

Learning A-Z, Raz-Plus ELL Edition Program Summary

February 24, 2020

Section 1. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Alignment

Grade K TEKS Student: 89.29%	Grade 2 TEKS Student: 82.26%
Grade K TEKS Teacher: 89.29%	Grade 2 TEKS Teacher: 82.26%
Grade K ELPS Student: N/A	Grade 2 ELPS Student: N/A
Grade K ELPS Teacher: 100%	Grade 2 ELPS Teacher: 100%
Grade 1 TEKS Student: 85%	
Grade 1 TEKS Teacher: 85%	
Grade 1 ELPS Student: N/A	
Grade 1 ELPS Teacher: 100%	

Section 2. Texts (what students read, see, and hear)

- The materials include high-quality texts across a variety of text types and genres but lack persuasive texts and dramas.
- The materials are accompanied by a text complexity analysis and include texts that are appropriately challenging and at an appropriate level of complexity.

Section 3. Literacy Practices and Text Interactions: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Thinking, Inquiry, and Research

- The materials provide students the opportunity to synthesize knowledge and ideas to deepen their understanding of the texts.
- The materials provide intermittent opportunities for students to make inferences and draw conclusions while interacting with texts and study the language authors use to support their understanding of the texts and do not address text structure or comparing and contrasting authors' purpose.
- The materials provide students some opportunities to develop composition skills across multiple text types for varied purposes and audiences, except in Grade 2 where students do not have sufficient opportunity to develop varied composition skills.
- The materials provide students some opportunity to build key academic vocabulary across the year but do not contain a year-long plan to build academic vocabulary.
- The materials do not consistently provide students the opportunity to engage in both short-term and sustained inquiry processes throughout the year; materials in Grade 2 do present students with opportunities to engage in inquiry processes.

Section 4. Developing and Sustaining Foundational Literacy Skills

- The materials provide systematic foundational skills instruction and practice targeted to grade-level TEKS.
- The materials do not include regular or systematic foundational skill assessment opportunities.

Section 5. Supports for Diverse Learners

- The materials offer some differentiation options for students performing above grade level and sufficient differentiation options for students performing below grade level throughout all units.
- The materials provide support and scaffolding strategies for English Language Learners.

Section 6. Ease of Use and Supports for Implementation

- The materials include a TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading–aligned scope and sequence, but there is no evidence of how standards connect and build across grade levels.
- The materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials, as well as annotations and ancillary materials that provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers, but they do not include assistance for administrators to support implementation.

Section 7. Technology, Cost, and Professional Learning Support

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

Raz-Plus ELL Edition, Kindergarten

Indicator 2.1:

Materials include **high-quality texts** for ELAR instruction and cover a range of student interests.

- The texts are well-crafted and are of publishable quality, representing the quality of content, language, and writing that is produced by experts in various disciplines.
- Texts include content that is engaging to K-1-2 students.
- Materials include increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts.

Meets 4/4

The materials provide a variety of high-quality texts that represent the content, language, and writing produced by experts in various disciplines. Texts are well-crafted and are of publishable quality, though most texts were not previously published and were written for the program. Texts increase in complexity throughout the course of the school year and contain content that is engaging to Kindergarten students. While classical texts are found in this collection, the bulk of texts are contemporary, traditional, and diverse.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The Chicken by Racheal Rice is an informational text in the guided reading collection. It uses real photos of chickens and their body parts to support the simple sentence structure commonly found in grade-appropriate texts.

The fictional series *Maria, Carlos, Abby, and Zots* by Rus Buyok grows in complexity throughout the titles so that students may follow the same characters through increasingly complex texts.

Fun in the Water by Edie Evans is a nonfiction text that describes different activities that students can do in the water, such as floating, fishing, or diving, accompanied by vibrant photographs.

Ant and Grasshopper by Mika-Lynne Sakaloff is an engaging folktale that uses words like *jig*, *snug*, and *hobbled* to cultivate visualization and lexical growth. Additionally, it uses phrases like *hard at work*, *gray day*, and *warm up* that can further add to the students' lexicon and understanding of figurative language.

Pop, Pop, Boom! by Myka-Lynne Sokoloff frequently incorporates figurative language and rhyme. Rhyming is included in verses such as “I’m popping popcorn. It’s just for me. It pops up big. Watch. You’ll see.” Figurative language is included via simile, “Popping popcorn sounds like a drum,” and onomatopoeia, “Poppity-pop-pop-yum”.

The Animals of Canada by Chuck Garofano is a text that makes good use of high-quality photographs displaying animals in their natural habitat. These sharp images help students closely study and decipher animal characteristics.

Games We Play by Noy Saetia is a contemporary text that has simple drawings and soft colors that can help the reader focus on the text and plot. The story features young children, who are relatable to students.

Indicator 2.2:

Materials include a **variety of text types and genres** across content that meet the requirements of the TEKS for each grade level.

- Materials include opportunities for students to recognize characteristics and structures of literary and informational texts.
- Materials include opportunities for students to recognize characteristics of persuasive texts, including stating what the author is trying to persuade the reader to think or do and distinguishing fact from opinion.
- Materials include opportunities for students to analyze the use of print and graphic features of a variety of texts.

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials include leveled fiction and nonfiction texts that provide students the opportunity to recognize characteristics and structures of literary and informational texts. Across all units, students have the opportunity to interact with print and graphic features within a variety of genres and formats. While the text list offers many opportunities for students to read and recognize characteristics of varied texts, there was no evidence of drama or persuasive texts explicitly covered in any of the Kindergarten units.

Examples of literary texts include but are not limited to:

Abby and Zots by Rus Buyok (fantasy)
A Fish Sees by Edie Evans (descriptive fiction)
Ant and Grasshopper by Myka-Lynne Sakaloff (folktale)
We Learn to Swim by Sarah Ghusson (realistic fiction)
Carlos Goes to School by Lorena F. DiBello (realistic fiction)

Examples of informational texts include but are not limited to:

A Place Called Home by Torran Anderson (informational nonfiction)
All Kinds of Faces by Annette Carruthers (descriptive nonfiction)
Counting Bugs by Laura Tully Zwickl (concept nonfiction)
Going Places by Chuck Garofono (informational nonfiction)
Spring Weather by Katie Knight (descriptive nonfiction)

Examples of print and graphic features include but are not limited to:

Pop, Pop, Boom! by Myka-Lynne Sokoloff uses varying font colors, styles, and sizes to emphasize increasing numbers as more people arrive at the house.

Are These His or Hers by Racheal Rice includes colorful illustrations that support this nonfiction text.

How Frogs Grow by Rus Buyok uses detailed illustrations about the life cycle of a frog. The illustrations match what the text says, allowing students to analyze the illustrations and make connections between words and pictures.

Indicator 2.3:

Texts, including read-aloud texts in K-2 and shared reading in Grade 2, are appropriately challenging and are at an **appropriate level of complexity** to support students at their grade level.

- Texts and the series of texts connected to them, including read-aloud and shared-reading texts, are accompanied by a text complexity analysis provided by the publisher.
- Texts are at the appropriate quantitative levels and have the appropriate qualitative features for the grade level.
- Read-aloud and shared-reading texts are above the complexity level of what students can read independently.

Meets 4/4

Materials include texts that are appropriately challenging and are at an appropriate level of complexity to support Kindergarten students. Texts are accompanied by a text complexity analysis provided by the publisher and are at the appropriate qualitative and quantitative levels for students. Read-aloud and shared-reading texts are above the complexity level of what students can read independently.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials contain a printable “2019 Learning A-Z Correlation Chart” that is available with nine different leveling systems, including the “Reading A-Z Levels.” The Learning A-Z “Leveling System” follows the guidelines for determining text complexity outlined in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The standards evaluate three areas of text complexity: qualitative measures, quantitative measures, and reader and task considerations. For the Learning A-Z Leveling System, quantitative levels were determined by average sentence length, word count, syllables, and number of different words per text. The publisher uses teachers to evaluate the qualitative measures, such as illustration support, concept load, and text organization. Each book in the publisher catalog is accompanied by a quantitative description and a summary. While not every book summary includes a description of qualitative features, many do. Two additional aspects of the Learning A-Z library are that many texts come in multi-leveled versions to better accommodate for differentiation, and many texts come with versions translated into other languages.

Ant and Grasshopper by Myka-Lynne Sokoloff is described as folktale fiction, with “190 words, Lexile 410L, Level 1, Grades K–1.” This text is utilized for shared reading and is above the

complexity level of what students in Kindergarten can read independently. The publisher provides summaries for texts, such as this one: “In this traditional retelling of the fable of the ant and the grasshopper, Grasshopper plays his fiddle through the summer and fall while Ant works hard gathering food. In winter, Grasshopper is out in the cold looking for food. Ant sees him and invites him in for a meal. Grasshopper vows he will work the next summer so he’ll have food to eat in winter.” The pages contain images that support the text, making it easier for students to comprehend the concepts; a combination of simple and complex sentences pushes the rigor to a level necessary for shared texts.

Near and Far Away by Cheryl Ryan is described as a 36-word “concept (nonfiction)” book that is at a “Level B (Grade K), Lexile 50L” level of quantitative complexity. The book summary states: “This simple leveled reader uses students’ favorite subject—animals—to illustrate a crucial spatial relationship. Each animal is shown close up and then farther away in its natural habitat. The simple, patterned text and beautiful photographs ensure that this book educates while it entertains.” This book can be found in six different languages: American English, French, Spanish, British English, Polish, and Ukrainian.

The Birthday Party, also by Cheryl Ryan, is a 73-word “[r]ealistic (fiction)” text that is at a “Level C (Grade K), Lexile 160L” level of quantitative complexity. This book uses high-frequency words on every page. According to the book summary, “repeated text patterns support the introduction of new vocabulary.” Other evident qualitative features include illustration support, familiar topics, and a reasonable concept load. A differentiated Spanish version of the book, *La Fiesta de Cumpleaños*, is included and has a quantitative description of “18 words, Spanish Level AA (Grade K), Lexile 0L.”

I’m All Right is a collection of seven poems written by Dina Anastasio. It is described as a 580-word poetry (fiction) text, that has a “Level L (Grade 2), Lexile 180” level of quantitative complexity. Used as a read-aloud text in Kindergarten, this book illustrates some of the common struggles students face, including “self-esteem, arguments with friends, and losing at games.” Realistic illustrations support each poem.

History of the Bicycle by Dana Duclou is an “informational (nonfiction)” text used as a read-aloud towards the end of the year. With a quantitative complexity of “497 words, Level M (Grade 2), Lexile 800L,” this rigorous text can be found in Unit 7 of the curriculum. In this text, students will learn how this machine has changed over time and how the technology is continuously improving.

Indicator 3.a.1:

Materials contain questions and tasks that support students in **synthesizing knowledge and ideas** to deepen understanding and identify and explain **themes**.

- Most questions and tasks build conceptual knowledge, are text-dependent, and prompt students to synthesize new information.
- Most formal and informal assignments and activities focus on texts students are reading/listening to and require close attention to the meaning and inferences as students demonstrate comprehension.
- Questions and activities grow students' understanding of topics and literacy skills over the course of each unit.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to evaluate and discuss information from multiple places within a text.

Meets 4/4

Materials contain questions and tasks that support students in synthesizing knowledge and ideas to deepen understanding and identify and explain themes. Questions and tasks build conceptual knowledge, are text-dependent, and prompt students to synthesize new information. Formal and informal assignments and activities focus on texts students are reading and/or listening to and require close attention to the meaning and inferences as students demonstrate comprehension. Questions and activities grow students' understanding of topics and literacy skills over the course of each unit. Materials provide opportunities for students to evaluate and discuss information from multiple places within a text.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The Unit 1 text *The Subway* includes a series of text-dependent questions for small guided-reading groups, allowing students to synthesize knowledge to deepen understanding and identify and explain themes. The guided-reading lessons contain questions that are labeled by type of question (i.e., Level 1, Level 2, Level 3.) For example: "What is the first step for riding the subway?" (Level 1); "Where are the people going?" (Level 2); "How does the girl feel about riding the subway? How do you know?" (Level 3).

Unit 1 has students interact with the read-aloud text *Police Officers*. The lesson plan provides six text-dependent questions about police officers that require students to look back into the text to answer them. The questions include "Why do police officers go to police school?" and "What do police officers do at the police station?" Additionally, students are asked inferential

questions, such as “What are some ways that police officers help people?” “How do police officers travel around in their communities?” “Why do police officers wear different uniforms?” and “Why are police officers important people in their communities?” Students are asked higher-order thinking questions to synthesize the content they learned in the text and think beyond the text. Some question examples include “Why is it important for police officers to be able to get places quickly?” and “Would you like to be a police officer?” The lesson plan also provides practice for finding the main idea and details of the different sections of the text.

Unit 2 includes “Elements of a Story,” where the read-aloud in Week 4 is *The Hero Maui*. “Higher-Order Thinking Cards” are used to prompt students to make inferences and evaluate the text that they just read/heard. Some examples of inferencing questions provided in the Higher-Order Thinking Cards are “What might have happened if Maui had not caught the Sun?” and “Do you think it’s good that Maui failed to give humans the gift of immortality? Why or why not?” These types of questions are ones that students cannot find the answers to in the story.

In Unit 3, Week 2, guided reading includes the story *The Box*, which provides teacher support to have students pay close attention to meaning and inferences throughout the story. Before reading, the teacher shows the cover of the book to make inferences about the genre and events that might happen in the story. Students are asked questions requiring them to make inferences as they read: “Why might the child need to wear goggles when zooming down the street?” and “What might the child see when high in the sky?”

The “Essential Question” in Unit 5 (“Social and Emotional Text”) is “What lessons can texts teach us about the kinds of choices we make in our lives?” The read-alouds for the unit—*Sugar*, *Sugar Everywhere*, *Penny the Rude Penguin*, *I’m All Right*, and *Mike’s Good Bad Day*—are all texts that develop students’ understanding of the Essential Question. Each text focuses on a different comprehension skill—skills that were taught throughout the year—ensuring that students are developing and practicing different literacy and comprehension skills to become better readers.

Unit 5 states the materials provide various opportunities to evaluate and discuss information from multiple places within a text. *Healthy Me* includes a text evaluation with identified high-frequency words and incorporates reading one-to-one and modeling how to take part in a think-aloud.

The materials cluster topics and skills together to help build comprehension skills throughout the course of each unit. For example, Unit 1 is called “Civics, Government, Citizenship.” The texts within that unit are all nonfiction texts and include *The Classroom*, *The Post Office*, and *We Build*. All three of these texts focus on the concepts of civics and government. They also

focus on the following comprehension skills topics: beginning high-frequency words, asking and answering questions to deepen understanding of the text, and connecting prior knowledge.

Unit 6 has another cluster of nonfiction texts, including *Strange Plants* and *Animals, Animals*. These texts require students to identify the main idea and details, summarize, and connect to prior knowledge to better understand the text. The shared-reading text for Unit 6, *Frog's Mississippi River Adventure*, requires students to make inferences and draw conclusions to help them understand the text.

Additionally, the program provides both a "Fiction Retelling Rubric" and a "Nonfiction Retelling Rubric" that can be used with any text to assess comprehension. The Nonfiction Retelling Rubric provides prompts for students to retell key elements, focusing on the summary, main idea, details, vocabulary, and accuracy. The Fiction Retelling Rubric assesses a student's ability to comprehend sequence, setting, characters, problem, and resolution. The program's selection of texts within a unit allows students to deepen their understanding of the topic over the course of four weeks. While there are no explicit opportunities in the lesson plans for students to make connections to other texts within the units, the progression of texts that the program chooses does provide ample opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of the topic. Each text focuses on a different literacy skill that is revisited in other texts within the unit.

Indicator 3.a.2:

Materials contain questions and tasks that require students to **evaluate the language, key ideas, details, craft, and structure of individual texts.**

- Questions and tasks support students' analysis of the literary/textual elements of texts by asking students to
 - analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding;
 - compare and contrast the stated or implied purposes of different authors' writing on the same topic;
 - analyze the author's choices and how they influence and communicate meaning (in single and across a variety of texts); and
 - study the language within texts to support their understanding.

Does Not Meet 0/4

The materials contain intermittent opportunities for students to evaluate the author's purpose, language, key ideas, details, and craft. Text structure and comparing and contrasting the authors' purpose is not addressed in the curriculum.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials contain intermittent examples to evaluate an author's purpose. For example, in Unit 1, *We Make Good Choices* includes the author's purpose as the comprehension skill. Through a pre-reading activity, students listen to the difference between persuading, informing, and entertaining. The teacher then provides examples of an author's purpose in different types of writing, such as newspapers, magazines, fairy tales, and advertisements. Students work as a group to locate specific examples in the provided texts to support why each text is a specific type of writing with a specific purpose. During the reading, students evaluate details to determine the author's purpose through a think-aloud: "When I think about why the author wrote this story, I ask myself: What does the author want me to know when I finish reading this story?" This information is not indicated in the weekly planner.

Some leveled texts include a lesson plan and worksheets related to author's purpose. Teachers have access to these resources, but they fall outside of the Kindergarten "Literacy Curriculum Map." Texts like *Amazing Caves* and *Grandparents Are Great* include lesson plans and

worksheets where students identify author's purpose and support this purpose with evidence from the text.

The materials contain intermittent examples to evaluate language. The texts themselves contain rich examples of language that could be studied, but questions do not often assess language. For example, in the Unit 4 shared-reading text *Drums Around the World*, there are examples of similes, such as "They sound like thunder and rain pounding down"; "They sound like slow, steady heartbeats." This is an opportunity for a craft and language analysis of these similes; however, the questions do not go beyond text-to-self questions. The analysis is limited to filling in a sentence stem about a personal experience: "When I listened to this page, I thought about...because...."

Unit 8 is one of the three units that include opportunities to discuss the author's purpose for writing a text. According to the "Standards Snapshot" in the "Literacy Curriculum Map," the author's purpose for writing text is covered in Units 1, 2, and 8. In *Blizzards!* students are given a graphic organizer to choose the author's purpose between "persuade, inform, or entertain," using drawing and text from the story. After explaining what each word means, the teacher chooses any previously read book. Students then work in groups to determine the author's purpose in the previous book and then reach a class consensus. With a partner, students predict the author's purpose for *Blizzards!*

The "Standards Snapshot" in the "Literacy Curriculum Map" does not list opportunities for students to evaluate the use of text structure or compare and contrast authors' purposes.

Indicator 3.a.3:

Materials include a cohesive, year-long plan for students to interact with and build key **academic vocabulary** in and across texts.

- Materials include a year-long plan for building academic vocabulary, including ways to apply words in appropriate contexts.
- Materials include scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners.

Partially Meets 2/4

The materials provide vocabulary instruction with each leveled text, and each individual lesson plan provides guidance on how to introduce academic and content-specific vocabulary. Materials contain resources for vocabulary development; however, the materials do not contain sufficient scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners. The materials do not include an “at-a-glance” year-long plan for building academic vocabulary.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The “Primary Protocols” document provides teachers with a framework on how vocabulary instruction should look in shared and guided reading over the course of a five-day literacy block. While there are suggested routines and procedures for how to teach vocabulary each day of the week, these suggestions are general and do not vary over the course of the year. While there is no plan on how to use previously learned vocabulary in a new text, all of the texts within a unit are on similar topics, which allows students to use their newly-acquired vocabulary appropriately.

Within the “Weekly Planner” and “Literacy Curriculum Map” resources, individual lesson plans do not provide a plan for differentiated vocabulary instruction. Each Weekly Planner file includes a folder titled “Resources for Differentiation,” which can be found in any of the six reading component folders: “Shared Reading,” “Phonics,” “Guided Reading,” “Centers,” “Read Aloud,” and “Writing.” However, when referenced in the Weekly Planner document, these resources for differentiation are essentially instructional options for the teacher. There are no further instructions for implementation, and documents do not vary over the course of the year. They do not include scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners. Each leveled text includes a lesson plan listing new vocabulary words as well as a script that teachers can follow to introduce the words. Sometimes, the

materials reference additional graphic organizers and flashcards that can be used to practice the new vocabulary. However, these resources are not scaffolded for students at varying levels.

The “ELL” (English Language Learner) “Language Skill Packs” are a prominent resource throughout the curriculum. They “provide content-based resources for developing vocabulary and strengthening English language learners’ reading, listening, speaking and writing skills.” The ELL Language Skills Packs are one of the resources that teachers have for differentiation; however, the materials included in the pack are not directly related to the texts in the Weekly Planner. While vocabulary resources include “Vocabulary & Idiom Books,” “Graphic Organizers,” and “Word Sorts,” there are no differentiation opportunities among these resources.

In Unit 1, the shared-reading text *Ant and Grasshopper* has vocabulary instruction to guide students in determining the meanings of words. The Weekly Planner instructs teachers to use the “Vocabulary” section from Day 1 in the shared-reading text’s lesson plan to teach the vocabulary words *fiddle*, *gathering*, *grain*, *rest*, and *work*. Teachers use vocabulary cards to introduce the words and prompts for discussion. Some prompts include “Can you tell me what this is a picture of? The word says.... Does anyone know what this word means? Let’s read the definition of the word.” These vocabulary cards are the only differentiation resource suggested for this shared-reading text. However, they are referenced during the five-day Shared Reading lesson as instruction for the whole group. There are no scaffolds and supports for teachers to differentiate vocabulary development for all learners.

Unit 2 includes the guided-reading text *Jungle Friends* and introduces the words *friends*, *frog*, *jungle*, *monkey*, *snake*, and *tiger*. This text includes a pre-made lesson available through a separate website; however, “words appear in the lesson but not in the book.” Directions for teaching vocabulary include reading the word aloud, discussing the meaning, and having students illustrate the words on a poster. There are no further scaffolds and supports to differentiate vocabulary instruction found in the text lesson plan. There is one resource for differentiation cited in the Weekly Planner: “ELL Language Skills Pack: Animals Vocabulary Lessons & Resources.” This document is general and does not include vocabulary relevant to *Jungle Friends*. In other weeks of the Weekly Planner, there is a “Games Guide and Bingo Sheets” resource cited for English Learner differentiation. The instructions state that the games can be used and are easily modified. However, further guidance and support for the teacher to modify for different levels and groups of students while using these resources is not given.

In the Unit 4 shared text *Color Wheel Colors*, the vocabulary instruction within the leveled-book lesson plan is minimal. The story’s critical words to know include *color wheel*, *complementary*,

primary colors, secondary colors, shades, and tints. Directions for teaching vocabulary include reading the word aloud, discussing the meaning, and having students illustrate the words on a poster. These are the same general directions found in the vocabulary instruction for the Unit 2 text *Jungle Friends*. There are, however, three resources for differentiation referenced in the Weekly Planner: “Vocabulary Graphic Organizer: Sense Wheel,” “Word Meaning Map I,” and “Vocabulary Graphic Organizer: My Definition.” However, these resources remain general, are not specialized for this vocabulary instruction, and do not include instructions for differentiation. The Word Meaning Map I and My Definition resources do not seem particularly apt for teaching the vocabulary words relevant to this text.

Indicator 3.a.4:

Materials include a clearly defined plan to support and hold students accountable as they engage in **self-sustained reading**.

- Procedures and/or protocols, along with adequate support for teachers, are provided to foster independent reading.
- Materials provide a plan for students to self-select texts and read independently for a sustained period of time, including planning and accountability for achieving independent reading goals.

Does Not Meet 0/1

The materials include some self-sustained reading opportunities throughout the units, but they do not provide students with the opportunities to make and track their own reading goals. Additionally, the materials do not provide adequate guidance for teachers to implement procedures and protocols that foster self-sustained reading. Materials do not provide a plan for guiding students in self-selecting texts or goal setting, but they include some accountability structures for independent reading.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The Kindergarten “Literacy Curriculum Map” has a “Primary Protocols” document that gives teachers guidance on how to set up their literacy block in the classroom; it only mentions independent reading in the “Oral Language Development/Discussion” section, where the program describes how students should be engaging in deep discussion about texts they have read, including discussions about independent-reading texts with other students, and in the “Reading Center” rotation. The “Centers” section mentions that self-selected reading time allows students to read for authentic reading purposes, practice reading skills, read a wide range of text types and genres, build reading fluency, and build endurance and confidence as they sustain uninterrupted reading over a 15–20 minute period of time. Although the document explains what self-selected reading is and why it is important, it does not provide instructions or suggestions on effective practices for fostering self-sustained reading.

The Primary Protocols document mentions setting and reviewing student goals, but the document does not specifically mention self-selected texts or independent reading goals.

The “Reading Room” is a digital library for students to quickly find relevant, high-interest content. In the Reading Room, students can choose to either listen to or read a story before completing an associated comprehension quiz. Students can navigate through the different categories on their own or “favorite” books they find interesting, while teachers can directly assign texts for students to read. Assigning texts to students can increase accountability; however, there is no instruction for students to decide which books are best for them.

In Unit 3, lesson plans for the read-aloud have a section called “Build Fluency.” In this section, the plan suggests the teacher should allow students to reread their guided-reading books independently or let them buddy-read with a partner. It also suggests allowing the students to take their books home to reread to build fluency.

The Unit 8 Curriculum Map addresses self-sustained reading under the Centers section with the following two objectives: (1) read on-level text orally with accuracy and rate; (2) read on-level and self-selected text with purpose and understanding.

The program does provide a plan for how teachers can select appropriate texts for students but does not give guidance on how students can use their reading levels to self-select books for independent reading. Teachers use the “Benchmark Passages” and “Running Records” to determine students’ reading levels.

Indicator 3.b.1

Materials provide support for students to **compose** across text types for a variety of purposes and audiences.

- Materials provide students opportunities to write literary texts for multiple purposes and audiences:
 - Students dictate or write poetry using poetry elements (1-2).
 - Students dictate or write personal narratives that convey their thoughts and feelings about an experience (K-2).
- Materials provide students opportunities to write informational texts (K-2):
 - Students dictate or write procedural texts (1-2).
 - Students dictate or write reports about a topic (2).
- Materials provide students opportunities to practice correspondence:
 - Students dictate or write thank-you notes and letters (1-2).

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials provide students some opportunities to write literary texts for multiple purposes and audiences, such as dictating or writing informational texts as well as dictating or writing personal narratives that convey students' thoughts and feelings about an experience.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The "Weekly Planners" for Units 1 and 2 show that narrative writing is done through a "Writing Center" activity. In Unit 1, narrative writing is said to be addressed in a "Doodle, Draw, Write" Center activity. In this Center activity, students draw a picture by adding to a line or doodle that is already on the page. Then, they write a story about their picture, following these instructions: "1) Players choose a doodle. 2) Players draw a picture by adding to the doodle. 3) Players write a story about their picture. 4) Players read their story to a partner." While this is said to address personal narrative writing, there is no direct instruction teaching students to write about their thoughts and feelings about an experience. The Weekly Planner instructs teachers to have Kindergarten students complete at least one page from the Center activity and use high-frequency words to create and illustrate original sentences. The same activity is used in additional weeks.

In Unit 2, narrative writing is said to be addressed through the "Trace and Write" Center. In this Center, students trace the words that are on the first line. For example, the students trace "the yellow" on one of the activity pages. Then, they copy those words to fill in phrases, such as "The

yellow boots. The yellow hat.” The directions state: “1) Players choose a page to work on. 2) Players trace the words on the first line. 3) Players write the words again on the next three lines. 4) Players read each sentence out loud. 5) Players color the picture to match the sentences.” This task addresses handwriting development and does not ask students to write personal narratives that convey their thoughts and feelings about an experience.

Unit 2 also references writing personal narratives in the lesson plan for the shared-reading text *Lucky Chinese New Year*. This task is titled “Shared Writing: Write Using Capitalization.” Students are encouraged to write a sentence using their name and their favorite holiday. First, the teacher models the following similar sentence: “Mrs. Singh spent the Fourth of July in Yellowstone National Park”; then, students pair together to tell each other their favorite holidays. Students help each other write their sentences and, when everyone is finished, they share. While this task is meant to address narrative writing and the model uses phrases like “I love...” and “I would like to...” students are not prompted to include either of these phrases in their writing. The prompt states that students need to “write a sentence that uses their name and the name of a holiday.” The overarching focus of the task is ensuring students use capital letters correctly.

Unit 6 provides an opportunity for students to write about something they did recently, using transitional phrases. In the lesson for *A Backyard Garden*, students use transitional phrases to write about something they did recently, using time and order words to help explain the order. The teacher first puts the following sentences on the board: “First, I put water in the kettle. Second, I put the kettle on the stove. Next, the water boils. Now, I can make hot tea.” The teacher discusses the words that signal a sequence and then explains that students are to choose a subject that is familiar to them to write about, such as steps to a game or how to get ready for lunch. After they have written, students are encouraged to share, and the listeners clap every time they hear a word that signals the order. While this task asks students to write about an experience, it is more of a procedural task rather than a personal narrative conveying thoughts and feelings about an experience. Additionally, Unit 6 addresses informational text writing when students read the leveled book *Living or Nonliving?* Students are prompted: “Choose one living and one nonliving thing. Write about how they are the same and how they are different.”

Unit 7 provides students additional opportunities to write informational texts. In the Weekly Planner, the instructions are: “Have students walk around their school and write about what they see on their walk.” Back in the classroom, students are expected to draw a map of the school first. Then, they are to “write an informational piece of what they saw on their walk

including any symbols they used on their map.” The activity is extended as students are asked to share what they wrote with a partner.

In Unit 8, students are given a copy of the wordless book *Blizzards*. They write their own version of this informational text using facts learned through the shared-reading lesson. The students also discuss whether this is a literary text or an informational text and how they know. Later, in Week 4, students are using facts that they have learned about the Earth, sky, and space; in the Writing Center, they write an informational piece using an acrostic poem. They thereby take the culminating knowledge that they have learned and apply it at an independent Center with no teacher support.

Indicator 3.b.2

Materials engage students **in the writing process to develop text in oral, pictorial, or written form.**

- Materials facilitate students' coherent use of the elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing/publishing) to compose text:
 - Students utilize drawing and brainstorming to generate drafts.
 - In K-1, students plan and organize their drafts by speaking, drawing, or writing.
 - In Grade 2, students organize drafts by writing based on an idea and details.

Meets 4/4

Materials engage students in the writing process to develop text in oral, pictorial, or written form. Materials facilitate students' coherent use of the elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing/publishing) to compose text. Students utilize drawing and brainstorming to generate drafts, and they organize their drafts by speaking, drawing, or writing.

Examples include but are not limited to:

In Kindergarten, the section of the “Primary Protocols” document (a document that provides suggestions for daily routines and procedures to help support the implementation of the “Weekly Planner”) utilized for writing instruction is called “Shared Writing (Grade K)” and showcases four weeks of daily instruction. On Day 1, the students brainstorm their ideas on a specific graphic organizer provided based on the type of writing being done that week. On Day 2, the teacher models using the notes from the graphic organizer to create sentences. Then, the students practice writing sentences from their graphic organizers as the teacher provides scaffolding. On Day 3, “students add illustrations to their writing as applicable.” The guidance specifies that “drawing helps ease them into the idea of communicating their ideas through modalities other than speech.” On Day 4, the teacher models making revisions from the sample sentences used on Day 2. Then, the students practice making revisions in their own text. On Day 5, the students share their writing and illustrations with their classmates.

During Units 1–4, the focus of Kindergarten is on sentence formation. Using a sentence starter like “We go to...” Kindergarten students are guided through each step of the writing process. After drafting, revising, and editing their individual sentences, the class publishes a class book composed of each student's individual sentence. The first semester “Shared Writing” framework provides students the opportunity to plan, organize their ideas, revise, and edit

sentences with a partner or group. Kindergarten students apply knowledge of the writing process independently in the second semester when they respond to writing prompts based on the shared-reading text for the week.

This Shared Writing pattern is used in Unit 3 with the sentence stems “We are at the.... We go to the....” In Unit 4, the sentence stems are “I make a...[color word]...[noun]. It is a...[shape word].”

During Units 5–8, the focus of Kindergarten shifts toward process writing. Each unit has a “Process Writing Lesson Plan” that is specific to the genre in which the students are writing. The Process Writing Lesson Plans teach the students the five-step writing process using four main genres: “informative/explanatory, narrative, opinion/argument, and transactional.” Each of those genres is divided into four developmental writing levels (beginning, early beginning, developing, and fluent). These lesson plans provide scaffolding and explicit directions for the teacher while providing more opportunities for students to practice their craft. These lessons also all have examples of texts, examples of filled graphic organizers, blank graphic organizers, a revision checklist, and a sample report.

For example, in Unit 7, the “Weekly Planner” prompts teachers to use “Process Writing Lesson, Narrative—Personal Narrative” throughout the week. This rigorous lesson plan introduces students to the different elements of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and assessing/reflecting. Before beginning, students preview samples of narratives that are on their level. They describe what the story is about and “identify the *details* in the story and how they help describe what happened.” In the prewrite, they use a “Personal Narrative Graphic Organizer” to brainstorm via writing or drawing using a web. Students then write a paragraph using the beginning-middle-and-end structure. During revisions, students use the “Personal Narrative Revision Checklist” to ensure correct usage of common nouns/verbs, correct order, correct parts of speech, and complete sentences. Finally, they use an “Editing Guide” to check convention usage before moving on to the publishing stage. Students are encouraged to “present their stories in such formats as a paper, a multimedia story, a Podcast.” This Process Writing Lesson Plan is representative of others found in the Kindergarten curriculum.

Indicator 3.b.3

Over the course of the year, students are provided opportunities to **apply grade-level standard English conventions to their writing**.

- Materials provide opportunities for practice and application of the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing, including punctuation and grammar.
- Grammar, punctuation, and usage are taught systematically, both in and out of context.

Meets 4/4

Over the course of the year, students have multiple opportunities to apply grade-level standard English conventions to their writing. The materials provide opportunities for the practice and application of the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing, including punctuation and grammar. Grammar, punctuation, and usage are taught systematically, both in and out of context.

Examples include but are not limited to:

Materials include thirty weeks of daily grammar practice activities that target key grammar skills at the four developmental writing levels: beginning, early developing, developing, and fluent. The activities provide quick practice with grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and other essential skills for writing. The “Primary Protocols” document states that “Grammar and Mechanics” instruction is embedded specifically in the “Read Aloud” and “Writing” portions of the day and is reinforced and practiced throughout different components of the literacy block. Grammar and Mechanics instruction is taught five days per week.

In Unit 1, teachers use *Ant and Grasshopper* as a leveled text resource for Writing. The “Weekly Planner” states that students practice capitalizing the beginning of sentences; they identify the capital letters at the beginning of sentences within the text, participate in “Shared Writing” by correcting capitalization mistakes in sentences that the teacher writes, and then apply their knowledge to write their own sentences.

In Unit 2, while reading *A Lucky Chinese New Year*, the teacher teaches students how to capitalize the first letter in a name. Students and the teacher discuss that names start with a capital letter. Then, the teacher makes a list of words, including *halloween*, *tomorrow*, *monday*, *friend*, *mrs. jones*, and *the lake*, and tells the students to give a thumbs-up if it needs a capital letter or a thumbs-down if it does not. The guided-reading lesson for *Jungle Friends* includes a small-group lesson that explicitly teaches plural nouns; students identify animals in the story

and create the plural form of the noun. Students practice the skill in small groups with a plural nouns worksheet.

In Unit 4, students practice identifying and using pronouns using the text *In the Spotlight*. Students identify pronouns within the text, participate in Shared Writing by changing names to pronouns in sentences that the teacher writes, and then write sentences using pronouns about a member of their own family.

In Unit 5, during a shared reading of *Healthy Me*, students identify verbs after hearing an explanation of what they are. After identifying verbs with a partner and adding them to a class list, the students are able to act them out for the rest of the class; students guess the verb another student is acting. Then, students practice verbs via a worksheet.

In Unit 6, students listen to *Frog's Mississippi River Adventure* during the "Read Aloud" portion of the literacy block and identify different types of punctuation used in the text. The Weekly Planner states that teachers should stop at different points to allow students to discuss the usage of different punctuation marks. For example: "[P]oint out the period and the exclamation mark on page 5. Invite volunteers to explain how the two sentences are different based on the ending marks." The Weekly Planner also lists the Grammar and Mechanics worksheets found in the lesson plans for *The Forest; High or Low?*; and *Spring Cleaning*. The worksheets allow students to practice identifying and using different punctuation marks at the ends of sentences within the context of the text. For example, students would have to put a punctuation mark at the end of "Where is the bird...."

In Unit 7's Writing section, students practice correctly spelling high-frequency words. Students use the words to create and illustrate original sentences. Later, while reading the poetry book *Just the Wind*, the teacher pauses to point out nouns and has students discuss what they notice about the words. In "Writing Centers," students write at least two different types of sentences.

In Unit 8, students practice identifying plural nouns in the text *Introducing Planet Earth* and discuss what they notice about the words. The Weekly Planner prompts teachers to stop and discuss the use of plural nouns at different parts during the read-aloud, specifically with the words *oceans* and *seasons*. In addition to identifying plural nouns during a read-aloud, it lists the Grammar and Mechanics worksheet for the leveled book *Places Plants and Animals Live* as a "Resource for Differentiation." On this worksheet, students look at pictures of different animals and plants and label them using a word bank that has singular nouns. For example, there is a picture of two frogs. The word bank lists the word *frog*. Students have to change *frog* to *frogs* to practice using plural nouns.

Indicator 3.b.4

Materials include **practice** for students to write legibly **in print (K-1) and cursive (Grade 2)**.

- Materials include instruction in print (K-1) and cursive (Grade 2) handwriting for students in the appropriate grade(s).
- Materials include a plan for procedures and supports for teachers to assess students' handwriting development.

Meets 1/1

The materials include practice for students to write legibly in print. Materials include instruction in print that is appropriate for Kindergarten students and a plan for procedures and supports for teachers to assess students' handwriting development.

Examples include but are not limited to:

According to the Kindergarten curriculum map, handwriting is covered in all units in the curriculum. The "Weekly Planners" contain specific handwriting instruction directions, usually found in the "Writing" section. For example, in Unit 1 the teacher develops handwriting by having the students practice writing their names. Also in Unit 1, the teacher models writing the letters *Nn* and *Aa*, and students practice writing the letters and words associated with these letters using the "Letter Formation Practice Sheets."

The Writing section of the Weekly Planners includes target letters for each week. Each Weekly Planner states the target letters and handwriting resources to use to reinforce handwriting practice. For example in Unit 3, Kindergarten students are introduced to the letters *Uu* and *Ll*. The Weekly Planner explains how to model writing each of the letters and notes that students should practice writing each letter and words associated with the letter using the Letter Formation Sheets. There are multiple Letter Formation Sheets that teachers can use: practice writing upper- and lowercase letters by tracing; practice writing upper- and lowercase letters without tracing; practice writing upper- and lowercase letters with a keyword; and practice writing upper- and lowercase letters with minimal prompting. Each Letter Formation Sheet has an image of a keyword that students can use to connect each letter to a familiar animal or object. For example, the pictures for the letter *L* include a leaf, a lion, and a lizard.

The materials embed handwriting into Writing sections every day of the week, reinforcing and practicing handwriting throughout the literacy block. The weekly plan focuses on two letters. Day 1 is dedicated to the uppercase formation of one of the weekly letters; Day 2 focuses on

the lowercase of the same letter; Day 3 targets the uppercase of the second letter; Day 4 targets the lowercase of the second letter; and Day 5 is dedicated to reteaching and enriching as needed. To guide students with whole-letter formation, teachers encourage students to say the letters and sounds of the letters as they write them. Materials also include a “Reflect on Writing” section in which students examine their work, identify the letters that are written the neatest, and then provide reasons for why they chose those letters.

Materials include an alphabet tracking form used to assess and track the development of students’ handwriting. The teacher records when the student has completed an alphabet pack or records anecdotal notes regarding the progress each student is making.

Indicator 3.c.1

Materials support students' **listening and speaking about texts**.

- Materials provide opportunities for students to listen actively and to ask questions to understand information.
- Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussions that require students to share information and ideas about the topics they are discussing.

Meets 4/4

The materials support students' listening and speaking about texts and provide opportunities for students to listen actively and to ask questions to understand information. Students have multiple opportunities to engage in discussions that require sharing information and ideas about the topics they are discussing.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials' curriculum map shows the opportunity for students to "share information and ideas audibly and clearly" in all units of study. Materials give guidance to teachers on how to model student participation in structured, whole-group discussions.

Unit 1 shows how the classroom reads *Hats at Work*, and the teacher engages students in a discussion about what they see on the cover and pages of the book. During the "Book Walk," the teacher probes students with questions such as "What do you think the book will be about?" and "What are some kinds of hats that may be in this book?" During the five-day lesson plan, the teacher also engages students in a discussion about the hats that are seen in the book, asking students to make connections as they determine if any of the hats in the book remind them of any hats they have seen or worn. The teacher provides students with sentence stems to support their answers: "This book reminds me of...because..." and "This book reminded me of my hat because...."

Unit 2 shows students how to speak clearly and to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas when conversing about texts. With the story *Fall Forward, Spring Back*, the students "discuss in their groups, times when they were early." After students discuss in their group, the teacher leads a discussion about strategies for being early. As the teacher introduces the book, the students "discuss what they see on the covers and offer as to what type of book it is and what it might be about." During the reading, students discuss in small groups what information is provided that is not included in the text. They also discuss how the setting changes throughout the story.

During “Word Work,” students work in small groups to discuss the alphabetical order of the character names and how they know.

In Unit 4, students orally form questions by choosing from the beginning words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. The teacher models asking a question using these question words. Students also have the opportunity to listen actively using the discussion cards available for the story *A Rainbow of Food*. The questions on the discussion cards include “Why do you think it is important to eat a rainbow of foods every day? What would you draw when making your own rainbow of fruits and vegetables?” Discussion cards are used again for the read-aloud *Let’s Make Shapes*. Some of the questions included in the discussion cards are “What do you draw first when you draw a mouse? How does the author describe the act of drawing a square? Why does the author start the story by writing about lines? What shapes would you use to draw your home?”

The Unit 5 read-aloud text *Sugar, Sugar Everywhere* reminds the teacher to have students “focus on orally asking questions to clarify information about sugar while discussing the text.” The teacher reminds the students of words to use, such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*, when forming questions. Also in Unit 5, the students focus on orally asking clarifying questions to help them understand the text or portion of the text that they don’t understand in the read-aloud *I’m All Right*.

In Unit 6, with the read-aloud text *A Backyard Garden*, students engage in various listening activities, listening for fluency, expression, and words that trigger order. After multiple shared-reading opportunities, students write stories of their own about something they did recently. After they finish, students volunteer to read their stories to the class. The listeners must actively listen to the student reading his or her story aloud and clap every time they hear words that signal order.

Unit 8, with the text *Blizzards!* allows students to discuss types of weather, as well as the author’s purpose for writing the text in a whole group. Later in this unit, students discuss what they notice about synonyms and antonyms within the text *Tornadoes* and take turns listening to and discussing the text. Students “share any experiences they may have with extreme weather.” Additionally, the teacher rereads the text *Changing Seasons* as a class. The students think about their favorite season; then, as a class, they discuss “positive and negative aspects of all four seasons.”

Indicator 3.c.2

Materials engage students in **collaborative discussions**.

- Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussion.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to practice grade-appropriate speaking skills using the standard conventions of English language.

Meets 4/4

Materials engage students in collaborative discussions. Materials provide consistent opportunities for students to engage in discussion and to practice grade-appropriate speaking skills using the standard conventions of the English language.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The “Primary Protocols” document outlines how the literacy block provides opportunities for students to engage in deep discussion in order to build their oral language skills through academic discussions. The guidance is specific to engaging in discussion during shared reading, independent reading, and texts that have been read aloud. The conversations should revolve around the reading skills and strategies being taught. Additionally, the opportunities to have these discussions are varied between a whole-group setting, a small-group setting, and while students are working in “Centers.” Students are also provided with opportunities to practice the rules and expectations of different types of conversations: taking turns, listening when others are speaking, and understanding nonverbal behaviors and cues that add meaning to conversations. During these conversations, students use standard conventions of the English language correctly; practice with some of these conventions can be found in the oral practice portions of units. After reading, students answer as many questions from the text as possible in discussion and they also create new questions not answered by the text.

The teacher models how to participate in structured, whole-group discussions with behaviors such as contributing relevant information, responding to others’ comments, speaking clearly, and listening actively. After the teacher models, students practice their own speaking skills through whole-group discussions that can then be transferred into small-group and partner discussions.

Unit 1 has students practice producing and expanding complete sentences. The students help the teacher by discussing what they would like to add to the shared-writing list of sentences with plural nouns. As the discussion continues, the teacher models and reviews what it means to listen actively, such as being attentive to the speaker and using what was said to ask and answer appropriate questions. The teacher models how to expand a complete sentence with the sentence “I have a hat” by describing what an adjective is and then writing “I have a new green hat. It is big and floppy.” Using the previously modeled speaking and listening skills, the students discuss the adjectives the teacher used and how they change the sentence.

In Unit 2, students have numerous opportunities to engage in discussion. The teacher models how to speak clearly when reading a text and what it looks and sounds like to share ideas in a conversation. Students speak clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas when conversing about the book. During a poetry read-aloud of “The Rabbit,” the teacher models how to ask and answer appropriate questions about the poem. The students then ask and answer appropriate questions during the read-aloud.

In Unit 3, teachers refer back to the classroom discussion rules established in Unit 1. The class decides if additional rules need to be added. The teacher suggests rules that need to be followed when sharing a personal connection to the text. For example: “[W]ait until the teacher finishes reading the page, then raise your hand, wait to be called on, and then share.” During a read-aloud of *Fast and Faster*, students are reminded of the rules that have been established as they take turns asking and answering questions throughout the story and also listen attentively to others while discussing the text.

In Unit 5, during each of the four read-aloud stories, students ask and answer questions about a text before, during, and after reading. Teachers first model asking questions using question words: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. Students focus on asking questions to clarify information while discussing the text and also practice speaking clearly as they ask their questions. Additionally, teachers review the rules for discussion established in previous weeks to acknowledge when students follow the agreed-upon rules while discussing the text.

In Unit 7, students complete a past tense verbs worksheet and discuss their responses using past tense verbs. During the read-aloud *History of the Bicycle*, after searching and identifying prepositions in the story, students “discuss the type of information each preposition provides (how, when, where, why, and so on) and how each one links the words in the sentence.” The teacher models how to stop to ask and answer questions while reading to clarify anything students do not understand.

Indicator 3.d.1

Materials engage students in both **short-term and sustained recursive inquiry** processes for different purposes.

- Materials support instruction for students to ask and generate general questions for inquiry.
- Materials support instruction for students to generate and follow a research plan.
- Materials support students in identification of relevant sources based on their questions (K-1).
- Materials support student practice in understanding, organizing, and communicating ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research (K-1).

Does Not Meet 0/4

While the program does offer lessons to ask and generate general questions, there are no opportunities for Kindergarten students to generate or follow a self-directed research plan. During writing, Kindergarten students write facts when responding to nonfiction texts; however, the materials do not support student practice in understanding, organizing, and communicating ideas and information in accordance with the purpose of the research. Since there are no opportunities for research, students are not identifying or using relevant sources.

Indicator 3.e.1

Materials contain **interconnected tasks** that build student knowledge.

- Questions and tasks are designed so that students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and language.
- Tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking; include components of vocabulary, comprehension, and syntax; and provide opportunities for increased independence.

Meets 4/4

The materials contain interconnected tasks that build student knowledge. Questions and tasks are designed so that students build and apply knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and language. Tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking; include components of vocabulary, comprehension, and syntax; and provide opportunities for increased independence.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The curriculum is designed for a 90- to 120-minute block; within the block, the literacy tasks are divided into six core parts: “Shared Reading,” “Read Alouds,” “Guided Reading,” “Phonics and Phonological Awareness,” “Writing,” and “Centers.” Within each of these components of the literacy block, reading, speaking, listening, thinking, writing, and language skills are addressed.

In Unit 2, the materials contain interconnected tasks; students study rhyming words using the read-aloud text “The Rabbit.” Before reading, students build background by discussing what they already know about rabbits and why they might make good pets. Then, students learn that rhyming poetry follows a beat that is based on syllables. Students practice clapping the syllables in words that the teacher writes on the board. Students volunteer to write slash marks between the syllables of each word. While the teacher is reading the text, students listen for rhyming words on each page and clap when they hear an example.

In the Unit 3 story *Trucks Dig and Dump*, students build and apply knowledge and skills across multiple areas. For example, on Day 2, the students read along with the teacher. The focus of this is on the enjoyment of reading as well as on the content vocabulary words within the text; the teacher points out the vocabulary words, and the students discuss their meanings. After the reading, students “work with a partner to brainstorm and write a question that would require a reader to search the text in two places to find the answer.” Later in this lesson, the students discuss whether the trucks remind them of the trucks they have seen. They also make

additional text-to-self connections using the following sentence stems: “The book reminded me of...because.... The page reminded me of a truck I once saw because....” This lesson provides opportunities for students to read, build language, think, speak, and write all in one lesson.

In Unit 7, students use reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and language to respond to the shared-reading text *The Washington Monument*. Students listen to the shared-reading text and answer comprehension questions during a whole-group discussion. Students analyze diagrams used in the text to answer discussion questions such as “How many steps are there to the top of the monument? How many years did it take for the Washington Monument to be built and opened?” Students use the text to find past tense verbs with an *-ed* ending. In “Writing,” students study sequential order by creating a timeline. Students search for signal words (*first, began, later*) in the text to show the sequence of the story. After finding the signal words, the class creates a timeline together. Students create a copy of the timeline and add pictures and words to describe each date.

The curriculum provides opportunities for students to “use newly acquired vocabulary expressively” in every unit. In Unit 1, in the vocabulary activity within the text *Where To Go*, the students locate words and discuss their meanings; then, based on their discussion, they illustrate each vocabulary word on a poster with a group/partner and share their products with their classmates. Within this vocabulary lesson, the students have the opportunity to read, speak, and write (draw). The lesson plan format remains consistent in other guided-reading lesson plans from Unit 1 through Unit 8, allowing for students to work with increasing independence with the activity each week. In the Unit 8 shared reading *Changing Seasons*, students listen to the vocabulary words that the teacher has chosen. The teacher models word attack skills as students practice reading the words. Students then speak and listen to a partner as they “talk about difficult words such as *cycle* and *winter*.” Students also draw pictures that pertain to the words. After they know how to read the words, students write to “add the new vocabulary words to their word journals.” Before continuing to read, students “say the new vocabulary words, talk about their meanings, and use the words in sentences.” With the comprehension of classifying information and the seasons, students practice classifying information as they speak, listen, read, write, and think. First, students speak and listen as they “discuss the similarities and differences between the four seasons.” Students work in a group to put an assortment of animals into groups based on their commonalities and “write or draw their groups on a separate piece of paper.” Students then use their writings to read their classifications to the class.

Indicator 3.e.2

Materials provide **spiraling and scaffolded practice**.

- Materials support distributed practice over the course of the year.
- Design includes scaffolds for students to demonstrate integration of literacy skills that spiral over the school year.

Partially Meets 2/4

Although materials do include some opportunities for spiraling and distributed practice throughout the year, there are some necessary standards that are sparsely spiraled or not returned to at all after they are introduced to students. There are many resources for differentiation, including scaffolded materials, leveled books, vocabulary resources, and leveled language resources.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The program is organized into eight units, each containing four weeks of instruction. Each unit includes an overview document and a “Weekly Planner” detailing topics of study, including topics like comprehension strategies, vocabulary, phonics, fluency, text features, etc. Materials for each lesson are located in the Weekly Planner, the “Primary Protocols” document, and text-based lesson plans. “Shared Reading,” “Read Aloud,” and “Writing” talks all relate to the unit theme and unit question. Each week of instruction includes a folder of “Differentiation Resources” that can be used as a scaffold or support. Examples include graphic organizers, vocabulary books, high-frequency word packs, and additional worksheets.

While there are some examples in the materials where skills are spiraled throughout the yearly curriculum, there are many skills that are not. With teacher support, students first practice identifying and describing characters in a story when they analyze elements of a story in Unit 2. While students return to storytelling later in the year, they do not engage in another direct lesson on identifying and describing main characters. This is similarly true for describing the setting of a story. While setting is a focus across all four weeks of Unit 2 instruction, it is not spiraled into instruction later in the school year. Another example of a skill that lacks distributed practice over the course of the year is making inferences and using evidence to support understanding with adult assistance. This skill is taught through Shared Reading and “Guided Reading” during one week of instruction in Unit 3. Direct instruction only occurs one more time during a week of Unit 6 instruction, again during Shared Reading and Guided Reading.

Over the course of the year, students practice writing with different purposes in mind. There is a balanced combination of whole-class writing activities and writing in “Centers.” The majority of the writing instruction depends on a set of “Process Writing Lessons” that fall into four main categories: “Informative/Explanatory,” “Narrative,” “Opinion/Argument,” and “Transactional.” Within these categories, there are specific lessons about more specialized writing purposes. For example, within the Opinion/Argument category, there is both a “Persuasive” and a “Pro/Con” lesson plan. Scaffolding exists for each lesson plan, as it is paired with “Student Resources and Teacher Rubrics” that vary based on reading ability. The four leveled sets include “Beginning,” “Early Development,” “Developing,” and “Fluent.” The teacher can utilize these scaled resources to support students as they spiral through the writing styles over the school year.

Within the instructional materials, there are comprehension checks that allow for repeated practice of comprehension skills that are not explicitly covered within that lesson. In the Unit 3 shared-reading text *Bigger Than a Monster Truck*, the target comprehension skill is “Main Idea and Details.” To repeatedly address standards within and across units, there is a “comprehension check” that includes a book quiz and a retelling rubric that can be used to monitor students’ understanding of the comprehension standards. There are also discussion cards that cover “comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book and provided as an extension activity.”

In Unit 6, materials are organized around the central “Unit Question,” “What are living and nonliving things?” Students use the shared-reading text *Living or Nonliving* to ask and answer questions, classify and sort objects, answer text-dependent questions, learn new vocabulary words, and analyze text features. The paired “Writing” lesson requires students to respond to the “Writing Connection” found in the same text. Later, in the read-aloud text *Frog’s Mississippi Adventure*, the Unit Question is again the focus. The tasks paired to this text effectively integrate asking and answering questions, recognizing periods and punctuation marks, and participating in a collaborative discussion; in both of the read-alouds, previous literacy skills are being recalled and integrated into a cohesive theme.

Indicator 4.1

Materials provide explicit instruction in **print concepts** and opportunities for student practice (K-1 only).

- Materials provide explicit instruction in print awareness and connect print awareness to books/texts.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to connect print awareness knowledge to texts.

Meets 4/4

Materials provide explicit instruction in print concepts and opportunities for student practice in all eight units. Materials connect print awareness to books/texts and provide opportunities for students to connect print awareness knowledge to texts during shared-reading and leveled-text lessons. The “Primary Protocols” also include guidance for teachers on how to implement print concept instruction with any text.

Examples include but are not limited to:

In Unit 1, the teacher uses the shared-reading text *Words All Around* to teach print awareness and how to read and follow words from left to right. On Day 1, the teacher points out different print concepts, such as the title, photographs, and the author, using prompts such as “Where is the title of the book? Where is the author’s name? What does an author do?” Students make predictions about what the text will be about based on the title and pictures. On Day 2, the teacher invites students to model reading from left to right: “Point to where you would begin reading the text. Show me with your finger which way I go as I read this page. Where do I go once I get to the end of the line? Point to the words while I read the sentence. Show me the first word on this page. Now, show me the last word on this page.”

In Unit 2, the teacher uses the shared-reading text *A Lucky Chinese New Year* to review the front cover of a text and provide instruction on capitalization in words in text titles. The teacher projects the cover, asks the students what they notice about the title of the book, and explains that important words in a title are capitalized, and small words like *a*, *in*, and *so* are not capitalized when they are in the middle of a title. On the second read of the text, students are asked to point to the title, author, and illustrator’s name on the front cover.

In Unit 5, the teacher uses the shared-reading text *Pop, Pop, Boom!* to lead a discussion on front and back covers, author, title, and illustrator. The teacher directs students to discuss using the sentence stems “On the cover I see...” and “The title of this book is....” On the next day, the

teacher reviews the information by asking questions such as “Where is the title of this book? Where is the author’s name? Where is the illustrator’s name?” The teacher also asks students to point to where they would begin to read the story, point to where they would go when they get to the end of a line, point to the words while the teacher reads the sentence, and count how many sentences are on the page.

In Unit 8, the teacher uses the shared-reading text *Blizzards!* to tie print awareness knowledge to texts. The teacher projects the text and reviews that books are made up of sentences; each sentence is made up of words; and each word is made up of letters. The students identify sentences, words, and letters as the teacher points to the projected text. Students are given additional opportunities to identify sentences in the captions underneath the photographs.

Indicator 4.2

Materials provide explicit instruction in **phonological skills** and opportunities for student daily practice (e.g., rhyming, syllabication, blending, segmenting, manipulation) (K-1 only).

- Materials provide opportunities for students to practice oral language activities.
- Materials provide explicit instruction in each newly taught sound and sound pattern.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to practice each newly taught sound and sound/phoneme pattern.

Meets 4/4

Materials provide explicit instruction in phonological skills and opportunities for student daily practice. Materials provide opportunities for students to practice oral language activities, explicit instruction in each newly taught sound and sound pattern, and opportunities for students to practice each newly taught sound and sound/phoneme pattern.

Examples include but are not limited to:

In Unit 1, students listen to the text *Are These His or Hers?* and practice counting the number of syllables in words by clapping once for each syllable in the word spoken aloud. Examples of the multisyllabic words include *flow/er*, *pen/cil*, *mon/ster*, *pa/per*, and *gi/gan/tic*. In addition to clapping, the students slide counters up for each syllable heard in the words.

In Unit 2, a phonological awareness objective is identifying and pronouncing final consonant sounds in spoken CVC words. On the first day, the teacher models identifying the final phoneme by saying the word *ran*, segmenting the word into individual phonemes, and identifying the final sound as /n/. The teacher repeats this process with the words *jog*, *bill*, *pop*, *vase*, and *stick*. Using the guidelines in the “Primary Protocols,” the teacher spends 10–15 minutes per day for four days practicing this skill with the class using different words. On Day 5, the teacher conducts an informal assessment to see if additional instruction on final consonant sounds is necessary. Additional aligned activities include the teacher saying a series of three words, such as *sheep/stamp/corn*, and students identifying which words have the same final sound. Next, the teacher says the sentence “The loud bird and the red toad were glad they found a seed in the mud on the road.” Students clap each time they hear a word that ends with /d/.

In Unit 3, a phonological objective is demonstrating an understanding of ending chunks by identifying and producing spoken rhyming words. The teacher explains to students that rhyming words have the same ending sounds (for example, *muffet* and *tuffet* rhyme because both words end with the same sound chunk, *-uffet*). The teacher reads the nursery rhyme

“Little Miss Muffet,” and students point out rhyming words as the teacher reads. By the end of the week, the teacher says aloud two words (for example, *bat/mat*, *bee/house*, *king/ring*, and *snail/rat*) and asks students if they rhyme.

In Unit 5, the teacher uses the read-aloud text *Anna and the Dancing Goose* to guide students in segmenting onset and rime. The teacher reviews that onset is the first phoneme in a word and the rime is the remainder of the word, and models by segmenting the word /g/ /oose/ with students having to identify the word (*goose*). Next, the teacher says the word *shelf* and explains that the word without the onset is /elf/. Students practice this skill with the word box; the teacher asks them to leave off the onset and students respond with the rime /ox/. Practice continues with the words *hot*, *kind*, *flop*, and *play* on the board; the teacher says the onset of each word and students say the rime for each word.

Indicator 4.3

Materials provide explicit systematic instruction in **phonetic knowledge** and opportunities for students to practice both in and out of context (K-2).

- Materials include a research-based sequence of grade-level foundational skills instruction and opportunities for sufficient student practice to achieve grade-level mastery.
- Materials systematically develop knowledge of grade-level phonics patterns as addressed in the TEKS for Grades K-2.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to apply grade-level phonetic knowledge to connected texts (e.g., decodable reader) and tasks.
- Materials provide explicit instruction in grade-level high-frequency words.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to read grade-level high-frequency words both in (e.g., decodable reader) and out of context.
- Materials include building spelling knowledge as identified in the TEKS.

Meets 4/4

Materials provide explicit systematic instruction in phonetic knowledge and opportunities for students to practice both in and out of context. Materials include a research-based sequence of grade-level foundational skills instruction and opportunities for sufficient student practice to achieve grade-level mastery. Materials systematically develop knowledge of grade-level phonics patterns as addressed in the Kindergarten TEKS, with opportunities for students to apply their knowledge to connected texts and tasks. Materials provide explicit instruction in grade-level high-frequency words and opportunities for students to read high-frequency words both in and out of context. Materials include building spelling knowledge as identified in the TEKS.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials include a variety of research citations to support their phonics approach. According to the research, phonics instruction can and should begin as early as Kindergarten due to the significant and substantial effect on later reading ability. Additionally, the research supports the integration of two major components: systematic instruction and practice. The systematic instruction component entails direct and explicit teaching of the major sound-symbol relationships in a specific and clearly defined sequence. The sequence begins with single-letter sound-symbol relationships and then progresses toward more complex sound-symbol relationships.

The materials include a scope and sequence for foundational reading instruction. The “Phonics Snapshot” indicates when each phonics skill is taught and which specific skill is being introduced. For example, in Unit 6, students are introduced to all the VCe long-vowel sounds. Week 1 is VCe sound /a/, Week 2 is VCe /o/, Week 3 is VCe /i/, and Week 4 is VCe /u/. The skills found in the Phonics Snapshot are directly correlated with the Kindergarten TEKS. The materials also include instructional routines for practicing phonics skills. For example, as students trace and write letters, they say the sound related to that symbol (students would say /m/ while writing the uppercase and lowercase letter *Mm*).

In Unit 2, students learn about the short vowel /o/ and the consonant /d/ sounds. The teacher shows the sound-symbol card for *Oo*, reads the word *ostrich*, and points out that the letter *o* stands for the /o/ sound in *ostrich*. A volunteer goes up to the card to point to the letter in the word *ostrich* that stands for the short /o/ sound. The teacher shows cards for additional words with the short vowel /o/ sound (*mop, pot, not, tot*) and asks what all the words have in common. The teacher reinforces that all of the words have the short /o/ sound in the middle, demonstrates decoding them by sounding out the CVC words, and directs students to repeat the decoding. The teacher follows a similar process for the consonant /d/ sound, using the words *dog, Don, Dan, dots, and dad*.

In Unit 4, the teacher uses the text *Nat’s Cat* to teach the *-at* and *-ap* word families. Students first have the opportunity to make their own *-at* and *-ap* words using letter/word family cards, and then the teacher introduces the decodable text *Nat’s Cat*. The teacher previews the cover of the text to make predictions, reads the title to identify the *-at* words, and identifies tricky high-frequency words in the text. After reading part of the text aloud, students identify words from the *-at* or *-ap* word families. Students then read the rest of the text independently, circling all the words from the *-at* word family in red and all the words from the *-ap* word family in blue. There is also a separate phonics worksheet that asks students to identify and label pictures from a provided bank of words in the *-at* or *-ap* word families.

In Unit 6, students receive explicit instruction on the letter-sound correspondence for VCe long vowel /o/. The teacher introduces the long /o/ sound using VCe picture cards. Students then practice blending and reading words, such as *cope, mode, rode* and *tone*, using a workmat and letter cards. Next, students practice blending onset and rime using letter cards and the *-oke* and *-ome* word family cards. The teacher places the *-oke* word family card on the right side of a pocket chart and the *j* card on the left side and models how to blend the onset and rime to make the word *joke*. The class repeats this process using different word family cards, such as *-ome, -ose, and -ove*. Students also practice distinguishing between the long /o/ and short /o/ sound by sorting decodable word cards. Last, the teacher introduces the decodable book *Rose’s*

Birthday, and students apply their phonetic knowledge to independently read the text.

High-frequency words are taught in a five-day sequence of instruction. On Day 1, the teacher uses flashcards to introduce the new high-frequency words for the week. The teacher says the word, students repeat the word, the teacher spells the word, and the students repeat the spelling one letter at a time. The teacher then says the word again, and the students repeat the word again. The teacher then puts the words on a “Word Wall.” On Days 2–5, the teacher reviews the new high-frequency words and their location on the Word Wall.

In Unit 7, the teacher uses the shared-reading text *The Mighty Mississippi* and flashcards to introduce the following high-frequency words: *these*, *those*, *or*, *more*, and *make*. The teacher posts the flashcards on the Word Wall on Day 1 and, throughout the rest of the week, directs students to echo read, choral read, and independently read the words. The teacher also points out the high-frequency words while reading texts throughout the week. Additional materials for differentiated instruction are also provided. For example, the teacher may use the high-frequency words in sentences and direct students to clap each time they hear one; then, students create sentences with the high-frequency words of their own. An example of a sentence included on the practice page is “I will get some...waffles.”

The materials build spelling knowledge throughout all eight units and focus on spelling VC, CVC, and CCVC words, spelling words with sound-spelling patterns, and spelling high-frequency words. For example, in Unit 4, students use the decodable text *Bub and the Nut* to work on the CVC spelling pattern. The teacher guides students in using sound boxes and letter tiles to build new words that include *-ub* and *-ut* spelling patterns. Students stretch out the sounds orally while spelling the word with letter tiles in the sound boxes.

Indicator 4.4

Materials provide frequent opportunities for students to practice and develop **fluency** while reading a wide variety of grade-level texts at the appropriate rate with accuracy and prosody. (Grades 1-2 only).

- Materials include explicit instruction in fluency, including rate, accuracy, and prosody.
- Materials provide opportunities and routines for teachers to regularly monitor and provide corrective feedback on rate, accuracy, and prosody.

Not Scored in Kindergarten

Indicator 4.5

Materials include **placement (diagnostic) assessments** and provide information to assist in foundational skills instruction (K-2).

- Materials include support and direction for teachers to assess students' growth in and mastery of foundational skills (e.g., skill gaps in phonetic knowledge).
- Assessments yield meaningful information for teachers to use when planning small-group instruction and differentiation.

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials include assessments on foundational skills, but they do not distinguish between the assessments' purposes. Materials do not state whether assessments should be used for diagnostic or placement purposes. There are some additional resources meant to assist in foundational skills instruction, and assessments yield meaningful information for teachers to use when planning. However, the materials do not give sufficient guidance to teachers on how to respond to this student data.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials include numerous foundational skills assessments, but they do not designate any assessments as “diagnostics,” nor do the materials advise teachers to use or implement an assessment prior to initially teaching a foundational skill. The materials mention pre-assessment prior to the five-day learning cycle: “Give a quick informal assessment of the weekly skills to determine where students need explicit instruction and at what level instruction should be given. This information helps ensure proper grouping of students and differentiation of resources.” However, materials do not note which assessments to give nor how to respond to them.

Quarterly assessments include little guidance for teachers on when these assessments should be given, other than calling them “quarterly assessments.” For example, the phonological awareness assessments section asks teachers to determine whether to focus on onset and rime, rhyme, syllables, or phonemic awareness skills using the assessments. There are eighteen assessments, but only a few are noted in the “Weekly Planners” to be used at specific times throughout the year. The materials do not note the order assessments should be given in.

As a resource meant to assist in foundational skills instruction, the program includes “Tutoring & Mentoring Packs” covering all foundational skills. Each comprehension pack includes numerous intervention lessons, letter books, picture cards, academic games, practice sheets,

etc. While these resources do assist foundational skills instruction, the program depends on classroom teachers or trained professionals to interpret assessments, assess students' growth, and respond accordingly.

Indicator 4.6

Materials regularly and systematically offer **assessment opportunities** that genuinely **measure student progress** as indicated by the program scope and sequence (K-2).

- Materials support teachers with guidance and direction to respond to individual students' literacy needs, based on assessments appropriate to the grade level.
- Materials include assessment opportunities to assess student understanding of print concepts (K-1).
- Materials include assessment opportunities to assess student understanding of phonological awareness (K-1).
- Materials include assessment opportunities to assess student understanding of phonetic knowledge (K-2).
- Materials include assessment opportunities to assess student reading fluency (1-2).

Partially Meets 2/4

Materials contain multiple options for reading level, alphabet naming, phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words assessment; however, assessment is neither regular nor systematic. There is minimal evidence of formal assessment on print concepts. Materials offer teachers some guidance on how to respond to individual students' literacy needs based on their assessment performance by providing resources such as additional lesson plans, decodable books, or "Center" activities. However, the guidance for teachers is often lacking specificity on which lessons to select and how to guide a student to mastery.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The program has an "Assessments" section where teachers can find progress-monitoring assessments for reading levels, alphabet naming, phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words. Assessments are usually completed one-on-one; some are assigned online, and some are used as progress-monitoring tools for foundational skills. Assessments are not organized by grade level; they are organized by skill. Assessments include alphabet letter naming and high-frequency word assessments. Other assessments available to the teacher include retelling rubrics, which include a three-part student leveling assessment; phonological awareness assessments, which assess how children listen for, identify, discriminate, and produce sounds; phonics assessments, which assess sound-symbol relationships and the ability to read nonsense words; fluency timed reading assessments, which assess the ability to read passages accurately in one minute; and sentence reading assessments. Not every assessment is referenced within the "Unit Weekly Planners." When they are, these assessments provide teachers with few suggested resources for differentiation to reteach skills based on the results

of an assessment. The materials do not provide clear guidance or support for teachers on actions to take after a student completes the online assessments.

The “Primary Protocols” document explains assessment opportunities to assess students’ phonological awareness skills. The materials note that teachers should keep a weekly observational datasheet; the phonological awareness assessment resources are labeled as “quarterly assessments.” These assessment target skills include rhyme awareness, onset and rime awareness, syllable awareness, initial sounds, final sounds, medial sounds, and phonemes. There are single assessments for rhyme, onset and rime, and syllable awareness; there are four assessments each for initial, final, and medial sounds; there are three different assessments for phonemes. When accessed from the Unit Weekly Planners, these assessments are referenced in Units 5 and 8. Weekly Planners do not reference which specific assessment within each skill teachers should be using for their assessments. Assessments ask students to listen for, identify, discriminate, and produce sounds during the individual assessment. For example, in the “Rhyme Awareness Assessment,” the students name each object in the set of three objects; then, they circle the object that does not rhyme. The materials provide clear directions for teachers on how to give this assessment.

The materials only reference phonological awareness assessments in Units 5 and 8, showing a lack of systematic and regular use of assessment. Teachers have the option of using these assessments at any point in the school year but are not given specific guidance.

The materials include limited assessment opportunities to assess student understanding of phonetic knowledge. Assessments are only mentioned in Units 2, 4, and 8, providing inconsistent opportunities and guidance to appropriately respond to the data gathered. There is some guidance and direction to respond to student needs, but rarely do the materials address individual students’ literacy needs. The Primary Protocols document states for teachers to “provide additional support or enrichment as needed based on the weekly assessment.” In Unit 2, after students complete the “Lowercase and Uppercase Letter Naming Assessment,” the Weekly Planner suggests the Lesson 1 “Consonant & Short Vowels” phonics pack as a resource for differentiation. This resource provides a stock, five-part lesson to teach the short *a* and consonants *c*, *m*, *s*, and *t*. While this resource does provide some intervention, it does not cover the full scope of the assessment. Additionally, the resource does not clearly provide information for the teacher on how to implement the support based on students’ needs.

The materials do not contain a formal assessment covering print concepts such as print awareness; informal checks for understanding are present in materials that cover print concepts.

Indicator 5.1

Materials include supports for students who demonstrate proficiency **above grade level**.

- Materials provide planning and learning opportunities (including extensions and differentiation) for students who demonstrate literacy skills above that expected at the grade level.

Partially Meets 1/2

Materials provide some planning and learning opportunities, including extensions and differentiation, for students who demonstrate literacy skills above that expected at the grade level. There is a clear plan for identifying a student's independent reading level; materials differentiate for students working above grade level in the confines of small-group or guided-reading activities. The materials and lessons provide some opportunities for students who demonstrate proficiency above grade level to extend their knowledge. Activities and lesson plans listed as above grade level require students to complete more work with a more complex text rather than apply their knowledge in an extension activity. Most resources for differentiation are provided for students performing at or below grade level.

Examples include but are not limited to:

Across the leveled reader library, there are some texts that include "Cross-Curricular Connections" at the end of the text. These additional tasks are meant to extend student learning and often include connections to writing, science, math, and art.

In Unit 1, the shared-reading lesson plan for *Laws for Kids* has an optional "Extend the Reading" section that extends the lesson through an art connection. Students draw a picture of a law they read about or one they already knew; then, they write one sentence describing their picture. Earlier in the lesson, students are using context clues and creating T-charts using cause-and-effect relationships from the story. The extension offered at the end of the lesson is not differentiated for students demonstrating proficiency above grade level.

In Unit 3 guided reading, the teacher has multiple texts to choose from for reading level differentiation, including *Bird Goes Home* (Level A), *Wind Blows* (Level B), and *Sky High* (Level D). Additionally, the "Resources for Differentiation" section recommends the teacher consider using the alternate leveled book *The Storm* (Level E) for students who are reading far above grade level.

In Unit 4, students respond to the shared-reading text *Color Wheel Colors*. The reading strategy for the text is to create mental images based on the words in a text to strengthen comprehension. The “Weekly Planner” lists the “Vocabulary Graphic Organizer: Vocabulary Sense Wheel, Primary” as a Resource for Differentiation. With this graphic organizer, students select a vocabulary word and describe what the word might feel, smell, taste, or look like. While this graphic organizer is intended for students performing at grade level, the lesson plan does provide cross-curricular extension ideas using writing prompts at the back of the book. The “Writing and Art Connection” prompts students to pick one group of colors from the color wheel, draw a picture using those colors, and write why they chose those colors for their picture. The “Math Connection” prompts students to look back in the text to see how many colors are on the color wheel; then, students write down all the ways they can make this number using addition.

The program provides access to over “3,000 books, including 2,500 leveled readers written to 29 levels of reading difficulty,” available in up to seven languages. The teacher can find a text at a developmentally appropriate level for a child working above grade level and follow that text’s lesson plan for any small-group or even large-group lesson. The teacher determines the developmentally appropriate level by assigning an online running record. Students send online recordings to the teacher in three parts. Part one of the assessment is a recording of the student reading the text. Part two is a recording of a retell that the teacher scores using a retelling rubric. Part three is a quick comprehension quiz that is scored by the RAZ-Plus software. This three-part process will clearly identify students above grade level.

Indicator 5.2

Materials include supports for students who perform **below grade level** to ensure they are meeting the grade-level literacy standards.

- Materials provide planning and learning opportunities (including extensions and differentiation) for students who demonstrate literacy skills below that expected at the grade level.

Meets 2/2

Materials include supports for students who perform below grade level to ensure they are meeting the grade-level literacy standards. Materials provide planning and learning opportunities, including extensions and differentiation, for students who demonstrate literacy skills below that expected at the grade level.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The entire set of materials revolves around the availability of books at levels that range widely, between “Beginning Reader” (BR) and 1120 Lexile level. With the abundance of leveled books available, the teacher is able to differentiate independent reading opportunities for the students. Students can log on to their student account and access the “Reading Room,” where they can choose books that have already been determined to be at their unique reading level. Additionally, during the “Reading” station in “Centers,” students have opportunities to read on-level and self-selected text with purpose and understanding.

The materials provide the teacher with a clear plan to find the developmentally appropriate reading level for students by assigning an online running record. Students send online recordings to the teacher in three parts. Part one of the assessment is a recording of the student reading the text. Part two is a recording of a retell that the teacher scores using a retelling rubric. Part three is a quick comprehension quiz that is scored by the “RAZ-Plus” software. This three-part process will clearly identify students performing below grade level. The program identifies the Kindergarten reading level between level aa and level C. Once the teacher has identified the student’s independent reading level, the teacher can begin assigning appropriate books through the online reading program or through small-group/guided-reading time.

The “Response to Intervention” section in the “Teacher Corner” provides an explanation of the program’s resources to use for struggling learners. Resources included are differentiated

instruction, tiered intervention, motivation, practice, assessment, and progress monitoring. Teachers can find lesson plans for intervention on literacy skills that students below grade level are struggling with. For example, for students struggling with letter-name recognition, teachers can use the “Alphabet Packs” for more support. The Alphabet Packs include a lesson plan, an alphabet song sheet, a large letter card, an alphabet chant, handwriting sheets, picture cards, an alphabet book, and an alphabet game for each letter in the alphabet. After using these focused lesson plans, teachers can use the “Alphabet Letter Naming” assessments for progress monitoring.

Unit 6 teaches students the vocabulary words *carved*, *changes*, *picked*, *pumpkin*, *seeds*, and *sprout* using the “Shared Reading” text *From Pumpkin Seed to Jack-o’-Lantern*. The “Weekly Planner” says that teachers should use the “Vocabulary” section from Day 1 in the lesson plan for Tier 1 instruction. It also lists the “Vocabulary Book: Plant Parts” as a “Resource for Differentiation.” “Plant Parts” is a text that uses context sentences, labels, and photographs that describe the common parts of different plants. The lesson plans provide additional support to those struggling to comprehend content-specific vocabulary, via whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one instruction.

In Unit 8, “Phonological Awareness & Phonics,” the Resources for Differentiation folder includes a “Tutoring and Mentoring” lesson plan on “Consonant Digraphs.” This lesson includes guidance for the teacher to adjust the time based on the student’s need. Teachers track the student’s progress by placing a check and/or date next to each part of a lesson that is completed. The lesson plan includes five activities that allow students more exposure and opportunities to engage with the content in a different way. Students play a board game with picture cards, use digraph flashcards as they create words, and practice high-frequency words by using them to finish incomplete sentences like “Do you have any more...?” Students also use their word cards to categorize words based on the similar digraphs they see. The last activity allows students to practice their syntax by using the word cards to create sentences.

Indicator 5.3

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

- Materials must include accommodations for linguistics (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency as defined by the ELPS.
- Materials provide scaffolds such as adapted text, translations, native language support, cognates, summaries, pictures, realia, glossaries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauri, and other modes of comprehensible input.
- Materials encourage strategic use of students' first language as a means to linguistic, affective, cognitive, and academic development in English (e.g., to enhance vocabulary development).
- Vocabulary is developed in the context of connected discourse.

Meets 2/2

Materials include supports for English Learners (ELs) to meet grade-level learning expectations. Materials include accommodations commensurate with various levels of English language proficiency as defined by the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Materials provide scaffolds and encourage the strategic use of students' first language as a means to development in English. Vocabulary is developed in the context of connected discourse.

Examples include but are not limited to:

Materials include resources for ELs within the "ELL" (English Language Learner) "Edition," including EL "Leveled Reader Packs" that can be used as companions to the core leveled books. A "Language Proficiency Alignment" is included in the leveling system; materials note how it aligns to state levels. The reader packs are separated into five English proficiency levels that correlate with Texas' proficiency levels in the following manner: Level 1, "Beginning"; Level 2, not applicable; Level 3, "Intermediate"; Level 4, "Advanced"; Level 5, "Advanced High." Distinctions are made according to state proficiency levels, where Texas is indicated to have Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High levels for language proficiency alignment. The "Teacher's Corner" also includes a "Language Proficiency Standards" page, which teachers can use to search within the materials for resources that correlate to the ELPS established by the state of Texas.

Leveled texts are accompanied by lesson plans that include comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar objectives. For example, the text *My Body* is intended for use with students at Level 1

(Beginning). The objectives focus on making text-to-self connections, introducing students to vocabulary for the names of familiar body parts, and using the possessive adjective *my*. The three-day lesson plan progresses from shared reading on Day 1, to guided reading on Day 2, to independent reading on Day 3. Another text, *Backyard Camping*, is intended for use with students at Levels 4 and 5 (Advanced and Advanced High). The objectives focus on identifying the main idea and details, retelling facts, using targeted vocabulary in conversation and writing, and using the simple present tense of need + object + infinitive to write about things needed to camp.

The lesson plans that accompany leveled texts provide language support throughout the lesson. For the text *Lily the Cat* (Level D/Advanced), the lesson plan guides teachers to point to each word as it's read aloud during shared reading and then to have students do the same. After each page, the teacher stops for discussion questions and word-attack skills. For example, the teacher points to the word *walked* and asks for the beginning sound, then points to the girl in the picture and asks what she is doing; then, students guess what they think the word is. Later in the reading, students are given sentence frames to tell what Lily is doing and what she saw. During independent practice, students reread three sequential pages of their choice, use sentence frames including *first, then, and last* to sequence the events they just read, and share their responses with a partner. For further support, a worksheet is provided with three pictures for students to cut and place in the order of occurrence.

The materials provide a variety of materials translated into Spanish, including, but not limited to, Spanish foundational skills, Spanish leveled books, and Spanish graphic organizers. The materials also include leveled texts written in English and translated into Spanish, so that teachers can use the same texts with all students in the class. Some texts are available in other languages as well; for example, the text *El Agua* is a Spanish translated text that is also available in American English, British English, and Vietnamese.

The materials include additional supports to aid teachers in strategically using students' first language as a means to development in English. For example, the teacher plan for the text *How Many* includes a language-comparison section with background on how the question "How many?" functions in other languages. The lesson plan for the text *Carlos Goes to School* (Level A/Beginning) includes information on how plural nouns are formed in other languages, including languages that follow the same rule of adding *-s* as in English (such as Spanish and French) and languages that follow different rules (such as Chinese and Hmong that indicate plurality through word order and combination).

Vocabulary instruction is included in the lesson plans for texts. For example, in Unit 7, the shared-reading text *The Mighty Mississippi* introduces students to the words *dams, floods, journey, locks, and wade*. Students work in groups to discuss the meaning of each vocabulary word and write or draw a definition on chart paper. Students review each group's poster, and the class discusses the definitions and works together to create a single definition for each word. In addition to this whole-group activity, the EL "Vocabulary Book" includes another vocabulary activity with this text to introduce ELs to additional words about traveling. The teacher pre-teaches the vocabulary using picture cards and engages the students in a discussion, using the prompts "What do you know about...? I know...." Next, the students do a shared reading of the text. The teacher stops at each location introduced in the book and asks students, "What can you see at the...? What can you do at the...?"

The materials include EL "Comic Conversations" resources designed for Beginning to Intermediate ELs to build vocabulary and conversational fluency. Each comic introduces a basic language function that students can apply in their own lives at school and at home and provides guided instruction to students as they read the comic, learn new vocabulary, and practice a conversation. For example, the Comic Conversation lesson plan for *Marty Says Sorry* teaches students different ways to apologize to someone. Students practice using new vocabulary by listening to and repeating a conversation that includes an apology and by role-playing a conversation that includes an apology.

Indicator 6.1

Materials include **assessment** and guidance for teachers and administrators to **monitor progress**, including how to interpret and act on data yielded.

- Formative and summative assessments are aligned in purpose, intended use, and TEKS emphasis.
- Assessments and scoring information provide sufficient guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance.
- Assessments are connected to the regular content to support student learning.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials provide some assessments and guidance for teachers and administrators to monitor progress. The materials include a clear alignment between the assessments and the TEKS in the unit guides. The materials offer a variety of formative and progress-monitoring assessments, but insufficient summative assessments. Some assessments provide scoring information; however, there is limited guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance for most assessments.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials center their approach around leveled readers. The materials assess students using a three-part online running record. Students complete an online reading and a recorded retelling of a story before sending the recordings to the teacher's account. The students also take a "Comprehension Quiz" scored by the online system. Based on the rubric and quiz results, the teacher can assign students an independent reading level, which allows the system to provide corresponding leveled texts in the student's online portal. Each leveled text includes graphic organizers and comprehension quizzes directly related to the content taught in the text. The materials provide an assessment schedule to monitor student progress. A note suggests students not progressing at the expected rate should be assessed more frequently than the assessment schedule suggests. Additionally, the materials include a chart detailing the scores students should attain before moving to a new level.

The program includes a variety of foundational skills assessments, including, but not limited to, "Alphabet Letter Naming," "Phonological Awareness," and "Retelling Rubrics." The "Weekly Planners" for Unit 1, Unit 3, Unit 6, and Unit 7 make no mention of assessments. Unit 2 and Unit 4 only mention assessments for letter naming and letter writing. Unit 5 includes

assessments for identifying sounds and symbols. In Unit 8, assessments identified within the Weekly Planners include phonological awareness, letter naming, and phonics. The assessments within Unit 8 provide end-of-the-year cumulative information. The Weekly Planner directs the teacher to reteach and enrich students, as needed, based on the results of assessments, but no further guidance is provided.

Any time the term “assess” is used within the unit guides, the teacher is directed to the “Primary Protocols” for suggestions on how to teach the objective across five days. For example, in Unit 5, the materials include assessments on “Identifying Sounds” and “Identifying Symbols” to assess students on letter-sound correspondence for short vowels and consonants. The Primary Protocol document provides guidance for explicit letter-sound instruction including, but not limited to, tracing and writing the letter while saying the sound in isolation, sound-by-sound blending, continuous blending, and whole-word blending.

Unit 1 uses the read-aloud text *Police Officers* to teach about the main idea and details. After listening to the text, students complete a six-question comprehension quiz based on the content of the text. The types of questions included on the quiz are the main idea and details, cause and effect, and author’s purpose. These skills were either taught indirectly within this text’s lesson plan or are a review. An example question is “How do police officers in the book help people?” While this comprehension quiz assesses what was taught in the text, there is no guidance for the next steps teachers should take based on these results.

Unit 8 contains the read-aloud *Go Away, Sun*. The lesson plan lists the “Fiction Retelling Scoring Form” to use as a formative assessment after students read the text. Teachers use this rubric with any fiction text and assess students on the sequence, setting, characters, problem, resolution, and level of prompting. Students are scored ranging from three (complete answer) to zero (inaccurate or not included). The rubric also includes a section for “Interpreting Point Totals.” According to this tool, students who score 12–18 points are “Skilled,” 7–11 points are “Developing,” and 0–6 points are “Need Work.” There is no indication of future steps that teachers should take based on the data collected from the rubric.

Indicator 6.2

Materials include **year-long plans and supports** for teachers to identify needs of students and provide **differentiated instruction** to meet the needs of a range of learners to ensure grade-level success.

- Materials provide an overarching year-long plan for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping (and other) structures. Plans are comprehensive and attend to differentiation to support students via many learning opportunities.
- Teacher edition materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials, as well as support for implementing ancillary and resource materials and student progress components.
- Annotations and ancillary materials provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers.

Meets 2/2

Materials include year-long plans and supports for teachers to identify needs of students and provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a range of learners to ensure grade-level success. Materials provide an overarching year-long plan for teachers to engage students in multiple grouping (and other) structures. Plans are comprehensive and attend to differentiation to support students via many learning opportunities. “Teacher Edition” materials include annotations and support for engaging students in the materials as well as support for implementing ancillary and resource materials and student progress components. Annotations and ancillary materials provide support for student learning and assistance for teachers.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The materials provide an overarching year-long plan through eight unit “Weekly Planners.” Each unit has a “Unit Snapshot” that consists of four weeks, for a total of 32 weeks of instruction. The plans are separated into 11 components, allowing the students to receive daily instruction on a “Reading Strategy,” “Comprehension,” “Vocabulary,” “High-Frequency Words,” “Text Features/Concepts about Print,” “Phonological Awareness,” “Phonics,” “Fluency,” “Speaking/Listening,” “Writing,” and “Grammar and Mechanics”/“Word Work.” Instruction of these components is intended to be given through multiple grouping structures. The reading strategy, comprehension, vocabulary, high-frequency words, and concepts about print are taught through a shared-reading grouping structure; the teacher leads whole-group reading and also provides opportunities to work with partners as students search for concepts in the stories. Phonological awareness and phonics are covered through a leveled book chosen for the

week; students have opportunities to discuss with a partner, share information with the whole group, and read independently. The reading strategy, comprehension, and vocabulary components are targeted again through guided-reading opportunities. During “Centers,” students work in their small groups, focusing on fluency, phonics, reading, and writing opportunities with the skills of the week. Students listen attentively and ask questions during a whole-group read-aloud, for further reinforcement of the reading strategy, grammar and mechanics, speaking/listening, and fluency.

The program has a variety of assessments that teachers can use at their own discretion to progress monitor skills; these include benchmark books, benchmark passages, retelling rubrics, alphabet letter naming, phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, and fluency timed reading. Teachers can use these assessments at any point in the school year, or they can use them to supplement whole-group lessons in the “Literacy Curriculum Map.” The program also has a section titled “Response to Intervention” (RtI), located in the “Teacher Corner.” Materials explain the framework for RtI and list additional resources. The program defines Tier 1 as whole-group instruction, Tier 2 as small-group instruction, and Tier 3 as individual, one-on-one instruction. The goal of the RtI framework is to provide struggling students with differentiated instruction so that they can remain in the general education environment. Teachers can use formative assessments, progress-monitoring assessments for foundational skills, and the text leveling system to determine which students are struggling and need additional support. The text leveling system helps teachers to accurately and reliably measure text complexity to support differentiated instruction. This assessment should be done at the beginning of the year so that teachers are aware of the varying levels of the class. Once teachers know the reading level of each student, they will be able to select texts and additional materials to support student learning.

The Literacy Curriculum Map provides teachers with annotations and ancillary materials that support student learning. Teachers can find these ancillary materials in the individual units’ folders. Each folder provides teachers with resources to use during whole-group instruction and a subfolder named “Resources for Differentiation.” The resources in these folders are the ones listed on the Literacy Curriculum Map under the Resources for Differentiation column.

The “Primary Protocols” are an overview document that encompasses all of the Centers throughout the curriculum, which cover “Fluency,” “Phonics,” “Phonological Awareness,” “Grammar,” “Word Work,” and “Writing.” This Centers document provides the teacher with organization and implementation tips. A few examples of the implementation tips are to review picture cards so that students can identify the pictures, to provide a hard surface to work on or

a clipboard, to swap out letter cards for magnetic letters (to change up the Center occasionally), and to repurpose other “Reading A-Z” resources for Learning Centers.

The English Learner (EL) “Language Skills Pack” is available as an ancillary content-based resource to support student learning in the areas of vocabulary development and the strengthening of skills across the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The annotations and guidance included for teachers include two options for teachers to consider when using the Language Skills Pack. One option is to connect assessment results with targeted instruction for each student; teachers administer an EL assessment to identify specific language strengths and weaknesses, record the results, and then select lessons within a Language Skills Pack to address the identified needs. The other option is to connect language development and academic content instruction through the Language Skills Pack; teachers first select a grade level, then select a Language Skills Pack under a specific content area, and finally use the lessons within the pack to teach content vocabulary and targeted skills across the four language domains. Further annotations are given by providing teachers with the instructional sequence: build background, presentation, practice and application, check for understanding, and review. Teachers are able to become familiar with the sequence that is consistently followed in the packs using the list and descriptions of each pack.

Indicator 6.3

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

- Materials are accompanied by a TEKS-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 additional supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended.
- Materials include additional supports to help administrators support teachers in implementing the materials as intended.
- Materials include a school year's worth of literacy instruction, including realistic pacing guidance and routines and support for both 180-day and 220-day schedules.

Partially Meets 1/2

The materials include a scope and sequence of standards that are taught in each unit throughout the year, but there is no evidence of how the standards connect and build across grade levels. The materials include supports to help teachers implement the materials as intended, but there is no evidence of additional supports for administrators to support teachers with implementation. The materials include realistic pacing guidance for a 160-day schedule.

Examples include but are not limited to:

The "Standard Snapshot" document includes a scope and sequence that details the TEKS that are taught in each unit, including information on which standards are spiraled throughout the year. The "Literacy Curriculum Map" also shows the theme for every unit and how the essential questions vary throughout the grade levels. For example, the Unit 1 theme is "Civics, Leaders, and U.S. Government." The "Essential Question" in Grade 1 is "What are the rights and responsibilities of people in a community?" and the Essential Question in Grade 2 is "What is the role of government in people's lives?"

Unit guides provide teachers with a summary of the content students will be learning, the materials needed for each lesson, and the resources needed for differentiation and extension. Each unit is four weeks long and includes a weekly planner with information about the focus topics and skills related to "Reading Strategy," "Comprehension," "Vocabulary," "High-Frequency Words," "Text Features/Concepts About Print," "Phonological Awareness," "Phonics," "Fluency," "Speaking/Listening," "Writing," and "Grammar and Mechanics"/"Word

Work.” There are occasional alignment issues between the unit guides and the actual lessons. For example for Unit 2, Week 3, the guide says that, for Word Work, the students will recognize and name exclamation marks; however, in the materials for that day’s lesson, the Word Work section focuses on alphabetizing words.

The materials include “Primary Protocols” to support teachers in planning and executing lessons. The Protocols provide teachers with a detailed explanation of each of the six components of the literacy block (“Guided Reading,” “Shared Reading,” “Phonics/Phonological Awareness,” “Read Alouds,” “Centers,” and “Writing”), guidance on how to teach specific skills, a timeframe to follow for instruction, and suggestions for daily routines and procedures. For example, the Primary Protocols provide the following suggested weekly pacing for a read-aloud: Day 1, preview the text and introduce the reading strategy, speaking/listening skill, and fluency skill; Days 2–4, read the text, model the reading strategy, grammar and mechanics, and fluency skills through think-alouds, and discuss the text; Day 5, discuss the weekly question and respond to the text.

An online component called the “Teacher Corner” provides additional resources for teachers to effectively and efficiently implement the program. For example, teachers can search by state standard and grade level to access aligned texts and materials they can use to teach specific content.

The materials include eight units that contain four weeks of instruction each, for a total of 32 weeks or 160 days. The materials also include resources for administering benchmark assessments and other progress-monitoring procedures outside of daily instruction.

Indicator 6.4

The **visual design** of the student edition (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.

Meets 2/2

The visual design of the “Student Edition” 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.

Examples include but are not limited to:

In the “Kids A-Z” online student reading portal, there is an appropriate use of white space and design that supports and does not distract from student learning. Students can select from six sections—“Level Up,” “Messages,” “Backgrounds,” “Badges,” “Assessments,” and “Reading Assignments”—which are distinguished with a simple graphic, making it easy, even for non-readers, to remember where to click to reach the desired destination.

The materials include PDF versions of all the texts and ancillary materials to allow students multiple access opportunities, including viewing the projected stories and/or printouts to support the e-texts that students can read through their online platform. These materials, whether in print or digital, contain a normal range of white space and design without any major distractions to the user.

Graphic organizers contain appropriate space for students to write; minimal other graphics that would distract from student learning or work are on the page. Graphic organizers logically section information into boxes or tables. Student worksheets contain sufficient space for Kindergarten students to write and record answers and often include handwriting lines to assist.

The leveled readers have one line of text per photo, which is engaging and visually appealing to students but does not distract from the text.

Indicator 6.5

If present, **technology** components included are appropriate for grade level students and provide support for learning.

- Technology, if present, supports and enhances student learning as appropriate, as opposed to distracting from it, and includes appropriate teacher guidance.

Not Scored

The materials contain a “Reading” tab that offers “Level Up!” “Reading Room,” “Assignment,” and “Assessment” sections. These components are student-friendly and support student learning along with appropriate teacher guidance. Students are given the opportunity to listen to and read stories, take quizzes, and complete activities. As students complete their exercises, they earn points and badges to level up and build their personal avatar. There is also a message functionality that allows the teacher to communicate with the student.

On the student homepage, students see the tabs “Reading Room,” “Reading,” “Vocabulary,” “Messages,” “My Stats,” and “Star Zone.”

In the Reading Room, students select books and topics at their individual reading levels. The program tracks whether the students listen to and read the story. Once students listen to and read the story, they can complete the comprehension quiz to earn points. While listening to a story, the books track each sentence and word, so the student can follow along. If students do not listen to the entire story, the program bookmarks where the student left off. When a student independently reads the story, the program can track if the student reads too fast or too slow, and, depending on the rate, may ensure the student rereads the story. After the student successfully listens to and reads the story, the student can move onto the comprehension quiz.

In the Level Up! section, students choose stories to read or listen to. Listening versions are read with a voice that has proper reading intonation. As the voice reads, the phrase being read is highlighted in yellow; further tracking guidance is provided with a green highlight that moves one word at a time. The student can pause the story as needed, and, when the page finishes, the student has the option of clicking the arrow to go to the next page or of clicking on the page to have it read again. However, the student cannot select a specific section to be reread; the student must reread the whole page.

For any of the activities assigned, students earn stars for the assignments that they successfully complete. The more difficult the task is to complete, the more stars the students earn for the

task. For example, students earn 10 stars for listening to a book, and they earn 500 stars for completing an entire activity. These stars can be spent to upgrade their avatar, their avatar's background, and their avatar's "RAZ rocket." The more stars they earn, the more impressive the upgrades they can buy.