

STEAM Themes: A clear and concise STEAM program for Prekindergarten Teaching is a new Prekindergarten program. It is Texas State Adopted and passed 100%.

It is a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) program where students engage in fun learning through play, using traditional, STEM and arts content to fulfil the TPGs. [Full details of the program are available here.](#)

TPS Publishing, Inc. thank the TRR review team for their work in evaluating STEAM Themes. We are happy to see many positive comments made. There are, however, scores and comments made about the program which TPS find are unfair, and do not reflect what the program has to offer. TPS also find that much of the citation evidence provided has been ignored.

TPS do not find that the review team have adequately reviewed the many citations provided by TPS. In submission for the TRR review, TPS provided an abundance of citations showing alignment to the TRR rubric. Despite providing 635 citations, only a small percentage were referenced in the report.

TPS is concerned that TRR reports may damage TPS and misinform school districts due to major process and report inaccuracies. TPS sent a full appeal document.

The major process issue is the lack of review time for cited TPS content.

TEA advised that the TRR panel does not have to follow cited information in their initial review but surely one would expect some review of major tools, whether print or online content, especially when cited for components that are online only?

A third-party company designed a digital access usage report which TPS use for all customers, and reviewers. TEA staff advised that all citations and comments submitted for the appeal would be reviewed for the final TRR report. Components cited are not referred to in TRR reports.

[Following receipt of the TPS appeals document available here](#) TPS expected the TRR panel reviewers to consider ALL cited content, especially online components.

A total of 120 minutes was invested by 5 reviewers viewing digital content from November 8th to December's report. Subtract time viewing digital textbooks; result- **4.17 minutes per reviewer was spent reviewing all other digital content.**

In the online menu there are 87 components. One component highlighted in the appeal has 94 cited pages. Clearly, the review has not considered cited online materials thoroughly; TEA confirmed reviewers would search for content to meet the rubric content.

TPS made 373 appeal comments. Less than 25% have received an updated comment and no score changed.

TPS expected cited content to be viewed and updated comments be included. This has not occurred, resulting in great concern in the TPS team, which includes professionals either with a PhD in a core subject and or Early Childhood Development, plus relevant STEAM qualifications.

This report is anonymous, not, scientifically, a quality text.

- There is no published information about number of reviewers or their qualifications; TEA advised five members, each with a degree. TEA confirmed that higher level qualifications are not required on application forms; it is possible that each person holds the same degree qualification, and the team has no multiple core subject degrees, or one or more Doctorate or Master's level of education.

- TEA advised all appeal citations would be thoroughly reviewed; it is evidenced that digital only content had only 2 hours spent in total, by 5 members. TPS requested confirmation that ALL cited content was reviewed; no response was received.
- Personal preference and subjective comments appear and negatively impacted findings.

373 appeal comments were sent to TRR. Key issues highlighted and not responded to within the final report include but are not limited to:

- 1) The reviewers have not followed TPS cited evidence and selectively used citations to demonstrate a point. The report typically referred to just one citation to make a judgement on the program. The TRR report references less than 25% of 635 citations given. One review omission example: in Section 2.4 the report states that there is no evidence of scaffolding for deconstructing and reconstructing sentences, however as cited page 163 of the teacher edition gives detailed information for scaffolding. Section 4.1 states that there is no evidence of materials providing specific ways for the teacher to model and explain the different nonverbal conversational rules. However, TPS have cited clearly pages 242-244. The teacher edition provides extensive information for conversation skills teaching and implementation.
- 2) There is no information for how scoring is determined, and it appears to be arbitrary. For example, for 11.4 a zero score was given. The indicator requires:

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.

One key component originally missed was the parent section of the Book of Activities. The reviewer mentions the Book of Activities but says the content is optional; this is inaccurate. TPS believe the reviewer has looked only at the printed version ending on page 48, and missed section 2 online. Pages 49 -143 are dedicated to the trio of teachers, parents, and students. This content is not optional. TPS provides free of charge access for all parents and for print only customers, a master print copy. TPS believe the reviewer(s) did not focus on these 94 pages. For each TPG in each domain TPS provide a narrative and activity for the trio to use together. The requirement is met.

- 3) The reviewers have misinterpreted content in multiple places. Section 3.5 of the report states - 'recommendations for teachers to address unsafe or unhealthy habits in a positive way were not located'. TPS cited pages 396–399 of the Teacher Edition, which includes an introduction for the reasons for hygiene plus activities including hand washing using a song. In Section 3.3 the reviewer writes that the materials do not address ways to set up the classroom to promote positive social interactions. However, detailed information is found in the Teacher Edition pages 10-13, and 48-50 as cited. Each theme provides a section or center theme and setup that is specific to the theme, addressing social skills development.
- 4) The reviewers have misinterpreted, misunderstood, or misstated the TPGs. The reviewers criticized a lack of evidence for research behind the use of the CRWPLN method for learning

to read. However, use of the CRWPLN comes from the TPGs itself. These are cross-referenced and supported by extensive research.

- 5) The reviewers have been subjective in many areas. In Section 2.2, the reviewer writes that the reader texts provided do not consistently serve as a foundation for skill development across domain areas. TPS cited multiple locations that show cross domain content linked to the reader books, that are fully relevant. The section calls for the utilization of high-quality texts as a core component, however there is no definition of high-quality text. The program utilizes texts written, specifically for each TPG, by a highly qualified teacher with a PhD.
- 6) Lack of appeal review time? Whilst many of the grammatical comments made by TPS in response to the original report have been addressed, it is clear that not all of the process and missed citation comments raised by TPS have received a response. For example, in section 2.2 the report states that 'There is no clear guidance for teachers on using the activities throughout the school day'. In response to this comment TPS cited evidence for the Teacher edition on pages 16-23, that gives detailed information on pacing through the day, utilization of themes, and pacing through the school year. TPS provide a blank schedule for teachers to use as a basis, and each theme provides scheduling information in the introductions. Despite evidence, the comment remains. Section 2.6 states worksheets are used heavily in the math and writing centers, rather than concrete math manipulatives or interactive writing for authentic purposes. Citations show there is extensive guidance on center setup including use of physical objects. This comment has been ignored. Section 3.1 states 'texts do not provide cultural and ethnic activities and materials.' In response TPS have provided a wide variety of citations. This includes, as cited, the entire theme based around Thanksgiving, the theme based around a new family joining the school from Africa, plus activities, as well as activities where children explore Native American art, culture, and more.
- 7) The review does not consider personalization. TPS provide personalized pacing and support teachers throughout the school year; ongoing professional development. TPS personalize schedules, curriculum, and provide exactly what each teacher needs for their classroom. [A full alignment to TPGs appears online](#). Again, this was missed originally and in the appeal review.

Whilst TPS welcome the many positive comments within the report, in conclusion, TPS do not believe that the TRR report has provided a true and fair reflection of the quality of the STEAM themes program. TPS believe once these process issues are resolved, and cited content reviewed, it will be a good tool for school districts.