

December 2020

# TPS STEAM Themes 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 do not utilize high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration. They somewhat support developmentally appropriate practice across all content domains.
- Materials do not fit within a developmentally appropriate programmatic structure. They include some detailed guidance that supports the teacher's delivery of instruction.
- Some child development research supports the materials, but it does not span all domains, content, or skills.

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

- Materials include some 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 include some strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs) in their development of English language skills and developmentally appropriate content knowledge; however, they do not include guidance on effectively incorporating strategies into the lessons.

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

- Materials provide some opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, including through authentic text conversations.
- Materials provide some explicit 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; however, limited support and guidance is offered to teachers.
- Materials include some strategies to support ELs with their reading skills; however, the materials do not give guidance to teachers to use the child's primary language as a means to support learning English.

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

- Materials 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 do not follow a logical mathematical continuum of concrete, pictorial, then abstract representations, but students do have practice opportunities with each.

- Materials provide some activities that 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, though children have the opportunity to practice across concepts and skills.

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

- Materials 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 limited fine arts opportunities through exploration.
- Materials provide some opportunities to link technology into the classroom experience or to 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 do not include 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 include minimal 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. 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 neither distracting nor chaotic; however, it can be challenging to use.

## **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

The materials consist of 13 thematic units containing specific, purposeful, and intentional cross-curricular connections creating a unified experience for the students. Each theme contains several activities that connect to the central theme, and often they contain cross curricular activities within a lesson. However, there is no clear guidance for teachers on using the activities throughout the school day. Multiple activities support the theme, but the program does not give explicit connections to Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, providing the domain, skill, and intended outcome.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide lessons that integrate multiple developmental domains organized around a common theme to support children's abilities to build background knowledge, make connections, and explore concepts in a variety of ways. The beginning of each thematic unit lists all specific skills that will be practiced throughout the one- to five-week unit. However, individual lessons and activities do not state the intended learning domains or cross-curricular skills reinforced. The "Correlations Guide" connects activities to Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, but it does not include integration and connection information about multiple domains.

In Theme C, "Weather," activities support connected learning across the literacy, science, and math domains. In the activity, "Windy Sentences, Blow that Word Away," the children segment sentences into words and then blend the words back together to make sentences. This activity integrates weather-related science knowledge and developing oral language skills as they recite the sentences orally. In another lesson in this theme, "Counting Raindrops," children place an ice cube in a bag and angle it over a container. They count the drops of water as they fall, connecting scientific observation practice with counting skills. While these lessons make specific

cross-content connections, the materials do not clearly identify the specific guideline skills they address.

In Theme K, “My Community,” students develop skills in the Social and Emotional, Writing and Language and Communication domains during the activity, “My Letter.” Students role play mailing and receiving a letter from a postal worker. Following a class discussion practicing speaking and listening skills, the children write a letter to a class friend. Through this activity, they develop their social studies understanding of community roles while connecting to the literacy domain.

In Theme L, “Music, Movement, and Dance,” the teacher uses cross-curricular connections during a three-week unit incorporating drama and music to review concepts learned during the year. However, the materials are not specific about what skills were previously taught. The teacher leads the students through the song *Thirty Birds* several times during the unit to support rote counting. The students use drums to determine the number of syllables in a word. The teacher reads *The Sunny Trails PreKindergarten Class Puts on a Show* and then leads the students through several activities such as rhyming, shared writing, creating costumes, and putting on a show for their families.

**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.

### Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials do not meet this indicator of utilizing high-quality texts as a core component of content and skill integration. Although the materials include 28 texts, these do not consistently serve as a foundation for skill development across domain areas.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

All of the books are provided in a digital format and located in the “Reader Book Library” section. The content of the books is directly related to the 13 themes and written by a single author, Dr. Jane Willoughby. There are no books aligned to Theme D, “Seasons.” All read-aloud books relate to the fictional class of the “Sunny Trails Preschool.” The characters in this book series include animals with human characteristics and some human characters. The students are Alice Golden, a member of the royal family; Juan Stegos, a dinosaur that lives in a stone house on a farm with his family; Bella, a bee that lives in a golden hive with her family; Max Twig, a beaver whose mother is the class teacher; Jun Hee-sun, a bear that lives in a cave; and Ann, Joshua, and Joseph, human children, who live with their foster parents.

The books are designed to highlight one or more topics included in the thematic unit. The first week of instruction follows the week-long unit, “The Kingdom of Color: My First Week in Prekindergarten,” and includes two read-aloud texts. The first book, *The Pledge of Allegiance*, provides background information about how to stand and say the pledges. This book aligns with one of the five objectives of the thematic unit, “Each child should recognize the Pledge of Allegiance and have a basic understanding of its meaning.” The teacher reads the book, and then line by line, recites the US pledge and Texas pledge in a teacher modeled, children repeat fashion. On the next day, students create a flag. Additionally, as part of this activity, the class studies the pledge of allegiance, and it is explained to children that “It is a way of saying ‘thank you’ and showing ‘respect’ for the country that we all live in. We are thankful for our freedom.” The teacher then explains what freedom is, and the children discuss the pledge and meaning. While these activities support both social studies and fine arts, the materials do not always reference the book as the foundation for learning across all activities.

The second book in this week-long unit, *The Kingdom of Color* by Dr. Jane Willoughby, introduces students to the characters present in the "Imaginary Kingdom" and "Ms. Twig's prekindergarten class." The book is read, and the teacher leads a short discussion before the children tour their own prekindergarten classroom. This text does not serve as a foundation for this theme, as it does not span multiple lessons or across multiple content domains.

Theme B includes two books, *Camping in the Forest* and *The Lonely Porcupine*. *Camping in the Forest* focuses on when Ms. Twig's prekindergarten classroom takes a camping trip to the Imaginary Kingdom. Each pair of pages tells one of five distinct scenes in the story: discussing packing for the camping trip, taking a hike through the forest, having s'mores, telling stories around a campfire, and then cleaning up the campsite. There is print on one side, a picture on the other, resulting in five snippets of their trip; This structure makes the story disjointed. The lesson is meant to occur within one "Circle Tile," and after reading, students participate in a short discussion about items each would take on a camping trip. This discussion is quickly followed by a math activity in which children count items on the board. Extension and practice ideas are included at the end of the lesson, where students count items packed. This learning is then reinforced through to the next circle or small group learning period. *Camping in the forest* is used again for the activity *Forest Discovery*, where students practice again utilizing music and movement.

The second book in this unit, *The Lonely Porcupine*, is read at snack time. Children follow this reading with a snack activity to create a snack of cocoa powdered marshmallows with pretzel quills (spines). As the children create their snacks, there is a discussion about the porcupine not having friends. The wise owl befriended him and told him others were afraid of his quills. The porcupine then cut his quills and had many friends. This story reinforces the fact that it does not matter what an individual looks like to have friends. The teachers are directed from this section to the activity "Camping with Kindness," where the discussion can be continued, and the theme of kindness is introduced.

Later in Theme F, "My Family and Me," the students meet the Trunk family, a fictional family of elephants that arrive at Sunny Trails from Africa. In the read-aloud book, *The Trunks Join Sunny Trails Preschool*, written by Dr. Jane Willoughby, the children learn about the continent of Africa, its 54 countries and their flags, as well as African animals and products. Activities associated with this book support some content and skill development in multiple domains. Content related to this text includes Geography through looking at maps and science, the rotation of the earth around the sun, and an understanding of day and night, as well as adaptation to environments, animals of Africa then used in a music and movement period, and flags of Africa. Students then complete activities around animal noises and movements in their music and movement period. The text is utilized for discussing emotions such as feeling new to the class.

**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 but do not support a balance of direct teacher-led instruction and student choice. Teacher guidance explains how to connect some domains to play. It provides recommendations on how to set up and facilitate learning centers. However, often these learning centers lack a purposeful focus.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The guidance explains how to set up a classroom that is supportive of teaching and learning in a positive atmosphere. Purposefully planned activities integrate large group, small group, and independent practice. However, teachers do not have access to research-based information that supports the importance of play. Information describing the gradual release model is mentioned in the “Introduction” section: “This curriculum adopts the developmental perspective of ‘gradual release,’ highlighted in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, in order to serve children better as they educationally evolve at different rates. In most areas of the curriculum, key skills and concepts are introduced gradually, initially through demonstration and then scaffolded practice using different settings leading to the objective of the child working more independently. This provides a balance of teaching strategies, beginning with direct instruction and finishing with indirect instruction with gentle monitoring and guidance.” Outside of this summary, there is little additional information to ensure teachers understand the gradual release model.

The learning centers continuously evolve throughout the year as the thematic units change. These changes focus on designated skills rather than a purposeful play objective. Some of the

activities include primarily tracing worksheets rather than playful experiences or exploration. However, the Introduction section does include a “Centers” materials list, describing items that support appropriate play and exploration. For example, in Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” the “Construction Center” includes building blocks so students can create different buildings. It is recommended that the teacher include twigs and branches to support the camping theme. Additionally, the teacher creates a log cabin display for the center as a prompt for building but; However, clearer instruction beyond this is not included.

During large group and small group instruction, children engage in various activities that allow for some playful engagement as they practice skills. In Theme C, “Weather,” whenever the teacher introduces the new number of the week, children play a game practicing counting items and focusing on the last number counted. Additionally, the “Extension and Practice” section of the lesson tells teachers to facilitate counting practice “anytime there are items that can be counted, and taught using gradual release.” The gradual release model, while introduced early in the Teacher Edition, is not described in the initial lesson or the extension. Both activities are teacher-led and provide minimal choice for students. In the “Science” center, the children experiment with a thermometer to see what happens when the thermometer is on cold and hot items.

In Theme I, “Health and Fitness,” the teacher reads the book *Inside My Body* by Dr. Jane Willoughby. Before reading, the teacher asks the question, “What do you think is inside your body?” As the children respond, the teacher draws a child-outline on the board using their responses. In the book, students learn about different parts of their bodies. Each time a body part is described in the book, the teacher draws the body part in a new color on the physical outline. The teacher then shares an anatomy doll and discusses the different organs, placing the doll in the Science center when finished. Following this teacher-directed activity, there is also a center activity where they practice placing pictures of the organs at the correct site. Additionally, a series of lessons and center activities are a mix of teacher-led and more student purposeful play, for example, blowing bubbles to show how breathing works and the children create a meal of their own choice using the food pyramid and making the food items out of modeling clay.. Later in the theme, children explore being a doctor or vet in the “Pretend and Learn” center. This activity is loosely related to the theme. However, in the “Writing” Center, children use pictures to create compound words that are not connected to the theme.

In a later example, the teacher explains important rules for safety in Theme K, “My Community.” Students discuss who is a stranger and who are people we can trust. The lesson includes suggestions for the teacher to use in her explanation, as well as what to say for safety tips. However, the heavy script results in a heavy teacher-directed lesson, and students never get the opportunity for guided or independent practice.

**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 materials do not refer to clear differentiation for various age groups. While it is not required to design instruction specifically for three-year-old children, overall, there is a lack of clear differentiation based on development level. The only indication is that the materials are designed to help children “prepare for Kindergarten.” Additionally, there is a suggested full-day schedule, but there is not a provided half-day schedule or suggestions for schedule flexibility.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Program Introduction Letter” states that the curriculum is hands-on, recognizing that three- and four-year-olds have a short attention span. Seated times should be limited, considering students this age are full of energy, and sitting still for long periods can be difficult or even counterproductive. This information appears to indicate that the program is designed for both three- and four-year-olds, but there is no clear evidence that the lessons and activities are designed for one or both of these specific age groups. The materials include “Extension and Practice” sections that mostly suggest extending activities across several circle periods. Additional “Scaffolded Challenge” sections offer activities to extend the original lesson; however, no suggestions describe how to differentiate the lesson to meet specific learning styles or developmental needs.

There is an included suggested schedule for full-day instruction consisting of five hours and 20 minutes. This schedule can be adapted slightly depending on the exact length of each day. Daily lessons are broken down into time for read alouds, “Circle Time,” “Center Time,” and “Movement and Music” time. However, there is no mention of supplementary lessons. The themed units, or “Themes,” usually span one to five weeks. They include a list of activities used

within the unit, but they do not include a daily or weekly overview to help teachers make instructional decisions for the program.

In Theme C, “Weather,” some scaffolding suggestions are included within lessons. For example, the students participate in two scaffolded activities to develop fine motor skills. The reading and writing section includes a scaffolded activity using the child’s name to teach letter recognition, letter-sound production, as well as name writing. This unit also included activities to teach skills like deconstructing and reconstructing sentences, in which there is no evidence of scaffolding.

Theme G, “The World Around Me,” includes activities listed as scaffolded challenges; however, they do not include clear scaffolding opportunities. These activities include pretend shopping, making simple words with magnetic letters, determining the number of syllables in a word, and building a block tower to 20 cm. The pretend shopping activity offers two levels of scaffolds. The first level includes role play of shopping with the teacher and children together with shopping items that have been left out. The second involves the children setting up their own shop and playing shopping with each other. In this activity, the practice of social conversation skills is stressed.

**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**

Some included teacher guidance promotes student development and proficiency of the prekindergarten skills. However, the information is often general and lacking in specificity. For these reasons, sometimes teacher delivery of instruction fails to connect students' prior knowledge to new learning. That being said, many times, guidance offers explicit teacher and student suggestions.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Under the "An Integrated Approach in Education" section, the "Introduction" area states how children who are exposed to STEM and STEAM in early childhood, through a hands-on-approach, are positively inclined toward these disciplines as they progress up the educational ladder. Activities that promote early excitement in these areas can only enhance a child's development in preparation for kindergarten. Lessons include some instructional strategy suggestions to achieve this goal; however, most lessons are limited to just one suggestion.

In Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," children practice counting items up to four. Using the "Kinesthetic, Tactile, Auditory, Vocal, and Visual" (KTAVV) strategy, the teacher leads students through a counting activity where they repeatedly count multiple items. Following provided guidance, the teacher states, "items counted can be counted in any order, and the final number counted is..." This activity provides students space to practice counting, and the teacher explains the purpose of counting. Teacher instructions include: "Explain that the order of counting is always the same. Counting four bricks uses the same method as counting four pom poms. Then mix the items up, count four items out, and show that the order remains the same. Share the pages of the Book of Numbers with them and count to four with the book." To support the purpose of counting, the teacher explains that knowing how many items or things

there are can be important. For example, would they be happier with zero, one, or four cookies if they are hungry? Then, the teacher divides the children into groups of two and provides them with different items to count. Each group counts out four of the same item and then counts together as a class. Then, ask the group to count out four mixed items, and again count together. The teacher does not reference future learning or past understandings. Children who are not proficient in counting are encouraged to count again without additional recommended strategies. Children who are competent in counting are not challenged to count other amounts. This lesson structure fails to offer effective strategies that integrate previous learning experiences, and it fails to provide differentiation addressing individual student needs.

In Theme G, “The World Around Me,” the teacher places items in the center and models a shopping experience. She uses sticky notes to add the price for each item and writes a sample shopping list on the board. The teacher and children role-play shopping, checking out, and leaving a store. The main scaffold, however, is a general reminder of the shopping list on the board. Within this activity, there is a section called “Let's Play Shop,” where the children are told that they need one token per item. They are guided on the role of the shopper and the person at the checkout. The role of community helpers is also discussed to make connection opportunities. In another themed activity, groups of children use cardboard boxes to create a house. The practice extension for this lesson is to “continue to decorate and play in the house” as part of center time. Though this is additional learning time, there is no change in the instructional strategies to enhance learning.

While the guidance is limited, the chosen theme topics are interesting and engaging for children. By organizing themes around interesting topics, teachers have more opportunities to integrate background knowledge into instruction. If they take this initiative, it could support student development and offer a deeper foundation for knowledge. Still, most of this responsibility is placed in the hands of the teacher. Prior to reading a thematic book in Theme H, “Living Things,” students discuss the topic using a chart clarifying living versus nonliving things. Several related activities are interesting and engaging for prekindergarten children, potentially expanding their knowledge of living and nonliving things. The students practice beginning sounds using pictures of animals, solve simple addition and subtraction problems using farm animal toys, observe pillbugs, and observe the butterfly life cycle. However, many of these activities focus on science, and there are limited teacher supports explaining the other domain relationships. Teachers receive a limited understanding of how thematic lessons relate to the phonological awareness continuum, stages of writing development, and the scope and sequence of math development.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

There is a bibliography of eight research references used to support lesson development within and across all domains. However, the research does not span the complete breadth of instructional topics, nor does it explain how to apply learnings for student success. It is unclear whether the cited references are timely, current, reputable, or applicable to Texas-specific context and demographics; the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines are the most notable source.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials indicate that the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines are addressed across all learning. However, the lessons do not clearly identify individual guidelines of focus. The “Correlations” tab is linked to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines Standards, but there are no additional early childhood development or curriculum research citations. There is no bibliography for the two authors cited in the materials, but there is a bibliography for the additional “Blackline Master” resource.

There is a provided general explanation of how instruction aligns to relevant child development research. This explanation covers how the program addresses Personal, Social, and Emotional Development; Communication, Language and Literacy; Numeracy; Executive Functioning; and Exploration Through the Five Senses. However, the explanations are limited in their description; they do not include citations, footnotes, or provided linked connecting commentary to the academic knowledge for each topic.

When considering student activities, current research does not always support the practices included across instruction. For example, worksheets are used heavily in the math and writing centers, rather than utilizing concrete math manipulatives or interactive writing for authentic purposes. Additionally, the materials encourage the use of flashcards for vocabulary development rather than a multimodal approach to oral language development.

The materials focus on project-based STEAM learning, stating: “Research has shown that children, who are exposed to STEM and STEAM in early childhood through a hands-on-approach, are positively inclined toward these disciplines as they progress up the educational ladder.” A bibliography does not clarify the research foundation for this statement. Cited research that is included in the bibliography is dated from 2002 to 2018, with most references being at least eight years old. The most recent research, “Implementing STEAM in the Early Childhood Classroom,” by Nancy Dejarnette, focuses on teacher reluctance when implementing a STEAM approach in the classroom. This research does not address the effectiveness of a STEAM instructional approach.

**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.

## Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide lessons that explicitly teach each skill within the social and emotional development domain of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines supporting children’s development of self-concept, self-regulation, relationships with others, and social awareness skills. The materials contain lessons that support introducing and demonstrating social and emotional competencies.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Included in the “Teacher Curriculum Textbook,” Part 1, “Prekindergarten STEAM Themes—Correlations,” the “Proclamation 2021 Correlations to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines” includes 10 “Domains” tabs. The introduction to “Personal Social and Emotional Development” provides a description of ways for the teacher to support children’s engagement, such as supporting students trying new things, working and playing with others, showing and discussing feelings, and being aware of their own bodies and personal space as well as how their behavior impacts others.

The Teacher Curriculum Textbook, Part 2, contains lessons to directly teach each skill within the social and emotional development domain of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Examples of teacher modeling and students practicing these skills are found in Theme B, “The Kingdom of Color: Camping in the Forest.” The teacher models how to express emotions with actions, words, and visuals. Students are given scenarios and identify emotions using emoji cards. Then, students are divided into learning groups to practice the concepts taught: expressing emotions, being kind, and using *please* and *thank you*. In Theme K, “The Kingdom of Color: Election,” the teacher models how to express emotional control and empathy if students do not win their

choice in the classroom election. Emoji cards are used to help students identify *sad*, *angry*, and *mad*. Students practice “good examples of behavior if the vote decision reflects or does not reflect their choice.”

In Theme F, “The Kingdom of Color: My Family and Me,” a lesson on self-regulation includes a note for the teacher: “The children will get very excited about this activity and may want to keep certain roles and not share.” Materials suggest that this is an “opportunity to remind the children to be kind and take turns in the different roles.” The only direct example of reinforcing the concept of self-regulation is to offer compliments, such as “I can see that Tom is using words of kindness—well done, Tom! Sarah has shared the role of ticket collector with Ben—well done, Sarah!” In this example, the teacher models and students demonstrate desired behaviors.

The materials explain that the texts serve as the foundation for each theme and are written by one of the curriculum designers, Dr. Jane Willoughby. They are correlated to the “Kingdom of Learning” and its characters—human and animal families of different types. The author has written about families that represent different types of families found in society. Alice Golden has a royal family with a mother, father, sister, and brother; Juan Stegos live on a farm with his family; Bella Bee lives with her family in a hive; Max Twig is a beaver whose mother is a prekindergarten teacher; and Jun Hee-sun is a bear who lives with his mother and father. The human family has three foster children with a mother and a father.

The materials use the texts to present common scenarios that most pre-k students will experience during the school year. Scenarios include an elephant family moving into the community; a porcupine who does not have friends because they are afraid of his spikes; and Spike, who learns how to have patience as he waits for Owl to get Thanksgiving dinner ready to eat. The characters in the story exhibit emotions, and the teacher elaborates on these emotions during the lessons. Emotional vocabulary is used throughout the text and lessons. The lessons promote equity and respect for all. Materials support students in practicing social skills through song, dance, and play, where students interact with their classmates. All books are illustrated, and they do not include photos of children. The books represent children of different cultures through illustrations. Texts have characters with ethnic names such as Juan Stegos, Jun-Lee Bear, and Bella Bee; however, texts do not provide cultural and ethnic activities and materials. The animated pictures are engaging and relevant for pre-k students. Read-aloud picture books are used to enhance the lessons and emphasize social situations. The teacher uses the stories to make relevant connections to social topics, even though the textbooks lack culturally relevant, realistic photos.

Within the supplemental materials, there is a list of additional books to reinforce or extend skill development. The materials include a checklist assessment for teacher use to support teacher documentation of developing skills. This two-page checklist provides for beginning-of-the-year, middle-of-the-year, and end-of-the-year data collection of 20 social and emotional development indicators. The competencies evaluated are self-concept skills, self-regulation skills, relationships with others, and social awareness. These are directly related to the four

components listed within Domain 1 of “Social Emotional Development” in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

**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

The materials include opportunities for students to practice social skills in a variety of activities throughout the day. Social skills that are embedded in content-specific lessons have limited integration with the content domains. Materials' main integration of social skills into content domains is via reminders, rather than through lessons in which students use social skills when working with others. There is some guidance for the teacher to implement the effective use of positive encouragement.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials allow for student practice of social skills throughout the day with limited social skills integration in the content-specific lessons. The materials do provide some opportunities for the children to practice and apply social skills of self-regulation, self-concept, relationships with others, and social awareness throughout the day as described in the "Teacher Curriculum Textbook," Part 1, "Classroom Management and Executive Functioning Skills." The examples provided are reviewing the schedule, rules, and the center expectations with the children, as well as the use of a "four point model" of overlapping skills, including attentional control, cognitive flexibility, goal setting, and informational processing.

The instructional materials are thematically designed so that lessons highlight multiple domains as well as the development of social skills. An example of this is in Theme K, "My Community," a social studies lesson in which the students explore voting by filling in a ballot about a snack choice. Prior to revealing the voting results, the teacher guides the students through an activity on managing emotions. The teacher discusses how students should behave if their snack is chosen, handling disappointment, and showing empathy. The students then continue the social studies lesson to tally their votes. Students practice counting skills as they remove the ballots and make tally marks on a graph to find their vote results.

Most lessons include suggestions and materials to practice and reinforce skills with a variety of methods. After each lesson, students practice the social concept. They are gradually released to centers that are equipped with materials needed for self-exploration and practice. During a lesson on rules and courtesy words found in Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” the teacher models how some students may use sign language to express themselves. Materials suggest practicing this activity during several “Circle” periods and throughout the day. Students are taught to use courtesy words such as *please*, *thank you*, *may I*, and *excuse me*. Students are encouraged to use words and signs when they are working with others during center time.

Theme B teaches kindness and the respect for personal boundaries. The teacher provides a definition with examples of kind acts. Students use emoji cards to identify how they would feel if “their friend was kind to them”; “they were left out of a play activity”; “they were pushed or shoved when seated or lining up.” Students are directed to look at someone’s face and eyes to identify their emotion and practice this skill by making an unhappy face, an angry face, and a happy face. The lesson continues with opportunities for students to practice saying *please* and *thank you*. In another lesson within this theme, students are asked to share their thoughts, be kind to others, and to take turns. These actions occur during an art activity. The only variation provided to teachers is to divide this lesson into several parts and have students give examples of when a friend was kind to them at “Closing Time.”

Theme G, “The Words Around Me,” includes an activity to teach self-concept skills, focusing on students having a reasonable opinion of their own abilities. In this lesson, student pairs use materials to build a house; students receive the instructions that their house will be “tested for its ability to stay standing on the wobble table and to withstand wind from the hairdryer.” Materials state: “This is an opportunity for the children to show initiative and feel good about their achievements.” Specific questioning techniques or supports are provided to the teacher, and students are encouraged to work interdependently, only asking for help if needed. Afterward, students discuss common elements of structures that stood the test of the wobbling table and the wind from the hairdryer.

The materials provide some indirect guidance to support the teacher in building responsive interpersonal relationships with children to support their dispositions to learn and emerging abilities. The “Classroom Structure and Management” section in each theme provides general directions for helping students become aware of their body in space and respect personal boundaries as well as for gently reminding students to follow class rules. There is a “Social, Emotional, Language, and Communication” section in Theme A, written in narrative form, which gives some suggestions for building responsive interpersonal relationships with children to support their dispositions to learn.

Although most lessons are designed for direct instruction in a large group, the materials do include some lessons that are first introduced in a large group and then practiced in small groups. An example is a lesson in Theme F, “My Family and Me.” The teacher uses emoji cards to

guide students to understand the feelings of others and show empathy to a new friend. After the large group lesson, students practice in small groups: One student pretends to be a new student, and the remaining students in the group practice using kind words and actions to make the “new” student feel welcomed. Additionally, students are reminded “of the importance of speaking clearly and in full sentences, so passengers understand (them).” In another example, during a lesson on rules (i.e., when to use *excuse me*), the teacher models how some students may use sign language to express themselves. Materials suggest practicing this activity in several Circle periods and throughout the day.

There is little evidence of social skills lessons directly embedded across content domains. Materials include teacher guidance on reminding students of the expected social behaviors. The supportive information suggests that the teacher tap the child on the shoulder twice and then correct the child’s behavior or ask the child about his feelings.

**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

The materials provide some guidance on classroom arrangement; however, they do not address ways to set up the classroom to promote positive social interactions. Materials provide suggestions for the types of areas that should be included in the classroom design. Direct statements related to positive social interactions are limited; teachers must infer the relationship between room arrangement and the promotion of social interactions among students to address social skill development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher Curriculum Textbook” provides information to support “Setting Up and Managing the Classroom.” Materials guide the teacher to set up a safe, comfortable, and positive environment, balancing active and restful spaces for children. Attention to social skills development is not specifically mentioned. Resources were not found to aid the teacher in identifying areas of the room designated for students to practice positive social skills on a daily basis. The materials describe large group lessons based on the recommended class size of 11:1.

The “Introduction,” “Section 3.1,” “Creating a Positive and Organized Working Space and Traffic Flow” mentions that all areas must be clearly defined and organized; the teacher must consider traffic flow, aesthetic appeal, and developmental appropriateness. Materials provide notes such as the following: “Decorating the classroom for each of the 13 themes can keep the children engaged and inspired in their learning.” Materials guide the teacher to do a walk-through of the

area to consider traffic flow and potential problems; however, there is no specific guidance on potential issues or how to solve them. To assist with children's social and self-regulation skills, "Managing Children's Ability to Focus" states: "Large group instruction periods may be difficult to manage for more than 10-15 minutes at the beginning of the year, so plan accordingly, and break these planned activities into smaller portions until the children are able to focus for 15-20 minutes."

The teacher sets up the classroom prior to the students' arrival. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to "take ownership for general classroom rules." One suggestion is included at the beginning of the year, in Unit 1, Theme A My First Week in Prekindergarten, the children work with the teacher, in a guided manner, to develop a set of classroom rules. The materials provide general statements about the importance of a "well laid out and organized classroom space"; "getting to know each child's capabilities and skills" and then planning accordingly; and a "well organized schedule" for students to rely on. There are some suggestions for classroom arrangement. For example, the Teacher Edition outlines specific areas to set up in the classroom, identifies factors to consider to ensure effective use of space, and provides guidance on making sure that the space provides for sensory and cultural experiences. The materials do not provide diagrams or examples to aid the novice teacher in a classroom arrangement. There is no mention of the importance of classroom arrangement in directly encouraging or supporting teacher-student or student-student interactions. In fact, the materials state that the teacher should set up centers that allow students to work independently without the teacher's support. Many of the thematic units include a center checklist and reminders for the teacher to model appropriate use of materials for students who are not using them properly. The teacher is to provide an example: "If you do not feel a friend is sharing, use your words to tell them how you feel such as, 'Please stop, do not grab the things I am working with.'"

At the beginning of each thematic unit, materials provide general information on social interaction. For example, in Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," the teacher uses a teddy bear to model appropriate ways to enter a center where another child is playing and ask to join in. The teacher tells children to respect the other child's choice, even if they say no. The teacher explains that if she comes up and taps students on the shoulder, she is guiding them in the appropriate behavior. The teacher provides an example, whispering, "You need to play more quietly." Also, in Theme A, the materials guide the teacher to provide a visual daily schedule, which is reviewed at the "Morning Circle Time." The materials suggest examples: a smiley face for arrival and greeting and a circle for Circle Time.

The materials provide minimal resources to support teachers as they encourage students to develop positive social interactions. In one lesson within Theme C, "Weather," the teacher prepares to work with a small group of two students by gathering two computers/pads. The teacher then guides the students as they use a computer drawing app to create rainbows. The lesson states this example as a collaboration between the students and the teacher. The materials guide teachers in supporting and including social interactions within the lessons and activities with scripted text and responses. In a whole group lesson, using *My Alphabet*

*Notebook*, the teacher asks each child to say their name as they present their notebooks to the class. If a child is nervous, the teacher is directed to sit with them while they present. There are small group and whole group activities throughout this curriculum. However, some of the activities are only listed by name. Teachers are asked to locate lessons elsewhere in the materials. For example, this theme contains a reading and writing lesson that introduces the letters *o*, *u*, and *b*. The lesson states that “the recommended activities listed above (A-G), are detailed in the Introduction Section 4.1.” Effective implementation of the lessons is difficult due to the need to search for additional information in other areas of the materials.

Support of children’s positive interactions can be found in Theme G, “The World Around Me,” in the lesson “Let’s Play Shop!” Students take turns at the checkout counter while others are at the shop shelves; in this activity, students have specific roles that foster their social skills. In Theme K, “My Community,” in the lesson “Put Out That Fire!” students work as a team to put out a pretend fire.

Additional resources included in the curriculum are emoji cards in the blackline masters materials. These additional resources are mentioned in various lessons as tools the teacher can use to teach feelings, emotions, and empathy. Additional tools for teaching are read-aloud books. Other than the stories themselves, the books reviewed do not include materials on supporting or enhancing children’s development of social skills. Stories with social skills content are *The Lonely Porcupine*, on how to be a friend; *When Is Thanksgiving Dinner?* on patience; *The Trunks Join Sunny Trails Preschool*, on acceptance; *The Twigs Build a Tree House for Sunny Trails Preschool*, on decision making and teamwork.

**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 include multiple opportunities for children to develop motor skills through movement, though daily opportunities are not evident. Gross motor and fine motor skills are included during large and small group activities. Fine motor skill development is limited, with skills mostly related to handwriting skills.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include activities promoting child movement to develop gross motor and fine motor skills. These activities are integrated into the lessons, center time, and outdoor activities. In the thematic units, children use their body to make the letter of the day, dance and sing along to songs, and play musical instruments. The students' daily schedule includes outdoor activities, where children use their gross motor skills through independent play and group play ideas, helping them develop coordination and balance.

Theme B, "Camping," includes the game *Run, Wolf, Run*, in which students run and tag each other. In another activity in this unit, the children use a variety of movements such as jumping, skipping, or hopping to make their way across the room to a tent. In Theme C, "Weather," children practice large body movements: They use their arms and legs to reenact the rain cycle and clouds blowing around in the sky. Students also act as forest animals, with accompanying sounds and movements. Another activity in this unit is "Puddle Jumping": the students use large motor skills as they jump over puddles. In Theme D, "Seasons," children toss tennis balls and small plastic pumpkins. In Theme G, "The World Around Me," children walk in a circle and fall down when the teacher places a fan in front of them. In Theme F, "My Family and Me," students are on an imaginary trip to Africa. Children use body movements to follow instructions in a song that describes body parts to move. There are additional gross motor skill activities integrated in other lessons; for example, students play a ball game that integrates their speaking

skills. In Theme I, "Health and Fitness," students listen to the story *Fitness Fun at Sunny Trails Preschool* and then engage in some of the exercises from the book, adding some exercises of their own as well. In Theme J, "Machines and Movement," students move through an obstacle course and review location words: *under* and *over*, *behind* and *in front of*, *above* and *below*, *beside* and *next to*. Items and materials required for these gross motor activities are generally stocked in a prekindergarten classroom, and additional items are supplied by the teacher.

Fine motor skills are integrated within group lessons as well as thematically designed center lessons. For example, in Theme B, "Forest Discovery," students collect leaves outside and later paint them and make collages on white paper. In Theme C, "The Raindrop Activity," students use a dropper to put a droplet of tinted water on a wax paper square, "making sure the water stays in the square"; this allows students to practice their pincer grasp and small muscle control. In Theme D, "Weather," children cut snowflakes. In Theme E, students use modeling clay and feathers to create a turkey. In Theme J, students review computer vocabulary using the computer mouse and the cursor, swipe, and zoom elements. Children also use fine motor skills to create modeling clay bugs, threading necklaces, and practice using glue sticks and scissors.

Many other activities are directly aligned with fine motor skills and focus on writing skills. In the "Introduction," "4.0 Emerging Reading and Writing Literacy, Math and Science Pedagogy," a description and illustration of the tripod grip provides information about correct pencil grip. Materials place emphasis on tracing letters or numbers in the two activity books that are part of the instructional materials. However, the materials provide limited suggestions of opportunities to develop fine motor skills through tasks that are not writing. For example, in the snack area, students create a flag snack using pretzel sticks, jello, and strawberries. Then, in the "Science" center, students use a magnifying glass to observe objects; they use their fine motor skills to move the magnifying glass to focus on objects.

**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 provide a variety of activities to practice safe and healthy habits; however, recommendations for teachers to address unsafe or unhealthy habits in a positive and supportive way were not located. Throughout the materials, there are reminders for the teacher to support children's appropriate safety habits. The materials encourage children to identify safe and healthy habits, including nutrition and exercise. In the second half of the year, the materials include a unit on health and fitness. Additional supports encourage the teacher to strike a balance that does not alarm the children; rather, teachers are encouraged to provide information for children to "learn an awareness of their surroundings and practice safe behavior." The materials do not mention the connection between physical and mental health to children.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Introduction" section of the materials supports discussing safety and hygiene habits with children. This section supports teaching scissor safety, keeping non-food items out of the mouth, handwashing, using a tissue to sneeze, and not sharing food items. The information in the introduction to the materials includes general information to assist the teacher to present, model, and teach safe and healthy habits.

Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," includes a lesson on classroom rules focusing on safety. The teacher explains why there are classroom rules for safety and why it is important to ensure that the classroom is a safe place for the children. In Theme C, "Weather," in the lesson "Managing My Emotions," the teacher says, "Although we may feel sad or angry, it is not ok to shout, throw a toy, or hurt someone."

Theme I, “Health and Fitness,” includes teacher guidance on working with children to understand what safe behavior looks like in the classroom. Also, in this unit, there are lessons on handwashing, brushing teeth, and basic safety concepts. In one lesson, the teacher reads the book *Fitness Fun at Sunny Trails Preschool*. The teacher uses rubber bands and a skeleton model (provided within the program as a kit material) and explains about muscles and bones. In the lesson “Where Does My Food Go?” the teacher uses an anatomy doll and drawing to explain the process of digestion. The anatomy doll is not included in resources. These lessons focus primarily on anatomy rather than hygiene. In the activity, Looking After Myself—I Am Clean, the students are introduced to hygiene and why it is necessary and practice hygiene habits. The Health and Fitness unit also includes lessons on healthy food choices: “Chewing My Food,” “My Food Types,” and “Creating My Food Pyramid/Triangle.” The materials use the Food Pyramid to discuss healthy food choices rather than the MyPlate model currently used by the USDA. There is a section called “My Clever Brain” to support children’s emotional health. Within this section, in the lesson “My Brain,” students learn that their brain controls their body; in the lesson “I Can Remember,” students learn about the importance of their brain in storing memory; in the mathematics lesson “Counting and Estimating,” students practice counting skills and carry out out estimations; and in the lesson “Conversations,” students practice conversation skills in groups of four using puppets. Additional lessons within this thematic unit are “Exercise,” “Pump It Up,” “Keeping Fit!” “Bones and Muscles,” “My Muscles and Bones,” “Drawing the Bones in My Hand,” and “My Fitness Book.”

**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 opportunities for the teacher to model active listening skills in whole groups, small groups, and at center times. Only a few lessons focus on students listening for sounds and appropriate sentence structure; outside of these lessons, the teacher receives limited guidance and support to continue this practice. The material does not include examples of teacher think-alouds or other teaching strategies to enhance students' understanding of listening skills, conversational rules, or listening for understanding.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the "Introduction and Setting Up the Classroom Environment" document, teachers receive guidance on modeling conversations and correct sentence structure. In the section describing "Outdoor Time," teachers are encouraged to support language and listening skills, reinforce positive behaviors, and build vocabulary by drawing attention to and commenting on interesting points related to the themes. Materials provide sample statements to provide students with examples of language structure: "I see Sarah and John are sharing the materials." "Sofia is building a sandcastle." "Ava and Jose are running fast."

In Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," teachers directly instruct students on expected listening behaviors. When the teacher, or a friend, is speaking, students need to be respectful, listen, not talk, and watch with their eyes; this is how they know someone is listening to them. This listening behavior, referenced throughout the curriculum, is described as "Listen[ing] with your eyes and ears." Additionally, teachers receive guidance to model appropriate conversation

and body language during the morning greeting. There is some evidence of materials providing specific ways for the teacher to model and explain different nonverbal conversational rules.

Read-aloud books include a “teacher script” with questions to engage and evaluate student understanding of the story content. In Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” teachers explain to the children that they are going to be learning about camping in the forest. After reading the book *Packing for the Campout*, teachers ask the children, “Have you ever been camping?” and “What would you pack for camping?” Materials state: “This should provide an opportunity to discuss what is needed for camping. Go around the circle and provide each child with an opportunity to share what they would take to a campout.” During this activity, students listen for understanding and then practice following conversation norms.

Throughout Theme C, “Weather,” teachers are guided in providing sentence stem activities that encourage children to practice correct listening, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. In one activity, the teacher re-reads *Bears Visit Grandma and Grandpa Jun* and attaches a card of each weather type to the board. The teacher asks each of the children what their favorite weather is. Students respond in a full sentence with a minimum of five words, using the sentence stem, “My favorite weather is....”

In Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” materials suggest post-reading questions: “What were the names of the people in the story?” “What country did the Pilgrims travel from, and where did they travel to?” “How were they similar and different?” “What did they need to stay healthy?” “What do you need?” However, the materials do not provide guidance to extend or scaffold these opportunities to listen for developing listening skills.

The instructional materials also include games to support listening skills. One example can be found in the game “Bingo,” where students practice actively listening for understanding. In Theme H, “Living Things,” the students first participate in a music and movement activity where they sing a counting song as a class. This activity is followed by playing “Meow Says,” a game similar to “Simon Says,” where students respond to what Meow, the book character, says. Materials describe the lessons and activities, but they do not guide the teacher to observe active listening behaviors, such as maintaining eye contact, or providing wait time for responses.

The materials include a few lessons on the sounds and grammatical structures of language. One example is found in Theme G, “It’s Fun to Bake”: Rhyming cards are distributed among the students, and they must find a partner whose card contains a word rhyming with theirs. In Theme K, “My Community,” the section “Exploring Neighborhoods” includes a lesson on blending onset and rime. The teacher says a segmented word, such as /r/ /ed/, and students point to something red to show comprehension of the sounds they heard. The materials provide no digital or e-stories for independent engagement to support listening, understanding, and comprehension.

**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 thematic nature of the instructional materials leads to several opportunities for teacher/child and child/child conversations. However, most opportunities do not include direct guidance for the teacher to develop the student's speaking skills. The materials provide some opportunities for students to practice sound production, appropriate sentence structure, and grammar. There are general guidance statements for setting up practice activities and providing corrective feedback on the student's sound production, sentence structure, and grammar are present.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Introduction" section of the "Theme Textbook Guide" describes how teachers should teach letters and numbers during small group Reading and Math activities. The core strategy is KTAVV. First, teachers focus on "kinesthetics," making sure students mimic the shape of the letter/number with fingers or body pose and using "tactile" methods for students to associate touch with letter or number acquisition. Next, every letter/sound introduction has an "auditory" piece: students hear the name of the letter and sound of the letter through basic speech or music. Finally, each new letter/sound requires "vocal" and "visual" aspects. Students speak the sound of the letter or repeat the letter name and see the letter, preferably in a creative way. There are no auditory tapes of letter-sound production or a list of words containing the initial sound production to assist the teacher in explicit sound production.

Throughout the year, the teacher introduces a letter or group of letters for the week. The

teacher begins the activity by explaining how words are made up of letters of the alphabet. In Theme B, "Camping in the Forest," The letters a, e, and i are introduced during the small group learning period. Letter introduction follows a sequence of vowels first as teachers teach the letter(s) of the week. The students name the letter, celebrate if the letter is in their name, and repeat the letter and sound after the teacher. Visual recognition of the letter and letter name is highlighted rather than letter-sound association. This activity is revisited as the students use the "Book of Letters" to observe letters and pictures that represent each letter. The Book of Letters activity is completed during one of the daily large group circle times. During small group time, students create an "Alphabet Notebook," in which they focus on the sound of the initial letter of their name. Each child says their name, the first letter of their name, and then the sound it makes. The teacher supports continued language opportunities by asking the students how they felt about the activity: what they liked, what they did not like, and to tell what they did well.

In most thematic units, the children participate in a "Word Hunt." The teacher chooses objects that have the initial sound of the letter(s) of the week and hides the objects around the room for the children to find. However, the materials provide little guidance on ways to scaffold child responses for differing verbal speaking abilities. In the Introduction sections on "Special Needs and English Language Learners," teachers are to "...adapt the lesson as much as necessary for this child, and to ensure it is done in an individual manner." The "English Language Learner" section guides teachers to incorporate visuals, labeling, peer-to-peer teaching, environmental print to "aid in the development of ELLs in their classroom." While this guidance is important, teachers require additional guidance to successfully facilitate speaking practice and correct students as needed.

Beginning in Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," the teacher explains that a sentence is a group of words and that we speak in sentences: such as "I am hungry." and "I have a dog." In the section "Setting Up Centers," teachers organize the center area to promote child-directed or child-child collaborative learning. Opportunities for verbal conversations with an adult or another child are kept in mind to support authentic language and varied vocabulary. In each center, the materials change with each unit. To support the child's spoken language in the reading/book center, the teacher asks why the child chose the book, "what is happening?" and "what may happen next?" Then, teachers "point to a letter, a picture, or a word, to check to see if [the student] understands the difference in the types of print. If they do not, then [the teacher] gently explains the difference and checks their understanding at another center period." Throughout center time, the teacher reminds children of the importance of kind words and actions and to share with others in centers, including that if they feel that a friend is not sharing, they should use their words to tell them how they feel. For example, "Please stop, do not grab the things I am working with." and If they need something, use kind words. For example, "Please may I play with that."

In Theme F, "My Family and Me," the students create paper bag puppets to practice conversation skills. Students use the puppet as they introduce themselves to a classmate and then extend the conversation by asking and answering questions about themselves with a classmate. In

Theme J, "Machines and Movement," students practice conversation skills using correct grammar while playing different thematic unit-specific roles, such as a driver and a ticket collector. Teacher directions are to practice greetings, use complete sentences with at least four words, add details, and focus on using the correct tense (past or present). In Theme K, "My Community," the students demonstrate the previously learned skills of sentence structure and grammar as they role play and discuss community workers' responsibilities.

There is no evidence of clear guidance provided to support appropriate speech production. Oral language development is through conversation, vocabulary development, and visual recognition/writing of letters. There are no pictures to help teachers and students know the placement of the sound in the mouth. Nor is there any support for teachers on how to correctly articulate or teach each sound. A single example represents the sound of "a" as "short a" but uses the words to represent the /a/ sound, *airplane*, *ant*, and *ankle*. These practices are not developmentally appropriate and do not follow a research-based pattern of speaking skill instruction.

**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

There is some evidence that the materials support developing and expanding students' vocabulary related to thematic vocabulary and activities. Materials provide the teacher with some suggestions for including the thematic vocabulary across the day.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The list of vocabulary words is driven by thematic units and includes a blend of common and rare words. During the (approximately) three weeks of each unit, the teacher provides students with opportunities to learn and use the new words in context. No specific vocabulary routine is identified for classroom experiences. In Theme B, "Camping in the Forest," the teacher introduces new vocabulary words with the read-aloud book *Camping in the Forest*. The teacher and students discuss the words: Students provide their ideas of vocabulary definitions; then, the teacher and students discuss the words together; finally, the teacher uses the words in a sentence. In Theme F, "My Family and Me," the teacher reviews the meaning of the vocabulary words, and the children create sentences using the new words. In Theme K, "My Community," the teacher introduces vocabulary words; there is also instruction in rhyming words, compound words, syllables, plurals, pronouns, sentence tenses. The construction and deconstruction of the vocabulary words and their grammatical properties are practiced through role-playing. At the end of each thematic unit, materials provide a list of current vocabulary words and a list of previously introduced words. No evidence was found of teaching strategies to scaffold or spiral the words throughout the year. Because the vocabulary words are unit specific, review, and authentic usage of the words is difficult outside the designated unit. Teachers can spiral vocabulary throughout the year using the word chart, but there are no suggested strategies for spiraling the vocabulary. This progression of vocabulary development is neither age nor sequentially appropriate.

Within the thematic units, students practice the new vocabulary in context as they explore different thematic activities. The majority of the vocabulary words are based on these thematic units. For example, in Theme C, “Weather,” students discuss different weather-related words in a lesson about weather reports. In Theme G, “The World Around Me,” students participate in large group and center activities meant to develop their understanding of words related to community helpers. This unit also includes a vocabulary lesson for direct teaching using a flashcard method.

In Theme H, “Living Things,” students focus on vocabulary when they play the game “Snap” using vocabulary cards. However, this game focuses more on the words themselves rather than their definitions. The materials use few strategies to teach thematic vocabulary words. Methods used include a flashcard review of pictures and written words; the teacher writing the word and drawing a picture on the board; children brainstorming the meaning of the word; students acting out the word; and the teacher and student using the unfamiliar word in a sentence.

The materials do not offer child-friendly definitions for the vocabulary words, although lessons do ask for the students to define the words. The materials provide teachers non-specific support. For example, in Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” the teacher encourages students to listen closely to anyone speaking and take time to comprehend the words being used. In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” materials instruct: “For any words unfamiliar to them, discuss their meanings, and use the words within a simple sentence.” In Theme I, “Health and Fitness,” materials state: “Encourage the children to attempt to use new vocabulary and correct grammar in their speech.” While these prompts are useful, they do not strategically support vocabulary development.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide some basic suggestions to support English Learners (ELs) through visual supports, peer-to-peer teaching, labeling, and social interaction. Beyond the basic suggestions, no specific lessons dedicated to second language acquisition teaching strategies were found. The materials do not provide support for teachers for building vocabulary in the students' first language.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Curriculum Introduction" includes some information for the teacher to use when supporting ELs. Section 4.5, "English Language Learners," states: "Make instructions visual to increase comprehension of expectations. Label objects in the classroom in order for children to become familiar with the names. Encourage peer to peer teaching and social interaction so that students learn from each other. Display environmental print throughout the classroom. Advocate for family involvement to support students with homework assignments. Make children feel safe and welcome in a nurturing classroom environment." While these suggestions are useful, they remain general. For individual lessons, teachers are guided back to this section without more specific strategies to support ELs.

In Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," one activity focusing on language and movement includes a game of tossing a ball in a circle. Students catch the ball, state their name, answer a single question, and then toss the ball to a friend. Sample questions are, "What is your favorite color?" and "What is your favorite food?" Materials state the following to assist the teacher in supporting ELs: "This activity is particularly useful when working with ELL children. All children need to show understanding of the language spoken by the children. However, ELL children need to show understanding of the new language being spoken, English, by their teacher and their peers. Encourage children to listen closely to anyone speaking and to take

time to comprehend the words being used. You can discuss any words the children find difficult.”

This same teacher support is found in Theme B, “Camping in the Forest.” The “Circle Time” discussion of what children would pack for a camping trip provides the same guidance: Have the children listen closely, taking time to comprehend the words used, and discuss any difficult words. However, there is no explanation of what this would look like or how the teacher is to support students in listening carefully and taking time to comprehend the words.

During a large group activity in Theme F, “My Family and Me,” the teacher is reminded that ELs “may not be able to communicate fluently so should utilize non-verbal communication, single words, and simple phrases to communicate.” Nonverbal communication is defined as body language, eye contact, and touch. This same phrasing and teacher support is repeated in Theme I, “Health and Fitness.” While this reminder is accurate, it should not be considered a strategy for supporting ELs. ELs are still expected to complete the task in the same way as other children in the class. While the communication barrier is mentioned, there are no strategies recommended to overcome that barrier.

During Theme G, “The World Around Me,” students participate in a “Rhyming Words” activity, in which teachers receive some guidance about students’ home language: “Teachers may wish to apply the investigation and understanding of sound and intonation to their child’s first language, and then apply it to the English Language.” This instruction is one of the few suggestions for teachers to integrate another language into instruction; however, there are no specific strategies described to accomplish the suggestion. The home language is referenced in the materials, but there are not any opportunities for ELs to develop vocabulary in both the English language and their home language.

**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

The materials provide some support to develop students' oral language through authentic text-based conversations. Supportive information is provided for teachers to pose both open-ended and closed questions for student discussion and text understanding. However, some of the questions do not generate student thinking about the text or enhance authentic conversation among peers. Supportive information to expand on the concepts or to extend student discussion is lacking. There is some guidance for children to ask questions about the information in texts.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Most of the thirteen thematic units designate one to four texts as read-aloud books. The texts are written with a focus on providing information related to the thematic unit. Some texts are read multiple times during the thematic unit, while a few are read only once. Although, the recommended schedule included in the materials recommends the inclusion of additional read-aloud periods per day, offering the teacher choice. Each unit provides a few questions for the teacher to ask as they read the texts. Questions are included for the pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading discussions. Some of the questions focus on thematic unit information rather than being directly related to the text. All texts reviewed were electronic. It is unclear if there is a "Big Book" format for the children to enjoy throughout the year.

Though the lessons include questions to support oral language development, there is no evidence that supports well-planned questions. The questions do not always generate students' thinking about the text or foster authentic conversation among peers to develop oral language skills. Common text questions are predictions of what might happen next as well as "Did the

story have a happy ending?” “How would you feel?” and “Did you like the story?” Questions are asked without accompanying scaffolding to encourage more than a one- or two-word answer.

Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” includes two texts: *The Pledge of Allegiance* and *The Kingdom of Color: My First Week in Kindergarten*. These two texts provide introductory information about the pledge to the US and Texas flags. This routine takes place each day of the year. During associated activities, the teacher introduces and students practice language and new vocabulary. Discussions held around the meaning of the Pledge, as well as discussing graphics on the pages, and then completing activities around the book. *The Kingdom of Color: My First Week in Kindergarten* introduces the characters students will encounter in upcoming texts. Little discussion is prompted about the information included in the two texts.

Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” also includes two texts. The text *Camping in the Forest* is read multiple times throughout the three-week unit. In various readings, the teacher poses pre-reading questions about what students think a hike is and whether they would like to go on a hike. Both of these questions initiate a discussion that provides oral language experiences and an introduction to new vocabulary. The story’s text has multiple embedded questions. Also, many activities throughout the thematic unit relate to the story. For example, later in this unit, the teacher gathers items not supplied by the curriculum (e.g., pictures of animal footprints, plastic animals, a tray of sand, and an audiotape of animal sounds). The children, through trial and error, match the animals to their footprints and make animal sounds together with the audiotape. This activity relates to *Camping in the Forest*, in which the characters see footprints at the campsite and try to decide who made them. At the end of this unit, children dress up in animal-type clothing (not included), move around the room, and make animal noises. As children play, they explore materials from the forest using their senses. The teacher explains what the five senses are and identifies with the children what body parts are engaged with that sense. The teacher then asks the children why they picked certain materials to explore. After reading the book, the teacher asks, “Have you ever been camping,” and “What would you pack for camping?” In addition, there are other prompts that a teacher can use if the child does not respond, including rephrasing the question or using pictures as prompts. In another example in this activity, two prompts are used to begin a discussion of “What’s in the Forest,” including “What’s in a forest? Have you ever been to a forest?” and “What do you think will be in a forest?” Though these activities can enhance oral language development, specifically-aligned teacher prompts to children are not evident.

Materials do not support regular and varied opportunities for children to build oral language through authentic discussions related to texts. In Unit Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” after each page, the teacher asks students what they think will happen next, emphasizing the words *yesterday*, *today*, *tomorrow*. While these questions are text-dependent, they do not promote discussion. The questions refer to a time reference; however, later in this lesson, the concept is expanded to asking the children to say a time-related sentence. The children then act out different scenes prompted by relevant pictures that relate to the time, such as sleeping. They act it out, they are asked what the child is doing, and they use their words to describe it.

Theme F, “My Family and Me,” provides information about Africa. The teacher asks the children, “Have you used any of the methods of transport and travel? Please share with the class where you went and what you can remember about it. Was it fun?” These questions do not directly relate to the content of the texts.

Theme I, “Health and Fitness,” has two texts. In the text *Fitness Fun at Sunny Trails Preschool*, the teacher asks students what they think will happen after each fitness exercise. At the end of the book, the teacher asks the students if they think exercising to keep bodies healthy is a good thing. Materials do not provide supportive scaffolding to assist in a discussion or sharing of information between the children.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include some activities for students to practice phonological awareness skills. However, materials do not include frequent phonological awareness practice and often focus on print instead of auditory skills as the foundation of phonological awareness. Some lessons could be modified to teach phonological awareness appropriately. The materials do not follow the research-based developmental continuum of how children acquire phonological awareness.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Research shows that phonological awareness skills are auditory skills that are practiced in the absence of print. The materials do not follow the continuum of phonological awareness. There is some direct instruction in phonological awareness; however, materials focus on print, and there are few opportunities for student practice. Many of the activities emphasize print in addition to sounds; some activities emphasize written words before the alphabet has been fully introduced to the students.

There are eight phonological awareness activities in the “Book of Activities” and one or two activities in each of the thirteen themed units. The teacher introduces letter sounds by singing the letter name, playing a chord on the xylophone, and then producing the letter’s sound. The children then repeat the letter and sound. During the first week of school, in Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” the children visually recognize the first letter of their name. Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” introduces a new letter at the beginning of each of its three weeks. Students learn to visually recognize the vowel letters *a*, *e*, and *i* with their accompanying sounds. Thus, the materials introduce vowels and vowel sounds first. When students get to

Theme C, “Weather,” children progress to the phonological skill of separating and rejoining compound words using picture cards.

The materials provide some activities that engage students in identifying, synthesizing, and analyzing sounds. In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” the teacher introduces syllables through drumbeat rhythm. The teacher models how to “drum out the syllables”; then, students drum out the syllables with the teacher. Materials provide a chart of one-, two-, and three-syllable words. This lesson provides teacher guidance on how to teach segmenting words into syllables. Then, the children are provided with pictures of words that they drum out. They can self check to see how many syllables as the number is noted on the card. Extension and practice is recommended in other periods where the children drum out their names and words chosen from books.

In Theme I, the teacher guides students to blend onset and rime. Materials guide the teacher to sound out the onset and then the rime slowly. The students select a picture that matches the word. The “Book of Activities” includes another activity for students to practice blending onset and rime: First, they are supported with pictures, and then just with the onset and rime. Students must identify the onset, the rime, and then the whole word.

The materials do not follow the research-based continuum of how students acquire phonological awareness skills. There is evidence of some learning of phonological awareness, but it is not systematic. Throughout the year, students make a personal “My Alphabet Book” to learn and practice letters and sounds. For this recurring activity, there is a lack of teacher guidance to help support phonological awareness strategies. The supplementary “Book of Activities” may be used “as needed” or adapted for home use. This supplement includes one activity for each expected end-of-year outcome in phonological awareness presented in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. The activities call attention to the print instead of focusing on spoken language. Materials do not include adaptations for home use. Direct teaching of this supplemental material is not evident. An example activity from this resource is separating a spoken four-word sentence into separate words. The activity uses the sentence example “I like jelly sandwiches.” Students visually look at the separated words, making sure they understand them and then join them back into a sentence. This highly visual segmentation and rejoining focuses on whole words, including multisyllabic words.

The curriculum content progresses from the largest unit of sound to the smallest; however, the activities are presented in conjunction with words, which is not supported by research. There is neither a printed scope and sequence of phonological skills nor activities that support daily lessons for children. Also, the materials do not provide directions for the teacher to set up a sound-rich environment. There are some materials for the teacher to print out, such as vocabulary cards, picture cards, and bingo card games. The students have a book of “Letters and Activities” to help them while learning letters and sounds. Students also make the “My Alphabet Book” to go along with their learning. However, these resources are supplementary materials and not consistent resources to be integrated into daily instruction.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials follow a sequence to introduce alphabetic knowledge; however, they do not provide a research-based sequence for the introduction of alphabetic knowledge. Additionally, materials provide only some guidance for the teacher to introduce, model, and use letter names and sounds directly. The materials lack research-based letter knowledge activities and extended materials for student acquisition of letters and sounds throughout the school year. There is no evidence of directions for the teacher to set up a letter-rich environment.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

While the materials have a strategic plan of letter introduction, the plan is not completely based on research. The program uses gradual release and repeated exposure to teach alphabetic knowledge, both through letter recognition and phonics. During the first week of school, “the first letter of each child’s name will be highlighted; thereafter, a letter will be introduced at approximately one per week.” After the first week, “vowels will be introduced before consonants and lowercase letters will be focused on, with recognition of the uppercase form.” The materials state that vowels are introduced first because there is a vowel in most words, which leads to a greater chance of developing pre-reading skills. Although starting with the letters in the students’ names is appropriate, teaching a letter of the week as well as teaching all vowels before teaching consonants is not based on current research.

The teacher explains that words are made up of letters of the alphabet to introduce students to the alphabet. Introducing the resource “The Book of Letters,” the teacher points to each letter of the alphabet and then produces the letter sound. Students then move into small groups to create their personal alphabet book. For this activity, the teacher prepares die-cut names for each child: an uppercase letter for the first letter of each name and the remaining letters in lowercase. This activity’s objective is for students to make their own “My Alphabet Book” that

they will use throughout the year to link together letters and sounds. As the year goes on, students gradually add letters to their books.

When introducing letters, provided guidance remains limited. Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” directly follows the first week of the program; the teacher introduces the vowels *a*, *e*, and *i*. The teacher follows a similar routine utilizing “The Book of Letters.” Again, the teacher points to each of the three letters within the book and models the letter sound. This time, students trace the letter with their finger while stating the name of the letter and its sound. After this initial introduction, teachers receive general guidance for modeling and using letter names and sounds. Teachers are directed to the general “Reading and Writing: Alphabet Strategy” section for the suggested sequence of activities: “Introducing the Letter from the Book of Letters; Adding a Die Cut Letter to My Alphabet Notebook; Introducing the Letter Using KTAVV; Introducing Words that Begin with the Letter of the Week; Word Hunt; The Alphabet Song; and Reading Strategy.” These instructions are general and do not provide additional differentiation for students who need extra support. Additionally, there are few scripted statements for the teacher to support student learning.

In Theme G, students cover letters *g*, *h*, and *j*, in addition to reviewing the nine previously introduced letters. During the “Circle Period” activity, students review each letter by playing “Word Hunt.” Children explore the classroom and collect items that begin with the identified letter. During the “Music and Movement” activity, students play musical instruments and sing “The Alphabet Song.” This activity occurs weekly; each week, the song is adjusted to emphasize the week’s letter. If the letter is found in a child’s first name, the letter is celebrated; then, students are asked to add the letter to their My Alphabet Book. To practice previously introduced letters, students “pick words out of a book or magazine that begin with that letter and then read the word and explain its meaning.” The materials do provide a few ongoing supports to review alphabetic knowledge skills throughout the school year, such as “Alphabet Soups” and “Alphabet Bingo.” Also, “The Book of Letters” contains handwriting worksheets intended to support letter learning; however, most directions and support remain general.

When setting up a letter-rich environment, the teacher is left without any direct instruction. In the “Introduction,” materials present teachers with many ideas to set up and organize the classroom. Sections provide support for creating a “Positive and Organized Working Space and Traffic Flow,” “Specific Areas Within the Classroom,” “Factors to Consider for Each Space,” and “Space Aesthetics.” None of the sections provide directions for setting up a letter-rich environment. The closest direction for teachers comes in the “ABC Center” section. Directions guide: “Place the letter of the week on a poster created in several ways, for example, stamped or finger painted. Add some sheets where the children can trace and decorate the letters.” Again, these directions remain general.

**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' instruction in print knowledge does not follow a research-based sequence. There are some examples of direct instruction through read-alouds, but often this instruction does not develop over time. Though there is a reference to labeling the classroom and providing environmental print, this instruction does not provide students the opportunity to understand the everyday functions of print in a school context.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Instruction in print knowledge and concepts is described in the introduction of the instructional materials and gives teachers guidance on the CRWPLN reading strategy used throughout the curriculum. This description remains general, and teachers are to refer back to the description when connecting print awareness to books and texts. CRWPLN stands for six print knowledge skills the student should master by the end of the year: hold the book the Correct way up, Read the text from left to right, recognize simple one-syllable Words, recognize and describe a Picture, recognize a Letter, and recognize a Number. This strategy is used throughout the year; however, materials provide no evidence of the research behind this method. Also, this instructional support remains limited and does not provide adequate text-based scaffolding.

Throughout the curriculum, the teacher writes words on the board, such as when the students are discussing what to pack for camping. However, the word list is not transferred to a chart to be kept in the classroom for students to continue to engage with the print. These words and sentences remain on the board for use in specific lessons.

The materials include 28 illustrated readers written to correlate to the themes. The reading strategy presented in the introduction has the teacher point to the week's letter when reading the read-aloud text, but there are no prompts within the individual themes. Materials do not include lessons that follow a developmentally appropriate continuum for the development of print awareness. Suggestions for everyday use of print include keeping items at eye level, providing books in the "Library and Listening" center, and labeling everything to promote early literacy. A suggestion for supporting the practice of print concepts in the Library and Listening center states, "while they are reading a book, gently correct a child who might be holding the book the wrong way up or reading from back to front. Ask them to point to a letter, a picture, or a word, to check to see if they understand the differences in the types of print." The materials do guide the teacher to post a daily classroom schedule and an alphabet chart.

In Theme C, "Weather," prior to reading the included texts, the teacher has students point to previously introduced letters, the picture, and the print's directionality. There are a few questions after the reading to help children develop print knowledge. While teaching a lesson on subject-verb agreement, the teacher writes a simple sentence on the board, such as "I like kites." Materials further direct: "Read the sentence to the children pointing to the word as you read. Create some cards with the words written in colors that match the sentences on the board." The children work in groups of three and "place the cards in the correct order." The students continue their sentence creation practice in "The Word Sub Game for the Weather Forecast" and again in "Weather Report. In another example, Communicating the Weather, the teacher re-reads the book, *The Bears Visit Grandma and Grandpa Jun*. The teacher then attaches a card of each weather type on the board and asks the children to respond to the sentence stem: "My favorite weather is...." This activity provides an opportunity to explore print in a meaningful way.

In Theme F, "My Family and Me," students identify conventional features of print. Students complete the sentence "My favorite color is....", using what they know of letters and sounds to spell the word for the blank. Several units later, in Theme K, "My Community," children point out where a sentence begins and what makes it special as a beginning; then, they point out where the sentence ends and what makes it special as an ending.

**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

The materials provide some engaging text variety. While there are 28 thematically-linked texts and some poems and songs, there are few classic texts or trade books. The same author wrote all 28 texts. There are no identified books, poems, or songs to support the "Library and Listening" center for continued student interaction with stories, the thematic unit, or print. Read aloud texts cover a range of student interests. While there is some use of environmental print throughout the classroom, the materials do not provide guidance linking this environmental print to print awareness.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide 28 books for this 41-week program; all of the texts are written by the program author, Jane Willoughby. Of these 28 books, all but two are written in narrative form. There are no big books provided for shared reading or interactive reading activities. However, there are interactive lessons found in this program that support thematic concepts. The included texts contain storylines that are usually easy for students to follow and remember. Some of the books have embedded questions for student engagement and problem solving, and many include a variety of simple and complex sentences.

Theme B, "Camping in the Forest," includes two books for read-aloud lessons: *The Lonely Porcupine* and *Camping in the Forest*, both by Jane Willoughby. Both texts include storylines and

characters that are easy to understand, and both are at an appropriate length for the beginning of the year. The book *The Lonely Porcupine* is highly predictable, with repeated sentences. The story follows a porcupine named Spike, who cannot make friends because of his sharp quills. The basic structure supports children as they retell the story while looking at the book, thus practicing reading behaviors. These two books designed as whole group read-alouds are the only books included for this theme.

Theme C, “Weather,” spans three weeks and includes one book for read-aloud lessons: *Weather in the Kingdom of Color* By Jane Willoughby. This text highlights different weather patterns, but it does not sequence the weather patterns in a predictable order. Each set of pages summarizes a standalone concept of weather, and winter and snow are presented before fall and leaves. The book is lengthy, with a large amount of text on each page and some illustrations that do not follow the storyline. For example, the story begins with an illustration of a bear family getting ready for a trip to their grandparents’, and then switches to illustrations of a dinosaur family. Due to the imbalance of text to pictures, lack of text matching pictures, and lack of predictability, this book is not suitable for students to practice reading behaviors.

Examples of fiction texts include but are not limited to:

*My First Day in Prekindergarten* by Jane Willoughby

*The Trunks Join Sunny Trails Preschool* by Jane Willoughby

*The Twigs Build a Tree House for Sunny Trails Preschool* by Jane Willoughby

*Celebrating My Prekindergarten Year at Sunny Trails Preschool* by Jane Willoughby

Classic children’s literature, early childhood favorites, and popular current titles are not present, nor is a book list of these books included to enhance thematic learning. However, the daily schedule does support additional 15-minute read-aloud periods, which would allow for teacher choice in the selection of text.

Examples of nonfiction texts include but are not limited to:

*The Thanksgiving Story* by Jane Willoughby

*Sink or Float* by Jane Willoughby

*Habitats* by Jane Willoughby

*Inside My Body* by Jane Willoughby

While these texts cover nonfiction subjects, they are written narratively without important nonfiction text features like labels, captions, and photographs.

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

“Benny the Funny Owl” by Jane Willoughby (counting nursery rhyme)

“Humpty Dumpty” by Lewis Carroll (classic nursery rhyme)

“The Treehouse Song” by Jane Willoughby (song)

“My Family and Me” by Jane Willoughby (rhyme book)

“Sunny Trails Preschool Class Puts on a Show” by Jane Willoughby (script)

While there are a variety of text types for children to interact with, most included songs are not offered in print form to support active engagement with print. Other than “Humpty Dumpty,” the materials do not provide or mention any other classic poems or nursery rhymes.

The materials recommend using environmental print by labeling items in the classroom. Examples include books, posters, pictures, and name and weatherboards. The use of environmental print is evident in early print awareness lessons as the teacher refers to the alphabet chart and various books in Theme A. Children have an opportunity to create their own “Alphabet Book,” affixing their names to it using die-cut letters. Students also use their “Book of Letters” and “Book of Numbers” as an extension to print awareness lessons. However, the materials do not offer guidance on using environmental print throughout the classroom to support print awareness development. Once, in Theme G, teachers take the opportunity to remind children of texts as opposed to print, print directionality, uppercase and lowercase, and periods. However, this guidance is not tied into the classroom environmental print, nor is instruction systematic throughout the year.

**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 do offer an approach that helps students comprehend stories; however, there is limited support and guidance for teachers. Strategies are sometimes repetitive, and additional strategy suggestions or adaptations are sparse. There are many opportunities for students to connect texts to their own experience at home and school; this is achieved primarily through questions that allow children to make predictions, develop inferences, and show understanding of the text. Though questions are included in many resources, there is no evidence of teacher guidance on integrating basic text structures into read-aloud lessons.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the introduction to the teacher textbook, Section 4.1, "Reading and Writing—Alphabet Strategy," mentions that by the end of preschool, students will be able to ask questions, make predictions, and develop inferences from read-aloud texts. The primary strategy for preparing students to read text can be found in the "Reading Strategy" section of this resource. Teachers remember the strategy via the acronym CRWPLN (Correct way up, Read, Word, Picture, Letter, Number) and use it when introducing each read-aloud text. Parts of this strategy require students to make sure they are prepared to read, while others remind students to look for basic text or print structures. Via this strategy, students practice recognizing the difference between pictures and texts as well as using text to aid comprehension. The "Letter" portion of the acronym reminds teachers to ensure students can recognize letters in a text, name them, and sound them out. Throughout the curriculum, CRWPLN is the main method teachers use to connect basic text structures to comprehension.

Each read-aloud text includes questions that help children connect to the text. In the Theme B text *Camping in the Forest*, the lesson activity focuses on packing for a campout. After reading, students answer the questions, "Have you ever been camping?" and "What would you pack for

camping?” The teacher is prompted to ask the children what they think a hike is and then would they like to go on a hike. Then, following the reading, the teacher asks, “What did they do on their hike?” For this text, students do have the rare opportunity to build a thematic experience within the classroom. As an extension activity, students dress up and act out their predictions about the hike from the story.

Questions encouraging students to make connections with their experiences vary in quality. Some questions require only a few words as an answer. For example, in Theme C, “Weather,” students answer the questions, “Do you need water?” “What about the things that you eat?” “What about plants?” In the same lesson, the teacher asks, “Which skies are rainy, and why?” as she displays pictures from the text. During a lesson on rainbows, students answer, “Have you seen a rainbow?” Materials use this question to prompt a discussion about rainbows and the weather when they saw a rainbow. This question is the only question provided that directly relates to the text “Rainbows” in *Weather in the Kingdom of Color*. In another circle period, the teacher reads the section of the book, *The Sleepy Bee*. The teacher then prompts the students to point to a picture of the character sleeping and then asks the children, “Why was Bella sleeping in the sun?” The students then go outside and experience the sun and reflect on how it makes them feel, prompting a personal connection to the story.

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” the story *The Trunks Join Sunny Trails Preschool* is about a family traveling from Africa to Texas. The teacher asks the following connection questions: “Have you used any of the methods of transport and travel? Please share with the class where you went and what you can remember about it. Was it fun?” In this case, the discussion questions are relevant to the text and successfully encourage students to connect their experiences at home to the text.

In Theme K, “My Community,” the teacher reads the book *My Community* and asks children what would happen if we did not have mail carriers, police officers, firefighters, and teachers. The teacher allows children to role-play and discuss the responsibilities of school and community helpers. There are associated questions that encourage children to make connections to the text: “What would happen if we did not have houses, buildings, schools, grocery stores, clothing stores? Why are these parts of the community important? What jobs do your parents have?” Then, students record information on the board with the teacher’s assistance. The teacher highlights that these are “OUR Community Helpers” and that children should be very proud of their parents.

In Theme G, “The World Around Me,” the teacher must obtain a copy of the story “Three Little Pigs,” as the materials do not provide it. After introducing the tale, the teacher asks students to predict what happens next. Teacher guidance prompts: “What inferences can the students make about the book? Explain that an inference, or predictions, is like guessing what might happen in the book. The book will give you clues as to what might happen.” However, there is no direct guidance on asking children about making predictions based on the gradual release model.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials include some strategies for supporting English Learners (ELs). Read alouds, vocabulary cards, visuals, and peer-to-peer instruction assist in developing emergent literacy skills. There is some guidance for the teachers on second language acquisition to aid in language transfer from the first language to English.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Specific information about support for ELs can be found in the teacher textbook introduction section 4.5, “English Language Learners,” The focus is on supporting English proficiency development through an understanding of one- and two-step directions, understanding of the words used by the teacher and peers, understanding of sounds and intonation of English language, increasing listening vocabulary, and engaging in nonverbal communication with individuals who do not speak their first language. General directions in this section support receptive vocabulary skills. However, little information is provided for assisting children to develop expressive vocabulary skills. Some suggestions include using single words and simple phrases in conversation with peers and attempting the vocabulary and grammar of English. In another example, a support is included for a lesson which states “This activity may be harder for ELL children as they are attempting to learn about the sound and intonation of a new language—English. Work with ELL children to identify such features and how they apply to the English language. If possible, you may wish to apply the investigation and understanding of sound and intonation to their child's first language and then apply it to the English language.” Additional direct lessons to assist ELs were missing. The materials include a reading strategy called CRWPLN. These strategies focus on concepts of print and decoding but do not include comprehension support for ELs in developing emergent reading skills.

Throughout the thematic units, there is some guidance to support students who are ELs. The first notation is in Theme B, “Camping in the Forest.” A reminder for the teacher states: “This activity is particularly useful when working with ELL children. All Children need to show understanding of the language being spoken by children. However, ELL Children need to show understanding of the New language being spoken—English—by the teacher and their peers. Encourage the children to listen closely to anyone speaking and take time to comprehend the words being used. You may discuss any words the children may find difficult.” Although this reminder is useful, there is no specific strategy recommendation to ensure ELs succeed with the activity. The activity “Making a Porcupine” is one where teachers receive specific differentiation for ELs. The support identifies that following two-step directions may be difficult for ELs. The teacher breaks the two-step directions into single-step directions, waiting for the completion of the first step prior to introducing the second step. This statement of support is repeated during Theme C, “Weather,” in a lesson about counting raindrops.

During snack time in Theme E, the teacher teaches “common phrases in English associated with food,” such as: “Please can I have a snack?” “Thank you for the dinner you have cooked.” “You are welcome.” “Can I have...?” “I really like...” For ELs, there is a specific reminder here for teachers to discuss each phrase and clarify how or when the phrases should be used. The primary support is to “discuss” unknown words with children.

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” the materials include the text, *The Trunks Join Sunny Trails Preschool*. The text could help students make the connection with coming from another area. The suggested questions that accompany the read-aloud have students discuss things like the flags of Africa and the animals of Africa. There is no explicit direction for teachers to connect ELs to the English language. Questions suggesting connections to the students' lives are not included. Other texts do not include authentic cultural topics that help children make personal connections, nor are there strategies that include using the child’s knowledge of literacy in their primary language as a transfer for English language and literacy skills.

Another example of EL support can be found in the Theme G lesson, “I Want to Bake a Cake.” Teachers have the EL reminder: “This activity may be harder for ELL children as they are attempting to identify such features and how they apply to the English language. If possible, you may wish to apply the investigation and understanding of sound and intonation to their child’s first language, and then apply it to the English language.” However, there is no support describing *how* to identify the sound and intonation or *how* to apply differences in sound and intonation to the English language.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

The materials do not include developmentally appropriate writing instruction but include some opportunities for independent writing that includes copying and completing sentence stems. Additionally, the materials include some modeled group writing on shared experiences but no writing opportunities in response to reading. The materials provide some opportunity for students to generate independent writing in recommended centers.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include an “Introduction” section that suggests setting up a “Writer's Corner Center” where children can “play” write, make marks on paper, and write in their own way. However, there is little guidance describing how to set up this area or how to facilitate the independent writing process. At the beginning of the year, students practice letter writing in their “*Book of Letters*.” Near the end of the year, they participate in “more constructive copying of letters and writing simple drafts with the assistance of the teacher.” Each thematic unit includes a Writing Center recommendation that focuses on handwriting and letter formation but also integrates using writing and drawing to make meaning. Often these recommendations integrate the *Book of Letters*. For example, one suggestion states: “Place the letter of the week on display together with themed words beginning with that letter. Add sheets, from the *Book of Letters*, where the children can trace the letters.”

As an additional resource, “The Book of Activities” provides five activities to support writing instruction. Each activity includes a description for the teacher and a description for the

student. Following the provided guidance, the teacher tells the students, “We write things down for lots of different reasons. We write stories, shopping lists, information, letters, and much more.” Students then practice writing by themselves using letters and words while the teacher circulates, offering writing suggestions. These suggestions demonstrate some one-on-one direct writing instruction. Most writing instruction is done through teacher-model and whole-group; otherwise, students have limited opportunities for shared writing. In one example, the students complete a study of the butterfly cycle and work with the teacher on creating three sentences about the butterfly in a large group. The teacher points out the sentence beginning with a capital and ending with a period. The sentences are edited and redrafted. In these teacher-led writing lessons, topics include text directionality, punctuation, and concepts of print. Students usually just copy the teacher’s model, providing little opportunity for independent writing beyond print formation. Daily shared writing opportunities such as “Morning Message” or “Daily News” are not included.

In the Thematic Unit D, “Seasons,” students “create” a recipe during the activity, “Creating My Apple Recipe—Chef for the Day!” Students receive a sheet of paper with the phrase, *My Apple Recipe*, written at the top. Children create their favorite apple recipe by drawing the apple, dip, and toppings. The paper includes a space where the children can write whatever they want. The teacher reminds students that writing is a means of communication and that children can choose letters, marks, symbols, or scribbles. After the children create their recipes, they explain what they wrote to the class and name their recipes. An experienced teacher could integrate her own supports and scaffolds to support writing skills. However, these types of intentional interventions are missing in the materials. Without this intentionality, the activity becomes a highly teacher-directed lesson and discounts children’s emergent writing proficiency. However, it is still one of the few opportunities students have to imitate and “generate” adult writing independently.

Within Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” there is an activity “Being Thankful,” in which the teacher writes the beginning of the sentence “I am thankful for....” The children read and repeat each word in the statement, internalizing the prompt. Then, the children draw a picture of something they are thankful for. While this is not exactly independent writing, the activity does allow children to imitate the adult writing process, namely analyzing a prompt and responding.

In Theme G, “The World Around Me,” students have an opportunity to write letters and phrases. One of the “Scaffolded Challenge” activities includes a shopping activity. Together the class role-plays shopping and paying for items. On the board, the teacher writes a shopping list with associated pictures. The children will create their own shopping list by writing the initial sound or copying the words from the teacher sample. Students who succeed in this task can attempt to write their own words. However, the writing activity in Theme K, “My Community,” does not provide a similar opportunity. In this activity, students are supposed to be writing a letter to a friend. However, the teacher writes sentences on the board, and the children copy

the words onto their paper. The materials include some prompts for writing with sentence stems and suggested topics for writing.

**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

Although there are some writing lessons, the materials do not follow the developmental continuum of how children learn writing. Teachers also do not receive guidance meant to support development along the continuum for writing development. Writing opportunities appear to be isolated rather than an integral part of the materials.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Introduction” section 5.1, “Selecting Centers,” summarizes the different centers in the curriculum, one center being the “Writer’s Corner.” Global suggestions to set up this area provide children the opportunity to make marks and write their name in their own way. However, there are some specific suggestions or supports that reference the developmental stages of writing in the Book of Activities, such as “When you start learning to write, it will take time for you to be able to use letters and words. While you are learning, as well as practicing with writing letters, you can also use pictures and marks to communicate.” and “We write things down for a lot of different reasons. We write stories, shopping lists, information, letters, and much more.” These prompts are followed by activities encouraging children to use letters, pictures, or marks to write a short story or create a shopping list or birthday card. Student writing is primarily teacher-led and involves copying or tracing teacher writing. Some lessons spread across the themes could be integrated into cohesive writing instruction, but they lack intentional structure and guidance.

In the lessons, “Spelling and Writing My Name,” which are paced over several small group learning periods, the children will continue to learn and practice the letters in their name; this was introduced earlier and should be continued here. It is recommended that if a child is competent in writing their name, then this activity is no longer needed as there are plenty of

opportunities for the children to write their name in the activities moving forward. Students practice writing their name in a variety of ways, including name tracing with dot-dot on photocopied sheets followed by decorating the sheet, creating their name in a shallow sand tray with a finger, creating their name with shaving cream in a shallow tray, and creating their name with finger paints on paper.

The foundation of brainstorming is evident in Theme B, "Camping in the Forest." After reading the book *Packing for the Campout*, children discuss different items to pack for a camping trip. The class generates new thematic vocabulary words, and the teacher writes them on the board. Students go up to the board and draw a checkmark next to their suggested vocabulary words, but they themselves do not practice writing. There are no follow up opportunities for students to practice independent writing. Though the teacher modeled listmaking, the children do not have the opportunity to develop along the writing continuum. In another activity, the student participates in a shared writing experience with the teacher. The teacher follows guidance by "dotting out the name and having them trace your letters." The teacher is instructed to write student sentences on the board in all lower letters, then ask students to correct the sentences with capital letters and punctuation. Students are then asked to copy the sentences on their paper. This activity demonstrates the practice of the writing process.

In Theme H, "Living Things," the students create an animal and describe its habitat and traits. The teacher helps them create descriptive sentences using magnetic letters on a board. Then, the children copy these sentences on paper. The teacher helps facilitate, encourages new ideas, and assists with sounding out and spelling words. This lesson does have some elements of writing to convey meaning, but the focus quickly moves to printing skills and correct letter formation. It does not include appropriate teacher-guidance to nudge students along the continuum for writing development.

In Theme L, "Music, Movement, and Drama," students take part in a shared writing activity creating a storyline for an upcoming play. The teacher starts by writing a few lines of the story. After sharing the beginning with the students, the teacher asks the students what comes next. The teacher writes the student's ideas as they orally create the storyline together. After class, the teacher types up the story in a large font, adds as many pictures as possible, and places hard copies in the center area. This story is used as a script during interactive playtime. While students assist in generating the script, they do not engage in the writing itself.

Theme M, "Preparing for Kindergarten," contains a "Scaffolded Challenge" in which children write to convey a message. As they consider the move from PreKindergarten to Kindergarten, students complete the sentence stem, "I Would Like to..." The teacher conducts a brainstorming activity to highlight different ideas, and then students begin to write. One-on-one, the teacher works with each child to develop their sentence orally; if necessary, she writes the sentence on a separate paper for students to reference when spelling, sounding out and writing the words. The teacher brainstorms with the students how to finish the

sentence. "I would like to..." The teacher can provide some suggestions. The lesson instructs the teacher to "work with the children to develop their own ideas."

**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 toward writing.
- Materials prescribe a variety of tools and surfaces for student writing experiences.

### Partially Meets 2/4

Some fine motor activities are described in the materials, but they rely heavily on worksheets and tracing. There is not enough guidance for the teacher to help children develop their fine motor skills. The connection of fine motor development with developing writing skills is unclear. The materials recommend some tools and surfaces for student writing experiences.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The section "Alphabet Strategy" includes a subsection on "Fine Motor Skills and Writing." This section contains information regarding the "Tripod Grip," a strategy repeatedly suggested as a teacher recommendation throughout the year. Beyond this recommendation, there is no additional guidance for supporting fine motor development. The "Book of Activities" provides various activities the teacher can include throughout the year. Using this resource, the teacher explains that there are lots of activities that need our small muscle groups. The teacher gives examples of throwing a ball, cycling, using scissors, or holding a pen. However, the materials do not provide guidance on developing fine motor skills, including using pre-writing strokes.

The materials recommend some tools for children to practice writing. These include tracing in the palm of a hand, crayons, a shallow sandbox, shaving cream, and finger painting. These suggestions are limited and do not emphasize the importance of motor development to refine writing. The Teachers Edition recommends encouraging children to use the tripod grip when writing and recommends correcting a previous grip that they have used. "Do this very gently by repositioning the implement and positively reinforcing with a smile and words."

While there is no specific fine-motor guidance, some lessons and center activities include embedded fine motor skill development. For example, in the "Pretend and Play Center," the students interact with dress-up items that have zippers, buttons, and ties. Though the center

directions do not mention the development of fine motor skills, the act of dressing provides fine motor development. Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," the teacher demonstrates how to use scissors, and then the children use fine motor skills to cut and glue paper. Later in the Theme C activity, "Scaffolded Challenge- The Rain Drop Activity," the children use eye droppers and colored water to place water drops on a grid. This activity is repeated throughout the week for additional fine motor development. In Theme I, "Health and Fitness," children use modeling clay to create a model of dinner. In another example, the children make seed balls to celebrate spring and practice fine motor skills. In another, the children thread beads to make necklaces. These activities do help students with fine motor development, but there is no information given to teachers about the importance of developing fine motor skills in prekindergarten.

**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

Instruction covers counting, adding to, taking away, geometry, spatial sense, measurement, classification, and pattern skills. However, lessons and activities do not follow an established continuum that builds conceptual understanding of these concepts. While most lessons begin with concrete representations and move to pictorial and abstract concepts, students do not receive enough practice time with concrete manipulatives. Many lessons move from concrete to pictorial within the same lesson, and most lessons depend on the teacher for the pictorial representations.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide some activities that progress from concrete representation to the abstract; However, only counting skills are located in the designated “Mathematics” section for each thematic unit. Additional mathematical concepts are found embedded as activities outside of the Mathematics section. In the “Introduction” section, the program describes the recommended methodology for teaching numbers. It uses the same strategy as teaching letters: KTAVV. “Kinesthetic—Making the shape of the number with fingers or as a body pose; Tactile—Using the sense of touch to learn; Auditory—Hearing the name and number of counts required to achieve the number by basic speech or through music; Vocal—Speaking the number and then counting to that number; and Visual—Seeing the number in many creative ways.” This methodology is essential when children create their “My Number Book,” similar to their “My Letter Book.” While this methodology is reasonable, it does not follow a continuum of concrete, pictorial, and abstract representation.

The *“Book of Activities”* contains additional lessons to enhance mathematical skills throughout the year, including sorting and graphing items; naming, tracing, drawing, and cutting shapes; using measurement tools; classification and sorting of items; and identifying patterns. While these activities provide some opportunity for conceptual development, they are auxiliary to the core math instruction and do not include an implementation scope and sequence. Teachers also have access to additional math songs written by the program author, Dr. Jane Willoughby. These songs integrate movement to promote mathematical skills and to help students learn mathematical terms.

In Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” students are introduced to a method of number sense that is used throughout the curriculum. In the first week of the unit, students practice numerals between zero and four. “My Book of Numbers” is the primary tool students use to learn numbers. The children use their fingers to count their age and then count a variety of manipulatives to practice counting. Then, they create a page in their own “My Book of Numbers” by gluing in a die cut numeral and adding the correct amount of stickers to the page. This procedure is used throughout the program to create pages from 0 to 30.

In Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” the teacher leads an interactive shape activity that utilizes watermelon as a concrete representation. Each student receives large slices of watermelon, safe knives, and a set of different foam shapes. After drawing a circle, square, and triangle on the board, the teacher identifies and names each shape. Children repeat the shape name and then cut the identified shape into their watermelon. Discussion of sides, angles, and rotation of shapes continues until the children finish by eating their watermelon shapes. This shape lesson is revisited twice, once when working with foam shapes and leaf shapes later in the unit, and again in Theme G, “My Community,” when looking at shapes of buildings.

The Theme C activity, “Collecting Rain,” is one that blends math and science content. In this activity, the teacher displays a variety of beakers for children to “consider what would, or would not fit in the beakers.” She questions the children: “Could a grape fit in the 50ml beaker?” and “How many grapes could fit in this beaker?” After discussing the containers, students investigate rainfall by placing their name on a beaker and collecting rain. After collection, students line the containers up from the least to the greatest amount of rainwater collected. While these concrete materials are useful and relevant, they were not listed in the “Materials Specific for this Unit” section but were instead considered “general stocked classroom items.”

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” students again use the same method for numeral recognition and counting as they count to 13. Then, to practice counting, children sort various beads by color, join two color groups together, estimate, and count the beads. After confirming with the teacher, the children mix up their beads and recount. To conclude the lesson, the teacher draws a pictorial representation on the board using the “+” sign, thus introducing children to addition. She says, “Another name for joining is *adding* or *addition* and “+” is the symbol you write.” Students continue with this practice into Theme G, “The World Around Me.” The children take out ten colored bricks and count them together. The teacher then illustrates on the board how

two bricks are joined with three bricks, which results in five bricks, more than they started with. In another example, the children use objects from around the classroom to practice adding up to five objects. The students take two paint pots from the art area, then another three paint pots. They add the objects together by counting them and answer the question, "How many paint pots do you have altogether?" Later in the lesson, the students are asked to draw pictorial representations of this activity.

In a center activity, the children play a dice game to build conceptual understanding in math; the children roll a dice and color in the number on the dice in a colored graph, addressing counting and classification pattern skills. The students roll a dice and color a square on a graph for each number they roll, and follow-up questions are asked such as "What number was rolled the most? What number was rolled the least?"

**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

There is some evidence that the materials promote instruction and experiences building upon students' informal knowledge about mathematics. There are a variety of cross-curricular activities that integrate mathematics throughout the day. However, students are not given the opportunity to have targeted and supported practice with each concept before moving onto the next. While there are some instances where teachers inquire about students' developmental status and mathematical knowledge, there is no comprehensive resource to build children's math knowledge.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Each day teachers lead an "Opening Time" lesson utilizing an interactive calendar. During this activity, students recall the day of the week before practicing number recognition and counting. Activities for the "Math Center" are listed at the beginning of each thematic unit. The center activities include a notation for teachers meant to support one-to-one instruction. Additionally, some non-mathematics lessons integrate math skills into instruction. However, the designated "Mathematics" unit-section only presents counting activities, and these activities remain consistent throughout the program. Increased content complexity can be seen in the cross-curricular activities that are not referenced in the Mathematics section. For most thematic units, students first interact with new numbers by completing pages within their "Book of Numbers" resource. The teacher puts the week's number on display, and children trace and decorate the numeral in their individual books. They use fun stickers, icons, and counting sheets to represent the numeral's quantity.

In Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” students compare tree cross-sections, measure their rings, and determine their age and height. This activity leads to a second measurement activity, where the teacher measures the students on a height chart and leads the students in a discussion about the results. Although the materials suggest adding books related to the theme, they do not reference specific book titles related to the math skills being taught. The Book of Numbers is referenced throughout the curriculum. In this case, English instruction does not explicitly integrate math content into instruction. Each child’s abilities and skills should be assessed; however, there are no directions or assessments presented. Teachers do not have the appropriate resources necessary to measure students’ current mathematical knowledge.

Teacher prompts and questions are meant to assess students’ mathematical knowledge; however, most questions remain surface level. For example, in Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” students count and sort feathers by color during “Feather Sorting.” Prompting questions include: “Does it matter what order they are in when you count them?” “How many yellow feathers do you have?” “How many brown feathers do you have?” In this lesson, the children review numbers they can count to, taught in previous lessons.

The materials include some cross-curricular opportunities to integrate mathematics throughout the day authentically. During Theme H, “Living Things,” the Math Center has students play the game *Chutes and Ladders* as a “Scaffolded Challenge.” However, no instructions detail why the game is included and how it will contribute to math knowledge. In a second Scaffolded Challenge, students answer story problems. They use a magnetic board with magnetic shape tokens to review adding skills. Children create their own simple adding story. The materials explain “the purpose of this activity is to practice addition and subtraction introduced over the last two units.”

In Theme K, “My Community,” students practice joining and separating sets in the activity, “How Many Firedogs?” The teacher provides students with pre-cut pictures of dalmatian firedogs, and then she draws a firedog pictorial representation followed by the associated equation. The teacher prompt states: “Without counting all the pictures, estimate how many dogs you have. Now count. Did it matter what order the pictures were in for the final count?” Additionally, within the theme, several activities encourage students to engage in hands-on exploration of math concepts through thematic interaction. For instance, the students explore shapes by creating blocks to build structures for their community. In the activity “How Much Sand?” students explore capacity as they sort cups into volume order. They are forced to compare capacity and use relevant vocabulary during the discussion. While students have daily opportunities to explore mathematical concepts, these opportunities are not consistently cross-curricular, nor do they integrate enough classroom environment and materials.

**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

While there are some playful activities provided within the program, they do not provide the teacher with enough open-ended questions to promote problem solving. Some math lessons and activities support and encourage participation and problem solving, but there is a lack of intentional feedback, reflection, and extension beyond the scope of the specific lesson.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Many activities are structured so that mathematical problem solving and questioning can occur. However, most of the instruction is teacher-led and lacks direct teaching of problem-solving skills. Children are rarely intentionally taught to question, recognize problems in their environment, and develop their mathematical reasoning. In general, teacher directions provide a narrative of how to accomplish a given lesson; there are few questions and prompts that develop childrens’ capacity to solve issues in their surroundings. Additionally, the theme structure includes guidance meant to help teachers monitor children during activity centers. However, this guidance does not help students recognize mathematical problems using the classroom environment. In the activity Community Shapes, the children build a community using modeling clay and shape molds, building math skills across Social Studies and Fine Arts Domains. In another lesson, "How Much Sand," the students practice math skills as well as science and physical development as they build a continuum of sand in cups.

Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” includes a relevant general direction in the “Center Theme and Set Up” section: “Gently encourage the children to solve problems and persist at challenging tasks.” However, there is no guidance as to how to accomplish this suggestion. In the activity, “Campfire Stories-Watermelon,” children name shapes cut from watermelon and acknowledge that the shape stays the same even when *flipped over*, *turned*, or *slid*. While this activity uses a familiar object, a watermelon, no further directions detail how students can apply this concept to shapes or objects in other situations. The students were first introduced to

shapes in relation to shapes in the forest. Additional lessons covering the topic of shapes relevant to real-life situations include Shapes in a Building, Car Shapes, and Community Shapes across various themes.

At the beginning of Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” there is a section providing general set up information for the different centers used throughout. For the “Construction” center, students are encouraged to ask questions as they build; however, there are no teacher supports describing how teachers should respond or provide feedback to these questions. For the lessons within the unit, teacher scripts could better develop students’ ability to problem solve. In one activity, the teacher leads the students through feather sorting. Each feather is a different color, size, or shape, helping students practice classification and ordering. The lesson is characterized by closed-ended questions that do not encourage curiosity and questioning: “How many brown feathers do you have?” and “Does it matter what order you count the number in?”

In Theme G, “The World Around Me,” different activities integrate materials familiar to both students’ classroom experience and outside experience. Often these activities are limited in their promotion of problem-solving skills. In an early activity, students try to understand the importance of shapes as they create a building. Each student receives two rectangles, two triangles, and four cube bricks; the challenge is that students have to use all of the bricks to create their building. In this case, the activity is interactive and promotes some problem-solving skills. However, during the activity, students are not intentionally encouraged to ask questions. Once complete, the teacher asks, “which shape was the easiest and hardest to use, and why?” By asking the students *why*, the teacher fosters a mathematical discussion requiring students to recognize and address the problem. Later in the theme, the teacher sets up a store shop for students in the “Pretend and Play” center. Students label different toys with numbers representing the price in cents. Together as a class, they compare different toy combinations and add up their values. To help students understand the concept abstractly, the teacher writes different number sentences on a dry erase board representing each transaction. However, throughout the activity, the teacher only asks close-ended questions, and students do not question or problem solve on their own.

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” students have one direct math lesson dedicated to counting skills. In “Counting Beads,” students count five red beads, two green beads, three blue beads, and three yellow beads together with the teacher. After mixing up the beads, they count them again. As written, the lesson prompts are limited to yes or no answers or single word responses: “Does it matter what order you count the beads in? Do you always get the same result? Now place the blue (three) and green (two) beads in a separate place.” They estimate the number of blue and green before answering the next question, “How many beads are there if the green and blue beads are joined together?” The end of the lesson integrates some problem-solving skills as students create their own “joining or adding problem to share with a partner.” In this activity, they use a dry erase board to draw pictorial representations of their addition problem but do not extend the concept to other objects or environments.

“Lining up my Toys” is a loosely related scaffolded challenge activity that takes place in a subsequent thematic lesson. Students receive 10 tagged toys; one side of the tag has a written numeral on it, while the other side has an ordinal label. Students have to order the toys from *first* to *tenth*, and when they are finished, they have to describe the order using ordinal terms verbally. This activity provides students unstructured practice with numerals and ordinal phrases.

**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**

The materials provide some guidance for teachers to build children's conceptual understanding in math supported with mathematical learning throughout the day. While the materials address number sense throughout the lessons, the activities are mostly repeated, not providing varied opportunities for frequent and spiraled practice.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The program contains thirteen thematic units, with most units spanning three to four weeks in length. Each theme contains a few math lessons to be completed during the duration of the unit. The Teacher Edition describes the approach to building number sense, "Each week a new number will be introduced, and numbers will be added at a rate of approximately one per week. Wherever possible, the theme of the unit will be linked to the counting activity." The number sense concepts of subitizing (incorrectly referred to as estimating), counting, and counting on are repeated in every theme; however, the activities are not varied. Teachers should use objects and manipulatives related to the theme, but no other guidance is given to vary the activities. Additionally, each Theme includes information regarding "Math Center" time. The primary activity recommended for this center is that children trace counting sheets and decorate the numbers of the week.

In Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," the teacher introduces the interactive calendar. Through the interactive calendar, students practice numeral recognition, counting skills, and the passing of time. This activity is repeated daily; however, it develops and changes only slightly over time. In this first theme, the teacher introduces counting skills by having students count objects to four while associating the numeral recognition of 1–4. Students also begin working on their individual documentation books, "My Number Notebook." These books

are then completed throughout the year. Students place die-cut numbers on each page, along with the correct amount of stickers to represent each number. This activity continues with numbers 0–30, which exceeds the Prekindergarten Guideline of count using one-to-one correspondence up to ten.

In Theme C, “Weather,” the teacher continues supporting counting skills up to number ten. These activities integrate students’ My Number Notebook, counting the number of objects, counting segments and shapes, and using the Kinesthetic, Tactile, Auditory, Vocal, and Visual (KTAVV) method. While these frequent routines provide consistent practice, they do not vary much, allowing for increases in rigor and a more developed conceptual understanding of number sense. It is recommended that students interact with the number in different ways.

In Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” students participate in an estimation (subitizing) activity after counting feathers. The teacher puts a feather on the ground and asks the students to say the number of feathers without counting. The teacher repeats this several times using numbers up to ten. In another subitizing activity, the teacher places counters in a paper bag, shakes them up, and pours them out. A student is asked to tell how many counters there are without counting. If the student guesses correctly, they get to put the counters back into the bag for the next student to guess. This same math concept is practiced in Theme I, “Health and Fitness.” This time, students count sets of objects up to nine. The teacher asks students to close their eyes. While the students’ eyes are closed, the teacher puts a set of cubes in front of them. When the students open their eyes, they say the number of cubes without counting.

In Theme K, “My Community,” the students practice counting in various ways. In one activity, they roll dice and create a bar graph. In another activity, the students practice numeral recognition and counting to 30. Numerals 29 and 30 are introduced using the familiar KTAVV strategy. Again, students add the numbers to their My Number Notebook and review number counting with rhyme and music. In an example of varied practice, students review numeral recognition and counting as they dig for magnetic numbers buried in the sand. They rote count as they dig the numbers out. In a different interactive activity, students practice counting outside as they play a game called *Cat’s Meow*. A “Cat” leads the group, asking students to perform different tasks such as hopping 13 times, balancing on one leg, or counting to four. Like *Simon Says*, students repeat the commands, and the Cat is replaced periodically.

**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 routine and daily opportunities to hear math vocabulary. However, there is only some opportunity for students to practice using math vocabulary. There is no specific guidance explaining how teachers should support and scaffold math vocabulary usage.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Introduction" section 4.2, "Math," provides directions for teachers to introduce numbers throughout each theme. A new number is introduced each week. There is some focus placed on hearing math vocabulary, but students are provided limited opportunity to practice vocabulary explicitly. For example, in Theme B, "Camping in the Forest," the children hear and use the names of shapes within an activity. However, they are not prompted to describe shapes beyond simply naming the shapes. In another activity, "Drum Music," the children listen to and repeat sound patterns; however, the vocabulary word *pattern* is not explicitly taught to students. In Theme C, "Weather," the teacher presents vocabulary word cards to introduce math vocabulary. The teacher lays the cards out saying the word, then she points out the first letter and models its sound. After this introductory routine, she asks the students what the word means. This activity focuses more on the connection to letter knowledge and sounds, and it does not engage students in playful application and practice of mathematics vocabulary. The program includes some songs like "Counting Nursery Rhyme" and "Benny the Funny Owl" that integrate math. However, these are not meant for direct math vocabulary instruction.

In Theme E, "Thanksgiving," the teacher focuses on the words *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow* as students discuss the passing of time. The teacher also introduces the concept of measuring time with a clock as she reads *When is Thanksgiving Dinner?* The lesson includes showing times, drawing clocks, and discussing what to do in different parts of the day. While students hear a few appropriate math vocabulary words, the lesson focuses heavily on reading a clock and measuring time instead of math vocabulary itself.

The materials provide math “Scaffolded Challenge” activities for the teacher to use as assessments, starting with Theme G until the end of the curriculum. These lessons include suggestions for facilitation and materials but do not explain how to scaffold children’s math vocabulary development. The materials do not support teachers with strategies for layering academic math vocabulary into informal conversations about math in a positive, supportive way honoring children’s language and ideas. In one example of math vocabulary, the students learn ordinal numbers by going outside and running races. Then discussing the order in which students finished the race.

Theme H, “Math Center,” has the same number of activities as previous units. However, this theme includes the math game *Chutes and Ladders*. The teacher explains how to play the game, and then the children play on their own. However, there is no mention of using math vocabulary during the game. Students might use math vocabulary in another activity where they create their own pictorial problem for adding and subtracting. While students will most likely use math vocabulary when presenting their problem, it is not an explicit requirement.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

Inquiry-based instruction is evident throughout several thematic units. Many activities include exploration with scientific tools to teach physical science, life science, and earth and space science skills. Throughout, students have the opportunity to observe, record, predict, investigate, and draw conclusions based on data in their environment. Science experiments include many suggestion discussion questions; however, more attention needs to be given to how teachers can encourage student-led questioning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Book of Activities” contains nine supporting activities that promote observation and questioning of one’s environment. Along with the different theme lessons, students participate in enough hands-on activities to cover the science domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Children explore using scientific tools like magnifying glasses, magnets, play test tubes, child-safe thermometers, prisms, flashlight, plastic beakers, insect collection pots, a bug habitat, an anatomy doll, and a human skeleton model.

In Theme D, “Seasons,” children plant seeds and observe their growth over two weeks. The teacher discusses the life cycle with children, and over time students use a simple ruler to measure and chart how tall each plant grows. Each time, students predict how much the plan has changed, discuss questions about the plants, and hypothesize plant needs to optimize growth.

In Theme H, “Living Things,” students follow the steps of the scientific process during an “Outdoor Hunt” for living and nonliving things. Following provided guidance, the teacher assists

exploration as appropriate. The children sort the items, discussing similarities and differences, and then they categorize these items as *living* and *nonliving*. This experience requires them to use scientific tools like a magnifying glass and a ruler. This activity is actually an extension of one that occurred in Theme B; In that activity, children compare a rock, a plant, and some insects. To finish, they create sentences describing why plants and insects are living while a rock is not.

During the Theme J, "Construction Center," students use various materials and tools to explore simple machines. They create a pulley out of common items like string, disposable plastic cups, clips, and a metal hanger. Students investigate how the hand-pulled pulley works to move sand and other items. During this experiment, the teacher asks open-ended questions to elicit students' problem-solving and observation skills, such as, "What difference is there when using the pulley?" In a later related activity, children practice communicating ideas as they predict if an object will roll down a ramp. Then, they can test and record their predictions with materials in independent learning centers.

**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.

## Meets 4/4

The materials include information about people and places in the classroom, community, city, state, and world. While these topics are not always sequenced from smallest to largest, they are sequenced in a fairly logical way. Social Studies practice helps students explore similarities and differences in people, concepts of time, and the roles of consumers in their communities.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The interactive calendar is introduced in Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” focusing on the idea of past, present, and future. This daily routine integrates the vocabulary terms *today*, *yesterday*, and *tomorrow*. Through discussion, students view the calendar and complete the following sentence stems: “yesterday was...” “today is...” and “tomorrow will be...” Not only do students identify the days of the week, but they discuss what they did yesterday, what they will do today, and what they might do tomorrow. They represent the passing of time with different counting items meant to represent days, months, seasons, and weather.

Theme A also includes pledges to the state and national flag. The book, *The Pledge of Allegiance* provides students an opportunity to discuss the words and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance to understand why they say it daily. Further in the unit, children interact with *The Star Spangled Banner* and review the 50 states of the United States, emphasizing Texas. The teacher tells the children that Texas is a state in the United States, explains the meaning of *state*, and helps the children locate Texas on a map. Through questioning, the children tell of personal travels to other states; these additional states are noted on the map as well. The lesson moves quickly from naming states and locating them on the map to creating a flag for a given state. The

thematic content is presented as a single social studies topic without connection to individuality, family, or culture more broadly. In this sense, it is not used as a foundation for future learning.

Separate, but also in the theme, children learn about themselves and their classmates through the game, *Who Am I?* The teacher tosses a ball to children one at a time and they have to share their name, favorite color, favorite food, or favorite toy depending on the category. This activity allows children to learn about similarities and differences between themselves. Expanding to the classroom, students meet their classmates, explore the classroom layout, talk about classroom rules, and learn about the different classroom roles and responsibilities.

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” students learn about different communities: continents, countries, local communities, and families. First, children learn about Africa. This lesson focuses on how the characters within the theme read-aloud experience different cultures. The teacher uses a globe to show students where Texas is located in regards to Kenya. To compare daytime and nighttime for both locations, the teacher shines a flashlight on the globe, representing the sun. The teacher continues this activity to introduce other countries and states students may know, like England, China, France, India, California, and New York. Next, students adjust their scope and focus on local communities. They take a walk around the school to ask different adults about their role in the school community. To complete the Theme, students learn about each other's heritage. The teacher sends out a letter to parents asking for family and cultural information that can be shared with the class.

Lessons in Theme G, “The World Around Me,” provide children the opportunity to role-play the roles of consumers in their community. They learn about a grocery store and engage in pretend-shopping play. Children place price tags on items in the “store” and work traditional store roles. In one related activity, the class works together to develop a shopping list. In another activity, the children create a recipe for baking bread. Then, students practice purchasing items with play money, and the teacher introduces the vocabulary word, *consumer*.

**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 include a limited variety of daily fine art experiences. Due to the low number of options, teachers often have to repeat activities many times throughout the year. Only some of the activities emphasize the process rather than the product created.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Across the thematic units, movement and music time is included for every day of the week. The teacher has the flexibility to choose the specific activity for each day. However, there is a lack of quantity and variety for the teacher to select. Each "Theme," running from three to five weeks, includes three or fewer fine art activities to choose. This lack causes teachers to repeat the same movements and songs throughout the year. In the materials, the "Introduction" section mentions outdoor time as a "wonderful opportunity for children to have independent play and develop socially with their peers." However, there are no teacher resources to integrate fine arts expression into outdoor time.

*"The Book of Activities"* includes three activities, across the entire year, for children to explore fine arts. One activity encourages students to explore art materials with their senses. Another activity suggests that students create a robot from recycled materials in the art area. In the third activity, the teacher teaches students a song. For these activities and unit activities, teachers have limited guidance describing how to support children through the process of creating. A product rather than a process is the focus of many curriculum activities.

As a general suggestion, students should share their creations as a "celebration of their abilities, self-awareness, and pride." However, lesson-specific instructions are not found within the curriculum.

In Theme B, "Camping in the Forest," children choose an instrument, play a song, and sing along to the music. While this is an opportunity for creative expression, the materials do suggest

which music, beat, or rhythm teachers should use. Later in the theme, children create a forest habitat of their own using plastic animal models, green vegetation, acorns, rocks, and twigs. This activity integrates different types of paper, crayons, scissors, and other craft materials. Throughout the lessons, a variety of materials, including food, traditional art materials, and natural materials, are used. For example, in the Lesson “The Campsite, Making a Porcupine,” food, painting, and construction are used to make a model porcupine.

In Theme C, “Weather,” students have many opportunities for thematic creativity. They use different colors of paint and cotton to make a weather scene. Alternatively, they have the option to explore creative expression and make an abstract piece. In another example, students use sponges, cut potatoes, paintbrushes, and food coloring to create rain art. They squeeze drops from the sponges, paint with the brushes, and stamp with the potatoes. When students learn about snow later in the theme, they create a snowman picture using modeling clay, cotton or wool sheets, string, and glue. Then when they study wind, students create a kite. While the first two activities focus on the process rather than the product, this last activity occurs within a structured lesson, and students produce a pre-planned product.

Musical expression is included in Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” during the activity “Turkey Gobble, Waddle, Gobble.” Half of the class plays musical instruments, while the other half dances and sings the song, *Turkey Gobble, Waddle, Gobble*. This “song/chant” is original to the materials, and it does not include any phrasing or music. Students form a circle, and then they move and make sounds like a turkey. In an example of fine arts for creative expression, the children paint and decorate a small pumpkin, create a display, and describe to others their pattern. However, per the instruction, the teacher must purchase and paint the pumpkins white and purchase stickers to affix to the pumpkin.

Each thematic unit also has a “Pretend and Play Center” where children can use costumes to role play, play instruments, and dress up. There is a list of suggested items for this center, and no materials are provided. In Theme F, children role-play taking a trip to the airport. They practice using a ticket, and they role-play the different responsibilities of transportation workers. Then in Theme H, “Living Things,” children dress-up and act out the life cycle of a plant. These different roles include wind, rain, plants, the sun. Children draw and cut out large leaves made out of construction paper to use as plant props. The sun props are made using yellow paper with teacher-drawn circles. Seed props are made using scrunched up brown paper. The children have the option of adding music to their activity, though a song is not provided. "In an activity titled "The Class Build Project Large Group Learning Period," the students work in teams to design houses using cardboard boxes. They outline the windows and doors. The teacher cuts these, and then the students can include furniture in their houses. The children then engage in a language activity to use complete sentences to describe their house. This activity is primarily teacher-led with minimal opportunity for independent creation.

**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.

### Partially Meets 2/4

Although the program includes many digital tools for instruction, the use of technology is limited to a single learning center. There is little teacher guidance directing how to facilitate this center, and no teacher guidance directing how to incorporate technology generally. Primarily, students use technology to play games and search for information. This usage does not always support and enhance the student learning experience.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

There are some opportunities for children to engage with technology in a way that meaningfully connects to the classroom experience. The “Introduction” section emphasizes how children need to learn to use technology to gain information, enrich their learning experience, and to learn digital citizenship. Most, if not all, of student interaction with technology, occurs in the “Technology Center.” There is some teacher guidance in the center directions; however, it mostly consists of advising the teacher to be in the Technology Center’s vicinity to “circle back and check in with the children.” The materials do not integrate technology more broadly into all content areas.

The suggested programs are all applications for iPhone and iPad and are easily accessible and usable. Some suggested programs include: “Kids Preschool Learning Numbers and Math,” “Elmo Loves 123s,” and “Endless Alphabet,” among others. Throughout the curriculum, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that technology programs are appropriate for their class. Technology tools available to students include computers, sound recorders, televisions, digital cameras, personal digital assistants, MP3 devices, tablets, laptops, document readers, smartphones, and digital projectors. However, the materials adoption does not include either technology programs or technology tools. Teachers should let students explore the various digital tools that “they have on hand.” Students do have digital access to the thematic books written by the program author; however, this program does not include a read-aloud function

to improve student understanding. Throughout the themes, there is evidence of some technology integration. For example, the teacher talks about computer programs, uses the internet, with teacher support, to research the Mayflower, uses a paint or drawing program, and suggests software to support letter knowledge, numeracy, and vocabulary.

The “Book of Activities” introduces technology vocabulary but does not provide resources or links to support new learning concepts. The first activity describes a laptop and suggests that students open a drawing program to draw something. The second activity describes several types of technology that may be available in the child’s classroom. After describing the various forms of technology, students open an app to create something, use an app to express ideas, and use an app to research their favorite animal. These are general statements rather than specific technology-based directions designed for student success. While students conduct online searches, there is some guidance ensuring safe search. This advice includes guidance to monitor and use filtering settings.

In Theme C, “Weather,” the teacher uploads two online programs students use to draw rainbows and other weather-related pictures. During the circle period, “New Center Technology,” the teacher gathers students around a desktop computer and introduces the center. These programs are “Microsoft Paint or Microsoft Paint 3D” and “Tablet App Doodle Buddy.”

In Theme F, “My Family and Me,” students use technology to look up information about Africa. Taking place in the Technology Center, adult supervision is advised to ensure internet safety. This guidance does not include specific suggestions or “looks fors.” The teacher asks, “What question would you like to have answered about the animals in Africa?” To help the process, the teacher writes the search words on a piece of paper for students to reference when typing. Students do not receive direct instruction showing them how to type words on a keyboard.

In Theme H, “*Living Things*,” there is a list of suggested software apps for children to use when practicing math skills and letter identification. In small groups, the teacher models how to maneuver programs and apps on the computer. Most practice occurs during unstructured Technology Center time.

Then in Theme J, “Machines and Movement,” students use a search engine again to research different transportation vehicles. They look for the *biggest* and *fastest* vehicles, and the teacher prints relevant images when finished.

**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 a checklist and assessment suggestions. However, guidance is not included to support consistent and accurate administration. The materials do not include a variety of developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools. They do not provide opportunities for students to track their own progress and growth.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Introduction” to the material briefly describes why teachers need to use informal and formal assessments throughout the year. The curriculum recognizes that most prekindergarten settings will use their own assessment tools; therefore, they only include a simple assessment template. If formal assessments are desired, they recommend using pages from the three activity books: the “Book of Letters,” “Book of Numbers,” and the “Book of Activities.” These pages represent more informal assessment measures, and there is no recommendation for which pages to use for assessment.

The provided assessment template consists of a checklist containing the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines in table form. The teacher uses this to mark student progress in September, January, and June. The key indicates how to report progress by marking O=Obtained, P=Progressing, U=Unattempt, N/A=Not Applicable. However, the checklist does not describe which settings and activities the teacher should use for progress monitoring. Additionally, there are no rubrics or instructions describing how the teacher should complete the assessment. Beyond this resource, no additional recommendations support observational or anecdotal record keeping.

The Book of Letters includes a tracing page for each letter of the alphabet, nine pages for matching uppercase letters to lower case letters, and six pages for identifying a beginning sound. The Book of Numbers includes activities designed to reinforce several math concepts such as sorting, patterning, shape recognition, counting objects, and simple addition/subtraction problems using pictures. The Book of Activities contains one activity designed for each guideline within the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, along with a few materials like sight word cards and coloring pages. Many of these activities are not developmentally appropriate, so they would not be appropriate assessment measures of the Prekindergarten Guidelines. For example, one activity prompts students to *read* a pair of words, like *boat/float* and *boy/girl*, and then determine if they rhyme. Sight words are also not an appropriate component of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

In Theme I, “Health and Fitness,” students create a “My Fitness Book.” The teacher models by creating her own book displaying a physical activity: hula hoop, standing on one leg, jumping rope, or bouncing a ball. Each day for five weeks, the children complete and record an “achievement” in their own fitness book. At the end of the unit, the teacher awards gold medals for progress. This lesson is the only activity where students have the opportunity to track their own progress and growth.

**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 include diagnostic tools that yield meaningful information for teachers to plan instruction and differentiation. Nor do they include guidance for teachers and administrators to analyze and respond to data. Some lesson tips are included for scaffolding, but they do not explain how to leverage different activities to respond to student data. There are no administrator-specific resources for data analysis.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

An assessment checklist is found in the online "Blackline Masters." The checklist corresponds to each domain in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and the front page indicates the domain being assessed. To record results, teachers assign students a rating in September, January, and June using this key: O=Obtained, P=Progressing, U=Unattempted, N/A=Not Applicable. However, there is no guidance describing how to assess or what the different ratings mean. This lack limits how meaningful the data will be. The checklist depends on the teacher's expertise to choose, facilitate, and interpret diagnostic tools. There are no provided resources helping teachers or administrators monitor or adjust instruction.

While some recommendations are included within the thematic units, these are not related to diagnostic data. Additionally, not all recommendations include differentiation. For example, in Theme E, "Thanksgiving," one lesson recommendation states that children should be able to identify the first letter of their name by now. However, there is no accompanying adjustment or

scaffold recommendation if students cannot complete the activity. Instead, teachers should repeat previous instructions, sounding out and reciting the letters in the children's name. In Theme I, "Health and Fitness," children create a sandwich recipe. Teachers are supposed to ensure that all children "make a contribution" to the recipe. However, the lesson does not offer information describing how to encourage participation or to extend learning.

**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 include frequent, integrated progress monitoring opportunities. Additionally, there is no assessment guidance, nor are there many types of assessment tools. Progress monitoring is primarily teacher-dependent.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials do not include information to measure or track student success accurately. In the “Introduction” section, the materials suggest that teachers use assessment documents to create a baseline for readiness measurement. While there is a checklist aligned to each domain in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, this assessment includes little facilitation direction. There are no resources explaining which assessments to use for monitoring or any rubric explaining the meaning of the different checklist ratings. It is recommended that this checklist be used three times across the year, but it does not explain how results routinely and systematically inform instruction.

The adoption program does not include assessments or program monitoring tools within the package, but they do recommend using the “Book of Activities” for assessment if there is interest. The Book of Activities contains one activity designed for each guideline within the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, along with a few materials like sight word cards and coloring pages. However, many of these activities are not developmentally appropriate and would not be appropriate for 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.

## Does Not Meet 0/2

No evidence was found in the materials to address target instruction guidance, scaffolds, and extensions for struggling students other than a repetition of the initial lesson. Though there is evidence of many quality lessons for student learning, materials provide little guidance, scaffolds, extensions, and differentiation to meet the needs of struggling students and students who previously mastered the content.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher Curriculum Textbook,” Part 1, provides information regarding preparing the classroom and setting up student success. This advice includes information to support learners who are English Learners or who may need special education services. Part 2 of the Teacher Curriculum Textbook contains the lesson plans geared for whole group learning with additional practice during centers or small group and independent instruction. Accommodations or modified lessons to meet struggling students’ needs are minimal and rely on small group intensive reteaching using similar teaching practices with different materials.

No evidence was found on differentiating instruction for students who master the material more quickly. Additional practice is supported through the downloadable blackline masters. Activities designated as extension activities do not deepen the knowledge and skills of students who have mastered the content.

A gradual release model is discussed in the Teacher Curriculum Textbook, Part 1. An example in one activity is when students practice name writing, a prekindergarten skill designated by the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, IV.C.1. For a few weeks, students practice writing their name by tracing their name card with bolded letters, tracing their name card with lightly written

letters, and writing their name while looking at their name card; students are then released to write their name independently on paper. The unit whole group lessons do support the introduction of the content, teacher modeling of content skills, and time for individual practice.

Within the thematic unit on living things, materials recommend enrichment activities during center time. Materials are provided for students to build a habitat for toy animals in the “Construction” center and to sort a variety of objects representing living and nonliving things in the “Science” center. Although these activities are evidence of additional learning activities, there is no evidence to support the learning of all students. The activities provide general knowledge for students, but they do not meet the needs of specific groups or learning levels.

**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

Though the materials provide a variety of instructional delivery approaches (including whole group, small group, and center activities for group engagement), the materials do not specifically provide multiple types of practice to support mastery of content. While most lessons appear to be developmentally appropriate for prekindergarten students, some noted lessons require skills that may not be developed by the typical prekindergarten or kindergarten child.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials provide a variety of instructional methods that appeal to a variety of learning interests and needs. Lessons are taught during whole group “Circle Time” and extended during center time, so students have an opportunity to explore and practice the concepts. The “Teacher Curriculum Textbook,” Part 1, provides information on classroom organization, the daily schedule, and grouping strategies for student success. Part 2 of the textbook contains the 13 units of lessons (themes lettered A–M).

The lessons on the weather (Theme C) engage students in multiple activities to learn the identified concepts. The materials include various pictures of different objects that the teacher introduces to students. Additionally, there is an interactive read-aloud in which students use a sentence stem to discuss their favorite type of weather. These materials are then placed in centers for the students to sort and discuss as extension activities.

In Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” the lesson titled “The Mayflower Sailed” encourages students to use a globe, paper, and a pencil to copy the landmasses of England and New England and draw

a line to indicate the route of the Mayflower. The teacher's lesson focuses on the length of the "cold and rocky" journey; the teacher asks students comprehension questions about how the Pilgrims must have felt when they arrived. The "Extension and Practice" section supports the teacher in showing students how to use a compass; students have time to practice using the compass. For specific use of the compass, it states, "Show students the compass and explain that this is a geography tool which tells you which direction is north. Allow the children to explore how to use the tool."

In Theme G, "The World Around Me," students write words such as *I, am, it, me, cat, dog, is, read, big, and the*. As additional materials, books are provided for students to use to find new words to write. As part of emergent writing, children are using writing to convey meaning.. Theme G is scheduled to be taught about halfway through the prekindergarten year. The "Scaffolded Challenge" statement to extend student writing skills suggests independent practice during center experiences in the "Writer's Corner." One experience is for the teacher to place the "Letter of the Week" and words beginning with that letter on display in the Writer's Corner. Worksheets downloaded from the "Book of Letters" provide children with additional independent experience in tracing letters. Another activity in the Scaffolded Challenge is for children to write simple words using the provided magnetic board and magnetic letters. Books in the center support the creation of new words and provide a reference for students to create words. "Scaffolded Challenge" opportunities are not embedded consistently within the units and themes.

In the Teacher Curriculum Textbook, Part 1, the section on emerging reading and writing literacy uses an approach to letter learning that addresses several learning styles. The approach is called KTAVV, which refers to the Kinesthetic, Tactile, Auditory, Vocal, and Visual components of building letter knowledge. This multimodal approach provides students with various types of practice as they explore letter knowledge. The approach is used throughout all of the units as new letters are introduced. KTAVV is also used for number recognition.

Additional practice of skills is listed in the "Extension and Practice" sections. Most of the practice opportunities are not different from the main activity presented by the teacher in a large group setting. Example extension statements are "This activity can be extended" (Theme C, Weather); "Many of the activities in this section can, and are recommended to, be repeated as the activity provides practice with counting, balance, and coordination practice" (Theme J, Machines and Movement). For activities that are not repeated or extended over time, there are at-home suggestions. One activity describes an opportunity for students to go outside and observe objects in the sky (large group activity). Students return to the classroom and illustrate their observations (small group activity). The suggested activity extension is for students to repeat the process at home and compare their observations at different times of the day; students can also compare sunny and rainy day observations.

**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).

## Partially Meets 1/2

The materials offer some support for English Learners (ELs). The materials' introduction includes general strategies to engage ELs in the classroom and help them with language acquisition. However, additional guidance and support are needed to teach the lessons in the curriculum effectively. Though there are few examples of using the student's first language to enhance vocabulary development, there is evidence of accommodations commensurate with the various levels of English language proficiency.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

Materials provide activities that allow for role-playing, movement, and repetition; however, teachers do not receive direct support for ELs. There is also no mention of language proficiency levels (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High) within the materials. In the introduction textbook, the materials provide several general strategies for teachers to support ELs. The materials state: "It is imperative that preschool teachers are equipped to aid the development of ELLs in their classroom." Examples following this statement include making instructions visual, labeling items in the classroom in both English and native languages, peer-to-peer teaching, and increasing family involvement. Though these suggestions are useful, they are not at the level of detail necessary for ELs. There are few lesson-specific accommodations and scaffolds throughout the curriculum.

"Language and Communication" breakouts aid children in learning the English language. These comments serve as a reminder for teachers as they model instruction, facilitate an activity, or observe behavior. Some of the breakouts include "The child shows understanding by following one to two step oral directions in English"; and "The child investigates and demonstrates

growing understanding of the sounds and intonation of the English language.” These strategies do not accommodate learners at various levels of English language proficiency, and they do not often provide intervention actions for the teacher.

The “Information on Setting Up the Classroom” resource includes an example of a vocabulary learning opportunity in which children name foods on a table during lunch or snack time. No English learning instructional planning examples are given. The teacher labels the utensils, and the children name each utensil as they use it. While the materials suggest incorporating languages other than English, they do not explain how the teacher can intervene or how the home language can be leveraged for English development. The materials state: “English Language Learners should teach other children the names for the utensils in their first language.” Beyond this accommodation, all children receive the same instruction.

Materials provide large group and small group activities for all learners, with some mention of specific scaffolds for ELs. In Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” and Theme B, “Camping in the Forest,” the teacher encourages ELs to “listen closely to anyone speaking and take time to comprehend the words being used.” In Themes B–D, for ELs, the teacher breaks down instruction and completes each instructional step first before moving on to the next step. Additionally, the teacher allows ELs to utilize nonverbal communication signals and smaller phrases to communicate when they are having difficulties communicating fluently in English. No additional teacher support is given to scaffold information for children who are learning English.

In Theme E, “Thanksgiving,” one lesson has all students review previously learned letters. During the small group activity, teachers should have the “alphabet poster visible so that the children can see the letters clearly.” Materials state: “Repeated exposure is recommended using the KTAVV (Kinesthetic, Tactile, Auditory, Vocal, and Visual) strategy in small group learning, center, and circle time periods.” While this suggestion is useful for ELs, it is not specifically tailored to them. Whole group math instruction exposes students to numbers through this same method. The only specific EL guidance is in the last section of the thematic unit for snack time. In this activity, ELs learn common English phrases such as *please*, *thank you*, *you are welcome*, *Can I have...*, and *I do not like...* The teacher discusses “each phrase and how and/or when it should be used.” These phrases are absolutely necessary for English development, but the provided scaffold does not offer adequate teacher direction. Later in the unit, in a small group vocabulary lesson, students practice with the words *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow* while reading the book *When Is Thanksgiving Dinner?* There is no specific guidance on how to focus on language development for ELs.

In Theme H, “Living Things,” the teacher shows the students an assortment of items during a lesson on the plant life cycle. ELs are encouraged to give the name of the object in their native language before the teacher provides the object’s name in English. While this use of home language is useful, it is not leveraged in a way that develops linguistic, affective, cognitive, or academic English language skills.

In Theme I, "Health and Fitness," during a rhyming activity, the teacher explains what sound and intonation mean with regard to language. The materials state that the teacher should, if possible, apply the investigation and understanding to the student's first language before applying to the English language. These strategies encourage some strategic use of the student's first language to enhance vocabulary development; however, these examples represent the few occasional strategies.

**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

Though the materials provide thematic units spanning the full academic year, the practice and review opportunities align with the unit topic rather than a content-based scope and sequence. For this reason, units do not particularly build upon one another, and there are limited vertical alignment considerations building the curriculum from year to year. Students do not frequently review domain concepts across these thematic units.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The "Introduction" section in the "Teacher's Edition" gives the teacher a sample schedule for a full day of instruction. This sample outlines the program's expectations for reading, writing, and math within each thematic unit. However, there is no content-based scope or sequence describing year-long content development.

The "Correlation" section does identify how lessons are linked to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, but it does describe how lessons offer review and practice across the year. Teachers teach thematic units "when most appropriate to the classroom or school context." Additionally, this Correlation section does not describe how lessons vertically align within a theme or beyond prekindergarten. The curriculum objective is to prepare children for kindergarten, but there is no explanation of how instruction aligned to kindergarten Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

When examining the themes themselves, there is limited skills-connection within and between units. For example, in Theme A, "My First Week in Prekindergarten," each domain is represented in instruction. Teachers use the "Book of Activities" to support instruction for each domain. However, these lessons are isolated and are not part of the thematic unit plan.

Generally, most lessons are focused on individual content areas, and often they do not develop much over time. For example, vocabulary instruction uses the same procedure when introducing new words. First, the teacher lays out word cards, then she says the word and points to the first letter, and finally, she sounds out and names the first letter. Children repeat the letter and the word before describing the word meaning. There are some review activities available, but not activities embedded throughout the day. In “Writing Corner,” students make marks, write in their own way, and work on writing letters. In their “Book of Letters,” students trace, copy, and practice letters as they are introduced throughout the year. Related to this task, students repeatedly practice writing their names. As the year progresses, the only teacher suggestion is to remind students how to hold their pencils using the “tripod-grip.” Though some of these activities are present throughout the year, the purpose, rigor, and development are at a single level of trace and copy.

The “Science” domain is a strong content area for this set of materials. Lessons promote exploration and the use of scientific tools for investigation. These opportunities are distributed throughout the year, and students return to different topics for recursive practice. For example, students care for the environment in Themes B, D, and H. Then, they describe position and motion in Themes F, I, and J.

There is no indication of whether a lesson is an introduction, practice, or review of content knowledge. For example, during Theme F, “Math Center,” children count beads. In the next theme, Theme G, “The World Around Me,” students practice adding pennies. There is no description linking the two activities to one another. While these lessons actually build upon skills and increase in rigor, sometimes lessons inconsistently ask students to practice skills before they are directly introduced. For instance, in Theme F, “Science Center,” children line up toys by ordinal number. However, there is only some evidence of ordinal number instruction in this theme or in previous themes. The Teacher Edition instructs that ordinal terms are to be taught and used frequently throughout the day through lining up for daily activities, such as at lunch and snack times, and some introduction of ordinal numbers occurs before the lesson. A search on the digital platform indicates that ordinal numbers are not addressed until Theme G. Some lessons offer an “Extension and Practice” opportunity.

**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

While there is a scope connecting the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and instruction, there is no map sequencing instruction. Additionally, there are general suggestions to implement lessons as intended, but the materials rarely include specific guidance for implementation. The materials lack administrator-information meant to support classroom teachers in program implementation. While the materials do include a full years' worth of instruction, the lack of a clear instructional map or lesson plan cycle does not support realistic pacing.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The materials include multiple independent pieces for the teacher to access: "The Teacher's Edition," "Blackline Masters," two workbooks, "Book of Letters," "Book of Numbers," "Book of Activities," and a "Correlation Guide." While these multiple pieces are viewable electronically, they are not electronically linked. This lack requires teachers and administrators to exit one area and return to the main page before accessing another area. This structure may hinder implementation.

The printed Teacher's Edition contains all of the publisher information about the program, along with the lessons for each thematic unit, or "Theme." Teachers have access to all of this information through the online platform. While there is an included search bar, not all skills are searchable, and page numbers are sometimes inconsistent. The "Introduction" of the Teacher's Edition provides a list of thematic units, breaking down the 11-month curriculum by week. The materials state that the schedule can be adapted to the length of the day provided by an

educational entity. However, no variation for pacing or length of the day is specifically stated. While each theme includes a general overview describing the one- to five-week unit, specific instruction to support teacher implementation is lacking. Also, this overview does not explain how to assess background knowledge prior to new learning.

Though the “Correlation” tab explains how the Texas Prekindergarten Standards connect to lessons, there is no map sequencing instruction. This section does not include guidance explaining the content continuum the teacher should follow. As well, no calendar informs teacher pacing of lessons or content. Instead, teachers teach thematic units “when most appropriate to the classroom or school context.”

The Blackline Masters resource includes 34 items meant to support instructional activities. Some of these items include emoji cards for feeling discussion and pictures of the butterfly life cycle. Some of these resources are inaccessible online, but for those that are accessible, they can be used as a master copy to create new copies year after year.

The materials do not include administrator-specific resources to support teachers with instructional implementation. Additionally, no resources help administrators recognize high-quality instruction or offer practice and arrangement suggestions for a prekindergarten classroom.

**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

While the program is organized around 13 thematic units, there is no provided guidance for strategic implementation. Instruction does not seem to follow a specific order, and there is no resource describing how the themes relate to a developmental progression. Additionally, no information or guidance describes how an LEA should incorporate this curriculum into their current programmatic design and scheduling considerations.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

There is a provided sample plan for full-day instruction spanning five hours and twenty minutes. The schedule “can be adapted to fit the specific minutes of an individual classroom,” but there is no direct guidance detailing *how* to modify content or scheduling for a full 7-hour day or a 3-hour half-day program. The recommended schedule provides three daily read alouds, as recommended in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. However, there is no evidence of daily phonological awareness, writing, or math, as recommended in the guidelines. The teacher determines individual daily instruction. The “Blackline Masters” includes a blank lesson plan template for reference, but it is not fillable and does not suggest how teachers adjust instruction to fit the dynamics of their classroom.

The “Introduction” section describes pacing for an 11-month school year. Thematic units, or “Themes,” are of various lengths between one week and five weeks; this variability makes planning for yearly implementation difficult. There are no guidelines meant to assist teachers in modifying the curriculum length to fit the time schedule of other calendars. Themes are arranged in any distinguishable order, although most are included during appropriate times of the year. Theme A, “My First Week in Prekindergarten,” is used as an initial week-long unit to

get students accustomed to school. Theme E, "Thanksgiving," is slated for November and Theme M, "Preparing for Kindergarten," is a three week unit at the end of the year. One theme, Theme C, "Weather," is integrated throughout the year based on the occurrence of the weather described. Teachers should teach thematic units "when most appropriate to the classroom or school context." Without a content map or continuum of learning to plan for year-long instruction, this suggestion does not provide enough guidance. Teachers do not have access to guidance explaining how to nudge students from one stage to another based on their current level. Also, lesson guidance does not integrate students' background knowledge, nor does it contextualize future learning.

**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

Although the materials offer suggestions to develop connections between the classroom and home, no specific activities and supports are provided. The materials recognize the important relationship between the two, but there is no timeline or plan describing how a household can support their student's learning and development.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

In the "Information" section of the curriculum, two pages state the importance of developing communication between teachers and families. However, there is no guidance describing *how* to develop this relationship between teachers and families. This section does mention it is up to the prekindergarten program or teacher to decide how (and if) to use the provided materials. Some of the materials offer communication with the parents, while others describe how families can work with the students maintaining a diary. This section suggests using homework as a parent-child-teacher interface and references three activity books that can be completed at home. These suggestions are optional, and activities are not necessarily built for home-usage.

The "Blackline Masters" includes content worksheets and daily/weekly information sheets that can be used for home learning if the teacher chooses. However, they are not an integral component of the program. This resource does not include communication templates, digital games, or content reinforcement. Additionally, themes do not include guidance meant to promote content reinforcement at home either. There is one instance where teachers communicate with families inviting them to a family engagement event. Families are invited to celebrate the culmination of their children's work on a family tree and their "My Book About Me." However, there is little support suggesting how teachers should prepare for the event.

While some resources are available online, there is little guidance describing how to make these materials accessible to families. Depending on the adoption package, the 27 readers could be available online for parents to read with their child. Physical handouts and resources are only

available in English, and most of the ones suggested for send home are materials already used inside the classroom.

**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.

### Partially Meets 1/2

The materials are available in print and digital formats. The visual design of these student and teacher materials is neither distracting nor chaotic. The photographs used are clear and appealing, while most drawings are large and easy to read. However, the digital interface can be challenging to use, and sometimes the design distracts from student learning.

Evidence includes but is not limited to:

The “Teacher Guide” is generally designed with clear, designated places for important information. Tables describe the unit objective, lessons, vocabulary, provided supplies, and necessary materials. However, some information is not clearly stated or easily accessible. The “Reading and Writing” and “Math” sections offer lesson sequencing at the beginning of the guide. While the printed Teacher Guide has colored tabs identifying specific thematic units, the teachers must refer back to the “Introduction” section for relevant sequencing information. Other sections do not clearly indicate which Texas Prekindergarten Guideline(s) are being covered within each specific lesson. There is a “Correlation” spreadsheet summarizing the guidelines; however, not all lessons are represented in the spreadsheet. On the general digital platform, teachers can easily scroll between the “Introduction” section, “Teacher Guidelines,” and thematic units. For navigational purposes, there is a back button located above books in a green bar. The textbooks can be presented in a variety of visual ways, including full screen, one page, two pages, and offers customizable zoom functions. Information on navigating the online section was provided within the program introduction and checklist pages. However, the materials are difficult to navigate without sufficient practice.

Student materials include the “Book of Activities,” “Book of Letters,” “Book of Numbers,” a set of readers, and a set of “Blackline Masters.” Most of these resources include clear graphic images that are supportive and not overly distracting. However, in some cases, the graphics do

not accurately support the text. The Blackline Masters can be accessed both online and in print, and this document contains many of the student materials. However, numerous resources in the digital Blackline Masters could not be accessed even after attempts from several different computers. The online version does not have a “help bar” or “help section,” so teachers can easily resolve this issue. Reference Google photos are organized by category, are clear, and can be isolated and enlarged to fit a particular activity. “Animals,” “Food Type,” and “Forests” are all accessible; “Buildings,” “Butterflies,” and “Dogs” are not accessible.

The online version of thematic books are small originally but can be enlarged for children to see the pictures and the print clearly. The sides of the screen include delta signs, allowing students to turn the pages back and forth. However, if the book is on full screen, students must reduce the size before turning the page. Drawings and illustrations are large and colorful, but virtually flipping between pages can become a challenge. If the student turns the pages too quickly, the page may take up to four seconds to refresh completely.