

EdReports Launches New ELA K–2 Foundational Skills Curriculum Reviews to Better Align with Science of Reading Research and Policy

Revised reviews align tightly to seminal science of reading research and structured literacy principles, identifying unaligned practices such as three-cueing.

Durham, NC, June 12, 2024 — [EdReports](https://edreports.org), a nonprofit organization that provides free reviews of instructional materials, premiered new reviews of English Language Arts (ELA) K–2 foundational skills supplemental materials. These reviews more tightly align to the science of reading and structured literacy principles while maintaining standards alignment where appropriate, offering heightened clarity to users of the reports.

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The revisions provide increased focus on phonemic awareness, as well as more explicitly identifying practices that aren't aligned with the science of reading such as the use of three-cueing and predictable texts.

“EdReports understands that standards serve as a foundation rather than a limit. Most college and career-ready ELA standards do not capture all of the skills necessary for students to fully develop into proficient readers and writers, and may not capture all of the newest research on how kids learn to read. That’s why EdReports has always prioritized reviewing materials for these aspects of quality in addition to standards alignment,” said Eric Hirsch, EdReports executive director. “We’re optimistic that our revised foundational skills reviews provide stronger information to states and districts as they make consequential decisions about ELA materials that best meet the needs of their students.”

Over the past decade, 37 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws or implemented other policies designed to bring early reading instruction in line with what psychology and cognitive science research has shown about how children learn to read. EdReports’ reviews continue to address all the elements of foundational skills—alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition and word analysis, and fluency—and the new reviews using the updated criteria more explicitly identify practices that aren't aligned with research.

“EdReports has heard feedback from the field that its reviews could more clearly signal the inclusion of content that’s not aligned with the science of reading,” said Stephanie Stephens,

principal of early literacy at EdReports. “We prioritized this need in our revisions, and readers now clearly see what we call ‘non-negotiables’ in our reviews that ensure harmful practices are flagged and prevent materials from progressing through our review process.”

In EdReports reviews, a ‘non-negotiable’ means that materials must score ‘Meet Expectations’ for specific criteria to proceed to the next stage of the review (or ‘Gateway’). Examples of ‘non-negotiables’ include the following:

- **1.2 - Phonemic Awareness (K–1 only), Phonics, and Fluency:** materials emphasize explicit, systematic instruction of research-based and/or evidence based phonemic awareness.
- **1.3 - Phonics (Decoding and Encoding):** materials emphasize explicit, systematic instruction of research-based and/or evidence based phonics.
 - **1h - Materials are absent of the three-cueing system:** Materials do not contain elements of instruction that are based on the three-cueing system.

“EdReports’ clear alignment to the research has had a major positive impact on how we review programs, particularly the non-negotiables,” said Erin Marshman, Director of Training and Development at the AIM Institute for Learning & Research and a former educator. “As a reviewer, I also really appreciate that the review tools explicitly outline examples of what should not be present in materials.”

EdReports is currently revising all of its review tools for K–12 ELA, mathematics, and science with plans to release reviews using the new tools in early 2025. One of the organization’s goals is to more tightly align the foundational skills aspects in the core K–5 ELA tools to the foundational skills review tool launched today.

“Reading is the foundation of all other learning. If students do not build foundational skills in grades K–5, this has ripple effects across multiple subjects,” said Hirsch. “We’re proud of the changes we’ve made to ensure educators have stronger evidence to make consequential decisions about curriculum, but we also know our best report has yet to be written. EdReports’ journey is one of ongoing learning and growth and we’re committed to continuous improvement.”

To explore the latest reviews, visit: edreports.org/reports/ela.

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[EdReports](https://edreports.org) 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 standards-aligned,



research-based materials tailored to diverse needs, including multilingual learners, EdReports publishes free, online, evidence-rich reviews of instructional materials. Since its launch in 2015, EdReports has trained nearly 900 educators to conduct rigorous reviews of instructional materials and has released over 1,100 reviews of math, ELA, 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.

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

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