

EdReports Launches Initiatives to Shine a Brighter Light on the Quality of Early Literacy Instructional Materials

These changes are in service to states and districts to make informed decisions about the materials being used in classrooms and to meet the requirements of new “science of reading” laws.

Durham, NC, October 16, 2023 — [EdReports](#), a nonprofit organization that provides free reviews of instructional materials, has announced two new initiatives aimed at making it easier for school districts and educators to assess early literacy instructional materials for the science of reading. The first initiative is a [redesign of the EdReports website](#) that better highlights how instructional materials performed for specific components called for in science of reading legislation (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). The second initiative is the revision of the EdReports English language arts foundational skills review tools, first released in 2019.

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The combination of these initiatives showcases EdReports’ commitment to continuously improving its reviews while being responsive to the needs of school districts seeking to meet new state requirements. “EdReports’ work is in service to states and educators,” said Eric Hirsch, EdReports executive director. “While we have always reviewed instructional materials for the science of reading, we know that our process is not perfect and we’re constantly working on reassessing, revising, and deepening the evidence in our review tools. We know that we can do better.”

Over the past decade, 32 states and the District of Columbia have passed new laws or implemented other policies designed to bring early reading instruction in line with what psychology and cognitive science research have shown about how children learn to read.

“Since the very beginning, EdReports has solicited feedback of our reviews and tracked innovations in the market to ensure that the reports we create continue to be as useful as possible to educators and the field at large,” said Jamilah Hicks, EdReports Director of English language arts. “After four years of use, it’s now time to update our foundational skills review criteria and corresponding evidence guide. The revisions leverage the intersection between standards and reading science research with increased clarity for users of our reports.”

Foundational skills are the beginning processes of reading for students in grades K–5 and facilitate students’ understanding of important beginning reading concepts such as print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency. Foundational literacy skills and the “science of reading” are closely intertwined and encompass the essential research necessary to develop students’ ability to read and write.

Reviews of foundational skills instructional materials using the revised tools are currently underway with the first set of reports slated to be released in spring 2024. The revisions will continue to support examining how well materials align to key science of reading components and streamline the integration of various elements found in EdReports’ prior tool.

Since its launch in 2015, EdReports has trained nearly 900 educators to conduct rigorous reviews of instructional materials and has released over 1,000 reviews of math, English language arts, and science curricula. The organization's work has been instrumental in helping educators across the country make informed decisions about the materials they use in their classrooms.

EdReports has reviewed approximately 97% of the known comprehensive K–12 English language arts materials market. Of the K–5 materials reviewed, 42% meet expectations for alignment to EdReports criteria, 37% partially meet, and 21% do not meet expectations. In the past three years, the availability of standards-aligned ELA materials has grown by 8%. In 2022, 36% of teachers were using at least one aligned ELA curriculum once a week or more, which amounts to an increase of 10 percentage points over 2020 and 2021.

The increase in the use of aligned materials may be attributed to a combination of different factors. These include the growing availability of aligned programs, the demand from teachers for resources to support their instruction, and the influx of federal funding to target challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“These initiatives are just some of the ways that EdReports is working to improve the quality of instructional materials and increase access to those materials for all students,” said Hirsch. “The organization's work is more important than ever as educators across the country accelerate learning in a post-pandemic world and strive to ensure that all students have access to high-quality content that prepares them for graduation, post-secondary success, and beyond.”

EdReports' commitment to improving early literacy instructional materials is a testament to its dedication to providing educators with the tools they need to help students succeed. [Explore the redesigned ELA reviews here.](#)

For more information about EdReports and these initiatives, visit the organization's website at www.edreports.org.

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[EdReports](#) is at the forefront of the curriculum reform movement. By increasing the capacity of educators to identify and demand the highest quality curriculum, EdReports is both disrupting a multibillion-dollar market and transforming the way students are taught and ultimately perform. With the firm belief that what is taught matters and that all students deserve high-quality materials, EdReports.org publishes free, online, evidence-rich reviews of instructional materials.