in this resource.

The materials do not provide research-based guidance for instruction that enriches educator understanding of early childhood development and the validity of the recommended approach. The materials do not follow a research-based continuum to teach skills like writing or phonological awareness; the materials teach phonological awareness skills such as listening, rhyming, syllabication, alliteration, and on-set rime all in one lesson. Materials sometimes provide a rationale showcasing why activities were included, such as an explanation of why the read-aloud texts were chosen by indicating how they support young children’s listening comprehension and vocabulary development; later, materials state the same texts apply to Kindergarten through grade 8 instructional material. The materials provide information on young children’s developmental learning milestones by displaying the content, knowledge, and skills children ages 30–50 months and 40–60 months should show and have. However, this resource does not provide guidance for the teacher to see how effective planning and implementation will help young children learn and build sustained knowledge.

**3.1** Materials include direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills.

- Full lessons on Self Concept Skills, Self-Regulation Skills, Relationships with Others, and Social Awareness Skills, as laid out in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.
- Materials provide guidance on teacher modeling of these skills.
- Materials include appropriate texts used to support the development of social competencies.
- Materials include appropriate texts used to support the development of competencies to understand and respond to emotions.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

Few of the materials include direct social skill instruction and explicit teaching of skills. While some lessons break down social and emotional skill development, the materials provide little evidence of explicit teaching with modeling. Additionally, there is a limited number of texts to support the development of social and emotional competencies.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include few lessons on self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness skills. The introductory section of the “Teacher Textbook” provides direct instruction for eight lessons in the “Social Emotional Domain.” These lessons contain hands-on activities, discussion points, scaffolding ideas, and the use of vocabulary. All of the covered prekindergarten guidelines are listed at the top of each lesson. For example, in the “Brain Sprouts” section of the curriculum, a lesson titled “Feeling Blue” teaches emotional development and focuses on self-control, self-esteem, forming relationships, language, and communication. The lesson directly teaches and explains what *feeling blue* means and feels like. The teacher asks questions and has students share their individual experiences in a group, allowing them to practice self-control as they wait for their turn. Students are then given the opportunity to take the learning further and independently draw a picture of themselves feeling blue. By drawing and expressing themselves to communicate how they feel or may have felt, students gain insight into their self-esteem. Although the lesson “Feeling Blue” does provide modeling, it relies on verbal discussion and does not include visuals, songs, or puppets to support understanding. The lesson also lacks instructional guidance on how to regulate emotions, such as how to calm down.

Some activities help students build relationships with others. For example, the “Math Domain” of the Teacher Textbook features “Millennium Development Goals,” at the end of which there are multiple activities related to building shape models and people representations. Students discuss all the different people who make up our global community and are encouraged to make representations of these diverse populations. Students also discuss issues these diverse

communities may face. This lesson allows students to recognize cultural differences. In addition to this activity, the textbook lessons state that teachers should use music from different genres and cultures. For example, one of the nursery rhyme songs in the materials is in both Spanish and English. In another example, the teacher models how to sing and play “Frere Jacques.”

The materials do provide guidance on modeling and supporting social skills through the use of songs that encourage children to make correct choices and explain why rules are important. Instruction guidance includes teaching skills through rewards, but using sticker or reward charts within social skill lessons does not follow developmentally appropriate practices or fall under the category of playful learning. The first of the eight lessons in the Social and Emotional Domain includes teaching skills and routines, such as cleaning up; the lesson refers to a reward system. The materials provide few opportunities for self-regulation, such as breathing or calming strategies. One such instance can be found in the Teacher Edition, Social and Emotional Development Domain. When students first break a rule, teachers are reminded, “you may need to pick them up and remove them from a situation, and try to distract them in another area or with a different activity.... A time-out or reflection area is a helpful thing to have. Have a cushion, stool, chair, or rug that children must sit on for their time out.” When placed in time out, teachers emphasize and reinforce the rule that was broken. This rule-based form of regulation does not follow developmentally appropriate practices.

The materials do not include many texts as a foundation to support the development of social competencies. There is a hub of provided materials called the “Teacher Reader Activity Master”(TRAM), with different sections, many of which contain cross-curricular connections. Some of the texts used in the materials are the *Olympic Games Reader (Book One and Book Two)* and *Olympic Games: Poetry in Motion*, which contain stories about likes and dislikes and characters representing various cultures. In the book *Scarlett Wendy and Her Animal Shape*, the names of the animals culturally represent a variety of children. Reader books feature twenty-six short stories on topics such as friendship, family, holidays, care for others, animals, and the environment. Materials include books with various social themes, such as going to school, families, and making friends.

The materials do not include culturally relevant texts with themes that support students’ development of the social skills of understanding and responding to emotions. For example, in the text library, the *Olympic Games Reader* is used to teach social skills; however, it does not contain common themes to teach students social skills.

**3.2** Materials include repeated opportunities for students to practice social skills throughout the day.

- Materials provide opportunities to learn, practice, and apply these skills throughout the day.
- Practice opportunities are authentically integrated throughout all other content domains.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Students have repeated opportunities to practice some social skills throughout the day. However, full lessons often lack teacher modeling of practice skills. The materials provide authentic opportunities for students to practice their social skills within all content domains. Nevertheless, there are only some opportunities to practice and apply social awareness skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the classroom, teachers teach social skills that can be practiced and applied throughout the day. Lesson 1 of the “Social Emotional Domain” instructs teachers to introduce simple rules to keep everyone safe in the classroom and to repeat the rules throughout each day. Teachers should also acknowledge students when they follow the rules. One reason for acknowledging the students’ actions is because students create their own reward chart to use as a method of reinforcement; directions state to differentiate rewards based on the child. The materials suggest “time outs” for breaking the rules rather than problem-solving strategies and opportunities to practice social skills. The reward chart is used as a way to teach self-regulation skills.

The materials also include the “Student Journal 2”; teachers use “Student Fact Sheets” to work with students on new topics or review previously taught concepts. These fact sheets include using activities for problem solving, following rules and routines, caring for others, understanding students’ personal roles in the community, communicating feelings, and understanding the perspectives and feelings of others. Teachers read a narrative discussing the social and emotional skill development highlighted in that particular lesson, and students complete an activity to demonstrate comprehension of the concept. The activities vary in instructional settings between whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Social skills are also addressed through songs, taking turns when asking and answering questions, playing games with others, and working in groups.

Social skills instruction is evident in the directions provided for lessons, weekly themes, and session activities. For example, the materials provide an activity following the story *Evan and Lucy Investigate*; students listen to a story, create props used in the story, act out various

emotions, and discuss their own personal feelings. Teachers lead a conversation about the complexity of emotions and listen as students discuss their feelings, thinking of life events students may have experienced and the feelings associated with each. The materials communicate the importance of discussing feelings. The “Teacher Edition” also contains an activity in which students act out the roles of bullies in the classroom and talk about how this made them feel. However, in both of these examples, the materials do not include a teacher model. Also, neither activity provides visual supports or structures for children to practice social skills.

Materials address relationships with others via a box labeled “Every Parent Matters” at the end of the lesson; this box contains a suggestion on how parents can reinforce the skills students learned at home. For example, after students role-play with puppets following a read-aloud at school, the materials suggest they role-play with parents at home. The materials also allow students to build interpersonal relationships with the teacher and with each other in group projects and during “Teamwork” time in the activities section of each lesson. For example, in the Social Emotional Domain, Lesson 2, after a whole group read-aloud, students interact in small groups. During Teamwork time, each group is assigned the task of drawing the main character and discussing the problem the character solved. During this lesson, the teacher gives out rewards if any child solves a problem.

Materials contain a chart with examples from the different domains of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines; social skills are authentically integrated throughout content domains. For example, in a science lesson about light energy, students are asked personal reflection questions about a time they were in the dark and how they felt. Later in Lesson 8 of the “Science Domain,” teachers engage students in a brief class discussion about basic emotions like sadness. They talk about how to deal with negative emotions. After a literacy lesson, students are invited to get into their “small book club groups,” take turns, and create a poster together. In an emergent literacy lesson, before the teacher reads a story about firefighters, the teacher highlights how community helpers stay safe. Within the “Fine Arts Domain,” teachers use a provided text to focus on the characters’ feelings as well as on the emotions felt by the audience. Children then use this knowledge to create or recreate stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations. A read-aloud activity (within the “Language and Communication Domain”) allows students to take turns responding and to listen to their peers actively. In another lesson, after playing the “Wild Animals Dice Game,” students discuss the importance of safety when engaging with wild animals. In the “How Do We Stay Healthy” activity, the class discusses the rules and ways to stay safe, including basic road safety and people who help keep us safe. Students and teachers can even create a “mock road” somewhere at school to practice modeling road safety.

**3.3** Materials include ideal classroom arrangements that support positive social interactions.

- Classroom arrangement supports daily opportunities for practice of social skills, including in daily learning centers.
- Materials give teacher guidance on classroom arrangement to support teacher-student and student-student interactions.
- Materials consider a variety of factors and components of the physical space and their impact on students' social development.
- Materials can be implemented easily and effectively within a classroom arrangement that supports positive social interactions.
- Materials provide suggestions for how to engage students in classroom arrangement in order to promote student ownership of the space.

## Partially Meets 2/4

There are some classroom arrangement supports that provide daily opportunities for the practice of social skills. However, materials rarely mention factors and components of physical space and their impact on students' social development. There are some suggestions to engage students in arrangements that promote ownership of the space, but there is limited teacher guidance on classroom arrangement to support interaction.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a "Prekindergarten Starter Manual," which contains guidance for teachers on setting up their daily learning centers in the classroom. The manual promotes social development in the classroom by including what materials will be used, what materials will need to be purchased, and the total number of areas to set up. The teacher should set up seventeen total areas in the classroom, including a "Construction" area, "Craft" area, "Computer and Technology" area, "Malleable" area, "Writing" area, "Math" area, and several other areas; however, classroom arrangement for a large number of centers is not mentioned. Although the materials list 17 areas to be set up, two learning centers have been left out: the "Science" center and the "ABC" center. The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines list these two centers as part of a list of the seven individual learning areas required to promote individual learning and social skills.

Teachers are given guidance to ensure positive social interactions and that students feel safe. In the "Social and Emotional Domain," students are taught personal boundaries as the teacher shows students how to hold hands in the carpet area and sit down. The teacher learns if they are comfortable sitting next to each other by asking, "Do you feel safe, or is the person next to you too close?" There are some suggestions to organize students into pairs and small groups that may support positive interactions. Students are placed into pairs that are too close

together and then far apart from one another to discuss personal boundaries. This lesson includes instructional strategies and activities that support self-regulation, model positive peer interactions, and model how to be an effective listener to peers during communication.

The section titled “Adult Interaction” includes recommended questions for each learning area: “What are you playing, can you tell me how to play this game, and whose turn is next?” This type of guidance supports building responsive interaction throughout the classroom. The Prekindergarten Starter Manual discusses how setting up the reading/book area allows students to practice social skills by taking turns reading, discussing their feelings while reading, and role-playing various roles. Role-playing in the “Reading” center also fosters student-student interactions. While in the Reading center, the teacher could ask, “What is that book about?” to foster relationships and communication. The materials include resources such as signs with pictures for the different learning centers and visuals that can be used to support positive interactions. For example, after reading the book *Elizabeth’s Magic Carpet*, there are picture cards with visuals from the story for every letter of the alphabet in both uppercase and lowercase print. These visuals can be placed in the Reading center to foster conversation about the book, pictures, and vocabulary terms. The manual provides guidance for teachers to set up materials at the student level and make areas comfortable to inspire creativity and exploration. For example, in setting up a book/reading area, it suggests putting the books in boxes or on a shelf. It also mentions having rugs and cushions for a comfortable environment. The materials suggest that books should be easily accessible to children; students should be encouraged to take responsibility for each area, ensuring they are kept clean, and that students should learn to treat books with care. When areas are labeled and items are placed at eye level, the classroom arrangement can easily and effectively promote social interactions.

The materials do provide plenty of information for the reading/book area, but they provide little guidance on the factors and components of physical space and its impact on students’ social development. The few centers to be separated were the Construction, “Sand/Water,” and “Quiet Area.” The materials recommend separating them because the Construction and Sand/Water areas can be quite noisy in comparison to the quieter centers. Although there is not much information about where to place centers in relation to space, the materials do go into depth about the type of materials needed in each center, the organization of the materials, and how the materials facilitate social interactions.

The materials provide some suggestions on how to engage students in the classroom arrangement to promote student ownership of the space. For example, the STEAM library includes a lesson about creating labels in “Activity Starter Kit 1” under “Nursery.” It encourages the students to help label items in the classroom with pictures and words; this labeling is done for different learning areas, such as the Craft area and the Construction area. As students assist with the labeling of items in the classroom, students take ownership of the space. The materials suggest the students should be involved in decorating centers in the room and make a list of materials needed for learning centers. Students can also create a visual—the classroom rules. The teacher guides children to brainstorm appropriate expectations that will keep everyone safe and then displays the visual at eye level. The materials also include suggestions for encouraging children to contribute to the classroom environment by getting their parents to send pictures of them to use around the classroom.

**3.4** Materials include activities to develop physical skill and refine motor development through movement.

- Materials provide numerous daily opportunities for students to develop their gross motor skills through movement.
- Materials provide daily opportunities for students to develop their fine motor skills through tasks that do not require writing.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide some daily opportunities for students to develop their gross motor skills through movement. The materials also provide some opportunities to develop students' fine motor skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Gross motor skills are addressed in various activities within the materials. Some of the activities are embedded within lessons, while others are not. For example, in math, teachers and students play games like hopscotch to practice counting; play problem-solving games using positional language; build more direct skills like throwing, catching, kicking, hitting, and jumping while counting; and navigate through an obstacle course while learning location words and rolling to support physical development. Some of the gross motor skills addressed in the materials are midline-crossing activities, coordination and balance in a bean bag toss between partners, and music and movement through song and dance participation. "Brain Sprouts," which is a part of the materials, offers multiple gross motor activities that incorporate positional words, such as the activity "Magic Color Den." In this activity, students ride a "magic carpet" and use gross motor skills and imagination to perform simple actions like flying, jumping, bouncing, and acting like animals. In a treasure hunt activity, students use gross motor skills, such as climbing, running, and jumping, as well as their knowledge of positional words, such as *under*, *over*, *through*, *top*, and *bottom*, to navigate. Although these activities are developmentally appropriate and engaging, other lessons do not demonstrate a skill being used.

In the "Teacher's Guide," under "Physical Development," there are some activities that encourage gross motor skills. In one example, students pick an animal out of a bag and then sing about that animal in the song "Old MacDonald"; the materials list this activity as accomplishing the skill of coordination and movement, but it is unclear how this activity supports gross motor skills.

The materials also provide students with multiple activities to develop their fine motor skills. At the beginning of the Teacher Textbook, the materials provide guidance to teachers about the things needed in the “Malleable” area, such as modeling clay, materials for threading activities, tweezers and pipettes within role-playing, and outdoor equipment for climbing and grasping techniques. The “Prekindergarten Starter Manual” also suggests the use of scissors, slime, and dice. The different learning areas established within the classroom outline various resources for students to develop their fine motor skills. For example, in the “Make Marks” area, students are provided with paint, water, brushes, chalk, trays to write with sand, trays with slime, and finger paint. The materials suggest using playdough to form and shape letters as a fine motor activity instead of writing in the Make Marks/Writing center to allow students to work age-appropriate muscles. The materials also have suggestions for a “Small World” area where students dress dolls or participate in role-playing in which they can dress and undress. The “Technology” area also provides opportunities to develop students’ fine motor skills with a camera, mouse, and digital camera.

**3.5** Materials include activities that develop safe and healthy habits in students.

- Materials provide teacher guidance on modeling safe and healthy habits for students.
- Materials provide a variety of opportunities and activities for students to practice safe and reflect on safe and healthy habits.
- Materials communicate for both teachers and students the connection between physical and mental health.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials contain some activities to develop safe and healthy habits. However, materials provide a limited amount of guidance to model safe and healthy habits for students. Materials provide some opportunities and activities for students to practice safe and reflect on safe and healthy habits. Additionally, there are few activities for teachers and students to discuss connections between physical and mental health.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a few examples to guide teacher modeling of safe and healthy habits for students. The materials do provide a theme called “Be Healthy.” The beginning of the “Teacher’s Guide” addresses the development of health and body awareness regarding the importance of sleep, hygiene, and eating healthy. In the role-play area, students can role-play sleeping, eating, bathing, and washing routines, which can reinforce the importance of good hygiene. This activity provides practice and student engagement but lacks teacher modeling. In the “STEAM Library,” under the “Nursery” section, there are four lessons on “Healthy Me.” The lessons cover healthy bones (and how a balanced diet and exercise can keep you strong); healthy eating (and the importance of a balanced and varied diet); exercise (and how it benefits your body); and putting it all together (turning the previous lessons into an action plan). All four lessons are based on discussion and making a craft item. Week two of Healthy Me is all about healthy eating; materials provide a link to a resource on healthy foods but do not explain how to use it to teach. The lesson includes a discussion about eating fruits and vegetables and also includes creating a craft.

The materials also provide a four-week unit on anti-bullying. The materials suggest that teachers model safe habits and routines in each center daily for at least one week prior to allowing students to play independently. Materials also state that teachers should regularly review reward charts to discuss behavior and acknowledge self-regulation and independent work skills. An activity labeled “Act It Out” allows students to act out a situation where a teacher is not present; students role-play how to be safe when handling a bullying incident. In addition, a

“Stay Safe” theme contains four lessons on stranger danger, people who help us, road safety, and road safety rules; these lessons also include discussion and creating a craft.

The materials provide some opportunities and activities for students to practice safe and reflect on safe and healthy habits. Teaching safety in the classroom is found within the introduction to Domain 10, under the heading “Personal Safety, Health, and Hygiene.” Materials state the importance of teaching children not to run with scissors; however, this lesson is not found in the activities that follow the introduction. The materials do not have a section that teaches safety in the classroom. In the “Physical Development Domain,” Lesson 1, students are asked to sort food objects into meats, vegetables, and dairy, but this activity is not modeled first as a healthy habit. There is also a lesson called “Tasting Foods,” where teachers die-cut food shapes, blindfold students, and place a small amount of food to taste in their mouth. Students then guess what food they ate by pointing to the die-cut shape. This activity does not provide guidance on healthy and unhealthy foods. Another activity dealing with food has the students act out healthy food while other students guess. After the activity, students “discuss how humans make best efforts to live a healthy life and talk about some of the problems they face, such as obesity.” This activity also does not provide guidance on which foods are healthy and which are unhealthy. In several activities, students are asked to reflect on healthy habits by naming one thing they can do to stay safe, one thing they can do to stay healthy, and one thing they can do to stay clean.

The materials have few examples of referencing a connection between physical and mental health. In Lessons 1 and 2, in the Physical Development Domain, the materials state the importance of physical health and how it benefits mental health, but they do not provide specific information to support the teacher in this lesson. In another activity titled “How Do We Stay Healthy?” in the “Teacher Textbook,” teachers discuss the importance of eating a healthy and varied diet and provide recommendations on what a balanced diet should include. Teachers tell students that eating healthy strengthens the immune system, makes a body less likely to become ill, and helps to focus and concentrate better.

The materials also provide several books and song activities that involve feelings and physical movement. In one activity, the teacher reads a book that encourages positive mental health in a way that children can relate to: It is about how to deal with negative feelings over non-preferred but vital activities. The story, *Ella Violet and Her Big Sister, Amelia Rose*, models how to physically deal with emotion and teaches the importance of hygiene, specifically, how to make teeth brushing fun through song and dance.

**4.1** Materials provide guidance on developing students' listening skills.

- Materials provide teacher guidance on modeling active listening for understanding.
- Materials support and scaffold daily opportunities for students to listen for understanding.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide some opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar through the use of books. The materials also provide some opportunities for students to hear conversations that follow conversation norms. However, there is limited guidance for teachers to help develop students' listening skills. While the materials provide some opportunities for students to listen for understanding, they do not provide modeling of active listening. These opportunities to listen for understanding only include limited supports and scaffolds.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Teacher Edition," "Social Emotional Domain," Lesson 6, states: "It is important for the students to speak one on one with teachers and adults. Encourage students to build nonverbal skills like looking at the person in their eye when they are talking." Materials give guidance to listen actively but do not provide an example of the teacher modeling looking someone in the eye while talking before children are asked to do it. Since modeling is rarely evident in the materials, students are provided a few opportunities to hear conversations that follow conversation norms. The materials provide questions for teachers to interact with students, but there is no modeling of these conversations. For example, in the "Mark Making" area, some questions include "What are you doing?" "Can I help you?" "What letter is this?" However, students do not receive whole group or small group examples of how to respond.

Lesson 3 in the "Language and Communication Domain" comes close to a lesson asking teachers to model listening. The description states: "A child needs to understand how to listen, and then follow one-two-three step instructions. Explain to the students that they are going to learn and make flashcards for the following keywords: *language, purpose, conversation, information, demonstrate, verbal, nonverbal, rules, and social.*" After reading *Amelia Rose Five Senses*, teachers "explain that when they are learning language, there are milestones to meet. Language can be spoken - words said to one another. Communication can occur by facial expressions. Behavior is a form of communication." The next section of the lesson moves into what is

developmentally appropriate listening at this age, how monitoring is important, and what to monitor as children communicate. There are suggested look-fors, like “children will wait their turn to speak and not interrupt” and “looking at the person who is talking and not walking off.” This lesson is useful and provides guidance for students as they develop listening skills. However, the provided teacher guidance does not offer a model for active listening.

The materials do provide several opportunities for students to demonstrate active listening for understanding. In Lesson 1 of the “Language and Communication Domain,” students listen for understanding in both whole and small group activities. The teacher provides students with directions to follow, such as clapping multiple times or standing up. As students follow the directions, the teacher observes and divides them into smaller groups based on ability levels. While working with students in small groups, the teacher gives students verbal directions to listen to and follow, providing support and scaffolding for developing listening skills.

Another way the materials provide guidance for developing students’ listening skills is by having students answer questions in relation to a lesson or read-aloud text. For example, in a Social Emotional Domain lesson, teachers read the e-book *David Michael and His Musical Friends*, which is grammatically correct and integrates developmentally appropriate activities to keep students engaged while reading. After reading, the teacher asks a variety of simple questions to assess comprehension of the text. Students answer closed and open-ended questions such as “Can you relate to any part of the story in your own life? How? Why?” Additionally, teachers ask students to retell the story and discuss characters.

Listening to stories, songs, finger-plays, and e-books, as well as playing listening games provide opportunities for students to hear sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar in a variety of contexts. In the Language and Communication Domain, Lesson 4 provides a song in the *Sprouts and Sing Along* book; students name objects in the song and answer questions about the song to practice listening skills. “Brain Sprout” lessons also include outdoor and drama activities that engage students with multisensory materials to practice and demonstrate listening skills. For example, in the “Animal Antic” lesson, students practice their listening skills by moving like animals and listening to directions such as freezing or moving their legs a certain way.

The “Reader Activity Library” contains 26 books that incorporate appropriate sentence structure and correct grammar as well as listening comprehension. *Number Poetry* contains rhyming to support listening and contains a repetitive rhyming pattern throughout most of the book. However, when the book addresses the number four, the rhyming pattern is discontinued; the book says, “Mrs. Coe loves number two, Mr. McFree loves number three. Mrs. Jaw loves number four.” The materials do not contain scripts to support students’ development of listening skills for sentence structure and grammar; rather, they provide guidance for what the teacher should do.

#### 4.2 Materials provide guidance on developing students' speaking skills.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to practice producing sounds and use appropriate sentence structure and grammar in a variety of contexts.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on corrective feedback of students' speech production, sentence structure, and grammar.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on setting up and facilitating activities that allow students to practice production of a variety of sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar.
- Materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion using conversation norms.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials guide teachers in setting up and facilitating activities within all content areas to provide speaking skill practice for students. Several activities provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussions using conversation norms. The materials do provide multiple opportunities for students to practice sounds, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. However, there is little evidence of teacher guidance for corrective feedback on students' speech production.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Teacher's Guide" provides information about the activities that occur within a typical day. During the day, students have the opportunity to work in two whole group sessions and three different small group times. During whole group time, the teacher leads the lessons, and the students respond to the teacher. During small group time, students interact and communicate with each other. Students are also given the opportunity to practice their speaking skills during center time. Under the heading "Adult Interaction," materials give recommendations to facilitate oral language activities in each area. A list of questions gets students to speak about what they are doing in the area. For example, the "Book" area provides the questions "What would you like to read about?" and "Can you tell me what is happening in this picture?" The "Construction" area provides the questions "What have you made?" "Who can build...?" and "Who would live here?" In the "Information and Communications Technology" area, materials recommend teachers set up old phones and recording tools so students can have many opportunities to use and record their own speech. These examples demonstrate how students engage in discussion as part of their daily center norms.

The "Social and Emotional Domain" includes a "Discussion Points" feature. In the Week 1 activity "My Feelings," discussion topics include emotions (the class makes a list of different emotions), what makes students feel those emotions, and how to handle those emotions.

Another topic mentioned during the week is “Religious Education.” Students are invited to discuss religion and the main beliefs followers of that religion observe. “Brain Sprouts” also provides opportunities to work collaboratively and engage in discussion using conversation norms in both child-to-teacher and peer-to-peer interactions. In the Social Emotional Domain of the “Teacher Textbook,” five hands-on student activities build students’ conversational skills using multisensory materials. Each activity has a different focus that supports students in practicing conversation norms. For example, in the “Box Construction” activity, students make 3D objects that interest them. Teachers use the students’ descriptions as an opportunity to talk about students’ own knowledge and understanding, thus developing their ideas and learning. These activities support the development of students’ speaking skills; each activity includes teacher guidance.

Lesson 2 of the “Language and Communication Domain” includes open-ended questions and activities to support students’ practice of critical thinking and expressive language; for example, the teacher asks students to describe characters and how they relate to a character. The “Teamwork” section in this lesson invites students to put on a short play. Students act like animals, and each student has a speaking part. This particular activity shows evidence of teacher guidance to facilitate an activity that addresses speech production. Lesson 10 uses the text *The Davis Family* to focus on elements of sentence structure. The materials state that this activity should be completed several times throughout the year with several different read-alouds. The teacher asks questions and scaffolds from one sentence to multiple sentences and then to paragraphs.

Lessons include opportunities for children to practice sound production, sentence structure, and grammar through activities such as shared rhymes or poems, picture books, singing songs, storytelling, using puppets, and acting. Often music is used as a vehicle to increase speaking skills and speech production. The included music incorporates simple songs with repetition, predictable patterns, and familiar nursery rhymes. Songs like “Hush Little Baby,” “Incy Wincy Spider,” and “Rock-a-Bye Baby” are included; these contain repetitive sounds and patterns. Sometimes, familiar nursery rhymes and songs are rewritten to serve a unique purpose. In an activity about healthy and unhealthy items, the class sings, “What have I got in my bag today?” to the tune “Here we go round the mulberry bush.” Afterward, the teacher models how to grab small items out of a bag properly.

Lesson 2 of the “Writing Domain” provides guidance for children to practice speaking skills through shared writing and dictation. After a read-aloud of *Hetty the Hungry Hedgehog*, students take turns showing their understanding of different vocabulary terms. Students discuss the story, write, and share a story they create about an imaginary friend for Hetty. Teachers ask students a variety of questions about what they heard and what they learned about wild animals; the class creates a labeled chart for each wild animal studied.

In the Language and Communication Domain, Lessons 5 and 6, the materials contain activities for speech production. The activity in Lesson 5 is to make an alphabet book, during which students learn to link sounds and letters. During the lesson, the teacher asks students to sound out the letters and give examples of words that begin with each letter. If the teacher does not understand the child, the teacher encourages the child to speak slower or helps them. However, there is little teacher guidance on *how* to help students. There are no specific suggestions for

feedback on students' speech production, sentence structure, or grammar. In Lesson 6, students make an alphabet line; they must think of something that begins with each letter of the alphabet. Materials instruct the teacher to observe the students and record if they can say the letters correctly, but they do not give corrective feedback for sentence structure and grammar. Later in the domain, there is guidance on how to support students with sentence structure and grammar. The teacher models sentences or phrases first, such as "It's far away"; "It's near my Grandma's house"; "I like going there"; and "I go there with my dad." However, the guidance materials give after teacher modeling does not allow students to practice the speech, sentence structure, or grammar by speaking following the modeling of the teacher. After modeling sentences, the teacher goes into another lesson, supporting students as they create 3D shapes.

#### 4.3 Materials support expanding student vocabulary.

- Materials follow a progression of vocabulary development that is age and sequentially appropriate.
- Materials include a variety of strategies for strategically supporting vocabulary development that are integrated and authentically embedded in content-based learning.

### Partially Meets 2/4

Within the materials, some of the strategies that support vocabulary development are not age-appropriate. The progression of vocabulary development is partially age and sequentially appropriate. Some materials are authentically embedded in content-based learning, but the suggested strategies do not provide routine guidance on how to support vocabulary development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Some examples show a progression of vocabulary development that is age and sequentially appropriate. For example, in the “Science Domain,” there is a lesson about *heat*, *light*, and *sound energy*. Teachers share child-friendly definitions for each word, and then students read a short story about Amelia, who learns about the types of energy. In small groups, students discuss and list the types of energy sources in their homes and then draw and label them. Next, the teacher reads another passage about Amelia’s use of energy through food; students again work in small groups to discuss how people use energy in everyday life. Students then make “mind maps,” visualizing different objects they see on their way to school that use light, sound, or heat energy. In this example, students are progressively learning authentically embedded vocabulary and applying the vocabulary in different ways. To complete the lesson, students create a short play to act out for the rest of the class. The teacher encourages students to extend their learning of these new vocabulary words outside of the classroom.

The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines state, “activities, whether they are meant to facilitate the learning of specific cognitive or social skills, need to be engaging, with children taking an active role using manipulatives, books, and pictures as opposed to worksheets or flashcards.” Flashcards are used throughout the curriculum as a way of building student vocabulary. In some instances, the creation of the vocabulary flashcards may not be appropriate. For example, one of the vocabulary activities found in the “Language and Communication Domain” asks students to create flashcards for the words *language*, *purpose*, *conversation*, *information*, *demonstrate*, *verbal*, *nonverbal*, *rules*, and *social*. The students work with an adult and use the internet to find the words in an online dictionary. The adult may then need to read the definition for the child to write a definition. Some of the flashcards created in a math lesson contain the number, the

spelling of the number, and a visual representation or definition of the number. While using visual supports is an age-appropriate strategy, this use of flashcards may not be age-appropriate. Materials also present vocabulary through games that involve children acting out new vocabulary, following directions, and interacting with new words in meaningful contexts.

Some of the lessons do embed vocabulary authentically for content-based learning. For example, the materials guide the teacher to set up vocabulary words with pictures in the “Construction” center. Realia of a construction hat should have a label with the word *hat*. In another example, after reading the book *Elizabeth's Magic Carpet*, there are picture cards with visuals from the story for every letter of the alphabet in both uppercase and lowercase print. These visuals can be placed in the “Reading” center to foster conversation about the book, pictures, and vocabulary terms. A similar activity in the “Teacher Edition” titled “Alphabet Book” has students use die-cut letters to create an alphabet picture book with upper and lowercase letters on each page. Students “draw pictures and write simple CVC words” to increase understanding. Later in the year, students can return to the book to add new words. While integrating pictures, letters, and words, this activity better supports letter recognition than vocabulary development.

The “Teacher Textbook” includes activities to support vocabulary development organized around a strong theme. For example, in the “Social Emotional Domain,” students touch and feel three objects (e.g., a hairbrush, coins, or “something pink, soft, and large”) and hold up colored cards to identify the object the teacher describes. The lesson transitions into one about matter and energy, where students learn about words like *property*, *shape*, *compare*, *mass*, *size*, and *texture*. The materials also include a “STEAM Photograph Library” that features photos for the scientific themes taught in the Teacher Textbook. These photographs include pictures related to matter and energy, which help embed vocabulary development into content-based learning. Generally, teachers are advised to reference this resource when appropriate. However, this resource is not directly cited in the specific lesson for the teacher to reference when supporting students in their vocabulary development.

The materials sometimes teach rare words more often than high-frequency words. Within the “Emergent Literacy Domain,” there is a lesson titled “High-Frequency Words,” in which the objective is for “children to recognize a variety of high-frequency words.” Teachers “show children the list of high-frequency words and ask them to see if any words from their list match any of the words on the high-frequency list.” The list of high-frequency words provides “Dolch and other high-frequency words” from the kindergarten and first grade Dolch list. There is some use of rare words such as *mend*, *join*, and *design* within the Construction area, and other times vocabulary words are not academically or developmentally appropriate. For example, in one lesson about health, students discuss “how many people struggle with *obesity*,” and a later social lesson covers *low self-esteem*.

The “Didax” lessons found in the “Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM)” include lessons and activities that help students build sounds into words. Many of the activities ask students to name each picture, listen for the beginning sound, and then “build” the word by adding the beginning sound to the two following letters. This type of activity is done for ending sounds, word families, blends, etc. While useful for sound development, the resource is not built for

vocabulary development. For example, students use blends to differentiate between words like *cast*, *whisk*, *desk*, *vest*, and *mask*. The practice relates to the sound and not the meaning of each word.

**4.4** Materials include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge.

- Materials include a variety of strategies for supporting English Learners.
- Strategies include how to use the child's first language as a foundation for learning English.
- Materials develop students' vocabulary in both English and the home language.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials reviewed provide a few strategies for using the students' home language as a foundation for learning English. The materials provide some examples of strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs), but in most cases, the strategies are repetitive. The materials provide a few lessons that incorporate vocabulary in both English and the students' home language. Spanish is the only home language ever used, even though ELs may speak other languages.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide few strategies to support ELs and few materials in both English and a home language. For example, in Lesson 1, under the "Language and Communication Domain," the teacher speaks Spanish to teach three-step instructions with gross motor movement. The teacher says, "one, two, three," and then, "uno, dos, tres," as an assessment to see if children understand the language. The teacher uses Spanish vocabulary for numbers, but these numerical words do not support the child in learning the context of the three-step directions. Lesson 1 provides another similar activity in which the students listen to the story *Amelia Rose*. Students answer comprehension questions while working in pairs. Guidance is given for ELs to communicate in their chosen language initially, but materials also ask them to answer the same question in English, as this will help the teacher check for understanding between peers.

Lesson 1 of the "Social and Emotional Development Domain" reminds teachers to "have a wide range of music available in your setting to play to the children and to enjoy with them." Teachers should "try to include Latin American, Central American, Asian, African, and European music and dance." These suggestions are useful but are framed for students "Working Above Expectations." Provided examples and their translations include "Frère Jacques," "Sur le Pont d'Avignon," and "Kye Kye Kule." This strategy suggests using the child's first language as a foundation for learning English, but this example does not include the guidance and prompting of a full and complete lesson.

In Lesson 2 of the Language and Communication Domain, after listening to a nursery poem, students answer comprehension questions in pairs. The materials state that ELs "may struggle

to understand what peers say due to language barriers” and “may not be able to follow as many instructions, as they are learning the language.” Materials instruct: “Assess if they can follow one- or two-step directions.” While the materials mention that students may not understand lessons, they do not provide additional support to teach the skill.

Other lessons include an “English Language Learner” section offering an alternative to the activity for whole group instruction. In Lesson 2 of the “Math Domain,” this section states: “The activities in the ELL section are for the student with the most limited English skills.” At times, this section also offers scaffolds for students working below expectation without any differentiation between the two student groups. In this case, ELs are sorting the same way most students are but with additional teacher support. The teacher repeats “the exercise by placing different combinations of objects in the box.” They are reminded that “repetition, manipulation, and visualization are key to help the ELL student.”

In Lesson 4 of the Language and Communication Domain, the materials remind teachers that ELs communicate differently as they acquire English. These different communication methods include various forms of nonverbal communication such as pointing, using gestures, or raising their hand. Teachers start by having students use single words like *mine*, *yours*, and *please*. The guidance reminds teachers that as the child gains confidence, they will attempt to use new grammar when speaking. This lesson also provides information about how ELs require more wait time before they respond; they are learning and processing two languages at once and this is a normal part of language acquisition. Although the materials provide various information about ELs, these general guidelines provide EL context; they do not provide modeling, scaffolding, or support.

Lessons in the Language and Communication Domain explains how the process of transfer from the first language to English requires teachers to build a connection with what children already know in their home language and use that knowledge to help them gain literacy skills in the second language. For example, in Lesson 10, materials state that vocabulary flashcards should include both the home language and English to promote acquisition. If a child’s first language is Spanish, the word should be in English on one side and the matching word in Spanish on the other. These flashcards are the primary method to support students in language acquisition, but they do not include pictorial support. While flashcards do incorporate two languages in the materials, they may not be developmentally appropriate for vocabulary instruction.

**5.1** Materials provide opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, including through authentic text conversations.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to listen actively and to ask questions and engage in discussion to understand information in texts.
- Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussions that require students to share information and ideas about the texts.
- Materials provide support and guidance for students to work collaboratively to engage in discussion.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Some of the opportunities for students to develop oral language skills are authentic, but the answers provided for students are limited in word choice. The materials do provide several opportunities for students to listen, ask questions, and engage in discussion actively. However, the materials provide few opportunities for students to discuss and share information and ideas about texts. The materials do not provide much support and guidance for students to engage in discussion while working collaboratively. In several of the activities, the teacher guides the interaction, limiting the number of authentic opportunities for students to practice and develop oral language.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The Introduction of the “Teacher Edition” describes how prekindergarten students listen and respond to instruction. Under the “Communication, Language, and Literacy” section, teacher guidance describes how language is developed and how students communicate from 30–50 months and 40–60+ months. This guidance sets up how the materials solicit oral language participation and assess oral language skills.

The materials provide opportunities for students to listen, ask questions, and engage in discussion actively. In the “Teacher Reader Activity Master,” there are 16 stories and books as well as two student journals. Stories contain “Questions to Consider” sections under “Let’s Communicate!” For example, in Lesson 1 of the “Emergent Literacy Reading Domain,” the teacher reads a poem about running from *Olympic Games: Poetry in Motion*. While reading, the teacher asks students to identify which animals run and why. The teacher asks students to imagine themselves as an animal running away from a predator and to describe how they would feel. The guidance in the materials reminds teachers that “regular brainstorming and other discussion forums will help open their mind to specific topics and help children to want to learn to read,” but specific guidance and scripts to model think-alouds are not evident. Some of the questions to engage students in discussion before and during the read-aloud include “What can you see?” “How many characters do you see?” “What letters do you see?” “Why is team spirit

so important?” The teacher stops at the end of each page and asks questions for students to answer. Many of the questions provide for limited responses, and children are not able to expand and share their ideas orally. At the end of the activity, students write a poem describing how they would feel. However, writing poetry is not a developmentally appropriate practice for engaging students in a discussion about the text. This activity also allows students to collaborate in groups as they discuss team spirit with the teacher and create a scene about sports teams. Although this lesson covers all the guidance points, some are limited in the way and amount that students can share. In addition, there is no guidance for students to work collaboratively or to converse authentically, and thus limits opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion.

When reading a new text, guidance is limited; the “Teacher Edition Manual” states directions such as “Read the book *Evan and Lucy Investigate*.” After reading the book, there is a list of 16 comprehension questions to ask students. The first open-ended question asks students to retell the story. There is no guidance on how to teach students to retell from the beginning, middle, and end within the manual. Texts in the materials do not support the teacher in engaging in open-ended discussions about the text.

In Lesson 4 of the “Science Domain,” the teacher asks students to describe how they feel when they are *hot* or *cold* and to identify the type(s) of energy they read about in the stories. Students discuss the types of energy found at home and the effects of weather on energy sources. Students create a poster with three types of energy (heat, light, electricity) and present it to the class, discussing the contents and how they represented each energy type. Each listening group asks questions for the presenting group to answer. While these opportunities allow students to participate actively in the lesson, opportunities to practice speaking skills with one another are not evident. Similarly, tips for teachers to integrate peer conversation (like “Turn and Talk”) and tips to expand on children’s conversation beyond the questioning prompts provided are not evident.

**5.2** Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in phonological awareness skills.

- Materials follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.
- Materials include a variety of types of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds.
- Materials allow for student practice of phonological awareness skills both in isolation and connected to alphabetic knowledge skills.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials do not provide clear and explicit instruction with opportunities for students to practice phonological awareness skills. The materials demonstrate little evidence of following a research-based continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness. In several instances, the lessons cover multiple phonological awareness skills instead of following a continuum. Activities provide a few examples of students engaging in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. The materials provide limited student practice of phonological skills in isolation and in connection to alphabetic knowledge skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines state that phonological awareness generally develops from large units of sound to smaller units of sound. In other words, the development of phonological awareness moves from words and syllables to individual phonemes. There are few examples to support this developmental continuum. Additionally, the materials included supporting phonological awareness in the “Reader Activity Library” state they are written for K–8 students and would need adaptation for a prekindergarten classroom. The included scope and sequence for phonological awareness lacks visual supports to aid teachers throughout the year. Also, no guidance describes which areas to teach first and how to spiral the skills over time.

The materials include a “Teacher Reader Activity Master Didax” that features hands-on lessons for word building focusing on consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. Using “Unifix” cubes, students combine beginning and ending consonant sounds, vowels, and short-vowel word families to build words. Materials also include lessons in which students identify beginning sounds of CVC words, then identify ending sounds of CVC words, and then blend sounds. This lesson would be an example of following a research-based continuum, but several lessons do not provide enough explicit direction. Other lessons teach multiple skills within the same lesson and do not follow the continuum. For example, in Lesson 1, in the “Emergent Literacy Domain,” students listen to an *Olympic Games* poem. The teacher focuses on how the text rhymes, how

there are four lines of text, and how the word *run* appears three times in the first line. The teacher then focuses on how the word *run* is a one-syllable word and contains the letters *r*, *u*, and *n*. In this example, the materials do not maintain the developmental continuum; this is also evidence of how lessons are not explicit and do not provide practice for students.

In the “Emergent Literacy Domain,” Lesson 3, materials teach multiple skills at once: segmenting phonemes, clapping syllables, rhyming, onset rime, and alliteration. In this lesson, directions for student understanding are minimal and unclear. The “Teacher Edition” gives guidance on how to teach word segmentation with letter counters. The teacher says the word *run*, takes it apart (/r/, /u/, /n/), and places a counter under each sound to show the word has three sounds. Students clap to show how many syllables are in the word. The materials provide few if any practice words.

Materials provide little explicit instruction and few opportunities for student practice. There is also not a large variety of activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. In one lesson, students list words that begin with the same sound. For example, materials use the word *won* and suggest the word *wonder* as another word with the same sound. After this activity about alliteration, the teacher goes into onset and rime. Once again, there is not enough direct instruction for each individual phonological awareness skill. Materials encourage teaching each onset and rime via color-coded words on flashcards, one color representing the onset and the other the rime. However, this takes away from the oral and auditory way of learning phonological awareness in the activity. Additionally, flashcards may fall outside of the recommended practice described in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Student practice of phonological awareness skills in isolation and embedded within various activities is limited. The materials provide a program called the “Archway Literacy and Phonics Program.” This program includes some games and exercises so students can learn to say sounds correctly, link and blend sounds to make words, and use the words to form sentences. This program consists of “Archway Cards,” which are different colors to represent a student’s level of learning. The teacher chooses which set of cards is developmentally appropriate. There are alphabet cards, uppercase and lowercase cards, and cards that have the same starting letters. At the end of the program, there are different games to play with the cards. The yellow cards are starting blends, and some cards start with the same blends. The light green cards have word endings, including *ff*, *ll*, *ss*, and *zz*. The program gives some hints on how to learn new words.

**5.3** Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction and opportunities for student practice in alphabetic knowledge skills.

- Materials follow a research-based, strategic sequence for introduction of alphabetic knowledge.
- Materials provide teacher guidance on directly introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials do not provide clear and explicit instruction with opportunities for students to practice alphabetic knowledge on a prekindergarten level. The materials do not follow a research-based, strategic sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge. Also, there is a limited number of lessons with guidance for introducing, modeling, and using letter names and sounds.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

“Starter Kit 2” contains two activities, “Alphabet Pairs” and “Alphabet Freeze,” that use die-cut letter cards. In Alphabet Pairs, the teacher shows the students a card and asks them to say each letter. Then the teacher explains there are two different colored cards—one color for uppercase and one for lowercase letters—and asks students to match the letters. This activity reinforces the naming of the letter and its sound, but it does not provide direct instruction about how to present the letters. In the second activity, “Alphabet Freeze,” teachers give each student a letter and ask them to arrange themselves in alphabetical order, correctly name their letter, produce the sound of their letter, and share an object that begins with the letter. The activity also does not specify what to do if the teacher does not have 26 students for every letter of the alphabet, how the students will hold their letters so the other students can see it, or the sequence of steps to follow to get the students to accomplish the objective of putting the letters in order.

For some activities, materials mention activity guidelines, but instructions on when or how to embed alphabetic skills into lessons are not evident. For example, in the “Emergent Literacy Domain,” Lesson 5 states that letter recognition may be taught “through class discussion, class reading, teacher instruction, among other methods,” but it is not specific about what other methods can be used to teach the alphabet. Lesson 6 within the same domain states that students “need to learn to name 20 uppercase and lowercase letters in the language of instruction,” as written in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG). However, the lesson is about gardening and living and nonliving things. This lesson embeds alphabet knowledge, stating “children will learn new words and their beginning letters and sounds,” but gives no guidance on how to accomplish this within the lesson on gardening.

In the Starter Kit activity “Alphabet Line,” instructions are limited: The teacher picks target words based on a theme or topic, and then students have to think of words that share the same beginning letter. The teacher uses words that sound similar and different to better assess students’ knowledge of letter names and sounds. Guidance for this activity states to repeat this activity regularly to see students’ abilities grow, but there are no instructions on when to do this or which words to use.

The teacher reads *Elizabeth Claire’s Magic Carpet*, a story containing alphabet songs. The teacher and students sing together as they read. Afterward, students write out letters in order on the classroom board. The read-aloud provides words that start with each letter, along with an illustration. The teacher talks about each letter, and students raise their hand if their name starts with that letter. However, the materials do not provide guidance on introducing alphabet skills; they assume students will recognize the letters.

In some activities, students also use worksheets to practice their alphabet knowledge; however, this work may not be developmentally appropriate according to the TPG. For example, the “Archway Literacy and Phonics Program” begins with some warm-up activities: Students trace all uppercase and lowercase letters from a tracing sheet. The teacher writes a letter on a dry-erase board, and students find the letter in a set of lettered cubes. Next, students match the lowercase and uppercase letters on the cubes. In another worksheet example, students fill in the missing letter with the letter cubes and then write each word. The worksheet lists two letters and four pictures of items; students pick the beginning and ending letters to make the pictures listed.

**5.4** Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction in print knowledge and concepts and opportunities for student practice.

- Materials provide direct (explicit) instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books/texts.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in context to the students' experience at school.
- Materials include a research-based sequence of foundational skills instruction and opportunities for sufficient student practice.
- Materials follow a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness knowledge.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide a few lessons with explicit instruction in print knowledge and concepts. Students are given limited opportunities to understand the everyday functions of print in and out of context to school experiences. The material does not provide a research-based sequence of foundational skills to instruct students throughout the year or within domains other than reading. Materials do not follow a developmentally appropriate continuum; often, students interact with multiple print concepts instead of building upon their print awareness over time.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

At the beginning of the school year, teachers try to create a classroom that will provide students the opportunity to develop an understanding of the everyday functions of print in school contexts. For example, in the section "Setting Up a Nursery," the "Book/Reading Area" guidance tells teachers to introduce students to a variety of different forms of print to help them understand that print carries meaning. The guidance also says adults can make a display with various things that can be read: menus, tickets, receipts, letters, emails, newspapers, or even a sheet of Braille. Teachers also invite students to bring something for a display and talk about the different ways the written word conveys meaning. Students can also make their own newspapers, tickets, or other items that may relate to various topics.

The "Teacher Edition" also includes guidance for the "Carpet Area," in which various items can be displayed to provide a print-rich environment; these items include a birthday chart, a weather chart, a reward chart, songs, rhymes, and poem sheets. However, instruction relating these examples of print to everyday school functions is implied and not explicitly stated. No other support or guidance is offered for setting up a print-rich environment in the other classroom areas. Also, there is no guidance on how to use theme-related lessons to change materials throughout the school year's scope.

In an early activity called “Classroom Labels,” students brainstorm a list of objects around the classroom and explain how labels and signs give information. The students create labels for classroom objects in small groups. When the group comes back together, the teacher has students practice identifying and labeling objects. Once this practice is complete, the teacher lays out the labels, and students attach the labels to their objects. This activity does provide an explicit lesson and offers students an opportunity to practice print knowledge of how labels represent classroom objects for everyday use. However, after this lesson, the materials provide an inconsistent amount of explicit instruction with opportunities for students to practice. The few lessons found in the materials are mostly in the “Emergent Literacy Reading Domain,” and instruction does not cover the complete continuum of print awareness knowledge.

Lesson 7 includes 14 text titles, with some direct print awareness instruction about letters, words, and pictures. Some of these pre-reading prompts include the following: “Teacher talks to students about different elements of print, such as letters, words, and pictures. Teacher discusses the difference and how each is used within the text. Students asked to describe what direction we read. Teacher will prompt the answer we read from left to right. Students will demonstrate this talk to class. Teacher asks students what would happen if we read from bottom to top, right to left, and explains the story wouldn't make sense.”

Lesson 8 offers similar pre-direction and guidance without developing on previous instructions. This time, the students do not get explicit instruction in print awareness, and, instead, the teacher jumps directly into a materials list and directions. The teacher projects the story on the wall, and students describe what they see. The teacher makes a list with three columns (“letters, words, and pictures”), and each child provides a letter and word they can see on the page. Students identify pictures they see and use lined paper to write a letter, a word, and name an object they found in the picture. The teacher guides students by reading a line and modeling correct reading behaviors, such as reading from left to right, top to bottom; students use total physical response techniques to demonstrate the difference between left and right. The teacher also discusses how a story would not make sense if read in a different direction. The teacher asks students to identify any symbols they see on the page; then, the teacher introduces punctuation marks, using one page to demonstrate the use of each mark in writing. Guidance is not integrated into specific lesson instruction, but this lesson does state to “use the same book as you read aloud” and “you can repeat this book for each lesson throughout the semester.”

The materials do include a variety of books provided by the curriculum and suggest three read-alouds daily. This activity includes pointing out letters and words and the number of words in a sentence. However, the materials do not provide a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness knowledge. Although the materials provide some opportunities for children to observe, engage with, and experience authentic print within the school day in an individual learning area, the materials do not provide big books for students to engage in shared reading. Shared reading allows students to interact with letters, words, and pictures. The materials only include the small texts found in the “Reader Activity Library.” The Emergent Literacy Reading Domain does not have a scope and sequence document where teachers can spiral these skills or teach them in progression from least difficult to most difficult. For several of their textual interactions, students engage in oral questioning instead of a hands-on approach.

**5.5** Materials include a variety of text types and genres across contents that are high-quality and at an appropriate level of complexity.

- Text selection is at the appropriate level of complexity for students' developmental level.
- Materials include both fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Materials include a variety of types of texts, such as poems, songs, and nursery rhymes.
- Texts include content that is engaging to prekindergarten students and include opportunities for students to interact with the stories, including repeated parts.
- Read aloud texts cover a range of student interests.
- Materials include use of purposeful environmental print throughout the classroom.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Within the materials, some text types and genres are minimally represented. The level of complexity is appropriate for students' developmental level. While there are several fiction texts, there are a limited number of nonfiction texts, poems, songs, and nursery rhymes. Some of these texts may be interesting or engaging to students, but they do not cover a wide range of student interests. There is no guidance for the use of environmental print throughout the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The curriculum includes a "Prekindergarten Reader Activity Library," although many of the texts recommend using them for kindergarten or above or indicate no age range at all. These texts are also available in the "Teacher Reader Activity Master" section of the curriculum. Texts to be used for read-alouds are often integrated into the domain-specific lessons available in the "Teacher Edition." Of these texts, all but one are fiction texts.

Lessons 1 and 4 each contain a lesson using the text *Poetry in Motion* by Marion Lewis. Short poems in this text use repetition of key sports vocabulary words (e.g., *run, kick, jump, swim*). By acting out these actions and stopping to draw different images, students remain engaged throughout the story. Other lessons associated with this text introduce students to rhyming words on topics related to staying safe, community, family, and friendship. The text suggests points at which students can stop and discuss, complete activities like keyword writing, and demonstrate comprehension related to the story read aloud. The topics are fairly engaging to students and offer opportunities for student interaction with the text.

In Lesson 4 of the "Emergent Literacy Reading Domain," with the text *Edward's First Day*, students engage in a pre-reading activity to identify word parts. The story contains an

appropriate number of pages and words to be used in a read-aloud lesson. However, no guidance is provided as to when to read the story to students or in what type of instructional setting.

In Lesson 2 of the “Fine Arts Domain,” materials use the text *Ella Violet and Her Big Sister, Amelia Rose* to illustrate the concepts of the five senses; there are integrated points of discussion, and the teacher leads students through various activities. After illustrating the five senses, the story targets social-emotional concepts about self-worth and the importance of health and hygiene. Later, students practice writing new vocabulary words and draw the five senses.

Examples of fiction texts include but are not limited to:

*Alfie’s Adventure in the Land of Mr. Grofolofulus* by John Lewis  
*Benjamin the Elephant* by John Lewis  
*Christopher Stephen and his Animal Brigade* by Marion Lewis  
*Invisible Alligators* by Hayes Roberts

While some books are recommended for teacher-sourcing, the materials do not provide a variety of classic children’s literature, early childhood favorites, and popular current titles. All 26 books within the Prekindergarten Reader Activity Library are titles unique to the reviewed materials. There is also a list provided within the “Starter Kit Manual” that includes “possible picture books to source” in addition to the 26 titles. This list contains 28 classic children’s literature titles such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Rosie’s Walk*, and *Where the Wild Things Are*; however, these books are on a recommended list of titles to purchase and are not included within the materials. There are no provided direct lessons or activities to support the texts on this list.

The only example of a nonfiction text is *Firefighters* by Live and Learn.

Examples of variety text types include but are not limited to:

*Number Poetry 0–20* by editor Nicola Wright (Poem)  
“Sur le Pont d’Avignon” (Song)  
“Kye Kye Kule” (African Call Songs)  
“Hush Little Baby” (Song)  
“A la Roro Nino/Lullaby Baby” (Song)

Of the 26 book titles found in the Prekindergarten Reader Activity Library, there is one book of poems and one book of songs: *Poetry in Motion* and *Sprouts Sing and Say*, respectively. In *Poetry in Motion*, students act out different Olympic key sports. *Sprouts Sing and Say* contains songs about the flag, color songs, and songs about each color of the rainbow. Within the 26 book titles, there are no books with popular children’s nursery rhymes.

Environmental print is not addressed with a clear focus and concept. The materials provide an activity called “Classroom Labels” in the “Language and Communication Domain,” with the objective of providing visual aids for objects in the classroom. Teachers discuss how labels and

signs give information, and students help to make labels for all objects in the classroom. The materials do not recommend using purposeful environmental print beyond this lesson; the use of environmental print is not evident in the lessons within the Teacher Edition.

**5.6** Materials use a variety of approaches to develop students' comprehension of text read aloud.

- Materials include guidance for the teacher to connect texts to children's experiences at home and school.
- Materials include guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding of text.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide minimal guidance for the teacher on basic text structures and their impact on understanding. That being said, materials do provide the teacher with some guidance to help students connect texts to their home and school experiences.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In domain-specific lessons of the "Teacher Edition," recommended questions encourage children to make connections to the text read aloud. Often, questions ask children if they can relate a part of the story to their own lives, how they relate, and why they relate to the text. For example, in Lesson 3 of the "Science Domain," students listen to a story about Amelia Rose and how she finds energy. While reading the story, the teacher stops and asks students to think about how energy is used in their homes. In small groups, students list the types of energy used in each room of their home. Students draw a picture of their home and label the types of energy they have in each room. Students also discuss how people use energy in everyday life and create short plays to act out for the rest of the class. They then draw a picture showing examples of light, heat, and sound energy. In other lessons, teachers "share books about different parts of the world" and share storybooks that have different images of houses in them. Students then think about what they have at home, share information, and make comparisons. All of these activities allow students to connect to texts and demonstrate their understanding.

Lesson 7 of the "Emergent Literacy Domain" includes a list of 15 books that teachers are supposed to cycle through daily. Along with these books, there is a generic list of comprehension questions. The teacher asks students to make predictions before reading the books *Dylan Michael and His Musical Band* and *Scarlett Wendy and Her Animal Shapes*. After reading the first portion, the teacher stops to have the children retell the story; then, "using the things they know...students infer what might happen next and why." The teacher writes keywords on the board and asks students what they already know, what may happen next, and why. After reading each story, students break into small groups; each group acts out the story. Students describe each character in the story and name an object they can recall from the book. Students can compare and contrast locations, objects, backgrounds, characters, etc. At the conclusion of the lesson, the teacher asks students if they can use the information they learned

in real life. Students may be able to play an instrument or know about the drums, but this question does not require students to make direct personal connections to the text. However, there is one generic comprehension question teachers can ask that does require making personal connections: “Ask children if they can relate any part of the story to their own lives. Ask how and why.”

The materials do not include guidance for teachers on basic text structures and their impact on the understanding of text read aloud. Teachers are not provided “think-alouds” as a way of modeling and developing students’ comprehension. In many cases, the teacher poses a question such as “What do you think will happen next?” Students do not have access to sentence stems, suggestions, or additional prompts, nor does the teacher model how to infer or make those predictions.

In Lesson 3 of the “Social Studies Domain,” teachers read aloud “chapters of their choice” from one of the three possible texts. Students explain the similarities and differences between the families in the stories and discuss different types of families. Next, the teachers ask students about school and the different roles of the teacher and the student. After this discussion, the teacher is expected to discuss the concept of a classroom community, but there is no provided model, and the explanation does not require reference to the text structure. Teachers end the discussion by asking, “How does school feature in the story?” and “What community helpers do they think would be part of their chosen family’s life if it were real life?” There are few examples of direct think-alouds, chart or organizer usage, or guidance for teachers on basic text structures and their impact on comprehension.

**5.7** Materials include appropriate strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of emergent reading skills.

- Materials include a variety of strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs).
- Strategies include use of the child’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language and ensure that knowledge is used to help them transfer to English language and literacy skills.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

There are few strategies to support English Learners (ELs) in their development of emergent reading skills. The materials leverage some Spanish in their intervention strategies, but they do not include support with other home languages. Strategies to help students transfer to English language and literacy skills were not evident.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Emergent Literacy Domain” is the main location for reading instruction. In lessons, students practice comprehension and inference-making; they “have a short discussion about the book and...give feedback about what they think the book may be about.” In Lesson 4, students practice phonological awareness skills by clapping syllables, rhyming, and reviewing alliteration. By Lesson 5, students learn alphabet knowledge by reading *The Alphabet Book*. Finally, in Lesson 7, students “retell the story” and “act out the story that the teacher chooses based on the theme of the week.” In these lessons, the teacher guidelines remain general and include a few intentional strategies to support ELs in their listening and reading development. Throughout this instruction, home languages are rarely used as a support for ELs, and the variety of EL support remains limited. Sometimes there are “Dual Language Prompts” included in the “Teacher Tips” section of a lesson. They are infrequent, about one every ten pages, and general. Examples include, “have students write in a foreign language they may be learning” or “have students write the name of *rooms* in the first language of a classmate.”

There are some examples of useful strategies for English Learners; however, they are not specifically directed toward ELs. Early in the year, students make classroom labels to place on important sections of the room. These labels include pictures, the item name, and sometimes the item name in Spanish. In Lesson 3, the teacher also has access to high-quality photographs, not just drawings, related to specific vocabulary and themes. This resource provides visual support for objects and places children likely know in their first language. For example, as children are learning about natural resources, teachers should show “photographs or real animals not just cartoons” and have children bring photographs to class. “Learning words with quality photographs aids children in making connections and developing understanding and can

be a foundation for learning English.” This strategy is acknowledged, but there is no further support for the teacher to facilitate or implement a potential “show and tell.” During Lesson 4 in the Emergent Literacy Domain, the teacher reads “Poetry in Motion” and asks the children if they noticed the rhyming words on the page. The children write or tell the teacher words that rhyme with *sun* and *sky*. The teacher should reference pictures of each word when facilitating the activity. This strategy is useful when developing emergent reading skills, but it is framed as a whole class support instead of direct EL intervention. Teachers also have access to the phonics program “Archway” to review any areas of concern with individual students. This program is very useful for English Learners, but they are not specified as a particular group to prioritize. Archway is a phonics program designed to ensure students and their families learn to read, write, and speak English. The program includes cards, books, interactive games, and videos.

In several occurrences within the material, the teacher has students create flashcards as a way of learning and understanding new words. For example, in Lesson 2 of the “Social Studies Domain,” the students make flashcards to connect to keywords used in the texts read aloud. Students place English on one side and add their home language to the back of the cards. This practice is repeated in Lesson 8 of the “Language and Communication Domain.” However, according to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, flashcards may not be developmentally appropriate since students are not taking an active role in their usage. (Worksheets and coloring pages should not be used for vocabulary sparingly, if at all.) The suggestion of using flashcards as a way to support ELs is constantly repeated within the materials.

The materials provide a few songs and rhymes from other cultures as a strategy to promote a student’s primary language. In most cases, this is not a support for students to develop their reading skills. For example, Lesson 1 of the “Social Emotional Domain” features songs and rhymes from other cultures, like “Frère Jacques” and “Kye Kye Kule.” However, these songs are indicated for use with students “working above expectations” and do not provide support or guidance for use with ELs. In the “Nursery” corner, students interact with these songs and rhymes. The materials suggest substituting “Rock a Bye Baby” with “Arrorro Mi Nino” for Spanish native speakers. While this activity includes some students’ home language, no strategies ensure this language knowledge transfers to the English language or literacy skills. Additional translations of this song are also not included. Most texts feature characters from various cultural backgrounds, but they do not include stories that would support students in building personal connections. These texts also do not utilize home languages to transfer knowledge to English language and literacy skills. In the Emergent Literacy Domain, several lessons include no evident strategies or supports to help ELs better understand the content.

**6.1** Materials include a variety of experiences through which students can engage with writing.

- Materials include direct (explicit) instruction, as well as opportunities for children to imitate adult writing.
- Materials include opportunities for students to generate independent writing.
- Materials include opportunities for group writing on shared experiences.
- Materials include opportunities for illustration/drawing with detail, which transfers to writing.
- Materials include opportunities to write in response to reading and make explicit the connection between reading and writing.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

Many of the writing lessons contain little, if any, evidence of direct writing instruction or opportunities for shared writing. Some of the activities mentioned for drawing and writing are not developmentally appropriate. The materials provide few opportunities for students to illustrate and draw with detail and few opportunities for group writing on shared experiences. Minimal opportunities are given to respond to reading and to make a connection between reading and writing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Throughout the instructional materials, students are provided with a few opportunities to engage in independent writing while working in centers/areas. For example, chalk and chalkboards, dry-erase pens and whiteboards, and pencils and pens are made available to students in the “Literacy and Writing” center. The teacher also provides keyword cards, alphabet tracing cards, and other supplies for students to practice writing by forming letters, copying, and tracing letters. The material also suggests birthday cards, books, envelopes, menus, and signs. In the “Mark Making” area, the students use brushes, chalk, paper, and paint; this center gives students the ability to experiment with a variety of sensory and tactile resources to make marks. These centers provide examples of print and the ability to make marks or write letters and words. However, the activity areas do not give any additional guidance.

There are some examples of a variety of writing activities throughout the lessons; however, most are not developmentally appropriate for prekindergarten. In Lesson 1 of the “Writing Domain,” the materials mention the use of two activities from the “Teacher Reader Activity Master” before having students make flashcards for writing practice. Guidance states to use the activity on page 904, but no activity matches the title “Initial Letters Project.” The “Archway” provides phonics-based activities and includes two pages that discuss the “correct” ways of

letter writing, including letter formation, writing on the line, title case, underlining titles, letter spacing, and paragraph writing. This specific lesson is an example of students independently writing and is not developmentally appropriate.

In the Writing Domain, Lesson 2, the book *Hetty the Hedgehog* is read to the class. The teacher asks students to identify examples of keywords describing Hetty and discuss the meanings of those words. This activity is an example of the materials providing suggestions for responding to text read aloud. The students write a story about an imaginary friend of Hetty and read their story. Next, students write a sentence about a character another student created. Students work as a whole group to create a labeled chart of each wild animal studied for the classroom wall. In the last section of the lesson, one activity is to have children write a list of words learned during their work on wild animals and create flashcards for each new word. The guidance says students can use drawings of animal features in place of words.

Students are provided additional writing experiences such as the one in Lesson 5 of the Writing Domain: The children are asked to write their name, age, and a sentence about an animal. In this activity, the teacher observes students to see if they are making a connection between reading and writing. The teacher looks at student writing and looks for students who are moving from scribbles to letter-sound correspondence. They are also able to make a list of items people like to throw at the Olympics. Materials suggest: "Write and read a short summary about your family," "Create a poem about family members," and "Read the story page for each chapter." Students should also sound out each letter in their sentence and write their name on the button on the piece of paper. When listening to children's responses to the stories, teachers make a note of any spelling, grammar, or punctuation issues for children. The teacher can write the sentences on the board and guide them to the correct content. Materials instruct teachers to correct any poor writing and have students practice difficult letters. These examples may be appropriate for students who achieve beyond grade level but may not be developmentally appropriate for the majority of pre-k students. Some activities accurately recognize marks and scribbles as age-appropriate. In others, students need to write sentences telling the class what sport they like to do; their sentences must even use a period, start at the top of the page, and work left to right.

In Lesson 6, the teacher reads *Invisible Alligators*. Students work individually and in small groups to write a story about an alligator. The students are expected to write one sentence to describe and name their alligator and then come together as a group to tell a story with their individual alligators. This activity is an example of shared/group writing experiences. Similarly, in Lesson 6 of the "Science Domain," students observe mini-beasts (insects) before working "in groups to make a book about the features of different animals." Teachers "encourage students to do their own research using information books and the Internet," and students "write about the animals for their book and note any features they observe." In both instances, teacher guidance remains vague. Neither activity provides direct instruction or necessary scaffolds to ensure students access the activity.

Similarly, activities can be found in the "Student Journal 2." In the Science Domain, students end an investigation of the sky with a presentation. They "draw a picture of the sky on a sunny day" then a picture of the earth on a very rainy day. After explaining what happens when the sun sets, they respond to the prompt: "It is raining but sunny too. What can you see in the sky?"

Here students are illustrating/drawing with detail but do not get to writing imitation. Other activities in this resource better connect to writing, like when students write a sentence about a community helper, a place they like to visit, and a classroom object.

**6.2** Materials instruct students along the developmental stages of writing.

- Materials follow the developmental continuum of how children learn writing.
- Materials provide guidance for teachers on how to nudge students along the continuum for writing development.
- Materials include guidance for teachers on how to include appropriate student contributions to writing and the writing process, as specified by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

While lessons sometimes follow the developmental stages of writing, lessons are missing guidance for teachers to move students along the continuum. The materials do not provide examples of the developmental continuum of how children learn writing in order for teachers to nudge them along in their development. Little guidance is provided for teachers to include student contributions to writing, and a limited number of lessons take students through the writing process.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the “Teacher Edition,” Lesson 1, the teacher discusses marks with the children and how these communicate ideas; students are allowed to draw pictures to communicate ideas. This information helps support the conceptual knowledge that print carries meaning. However, students are asked to write vocabulary flashcards for the following keywords: *marks, letters, symbols, language, verbal, write, independent, communicate, ideas, and purpose*. Initially, the lesson is trying to get students to write with marks and scribbles; then, students are asked to copy words to make flashcards. This activity is a quick transition between marks and scribbles to full words and is not developmentally appropriate in regards to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG).

In Lesson 3 of the “Writing Domain,” students make a word or picture web of ideas they would like to include in a story during the first activity, “Storytelling with Stick Puppets.” Together, they choose some of these story ideas to begin a class draft, while the teacher models using storytelling language. Students are also encouraged to retell through verbal stories. The teacher encourages students to write down their stories, and groups make edits to their stories. Students tell about the beginning, middle, and end of the story. They are encouraged to review their peers’ stories, offer constructive criticism about their stories, and discuss what they liked. The materials do not guide the teacher with best practices for moving children along the continuum for writing development or include information about writing development in young children. This lesson is one of the few lessons demonstrating the writing process.

Other lessons provide wording such as that in the TPG to state the developmental writing continuum, but the lessons do not show the teacher how to teach or recognize the continuum. For example, in Lesson 5, the students write their name and age and a sentence about an animal. The teacher observes the child's writing to see if the child moves from scribbles or mark-making to some letter-sound correspondence using beginning and ending sounds. Students then write independently, using letters to make words and using legible letters in the proper sequence.

The curriculum rarely instructs the teacher on including the student in the writing process; instead, it has students mostly write independently. It also does not provide opportunities for the teacher to model the writing process from brainstorming ideas to developing a published or shared piece. In this lesson, teachers are instructed to "correct any poor writing"; however, an example of poor writing is not given or explained. Many students' handwriting is considered not legible according to the TPG, as they are in the first few states of writing. The materials do not provide instructional strategies for struggling students to make writing enjoyable; rather, the teacher communicates to the class that "writing is tricky." Later, in Lesson 6, students write sentences before building to paragraphs and chapters; these skills are more aligned to the second grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

**6.3** Materials support fine motor development alongside and through writing.

- Materials provide a variety of opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills.
- Materials provide differentiation and guidance on how to develop students' fine motor skills towards writing.
- Materials prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials contain opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills, but most activities do not provide differentiation or guidance for teachers on how to assist or support in developing students' fine motor skills toward writing. Some of the same tools and surfaces are used for student writing experiences (e.g., die cuts and tracing), rather than a variety. Lessons do not reference how activities are beneficial for student writing skills to develop.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In "Physical Domain," Lesson 1, "Brainsprouts," students complete crafts to work toward developing fine motor skills. Activities include tracing farm animals, the use of the die-cutting machine, and the use of scissors. In "The Boy and Girl Activities," students use die-cuts to dress up a boy or girl, tracing the negative of a figurine and drawing on clothing. Students can also use the clothing die-cut to make clothes for their figurines. "Tracing Farm Animals" allows students to build fine motor development by holding a writing utensil and using scissors to cut.

In the "Didax Addition to Five" resource, students have access to 48 workbook pages that ask them to complete a combination of counting, adding, writing, coloring, cutting, gluing, and drawing. The majority of activities integrate counting, writing, and coloring only. More emphasis is placed on math skill development than fine motor development.

The materials do not often provide explicit examples in which there are differentiation and guidance to develop students' fine motor skills toward writing. The materials contain a teacher-led Brainsprouts activity in which students choose and discuss the properties of different beads and sort them into piles. After sorting, students take a piece of string and thread a bead onto it, threading six beads in total. Students repeat the process, choosing beads that match each other and working in pairs to describe characteristics of beads to see if their partner can identify the bead without looking at it first. This activity provides differentiation: It states that younger children can thread a smaller number of beads and follow sequencing cards. Some of the practices for developing fine motor skills through writing, like tracing letters, words, and numbers, are not appropriate according to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

The materials use some variety of writing tools, but they do not mention a variety of surfaces for children to use when participating in writing experiences. In Domain 1, Lesson 6, the Brainsprouts activities include the use of a sand tray, chalkboard, and dry-wipe boards. The different learning areas mentioned in the materials also provide a variety of writing tools. For example, in the “Literacy and Writing” area, the writing tools include chalk, dry-wipe pens, and highlighter pens. In the “ICT” (computer) area, the students practice their fine motor skills by operating a mouse, using a digital camera, or using a tape recorder. In the “Malleable” area, students develop their hand-eye coordination by using items like playdough. The “Math” area has students throwing dice in a game and moving pieces around a board.

**7.1** Materials follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations.

- Instruction in all mathematical competencies progresses from concrete to pictorial to abstract, with the greatest emphasis on using concrete manipulatives.
- Materials include a variety of types of concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations.
- Materials include activities that build conceptual understanding in: counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, classification, and pattern skills, as indicated by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

## Partially Meets 2/4

A mathematical continuum is not evident within the lessons. In some lessons, the materials use a combination of concrete, pictorial, and abstract representations within the same lesson. Although the materials do include activities to build conceptual understanding in counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, classification, and pattern skills, not all activities are aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG).

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

There are 10 mathematical lessons in the teacher's guide that cover different mathematical content areas, including counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, and pattern skills. Each lesson correlates to the TPG, but it is unclear in what order to teach the lessons and how to spread them across the week or month. In the "Mathematics Domain," Lessons 1 through 3 have students practice simple addition and subtraction; in Lesson 4, they review these concepts. Lessons 5 and 6 have students learn the names of common shapes, identify shapes, create shapes, and use shapes to create pictures. In Lesson 8, students are introduced to the concept of measurement and its keywords; they look at pictures of two apples and decide which one is bigger, and then two carrots and point to the shorter one. In the next activity, students are taught standard measurements using a ruler. The teacher introduces a ruler and teaches the children how to measure a fruit or vegetable. While this practice is useful and often welcomed, measuring with a ruler is not required under the TPG. In Lesson 9, part of the lesson has students working on patterns. Teachers show some pictures and use real items, such as farm animal figures, to make a pattern. Students look at shape patterns made by the teacher and select the next shape in the pattern.

Concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations are used jointly in a variety of lessons as students are building conceptual understanding. However, the majority of concrete manipulatives found within the materials are die-cut objects. While technically three-dimensional, die-cuts serve more as pictorial representations than concrete

manipulatives. For example, in Lesson 1, students learn the skill of counting by counting different modes of transportation. Students look at pictures of two cars, three bikes, four trains, and five motorcycles and use them to learn numerals 1 through 5. However, in this lesson, students also draw objects meant to represent a number of their choice up to 30. For example, students draw and label 19 circles if they choose the number 19. This activity does not follow the TPG since writing and representing numbers up to 20 is a kindergarten TEKS. In Lesson 2, “Counting and Recognizing 1 and 2,” students place objects into a clear box to count “how many.” Again, the objects listed (blocks, crayons, balls, a bird, a cat, and mittens) are die-cuts from cardboard and are not concrete manipulatives in themselves, and concrete manipulatives should precede the use of pictorial representations.

Some lessons provide guidance dictating the use of concrete models, but often these models are used by the teacher and not the student. For example, in Lesson 3, the teacher models using concrete objects and writes an addition problem on board. Students draw a pictorial model and complete the addition problem. Then in the text, “Number Poetry,” students primarily use pictorial models to count from zero to twenty. Lessons also refer to “Didax” components in the “Teacher Reader Activity Model” (TRAM) to review numbers 0–10 with students. Provided guidance does not explicitly state which Didax activity book to use or which activities the teacher should facilitate. The Didax components are used throughout the materials to help students build conceptual understanding. For example, the Didax “Exploring Measurement” book includes a student workbook where students can measure images with paperclips and cubes. The Didax “Addition to Five” booklet includes picture-based worksheets and activities for students to practice counting, writing, and coloring. Another activity book in the curriculum is the Didax “Pattern Block Book,” providing students activities to practice with patterns and shapes. Although many of these activities fall within the TPG, some materials are more appropriate for kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Lessons do not follow a continuum of concrete, pictorial, and then abstract representations; rather, they incorporate multiple representations within one lesson. In “Student Journal 1,” students participate in different math activities during the lesson on “Elizabeth Claire’s Magic Carpet.” Students use primarily pictorial or abstract representations to answer math questions. One question states, “Each of these colored triangles has a jumper. There should be 30. Which number is missing.” There is no concrete representation for students to work from. The next question states, “Use the counters or cubes your teacher gives to you. Count out 12.” It is accompanied by a picture of 12 cubes. These questions do not follow a progression from concrete to pictorial to abstract, nor do they emphasize concrete representations.

In the “Student Journal 2,” which coincides with the “Mathematics Domain,” students complete a counting activity using pencils. The teacher puts one pencil on the table and asks students to count the pencil. Once students answer, three more pencils are placed on the table, and students name how many pencils have been added. The teacher writes the equation on the board:  $1+3=4$ . This example demonstrates the use of concrete and abstract representations. While using symbols to form an equation may be appropriately challenging for some, it is not developmentally appropriate for most; this type of activity better aligns to grade 1 TEKS.

**7.2** Materials promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge about mathematics.

- Materials prompt teachers to inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge.
- Materials include cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate mathematics throughout the day.
- Materials support the use of the classroom environment and materials as vehicles to explore math concepts and skills.

## Partially Meets 2/4

In the materials, some activities promote instruction that builds on students' informal knowledge, while others are not as detailed. The materials provide cross-curricular opportunities to authentically integrate math throughout the day, including in center areas that utilize the classroom environment for math exploration.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the "Teacher Edition," the introduction explains how to set up centers, or areas, in the classroom. In each area, it states how the center can be used for "Problem Solving," "Reasoning," and "Numeracy." In the "Book" center, there should be books containing information about numbers, and the teacher can ask questions about colors or shapes. In both the "Construction" area and the "Craft" area, the students identify shapes and recreate patterns. Students can also talk about their creations in terms of size. In the "ICT" (computer) area, the students use software with mathematical content and use programmable toys for counting, estimating, and predicting. In the "Malleable" area, students use vocabulary words like *bigger than*, *smaller*, and *heavier* while exploring using clay or playdough. In the "Math" area, students count, match numbers to objects, recognize shapes, and make patterns. In the "Outdoor" area, students count as part of some games, like hopscotch, and practice using positional words. In the "Quiet" area, students play board games, where they count while moving a piece on a game board. In the "Sand" area, the students count how many scoops are needed to fill a container and compare which has more or less. In the "Role-Play" area, students count plates and cups and talk about size and shape and compare quantity. In the "Small World" area, the students can sort and match outfits for dolls, count cars, and count train pieces. In the "Water" area, students can count the number of scoops to fill a container; containers can be ordered or grouped by color or size. In the "Carpet" area, a birthday chart can be used to recognize the date. The Carpet area also includes number activities that integrate counting from 1 to 10, simple addition and subtraction, and use of mathematical language. These centers occur daily, depend on cross-curricular instruction, and utilize the classroom environment for math exploration.

Some authentic cross-curricular math opportunities exist within the different “Domains” as well. For example, the “Writing Domain,” Lesson 4, has students compare different types of helpers, such as those mentioned in the book *Firefighters*. Students discuss what farm animals do to help us and what firefighters do to help us; then, they write a story about a firefighter and an animal helping each other. Students demonstrate different math skills by answering questions about the size and color of farm animals, comparing and contrasting features, and creating a graphic chart. In the “Math Domain,” Lesson 1, students sing a song that uses counting. In the “Science Domain,” Lesson 1, students make observations, use positional words, and use measuring devices to make observations about objects. Finally, in the “Language and Communication Domain,” students discuss size using *bigger* and *smaller* in the activity “Matter and Energy.” However, many other lessons do not make a cross-curricular connection with math. For example, in the Math Domain, Lesson 5, students complete a lesson titled “Living Things.” In this activity, “live animals and actual objects, for example, butterflies and frogs, spawn in the room for life cycle investigations.” Although this science activity presents a cross-curricular opportunity, it does not specify how to connect math and other content areas, even though it was found in the math lesson.

In the Teacher Edition, there are provided suggestions for students working at, toward, or above grade level. These general sections provide useful context for teachers but do not prompt them to inquire about students’ mathematical developmental status. There are useful assessments and observation resources, but they are not directly connected to math instruction. However, some lessons provide teachers prompts to inquire about students’ developmental status and mathematical knowledge. For example, within Lesson 1 of the Math Domain, the teacher determines how high students can count by asking them to count out loud; the teacher makes an informal note for each individual student. Then, the teacher identifies whether students can write the numbers 1 through 5. Based on these two tests, teachers can then move forward, building on student knowledge.

Lesson 5 includes activities that become more complex as students’ knowledge increases. While Lesson 1 includes informal notes for each student, there is no provided guidance for determining the students’ ability prior to beginning Lesson 5. The lesson on shapes begins with the teacher reading a book from the “Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM)” called *Scarlett Wendy*. While reading, the teacher asks students to identify the shapes they see in the book: “Can you find a circle? Can you find a triangle? Can you find a square?” The next activity is broken up into three sections: students working at expectations, working above expectations, and working toward expectations. Students working toward expectations are introduced to familiar 3D shapes first; students working at expectations identify common 2D shapes; students working above expectations identify shapes they see in the environment, like circles in plates or wheels. Once completed, the teacher asks students questions about shapes depending on their ability level. While the activity is differentiated, the beginning of the lesson does not include necessary guidance for teachers to determine students’ current mathematical understanding.

The Prekindergarten “Skills Library” includes numerous web-based and interactive assessments meant to measure math, language arts, science, and physical education skills. For Math specifically, there are four multiple-choice benchmark tests that students complete with teacher

guidance. Two additional “Math Reteach” documents offer intervention resources, but these opportunities are not authentically integrated throughout the day.

**7.3** Materials intentionally develop young children’s ability to problem solve.

- Materials develop children’s capacity to ask thoughtful questions.
- Materials develop children’s capacity to recognize problems in their environment.
- Materials develop children’s capacity to use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and world outside the classroom.

## Partially Meets 2/4

Many questions in the materials are close-ended and do not promote problem solving. Also, children are only given some opportunities to recognize problems in their environment since most instruction is teacher-driven. The materials provide few opportunities to use mathematical reasoning with familiar materials in the classroom and the world outside the classroom.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The introduction to the “Teacher Edition” includes a section dedicated to setting up and organizing areas (centers). One subsection, titled “Problem Solving, Reasoning, and Numeracy,” explains how the teacher can incorporate these skills throughout the 17 centers. While there are many suggestions for ways to incorporate numeracy, there are few suggestions for problem-solving and reasoning skills. Some areas that do have integrated problem-solving skills are the “ICT” (computer) area, “Construction” area, and “Malleable” area. In the ICT area, students use programmable toys to practice these skills; in the Construction area, students use building blocks and free play; in the Malleable area, students are encouraged to use comparative language like *bigger*, *heavier*, *lighter*, and *smaller* throughout their exploration. For the most part, these areas only provide limited direction and specific guidance for teachers to actively promote problem-solving skills.

The “Communication, Language, and Literacy” section has some materials to engage students in question-asking. There is a list of prompting questions the teacher can use during play. However, most of these questions are not open-ended. For example, in the Construction area, students ask questions like “Who can make a...?” “Can you make a bridge?” and “What did you make?” During ICT, when students use the programmable toy for counting, estimating, and predicting, most questions are procedural and surface-level: “Can you move the mouse here?” and “What would you like to take a picture of?” A similar trend is found throughout the Malleable play questions: “Do you like how it feels?” “Can you make a...?” and “What else could you make using...?” These types of questions do not provide children the ability to problem solve, and there are few opportunities for the teacher to provide feedback.

The lessons within the “Math Domain” of the Teacher Edition provide students some problem-solving opportunities that utilize familiar environments and materials. However, Lesson

1 depends primarily on teacher-based inquiry questions that do not push students toward problem solving. In this lesson, students count one to ten objects, practice ordinal phrases, and recognize digits. The teacher begins by displaying a page of vehicles, counting them, and counting their parts: "Count them, point to each one and show students how they can count parts of objects, such as the number of wheels on the train or the number of windows on the helicopter." Integrating real objects as well as pictures, students practice counting up and down between one and five. However, most of this practice depends on call and response; the teacher does not have access to questions that promote problem solving. Questions available to the teacher include "How many are there? Can you count them? How many wheels can you count on the last carriage? How many wheels on the engine?" Often, the materials direct the teacher to *show* students concepts instead of working with students, so they discover the knowledge themselves. Prompts include: "show the children how to count to 10; show how we can label in order first, second, third; demonstrate how children can identify how many objects there are without counting."

Lesson 4 more successfully promotes problem-solving skills but still lacks adequate exemplary teacher supports. In this activity, students create a "store" to practice the roles of consumers and providers in the community. Children take turns acting out the roles of customer and clerk; each customer will purchase two items; students then model the transactions using counters. After some role-playing, students work as a class to create a story focusing on characters visiting their store. The lesson ends with a whole group activity where students brainstorm and create a labeled chart for each item sold at the store. Together, they work through math-based problems, interact with familiar materials, and apply their graphing skills. Following this lesson, there is a list of extension activities for students to further connect learning to their environment. Categorized into natural resources, open-ended objects, and living things, the teacher can leverage these additional activities to help students practice problem-solving skills. For example, students can "visit a local store and see how pricing is completed" or "visit a pet store to see how live animals are priced." While these extension activities allow for more complex problem solving, the lesson plans include limited teacher guidance. They depend on external factors to ensure students develop the ability to problem solve.

The "Science Domain" includes some lessons where students can recognize problems, ask questions, and apply reason. In Lesson 1, students need to learn how to investigate motion and position, identify and describe characteristics, and discuss scientific concepts. Basically, students play with a ball and investigate its properties, position, and movement. Teacher direction is mostly limited to general statements, like "lead a discussion about objects and their position"; "explain to the children that an object could be many things like a car or a ball"; and "explain that motion is what you can see when an object moves." These prompts put a lot of the responsibility on the teacher and do not develop childrens' ability to problem solve. Other questions and prompts are better suited for problem solving: "What can you observe, or see, about its position? Allow the children to investigate the ball by looking at it and touching it. Ask them to watch and see what happens now when you gently kick the ball." That being said, the lesson does not include enough substance to ensure students adequately develop the ability to problem solve.

In one science lesson titled, "Recycled Bird Feeders," students think of "ways to recycle or reuse their milk containers from school." They complete four activities meant to help them

“demonstrate the importance of caring for the planet and their environment.” While students are using milk cartons, materials familiar to the classroom, the lesson plan offers limited opportunities to ask thoughtful questions and use mathematical reasoning.

The “Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM)” also includes some activities that promote problem solving. In the activity titled “Recycled Animals,” students “use a variety of recycled materials and containers to create a 3D animal model.” In this adult-initiated activity, students create an animal model. Some prompts found in the Lesson Guide include, “Ask children to suggest how they might join two packets or containers together.” and “encourage children to use the resources creatively to make their animal.” While students are working creatively, they are not necessarily using mathematical reasoning. In another activity titled “Hedgehogs,” students use number language in context and count up to six. This Lesson Guide has students differentiate between *biggest* and *smallest*, and then use terms like *in front*, *next to*, and *behind*. However, students are not identifying problems in their environment or asking thoughtful questions. Other activities include brainstorming volume before observing plant growth and using feet/hands to measure items from around the house. Throughout these activities, some questions promote problem solving, like, “Ask them to consider how many different ways could something be measured?” However, these opportunities lack consistency throughout the TRAM.

**7.4 Materials build students' number sense.**

- Materials provide guidance for teachers on building conceptual understanding in math.
- Materials provide frequent, spiraled, and varied opportunities for students to participate in activities that build number sense, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. These activities include: subitizing, counting one-to-one, comparing set size and numbers, counting on, and finding one more than a number.

**Partially Meets 2/4**

Some of the lessons do not build a conceptual understanding of number sense. Although the materials do mention the teacher needs to review, the materials do not state how or what to review. The materials mention reviewing previous activities instead of spiraling throughout the "Math Domain." There are various types of activities in the materials to build number sense, but subitizing is not evident.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the "Teacher's Edition," the "Mathematics Domain" lists lessons according to Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. This list includes frequent opportunities for children to participate in activities that build number sense through counting one to one, comparing set size and numbers, counting on, and finding one more than a number, but not subitizing. None of the lessons in the Mathematics Domain give students the opportunity to subitize using counters, dice, or other objects. The opportunities are not spiraled across the instructional materials to support children's number sense skills; Once a lesson is taught, it is not revisited.

In Lesson 1, students point to and count objects of various modes of transportation. This lesson includes opportunities for students to practice counting and using one-to-one correspondence. Within this lesson, the students also compare sets of objects. For example, students look at the boats and tell how they are different. Students compare the sets by answering questions: "Are there more brown boats or blue boats?" "Count the brown ones and then count the blue ones. Are there less brown ones or less blue ones?"

In Lesson 2, students count one to one using real objects placed in a box, such as balls, crayons, blocks, and mittens. The objective of this lesson is for students to practice counting and to recognize the value of 1 and 2. Students also compare numbers using chip counters by counting the number of chips in their cup. Then, the teacher asks, "Who has more chips? How many more chips does one student have than another?" Another activity in Lesson 2 is "The Number Line," where students use a number line to count on and to find one more. Students have their own number line with numbers 0 to 10 and are told to count forward three units from the

number 1, for example. They have several opportunities to practice counting throughout the lesson. In this activity, students create a number line for numbers 1–30. The activity ends with students practicing rote counting to 30 and writing numerals to 30. The materials also guide teachers to count daily during routine activities such as counting steps, counting fingers, counting toes, counting snacks, and singing counting songs for more practice with rote counting.

In Lesson 3, the materials include guidance for teachers to review the work completed in Lessons 1 and 2. After reviewing Lessons 1 and 2, students will complete activities with addition, and then later complete the same activities using subtraction word problems and the song “10 Green Bottles.” Students use concrete objects to practice subtraction problems, and teachers introduce the concept of mental math and ask students to imagine word problems with teacher prompts.

Additional activities in the Teacher Edition reinforce number sense. In the activity, “Farm Animal Number Cards,” students recognize numbers and count. Students count how many objects are on a card before responding with their fingers the correct number. Students sequence the cards, select the card that adds one more, and add numbers together. However, they are not asked to subitize. The activity, “Number Freeze,” is similar. Students sequence number cards 1–9, add one more, use greater than and less than signs, and sort cards into odd and even. Other math center activities utilize number cards, number lines, play money, and counters.

“Student Journal 2” includes the workbook “Dylan Michael and His Musical Friends.” These 50 pages include activities that help students reinforce number skills. However, number skill is not the exclusive focus of this book. Students also practice tracing, alphabet identification, instrument naming, and fine arts. Additional teacher, parent, and student lessons can be found in the Student Journal 2. Some of these activities, like “Sorting Wild Animals” and “Wild Animals Dice Game,” improve number sense, while other activities focus on reading and writing.

**7.5** Materials develop students' academic math vocabulary.

- Materials include repeated opportunities to hear math vocabulary.
- Materials include repeated opportunities to practice using math vocabulary.
- Materials include guidance for teachers on how to scaffold and support students' development and use of academic math vocabulary.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide little guidance on how to scaffold and support students during academic math vocabulary instruction. The materials provided some opportunities to hear and practice the vocabulary.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The guidance in the introduction for setting up a "Construction" center provides a list of words for an adult to use when interacting with students at this center. It contains math words such as *long, tall, high, low, under, over, big, small, and join*.

A similar "Brainsprouts" activity in the Teacher Edition" titled "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" includes mathematical language like *time, big, and small*. However, the objective of the activity is for children "to learn and join in with a game, listen and respond to instructions and move appropriately." They respond to commands from Mr. Wolf until Mr. Wolf turns around and chases them back. At the end of the lesson students "respond and follow instructions" and then "match the number of steps taken with the number called."

In the "Math Domain" of the Teacher Edition, Lesson 1, students practice counting. One activity has pictures of two cars, three bikes, four trains, and five motorcycles. This activity shows students using pictorial representation and counting to build their vocabulary. The students also learn ordinal numbers by counting the number of students in line and using *first, second, and third*. Students count items during the normal routine of the classroom, like items at snack time or buttons on their coats.

In Lesson 7, students hear and use math vocabulary throughout the lesson. The lesson is divided into three areas of developmental ability, and each area provides guidance for teachers to introduce the concept of measurement and keywords (*bigger, smaller, longer, shorter, heavier, lighter*) using pictures and objects. Teachers prompt students to demonstrate their knowledge during centers and snack time. Students then use a balance to compare weights and use the words *bigger* and *smaller*.

After these activities, teachers use materials from the “Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM)” to review the keywords related to measurement; for instance, students make flashcards to represent the words. According to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, flashcards may not be developmentally appropriate for purposeful vocabulary practice. Teachers ask students to choose a keyword related to measurement and define it as they assess for understanding. The lesson does not include any texts or recommendations for texts that are math-related. The materials do not provide examples of how to scaffold or support children’s development of academic math vocabulary with strategies for layering academic math vocabulary into informal conversations.

In “Student Journal 2,” students learn the words *verbal*, *ordinal*, and *term*. They create “their own ordinal number charts for numbers 1 to 10.” The teacher says, “Think about numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8, 10. You have learned they are in sequence. Each number has an ordinal term.” After listing the ordinal terms between 1 and 10, students respond with ordinal terms 1 to 9, “say the numbers out loud,” and then provide a written response to the question, “Suzy wins a race. Suzy is first. True or false?” This instruction is the extent of the directions. Additional lessons in the Student Journals cover skills in the mathematical domain; however, many are not developmentally appropriate.

The “Didax Exploring Measurement” offers twenty math activities that help students compare by measurable attribute with length, weight, and capacity. In pairs, small groups, or whole class, students participate in activities meant to improve their understanding of measurement. Each lesson includes a section on materials, overview, presenting the activity, assessing student responses, and extending the activity. While useful, the lessons lack scripting, prompts, or discussion questions meant to ensure student development of math vocabulary.

**8.1** Materials build science knowledge through inquiry-based instruction and exploration of the natural world.

- Materials develop children’s observation and questioning of their environment.
- Materials develop children’s ability to communicate ideas.
- Materials include exploration with scientific tools.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore physical science, life science, and earth and space science through hands-on experiences.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials contain some opportunities for students to observe and question their environment, but questions included in lessons are rarely open-ended to facilitate students’ communication of their ideas. Students engage with hands-on experiences across types of sciences but have few opportunities to explore with scientific tools.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include a “Science Domain” with eight lessons written according to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG). Lessons 1–4 target physical science; Lesson 5 and 6 target life science; Lessons 7 and 8 target earth and space science.

In Lesson 1 of the Science Domain, students use their five senses through various hands-on activities. To explore the sense of smell, students make pictures with scents by adding a few drops of fruit oil to paint. They also work with scented modeling clay; when students squeeze the dough, the smell is released. Students explore the sense of touch by using shaving cream on a large surface and making patterns. Students take a walk around the school and listen to different sounds. Teachers set up a taste test, although they offer no guidance on what foods to offer for the taste test. Students look at various materials with a hand lens, including soil, cotton, wool, fruit, leaves, bark, fabric, and wood. Although Lesson 1 includes many play-based suggestions for engaging children in science, other lessons in the materials do not include play-based strategies. The materials do not guide teachers to use children’s interests and topics about which they have questions as a basis for further exploration. One of the questions posed in the lesson is “What part of the activities have you enjoyed the most?” allowing the teacher to learn about student interests; however, no guidance is given in the materials on how to respond to student interest to build inquiry-based lessons. These activities also do not provide students opportunities to explore with scientific tools.

In Lesson 3, students review vocabulary with flashcards and choose a keyword they have heard about light, heat, sound, and electricity. In an activity more focused on emergent literacy than scientific understanding, the students explain the meaning of the word and write down the

letters in each keyword. In Lesson 4, students work in small groups and create a poster with three sections: light, heat, and electricity. Students engage in discussion and observation as they look around their classroom for objects that create heat, light, and sound energy. While these activities align with the physical science skills of the TPG, the experience may stretch beyond what is developmentally appropriate practice for prekindergarten-age students.

In Lesson 5, students learn about the life cycle of a frog. Students use die cuts and put them in order to represent the life cycle of a frog. The materials suggest observing a live tank or school pond so students may see if there are frogspawn, to promote the observation and questioning of an environment. Later in the lesson, students make a habitat and make observations about natural habitats. Teachers ask which insects or animals live in certain habitats and what it might be like at night. In Lesson 6, students further explore life science as they choose an organism and create a poster showing the organism's life cycle. Providing an opportunity to practice their ability to communicate ideas, the groups present their poster to the class and can share their learning via short plays, student-made books, or group posters. While these are ways to communicate ideas, this may be developmentally difficult for students with developing written expression or oral language skills.

In Lesson 7, which is about weather, seasons, and time, students look out the window or go outside and describe what they see in the outdoor environment. Teachers ask, "Can we see the sun? Are there any clouds? Is it raining? Is it snowing? Is it windy?" The materials note that this activity is for "students who are working toward expectations." The teacher discusses seasons and pretends to go on a vacation. From a list of items, the children pick out those they would take if going on a summer trip and those they would take on a winter trip. In a later part of Lesson 7 about recycling, the teacher explains how many people are polluting the environment by consuming too much too quickly. The teacher asks what part of the activities the students have enjoyed the most, but the materials give no guidance on how the teacher can use that information to extend the lesson to student interests. This lesson does not give opportunities for the students to ask questions; it revolves mostly around teacher talk.

Beyond the Science Domain, some additional resources help students build scientific knowledge. In the "Teacher Edition," students receive a "brief introduction to the subject of tools used in science investigation." Tools suggested but not provided include a computer, bowl, magnet, notebook, clock, timer, rain gauge, etc. The teacher follows lesson-prompting like "Ask children to tell you what they know about what scientists do" and "Discuss measuring." However, the prompts lack specific questions and potential answers. The discussion section of the activity includes questions that promote one-word answers: "Do you know what all these tools look like?" and "Do you know how to use all these tools?"

Later during the activity "Our World and the Environment," students consider the concept of recycling, sort boxes of recyclable materials, and read "Dinosaurs and All That Rubbish" by Michael Foreman. They discuss caring for our world and "what we can all do as individuals to help." However, the lesson does not include specific questions to prompt these discussions.

Additional activities in the Teacher Edition like "Session 3—Be Positive!" and "Week 2—My Local Community" develop children's ability to communicate ideas, but does so outside of a scientific context: i.e., they discuss skill and ability as a class then they talk to their parents

about self-esteem. In the Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM), students participate in an activity called “Poetry in Motion” that includes a “Let’s Communicate” section. Discussion questions include “What animals run and why?” “What word is a term to describe rain, wind, and sun?” and “Which words rhyme in the poem?” While related to movement, the focus of this discussion is on language.

**8.2** Materials build social studies knowledge through study of culture and community.

- Materials follow a logical sequence of social studies, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state, and country.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore commonalities and differences in individuals.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to learn about routines and events, both past, present, and future.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to explore the roles of consumers in their community.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials follow a logical sequence of social studies and provide opportunities to explore similarities and differences in individuals and families as well as to explore the roles of consumers in their communities. Some of the materials include references to past, present, and future.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The Social Studies domain includes six lessons that follow a logical sequence of social studies instruction, beginning with self and moving to family, community, city, state, and country. Lessons focus on the child and their relationship to others, similarities and differences in families, and communities children may be a part of. However, lessons provide limited evidence for students to learn about routines and past, present, and future events.

In Lesson 1, students make a wall display about their families. The teacher models the activity by pointing at themselves and saying “me,” and each child produces a flower with a picture of themselves at the center with a name label. The petals include the use of a photograph or drawn picture of people in the child’s family. The teacher engages with the students to ask about their families. The teacher encourages the child to use the terms me, you, and the names of people that are familiar to the children and discusses the roles and characteristics of members in their family. Also, in Lesson 1, students explore how they are alike and different. Students look around the class and try to find someone with the same eye color or hair as themselves. During the activity, children stand in an area of the room with labels, such as blue eyes, blonde hair, brown eyes, black hair, and a place for people to stand if they feel they are alone with eye or hair color. The “Social Studies Student Journals” provide a lesson in which teachers read a narrative to students and ask, “What similarities are there between you all? What differences are there?” The lesson references cultural differences and encourages listening to different music and foods. Lesson 1 includes an extension activity for making a class or group scrapbook with photographs of the children participating in a range of activities,

including captions with the children's names. It includes past tense phrases such as “Sam played in the sandpit.” This label helps to capture a past event and helps with identifying an activity that occurred during a routine.

In Lesson 2, students participate in activities where they interact with themselves, their family, their birthday, their friends, and their emotions. The teacher reads *A Year with the Davis Family* and *Elizabeth Claire’s Magic Carpet*. After reading the stories, the students compare the two families and discuss what a family is and the similarities and differences in the families. In the same lesson, the teacher later explains that there are 24 hours in a day, discussing the present with students.

Lesson 3 also has a lesson where students can discuss what may happen in the future when discussing income and jobs. The teacher discusses how to earn money in the future and what skills are needed for their future career. The materials say, “discuss with your children what their interests are and talk with them about likely careers. Some children have very strong feelings about future careers.” During circle time, the teacher uses a visible timeline to help children to explain the daily routines. Children are encouraged to think about routines they have, for example, brushing their teeth in the morning and putting on their pajamas in the evening before bed.

In Lesson 3, there are four topics: “Week 1: My School Community,” “Week 2 My Local Community,” “Week 3: My National Community,” and “Week 4: My Global Community.” Some topics covered during these weeks are not appropriate for prekindergarten children. Lesson 3 provides guidance for teachers to introduce the idea of consumers to children by explaining that money is the way people buy things they want or need. Teachers explore the concept of earning money by discussing how family members have to work for money to pay for goods and services, noting that some people who cannot find work “have to claim support from the government.” Children brainstorm the reasons people need money and identify the different jobs in the community that can earn someone money. Then, students identify jobs that earn money versus money that is received as a gift. Further, students make a list of things parents or guardians buy for them and circle the things they feel they must have to distinguish between wants and needs. The Social Studies Student Journals provide a lesson in which teachers read a narrative to a student, noting that a consumer is someone who buys something. Students pretend to shop around the classroom; some students play the role of a store owner, and some students play the role of consumers. Throughout the weeks in Lesson 3, students make crafts that include the school logo (Week 1: My School Community), signs for different stores (Week 2: My Local Community), and paper rings for varying flags and happy faces of various skin colors (Week 3: My National Community, Week 4: My Global Community).

Outside of the Social Studies Domain, some resources have additional connections to social studies knowledge. When students explore measurement in Lesson 7 of the “Mathematics Domain,” they compare heights by lining up from smallest to tallest. This activity allows them to explore commonalities and differences. In the Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM), the activity titled “Assembly Board” focuses on identifying similarities and differences, and reflecting on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues. While related to social studies, this activity lacks detailed instructions beyond discussion points and teacher tips. The activity, “Welcome Sign,” begins as a discussion about what *welcome* means, then students create

classroom rules and a welcome sign. They similarly discuss community, similarity, and difference.

Between the TRAM and the Teacher Edition, students create and participate in a flower shop with adult support. Then during a “Price Tag Problems” activity, students practice being consumers by comparing prices. They consider their futures during the “Story Telling with Stick Puppets” activity when they retell stories, describe past events, and then create new stories.

The materials also provide opportunities for children to learn about events that have happened in the past through The Nest. The Nest is a video library that contains videos about famous historical characters such as Helen Keller, Leonardo DiVinci, and Thomas Edison.

**8.3** Materials expose children to fine arts through exploration.

- Materials include a variety of daily experiences through multiple mediums (dance, music, dramatic play, painting, sculpture, drawing, and other movement).
- Materials emphasize the students' engagement in the process of creating rather than the product that is created.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide students with opportunities to use multiple mediums to engage with fine arts, but they do not provide guidance about daily experiences. The materials often focus on the product instead of the process of creating.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include experiences for children to explore through various mediums of art; however, because the materials are set up by domains rather than chronologically structured, it cannot be determined if these activities are offered daily to students. Most art activities are included in the Fine Arts Domain, though others do mention sculptures (referenced once to create a 3D model of an animal using recycled products) and drawing (included in the Physical Development Domain).

The "Teacher Edition" includes different activities allowing students to sing along to books, create personalized art projects, draw, sculpt, and paint. Some songs include "Frere Jacques" and "Kye Kye Kule," while another sing-along book includes the *Sprouts Say and Sing A Long Book*. In one activity, "I Love My Life," students use paper, die-cuts, and photographs to create a collage celebrating family life. While the product is personalized for each family, the activity is detailed in a step-by-step guide giving detailed instructions that prioritize the product over the artform. For example, students cut specified sizes of paper and glue them on the bottom left and top right corners of the page. They then "crop and mat photographs with contrasting cardstock, die-cut two tags, body and clothes," and then title the page "My Family." While there are other fine art activities included in this resource, no pacing guide or scope and sequence ensures art is a daily experience.

In the Lesson 1 Fine Arts activity entitled "Art Skills and Sensory Experience," students move and use their hands to explore different sensory materials. The teacher sets up tubs filled with various materials such as beads, rice, and spaghetti and includes a sandpit, a melting station, a dough making experience, and other supplies to provide multisensory experiences in art. Students do not engage in the art process or create a product in Lesson 1.

In Lesson 2, “Senses in the Sports Field,” students listen to a poem about a man who steals sounds, and students go outside to experience their sense of hearing by listening to various sounds. Students comment on the poem’s structure and write a multiple verse poem either alone or in small groups using the observations from their five senses. While writing poetry is a form of creative expression, this activity may not be developmentally appropriate for most prekindergarten students.

In Lesson 3, students focus on creating a self-portrait (focusing primarily on the product versus the process). The students describe what they have created and the feelings they represented on their faces to emphasize the creation process. Students review, critique, and assign stickers and prizes to their classmates’ work. This practice of assigning value to their art emphasizes the product over the process. The lesson recommends replicating this activity for other art forms and mentioning that “they [students] may get a prize or mention by the teacher.” After students are awarded a first, second, or third place prize, students discuss the reason why those students won.

Lessons 4 and 5 in the Fine Arts domain contain activities related to music. In Lesson 4, the teacher discusses how music makes people feel and demonstrates how students can sing while playing a musical instrument (materials do not specify what instrument). Students sing songs from the *Sprouts See and Say* book. In Lesson 5, students sing simple nursery rhymes, but the materials do not list a specific nursery rhyme, nor is there a nursery rhyme included to be used within this lesson. Instead, the materials state, “Talk about voice and sing a simple nursery rhyme.” This lesson includes making flashcards of keywords related to music as a way to learn new vocabulary. This support may not be developmentally appropriate under the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

Lessons 7 and 8 contain activities with dramatic play. In Lesson 7, students break up into groups of four and are given a book to read. They then brainstorm how to act out and present the story to the class. Students create a list of character names, what happens, emotions, and experiences the audience should feel. Students later present their stories. In Lesson 8, students create another dramatic play. In their groups, students create their own story with at least three characters and two events. The story shows happiness, anger, sadness, and fear.

**8.4** Materials include technology applications.

- Materials provide opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience.
- Materials provide students the opportunity to explore and use various digital tools.
- Technology supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance.

## Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials refer to technology applications included in the product; however, some of the applications were not accessible during the review, and some were developmentally inappropriate for a prekindergarten student. As such, students have minimal opportunities to explore and use various digital tools. The materials contain limited opportunities to link technology into the classroom to support and enhance student learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials rarely include opportunities to integrate technology into lessons. The materials contain two lessons in the Technology Domain. In the first lesson, students learn about various devices and what they do, such as a laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Materials state teachers should introduce a variety of other devices such as a digital camera, projector, document reader, or other devices. The materials mention a tablet and programmable toys in reference to child learning, stating a tablet can be used for applications that teach letter identification or writing. However, the materials do not provide a recommended list of app suggestions with guidance on usage or how to use either kind of technology with students.

In Lesson 1, the guidance states that teachers should model using a device for students that teachers may want to use with the class. Teachers model how to turn the device on, how to use the volume, how to open an app and navigate through it, and how to return to the main home screen. After modeling, students pair up to practice moving through the app (or other programs the teacher has selected) while the teacher walks around the room, asking students to show the skills the teacher modeled. Lesson 2 provides guidance for teachers to teach students how to care for devices and appropriate uses, as mentioned in Lesson 1. Students do use technology to enhance their learning with two digital E-books in Domain 10: *Alfies Adventure in the Land of Mr. Grofolofulus* and *Benjamin the Elephant*. The STEAM Library, or the Nest, contains videos about people in history for students to watch while completing workbook pages; however, they include some topics that may not be appropriate for pre-k students, such as war.

In the “Teacher Edition,” some lessons provide students the opportunity to use digital tools for classroom activities. At one point, students use the internet (if available) to “find pictures of living things” or “watch a movie with animals in their natural environment.” At another point,

students use the internet to find word translations. Later in the year, the students link technology into the classroom experience by discussing how “technology can help them keep in touch with friends who move from the area.”

In the ICT area, students can access technology, such as a CD player. The materials recommend allowing students to select their own music CDs to play, but music CDs are not included in the materials. Some of the other materials listed in the ICT area include the use of a computer, a keyboard, a mouse, a digital camera, remote control toys, and a printer. The materials also state to limit the number of students in this area. Although all these materials are listed for use in the ICT area, they are not provided for student use.

**9.1** Materials include developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools (e.g., formative and summative progress monitoring) and guidance for teachers and students to monitor progress.

- Materials include a variety of diagnostic tools that are developmentally appropriate (e.g., observational, anecdotal, formal).
- Materials provide guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of diagnostic tools.
- Materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.
- Materials include diagnostic tools to measure all content and process skills for prekindergarten, as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials include some diagnostic tools that emphasize five areas of focus—emergent literacy-reading, emergent literacy-writing, language and communication, health and wellness, and mathematics. However, they are not varied, often are not developmentally appropriate, and only correspond to all content and process skills as outlined in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines on one occasion throughout the materials. The materials do not provide consistent guidance on usage and do not provide a way for students to track their own progress and growth.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide diagnostic tools like formal, informational, anecdotal, and observational notes, but many of these tools are not developmentally appropriate. One diagnostic tool that is consistently used throughout the materials is the 10 point assessment. The assessment covers the areas of curiosity; natural resources; open-ended objects; imagination; flashcard activities; living things and steps 1, 2, 3; teamwork; literacy and numeracy; and self-reflection. The materials do not provide instructions or tips on administering the assessment, but they do list the materials needed in the lesson plan preceding the assessment. Sometimes the 10 point assessment is not developmentally appropriate or related to the skills covered in the lesson or lessons that precede the assessment. For example, in the Mathematics Domain in Lesson 1, the focus is counting to 5 and counting items using the words *more*, *all*, and *none*. Lesson 2 focuses on counting from 1–30, recognizing the numbers 1–30, and writing the numbers 1–30. Rote counting to 30 is a prekindergarten skill, but number recognition to 30 and writing numbers to 30 is not a pre-k skill consistent with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The 10 point assessment’s curiosity section has the children create a model to show the numbers up to 30; the natural resource section has the students visit a local store or set up a store to have children act out being a customer and a store owner; the open-ended objects section has the students build a giraffe from blocks or other items and then create a store display of an item on sale.

The “Benchmark Assessment” in the math domain is a paper, pencil assessment that requires students to count objects past 20 and answer multiple-choice questions by circling the correct answer. There is an associated script for teachers to use while administering the benchmark. However, this kind of assessment is not consistent with the skills typical of pre-k-aged students, nor is it developmentally appropriate.

The “Program Resources/Blackline Master” section of the materials contains assessments related to the “Brainsprouts” adult and child activity collections and includes an “Assessment Brainplan” which outlines how to use the Brainsprouts activities. These assessments include six pages of blank record sheets for teachers to take observations but not tied to any particular activity.

The “Early Learning Foundation Stage Profile” also includes “Assessment Record Sheets” with spaces for teachers to record observations of students’ personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, and physical and creative development, as well as knowledge and understanding of the world. The Assessment Record Sheets do not contain specific tips or recommendations to help the teacher decide what they should be writing down and observing.

The materials include one resource for engaging families and caregivers called “My Learning Journey,” which is a 24-page fill-in-the-blank workbook in which adults can document their child’s developmental ability in various areas such as listening; personal, social, and emotional development; and problem solving, reasoning, and numeracy. However, this does not include a section or tool meant for students to track their own progress and growth.

Each of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG) is assessed within the online “Assessment Database.” The Assessment Database allows teachers to evaluate students “At, Below, or Above” standard in each of the domains found in the TPG and input students’ scores into the Database.

For anecdotal observations, the Teacher Edition includes a broad four-week observation planner. Based on this research, teachers should plan skill-focused observation for a “period of two to three days, and any time a student demonstrates evidence of the 1–2 particular skills being observed, this should be recorded.” The section includes a list of 21 different possible skills for observation. A brief section titled “Analyzing the Observations” offers general suggestions for next steps like, “All observations should be linked to the curriculum objectives where possible.”

**9.2** Materials include guidance for teachers and administrators to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools.

- Materials support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students' needs in all domains, based on measures of student progress appropriate to the developmental level.
- Diagnostic tools yield meaningful information for teachers to use when planning instruction and differentiation.
- Materials provide a variety of resources and teacher guidance on how to leverage different activities to respond to student data.
- Materials provide guidance for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not provide guidance for teachers and administrators on how to analyze and respond to data from diagnostic tools. The resources in the materials do not provide different activities to respond to student data; rather, they provide the same activities or strategies throughout, regardless of student data. The materials do not provide information about how to plan instruction and differentiate. There is also no mention or guidance provided for administrators to support teachers in analyzing and responding to data.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide 18 assessments with few resources meant to help teachers interpret and compile the data. The materials do not provide any additional information beyond the child's score in the "Assessment Database." These assessment results do not describe how teachers can support or reinforce student understanding. There are no administrator supports to help teachers plan for responsive instruction based on data.

The materials do not reference diagnostic tools as a way to help teachers plan instruction and differentiation. Instead, materials reference a separate assessment guide or section that includes benchmarks; they do not provide guidance on how to use the data as it relates to child age or necessary level of support. While Teacher Guides provide differentiated lessons provided for students who are working toward, at or above expectation, there is no explicit guidance on how to leverage these activities in response to assessment results. For example, in the Social Studies Domain Lesson 1, teachers use puppets to illustrate the concept of similar/different features in themselves and others. The teacher uses simple questions to assess students' understanding. The materials note that students working at expectations use puppets to create storytelling scenarios to describe and compare features in themselves and puppets from various cultural backgrounds. Scaffolds like these are available in many domain lessons in the teacher

edition, but no lessons offer guidance to use the scaffolds based on data collected about students' developmental abilities.

**9.3** Materials include frequent, integrated opportunities.

- Materials include routine and systematic progress monitoring opportunities that accurately measure and track student progress.
- Frequency of progress monitoring is appropriate for the age and content skill.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not provide progress monitoring opportunities for all domains that accurately measure and track student progress. Some of the materials provided for progress monitoring are not developmentally appropriate for prekindergarten children.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials routinely provide a “10 Point Assessment” after completing two lessons in each domain. The assessment covers the areas of curiosity; natural resources; open-ended objects; imagination; flashcard activities; living things and steps 1, 2, 3; teamwork; literacy and numeracy; and self-reflection. The materials do not guide the teacher to use this assessment to track student progress. Sometimes, the assessment does not clearly align with the lessons it follows.

The materials also provide an online Assessment Database. The Assessment Database allows for teachers to evaluate students “At, Below, or Above” standard in each of the domains found in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG) and input students’ scores into the Database. However, the materials do not note that the Assessment Database should be used to track child progress and do not show how the data is gathered, tracked, or systematized or if the assessment should be given again to track and monitor progress.

“Benchmark Assessments” are often not developmentally appropriate for pre-k children since they include multiple pages with problems or questions for students to answer. For example, the “Gymnasium and Outdoor” Assessment is 10 worksheets in length, and there is no guidance for the teacher as to how many pages of the assessment are to be given in one sitting. The Math Benchmark assessment contains four math benchmarks comprising 10 questions each, in which students respond by circling the correct multiple-choice response. In the English Benchmark, students write three sentences about their favorite animal and then work with the teacher to edit their work; however, independently writing sentences and editing writing is not a skill in the TPG. In Lesson 1 of the Social Studies domain, teachers use puppets to illustrate the concept of similar/different features in themselves and others. The teacher uses simple questions to assess students’ understanding. The materials note that students “working at expectations” use puppets to create storytelling scenarios where they describe and compare features in

themselves and puppets from various cultural backgrounds. However, there is no information for teachers to understand how frequently to administer progress monitoring.

**10.1** Materials include guidance, scaffolds, supports, and extensions that maximize student learning potential.

- Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content.
- Materials provide recommended targeted instruction and activities for students who have mastered content.
- Materials provide additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners.

## Partially Meets 1/2

The materials reviewed include some targeted instruction and activities for students who struggle to master content. There is some targeted instruction and activities for students who have mastered the content. There are a variety of additional enrichment activities for all levels of learners.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Skills Library” suggests some ways to reteach material; it provides teachers with supplemental worksheets for students who require reteaching of skills related to the sub-areas of capacity, counting objects, and using a number line.

The materials provide guidance for Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) to use the curriculum by providing an “Inclusion Additional Ideas and Activities” section, located after the week’s overview lesson. For example, following several lessons, a bullet labeled “Special Education Needs” contains a suggestion on how to differentiate. There are also “Inclusion” activities within each domain that give support for students who have not mastered the content. Guidance for some lessons states “give more time,” “act as a scribe,” and “give larger work space.” However, there is no guidance for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) students in any of the lessons in the 10 domains. Additional support in the curriculum is a “Library” section containing videos for visual learners. There is also an option to change the materials’ text size to meet the needs of students with visual impairments.

The materials also include guidance for targeted instruction and activities for children who have mastered content; materials provide several extensions within the curriculum sections. “Brain Sprouts” activities are supplemental lessons relevant to specific themes in the “Teacher Textbook” weekly lessons, but they can also be found in their own section of the materials; they support child choice to extend and explore new learning in small groups and centers. Topics cover various content areas, including social and emotional skill development, visual art, dramatic play, and science. These activities subdivide instructional support into two student age categories: 30–50 months and 40–60 months. In a lesson titled “Color Fishing,” under

“Discussion Points,” teachers scaffold for younger students by having them catch fish and try to sequence them based on the number on the fish. The older students add up the numbers on the back of the fish they caught in each round or find the total number of their fish and record them.

Learning in centers provides additional opportunities for students to participate in outdoor activities, quiet time, music, and drama activities. Materials contain recommendations for upward scaffolds and extensions; students are prompted to answer questions and explain their thinking during class discussions. For example, after a social-emotional learning lesson (Lesson 3), the teacher reads a problem-solving text and asks students to make a list of the different problems they have encountered. Some of the guidance given for students who have mastered content includes having students “talk more or write in more detail,” “discuss the topic with their family,” and “write positive acrostic poems about family members.” In addition, throughout the Teacher Textbook SEL section of Lesson 2, at the end of each weekly theme and session activity, there is a subsection with “Gifted and Talented” scaffolds, with guidance and ideas to support student learning. In one of the upward scaffolds, after working with high-frequency words, students create a book with a wider range of words; they use a dictionary to find a word for each letter of the alphabet that they do not already know and learn its definition.

In the “Language and Communication Domain” section of the Teacher Textbook, the teacher chooses from a variety of enrichment activities. For example, after Lesson 3, students complete extension activities in numeracy, curiosity, imagination, natural resources, creativity with open-ended objects, teamwork, literacy, self-reflection, and living things. Many of the activities offer opportunities for children to work together, explore, and apply new learning. For example, students can create visual representations of animals using open-ended objects, use cardboard boxes to model object counting through imaginative play, and work as a team to create a short play using all-imaginary animals and acting out the various parts.

Within the materials’ resources, a “50 Extended Ideas” guide offers activities to extend student learning in areas related to sensory integration, thinking and reasoning, speaking and listening, and visual and auditory support. For example, in a sensory integration activity, students observe and collect insects on a nature walk and use the shapes they see in the insect’s body to create designs. In a thinking and reasoning activity, in a small group setting, students work with various shapes; they order them from smallest to largest, describe them shapes, and relate their size. In a speaking and listening activity, students create a “listening picture”; they follow the teacher’s instructions to complete a drawing. In a visual and auditory extension, students create 3D models of objects to discuss symmetry.

**10.2** Materials provide a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs.

- Materials include a variety of instructional approaches to engage students in mastery of the content.
- Materials support developmentally appropriate instructional strategies.
- Materials support flexible grouping (e.g., whole, small, individual).
- Materials support multiple types of practices (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and provide guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation.

## Partially Meets 1/2

The materials contain various instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests; less material addresses student needs. The materials do provide some variety of instructional approaches to engage students in the mastery of the content. The materials also provide some of the developmentally appropriate instructional strategies. Some of the materials referenced throughout the curriculum are the same since they focus on a chart based on the student's age level. Flexible groupings are evident across the materials, with little evidence of instruction being provided in a one-on-one setting for those students who have different needs. There are some types of practices with guidance and structures to achieve effective implementation.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The lessons incorporate various instructional approaches to engage students by including hands-on activities, concrete practice with manipulatives, purposeful centers that support learning through play, and questions to foster communication that can reinforce and extend learning. During a lesson, the teacher models or demonstrates a new skill or concept. The materials allow students to practice the skill or concept in a variety of group settings, such as whole group, small group, or individual settings. A lesson may begin with the teacher discussing new concepts, move into partner talk for students to reflect on prior knowledge or experiences, and then return to whole group for an activity to practice. At the end of that practice, students may move into a small group or independent activity. At the end of a lesson, students return to whole group to summarize their learning, discuss new concepts, and clear up any remaining misconceptions. For example, in "Brain Sprouts," the materials provide an adult-initiated "Flower Shop" activity for teaching concepts; in the child-initiated "Flower Shop" activity, students use the knowledge they learned to create a class flower shop as a catalyst for role play. This activity incorporates the theme and concepts related to the content and encourages child participation. The teacher asks questions to assess students' prior knowledge about flowers and flower shops, such as how they feel when someone gives them flowers, and then students create their own flowers. While students are creating their flowers, the teacher encourages

them to name their flowers and guides them to think about the materials needed to create a classroom flower shop. This activity demonstrates the teacher using developmentally appropriate strategies by keeping students engaged and working in different types of groups. The teacher works with the whole group, as students discuss what they know about flower shops and how flowers make them feel. This activity also demonstrates how the class transitions into a small group by role-playing. Students also get to work independently and extend their learning when they are creating their own flowers.

In order to ensure lessons are developmentally appropriate, each lesson contains an introductory paragraph that includes materials, questions to ask students, and a description of the lesson; this helps support the teacher in understanding when to use developmentally appropriate strategies to support all learners. At the end of lessons, there is also an “Inclusion” section with reteaching suggestions for students who did not master the lesson and extension suggestions for students who did master the lesson. The curriculum provides teachers with a chart to know what is developmentally appropriate for the child’s age. It includes all the domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and is broken down into two age groups: 30–50 months and 40–60 months. Developmentally appropriate instructional strategies in the curriculum include, but are not limited to, exploration with concrete, hands-on materials. Although the materials contain the “Malleable” center (which has playdough), the “Mark Making” center (which has paint), and other supplies to provide opportunities for students to engage in age-appropriate activities, some instruction focuses instead on flashcards and worksheets. Materials include two student workbooks that contain worksheets; students copy words within dotted lines, color pictures, and write missing letters of the alphabet.

The materials suggest a variety of activities that can be accomplished through different groupings. Large group activities are encouraged to be held on the carpet. The materials provide instructions on how to set up the carpet area so that the teacher can conduct read-alouds, whole group greetings, and music and movement. The materials also suggest keeping the weather and birthday chart in the carpet area to foster group discussions and opportunities for students to express themselves. Some small group activities include the following: students discuss, build their skills, and use new social and emotional skill development vocabulary to create and act out a scene; students engage in small group games targeting literacy skills like letter identification; and students work with partners to build numeracy skills like shape identification and pattern building. Teachers are instructed to make adjustments in a lesson to decide whether an activity should be taught in a collaborative, guided, whole group setting or if the instruction would be better in a small group setting. One area in which the material does not provide support is when working one-on-one.

Materials provide guidance for the effective implementation of a reward chart. Students use their initiative and earn reward time by cleaning up or caring for their environment. Parents are also encouraged to use reward charts to discuss students’ behaviors and responsibilities at home. Thus, the reward chart is an activity with a school-home connection. The activity is effectively implemented when students can explain and use their reward chart at home.

**10.3** Materials include supports for English Learners (EL) to meet grade-level learning expectations.

- Materials must include accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency.
- Materials provide scaffolds for English Learners.
- Materials encourage strategic use of students' first language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development).

## Does Not Meet 0/2

Supports for English Learners (ELs) are limited. The materials state the guidelines, but they do not provide scaffolds or strategies to support students' language development. These guidelines are not commensurate with the various levels of English language proficiency, and few lessons leverage students' first language as a means to develop linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic skills in English.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The lessons covering language and communication make no mention of the English proficiency levels (i.e., Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced High). There are some linguistic accommodation strategies to support English language acquisition, but strategies remain few and general. One of the strategies mentioned throughout the text is to incorporate students' native language by creating flashcards with English on one side and Spanish on the other side; however, flashcards are not developmentally appropriate vocabulary instruction. Materials prominently feature general guidance meant to help teachers understand how ELs communicate and some of the barriers they may face. For example, one piece of guidance states: "ELL children will communicate in different ways as they acquire English. This will begin with various forms of nonverbal communication, for example, pointing or using gestures. Guide children to start using single words, for example, *mine*, *yours*, and *please*." While this example provides a general suggestion, many EL reminders do not. Sometimes suggestions combine ELs with students working below expectations: "ELL students and students working below expectations will need more practice in exercises using the words *before*, *after*, *follows*, *more than*, and *less than*."

In an early lesson under the "Language and Communication Domain," students follow one- to three-step directions, such as counting to three or clapping a certain number of times. The teacher observes students' understanding and takes note of students struggling to understand the oral directions. The materials remind teachers that ELs "may not be able to follow as many instructions as they are learning the language." Students are later placed into mixed ability

groups and get to count in their native language. Students are allowed to use the Spanish language, and the teacher notes which kids understand; however, few specific linguistic accommodations are provided. While ELs are mentioned in this lesson, there is no mention describing how the teacher can intentionally scaffold them beyond flashcards.

Later in this domain, the teacher reads poems from the *Number Poetry* book and then asks students comprehension questions. The teacher has access to ten questions in total; some examples include asking students to describe the characters or explain how they relate to the story. The text states: "Examine whether or not children understood what each other said by asking them to explain what the other students mean in their home language. ELL students may struggle to understand what peers say due to the language barriers." While this statement recognizes a potential challenge ELs may face, it does not include a recommended strategy in response. Next, the teacher explains, "When following directions, it's important to listen carefully to what is being asked and then do what is asked." The materials suggest testing "whether or not students are able to follow multiple-step directions, based on their abilities and accounting for any language barriers that may exist." Guidance remains limited, again remaining at acknowledgment and not moving toward intervention.

In the "Math Domain," students learn how to recognize the value of *one* and *two* as well as the name and how to write the numbers. Teachers are reminded: "Some students, who are not as proficient, will need that extra help with additional teaching strategies to help them become successful"; "Different box configurations will be needed for the different types of learners"; and "As a student becomes more proficient in English, they might have the ability to move into another group. All activities can be adjusted depending on the needs of the students." Like previous lessons, these reminders do not reach the level of specific accommodations or scaffolds necessary for ELs to meet grade-level proficiency. In one activity, students create study flashcards with a combination of words, numbers, pictures, and stickers. Students can write some of the words in their home language, but their language is never used as a means toward English development. The end of the lesson includes a useful reminder: "In addition, the ELL and Intensive students might benefit from songs and rhymes that include number counting. For example, in the playground, if students play hide-and-go-seek, they can count 'One Mississippi, Two Mississippi.'" In this example, however, the materials again combine ELs with students performing below grade level.

**11.1** Materials include year-long plans with practice and review opportunities that support instruction.

- Materials include a cohesive, year-long plan to build students' concept development and consider how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year.
- Materials provides review and practice of mathematical knowledge and skills throughout the span of the curriculum.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not provide year-long plans with practice and review opportunities that support instruction. The materials are not written by unit or theme; instead, they are written by the instructional domain. Opportunities to review material are often limited to the reviewing of flashcards. Additionally, the materials do not provide a cohesive year-long plan to build students' concept development or consider how to vertically align instruction that builds year to year.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

While TPS offers a personalized year planning service, the materials do not include a cohesive, year-long plan covering practice and review opportunities. Within the "Program Resources," the "Blackline Master" in the materials contains a document titled "Year Planner." The Year Planner has the heading "Prekindergarten Year Planner" and a column with months of the year from August to May. The other columns are blank for the teacher to fill out "Class Hours" and "Homework Hours." This year-long planner does not contain information as far as content delivery for each domain. Each domain has a different amount of lessons, ranging from two to ten lessons per domain, and it is unclear when to teach each domain lesson. In the "Teacher's Edition," 10 themes are mentioned (color, animals, houses/homes, ourselves, water, shapes, numbers, health, weather, and dinosaurs), but it is unclear how to use the lessons as a theme or a unit. The materials also include a document titled "Pacing Plan," found in the Program Resources on the Blackline Master. Although this pacing guide includes suggested time constraints, more information is needed for teachers to determine how to teach all prekindergarten guidelines throughout the school year. There is also another document in the "Program Overview" titled "Prekindergarten Skills Long Term Plan." Each page of the Long Term Plan lists all the center areas (e.g., the "Construction" area, the "Malleable" area, the "Math" area) and gives guidance on what to do in that area that supports "A Unique Child," "Positive Relationships," "Enabling Environments," and "Learning and Development." However, the Long Term Plan does not include content delivery for each domain.

The materials provide some teacher guidance for the review and practice of a variety of skills embedded throughout the learning day, such as using the different learning areas. For example,

in the “Sand” area, students can practice math by “counting scoops of sand” and practice alphabet knowledge and writing by “writing letters in the sand.” In the “Craft” area, students can practice math by “patterning and reviewing shapes.” Students can also use the “Science” area to practice “using their five senses to explore a wide range of materials.” Although these areas can be used to review different concepts, the materials rarely mention how or when to change the items in the areas/centers.

The materials sometimes include instruction meant to be used in higher grade levels. For example, in the program introduction, some of the materials listed are “Grade Kindergarten STEM Math Projects” and “Didax Math Manipulatives” lesson plans for pre-k through second grade. The introduction also states that this program has children learn kindergarten language in pre-k to “enhance” the progression from pre-k to kindergarten.

Within the Teacher’s Edition, in the “Scientific Investigation and Reasoning” section, the teacher is guided to view future kindergarten science TEKS, and the materials state “the activities are aligned to the requirements for safety in pre-k and prepare children for their safety work in the TEKS for grades 1 to 4.” The lessons found in “Scientific Investigation and Reasoning” provide a teacher note at the top of the page that reads, “This section helps prepare children for Kb1A, Kb1B, and Kb1C,” referencing kindergarten TEKS. However, the lesson does not include pre-k material, as the vocabulary in the lesson includes *conservation*, *investigation*, *natural resource*, *recycle*, and *reuse*. At times, items such as the “Didax,” the “NEST” videos, and some books in the “Teacher Reader Activity Master” are above pre-k level and not aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

There are some review lessons in which the review does not align with previous lessons. For example, in the “Mathematics Domain,” in Lesson 1, some instruction includes teaching, reviewing, and ideas to review. However, other activities have teachers review and extend learning areas not yet taught. Students count objects such as cars, bikes, trains, and motorcycles. Then they practice counting to five during different daily routines, such as snack time or while in line. The lesson has two songs to practice counting and encourages the teacher to find a CD of counting songs to use during the day. Next in the lesson, students use die-cuts to make numbers 1–10 and then pick numbers to add up to 10. In the next activity, “Number Frieze,” students use cards to make numbers corresponding to dots. All of these lessons and activities provide teacher guidance for review and practice of counting. However, the Number Frieze and Make 10 activities move children into addition, subtraction, *greater than*, and *less than* before reviewing counting from 1 to 30. These concepts have not been taught and are not age-appropriate.

**11.2** Materials include implementation support for teachers and administrators.

- Materials are accompanied by a Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence outlining the essential knowledge and skills that are taught in the program, the order in which they are presented, and how knowledge and skills build and connect across grade levels.
- Materials include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended.
- Materials include resources and guidance to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.
- Materials include a school years' worth of prekindergarten instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not provide a scope and sequence that supports teachers with implementation aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG). Additionally, It is unclear whether there is enough material in the guides to cover a school year's worth of prekindergarten instruction. The materials do not provide evidence about how implementation should occur for students to learn and build knowledge and connections across grade levels. Information is not provided in order for administrators to understand and support curriculum implementation.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not include pacing guidance to indicate the lessons include a full year's worth of pre-k instruction. The number of domain-specific lessons available in the "Teacher's Edition" varies across content areas, and the materials are not written by the unit. At the beginning of the Teacher's Edition, the guidance states the materials cover themes, but the implementation of themes is not consistent throughout the lessons. A specific time for lesson completion is sometimes stated. Most Lessons and activities vary in length, and guidance is not consistently included for teachers to understand how long a particular lesson should take. Therefore, it is unclear what to teach daily, weekly, or monthly for the school year. The materials do provide a document titled "Pacing Plan" that outlines how much time the teacher should spend per week teaching each domain and how much time the students should spend doing homework in that domain. However, within the Teacher's Edition, there is no pacing guidance for the lesson that includes an estimated time for the lesson duration.

The materials do not provide a traditional Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines-aligned scope and sequence that outlines skills taught in the program and how they connect across grade levels. The materials are organized by the order of domains in the TPG. There are other materials in the curriculum, such as "Didax," "Brainsprouts," and "Archway." While some activities are listed

as part of a lesson, others are not. For those not listed as part of a specific lesson, it is unclear how to include them in the curriculum. Lessons in the Teacher's Edition are laid out by domains, each Teacher Edition featuring a list of guidelines targeted in each lesson. For example, math lessons have math guidelines written before the lesson. However, there is no further information to address how the content connects across other grade levels.

The materials do provide a "Correlation" document where each of the TPG can be located within the materials, but this document does not provide the order in which the guidelines are presented or revisited. The top of the Correlations page contains hyperlinks to each of the TPGs for easy access. Each of the TPGs is listed along with the outcome, the page number on which the guideline can be found in the Teacher Edition or other materials, and a hyperlink to the digital content. In addition to this document, the materials include blank templates for the daily schedule, titled "Short Term Plan Blank" and "Long Term Plan Blank." The lessons do not cross over and include a guideline for more than one domain or include a lesson that relates to different parts of a domain in one lesson. For example, in the "Social and Emotional Domain" Lesson 6, it lists part C, "relationships with others," and lists all subsections (1–7). All sections under the subsections relate to one lesson. The beginning of the Teacher's Edition includes "Setting Up a Nursery," which provides information for teachers to use when setting up centers, in this case, referred to as 17 different *areas*. Guidance includes information for teachers to add materials and activities in each area that pertain to the targeted domain, such as math, but include materials that would encourage growth in language, literacy, and physical development. Guidance for how teachers should and can update these centers throughout the year is not evident.

The materials provide some resources and guidance to help teachers implement the materials as intended. For example, some lessons in the Teacher's Edition describe differentiation for students working below, toward, at, and above expectation. However, there are no resources specifically for administrators to support teachers in implementation. The materials do provide a document within the "Starter Kit Manual" and the "Program Summary," titled "How to Use the Program." This document lists all the program materials and explains how to implement the program in steps. Step 1 is "Read and follow the Teacher's Edition content." Step 2 is "Use the student journals in the classroom." Step 3 is "Utilize the handouts provided in the TRAM." The manual continues to explain how lesson plans are set up, what assessments are included, and the activities in Brainsprouts. This document is framed toward teachers and does not connect the different components in a cohesive way for easy implementation.

**11.3** Materials provide implementation guidance to meet variability in programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

- Materials provide guidance for strategic implementation without disrupting the sequence of content that must be taught in a specific order following a developmental progression.
- Materials are designed in a way that allow LEAs the ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The materials do not provide implementation guidance for content that must be taught in a specific order to follow a developmental progression. The lessons in the “Teacher’s Edition” do not provide guidance based on a developmental continuum. The materials included are not all based on prekindergarten levels; other materials listed are only available if additionally purchased. Materials are not designed to allow LEAs the ability to incorporate the curriculum into district, campus, and teacher programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The lessons in the Teacher’s Edition contain wording similar to that of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG) about the things a child needs to learn and know. For example, in the “Math Domain,” Lesson 1, the guidance states the child will rote count from 1 to 30, count up to 10 items, and recognize one-digit numerals. However, the materials do not include information beyond this to guide teachers to follow a continuum within any content area. The materials mention 10 themed topic areas in the introduction of the Teacher’s Edition, but it is unclear how to align the lessons with the themes since the materials are organized by domain. Since there is no included guidance for how to implement the content lessons sequentially, it is unclear whether adjustments would disrupt the content sequence being taught in the classroom. The TPG provides examples of the order or phonological awareness skills and the writing stages; however, the materials do not reference these stages of early child development in phonological awareness or writing.

The materials do not include clear examples of lesson implementation that can be adapted for full- and half-day programs. In the Teacher’s Edition, there are domain-specific lessons that feature a list of TPG at the beginning of each lesson, but the type of program (full- or half-day) is not referenced. The materials include a daily sample schedule in the Teacher’s Edition, but the times provided for the different activities do not align with TPG. The additional curriculum supplements, like the “Didax” and “Teacher Reader Activity Master,” reference alignment to grades other than pre-k.

“Student Journals” include lesson plans with narratives and activities for teachers, parents, and students. While these can be taught in such a way to meet variability in programmatic design, they lack the necessary guidance for strategic implementation.

**11.4** Materials provide guidance on fostering connections between home and school.

- Materials support development of strong relationships between teachers and families.
- Materials specify activities for use at home to support students' learning and development.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

Within the materials, guidance on fostering connections between home and school is limited or not present at all. The materials provide a limited amount of information about building strong relationships between teachers and families. Of the activities mentioned, few provide extensive details, making it unclear how to support students' learning and development. In other cases, topics of discussion were inappropriate.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide limited information for parents under the headings "Every Parent Matters" and "Every Child Matters." These sections are usually found at the end of the lessons. They usually consist of one or two sentences of information. Typically, these sections suggest topics of discussion for parents and their children. For example, in Lesson 9 of the "Language and Communication Domain," "Alphabet Freeze," Every Parent Matters recommends students bring in an object from home beginning with a specific letter. For Every Child Matters, the materials recommend discussing with students that knowing the alphabet will help them learn to read and write. The activities are appropriate for students, but guidance is not extended or recommended throughout all lessons in each content domain. In the "Science Domain," Lesson 6, Every Parent Matters encourages students to discuss the life cycle of a frog with their parents or, if possible, to visit a local pond. As Lesson 6 continues, it states that students can share learning with their parents and find simple ways of encouraging animals into their own gardens. However, these suggestions do not state how to ensure children remember to discuss these items with parents. These suggestions do build connections between the student and parent, but they do not connect the teacher and parent.

Some of the discussion topics in the materials provide suggestions for at-home activities that are not developmentally appropriate topics. For example, in the "Social Studies Domain," materials instruct the teacher: "Discuss with the students that the United States is a wealthy country with good access to education and health services. Compare this to the situation in many developing countries." The materials include parents in the discussion at home, having the student ask their parents what they feel about being a US citizen. "Do they like living in the U.S.A.? What do they like most about it?"

The materials include inconsistent online access to resources for parents to work with their children on specific skills. No materials are available in any language other than English, and resources that are included for at-home activities cannot be used easily by families.

**11.5** The visual design of student and teacher materials (whether in print or digital) is neither distracting nor chaotic.

- Materials include appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning.
- Pictures and graphics are supportive of student learning and engagement without being visually distracting.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

The visual design of the student and teacher materials do not support learning. The materials do not use appropriate white space, and they distract from student learning. The pictures and graphics are not supportive of student learning and engagement.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher’s Edition” can be navigated online using the clickable tabs, zooming tool, and search button. The print version of the Teacher’s Edition does not have any tools for easy navigation, such as tabs or color-coding. The materials do not include graphic features, such as italicized text, for teachers to understand what is guidance for the teacher and what text is to be read as a script while implementing the lesson. Any questions are written within the lessons; while some form of questioning is offered in most lessons, it is not in a consistent place within each lesson. The materials do not adhere to the “User Interface Design” guideline of “Consistency and Standard;” books used to find certain topics are inconsistent. The materials also do not follow the standard of “aesthetic and minimalist design,” as pages in the Teacher Reader Activity Master (TRAM) ask students various questions on the same page, such as “check the box,” “write the word,” “color the picture,” and “draw a picture,” and leave minimal white space for students to work.

There are over 25 ebooks, and all feature cartoons, including the one nonfiction text about firefighters. The students use these books to answer questions throughout their reading. However, these books require reading complete sentences and questions, which are not developmentally appropriate for prekindergarten students. These ebooks can only be used with the support of an adult. For example, in “Student Journal 1,” students must “Look at the picture” and answer the question, “What color is his tractor?” While there are provided tramlines, the teacher still needs to assist in reading the questions and writing the answer *green*. Because these ebooks are written like workbooks, these are not considered developmentally appropriate based on the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (TPG).

The materials provide some authentic pictures, but they do not align with the lesson themes. The pictures and graphics within the Teacher’s Edition and TRAM do not support student

learning, as they ask students to fill in the blank, draw in minimal white space, and check boxes. The materials include a section called “Photographs,” which features 36 saved Google photo searches related to topics like animals in water, skies, and patterns. However, many of these photo albums are not developmentally appropriate for pre-k. For example, two albums—“Systems and Models” and “Structures and Functions”—feature photos like engines, x-rays, and computer parts. Materials provide no guidance for the teacher on how to use these photo albums. Other materials beyond the “Photographs” section of the curriculum are cartoon representations. While a 20-point font is used in student journals, and most pages have few words, some associated photos are not easy to identify for children. For example, in the “Olympic Games” in Student Journal 1, students are shown a picture of a child in a wheelchair who is supposed to be fencing. Fencing is not a familiar topic of interest according to the TPG.