

DeKalb County School District

Teaching and Learning Curriculum Audit
June 2025

Table of Contents

I.	Internal System Coherence	p. 4
A.	Alignment to 2020-2025 Strategic Plan	p. 5
B.	Timeline of Events	p. 8
II.	Curriculum Review	
A.	Survey Data	p. 10
B.	Classroom Walkthroughs	p. 27
C.	Focus Group Data	p. 40
D.	Artifact Analysis, Curriculum Map / Scope and Sequence Notes, Unit Plan Analysis, and Content-Specific Next Steps	p. 43
1.	Mathematics	p. 45
2.	English	p. 57
3.	Science	p. 80
4.	Social Studies	p. 94
5.	Health & PE	p. 108
6.	World Languages	p. 114
7.	Visual Performing Arts <i>and</i> Music	p. 121
8.	Career Technical <i>and</i> Agricultural Education	p. 128
9.	Early Intervention Program	p. 134
10.	Specialized Content: ESOL	p. 149
11.	Specialized Content: Exceptional Education	p. 150
12.	Specialized Content: Gifted	p. 152
13.	Specialized Content: IB and AP	p. 154
III.	Action Plan for Priority Improvement Initiatives	p. 155
A.	Gap Analysis	p. 156
B.	Recommended Next Steps	p. 157
IV.	Appendix	p. 163

PART I

INTERNAL SYSTEM COHERENCE

Internal System Coherence

In October 2024, the DeKalb County School District team (DCSD) began partnering with Insight Education Group (Insight) on the Curriculum Audit project. One of the primary objectives of the audit is to gain deeper understanding around the current state of curriculum—materials, systems, and practices—in the district. This deeper understanding, combined with the perspectives of various stakeholder groups relative to this current state, yields many bright spots and a few recommendations for areas that may use improvement.

These recommendations support the district's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, "Disrupting for Excellence: New Levels, New Heights." The Audit suggests next steps that support key aspects of this Strategic Plan.



The Audit proceeded in three stages - Curriculum Review, Gap Analysis, and Action Plan for Priority Improvement Initiatives.

The goal of the Curriculum Review stage was to understand what curriculum materials were available and being used for instruction across the district in several distinct content areas—math, English, science, social studies, physical education and health, world languages, visual arts/performing arts, music, and CTAE. Additionally, curriculum materials, survey data, and

focus group conversations focused on implementation of Tier I curriculum through the following programs: EIP, ESOL, Gifted, IB and AP, and Exceptional Education. The Insight team collected district-level quantitative and qualitative data. The data consisted of a survey, live and virtual classroom walkthroughs, and reviews of curriculum artifacts using indicators from leading curriculum analysis tools. A synthesis of the data can be found in the pages that follow.

During the Gap Analysis stage, the Insight team sought to understand what barriers existed, if any, between present conditions and ideal outcomes. During this stage, Insight conducted focus group interviews with several different stakeholder groups, including groups of teachers and content supervisors.

Finally, the data and evidence gathered are used to generate this report, the Action Plan for Priority Improvement Initiatives. This report is organized according to the data collection opportunities, followed by identification of bright spots (or practices already present), areas of opportunity, then suggested next steps for the district.

We hope the findings and recommendations in this report can serve as a springboard to a robust planning phase. We are so grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and look forward to supporting you on this journey in service of the students of DeKalb County School District.



ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN



GOAL AREA 1

Student Academic Success with Equity and Access

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION STEPS / METRICS	ALIGNMENT TO CURRICULUM AUDIT
1.1: Increase proficiency rates in literacy on district and state assessments for all students. 1.2: Increase proficiency rates in numeracy on district and state assessments for all students. 1.5: Improve student academic growth as measured by the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).	Content-area and district recommendations such as strengthening the Academic Coaching program and ensuring more robust support and usage of the DCSD curriculum materials in Canvas, will create conditions that increase proficiency rates on the state assessments and academic growth on CCRPI.
1.3: Increase the 4- and 5-year cohort graduation rates.	Content-area and district recommendations will create conditions that increase graduation rates to or above levels indicated by the Goal Area.
1.4: Ensure all students have equitable access to and support for academic programs and career pathways.	Content-area and district recommendations, especially those concerning PreK to 5 schools and programs, will create conditions that ensure all students have equitable access to academic programs and career pathways of their choice.



ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL AREA 2

School, Family, and Community Engagement

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION STEPS / METRICS	ALIGNMENT TO CURRICULUM AUDIT
2.3: Improve communication processes for stakeholders to ensure the flow of clear, timely, and relevant information. Improve communication processes for stakeholders to ensure the flow of clear, timely, and relevant information.	Content-area and district recommendations, especially the district recommendation on improving communication about curriculum rollout and support, directly addresses this action step / metric.

GOAL AREA 3

Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talent

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION STEPS / METRICS	ALIGNMENT TO CURRICULUM AUDIT
3.2: Develop high performing staff to ensure quality teaching and learning outcomes, an innovative workforce, and visionary leaders. 3.3 Retain highly effective staff in critical needs positions to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of integral district programs and services.	All recommendations in this Audit, both content-specific and district-wide, will directly impact the degree to which high performing and highly effective staff continue to positively impact the DCSD community. Additionally, the supports recommended in this Audit will also ensure more DCSD staff become more high performing and highly effective.



ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL AREA 6



Organizational Excellence

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION STEPS / METRICS	ALIGNMENT TO CURRICULUM AUDIT
6.4: Improve and maintain a secure, accessible, and equitable digital learning environment for all students. 6.5: Ensure excellent financial management of district resources.	Improved processes around curriculum use and selection increase investment in current resources, increase the likelihood of more responsible purchase decisions both district-wide and locally, and create conditions in which all students optimize the use of excellent, high-quality instructional materials no matter the school they attend.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

October 2024: delayed project kickoff. Insight drafted Implementation Plan and determined courses to include in Audit; Insight facilitated materials submission for Audit's content areas and programs

November 2024 to February 2025: Eighteen on-site walkthrough days across fifty-four DCSD schools spanning all Areas and all grade bands; artifacts collected and requested teachers whose classrooms were visited

March to April 2025: Delayed survey administration to all DCSD teachers; analysis of curriculum materials artifacts; teacher, school leader, Area Superintendent, and content coordinator focus groups

June 2025: Virtual walkthrough analysis of 180+ 10-15 minute Teaching Channel videos, completion of Curriculum Audit report

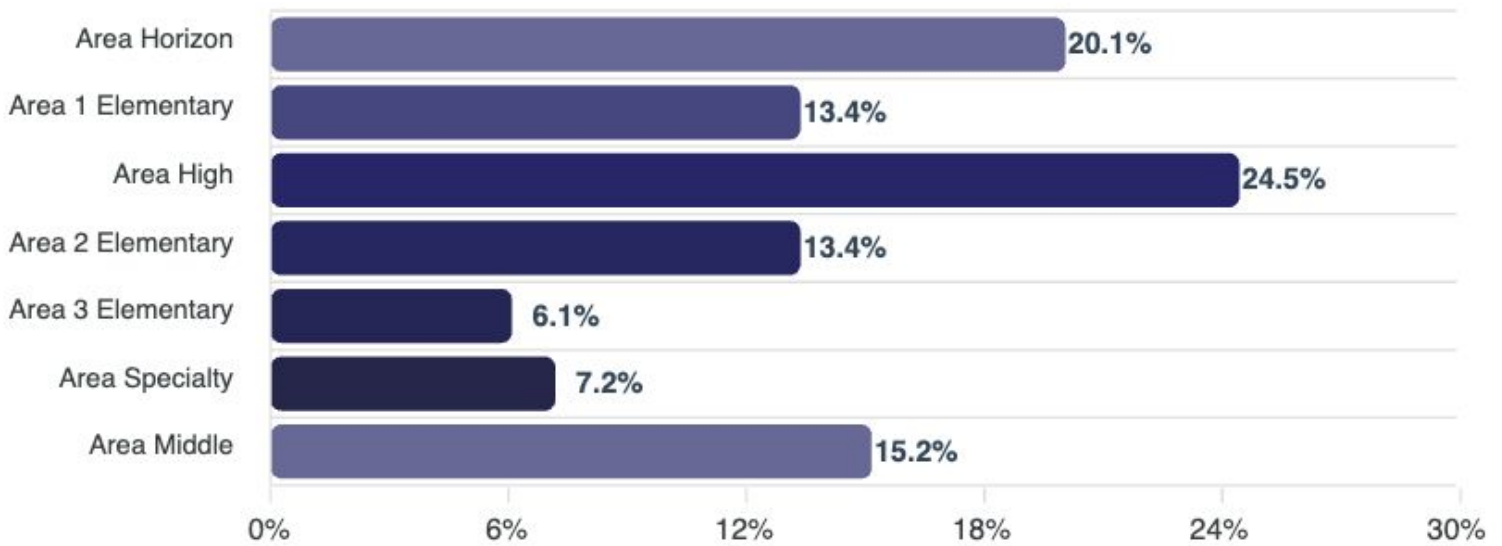
May 2025: Delayed receipt of 180+ virtual walkthroughs performed by Academic Coaches across a wide diversity of DCSD schools, across all areas and grade bands; continued artifact analysis from live and virtual walkthroughs

PART II

CURRICULUM REVIEW

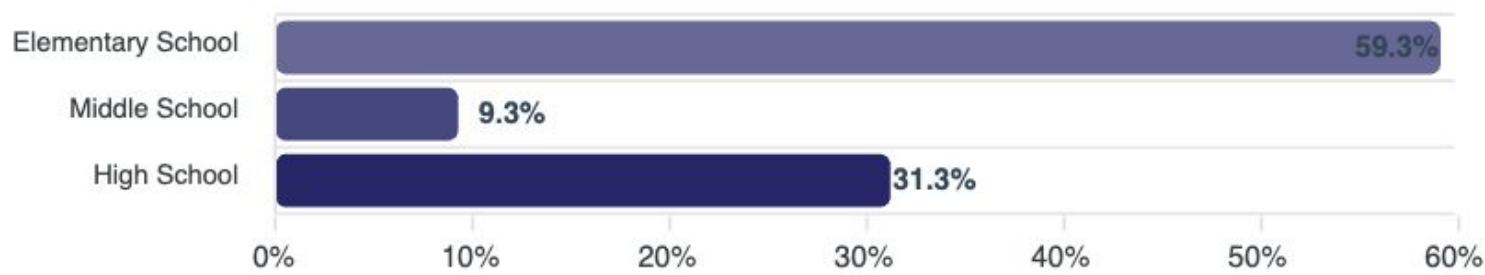
SURVEY DATA

The survey yielded one thousand three hundred thirty-three responses distributed among the following areas:



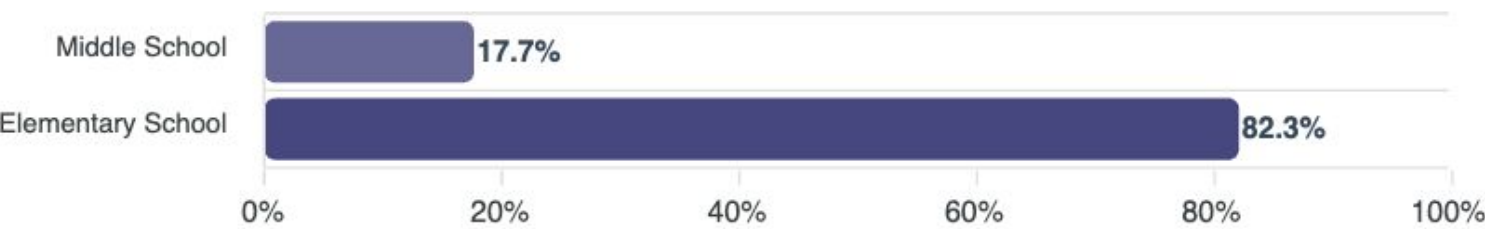
Total Survey Responses (Count Data)	
Area Horizon	268
Area 1 Elementary	179
Area High	327
Area 2 Elementary	179
Area 3 Elementary	81
Area Specialty	96
Area Middle	327

More specifically, of the two hundred sixty-eight who selected Area Horizon, they can be broken down as follows:



Total Area Horizons Survey Responses (Count Data)	
Elementary School	159
Middle School	25
High School	84

Lastly, for the ninety-six who selected Area Speciality, they can be divided into Middle School and Elementary School as follows:

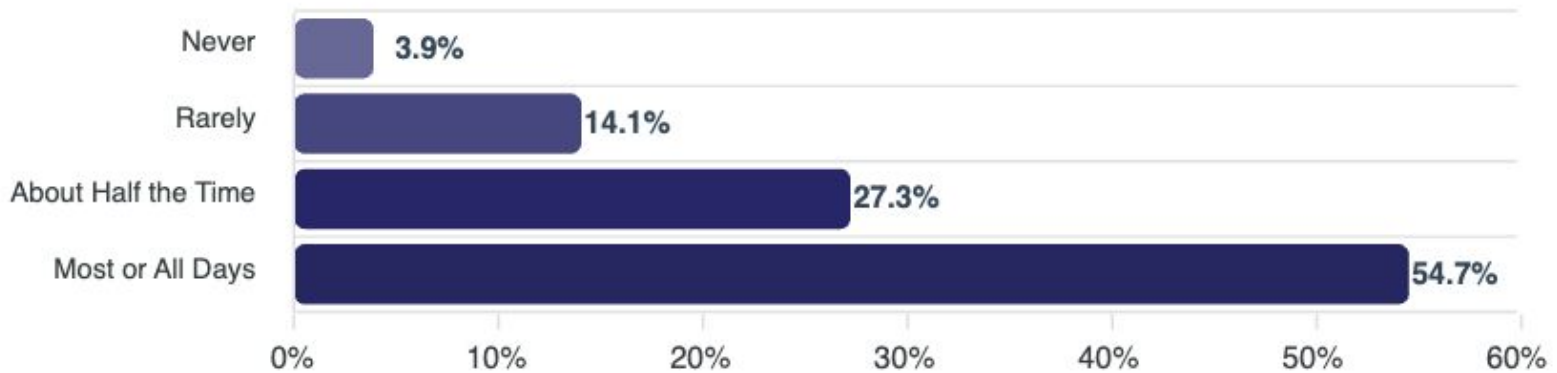


Total Area Specialty Survey Responses (Count Data)	
Middle School	17
Elementary School	79

SURVEY DATA

DCSD is particularly interested in understanding the usage of DCSD materials across the surveyed courses and content areas.

The question “If district-provided curriculum materials (textbooks, online resources, manipulatives, student workbooks, etc.) exist for your course, how often do you use them (most or all days, about half the time, rarely, never)” yielded the following data.



Total Survey Responses (Count Data)	
Curriculum Usage	
Never	52
Rarely	188
About Half the Time	364
Most or All Days	729

SURVEY DATA

A sampling of responses for Question #6, What else would you like to add to help us understand the availability or quality of curricular resources for the course you identified above?, from each category of curriculum usage reveals the aforementioned patterns.

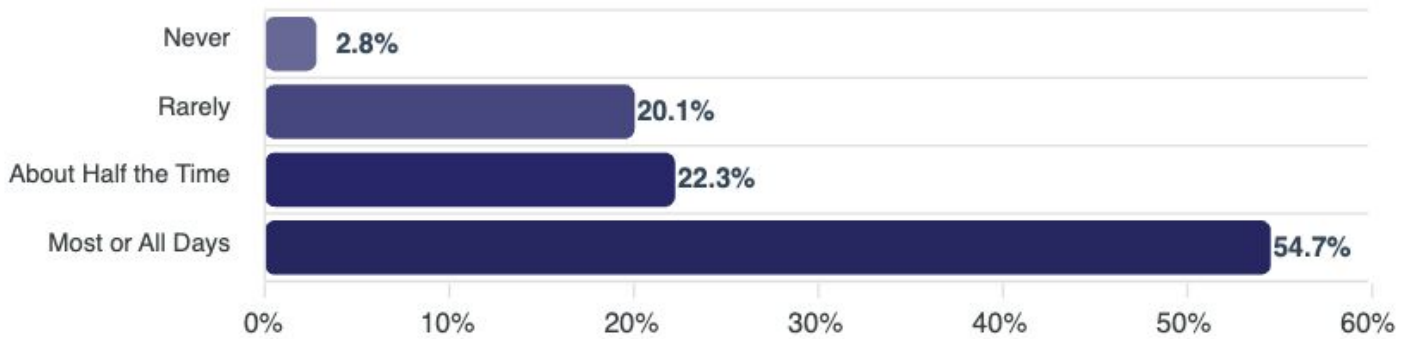
Most or All Days	• "The new text book we have does not cover all the standards we teach. We need manipulatives to teach students concrete." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i> • "It would be beneficial to have resources to help differentiate the math standards." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i> • "ESOL: More low-prep materials. Manipulatives. Updated unit plans, curriculum maps, pacing guides, etc in accordance to textbook/student workbooks." <i>(Secondary English Teacher)</i> "Online access for the textbook would be great." <i>(Middle School Social Studies Teacher)</i> • "The biggest challenge I face as a math teacher is having the resources I need to complete the projects described in our Unit Plans. For example, the plan will show a screenshot of a worksheet, but the actual resources does not exist. I have had to create worksheets and visuals to make the projects accessible to my students." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i> • "Science requires many materials to teach lessons. I haven't received science materials needed for experiments, models, or scientific equipment. I use broken equipment from years ago, ask parents for donations and spend my own money to make science hands-on for my students." <i>(Elementary Science Teacher)</i> • "Sometimes, consumable materials might be needed for an activity, and teachers might have to buy out of their pockets." <i>(Elementary English Teacher)</i>
About Half of the Time	• "HMH Writable is a little clunky, but it is an excellent resource. I appreciate the AI sample model texts that I can easily generate for writing assignments and the handy rubrics I can drag and drop. However, students absolutely should have the audio versions of all the engaging reading passages in HMH Lit. This is especially critical for our multilingual learners." <i>(Secondary English and ESOL Teacher)</i> • "I would like to see differentiated textbooks for students with disabilities. Also, the materials need to be relatable to ESOL students. We do not receive enough manipulatives for each student." <i>(Elementary Special Education Teacher)</i> • "The district's purchase of online resources are not complete. The do not buy all aspects of the program and resources needed to use the support/drive instruction." <i>(High School Science Teacher)</i> • "I really dislike that the district seems to just choose resources to encourage a one size fits all method. It is clear that teachers are not involved in the decision making process." <i>(Secondary English Teacher)</i> • "I often feel like I need someone to show me how I would use them in a class, or show me how to use it for students." <i>(Middle School Social Studies Teacher)</i>

About Half of the Time <i>(Continued)</i>	"The activities that can be done with the provided curriculum is limited. The textbook itself is not enough to provide a rich and varied level of instruction and activities. Most of those are made by me -- games, scaffolded practice, graphic organizers, writing and speaking prompts, paired practice. I have to write assessments that cover all the standards, since the provided textbook resource is limited in the standards assessed." <i>(World Languages Teacher)</i> - The district's text books does not align with the GA Learning plans." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i>
Rarely	"Let teachers have freedom in their classrooms rather than trying to standardize every little thing. I will not use a textbook that has all assignments, assessments, lessons, and everything planned out - it takes away my passion for the job and the joy I get in creatively solving a problem." <i>(Secondary English Teacher)</i> "I would prefer to choose resources from a list instead of bulk orders not tailored to fit specific needs." <i>(Middle School Visual and Performing Arts Teacher)</i> "Instead of the county coming up, what they think is best, they should ask the teachers. Especially the ones who've been teaching for so long because they are so knowledgeable." <i>(Elementary School Teacher)</i> "Student workbooks are often too generic and fail to offer enough practice or differentiation to support students at various levels of understanding. There also seems to be a lack of alignment between the resources provided and the actual needs of students in the classroom, leading to a disconnect between teaching materials and the goals of the curriculum." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i> "It is very difficult to find the resources we do have, and when I find them, they are often ineffective and outdated. Navigating DCSD's curricular resources is often a futile effort." <i>(High School Social Studies Teacher)</i>
Never	"The science curriculum needs an overhaul to include learning targets and success criteria so that they are the same across all classrooms. The assessments are too easy and need to change more often." <i>(High School Science Teacher)</i> "The current Algebra curriculum is not working for Tier A multilingual students. It is frustrating as we have to create all our materials. We have asked for help from our school and the County multiple times but have not received support." <i>(Secondary Math Teacher)</i> "The district needs to do better with providing teachers with resources they need." <i>(Elementary Math Teacher)</i> "Despite having physical access to textbooks, it's clear that Dekalb does not want to spend money on quality materials. I find the Georgia Studies textbook unusable." <i>(High School Social Studies Teacher)</i> "The materials do not support ESOL students who are Tier A and have disjointed educational experiences." <i>(Secondary Math Teacher)</i>

SURVEY DATA

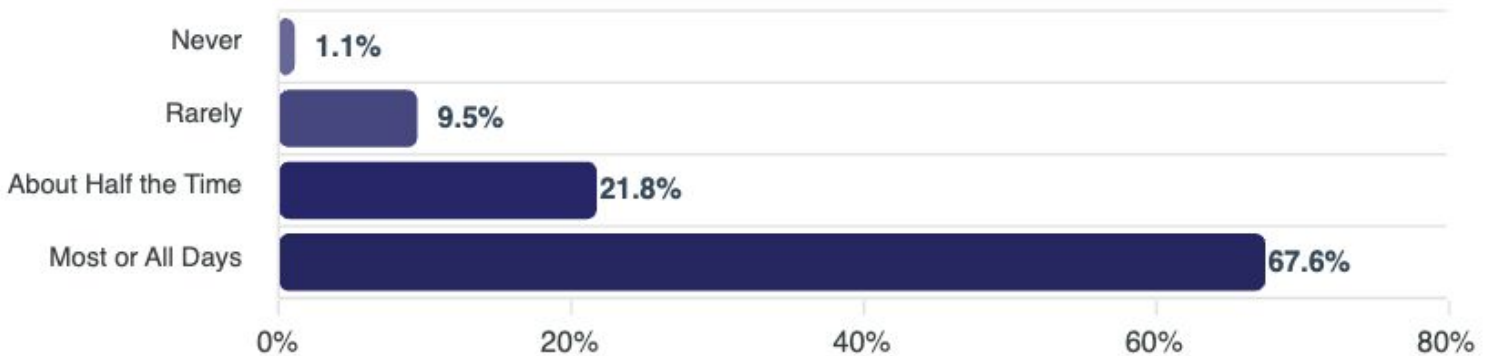
The following pages show data for the Curriculum Usage question specific to areas.

Area 1 Elementary (*Curriculum Usage*)



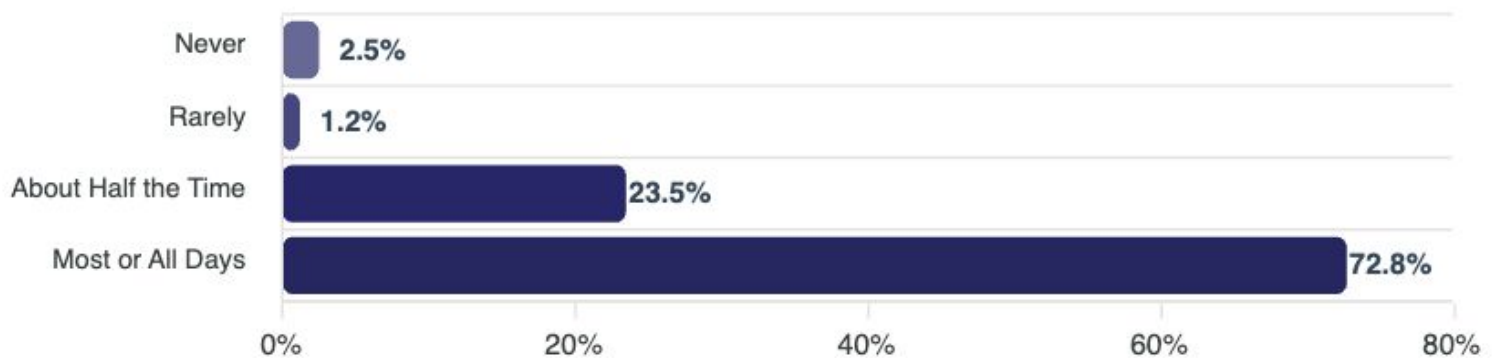
Area 1 Elementary - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	5
Rarely	36
About Half the Time	40
Most or All Days	98

Area 2 Elementary (*Curriculum Usage*)



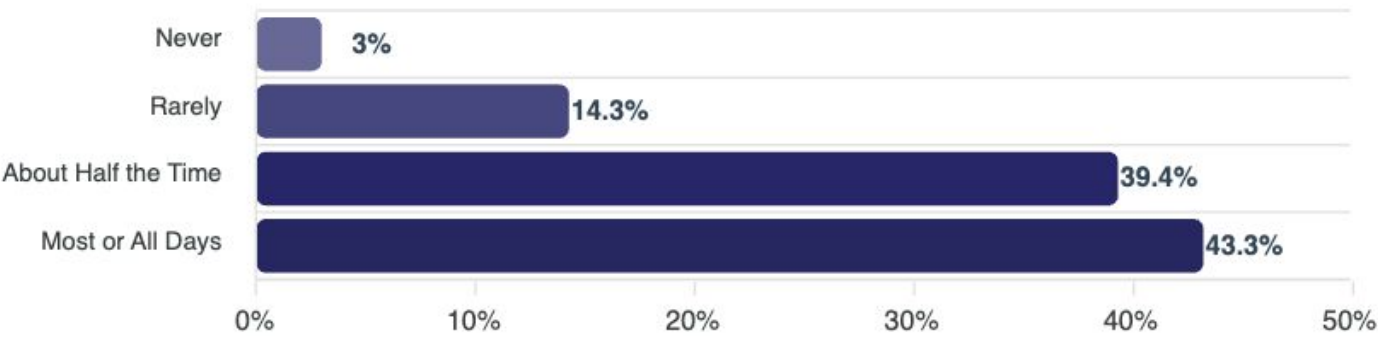
Area 2 Elementary - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	2
Rarely	17
About Half the Time	39
Most or All Days	121

Area 3 Elementary (*Curriculum Usage*)



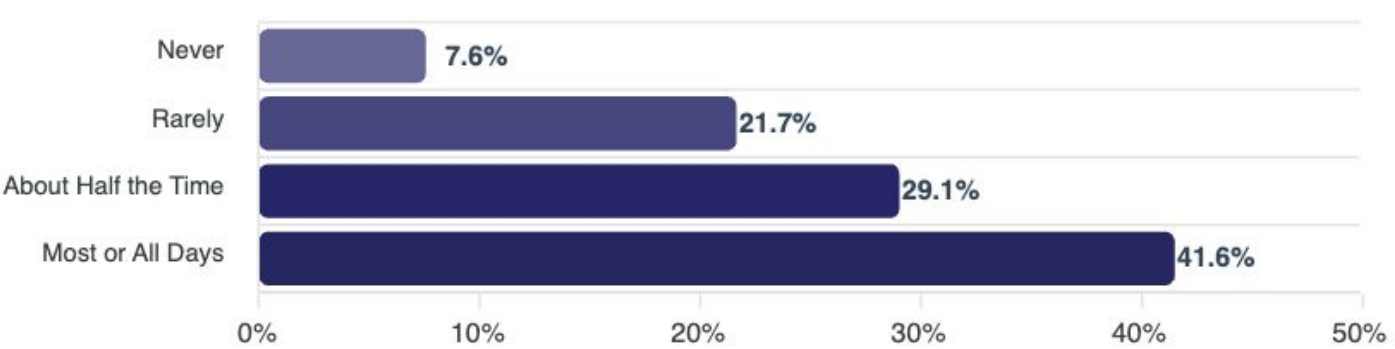
Area 3 Elementary - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	2
Rarely	1
About Half the Time	19
Most or All Days	59

Area Middle (Curriculum Usage)



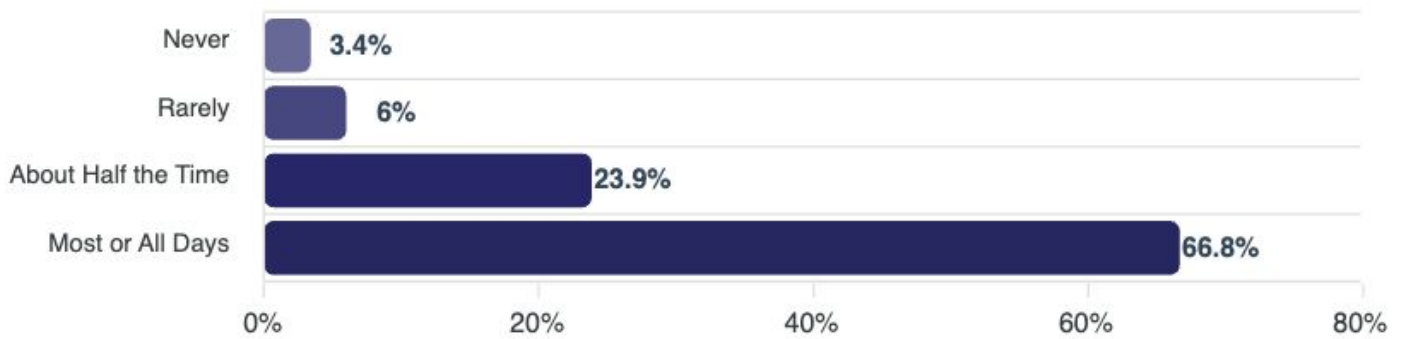
Area Middle - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	6
Rarely	29
About Half the Time	80
Most or All Days	88

Area High (Curriculum Usage)



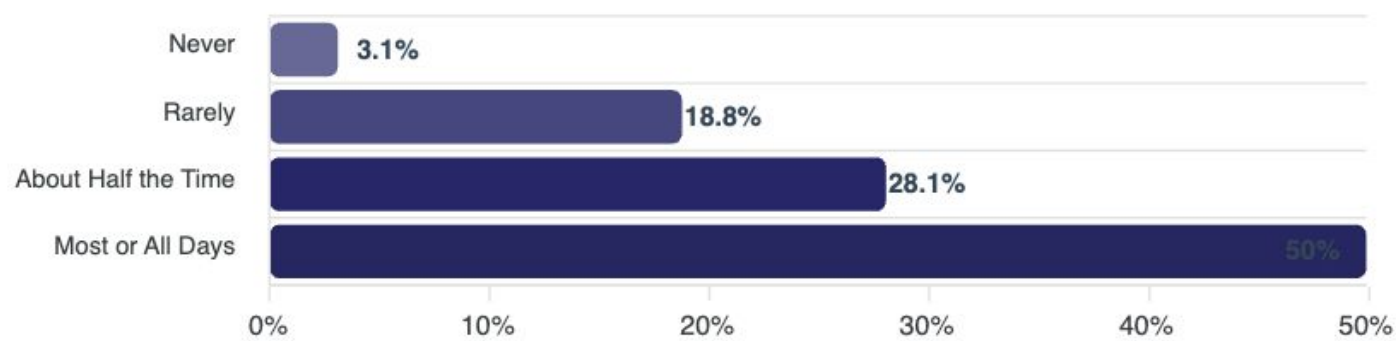
Area High - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	25
Rarely	71
About Half the Time	95
Most or All Days	136

Area Horizons (*Curriculum Usage*)



Area Horizons - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	9
Rarely	16
About Half the Time	64
Most or All Days	179

Area Specialty (Curriculum Usage)



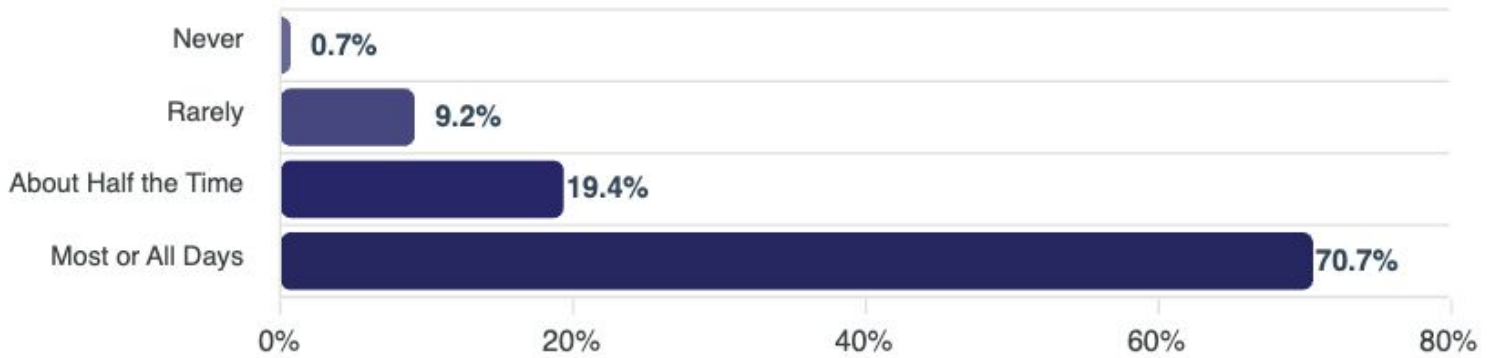
Area Specialty - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	3
Rarely	18
About Half the Time	27
Most or All Days	48

The following pages show data for the Curriculum Usage question specific to content areas.

SURVEY DATA

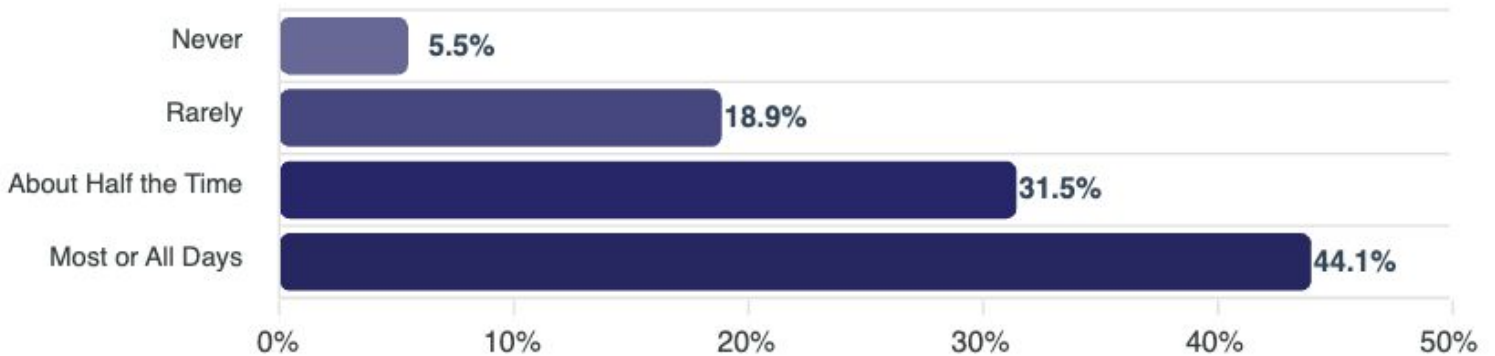
The following pages show data for the Curriculum Usage question specific to content areas.

Elementary English (*Curriculum Usage*)



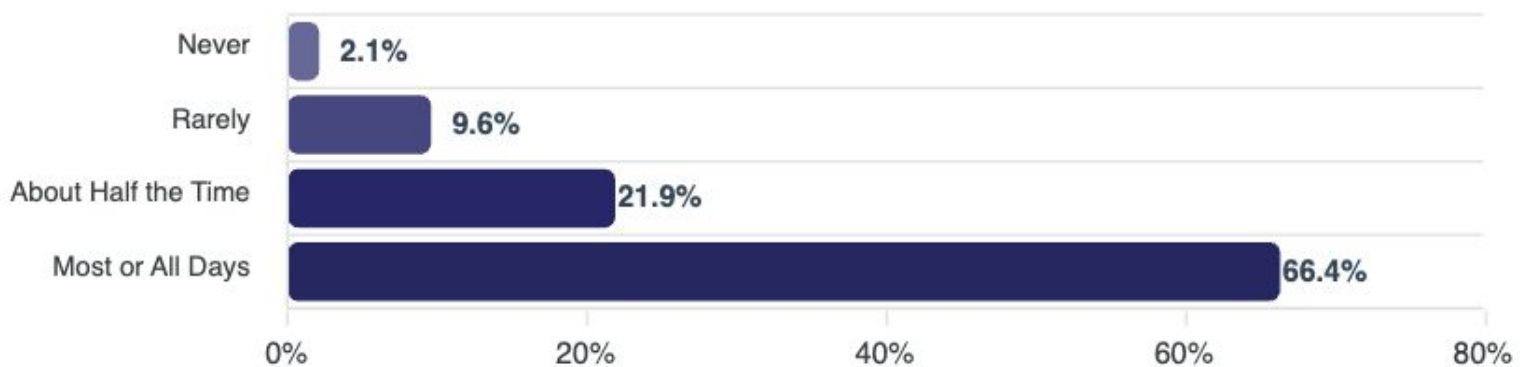
Elementary English - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	2
Rarely	28
About Half the Time	59
Most or All Days	215

Secondary English (*Curriculum Usage*)



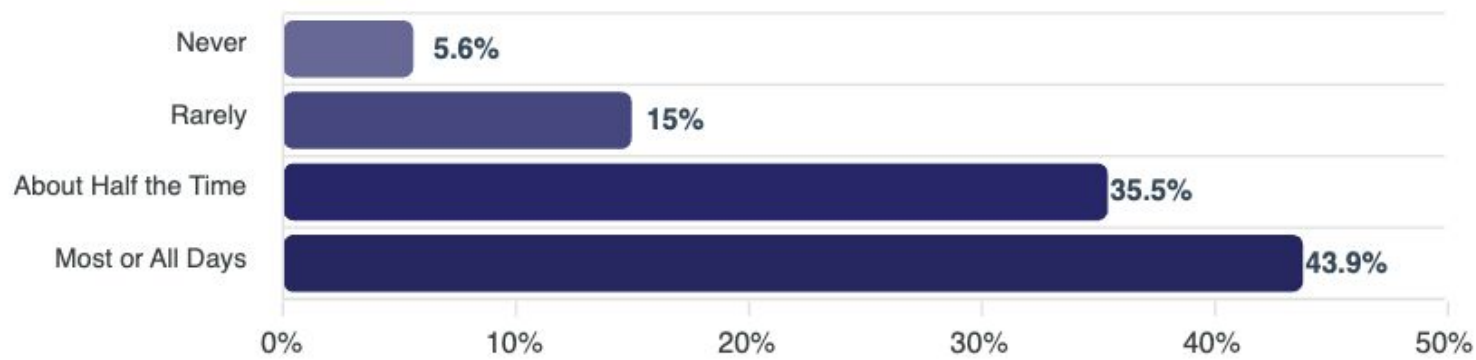
Secondary English - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	7
Rarely	24
About Half the Time	40
Most or All Days	56

Elementary Math (*Curriculum Usage*)



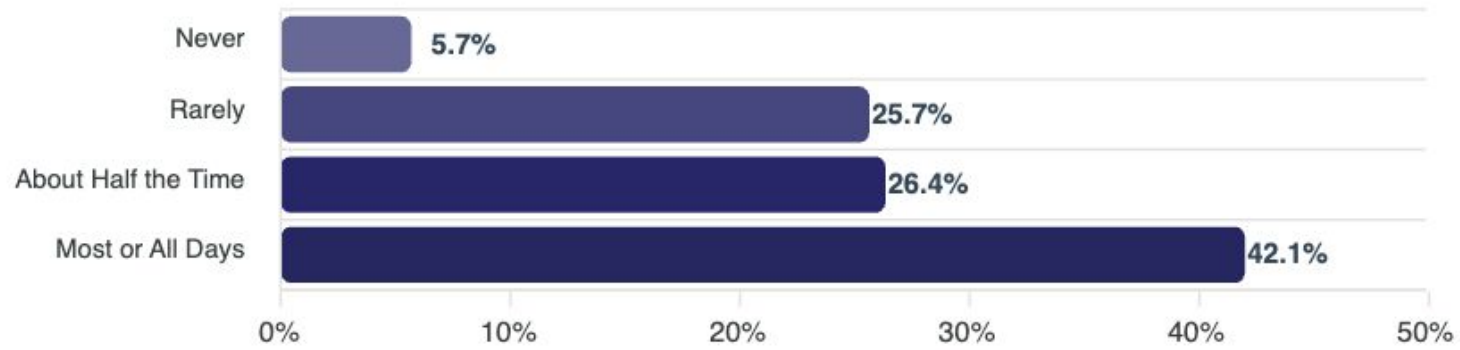
Elementary Math - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	3
Rarely	14
About Half the Time	32
Most or All Days	97

Secondary Math (*Curriculum Usage*)



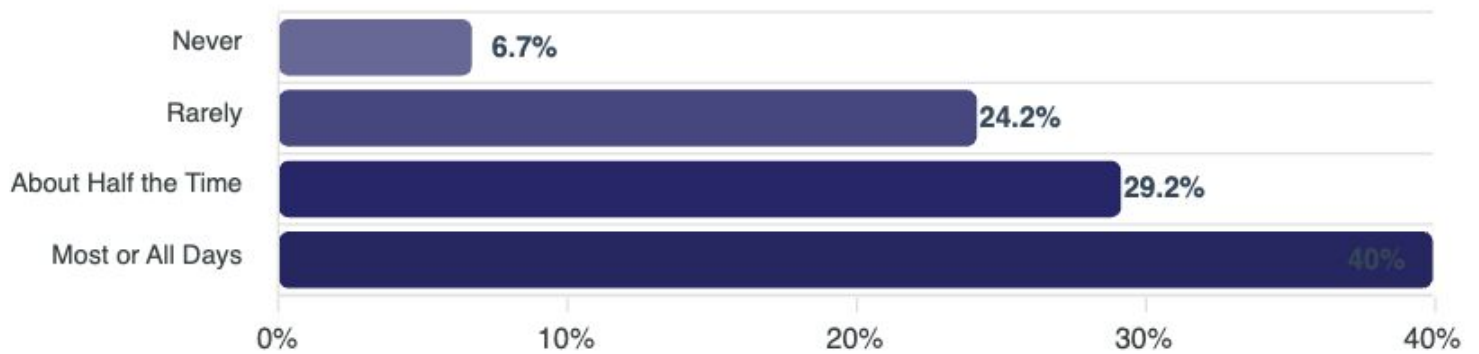
Secondary Math - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	6
Rarely	16
About Half the Time	38
Most or All Days	47

Science (*Curriculum Usage*)



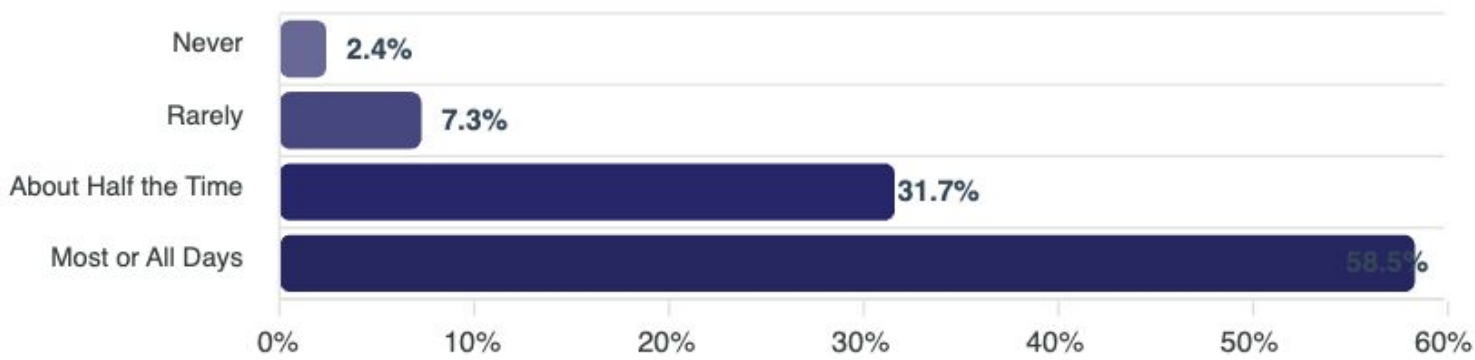
Science - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	8
Rarely	36
About Half the Time	37
Most or All Days	59

Social Studies (*Curriculum Usage*)



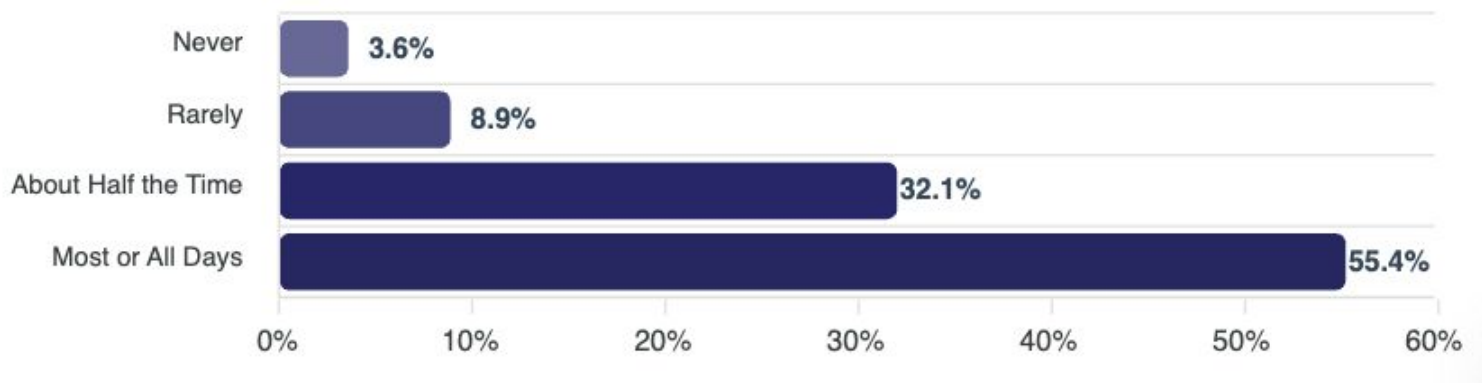
Social Studies - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	8
Rarely	29
About Half the Time	35
Most or All Days	48

Health & PE (Curriculum Usage)



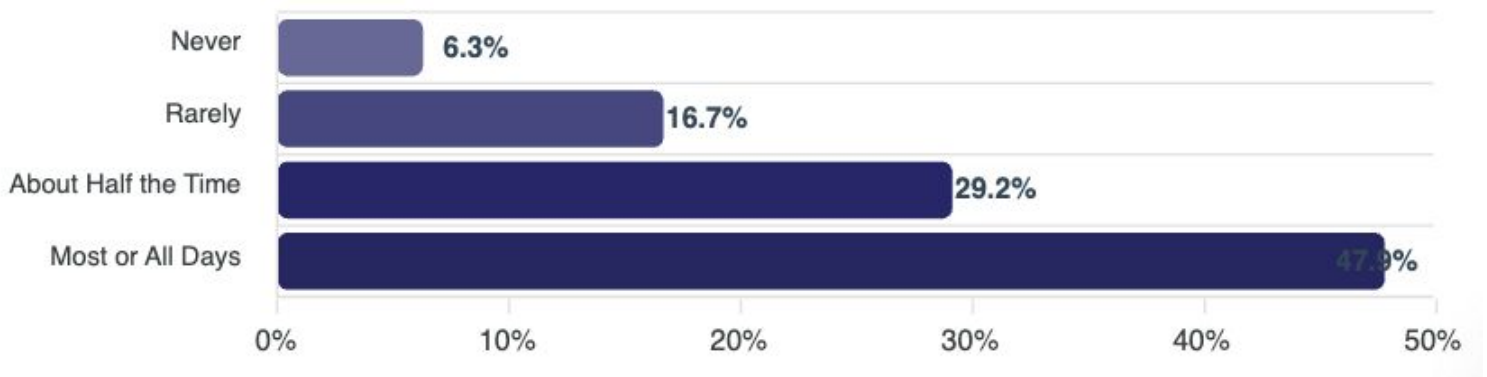
Health & PE - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	1
Rarely	3
About Half the Time	13
Most or All Days	24

World Languages (Curriculum Usage)



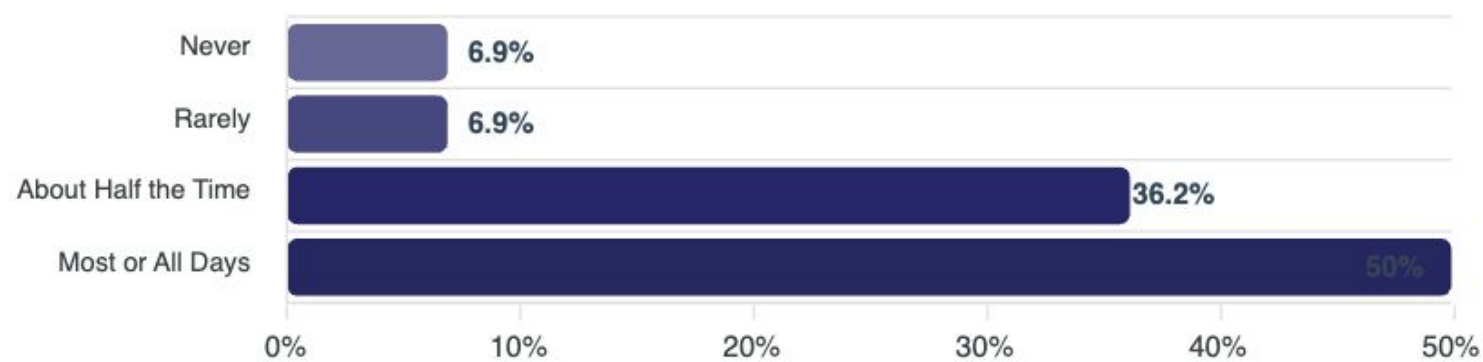
World Languages - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	2
Rarely	5
About Half the Time	18
Most or All Days	31

Visual Arts, Performing Arts & Music (*Curriculum Usage*)



Visual Arts, Performing Arts & Music - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	3
Rarely	8
About Half the Time	14
Most or All Days	23

CTAE (Curriculum Usage)



CTAE - Curriculum Usage (Count Data)	
Never	4
Rarely	4
About Half the Time	21
Most or All Days	29

These tables represent a small fraction of the insights available from the vast collection of numerical and anecdotal data in the 2025 DCSD Curriculum Audit survey. DCSD’s Division of Curriculum and Instruction and other divisions, departments, Area leadership, and schools can determine priority questions in this survey to investigate in order to add further context and specificity to the content area and district-wide recommendations included in this report.

WALKTHROUGHS

Three members of the Insight team each completed walkthroughs across six separate days of site visits in order to contextualize the submitted artifacts and see curriculum materials and instructional strategies in action. Additionally, 180+ Teaching Channel walkthroughs were collected and uploaded by DCSD's Academic Coaches across a wide range of schools and content areas in all DCSD Areas.

The breakdown of those walkthroughs by area is as follows:

Total Walkthroughs (Percent Data)	
Area Elementary	approx. 51%
Area Middle	approx. 18%
Area High	approx. 31%

The breakdown of those walkthroughs by subject is as follows:

Total Walkthroughs (Percent Data)	
CTAE	approx. 1%
EIP	approx. 2%
English	approx. 30%
ESOL (<i>self-contained</i>)	approx. 3%
Exceptional Education (self-contained)	approx. 1%
Mathematics	approx. 31%
Music	approx. 2%
Science	approx. 15%
Social Studies	approx. 11%
Visual Performing Arts	approx. 2%
World Languages	approx. 2%

WALKTHROUGHS

Each walkthrough proceeded for, on average, between ten and fifteen minutes. When visiting classrooms during the live or virtual walkthroughs, Insight team members utilized the following rating system to assess “look-fors”:

- N - No (look-for should have been observed during the visit but was not)
- NP - Not Present (visitor was not present during a time when the look-for could have been observed)
- P - Partial (look-for could have been observed during the visit and was observed but not to its)
- Y - Yes (look-for could or should have been observed during the visit and was)

This system was approved by the DCSD team in November of 2024.

Insight captured data on the following look-fors:

- Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.
- Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.
- Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout the lesson.
- Uses a variety of research-based instructional strategies and resources.
- Effectively uses appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning.
- Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.
- Develops higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities.
- Engages students in authentic learning by providing real-life examples and interdisciplinary connections.

WALKTHROUGHS

Each walkthrough proceeded for, on average, between ten and fifteen minutes. When visiting classrooms during the live or virtual walkthroughs, Insight team members utilized the following rating system to assess “look-fors”:

- N - No (look-for should have been observed during the visit but was not)
- NP - Not Present (visitor was not present during a time when the look-for could have been observed)
- P - Partial (look-for could have been observed during the visit and was observed but not to its)
- Y - Yes (look-for could or should have been observed during the visit and was)

This system was approved by the DCSD team in November of 2024.

The following data was disaggregated from relative to the following “look-fors”:

- Look-For: Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.
- Look-For: Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.

The following data breaks down the overall rating based on “Look-For: Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.”

Total Walkthroughs (Percent Data)	
N	1%
NP	1%
P	18
Y	90%

Breaking down this “look-for” by area, the data is as follows:

Area Elementary (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 1%
NP	0%
P	approx. 20%
Y	approx. 79%

Area Middle (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 0.5%
NP	approx. 0.5%
P	approx. 29%
Y	approx. 62%

Area High (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 5%
NP	approx. 2%
P	approx. 22%
Y	approx. 71%

Breaking down this “look-for” by subject, the data is as follows:

CTAE (Percent Data)	
N	—
NP	—
P	—
Y	100%

EIP (Percent Data)	
N	—
NP	—
P	—
Y	100%

English (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 3%
NP	approx. 1%
P	approx. 20%
Y	approx. 76%

ESOL - <i>Self-Contained</i> (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 14%
NP	approx. 29%
P	—
Y	approx. 57%

Exceptional Education - <i>Self-Contained</i> (Percent Data)	
N	—
NP	—
P	—
Y	100%

Mathematics (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 1%
NP	—
P	approx. 22%
Y	approx. 77%

Music (Percent Data)	
N	—
NP	—
P	50%
Y	50%

Science (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 3%
NP	—
P	approx. 15%
Y	approx. 82%

Social Studies(Percent Data)	
N	approx. 4%
NP	approx. 11%
P	approx. 37%
Y	approx. 48%

Visual Performing Arts (Percent Data)	
N	25%
NP	—
P	—
Y	75%

World Languages (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	–
P	50%
Y	50%

The following data breaks down the overall rating based on “Look-For: Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.”

Total Walkthroughs (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 5%
NP	approx. 6%
P	approx. 22%
Y	approx. 67%

Breaking down this look for by area, the data is as follows:

Area Elementary (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 3%
NP	approx. 3%
P	approx. 18%
Y	approx. 76%

Area Middle (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 15%
NP	approx. 7%
P	approx. 24%
Y	approx. 54%

Area High (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 6%
NP	approx. 12%
P	approx. 38%
Y	approx. 44%

Breaking down this look for by area, the data is as follows:

CTAE (Percent Data)	
N	—
NP	—
P	—
Y	100%

EIP (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	–
P	–
Y	100%

English (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 5%
NP	approx. 6%
P	approx. 17%
Y	approx. 72%

ESOL - <i>Self-Contained</i> (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 17%
NP	approx. 17%
P	–
Y	approx. 66%

Exceptional Educations - <i>Self-Contained</i> (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	–
P	–
Y	100%

Mathematics (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 5%
NP	approx. 1%
P	approx. 22%
Y	approx. 72%

Music (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	approx. 33.3%
P	approx. 33.3%
Y	approx. 33.3%

Science (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 2%
NP	approx. 31%
P	approx. 6%
Y	approx. 61%

Social Studies (Percent Data)	
N	approx. 18%
NP	approx. 14%
P	approx. 27%
Y	approx. 41%

Visual Performing Arts (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	–
P	100%
Y	–

World Languages (Percent Data)	
N	–
NP	–
P	50%
Y	50%

Walkthroughs were the primary vehicle for collecting artifacts for analysis. Walkthrough data from look-fors, for the purposes of this Audit, was used to contextualize artifacts gathered and provide the Insight team with some working familiarity on how DCSD curriculum materials from across the district were brought to life in varied content areas and grade bands. School or teacher information from walkthrough data was not shared with anyone outside the Insight team.

The Insight team would like to thank all teachers, school leaders, Division of Curriculum & Instruction staff, Academic Coach Coordinators, Academic Coaches, and of course all the students who allowed us into classrooms to observe their learning.

FOCUS GROUP DATA

DeKalb County School District recruited stakeholders from multiple groups to engage in focus group sessions with Insight audit team members. During the recruitment process, DCSD invited potential group members from the following stakeholder groups: the Director of Teaching and Learning; Area Superintendents; Content Area and Program Senior Coordinators, Coordinators II, and Directors; Principals; Academic Coach Coordinators; Academic Coaches; and Teachers.

Focus groups were facilitated by Insight team members held in person and virtually via Zoom tele-conferencing platform with attendees. Focus groups were approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length.

During the focus groups, participants were provided the opportunity to share insights on the state of curriculum materials in their content area, grade band, or Area.

For ethical and integrity reasons, participants were assured their identifying information and views expressed during the focus group would remain confidential. As such, audit team members would anonymize all details during the reporting process.

The following tables show the focus groups and number of participants (out of at least five who were invited), listed in order of completion. Participant count includes those who could not attend live, but later offered their thoughts via email.

Stakeholder Group	# of Participants
Social Studies Senior Coordinator	1
Math Senior Coordinator, pt. I	1
Science Senior Coordinators	2
Visual Arts and Performing Arts Senior Coordinator	1
World Languages Senior Coordinator	1
IB and AP Coordinator II	1
EIP Coordinators	2
Academic Coach Coordinators	5

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Stakeholder Group (cont.)	# of Participants
Director of Teaching and Learning	1
Math Senior Coordinator, pt. II	1
Music Senior Coordinator	1
ESOL Coordinators	5
Elementary Academic Coaches	4
Gifted Senior Coordinators	2
High School Academic Coaches	5
Middle School Academic Coaches	5
MS/HS English Teachers	3
Exceptional Education Director, Senior Coordinators, and Coordinators II	6
Elementary English Teachers	3
Elementary Science Teachers	2
MS/HS Science Teachers	2
MS/HS Social Studies Teachers	3
EIP Teachers	3
MS/HS World Languages Teachers	2
Visual Arts Teachers	3
Middle School Principals	4

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Stakeholder Group (cont.)	# of Participants
ELA Director	1
High School Principals	5
Elementary Principals	5
Elementary and Special Area Superintendents	4
Middle School and High School Area Superintendents	2
High School Math Teachers	5
Middle School Math Teachers	2

CURRICULUM DATA

The Audit's Curriculum Review stage focused on a comprehensive collection of courses within content areas chosen by DCSD. Data from documents for review, focus groups, and surveys were selected from the courses below:

Math	English	Science	Social Studies	Health & PE	World Languages & Culture	Visual Performing Arts
First Grade Math	First Grade English	Fifth Grade Science	Sixth Grade Social Studies	Sixth Grade Health/PE	Spanish 1	Fifth Grade Visual Arts
Third Grade Math	Third Grade English	Sixth Grade Science	Eighth Grade Social Studies	High School Health/PE		Level 1 Visual Arts (9th-12th)
Fifth Grade Math	Fifth Grade English	Eighth Grade Science	American Government			Music (all grades)
Sixth Grade Math	Sixth Grade English	Biology	US History			
Eighth Grade Math	Eighth Grade English		AP US History			
Algebra	Ninth Grade Comp and Lit					
Geometry	Eleventh Grade American Lit					

These courses are a beginning representation of DCSD's diverse offerings and diverse student body; limiting data to that obtained from these courses allows the Audit to go deeper with fewer representative courses and thus serves the intended goals of this Audit. Insight conducted focus groups and administered surveys to teachers and content supervisors. The focus groups and surveys ascertained baseline curriculum and content practices across these courses. Finally, Insight gathered curriculum documents, assessments, and instructional materials related to the courses above.

Additionally, Insight audited courses with EIP, AP, IB, Gifted, Exceptional Education, and ESOL designations, but through the lens of Tier I instruction in the main content areas. Some courses in CTAE were audited, but as a means to contextualize CTAE survey data and eventual recommendations.

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

The Curriculum Audit focused on a limited number of courses in the content areas below. For both live and virtual walkthroughs, DCSD solicited, then uploaded, artifacts for each content area.

Artifacts included course and unit overviews, end-of course assessments, unit assessments, and shorter formative assessments. Artifacts were assessed on their alignment to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, and content-specific criteria derived from assessment and task evaluation tools used by field-leading organizations.

It is important to note that included artifacts are only those submitted by teachers. Insight aimed to include and rate artifacts that were used in actual classroom instruction, rather than those that were simply available or existent in Canvas. When lesson or unit plans referred to curriculum materials in Curriculum Community, these materials were considered artifacts for audit and rating.

MATHEMATICS

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for some analyzed courses.

First Grade Math	The DeKalb County 1st Grade Mathematics Curriculum Map outlines a yearlong sequence of six units designed to build foundational math skills through conceptual learning, problem solving, and real-world application. Grounded in the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the curriculum emphasizes number sense, place value, measurement, geometry, data, and patterns. Instruction follows a structured framework—Engage, Explore, Apply, Reflect—and integrates the Standards for Mathematical Practice daily. Unit 1, "Let's Count!," introduces counting, composing numbers, and data representation through performance tasks like designing vegetable boxes, with embedded formative assessments and differentiation strategies. Later units, such as Unit 3, focus on shapes, patterns, and fractions through engaging, paced activities. The curriculum promotes mathematical thinking, discourse, and developmentally appropriate instruction aligned with state expectations.
Third Grade Math	The 3rd grade Math Scope and Sequence and Curriculum Maps provide a comprehensive year-long instructional plan that integrates priority standards, essential questions, and formative and summative assessments across clearly defined weekly units. The curriculum begins with foundational concepts in place value and extends through complex topics such as multi-digit addition and subtraction, multiplication and division strategies, fractions, measurement, and geometry. Each unit includes detailed weekly lesson breakdowns, vocabulary, instructional tasks, and aligned Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) or end-of-unit evaluations to monitor progress and inform instruction. Emphasis is placed on fluency standards such as adding and subtracting within 1,000 and using multiplication and division within 100, which are woven throughout the year for skill mastery. The sequence is strategically designed to build on prior knowledge, support real-life problem-solving, and reinforce the eight Mathematical Practice Standards for deeper conceptual understanding and flexible mathematical thinking.
Fifth Grade Math	The 5th grade mathematics curriculum is organized into eight cohesive units that build conceptual understanding and real-world application across key domains: volume, place value, operations, fractions, decimals, geometry, and data. Students begin with exploring volume through hands-on activities and progress to applying multiplication and division with whole numbers and fractions, using visual models and problem-solving strategies. Place value concepts are extended to decimals, with an emphasis on comparison, rounding, and operations. Geometry and coordinate plane work include classifying polygons and analyzing numerical patterns. Throughout the year, interdisciplinary connections are emphasized—integrating math with science, ELA, and social studies. The curriculum culminates in a capstone unit where students apply their learning in project-based contexts. Mathematical Practices (MP.1–8) are consistently embedded, and performance tasks such as the "Soles for Souls" box-shipping project bring relevance and engagement to student learning.

MATHEMATICS

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	Rubric for Lessons & Units: Math (from EQulP Rubric)	
	I: Alignment to the Depth of the SoLs. Does the unit target a set of grade-level Georgia math Standards of Learning? Are the math practice skills central to the lessons identified, handled in a grade-level appropriate way, and connected to the content being addressed? Is there a balance of rigor (procedures and conceptual understanding) appropriate for the standards being taught?	II: Key Math Shifts: Is the unit focused on the parts of it that constitute major work of the grade standards? Does content build on previous understandings, and are there opportunities for students to connect knowledge and skills vertically and horizontally? Is there opportunity for the appropriate balance of application, conceptual understanding, and procedural skill and fluency relative to the standards being taught?
First Grade Math	Based on the scope of available artifacts, the units presented demonstrates a strong alignment to Georgia Standards of Learning, appropriate integration of mathematical practice standards, and a well-balanced instructional approach. The unit is thoughtfully designed with clear scaffolds for developing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application skills. It incorporates formative assessments, rubrics, and supports for diverse learners, including ELLs and students with IEPs. While conclusions are based solely on Unit 1 and 5 planners, the documentation reflects a high-quality instructional design that prioritizes real-world connections, student reasoning, and developmentally appropriate engagement with core math content.	Yes, the unit is clearly focused on the major work of Grade 1 by targeting core standards such as counting to 120, understanding place value, and solving addition and subtraction problems within 20 (1.NR.1, 1.NR.2), all of which are central to developing numerical reasoning. The content builds meaningfully on Kindergarten skills like counting and representing numbers, and offers opportunities for vertical and horizontal coherence by connecting number operations to data collection and measurement tasks, as seen in both the "Let's Count!" unit and the Week 7 lesson plan. Instruction is carefully designed to balance conceptual understanding (e.g., using ten frames and manipulatives), procedural fluency (e.g., mental math strategies), and real-world application (e.g., packaging vegetables), ensuring alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
Third Grade Math	Yes, DeKalb County's 3rd Grade Math align with the Georgia Standards of Excellence, targeting key concepts in operations, fractions, measurement, and geometry. The units incorporate the Standards for Mathematical Practice in age-appropriate, content-connected ways, promoting problem-solving and reasoning. Instruction balances conceptual understanding with procedural fluency through hands-on activities and real-world applications, supporting a well-rounded and rigorous approach to math instruction.	3rd Grade Math units are well-aligned with the major work of the grade, emphasizing foundational skills in multiplication, division, area, fractions, and geometry—key components of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The units build on prior knowledge and support progression to more advanced concepts, ensuring strong vertical and horizontal alignment. Instruction fosters deep conceptual connections and real-world relevance, while maintaining a balanced approach to rigor through conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application via hands-on tasks and structured practice.
Fifth Grade Math	Yes, the 5th grade Unit 1 math plan targets Georgia Standards 5.GSR.8 and 5.NR.5, focusing on volume and numerical expressions. It integrates Mathematical Practices (MP.1–8) in grade-appropriate ways, emphasizing reasoning, modeling, and precision. Students engage in real-world tasks, like calculating box volumes for a shoe drive, balancing conceptual understanding with procedural fluency. Performance tasks and hands-on activities ensure alignment to standards and promote deep, meaningful learning.	The 5th grade Unit 1 plan, <i>Investigating Volume of Solid Figures</i> , is clearly focused on the major work of the grade by emphasizing key standards related to volume (5.GSR.8) and numerical expressions (5.NR.5), which are foundational to 5th grade geometry and numerical reasoning. The unit builds on prior knowledge from earlier grades—such as area, multiplication, and place value—and deepens understanding through hands-on exploration and real-world tasks, supporting both vertical and horizontal connections.

Rubric for Lessons & Units: Math (from EQulP Rubric)

III: Instructional Supports: Is the unit plan easy to understand and use? Does the unit use and encourage precise use of mathematics, terminology, and academic language? Does it provide all students (with scaffolding if necessary) with multiple opportunities to engage with problems and tasks that stimulate mathematical thinking? Does it integrate appropriate supports for students who are EL, have disabilities, or operate well below grade level?

IV: Assessment: Does the unit regularly assess whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills using varied modes of curriculum-embedded pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessments? Do the assessments elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level standards?

First Grade Math

1st grade math units are thoughtfully designed to be user-friendly and accessible for educators. The unit plans are structured with clear objectives, sequential lessons, and embedded instructional strategies that facilitate ease of use in classroom settings. Mathematical terminology and academic language are consistently and precisely employed throughout the units. This ensures that students are introduced to and can engage with the correct mathematical vocabulary, fostering a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught. The units provide multiple opportunities for all students to engage with problems and tasks that stimulate mathematical thinking. Activities are designed to encourage exploration, discussion, and reasoning, allowing students to construct their understanding through various problem-solving experiences. Appropriate supports are integrated to assist students who are English Learners (EL), have disabilities, or are performing below grade level. Scaffolding strategies, such as visual aids, manipulatives, and differentiated instruction, are incorporated to ensure that all students can access and engage with the mathematical content effectively.

Units incorporate assessments that align with the Georgia Standards of Excellence, focusing on key concepts such as operations, algebraic thinking, and place value. These assessments are designed to be clear and accessible, utilizing precise mathematical terminology and language appropriate for first-grade learners. The assessments provide multiple opportunities for students to engage with tasks that stimulate mathematical thinking. They include a variety of question types and formats that encourage students to apply their understanding in different contexts, promoting deeper comprehension of mathematical concepts. To support diverse learners, the assessments integrate appropriate scaffolding strategies. These include visual aids, manipulatives, and differentiated instruction techniques to assist English Learners, students with disabilities, and those performing below grade level. Such supports ensure that all students have equitable access to the assessments and can demonstrate their mathematical understanding effectively.

Third Grade Math

The 3rd grade math unit plans demonstrate a well-organized and standards-aligned curriculum structure that promotes conceptual understanding through clearly defined weekly lessons, essential questions, and targeted vocabulary. The units encourage the precise use of mathematical language and provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in problem-solving through hands-on, real-world tasks that foster deep mathematical thinking. While the instructional design reflects strong alignment with best practices such as the Concrete-Representational-Abstract model, the plans lack explicit scaffolds and supports for English Learners, students with disabilities, and those performing below grade level. Incorporating differentiated strategies and accommodations into the unit plans would enhance their inclusivity and effectiveness, ensuring equitable access to rigorous mathematics instruction for all learners.

The 3rd grade math unit includes a strong variety of assessments—diagnostic, formative, and summative—that align with grade-level standards and provide clear evidence of student understanding. Assessments such as exit tickets, performance tasks, and pre-assessments use visuals, models, and real-world problems to measure mastery of key skills like multiplication, area, and perimeter. These tools allow students to demonstrate learning in multiple ways and support instructional decisions. While the assessments are comprehensive and rigorous, the inclusion of more explicit self-assessment and reflection opportunities would further strengthen the approach.

Fifth Grade Math

The unit plans are thoughtfully organized and user-friendly, offering clear guidance and structured lessons that support effective implementation. Mathematical terminology and academic language are used consistently and appropriately, helping students build precise vocabulary and communicate their thinking clearly. Lessons provide varied and engaging problem-solving experiences that promote deep mathematical thinking. Additionally, the plans include built-in supports such as visual aids, differentiated tasks, and strategic scaffolding to meet the needs of English Learners, students with disabilities, and those working below grade level, ensuring equitable access to rigorous instruction.

The 5th grade math unit assessments are well-aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and focus on key concepts using varied question types, such as selected and constructed responses. These assessments elicit clear evidence of student understanding by requiring both problem-solving and explanation of reasoning, particularly with decimal operations. This approach ensures students demonstrate conceptual understanding, not just procedural skills, and provides valuable insight into their mastery of grade standards.

MATHEMATICS

Insight used criteria derived from leading assessment evaluation tools and appropriate for the purposes of this Audit, to assess math assessments on a 3-point scale. Evaluation tools of origin are linked.

Five Math Assessment Criteria and 3-point scale

- A. The set of items is clearly consistent with the most important content of the identified standard, and items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of a student's ability to independently demonstrate competency (from EQuIP Rubric, [achievethecore.org](https://achievethecore.org/equip))
- B. Item set is consistent with the standards' primary aspect of rigor (conceptual, procedural, and/or application) (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating HighQuality Assessments, CCSSO)
- C. Assessments should contain a variety of item types (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- D. Assessment should demonstrate authentic connections between the content standards and the eight Standards for Mathematical Practices (from Assessment Evaluation Tool, achievethecore.org)
- E. Majority of items on the assessment come from major work of the grade (priority standards) (from Assessment Evaluation Tool, achievethecore.org)

3	a significant majority or all aspects of the criterion
2	some aspects of the criterion
1	none or nearly none of the aspects of the criterion

For shorter artifacts, Insight used the EQuIP Task Review Rubric for Mathematics. It assesses alignment to standards, attention to the instructional shifts in the standards, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

MATHEMATICS

Most math artifacts were rated on the five Math Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. The set of items is clearly consistent with the most important content of the identified standard, and items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of a student's ability to independently demonstrate competency.	2.76
B. Item set is consistent with the standards' primary aspect of rigor (conceptual, procedural, and/or application).	2.61
C. Assessments should contain a variety of item types.	2.45
D. Assessment should demonstrate authentic connections between the content standards and the eight Standards for Mathematical Practices.	2.42
E. Majority of items on the assessment come from major work of the grade (priority standards).	2.73

Shorter artifacts were rated on the EQulP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	0
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	1
R: Some criteria checked	1
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

MATHEMATICS

The following tables name artifacts and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the math assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQulP task rubric.

	First Grade Math				
Criterion	1. Unit 1 Pre-Asses s.	2. Unit 5 Pre Assess.	Unit 5 Measurement Assessment	Unit 4 Post Assessment	Unit 4 Measurement GDOE
A	3	3	2	3	2
B	3	3	2	3	2
C	2	2	2	3	2
D	2	2	1	2	2
E	3	3	2	2	2

	Third Grade Math						
Criterion	1. Multiplica tion Exit Ticket	2. Array Exit Ticket	3. GA DOE Unit 2 Diagnostic Assessment	4. Unit 7 Pre-Assess ment	5. Quiz - Formative Assessm en	6. CFA "Deriving 9s and Building Arrays Quicks"	7. multi-step WPs add / subtract within 100
A	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
B	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
C	1	3	3	3	1	2	3
D	1	3	3	3	1	2	3
E	3	3	3	3	2	3	3

	Fifth Grade Math						
Criterion	1. Unit 1 Post Assessment	2. Exit Ticket Assessment Resource Book	3. IXL Learning-Fraction Quiz	4. Unit 4 Post Test	5. Teacherma dequiz.com	6. Teaching in the Big Sky (TOD)	7. Place value w/ decimals ppt
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
B	3	2	2	3	2	2	3
C	3	2	2	3	2	2	2
D	3	2	2	3	2	2	3
E	3	2	3	3	3	3	3

	Sixth Grade Math			
Criterion	IXL	Budget/Do I have enough Money sheet	Graphing on Coordinate Plane Reproducibles	Coordinate Plane Desmos
A	3	R	3	3
B	3		3	3
C	3		3	3
D	3		3	3
E	3		3	3

	Eighth Grade Math		
Criterion	Slope review	Perf. Task 2: Entertainment for the Prom	Functional Relationships Student Reproduc.
A	E/I	3	3
B		3	3
C		3	3
D		3	3
E		3	3

	Geometry					
Criterion	10th gr. circles prac.	Arc length /sector notes	Find the missing angle	Density student Reproducibles	Permutations and combinations	Unit 8 Pre assessment
A	3	3	3	3	2	2
B	2	2	2	3	2	2
C	2	2	2	3	2	3
D	2	2	2	3	2	3
E	2	2	2	3	2	3

	Geometry		
Criterion	Unit 8 student reproducibles	6.1 Practice	Horse Race Probability
A	3	3	2
B	3	3	3
C	3	3	3
D	3	3	3
E	3	3	3

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts above.

First Grade Math	A. The Grade 1 Unit 1 Math Pre-Assessment is a well-aligned diagnostic tool that assesses key early math skills like number recognition, place value, and data interpretation. It offers a mix of question types and supports conceptual and procedural understanding, though it could be strengthened with more item variety and clearer ties to math practices. B. The Grade 1 Unit 5 Math Pre-Test effectively assesses key standards in measurement and operations within 100, using varied item types to support conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. It aligns well with priority content but could be strengthened with clearer connections to mathematical practices. C. The Grade 1 Unit 5 Measurement Assessment aligns well with key standards, using varied tasks to assess length measurement and comparison. It supports conceptual and procedural understanding but could be improved with clearer integration of mathematical practices. D. The Grade 1 Unit 4 Math Post-Assessment aligns with key standards in addition, subtraction, and place value, using varied item types to assess conceptual and procedural understanding. It supports major grade-level content but could be enhanced by stronger integration of mathematical practices. E. The GDOE Grade 1 Unit 4 Measurement Assessment aligns well with key standards, using varied tasks to assess length measurement and comparison. It supports conceptual and procedural understanding but would benefit from clearer integration of mathematical practices.
Third Grade Math	A. The 3rd Grade Multiplication Exit Ticket effectively checks procedural fluency with multiplication facts and aligns with major grade-level standards. However, it lacks item variety, conceptual depth, and connections to mathematical practices. With an overall score of 1.8 out of 3, it serves as a quick skills check but could be improved by adding tasks that assess reasoning, modeling, and application. B. The Array Exit Ticket earned a top rating of 3.0 out of 3, demonstrating strong alignment with 3rd grade multiplication standards. It balances conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application by asking students to draw, interpret, and write equations for arrays. The assessment includes varied item types and connects well to mathematical practices such as modeling and reasoning, while also supporting major grade-level content. C. The GA DOE Unit 2 Diagnostic Assessment is a well-designed, standards-aligned tool that earned a top score of 3.0 out of 3. It balances conceptual understanding, fluency, and application through varied item types and real-world tasks, while effectively integrating key mathematical practices and supporting major 3rd grade content. D. The Unit 7 Pre-Assessment earned a top score of 3.0 out of 3 for its strong alignment to 3rd grade standards, balanced rigor, and variety of item types. It effectively assesses area, perimeter, and data interpretation while integrating key math practices and supporting major grade-level content. E. The Time-Telling Quiz – Formative Assessment received an overall rating of 1.6 out of 3. While it aligns with 3rd grade measurement standards and effectively checks procedural fluency in reading clocks and calculating elapsed time, it lacks conceptual depth, item variety, and meaningful engagement with mathematical practices. The quiz consists solely of multiple-choice questions and does not address major work of the grade, limiting its usefulness for assessing deeper understanding. F. The Math CFA "Deriving 9s and Building Arrays Quicks" is a well-aligned, rigorous assessment that effectively targets key 3rd grade multiplication standards using visual models and applied reasoning. Scoring 2.6 out of 3, it balances conceptual and procedural understanding but could be improved with more open-ended tasks and deeper engagement with mathematical practices. G. 3rd grade power point on multi-step word problems allows students to choose own strategy to solve problems, which is standard guidance on Georgia SuitCase. Conceptual, procedural, and application aspects of rigor are present. Independent practice not present in pptx, but assuming the "you try" is guided practice, students may have the opportunity to share different ways of solving the bread/flour problem. Students can reason abstractly and materials set students up to make sense of problem context. This is major work of 3rd grade.

MATHEMATICS

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

Fifth Grade Math	A. The 5th Grade Unit 1 Post-Assessment effectively assesses key standards in place value and operations using varied item types that support conceptual and procedural understanding. It aligns with major grade-level content but could be improved with stronger integration of mathematical practices. B. The Assessment Resource Book Exit Ticket is a brief, standards-aligned tool designed to assess specific math skills in a quick, targeted format. It supports procedural fluency and basic conceptual understanding through concise problems, often focused on a single objective. While it provides observable evidence of student learning and aligns with grade-level content, it typically includes limited item variety and lacks strong integration of mathematical practices or opportunities for student explanation. C. The IXL Learning – Fraction Intro Quiz aligns with grade-level standards and supports basic fraction understanding through visual and multiple-choice questions. It offers clear evidence of learning but lacks item variety and deeper engagement with mathematical practices. D. The 5th Grade Unit 4 Post-Test assesses key fraction operations using varied item types that support conceptual and procedural understanding. It aligns with major standards and provides clear evidence of learning but could benefit from more emphasis on reasoning and mathematical practices. E. The TeacherMade Quiz aligns with grade-level standards and supports procedural fluency through interactive, auto-graded items. While effective for quick checks, it lacks item variety and deeper engagement with mathematical practices. F. The Teaching in the Big Sky Exit Ticket aligns with grade-level standards and supports quick checks of procedural fluency and basic understanding. While effective for immediate feedback, it lacks item variety and deeper engagement with mathematical practices.
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Differentiate professional development offerings to address the diverse needs of teachers at various stages in their practice.

“So you have teachers who don't touch learning plans.. they don't think they need to go to the training, but they're not doing it, and they're not wanting to do it, and they don't think they need to do it. But the truth of the matter is, their students are not reasoning, and the results suggest that something needs to change.”

To support equitable instruction and meet the diverse needs of all learners, districts should differentiate professional development offerings to align with teachers' varying levels of experience and instructional needs. Just as lesson plans should integrate multimodal strategies and differentiation to support English Learners, Gifted students, and students with disabilities, professional learning should reflect a similar approach—providing targeted support, resources, and strategies tailored to where educators are in their practice. By aligning PD with tools such as tiered tasks, flexible grouping models, and language supports, educators are better equipped to implement inclusive, effective instruction in every classroom. supports, sentence stems, and modified tasks ensures all students receive the scaffolds they need to succeed.

2. Explore opportunities to expand dedicated collaboration time for teachers, including time for general education, exceptional student education (ESE), ESOL, and gifted educators to plan and align instruction effectively

“We've been talking a little bit about supporting the teachers, you know, through means like professional learning and professional development, but also collaboration time. I do want to skip to number four, because I think that this is also timely, right? This project that I'm we're working on is called the curriculum audit, and I can't talk about curriculum without also thinking about or talking about the systems and structures that support it and the ways that teachers feel supported, right?”

Districts should establish clear expectations for schools to structure schedules that provide teachers with dedicated planning time focused on effective instructional preparation. This time should be intentionally used to engage with a variety of high-quality resources, including the myView curriculum, Georgia Department of Education materials, and DCSD-developed tools. Ensuring consistent access to *these resources during collaborative planning supports aligned instruction and improved student outcomes.*

ENGLISH

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

First Grade English	The Georgia 1st Grade English Language Arts Curriculum Map served as the foundation for artifacts provided by the district and teachers, showcasing a yearlong sequence of six cohesive units. These units build foundational literacy by focusing on early reading behaviors, phonological awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and writing development. Aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the curriculum encourages students to engage with a range of literary and informational texts through read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, and independent exploration. Instruction promotes language development and comprehension by integrating speaking, listening, and writing tasks that support narrative understanding and idea expression. Each unit fosters interdisciplinary connections, encouraging students to apply literacy skills across content areas and engage in collaborative discussions that build confidence in oral and written communication.
Third Grade English	Artifacts from the Georgia 3rd Grade English Language Arts Curriculum Map, which presents a comprehensive sequence of nine instructional units designed to deepen students' reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and written expression. Grounded in the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the curriculum emphasizes skill development across reading literary and informational texts, writing in multiple genres, and using language purposefully. Each unit includes opportunities for students to cite textual evidence, analyze characters and theme, and craft narrative, opinion, and informational writing. Reading and writing tasks are supported by structured inquiry, academic discussions, and the integration of speaking and listening standards. Through consistent engagement with text-based questioning and reflective writing, the curriculum promotes the use of comprehension strategies and supports interdisciplinary learning across science and social studies content.
Fifth Grade English	Instructional artifacts from the DeKalb County 5th Grade ELA Curriculum Map, submitted by district educators, demonstrate a rigorous standards-based sequence that builds literacy proficiency. The curriculum spans multiple genres and text types, integrating literature and nonfiction texts to support analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking. Students build proficiency in crafting narrative, informational, and opinion writing through structured drafting, revising, and publishing processes. Oral and written communication are emphasized through academic discussions, evidence-based responses, and vocabulary development. Each unit is designed to enhance reading comprehension, fluency, and literary interpretation while fostering interdisciplinary connections that allow students to apply their ELA skills in real-world and cross-curricular contexts.

Sixth Grade English	As evidenced in many submitted artifacts, the DeKalb County 6th Grade English Language Arts Curriculum Map provides a structured progression of literacy instruction aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The curriculum emphasizes reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and structured writing across genres, including narrative, informational, and argumentative forms. Aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the curriculum fosters deep engagement with a variety of texts, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Each unit incorporates opportunities for students to analyze literary elements, construct evidence-based written responses, and participate in academic discussions. The map supports interdisciplinary learning by connecting reading and writing tasks to social studies and science topics, thereby reinforcing comprehension and communication across content areas.
Eighth Grade English	The district and teachers submitted artifacts from the Georgia 8th Grade English Language Arts Curriculum Map, which outlines a comprehensive yearlong plan of vertically aligned units that prepare students for high school-level literacy demands. Emphasizing the development of analytical reading and evidence-based writing, the curriculum aligns with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and promotes mastery of key language and literacy skills. Students engage with increasingly complex texts across genres while learning to cite textual evidence, analyze author's craft, and synthesize multiple sources. Each unit integrates speaking and listening tasks, structured discussions, and academic writing, fostering both literacy and communication. Interdisciplinary connections are evident through thematic links to historical and scientific texts, supporting deeper understanding and cross-curricular integration.
AP Language	The AP English Language and Composition Curriculum Map, which guided the submitted district artifacts, is designed around College Board expectations and consists of a sequence of targeted, skill-based units. These units emphasize rhetorical analysis, synthesis, and argumentative writing while promoting close reading of nonfiction texts from a range of historical and contemporary sources. The curriculum supports alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and integrates college-level expectations for writing clarity, audience awareness, and evidence-based reasoning. Students engage in frequent written and spoken expression through timed essays, Socratic Seminars, and revision workshops. Each unit provides opportunities for interdisciplinary connections, particularly with history and civics, as students explore social and political issues through rhetorical lenses.
AP Literature	Educators submitted AP English Literature and Composition artifacts aligned to a curriculum map structured around the College Board's framework and focused on yearlong literary analysis. Each unit centers on canonical and contemporary texts, guiding students in the close reading and critical interpretation of fiction, poetry, and drama. The curriculum emphasizes the development of literary argumentation, focusing on theme, structure, characterization, and figurative language. Aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence and Advanced Placement objectives, the curriculum provides rigorous opportunities for students to write analytical essays, participate in interpretive discussions, and demonstrate comprehension through multiple modes. The curriculum map encourages interdisciplinary connections by linking literature to history, philosophy, and cultural studies, fostering deeper insight and textual engagement.

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	Rubric for Lessons & Units: English (from EQulP Rubric)	
	I: Alignment to the Depth of the SoLs. Does the unit target a set of grade-level Georgia ELA/Literacy Standards of Learning? Does it include a clear and explicit purpose for instruction, and feature texts that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality for the stated purpose?	II: Key Shifts in English Language Arts: Does the unit feature close reading, a focus on text-based evidence, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary? Do the unit's texts build disciplinary knowledge, increase in complexity, and represent a balance of literary and informational? Is there a balance of on-demand and process writing? Is there evidence of short, focused research project(s)?
First Grade English	The First Grade English Language Arts units are closely aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), targeting foundational standards in phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, and writing development. Each unit has a clearly articulated instructional purpose that focuses on building early literacy through structured reading routines and foundational writing tasks. Texts fall within the appropriate Lexile range for early readers and are of high quality, supporting comprehension of basic story structure, informational text features, and vocabulary acquisition. Instruction includes interactive read-alouds, shared reading, and decodable texts that scaffold early comprehension and build confidence in reading behaviors.	Instruction emphasizes listening comprehension and emerging fluency through repeated readings and interactive discussion. Close reading strategies are introduced in developmentally appropriate ways, with teacher-guided questioning and visual supports. Writing tasks, though brief, are rooted in text response and build toward opinion and narrative forms. Vocabulary is explicitly taught using read-alouds and language routines. There is an emerging balance of literary and informational texts. Research is limited but scaffolded through short group investigations and question-driven exploration.
Third Grade English	The Third Grade ELA units are well aligned to grade-level GSE standards, addressing both reading and writing with an emphasis on comprehension, text structure, and opinion writing. Units clearly define instructional goals and include a range of texts; literary and informational, appropriate to the grade-level complexity band. Selected texts support analysis of key ideas, character development, and author's purpose. Writing tasks are linked directly to reading, and students engage in opinion, informational, and narrative writing that is scaffolded to support developing skills. The units foster reading fluency, vocabulary development, and foundational research skills.	Close reading is a central strategy in the third grade units, with lessons structured around key comprehension skills such as identifying main ideas, character traits, and cause-effect relationships. Students write routinely from texts, using evidence to support ideas in opinion and explanatory writing. Academic vocabulary is taught explicitly and used across reading and writing tasks. Units feature a strong balance of literary and informational texts, including content-aligned science and social studies articles. Students complete short research projects, often related to unit themes or content areas.
Fifth Grade English	Fifth Grade units align with the GSE by integrating literary and informational texts to support the development of analytical reading and multi paragraph writing. Instructional objectives are clearly stated and scaffolded to help students meet grade-level expectations for interpreting text structure, identifying themes, and comparing text types. Texts span a range of genres and are selected for complexity and thematic depth, promoting critical thinking. Writing assignments reflect varied purposes; opinion, informative, and narrative, and are clearly connected to reading experiences. Instruction supports vocabulary growth, grammar usage, and sustained independent reading.	Fifth grade units emphasize deeper reading through text-based questioning and structured annotation. Students cite evidence in written and oral responses and are expected to compose extended responses in multiple genres. Writing instruction includes both on-demand tasks and process pieces with drafting and revision. Vocabulary development is integrated through context, word study, and content-area readings. Texts support disciplinary literacy and include both literary works and informational texts. Research skills are built through scaffolded inquiry projects, culminating in short written presentations.

Sixth Grade English	The Sixth Grade ELA curriculum targets GSE middle school literacy standards with a focus on text analysis, evidence-based writing, and increased reading complexity. Each unit outlines explicit instructional purposes, supported by appropriately complex texts that include modern fiction, classic literature, and nonfiction articles. The units emphasize comprehension strategies, point of view analysis, and textual evidence. Writing tasks are directly tied to readings and include explanatory, narrative, and argumentative pieces, preparing students for rigorous literacy demands in upper grades. Vocabulary instruction and grammar usage are embedded in context.	Close reading is explicitly taught, with students expected to analyze text structure, word choice, and author's purpose. Written tasks are regularly sourced from anchor texts and emphasize claim-evidence reasoning. Academic vocabulary is incorporated through explicit instruction and text-based usage. Texts represent an even balance between literary and informational genres, and units are structured to increase in complexity. Writing instruction includes both timed and extended writing, and students complete short research projects using print and digital sources.
Eighth Grade English	Eighth Grade ELA units are strongly aligned with GSE standards and include clearly defined purposes for instruction. The curriculum provides grade-appropriate texts that gradually increase in complexity across units, including contemporary literature, historical documents, and persuasive essays. Instruction is designed to deepen students' understanding of theme, tone, and structure. Units include a range of writing tasks; narrative, argumentative, and explanatory, and emphasize use of textual evidence and structured writing processes. Students engage in vocabulary development, discussion, and foundational research projects that support critical thinking and prepare them for high school coursework.	Close reading strategies are embedded throughout eighth grade units, supporting textual analysis of theme, rhetoric, and characterization. Students write routinely from sources, producing argumentative and explanatory essays supported by textual evidence. Vocabulary is studied in context, with emphasis on Tier 2 academic words. A variety of texts are included: essays, articles, novels, and primary sources, to support disciplinary knowledge and critical thinking. Writing tasks reflect a balance of process and on-demand, and research is integrated through short projects that synthesize multiple texts.
AP Language	The AP Language curriculum is aligned to both the College Board's course framework and GSE standards for advanced writing and reading comprehension. Each unit has a defined instructional purpose focused on rhetorical analysis, synthesis of sources, and argumentative writing. The curriculum includes high-quality, complex nonfiction texts; speeches, essays, and editorials, that challenge students' comprehension and critical thinking. Writing from sources and citing textual evidence are central components of instruction. Instruction supports college-level expectations, fostering clarity, audience awareness, and analytical rigor through frequent writing and revision.	Close reading is foundational, with a focus on rhetorical strategies, argument structures, and source analysis. Students routinely write from texts, producing argumentative and synthesis essays that require advanced reasoning and use of evidence. Academic vocabulary related to rhetoric and logic is emphasized throughout. Units build disciplinary knowledge through analysis of historical and contemporary nonfiction. Writing includes timed AP-style essays and extended process writing. Students complete focused research projects aligned to rhetorical themes or civic issues.
AP Literature	The AP Literature curriculum aligns with the College Board's course objectives and the GSE, offering a sequence of literary analysis units designed around canonical and contemporary works. Units are purposefully structured to explore themes, characterization, and literary devices in poetry, novels, and drama. Texts are appropriately rigorous, selected for their literary merit and complexity. Writing instruction centers on literary argumentation and interpretive analysis, and students are regularly assessed through formal essays, discussions, and text-based reflections. The curriculum prepares students for postsecondary-level literary study.	Instruction emphasizes close textual analysis, with students examining figurative language, structure, tone, and literary devices across genres. Writing is grounded in interpretation and argument, requiring evidence-based claims and literary critique. Vocabulary is discipline-specific, with emphasis on literary terminology. The text selection ensures exposure to varied genres, time periods, and cultural perspectives. Writing tasks include timed responses and revised essays. Short research tasks support thematic or contextual analysis, preparing students for AP expectations and collegiate literary study.

Rubric for Lessons & Units: English (from EQuIP Rubric)

	III: Instructional Supports: Is the unit plan easy to understand and use? Does the unit cultivate student interest in reading, writing, and speaking about the texts? Does it provide all students (with scaffolding if necessary) with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level? Does it integrate appropriate supports for students who are EL, have disabilities, or read well below grade level?	IV: Assessment: Does the unit regularly assess whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills? Do the assessments elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level standards with appropriately complex text?
First Grade English	The First Grade ELA units are user-friendly and developmentally appropriate, with clearly organized lesson plans, pacing guides, and suggested resources that support consistent implementation. Activities are structured to build excitement around storytelling, reading aloud, and writing simple sentences. Instructional supports include guided reading, visual aids, and phonics routines that allow all students; including English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities, to access texts with grade-level complexity. Scaffolds such as sentence stems, picture cues, and teacher modeling ensure inclusive participation in speaking, reading, and writing activities.	Assessment in first grade is ongoing and embedded within daily instructional routines. Students demonstrate mastery through retelling, drawing, shared writing, and phonics-based tasks. Teachers use running records, sight word assessments, and writing samples to monitor progress against GSE literacy goals. These tools provide observable evidence of comprehension and foundational writing development.
Third Grade English	Third Grade units are structured with explicit daily objectives and step-by-step instructional guidance, making them accessible and easy to implement. Thematic text selections and high-interest tasks (such as character studies and creative writing) foster student engagement and deepen understanding. Differentiation strategies are embedded throughout the units, including leveled texts, guided reading groups, and writing scaffolds. ELs and students reading below grade level are supported through sentence frames, vocabulary organizers, and visual supports, while enrichment tasks extend learning for advanced readers.	Third grade units include formative and summative assessments that directly measure reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing fluency. Rubrics and checklists aligned to GSE standards allow teachers to track mastery. Students demonstrate independence through on-demand writing, reading logs, and comprehension quizzes. Assessments include both literary and informational texts, ensuring breadth of standard coverage.
Fifth Grade English	Fifth Grade unit plans include clearly labeled lesson components, explicit teaching routines, and built-in scaffolding for diverse learners. The units cultivate student interest through relevant, real-world texts and writing prompts that encourage personal connection and critical thinking. Instruction provides multiple pathways to access grade-level texts, including audio supports, guided annotation strategies, and collaborative reading structures. Supports for ELs and students with IEPs include adapted text versions, scaffolded writing tasks, and targeted small-group instruction aligned to the GSE.	Assessment strategies in fifth grade are frequent and intentional, including standards-aligned rubrics, constructed responses, and extended writing tasks. Units emphasize authentic writing from texts, requiring students to apply evidence and analysis. Teachers gather data from reading conferences, vocabulary checks, and independent reading journals to determine mastery of grade-level expectations.
Sixth Grade English	Sixth Grade units are logically sequenced and easy to navigate, providing educators with anchor texts, essential questions, and differentiated instructional routines. Reading and writing assignments engage students in exploring social and literary themes relevant to adolescent learners, encouraging inquiry and discourse. Instructional supports include graphic organizers, chunked reading activities, and gradual release models that make complex texts more accessible. ELs and students with disabilities benefit from vocabulary pre-teaching, visual learning tools, and scaffolded writing prompts aligned to grade-level standards.	Sixth grade assessments target both comprehension and writing through a mix of process and on-demand tasks. Students are assessed using rubrics aligned to GSE writing and reading standards, and they produce analytical and narrative responses using text-based evidence. Reading comprehension assessments include cold reads and performance tasks with observable learning outcomes.

Eighth Grade English	Eighth Grade units are designed with student engagement in mind, incorporating high-interest texts and structured academic conversations. Units are easy to follow and rich in scaffolds, including text annotation protocols, evidence trackers, and sentence scaffolds for writing. Reading tasks are varied and offer multiple opportunities to interact with texts of increasing complexity. Supports for ELs and struggling readers include read-aloud strategies, paired reading, extended time, and scaffolded peer discussion formats. Advanced learners are challenged through independent reading extensions and deeper analytical tasks.	Assessments in eighth grade are frequent and rigorous, eliciting direct evidence of students' ability to analyze and write about complex texts. Rubrics assess depth of thinking, clarity of expression, and alignment to grade-level standards. Students respond to writing prompts, analyze paired texts, and participate in Socratic seminars; all used as performance-based measures of mastery.
AP Language	The AP Language curriculum is sophisticated yet accessible, offering teachers and students clearly defined rhetorical goals, text selections, and writing assignments aligned to the AP framework. Units are structured to build student engagement in civic and cultural discourse through texts on contemporary issues, political rhetoric, and historical documents. Instruction is scaffolded through modeling of rhetorical analysis, mentor texts, sentence deconstruction, and peer conferencing. ELs and students with accommodations are supported through vocabulary glossaries, modified texts, and structured outlines, allowing all students access to college-level content.	Assessment practices in AP Language reflect both AP exam alignment and GSE rigor. Students complete timed essays, rhetorical analysis, and multiple-choice reading tasks. Rubrics mirror College Board expectations and assess textual evidence use, rhetorical insight, and clarity of argument. Feedback is formative and revision-based, promoting continuous growth and independence in writing.
American Literature	AP Literature units are organized around essential questions, literary periods, and genres, making the curriculum coherent and student-centered. Units cultivate interest through deep literary exploration and connections to universal themes. Complex texts are scaffolded through guided reading protocols, literary device glossaries, and analytical writing organizers. ELs and students with reading challenges receive additional support through text summaries, focused annotations, and small-group discussion formats. Opportunities for interpretive writing and oral analysis are consistently embedded, ensuring full participation across varied readiness levels.	In AP Literature, assessment is structured around literary analysis and interpretive writing. Students write timed essays in response to complex texts, conduct literary discussions, and respond to close-reading questions. Assessments are designed to gauge deep understanding of literary devices and thematic development. Rubrics evaluate both analytical depth and textual mastery.

Insight used criteria derived from leading assessment evaluation tools and appropriate for the purposes of this Audit, to assess English assessments on a 3-point scale. Evaluation tools of origin are linked.

Five English Assessment Criteria and 3-point scale

- A. Texts are worth reading. Should include high quality texts at appropriate lexile and qualitative complexity (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating HighQuality Assessments, CCSSO)
- B. Balance of genres when appropriate; reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible texts or passages according to RI/RL.3, Integration of Concepts (from Assessment Evaluation Tool, achievethecore.org)
- D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings of the text relative to the demands of the standard (from EQulP rubric, achieve.org)

3	a significant majority or all aspects of the criterion
2	some aspects of the criterion
1	none or nearly none of the aspects of the criterion

For shorter artifacts, Insight used the EQulP Task Review Rubric for ELA. It assesses standard alignment, attention to text complexity and the shifts in the standards, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

ENGLISH

Some English artifacts were rated on the five English Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. Texts are worth reading. Should include high quality texts at appropriate lexile and qualitative complexity.	2.89
B. Balance of genres when appropriate; reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards.	2.75
C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible texts or passages according to RI/RL.9.	2.59
D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts.	2.64
E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings of the text relative to the demands of the standard.	2.62

Shorter artifacts were rated on the EQuIP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	5
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	2
R: Some criteria checked	4
N: Task not recommended for instruction	2

ENGLISH

Some English artifacts were K-3 Phonics lessons and were rated on the following criteria (adapted from What Works Clearinghouse/Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest):

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. Materials indicate a recommended sequence of activities to teach a targeted skill (or targeted skills).	2.8
B. Materials explicitly state the rules or patterns related to segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.	2.8
C. Materials require teachers to model targeted skill or skills through a demonstration or think-aloud.	3
D. Materials include an opportunity for at least one type of formative assessment to gauge student understanding of the targeted skill or skills.	2.2
E. Materials articulate a plan for using data to identify students who need additional support or an intervention related to developing awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.	1.8

ENGLISH

The following table shows artifacts rated according to the English phonics lesson criteria adapted from WWC/RELM.

	Phonics Lessons				
Criterion	(K) Long o - Mc Graw Hill	K - Phonics (CVC words)	K - UFLI	1st- Phonics Core	1st Grade Phonics Daily Lesson
A	2	3	3	3	3
B	2	3	3	3	3
C	3	3	3	3	3
D	1	2	3	3	2
E	1	1	3	3	1

ENGLISH

The following tables show artifacts coded alphanumerically (based on the spreadsheet into which they were submitted) and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the English assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQuIP task rubric.

	Kindergarten English			
Criterion	Letter Recognition Checklist	Wonders Workbook	myView Literacy Workbook	DCSD benchmarks
A	E	3	3	3
B		3	3	3
C		3	3	3
D		3	3	3
E		3	3	3

	First Grade English				
Criterion	1st Grade Unit 1 Reading Test	1st Grade Unit 2 Reading Test	1st Grade Unit 3 Reading Test	Reading Wonders Workbook	1st Grade Weekly Lesson Plan
A	3	3	3	3	2
B	3	3	3	3	2
C	3	3	3	3	1
D	3	3	3	3	2
E	3	3	3	3	1

	First Grade English				
Criterion	1st Grade Sequencing	1st Grade Lesson Plan	1st Grade Compare & Contrast	1st Grade Unit Lesson Plans	1st Grade Practice worksheet
A	2	2	2	3	3
B	1	3	2	3	2
C	1	2	3	2	1
D	1	2	1	3	3
E	2	2	2	3	3

	Third Grade English					
Criterion	Readworks Comprehension worksheet	Daily Language Review	Sight Word Fluency Passages	ESOL - Formative Assessments	ESOL - End of Unit (Pre/Post) Assessment	myView Literacy
A	3	E	N	N	3	3
B	3				3	3
C	3				3	3
D	3				3	3
E	3				3	3

	Third Grade English		
Criterion	Read/Write Think: Exit Slip	HMH Writeable	End of Unit - Writing Convention s (DCSD)
A	E	E/I	3
B			3
C			3
D			3
E			3

	Fifth Grade English					
Criterion	myView Literacy Interactive Notebook	SAAVAS myView Unit 3 Assessment	Exit Ticket 3-Questions	Plot Diagram Worksheet	Reading-Writi ng Bridge (Spelling) Worksheet	Georgia Milestones Writer's Checklist
A	3	3	R	E/I	R	E
B	3	3				
C	3	3				
D	3	3				
E	3	3				

	Fifth Grade English		
Criterion	Work Sample Formative Assessment	Noteworthy Novel Works-Worksheet	Do Now
A	3	3	E
B	3	3	
C	3	3	
D	3	3	
E	3	3	

	Eighth Grade English				
Criterion	Text-based questions	Common Summative Assessment	Poet X Quizzes	Body Biography Project	Lesson Plan
A	3	3	R	3	3
B	3	2		3	3
C	2	2		2	3
D	3	1		2	3
E	2	1		2	3

	9th Grade English					
Criterion	Writing a Debate Using the Douglas Model	Common Formative Assessment (1)	Common Formative Assessment (2)	Common Formative Assessment (3)	Unit 3: Argumentative Analysis Pre Assessment	Common Lit Assignments
A	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	3	2	2	2	3	3
C	3	2	2	2	3	3
D	3	2	2	2	3	3
E	3	2	2	2	3	3

	American Literature (11th grade)						
Criterion	Common Formative Assessments from Illuminate for American Lit.	Quiz	Unit 2 Quiz	Unit 4 - Argumentative text (GMAS sample items)	End of Course Narrative writing	Peer evaluations	Essay
A	3	R	3	3	3	3	3
B	3		3	3	3	3	3
C	3		2	3	3	3	3
D	3		2	3	3	3	3
E	3		2	3	3	3	3

ENGLISH

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

Phonics Lessons	A. The lesson provides a clear sequence across multiple structured pages: from phonemic awareness, sound introduction, word building, to passage reading and comprehension. B. Within the lesson, the teacher is instructed to model and explain phonogram pronunciations for /all/, /oll/, and /alk/, clearly linking sounds to their letter patterns. Students also see the rule applied repeatedly in underlined words. C. The lesson plan, includes direct modeling language: "Watch what I do... I select the consonant b to add before the phonogram all." The teacher models how to build and read new words step-by-step, demonstrating phoneme-grapheme blending. D. While there is oral response and student application in word ladders, formative assessment is informal. Teachers may gauge learning through oral responses or observation, but no explicit rubric or recording form is given. E. The material does not explicitly mention how to use data from word reading or oral response to identify students needing further support or intervention. The teacher may informally observe, but no systematic plan is articulated.
First Grade English	A. The selected texts, such as <i>The Little Red Hen</i> and <i>From Wheat to Bread</i>, along with resources from the <i>Wonders</i> curriculum, are well-suited to young readers and provide engaging, familiar content. While the texts appear age-appropriate, there is an opportunity to strengthen the planning by including details about their text complexity, such as Lexile levels or qualitative features, to more clearly demonstrate alignment with instructional goals and standards. B. Lessons incorporate both literary and informational texts, offering students a chance to work with a range of genres. The standards addressed suggest awareness of key instructional shifts, including vocabulary development and comprehension. To deepen impact, the instructional plans could more clearly articulate how the selection and sequencing of genres help students build content knowledge or develop reading skills over time. C. There are efforts to thematically link texts, for example, through the connection between the folktale and the nonfiction text about bread-making, which provide a foundation from cross-text connections. Expanding these opportunities with more consistent and structured comparisons, such as scaffolded tasks or written reflections, could further support students in building meaningful connections between texts. D. Instruction includes a range of engaging activities, phonics, grammar, word work, and writing practice, providing multiple entry points for students. While writing tasks are present, they tend to be brief and could be enhanced by incorporating more extended or analytical writing prompts that give students a chance to respond to texts in deeper, more reflective ways. E. Learning targets are clearly communicated and revisited, providing helpful structure to instruction and focus for students. Evidence of learning is observed through activities like drawing, sentence construction, and partner discussions. To build on this, future plans might consider adding more formal or targeted assessment tools, such as rubrics or structured student work samples, to better capture student progress and guide instructional decisions.

ENGLISH

The following short descriptions provide additional information on each artifact rated.

Third Grade English	A. The Readworks comprehension assignment maintained a rating of 3.0, demonstrating strong alignment with 3rd grade comprehension standards. It balances high quality text at appropriate lexile and qualitative complexity with tasks that purposefully link passages according to RI/RL9. B. __The Daily Language Review is well-suited for targeted skill reinforcement but may benefit from supplementary resources that integrate richer texts and extended response opportunities. While it strongly supports surface-level standard mastery, it is less equipped for cultivating deeper interpretive or analytical skills required by higher-order ELA standards. C. __The Sight word fluency passage artifact does not meet the rigor or complexity standards appropriate for 3rd grade instruction. It is better suited for early emergent readers in grades K–1. The content and vocabulary are significantly below grade-level expectations, limiting opportunities for students to engage with grade-appropriate texts or demonstrate the depth of comprehension and analytical skills required at this level. D. __To be instructionally useful, ESOL formative assessments must be purposefully designed, include language objectives alongside content goals, and provide opportunities for oral and written language production in academic contexts. This artifact may serve as a brainstorming tool or informal checkpoint but does not meet instructional quality criteria for 3rd grade or any formal assessment setting. E. __The End-of-Unit Assessment (ESOL) is a comprehensive tool designed to evaluate English learners’ understanding of both content knowledge and academic language use at the end of a unit. It integrates reading, writing, and language objectives aligned to grade-level ELA and English Language Development (ELD) standards, allowing students to demonstrate progress in both conceptual understanding and language acquisition. F. __This MyView Literacy Assignment exemplifies strong instructional design by aligning high-quality texts with meaningful, standards-driven tasks. The scaffolded structure supports a range of learners, and the inclusion of writing in response to reading encourages deeper engagement and higher-level thinking. It is well-suited for use in both whole-group and small-group instructional settings. G. This artifact demonstrates effective instructional value by supporting student reflection and quick demonstration of learning. It is aligned with key instructional priorities and supports standards-based formative assessment, though there are areas where deeper rigor or alignment could be enhanced for maximum impact.
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The following short descriptions provide additional information on each artifact rated.

Third Grade English	H. HMH Writable is a digital writing platform that provides students with scaffolded writing tasks, immediate feedback, and standards-aligned prompts. It is designed to support the development of writing fluency, grammar skills, and text-based responses through a blend of teacher-led and self-guided practice. The tool integrates seamlessly with ELA instruction, offering opportunities for students to respond to reading and revise based on targeted feedback. I. This conventions assessment is instructionally sound and effective for use at the end of a grammar-focused unit. To further enhance its impact, it could be paired with a brief writing sample that allows students to apply conventions in context, strengthening the bridge between grammar knowledge and writing fluency.
Fifth Grade English	A. The MyView Literacy Interactive Notebook is a student-centered learning tool aligned with the MyView curriculum. It is designed to support comprehension, vocabulary development, and written expression through engaging, hands-on activities. The notebook encourages active participation by allowing students to respond to texts, reflect on reading strategies, and organize their learning in a meaningful, personalized format. B. The SAAVAS myView Unit 3 Assessment is a well-rounded tool for evaluating student learning at the conclusion of the unit. To enhance its effectiveness, teachers might pair it with performance tasks, student reflections, or formative checkpoints from earlier in the unit. This approach can support a more holistic understanding of student progress and inform instructional next steps. C. The Exit Ticket – 3 Questions is a brief formative assessment tool intended to check for student understanding at the end of a lesson. It included three open-ended or short-response questions that prompt students to reflect on key concepts, clarify misunderstandings, or summarize their learning. This tool is meant to inform immediate instructional adjustments. This artifact shows potential as a formative checkpoint but requires improvement in structure, alignment, and rigor to fully meet the instructional criteria for effective assessment. D. The Plot Diagram Worksheet is a solid foundational tool for teaching narrative structure. To elevate its effectiveness, consider pairing it with a high-quality, grade-level text and incorporating brief written prompts that require students to justify or explain their choices. These minor improvements would enhance rigor and better align the artifact with instructional goals. E. The Reading-Writing Bridge (Spelling Worksheet) is a skills-based activity focused on spelling practice. It aims to strengthen the connection between reading and writing by helping students recognize and apply correct spelling patterns in context. This artifact shows potential as a supplementary skills-based tool, but it lacks alignment to deeper literacy standards and instructional rigor.

The following short descriptions provide additional information on artifacts rated.

Fifth Grade English	F. The Georgia Milestones Writer’s Checklist is a practical and standards-aligned tool for both test preparation and formative writing assessment. It supports student independence and encourages a consistent approach to writing expectations. Minor improvements; such as customizable prompts for text integration or genre-specific checklists, could enhance its impact across diverse classroom contexts. G. This artifact demonstrates solid alignment to grade-level standards and effective formative assessment practices. It allows students to apply literacy skills in meaningful ways and provides observable evidence of their developing proficiency. H. The Noteworthy Novel Worksheet is a literary response tool designed to guide students in analyzing key elements of a novel. It prompts students to think critically about characters, plot, theme, and author’s craft while engaging with a full-length, grade-appropriate text. This worksheet supports comprehension, text analysis, and written reflection, making it a valuable instructional resource in a novel study unit.
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The following short descriptions provide additional information on each artifact rated.

Eighth Grade English	A. The plan incorporates rich, relevant texts such as <i>Black Beauty</i> for literary analysis and paired nonfiction articles like “<i>Play Video Games, Solve Real-World Problems</i>” and “<i>Careers in Video Games</i>” for argumentative and reading comprehension work. These texts are age-appropriate, diverse in purpose, and reflect both literary and real-world issues, aligned to standards. The use of both fiction and informational sources supports rigorous engagement with content that meets grade-level text complexity demands. B. The weekly plan demonstrates a clear balance between literary texts (i.e. <i>Black Beauty</i>) and informational texts (i.e. <i>Careers in Video Games</i>), as well as narrative and argumentative writing. Lessons include activities aligned to speaking, listening, reading, and writing strands, such as analyzing character traits, citing evidence, and supporting claims with credible sources, directly supporting shifts in citing evidence, building knowledge, and writing with clarity. The inclusion of test prep elements further reflects a strategic alignment with high-stakes assessment expectations. C. The Wednesday and Thursday lessons involve reading and comparing two nonfiction passages on video games, aligning precisely with ELAGSE8RI9: analyzing conflicting information across texts and identifying discrepancies in fact or interpretation. The lessons also incorporate guided questions and peer feedback, deepening students’ capacity to synthesize across sources. D. Students engage in multiple forms of writing throughout the week: argumentative essays, peer reviews, and constructed responses. Tasks include writing claims with evidence, using a revision guide for clarity and organization, and completing final drafts. Students are expected to revise and reflect using clear criteria, supporting mastery of varied standards across writing and language domains. E. The plan embeds formative assessment practices across the week: K-W-L charts, student response reviews, peer editing, final drafts, and exit tickets. These tasks yield direct, observable evidence of students’ comprehension and writing proficiency, while also supporting differentiation and targeted feedback. Evidence collection is well integrated into instruction and aligned with both content and process standards.
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Recommendations for Elementary & Secondary English

Redesign professional development for depth and literacy leadership by building leadership capacity at every level to inspire instructional excellence.

- Shift from compliance-driven sessions to content-specific, collaborative PD that equip ELA teachers to teach with rigor, support diverse learner, and lead peer growth. Embed instructional coaching and mentorship within all departments to deepen impact.

Establish role-specific, tiered professional development frameworks by cultivating a learning-centered culture by honoring the diverse professional learning needs across instructional roles.

- Develop and implement a tiered PD model that differentiates training for new and veteran teachers, special education and ESOL instructors, and literacy coaches. Each tier should align with the GSE and be rooted in real-time instructional needs. Offer PD in various formats (face-to-face, virtual, on-demand) to ensure accessibility and relevance.

Integrate inclusive co-teaching and planning structures by building systems of collaboration that elevate every learner and educator.

- Formalize common planning times and co-teaching models that foster collaboration between general education, ESOL, and special education teachers. Embed strategies for differentiated instruction and language support into ELA core instruction. Align Curriculum Implementation with Collaborative Instructional Planning Establish protected planning structures where general education, ESOL, SPED, and gifted teachers co-design and adapt curriculum materials to meet diverse needs. Embed assessment analysis and instructional planning routines within weekly PLCs.

2. Recommendations for Elementary Reading and Writing

Embed early-year and ongoing foundational literacy professional development by leading with intentionality and anchoring early learning intervention and equitable access to materials.

- Strengthen early literacy through aligned foundational skills PD. Deliver grade-specific PD on foundational literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) that is explicitly aligned with GSE RF and L standards. Emphasize instructional routines and progress monitoring for Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions. Provide targeted PD in foundational literacy (through secondary grade levels) prior to the start of the school year, with job-embedded follow-up throughout the year. Include cross-role training sessions to unify instructional language and methods across general and special education.

3. Recommendations for Secondary English & Reading

Expand curriculum tools for advanced, struggling, and multilingual learners ensuring all learners experience challenge and support through inclusive curriculum design.

- Provide flexible curriculum supports that include advanced extensions for gifted/AP students and scaffolded pathways for multilingual and struggling readers. Include comprehension scaffolds, multiple text formats, and culturally responsive texts aligned with GSE.

Align reading and writing interventions with grade-level expectations. Use student performance data to drive innovative, responsive instruction.

- Develop intervention frameworks that accelerate rather than remediate, emphasizing strategy-based reading and writing aligned with secondary standards. Provide training in using data from formative and benchmark assessments to target support.

SCIENCE

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Fifth Grade Science	The DCSD Grade 5 Science Curriculum-at-a-Glance provides a high-level overview of the six units. The units include: Classification, Cells & Microorganisms, Heredity, Physical and Chemical Change, Earth Processes, and Electricity and Magnetism. The curriculum aligns with specific science standards and differentiates between the "Priority" and "Supporting" standards. There is a daily instructional framework that explains that lessons should be broken down into: Direct Instruction (~25%), Student-Centered Instruction (~50%), and Formative Assessments (~25%). Lastly, the Curriculum-at-a-Glance also integrates Science & Engineering Practices (SEPs) and Cross-Cutting Concepts (CCCs).
Sixth Grade Science	The DCSD Grade 6 Science Curriculum-at-a-Glance provides a high-level overview of the five units for the academic year. The units include: My Place in the Universe: Earth, Moon & Stars; Rocking the Earth: The Formation of the Earth's Surface; Let's Get Physical: Physical Processes of the Earth; Water, Water Everywhere: Earth Processes and Hydrology; and Weather Me This: Weather and Climate. The curriculum aligns with specific science standards, differentiating between "Priority" and "Supporting" standards. Daily instruction is divided into Direct Instruction (~25%) and Student-Centered Instruction (~50%). Formative assessments, which account for approximately 25% of daily instruction, include checks for understanding and constructing explanations. The Curriculum-at-a-Glance also integrates Science & Engineering Practices (SEPs) such as asking questions, developing and using models, and analyzing and interpreting data. Cross-Cutting Concepts (CCCs) are also integrated, providing connections across disciplinary content and enriching the application of science and engineering practices.
Eighth Grade Science	The DCSD Grade 8 Science Curriculum-at-a-Glance provides a high-level overview of the curriculum that is structured into six units. Key topics covered include Structures and Properties of Matter, Transformation of Energy, Forces and Interaction, Electromagnetic Spectrum Waves, and Electromagnetism. The curriculum aligns with specific science standards, differentiating between "Priority Standards" and "Supporting Standards". Daily instruction is divided into Direct Instruction (~25%), Student-Centered Instruction (~50%), and Formative Assessments (~25%). The Curriculum-at-a-Glance also integrates Science & Engineering Practices (SEPs) like asking questions and engaging in arguments from evidence, and Cross-Cutting Concepts (CCCs) such as Cause and Effect and Energy and Matter.
Biology	The Biology Class Calendar for 2024-2025 outlines a comprehensive program that is structured into multiple units. Fall topics include lab safety, experimental design, macromolecules, protein digestion, enzymes, ecology, and gel electrophoresis. Spring units cover cells, genetics (including melanin, transcription, translation, and complex inheritance), disease (cell division and meiosis), and evolution (speciation, evidence, natural selection, cladograms). The calendar integrates various instructional strategies, including DCSD Unit Tasks, Interdisciplinary Integration, STEM/STEAM, and Research-Based Instructional Strategies. Daily lessons feature POGILs, labs, simulations, videos, and graphic organizers. This multifaceted approach aims to facilitate student learning through hands-on activities, research, and project-based work.

SCIENCE

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	EQulP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science Category I: Unit Design		
	A: Does making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to a problem drive student learning in the unit?	B: Does the unit build understanding of multiple grade-appropriate elements of the Science and Engineering Practices, core ideas of the strand, and cross-cutting concepts, by developing and using them?	C: Does the integration of Science and Engineering Practices, core ideas of the strand, and cross-cutting concepts drive student performances?
Fifth Grade Science	The unit plan, "Earth Science" utilizes phenomena and problem-solving to drive student learning. For example, the "Engaging Scenario" places students in the role of geologists researching constructive and destructive processes to understand landform creation and determine how technology can limit their impact. This directly aligns with making sense of phenomena (landform formation) and designing solutions (using technology to limit/predict impact).	The unit is structured around specific Priority Standards that require students to think critically. For example, students are asked to "Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information" as well as "Develop simple interactive models." These directly align with Science and Engineering Practices. The core ideas revolve around Earth's surface features and constructive/destructive processes, which are central to the Earth Science strand. While CCCs are not explicitly listed in these weekly plans, the nature of the content (e.g., cause and effect of weathering/erosion) suggests their implicit use.	The integration of SEPs, core ideas of the strand, and cross-cutting concepts drives student performances. The priority standards themselves are written to integrate content with practices, such as "Constructing an argument supported by scientific evidence". Daily lessons include activities like "Forming Landforms" and "What Can Change Earth's Surface?", which likely involve hands-on exploration and observation, prompting students to use SEPs like developing models and analyzing data to understand core ideas.
Sixth Grade Science	The "Unit 4: Water, Water Everywhere!" plan explicitly integrates phenomena and problem-solving to drive learning. The unit begins with the overarching phenomenon question, "How does Water Shape Our World?" and includes an "Engaging Scenario" where students are asked by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to use their knowledge of hydrology and oceanography to determine causes for declining species populations in freshwater and saltwater locations. This scenario sets up a real-world problem for students to address.	The unit plan analyzed is designed around specific Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) and Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs). In fact, SEPs such as "Asking questions" and "Developing and using models" are listed. CCCs integrated include but are not limited to: Patterns, Cause and effect, and Systems and system models. Core ideas of Earth Science are central, covering water location, the water cycle, ocean features, and natural resources.	The integration of SEPs, core ideas of the strand, and cross-cutting concepts drives student performances. For example, Task 1 involves creating models and graphs to illustrate water distribution (Developing and using models, Analyzing and interpreting data, Scale, proportion, and quantity). Additionally, Task 2 involves designing an experiment to illustrate the water cycle (Planning and carrying out investigations, Developing and using models). Lastly, Task 4's "Global Trading" scenario integrates economic and environmental considerations, requiring analysis, modeling, and problem-solving related to natural resources

Eighth Grade Science	The unit plan reviewed, "Structure and Properties of Matter," heavily relies on making sense of phenomena and designing solutions to drive student learning. For instance, Task 1 asks students to create a poster modeling elements, compounds, and mixtures to understand why they appear different in real life and on a model. Task 2 prompts students to develop a model explaining how thermal energy changes the state of a substance, driven by the phenomenon of a popsicle melting. Task 3 involves investigating mystery powders to identify unknown substances based on their chemical and physical properties. Finally, Task 4 challenges students to distinguish between chemical and physical changes based on observations of an effervescent tablet	The unit builds understanding of Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs), core ideas, and Cross-Cutting Concepts (CCCs). It incorporates SEPs like obtaining and communicating information, developing models, planning investigations, analyzing data, and constructing arguments. The core ideas include the structure and properties of matter, pure substances, elements, compounds, mixtures, particle movement in different states (solid, liquid, gas, plasma) with thermal energy, chemical and physical properties (e.g., reactivity, combustibility, density, melting point, boiling point), and atomic structure. The integrated CCCs are Patterns, Scale, Proportion, Quantity, Energy and Matter, Structure and Function, and Stability and Change.	The integration of SEPs, core ideas, and CCCs drives student performances. The "Unwrapped Priority Standards" explicitly combine skills (SEPs) with concepts (core ideas). For example, students "DEVELOP and USE a model to COMPARE and CONTRAST pure substances (elements and compounds) and mixtures". Performance tasks require students to apply these integrated understandings, such as constructing arguments based on observational evidence
Biology	Making sense of phenomena and designing solutions to problems directly drives student learning in this unit. The "Engaging Scenario" places students in the role of infectious disease experts at the CDC, tasked with tracking and stopping the spread of a novel Coronavirus by analyzing its genetic sequence and investigating its origins. This real-world problem sets the context for all subsequent learning. Performance tasks, such as Task 1, specifically require students to "engage in arguments based on evidence to construct an explanation of the ways in which the Coronavirus is spread, and to help minimize or stop that spread". This clearly demonstrates a focus on both understanding phenomena (how the virus spreads) and designing solutions (minimizing or stopping the spread)	The unit builds understanding of Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs), core ideas, and Cross-Cutting Concepts (CCCs). It integrates SEPs such as obtaining and communicating information, developing models, planning investigations, and constructing arguments. Core ideas span cell structure and function, macromolecules, and cellular energy cycling through photosynthesis and respiration. Integrated CCCs include Patterns, Cause & Effect, Scale, Proportion, Quantity, Systems & System Models, Energy & Matter, Structure & Function, and Stability & Change.	The integration of SEPs, core ideas, and CCCs directly drives student performances. Priority standards explicitly link these elements, for example, requiring students to "Construct arguments supported by evidence to RELATE the structure of macromolecules...to their interactions in carrying out cellular processes". Performance tasks demand students apply these integrated understandings.

EQulP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science Category I: Unit Design			
	D: Do the lessons fit together to target a set of performance expectations? Do they build on prior lessons?	E: Are there opportunities, where appropriate, to link life, physical, and earth/space science?	F: Are there connections to Math and/or ELA?
Fifth Grade Science	The weekly lesson plans within the unit demonstrate a cohesive sequence that focuses on priority standards and essential questions. Both weeks focus on the same Priority There is a consistent instructional framework for each day (Engage, Explore/Explain/Extend/Elaborate, Evaluate) that supports a progressive build-up of understanding. Furthermore, the mention of reviewing prior knowledge (e.g. cells) suggests connections to prior units.	The primary focus of Unit 5 is Earth Science, specifically geological processes. While the provided weekly plans don't explicitly detail strong links to life or physical science concepts <i>within these specific lessons</i>, the general nature of Earth processes like weathering and erosion can implicitly involve physical science principles (e.g., forces, energy). There are no explicit mentions of life science or space science integration in these specific weekly plans.	There are explicit connections to ELA. There are non-content standards listed that focus on explaining relationships in scientific texts and determining meanings of academic/domain-specific words. Additionally, the scheduling of "ELA Boot Camp Day" and "Math Boot Camp Day" within the science plans indicate that there is dedicated time for interdisciplinary support
Sixth Grade Science	The unit outlines a 35-day pacing guide with weekly activities that build on each other, starting with foundational concepts like water distribution and moving to more complex topics like the water cycle, oceanography, and natural resources. Each performance task details "Engage," "Explore," "Explain," "Elaborate," and "Evaluate" phases, indicating a structured learning progression. Teachers are also advised to "Revisit the original phenomenon and the students generated questions throughout the unit so that the students will be able to revise their explanation"	The unit provides opportunities for interdisciplinary connections. While primarily Earth Science, the engaging scenario links hydrology and oceanography to declining species populations, touching on life science. The water cycle itself is a natural link to physical science through energy transformations (heat, evaporation, condensation). The focus on natural resources and their societal impact also implicitly links to human impacts on living systems.	There are explicit connections to Math and ELA included. The unit vocabulary section lists specific ELA standards for reading comprehension, writing arguments, and using technology. Math standards are also cited, focusing on operations with multi-digit numbers and decimals, ratios, and variables. More specifically, performance Task 1 requires students to create graphs from data, involving mathematical skills. Additionally, performance Task 3 involves a persuasive letter, requiring writing skills.

Eighth Grade Science	The lessons fit together to target a set of performance expectations and build on prior lessons. The unit spans 12 weeks, with 55 instructional days and 5 buffer days, indicating a comprehensive and sequential build-up of knowledge. The progression of tasks, from modeling basic structures of matter (Task 1) to phase changes (Task 2) , identifying unknown substances (Task 3) , distinguishing chemical/physical changes (Task 4) , and exploring the periodic table and atomic structure (Tasks 5 and 6), demonstrates a clear conceptual progression.	This unit plan, "Structure and Properties of Matter," primarily focuses on physical science. While physical science principles are inherent in concepts like energy transfer and properties of matter, explicit connections to life or earth/space science are not detailed in the provided materials.	The unit explicitly connects to ELA and Math. For ELA, students "OBTAIN, EVALUATE, and COMMUNICATE information," "CONSTRUCT an ARGUMENT based on observational evidence," and develop scientific explanations. This hones reading, writing, and argumentation skills, with performance tasks requiring claims, evidence, and justifications. Math is integrated through the "Using Mathematics & Computational Thinking" Science and Engineering Practice. While not always detailed, quantitative analysis is inherent in activities like density and melting/boiling point measurements (Task 3). Analyzing periodic table patterns (Task 5) also involves mathematical concepts like atomic number and mass.
Biology	The lessons in this unit are designed to fit together cohesively, targeting a set of performance expectations and building upon prior knowledge. The unit is paced for 10 weeks, or 4.5 weeks in a block schedule, allowing for a progressive build-up of understanding. The performance tasks are sequenced in a "learning progressions" order, moving from analyzing the spread of the Coronavirus (Task 1) to exploring macromolecules (Task 2) , cell structures and organelles (Task 3) , cellular transport (Task 4) , and finally photosynthesis and cellular respiration (Task 5). Each task builds upon foundational biological concepts, ensuring a systematic development of student understanding towards the overarching unit goals related to cellular processes and the flow of matter and energy in living systems.	This Biology unit, "From Molecules to Organisms: Structure and Processes", primarily focuses on life science. While it delves into fundamental biological processes at a molecular and cellular level, direct explicit opportunities to link with physical science or earth/space science are not detailed in the provided unit plan. However, concepts like energy flow (a physical science concept) are inherently integrated when discussing photosynthesis and cellular respiration.	The unit includes explicit connections to both ELA and Math. For ELA, students are expected to "OBTAIN, EVALUATE, and COMMUNICATE information" and "CONSTRUCT arguments supported by evidence". Math connections are evident through the "Using Mathematics & Computational Thinking" SEP and specific calculations for solution preparation.

SCIENCE

Insight used criteria derived from EQulP science rubrics from Achieve and appropriate for the purposes of this Audit, to assess science assessments on a 3-point scale.

Five Science Assessment Criteria and 3-point scale

- A. Assesses state science standards to provide evidence about students' achievement in science. Assessment requires students to use some understanding of the strand's core ideas to successfully complete it, and includes Reading and Writing for Science and Technical standards.
- B. Assessment requires students to use at least one Science and Engineering Practice to successfully complete the task.
- C. Assessment requires students to identify and interpret evidence and engage in scientific reasoning as they make sense of phenomena and address problems.
- D. There are varied task types requiring a range of analytical thinking and cognitive complexity.
- E. Majority of assessment cannot be answered without information from tasks or items, nor can the majority of the assessment's items be answered successfully by using rote knowledge.

3	a significant majority or all aspects of the criterion
2	some aspects of the criterion
1	none or nearly none of the aspects of the criterion

For labs or shorter artifacts, Insight adapted the EQulP Task Review Rubrics. This rubric assesses standard alignment, attention to cross-content opportunities defined in the strands, science and engineering practices, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

SCIENCE

Most science artifacts were rated on the five science Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. Assesses state science standards to provide evidence about students' achievement in science. Assessment requires students to use some understanding of the strand's core ideas to successfully complete it, and includes Reading and Writing for Science and Technical standards.	2.47
B. Assessment requires students to use at least one Science and Engineering Practice to successfully complete the task.	2.39
C. Assessment requires students to identify and interpret evidence and engage in scientific reasoning as they make sense of phenomena and address problems.	2.39
D. There are varied task types requiring a range of analytical thinking and cognitive complexity.	2.24
E. Majority of assessment cannot be answered without information from tasks or items, nor can the majority of the assessment's items be answered successfully by using rote knowledge.	2.34

Shorter labs or artifacts were rated on the EQuIP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	1
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	1
R: Some criteria checked	1
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

SCIENCE

The following tables name artifacts and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the science assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQuIP task rubric.

	Fifth Grade Science					
Criterion	Plicker - Cells Quick Review	Exit Ticket - Tweet about Takeaways	Unit 1 - Post Assessment	Unit 2 - Pre Assessment	Weekly Lesson Plan	Conductor/Insulator Graphic Organizer
A	E/I	R	3	3	3	3
B			3	3	3	3
C			3	3	3	3
D			3	3	3	3
E			3	3	3	3

	Sixth Grade Science					
Criterion	GA GPS Coach workbook	Volcano Video	Journal entries - KWL chart	DCSD Benchmark #3	Ticket Out the Door	Cloze Reading Article
A	3	E	3	3	2	1
B	3		3	2	2	1
C	3		3	3	2	1
D	3		3	3	2	1
E	3		3	3	2	1

	Eighth Grade Science					
Criterion	HMH GA Science Workbook pages	Energy Project	End of Unit Assessment: Chemical Reactions Test	Formative Assessment: Counting Atoms	Formative Assessment: Exit Tickets	Formative Assessment: Is It Following the Law?
A	3	3	3	2	2	3
B	3	3	3	2	3	3
C	3	3	3	2	3	3
D	3	3	3	2	3	2
E	3	3	3	2	2	3

	Eighth Grade Science	Biology				
Criterion	Weekly Lesson Plan Unit 5 Electricity and Magnetism	Evolution Webquest and New Vocabulary	Lizard Evolution Worksheet	Types of Evidence Quiz	Types of Natural Selection Worksheet	Darwin vs. Lamarck Venn Diagram
A	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	3	2	3	3	3	2
C	3	2	3	3	3	3
D	3	2	2	3	2	2
E	3	2	3	3	3	3

	Biology					
Criterion	Melanin Test	Formative Assessment: Evidence of Natural Selection	Complex Inheritance Quiz	Progressio Cladograms Assignment	Cladogram Analysis	Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection Worksheet
A	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	3	3	3	3	3	3
C	3	3	3	3	3	3
D	2	3	2	3	3	2
E	3	3	3	3	3	3

	Biology					
Criterion	Post-Class Extension: Career Project Lesson Plan	My Career Project Worksheet	Light Microscope Lab Lesson Plan	Light Microscope Worksheet	Autosomal/ Sex-Linked Inheritance	Karyotype Lesson
A	1	1	3	3	2	3
B	1	1	3	3	2	3
C	2	2	1	1	3	3
D	1	1	2	2	3	3
E	1	1	2	2	3	3

	Environmental Science					
Criterion	Study Guide for Final	Weekly Lesson Plan	Daily Lesson Plan Human Impact	Story of Lorax Worksheet	Unit 4: Environmental Concerns	Population Planner Worksheet
A	2	2	3	3	3	2
B	1	1	2	2	2	2
C	1	1	2	2	3	2
D	1	1	2	2	2	2
E	2	1	1	1	3	2

SCIENCE

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

Fifth Grade Science	A. The artifacts consistently target core scientific ideas in life science, such as classifying organisms, understanding inherited traits versus learned behaviors, and identifying cell structures and functions. Tasks frequently require students to apply conceptual understanding and involve scientific writing to describe characteristics, provide examples, or communicate scientific ideas concisely. B. The artifacts actively engage students in several Science and Engineering Practices. Common requirements include constructing explanations, analyzing and interpreting data from various visual and textual sources, and synthesizing information to communicate key learnings. C. Students are frequently prompted to identify and interpret evidence from diverse sources, including diagrams, descriptive text, and observational data. They are expected to engage in scientific reasoning to draw conclusions, differentiate between concepts, and make sense of biological phenomena D. The artifacts utilize a commendable variety of task types. These include multiple-choice questions that often necessitate interpretation of accompanying information, as well as open-ended questions requiring detailed descriptions, analyses, and explanations. The inclusion of tasks involving visual interpretation and application of concepts promotes a range of analytical thinking and cognitive complexity. E. A significant portion of the artifacts cannot be completed through rote memorization alone. Tasks frequently present specific scenarios, diagrams, or data that require students to apply their understanding in novel contexts, ensuring engagement with higher-order thinking skills rather than simple recall.
Sixth Grade Science	A. The artifacts target core Earth Science concepts, including the distribution of Earth's water, the water cycle, ocean features, tides, physical weathering, and renewable/nonrenewable resources. They require students to interpret scientific information from text, maps, and graphs, and to articulate their understanding through written responses and explanations. Some tasks necessitate writing in a scientific context. B. The artifacts actively engage students in several Science and Engineering Practices. "Analyzing and Interpreting Data" is prominent, requiring students to extract information from graphs (e.g., tide predictions) and maps (e.g., ocean salinity). "Asking Questions" is also featured, prompting students to identify the best scientific questions for investigation. Some tasks involve elements of "Developing and Using Models" and "Constructing Explanations" to represent and explain scientific phenomena. C. Students are consistently asked to identify and interpret evidence from various sources, such as diagrams of the water cycle, maps of ocean salinity, and tide graphs. They engage in scientific reasoning to make judgments about scientific questions, draw conclusions from data (e.g., applying the Law of Conservation of Mass to a scenario), and explain how certain natural processes occur. Problem-solving is also present, requiring students to reason about experimental design. D. The artifacts employ a range of task types. These include multiple-choice questions that vary in cognitive demand from simple recall to application and interpretation. There are also open-ended tasks that require students to summarize, explain, or identify key facts about concepts. The inclusion of tasks involving interpretation of visual data (graphs, maps, diagrams) further enhances the range of analytical thinking required. E. The majority of the artifact items cannot be answered by rote knowledge alone. While some questions involve recall of definitions, many tasks require students to interpret specific information presented in the item (e.g., a particular graph or scenario) and apply their understanding of scientific principles to derive the answer. This necessitates active analysis and reasoning beyond simple memorization.

Eighth Grade Science	A. The artifacts directly target fundamental concepts in chemistry, such as counting atoms in chemical compounds, understanding the Law of Conservation of Mass, distinguishing between chemical and physical changes, and identifying reactants and products in chemical reactions. They require students to interpret chemical formulas, textual descriptions of reactions, and experimental data. Several tasks necessitate written explanations, definitions, and short answer responses, integrating scientific reading and writing skills B. The artifacts effectively engage students in key Science and Engineering Practices. "Analyzing and Interpreting Data" is prominent, especially in tasks requiring students to count atoms, interpret experimental results related to mass conservation, or identify reactants and products from a given equation. "Constructing Explanations" is frequently required, such as explaining how to differentiate between chemical and physical changes or providing reasoning for observations. Some tasks explicitly ask students to determine if an equation follows a scientific law based on atom counts. C. Students are consistently asked to identify and interpret evidence from chemical formulas, reaction descriptions, and experimental scenarios. They must apply scientific reasoning to deduce the total number of atoms in a compound, determine if mass is conserved in a reaction, or explain the implications of observed changes (e.g., a substance burning). Problem-solving is evident in tasks like redesigning an experiment for better accuracy based on given data. D. The artifacts employ a range of task types to gauge understanding. These include multiple-choice questions, matching, and open-ended items, covering recall, application, and analysis. Some formative tasks utilize direct calculation, judgments based on analysis, and short written explanations. This variety elicits different levels of analytical thinking and cognitive complexity. E. The majority of the artifacts cannot be answered by rote knowledge alone. While some questions involve recall of definitions, many tasks require students to apply their knowledge to specific chemical formulas, interpret provided scenarios, or engage in calculations based on given data. Tasks requiring students to determine if an equation follows a scientific law or to explain observations necessitate active analysis rather than simple memorization.
Biology	A. The artifacts consistently target core biological ideas, including DNA/RNA structure and function, transcription, translation, various inheritance patterns (Mendelian, complex, X-linked), genetic drift, natural selection (principles and types), evidence for evolution (e.g., comparative anatomy, embryology, fossils, genetics), and speciation. Students are frequently required to interpret scientific texts, diagrams, and data. The inclusion of questions demanding written explanations, justifications, and arguments in formats like CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) directly assesses scientific literacy and communication skills. B. The artifacts heavily emphasize multiple Science and Engineering Practices. "Analyzing and Interpreting Data" is central, with tasks involving Punnett squares, cladograms, amino acid sequences, and various biological scenarios. "Developing and Using Models" is evident in tasks requiring students to construct cladograms or conceptual models for genetic processes. "Constructing Explanations" and "Engaging in Argument from Evidence" are frequently required, particularly in open-ended questions asking for justification of claims or explanations of complex biological phenomena. "Asking Questions" is also present in some tasks. C. Students are consistently challenged to identify and interpret diverse forms of evidence, such as DNA/mRNA sequences, genetic crosses, pedigree charts, anatomical diagrams, fossil records, and descriptions of evolutionary scenarios. They must apply sophisticated scientific reasoning to solve genetic problems, deduce evolutionary relationships, explain the mechanisms of natural selection, and make sense of real-world biological phenomena like antibiotic resistance or skin pigmentation variations. D. The artifacts utilize a robust array of task types. These include multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and extensive open-ended questions demanding written definitions, explanations, justifications, and the application of concepts to specific scenarios. Tasks range from constructing diagrams (e.g., cladograms, Punnett squares) and interpreting graphical data (e.g., bell curves in natural selection) to creating narrative explanations of evolutionary changes. This variety caters to and elicits a broad range of analytical thinking and cognitive complexity. E. The majority of the artifact items cannot be answered by rote knowledge alone. While some foundational vocabulary recall is necessary, most tasks require students to actively engage with specific information provided within the item (e.g., unique genetic crosses, evolutionary scenarios, diagrams, or data tables). This necessitates the application of learned principles, critical analysis, and problem-solving beyond simple memorization.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Standardize and Modernize Science Curriculum Resources and Instruction

Ensure that all science courses, particularly those identified as lacking, are provided with current, relevant, and comprehensive curriculum resources. This includes updating textbooks (both physical and easily accessible online), supplementary materials, and ensuring assessments are aligned with current standards.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from primary and secondary science teachers:

"We haven't had a textbook in years!"

"There is no teacher copy of the book. AND the textbook is extremely outdated."

2. Invest in and Ensure Equitable Access to Hands-On Lab Equipment and Manipulatives

Allocate adequate funding and establish streamlined procurement processes for acquiring and maintaining a diverse range of hands-on, inquiry-based lab equipment and manipulatives for all science classrooms. This investment should also prioritize resources that support differentiated instruction for all learners, including English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students and students with disabilities.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from primary and secondary science teachers:

"More hands on resources for labs and inquiry based learning would be beneficial instead of just workbooks and online resources. Students need to be hands on to really learn and enjoy learning about science."

"Supplies for labs would be nice. I often must buy the items I need.."

3. Strengthen Professional Learning for Effective Curriculum Implementation and Pedagogical Practices

Implement structured and ongoing professional development opportunities that focus on the practical application of curriculum, effective integration of new technologies and resources, and the adoption of high-impact instructional strategies (e.g., inquiry-based learning, differentiation). This professional development should be designed to address specific needs identified by teachers and promote consistent and high-quality implementation across the district.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from primary and secondary science teachers:

- "I need more professional development and training on how to properly use the resources that have been provided."*
- "The professional learning is catered to district initiatives or impractical ways to engage students."*
- "More training for new resources and curriculum."*

RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.):

3. Strengthen Professional Learning for Effective Curriculum Implementation and Pedagogical Practices

Implement structured and ongoing professional development opportunities that focus on the practical application of curriculum, effective integration of new technologies and resources, and the adoption of high-impact instructional strategies (e.g., inquiry-based learning, differentiation). This professional development should be designed to address specific needs identified by teachers and promote consistent and high-quality implementation across the district.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from primary and secondary science teachers:

"I need more professional development and training on how to properly use the resources that have been provided."

"The professional learning is catered to district initiatives or impractical ways to engage students."

"More training for new resources and curriculum."

SOCIAL STUDIES

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Sixth Grade Social Studies	6th Grade World Studies CAAG in Curriculum Community contains four units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit.
Eighth Grade Georgia Studies	8th Grade World Studies CAAG in Curriculum Community contains eight units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit.
American Government	One submission contained the GSEs for American Government but no Scope and Sequence. Artifacts included with submission did not come from DCSD Canvas platform. iCivics and EdPuzzle links mentioned as sources for material; however, it is unclear how frequently activities are chosen, how they align to a scope and sequence or unit plan, and if they are aligned to GA standards. American Government/Civics CAAG in Curriculum Community contains five units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing for both block and traditional scheduling. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit.
US History	US History CAAG in Curriculum Community contains five units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing for both block and traditional scheduling. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit. Submitted unit assessment does not match the post assessment provided by DCSD in Curriculum Community.
AP US History	AP US History scope and sequence is set by the College Board.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	Rubric for Lessons & Units: Social Studies (adapted from EQuIP Rubrics)	
	A: Alignment to Standards: Does the unit target a set of grade-level standards in the Georgia Standards of Excellence in one or more of the following areas: Geography, Civics, Economics and Financial Literacy, History, or K-12 Inquiry Skills? Does it integrate history and social science content knowledge with reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?	B: Teaching Strategies: Does the unit integrate content and skills, contain inquiry-sparking questions, and encourage the 5Cs in 21st century learning? Does it incorporate good literacy practices with increasingly complex text?
Sixth Grade Social Studies	DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of geography, civics, economics, and history. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Engaging Learning Experiences, linked at the top of the document.	The unit contains engaging learning experiences that offer inquiry-sparking questions, primary sources, and grade-level texts. Week-by-week sequencing of standards and suggested activities per week with guiding questions (driven by the unit's essential questions) encourage the 5 Cs.
Eighth Grade Social Studies	Unit 5: DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of geography, civics, economics, and history. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Engaging Learning Experiences, linked at the top of the document.	Unit 5 contains engaging learning experiences that offer inquiry-sparking questions, primary sources, and grade-level texts. Week-by-week sequencing of standards and suggested activities per week with guiding questions (driven by the unit's essential questions) encourage the 5 Cs.
American Government	Unit 2: DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of geography, civics, economics, and history. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Performance Tasks, linked at the top of the document. Artifact analysis indicates the need for some listed activities to be better aligned to GSEs; for example, Unit 2 Performance Task 3 should have students incorporate the role of lobbyists and legislative committees during the "create a bill" activity. Additionally, all students should be reading the primary source (a real bill) before choosing comic strip, video, or writing an actual bill.	The two-week unit contains performance tasks that offer inquiry-sparking questions, primary sources, and grade-level texts. All performance tasks are included as activities during the two weeks. Collaborative activities encourage the 5Cs.
US History	Unit 2: DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of geography, civics, economics, and history. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Performance Tasks, linked at the top of the document. All four performance tasks ask students to integrate reading and writing skills, specifically citing evidence from texts, to complete them. For example, Performance Task 4 advises teachers to "prompt students with questions to ensure they have evidence for saying that a character would make a certain comment. This is a way to make sure the work product is content-rich, not empty fluff."	The six-week unit contains performance tasks that offer inquiry-sparking questions, primary sources, and grade-level texts. All performance tasks are included as activities during the two weeks. Collaborative activities encourage the 5Cs.

Rubric for Lessons & Units: Social Studies (adapted from EQulP Rubrics)		
	C: Instructional Supports: Is the unit responsive to varied student learning needs (including but not limited to tech, engagement, prior learning, support with CER, etc.)?	D: Assessment: Do all assessments in the unit elicit evidence that a student can independently demonstrate that they can meet the targeted standard(s) identified in it? Are there varied assessment types throughout the unit?
Sixth Grade Social Studies	Unit contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner.	Yes. There are varied assessment types throughout the unit. The unit contains pre- and post-assessments, which contain a variety of prompts containing text and written responses to text, selected response with informative distractors, and short answer questions. Unit also contains four performance assessments that are suggested during specific weeks in the Weekly Planner. The Engaging Scenario combines narrative and interactive technology, with further breakdown of the cross-concept skills that performing this task would encompass.
Eighth Grade Social Studies	Unit 5 contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner.	Yes. There are varied assessment types throughout Unit 5. The unit contains pre- and post-assessments, which contain a variety of prompts containing text and written responses to text, selected response with informative distractors, and short answer questions. Unit also contains four performance assessments that are suggested during specific weeks in the Weekly Planner. The Engaging Scenario combines narrative and interactive technology, with further breakdown of the cross-concept skills that performing this task would encompass.
American Government	Unit contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner.	Included unit post-assessment does contain items that are aligned to the standards in the unit. Mostly multiple choice, one short answer, one longer writing prompt. If taken independently, can gauge a student's understanding. However, the assessment does not contain a primary source or grade-level appropriate text which a student must cite, or to which they must respond or allude. Submitted assessment for American Govt Unit 2 is not the same as assessment in Curriculum Community Unit 2.
US History	Unit 2 contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner.	Included unit post-assessment does contain items that are aligned to the standards in the unit. Mostly multiple choice, two open response items. If taken independently, can gauge a student's understanding. However, the assessment does not contain a primary source or grade-level appropriate text which a student must cite, or to which they must respond or allude. Submitted assessment for US History Unit 2 is not the same as assessment in Curriculum Community Unit 2.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Insight used criteria derived from leading assessment evaluation tools, and appropriate for the purposes of this Audit, to assess social studies assessments on a 3-point scale. Evaluation tools of origin are linked.

Five Social Studies Assessment Criteria and 3-point scale

- A. Texts, including primary sources, are worth reading. Texts reflect the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the social sciences (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO).
- B. Informational texts and tasks associated with them reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible historical texts or sources (from Assessment Evaluation Tool, achievethecore.org)
- D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts and primary sources (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings relative to the demands of the social studies standard(s) (from EQulP rubric, achieve.org)

3	a significant majority or all aspects of the criterion
2	some aspects of the criterion
1	none or nearly none of the aspects of the criterion

For shorter artifacts, Insight adapted the EQulP Task Review Rubrics. This rubric assesses standard alignment, attention to teaching strategies and literacy strategies, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

SOCIAL STUDIES

Most artifacts were rated on the social studies Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. Texts, including primary sources, are worth reading. Texts reflect the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the social sciences.	2.00
B. Informational texts and tasks associated with them reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards.	2.25
C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible historical texts or sources.	1.63
D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts and primary sources.	1.94
E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings relative to the demands of the social studies standard(s).	2.19

Shorter artifacts were rated on the EQulP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	0
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	1
R: Some criteria checked	2
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

SOCIAL STUDIES

The following tables name artifacts and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the social studies assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQuIP task rubric.

	Sixth Grade Social Studies		
Criterion	LCNR/Env Issues Quiz	Cuban Missile Crisis Quiz	Class activity
A	2	1	2
B	2	3	3
C	1	1	2
D	2	2	2
E	2	3	2

	Eighth Grade Social Studies					
Criterion	GA Journey Book pgs	Unit 5 GA and the Civil War Quizzizz	Jim Crow Era GA Progress Learning	Delinquent and Unruly Behavior Progress Learning	Lesson Plan	Physical Features worksheet
A	3	2	1	2	2	1
B	3	2	2	2	2	1
C	3	1	1	1	1	1
D	3	1	1	2	2	1
E	3	3	3	1	2	2

	American Government			
Criterion	.gov Exam	Create a Bill Project	Legislative Branch Quiz	Civics Lesson Plan- wk 6
A	1	2	1	3
B	2	2	2	2
C	1	2	1	2
D	1	3	1	2
E	1	2	1	2

	US History				
Criterion	Gilded Age Kahoot Warmup	Imperialism Kahoot Warmup	Exit Ticket Questions	CFA2, SSUSH 6, 7, 8bc	Unit 2 post assessment
A	R	R	E/I	2	2
B				3	3
C				2	2
D				1	1
E				2	2

	AP US History		
Criterion	AP 11th grade agenda, activity	AP 10th grade lesson and activity	AP 11th grade Lesson Plan and Exam
A	3	3	3
B	3	2	3
C	3	2	3
D	3	2	3
E	3	2	3

	World History		
Criterion	ESOL 9-12		
A	3		
B	3		
C	2		
D	2		
E	3		

SOCIAL STUDIES

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

Sixth Grade Social Studies	A. Some submissions did not contain text. But some main reading passages offers a clear and age-appropriate summaries of historical events and connects deeply to cultural impact. Ensuring the additional of original source materials such as period writings or explorer accounts to deepen historical authenticity. B. The passage and questions effectively align with instructional shifts such as building knowledge from informational texts, identifying cause-and-effect, and understanding global interdependence. Students are prompted to make connections across historical developments C. One submitted lesson encourages students to compare visual sources, such as maps of colonial empires and relate them to the informational text. However, the reading and visuals for other submissions are not framed as explicitly linked passages, students aren't required to analyze or synthesize across texts in a structured way. Including a secondary document or excerpt for comparison would strengthen these submissions' impact. D. Submissions include multiple-choice and true/false questions, which provides a CFU with content recall. However, opportunities seem limited for students to write in response to the text, i.e. activity doesn't content short constructed response, paragraph writing, or critical thinking prompts are included. Adding a brief writing task or a summary question would raise the rigor and meet writing-based assessment expectations. E. Multiple-choice responses are aligned to the reading, and visual interpretation is lightly scaffolded through labeled maps and guiding arrows. While the responses are directly observable, they mostly check for factual recall rather than deeper reasoning or analysis.
Eighth Grade Social Studies	A. Some artifacts do not include robust, discipline-authentic texts. One submitted lesson plan relies on Quizlet, and no texts. Submitted teacher-created slides and worksheets do not contain textual sources at all - primary or scholarly secondary sources are absent. B. Tasks in the submitted lesson plan include discussion and some conceptual exploration, but lack text-based evidence. The worksheet prompts thinking but does not support it with complex or varied texts requiring citation or inference. C. With the exception of the submitted textbook pages, no artifact references or integrates additional texts or historical sources. The lack of scaffolding to connect the material to broader historical narratives/ texts limits contextual depth. D. Artifacts offer a mix of multiple-choice, discussion, and labeling tasks. However, writing tasks are minimal, there's no structured opportunity for extended or evidence-based writing. E. Submitted Lesson Plan is aligned to standards, well organized and includes partner discussions and teacher review of multiple-choice responses; worksheet and short assessments use open-ended questions. However, no long artifact includes a formal rubric or performance-based task to assess deeper understanding.

American Government /Civics	A. The materials reference the U.S. Constitution, foundational documents, and current legal examples - which reflect high-quality, authoritative sources and offer historical relevance and applicability to modern civic life. However, primary or secondary sources themselves do not appear in most of the submissions, which mean students do not need to cite from them to complete the submitted tasks. B. The tasks involve identifying civil liberties and analyzing due process, which reflect important civic content. However, some activities (e.g., Kahoot, vocabulary, and "quick write") lean more toward review than complex text engagement. This limits opportunities for deeper inquiry and discourse that includes case-based reasoning. C. One submission touches on foundational concepts, providing entry points into deeper exploration of due process and civil liberties. Other submissions show that while students are asked to reference sources, there is limited evidence of scaffolded comparisons across multiple primary texts or structured synthesis D. Activities include vocabulary work, discussion, and a "quick write," providing some variety. Still, there is room to strengthen the depth of student writing and expand the range of responses. E. Student learning is monitored through informal methods such as Kahoot, oral discussions, and brief writing. While these provide snapshots of engagement, the inclusion of a more formal assessment, such as a rubric-based writing product, would yield more robust and observable evidence of mastery.
US History	A. Artifacts do not include discipline-authentic texts, though some refer to them. Submitted teacher-created slides and worksheets do not contain textual sources at all - primary or scholarly secondary sources are absent. B. Tasks submitted include some conceptual exploration, but lack the need for text-based evidence. The assessments (CFA and Unit test) prompt thinking but does not support them with complex or varied texts requiring citation or inference. C. No artifact integrates additional texts or historical sources, though both submitted assessment reference primary sources that students must allude to or recall. The lack of scaffolding to connect the material to broader historical narratives/ texts limits contextual depth. D. Artifacts offer mostly multiple-choice assignments. However, writing tasks are minimal, there's no structured opportunity for extended or evidence-based writing. E. Submitted artifacts' items are aligned to content expectations of the standards. However, most standard language verbs like explain, compare, describe, and analyze cannot be completely accomplished by the multiple choice format of the submitted assessments.

AP US History	A. The lessons incorporate historically rich, high-interest films such as <i>Ruby Bridges</i>, <i>Marshall</i>, and <i>Son of the South</i>, each grounded in real events and figures central to the Civil Rights Movement. These texts effectively support exploration of APUSH content B. Students engage in meaningful personal reflection and content recall through guided questions, promoting contextualization and describing historical situations. Could expand on opportunities for students to makes claims with contextual evidence. C. While the films and related worksheets reference landmark legal cases and historical figures, there appears to be minimal scaffolding for comparing texts or synthesizing across sources. Deeper integration of supporting primary documents or side-by-side case analysis would strengthen students' ability to make historical connections. D. Students complete open-ended prompts and reflection-based worksheets, which encourage engagement and surface-level interpretation. E. Student learning is observable through worksheet responses and informal discussion, but assessments are not structured around AP rubrics or formal checkpoints. A more targeted formative assessment could provide clearer evidence of learning.
World History ESOL	A. Readings are rich in historical detail, appropriately sourced for high school, and written in a style reflective of impactful historical events.. They include academic language and disciplinary depth on political ideology and state formation B. Tasks require students to interpret dense texts, build on previous knowledge, and cite evidence (via reciprocal teaching prompts like questioning, clarifying, summarizing). The reading level, structure, and scaffolding reflect shifts in rigor aligned to college- and career-ready standards. C. Students analyze events using paired texts, which provides comparative context. However, while the reciprocal teaching strategy encourages active questioning, the materials would benefit from integration of additional accessible primary sources (e.g., speeches, propaganda, or visuals used as anchors) D. Materials display reciprocal teaching, jigsaw presentations, exit tickets, and timeline activities. However, a focus on providing writing prompts that elicit robust writing in response to texts (ie. structured essay or historical argument) E. Students' comprehension is assessed via formative tools: reciprocal summaries, exit tickets, and peer presentations. These provide multiple snapshots of student mastery of standards.

SOCIAL STUDIES

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Develop structured collaboration time for a committee made of teachers and other Social Studies stakeholders across grade levels and courses to review curriculum alignment, share resources and teaching strategies, and discuss how those resources and teaching strategies enable strong implementation of the district's chosen C3 framework.

The C3 framework calls for a curriculum rich in primary and secondary sources. The committee should vet and choose district-wide resources that:

- provide teachers with high-quality primary source collections
- support more critical thinking through in-class discussion and discourse, and more extensive writing from primary and secondary sources
- that benefit new teachers in that they offer comprehensive units and materials to use immediately

The committee should take the lead on district-wide curriculum design:

- Create lesson templates that emphasize student discovery
- Incorporate more visual literacy and comparative analysis
- Design units that require students to analyze multiple perspectives
- Develop structured project-based learning opportunities
- Create clear guidance on implementing project-based learning
- Ensure alignment of curriculum expectations to blueprints for any grade levels and courses that undergo state testing

The committee should organize opportunities for collaborative peer observation and learning:

- Establish teacher networks to share innovative instructional strategies
- Organize classroom observation opportunities
- Create platforms for teachers to share successful project-based learning examples

As part of this work, the committee should set goals for their work together, including timelines and progress monitoring checkpoints, to check on the status of these goals throughout the year. Should the committee remain for following years, they should follow the same progress monitoring structures (with any tweaks for efficiency that the committee decides to integrate).

RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.):

2. Promote more critical thinking and project-based learning, and rely less on lecturing, in high school classes. Contributions from teacher and leader focus groups, anecdotal data from high social studies teachers in the district-wide survey, and evidence from artifact analysis reveal an opportunity to include more inquiry-driven lessons that lead to more writing and more student discussion based on primary and secondary sources.

To do this, Insight recommends that the department invest in professional development for high school teachers, at least twice yearly district-wide, focused on:

- designing inquiry-driven lessons that teach students to develop multi-perspective analysis skills aligned with the district's C3 framework
- using primary and secondary sources effectively
- where appropriate, redesigning assessments that reward critical thinking, and remove assessments that reward memorization and recall. This may involve creating rubrics that emphasize analysis and inquiry skills

Promoting these practices ideally yields more reading, writing, and speaking in Social Studies courses, which in turn increases student performance in English Language Arts courses and exams.

3. As DCSD embarks on the efforts above, Division of Curriculum & Instruction should continue efforts to support teachers to access and use the already-extensive curriculum found in Canvas. Artifact analysis, walkthroughs, and survey data revealed that 52% of DCSD Social Studies teachers *do not* use the curriculum "most or all days." That a majority of Social Studies teachers in the district do not use what is available to them may indicate, at least in part, a lack of familiarity with what is available and how to access it.

HEALTH & PE

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Sixth Grade PE	6th Grade PE CAAG in Curriculum Community contains four units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing for both quarter and semester scheduling. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit. Curriculum Community also includes GSEs for 6th grade PE, of which the DCSD CAAG covers all (via priority and supporting standards for each unit).
High School General Phys Ed 1	HS General Phys Ed 1 CAAG in Curriculum Community contains four units, each of which offer their own detailed pacing for both traditional and block scheduling. Priority and supporting standards are indicated for each unit.

HEALTH & PE

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

Sixth Grade PE	Unit 2: Invasion/Target, in DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of performing, identifying, and describing certain movement combination and manipulative skills as in dedicated in the 6th grade PE standards. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Engaging Learning Experience, linked at the top of the document. Additionally, there are four performance tasks, all of which feature cross-curricular engagement. Week-by-week sequencing of standards and suggested activities per week with guiding questions are driven by the unit's essential questions. Unit 3 contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner. The unit contains pre- and post-assessments, which contain a variety of prompts containing text and written responses to text, selected response with informative distractors, and short answer questions.
High School General Phys Ed 1	Unit 3: Tchoukball, in DCSD Rigorous Design Unit Planner contain week-by-week breakdowns of GSEs by priority and supporting standards. The unit aligns to the areas of demonstrating and applying competency in movement and performance. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are embedded in the suggested Engaging Learning Experience, linked at the top of the document. Additionally, there are four performance tasks, all of which feature cross-curricular engagement. Week-by-week sequencing of standards and suggested activities per week with guiding questions are driven by the unit's essential questions. Unit 3 contains a page of Intervention Strategies—a list divided into three categories (Tier 1/2/3 intervention, for SpEd students, and for ESOL students). Strategies are not attached or recommended to each activity or suggested per week; thus, the unit's responsiveness (if using these strategies) to the needs of these diverse learners is dependent on practitioner. The unit contains pre- and post-assessments, which contain a variety of prompts containing text and written responses to text, selected response with informative distractors, and short answer questions.

HEALTH & PE

For all Health and PE artifacts, Insight adapted the EQuIP Task Review Rubrics. This rubric assesses standard alignment, attention to teaching strategies and literacy strategies, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	1
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	0
R: Some criteria checked	0
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

HEALTH & PE

The following tables name artifacts rated on the EQulP Task Review Rubrics that Insight adapted to assess the Health/PE artifacts. One artifact was submitted via virtual observation. This rubric assesses standard alignment, attention to teaching strategies and literacy strategies, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

	2nd Grade PE
	Dance (Locomotor / Non Locomotor Movements)
Rating	E

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

2nd Grade PE Dance (Locomotor / Non Locomotor Movements)	Submitted artifact lesson plan (from walkthrough) shows an alignment to the standards PE1.1f - TRANSFERS weight from one body part to another maintaining personal space, PE1.2a - RESPONDS to different beats/rhythms in personal and general space, PE4.1b - Creates a repeatable dance, gymnastics, or exercise routine when combining locomotor movement patterns, and PE4.1d -Transfer weight in gymnastics and/or dance environments. Lesson Plan indicates frequent assessment and practice of dance routines while asking students “what is the difference between locomotor and non-locomotor movements?” LP includes strategies included for implementation to include all students, including those with exceptional needs and whose first language is not English.
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide more opportunities for PE and health teachers to collaborate across elementary, middle, and high school levels. Interviews and survey data highlight the desire for more collaboration and peer learning. These opportunities may include, but are not limited to:
 - First, following up the 2025 DCSD Curriculum Audit survey and further surveying PE/Health teachers to better understand teachers' specific professional development needs and design PD around those specific requests.
 - Creating quarterly (perhaps within DCSD Areas) cluster meetings that bring together elementary, middle, and high school teachers to discuss curriculum alignment and skill progression.
 - Implementing model teacher classrooms where teachers can observe colleagues from different school levels to learn classroom management and instructional strategies.
 - Establishing dedicated time during district-wide professional development days for cross-level discussions about curriculum, skill development, and teaching approaches.
 - Creating digital platforms or regular virtual meetings that allow teachers from different levels to connect and share experiences.
2. Continue advocating for more technology and equipment, and continuously ensure this access is equitable across all schools.

Schools and school districts could always use more funding; this recommendation is easier said than done. It is in response to interviews and survey data that speak to the desire for more functional equipment, more access to spaces that allow students to play, move, and learn productively, safely, and joyfully. Though budget constraints exist, finding innovative ways to provide resources is crucial for maintaining curriculum quality across all schools. These ways may include, but are not limited to:

- First, following up on the 2025 DCSD Curriculum Audit survey by conducting a comprehensive inventory of current technology and equipment across all schools to identify specific gaps.
- Seeking grants and alternative funding sources to purchase equipment for schools with limited resources
- Continuing to organize professional development sessions where teachers receive free equipment
- Prioritizing technology investments, such as:
 - Adding ViewSonic boards in gyms
 - Ensuring reliable internet connectivity across PE/Health spaces
 - Providing mobile technology solutions for schools with limited resources
- Developing creative solutions for schools with limited equipment:
 - Create lesson plans that can be adapted to minimal equipment
 - PE/Health Coordinator should continue sharing resources on how to conduct activities with limited resources
 - Develop a district-wide equipment sharing or rotation system

WORLD LANGUAGES

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Spanish 1	The scope and sequence offers a well-structured framework for Spanish I instruction, emphasizing comprehensive language acquisition. It aligns with state standards by outlining clear learning objectives, and its focus on communicative proficiency is evident throughout. The curriculum thoughtfully integrates cultural learning, providing opportunities for students to explore Spanish-speaking cultures. Varied activities are suggested to engage diverse learners, and the inclusion of differentiation strategies, such as tiered performance tasks, supports varied learning needs. The framework also highlights ongoing assessment, featuring common formative assessments with diverse question types to monitor student progress While the scope and sequence provides a strong foundation, specific areas could benefit from further development to enhance its effectiveness. Clarifying how learning outcomes are measured and ensuring the explicit connection between depth of knowledge questions and specific learning activities would strengthen instructional coherence. Additionally, making performance task descriptions more concise would improve clarity for both teachers and students. Overall, this resource serves as an excellent starting point for Spanish I, with potential for refinement to maximize its impact
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WORLD LANGUAGES

For all World Languages artifacts, Insight adapted the EQuIP Task Review Rubric. It assesses standard alignment, attention to reading and writing, and attention to speaking and listening. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	25
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	3
R: Some criteria checked	0
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

WORLD LANGUAGES

For all World Languages artifacts, Insight adapted the EQulP Task Review Rubric. It assesses standard alignment, attention to reading and writing, and attention to speaking and listening. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

The following tables show artifacts coded alphanumerically (based on the spreadsheet into which they were submitted) and their E-N ratings on the adapted EQulP task rubric.

	Spanish 1						
	Formative Assessment (Unit 3 Lesson A)	Formative Assessment (Unit 2 Lesson A)	End of Unit Test	Family Project	Family Listening Exam	Ser y Subj. Pronouns Quiz	Unit 1 Test
Rating	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

	Spanish 1						
	Unit 2 Mini-Proj. (Adopt a Pet)	Unit 5 Interpersonal Assessment	Unit 5 Reading Exam	Unit 5 Reading Selections Test	Unit 7 Reading Exam	Unit 7 Grammar Quiz	Unit 2 Oral Exam
Rating	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

	Spanish 1						
	Unit 2 Mini-Proj. (Adopt a Pet)	Unit 5 Interpersonal Assessment	Unit 5 Reading Exam	Unit 5 Reading Selections Test	Unit 7 Reading Exam	Unit 7 Grammar Quiz	Unit 2 Oral Exam
Rating	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

	Spanish 1						
	Unit 3 Vocab Quiz	Unit 8 Vocabulary Quiz	Unit 8 Grammar Quiz	Semana 2	Unit 6 Lesson Plan	Unit 6 Lesson Plan Worksheet	Unit 5 Oral Perform ance Task
Rating	E	E	E	E/I	E/I	E/I	E

WORLD LANGUAGES

The following short descriptions, by grade level, provide additional information on the artifacts above.

Spanish 1	The provided Spanish 1 materials consistently demonstrate a high level of quality in targeting foundational language skills across various modalities, which is crucial for novice learners. Assessments effectively cover listening, reading, writing, and basic oral communication. The curriculum's strength lies in its diverse activities, ranging from specific grammar exercises like verb conjugations and pronoun usage to contextual vocabulary application through multiple-choice questions, picture labeling, and personal responses. A notable highlight is the emphasis on communicative competence and real-world application. Students engage in practical tasks such as creating blog entries to describe their lives or travels, "adopting" a pet from a Spanish website and creating an adoption advertisement, and participating in structured interpersonal role-plays for making and declining invitations. These activities not only assess language acquisition but also build fluency and confidence by requiring students to produce language spontaneously and react in conversational settings. The inclusion of detailed rubrics for oral exams and projects further ensures comprehensive evaluation of pronunciation, fluency, and overall communicative effectiveness, preparing students for authentic language use. The powerpoint is interactive and engaging providing multiple opportunities for students to practice the language while acquiring new knowledge.
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Strengthen Curriculum Articulation and Differentiated Instruction for Varied Proficiency Levels

Address challenges of diverse student proficiency by ensuring curriculum materials are well-articulated across courses and provide clear guidance for differentiated instruction. Implement pre-assessment and support for students not on grade level, ensuring smoother language progression.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from secondary world language teachers:

"Yes, the county has provided some resources but they are not related to the articulation of our students and the county does not provide a plan for students who are not on level."

"The student level is not aligned with the textbook..."

"Students need to be assessed before they continue to the next course..."

2. Enhance Access to Diverse and Modern Curricular Resources for Authentic Language

Supplement existing digital resources with essential physical materials like student workbooks, dictionaries, and visual aids. Invest in and fund access to current, high-quality digital platforms for comprehensive language skill development, especially for advanced and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from secondary world language teachers:

"Students need workbooks. We need manipulative and posters and visuals for wordwalls. We also need dictionaries."

"Students workbooks would be great, as well as manipulatives."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

3. Optimize Professional Development and Operational Support for World Language Educators

Provide ongoing, targeted professional development on effective pedagogical practices, communicative proficiency, adapting to varied student levels, and utilizing digital tools. Concurrently, address operational concerns like oversized class sizes to foster optimal learning environments and demonstrate administrative support for World Language programs.

Quotes supporting this recommendation from secondary world language teachers:

"More training on Canvas."

"World language classes are oversized. I have 37 students in my level 3 courses... In my particular school, World Language is not valued and this is evident in the number of teachers the school schedules for a large number of students. Also, there is a generally lack of support in the administration which in turn, is seen as a lack of support by the community."

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS and MUSIC

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Visual Performing Arts 5	Lessons align with GSE standards. Includes targets related to reading music notation and expressing musical preferences with vocabulary. Differentiated approaches (composition, improvisation, analysis of jingles) connect to performance and personal expression standards.
Level 1 Visual Arts	The unit aligns with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for General Music Learning targets and success criteria are clearly stated and standards-based (ex. distinguishing dynamic levels, performing rhythmic patterns). Activities connect directly to the standards using age-appropriate strategies and music vocabulary.

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS and MUSIC

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

Visual Performing Arts 5	Some indirect writing through drawing, evaluating jingles, and reflection on musical preferences. Students participate in discussions (ex. "What makes music catchy?"), form opinions about music, and share ideas. Listening tasks are embedded across all lessons.
Level 1 Visual Arts	Limited direct evidence of reading or writing activities beyond verbal and kinesthetic engagement. While appropriate for developmental levels, additional integration of early literacy elements (such as drawing to represent sound or labeling parts of music) could strengthen writing evidence.

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS and MUSIC

For all Fine Arts artifacts, Insight adapted the EQuIP Task Review Rubric. It assesses standard alignment, attention to reading and writing, and attention to speaking and listening. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	2
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	4
R: Some criteria checked	0
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS and MUSIC

	Visual and Performing Arts Lessons					
Criterion	Oil painting Studio Project	4-stage metamorphosis drawing	Perform Exercise 39	Ballet barre exercises	Individual performed piece	perform using contrasting dynamics and articulations
A	E/I	E/I	E/I	E/I	E	E
B						
C						
D						
E						

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Increase Curriculum Flexibility for Visual Arts

Teachers appreciate having access to district-provided curriculum materials and understand the intent to maintain instructional consistency and alignment to standards. Empower visual arts educators by offering a flexible curriculum framework or map rather than a rigid sequence. This framework should:

- Include suggested themes, skills, and standards, but allow teachers to adapt based on student interests, available materials, and teaching styles.
- Invite visual arts educators to co-design the curriculum map, ensuring it reflects the diversity of artistic practices and instructional realities across the district.

2. Address Resource Inequities Through Centralized Support and Strategic Funding

There is recognition that some schools have successfully acquired equipment like kilns and robust art supplies, showing that investment in the arts is possible and impactful. Establish a district-wide audit and inventory of art resources to identify disparities across schools. Use this data to:

- Create an equity-based funding model for art materials, ensuring every school has access to baseline resources.
- Provide a centralized materials budget or ordering system to streamline procurement and reduce out-of-pocket spending by teachers.

VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS

RECOMMENDATIONS, cont.:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

3. Establish Structured and Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration Opportunities for Visual Arts Teachers

Visual arts educators value collaboration and have expressed a strong desire for structured opportunities similar to those enjoyed by core content areas. They also recognize the potential for art to enrich interdisciplinary learning when aligned with subjects like ELA, social studies, and science. Develop a two-tiered collaboration model that includes both discipline-specific and cross-curricular opportunities; discipline-specific PLCs and cross-curricular collaboration.

- Create formalized Visual Arts PLCs to allow art teachers across the district to share best practices, co-develop curriculum, align around instructional strategies and assessment practices
- Facilitate structured interdisciplinary planning sessions where visual arts educators collaborate with teachers from ELA, social studies, science, and math to identify thematic connections across content areas, develop integrated units or projects that enhance student engagement and reinforce core concepts through artistic expression, promote deeper learning and authentic application of knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Expand access to quality music resources to support full curriculum implementation

The department's alignment of the curriculum with state standards ensures that students engage in a well-rounded musical education that includes performance, creation, listening, and response. To support the full delivery of the curriculum, particularly the "creating" standard, the district might:

- Develop a resource equity plan to ensure every program has access to basic instruments, composition tools, and digital platforms; such as Music First.
- Consider district-level procurement and rotation systems for high-cost equipment (e.g., percussion kits, MIDI controllers) to reduce access disparities.

2. Improve Scheduling Structures to Support Program Growth and Student Differentiation

The department's commitment to year-round, standards-aligned music instruction is evident and appreciated by educators. Address barriers created by current scheduling structures by:

- Providing guidance templates or scheduling exemplars for principals to model effective music programming.
- Encouraging year-long enrollment in performance-based electives, particularly in secondary schools, to support consistent skill development and performance readiness.

3. Establish a Peer Coaching Model and Integrate Music into Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

The vision of leveraging the experience of retired music educators and seasoned lead teachers shows foresight and honors the expertise within the district. To deepen teacher development and raise the profile of music education:

- Launch a "Music Coach Cadre" by recruiting retired or part-time lead music teachers to provide side-by-side coaching, particularly for new or isolated educators.
- Embed music teachers into interdisciplinary PLCs or cross-subject collaboration teams, with an emphasis on integrating music with ELA, social studies, and science (e.g., musical storytelling, historical/cultural analysis, sound science).

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

Career Technical and Agricultural Education-Middle School	The middle grades engineering and technology curriculum maps provide a clear, vertically aligned progression for grades 6–8. Sixth grade builds foundational skills in engineering design and problem-solving; seventh grade emphasizes invention and innovation through 3D modeling and CAD tools; and eighth grade explores complex systems using the Universal Systems Model. Integrated throughout are literacy, digital skills, and career readiness, supporting both conceptual understanding and technical skill development within a standards-based framework.
Foundations of Engineering and Technology	The Foundations of Engineering and Technology curriculum, delivered through Engineering by Design, offers a hands-on, standards-aligned sequence focused on real-world applications. It blends online content and assessments with skills like spatial reasoning, coding, and technical drawing using tools like Spheros and Micro Bits. Through projects and performance tasks—such as robotics challenges and EV debates—students build problem-solving, collaboration, and digital literacy skills in an inquiry-driven learning environment.
Introduction to Business	The Introduction to Business and Technology curriculum equips students with real-world business skills through a structured, standards-based sequence. Covering areas like digital communication, financial literacy, and marketing, it integrates employability and entrepreneurial skills with hands-on projects and tools like Knowledge Matters simulations. Students build leadership, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities while engaging with technology and exploring career pathways through CTSOs.
Introduction to LPSCS -911	This lesson plan introduces key concepts in Introduction to LPSCS and includes a variety of instructional strategies such as [e.g., group work, hands-on activities, or assessments, if applicable], aimed at supporting student engagement and understanding. However, no scope and sequence or curriculum map was provided to indicate how this lesson fits within a broader instructional framework or progression of learning objectives. As a result, alignment to grade-level standards and long-term planning is unclear.

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

Career Technical and Agricultural Education-Middle School	The 6th–8th grade Engineering and Technology units align closely with Georgia Standards of Learning, featuring clear outcomes and a progressive build of core concepts. Each unit includes hands-on, inquiry-based activities that develop skills in 3D modeling, drafting, coding, and robotics, while emphasizing the engineering design process and systems thinking. With a strong balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and real-world application, the curriculum fosters technical proficiency and critical thinking, preparing students for future STEM pathways.
Foundations of Engineering and Technology	The Foundations of Engineering and Technology course from CTAEIR.org aligns with Georgia Standards of Learning through ten structured standards (STEM-FET-1 to STEM-FET-10). It emphasizes technical skills like sketching, CAD, and prototyping, reinforced through real-world applications. Balancing procedural fluency with conceptual understanding, the course highlights the importance of safety and the engineering design process, offering a rigorous, hands-on foundation for advanced STEM pathways.
Introduction to Business	The Intro to Business and Technology course aligns with grade-level standards through twelve detailed content areas (BMA-IBT-1 to BMA-IBT-12), covering key topics like employability, digital communication, marketing, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Students develop technical and soft skills through hands-on, real-world tasks such as creating professional documents and applying accounting principles. The curriculum balances conceptual understanding with procedural practice, preparing students for success in business-related fields.
Introduction to LPSCS -911	This lesson plan demonstrates strong alignment to Georgia Standards, with clearly stated learning targets, success criteria, and language objectives. It follows a structured instructional framework and incorporates interactive tools like Kahoot to support engagement and formative assessment. However, it lacks documentation of key instructional strategies such as differentiation and research-based practices, and the instructional materials are minimally described. Additionally, while interventions for struggling students are mentioned, they lack detail, and no scope and sequence or curriculum map is provided to show broader instructional alignment.

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

For all Career Technical and Agricultural Education artifacts, Insight adapted the EQuIP Task Review Rubric. It assesses standard alignment, attention to reading and writing, and attention to speaking and listening. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	3
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	5
R: Some criteria checked	2
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The following tables show artifacts coded alphanumerically (based on the spreadsheet into which they were submitted). Insight adapted the EQuIP Task Review Rubrics to assess the Career Technical and Agricultural Education artifacts. This rubric assesses standard alignment, attention to teaching strategies and literacy strategies, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

Criterion	Career Technical and Agricultural Education- Middle School		
	1.7th Pre-Assessment	CorelDraw Test	What is Technology?
Rating	E/1	E/1	R

Criterion	Foundations of Engineering and Technology		
	Spatial Reasoning Rotations	FE&T Post-Assess.	Debate on Technology: Electric Vehicles
Rating	R	E	E

Criterion	Introduction to Business	
	Intro to Business Fall Semester Exam	Study.com
Rating	E/1	E/1

Criterion	Introduction to LPSCS -911	
	Search & Rescue & Disaster Emotional Response WKST	Search Techniques Overview Presentation
Rating	E	E/1

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

Career Technical and Agricultural Education- Middle School	The 7th Grade Pre-Assessment on 3D Design and Engineering Concepts and the CorelDRAW Formative Assessment are both rated E/I—many criteria met but with room for improvement. Each aligns with relevant standards and includes visual components that support foundational technical skills, such as CAD vocabulary, SketchUp use, and CorelDRAW tool identification. However, both assessments rely heavily on multiple-choice formats, limiting opportunities for deeper reasoning. Incorporating constructed-response or application-based tasks would enhance rigor and conceptual understanding. In contrast, the "What is Technology?" Formative Assessment is rated R, as it meets only some criteria. While suitable for early learners, it lacks standards alignment, real-world application, and depth, relying solely on recall-based questions with limited instructional value.
Foundations of Engineering and Technology	A.The "Spatial Reasoning Rotations – Warm-Up" activity is rated E – Most criteria checked. It aligns with engineering standards on spatial reasoning, supports middle-grade learners in identifying rotated shapes, and reinforces 2D visualization skills essential for CAD. Though brief, it effectively balances conceptual and procedural thinking as a scaffold for deeper design learning. B.The Foundations of Engineering and Technology Post-Assessment earns an E – Most criteria checked rating. It aligns with Georgia CTAE standards and assesses key skills like design, CADD, coding, and systems thinking. With accessible visuals and a strong balance of procedural, conceptual, and applied tasks, it effectively measures student mastery and supports instructional goals. C.The "Debate on Technology: Electric Vehicles" assignment is rated E – Most criteria checked. It aligns well with CTAE and literacy standards, promoting critical thinking, digital communication, and real-world application. Through research, argumentative writing, and peer interaction, students build analytical and communication skills in a structured, accessible format. The task balances rigor and relevance, making it a strong example of integrated CTAE instruction.
Introduction to Business	A.The Intro to Business Fall Semester Exam 2024 is rated E/I – Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements. It aligns well with course standards and includes appropriate content for high school learners, covering key business topics through multiple-choice and some short-answer items. While it promotes some critical thinking, the exam relies heavily on recall, and would benefit from more scenario-based or application-driven questions to enhance rigor and real-world relevance. B.The "Sole Proprietorship" class material is rated E/I – Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements. It aligns with business standards and presents content clearly and appropriately for students, but lacks interactive elements and application-based tasks. Adding activities or assessments would improve engagement and instructional depth.
Introduction to LPSCS -911	A.This is a strong, well-structured instructional resource that aligns tightly to the standards and supports meaningful content review. It earns a rating of E (Most criteria checked) and would benefit from minor enhancements to support diverse learners and promote deeper engagement. B. This presentation is a strong foundational teaching tool with clear, aligned content and strong visuals. However, it would benefit from minor enhancements that promote student interaction, differentiation, and assessment integration. As such, it earns a rating of E/I — many criteria checked with room for modest instructional improvement.

CAREER TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION:

1. CTAE teachers receive ongoing coaching and collaborative planning support.

"We are building based for the coaching cycle and who gets tiered.. is going to be different, what that looks like at every single school, part of administration, staff at that school, ultimately, the goal is, or they will tell you that every teacher at your school should be tiered, right? But then that's complex, because not every content area has a coach to give that feedback and that coaching?" -CTAE teacher

Including CTAE teachers in the coaching and feedback cycle is essential to ensuring instructional excellence across all content areas. Just as core academic teachers benefit from targeted support, CTAE educators thrive when provided with ongoing coaching that enhances lesson design, student engagement, and industry-relevant skill development. Leveraging exemplar teachers within specific CTAE pathways to mentor less tenured or developing educators fosters a collaborative, growth-oriented culture. This peer-to-peer support not only builds instructional capacity but also promotes consistency in content delivery, ultimately elevating student learning and preparing learners for postsecondary and workforce success.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

First Grade English	Based on the 1st grade artifacts provided, 1st EIP Reading, while a formal scope and sequence is not used, instruction is closely aligned to the grade-level sequence and tailored using data from running records that assess fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. Instruction incorporates district-approved resources like LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention) and Savvas MyView, along with structured literacy practices grounded in the science of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies.
Third Grade English	The 3rd Grade EIP Scope and Sequence uses a targeted, data-driven approach focused on foundational literacy aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. While not organized into formal units, instruction is guided by assessments and delivered using approved resources like <i>MyView Literacy</i> , <i>UFLI</i> , and <i>FCRR</i> . Emphasizing the Science of Reading, it supports phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Students are identified by MAP scores and monitored through running records at key points in the year, ensuring instruction is personalized and responsive to their needs.
5th Grade English	The 5th Grade ELA Scope and Sequence includes five six-week thematic units aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence, integrating reading, writing, and research across various genres with clear focus standards and assessments via Savvas Realize. EIP Reading provides daily Tier 2 intervention using UFLI or FCRR, targeting foundational literacy skills. Eligibility is based on MAP and GMAS data, with progress monitored through running records and comprehension assessments three times a year.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	Rubric for Lessons & Units: EIP (from EQuIP Rubric)	
	I: Alignment to the Depth of the SoLs. Does the unit target a set of grade-level Georgia Standards of Excellence Does it include a clear and explicit purpose for instruction, and feature texts that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality for the stated purpose?	II: Key Shifts in English Language Arts: Does the unit feature close reading, a focus on text-based evidence, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary? Do the unit's texts build disciplinary knowledge, increase in complexity, and represent a balance of literary and informational? Is there a balance of on-demand and process writing? Is there evidence of short, focused research project(s)?
First Grade English	Yes, the lesson meets the criteria. It aligns with first-grade Georgia Standards (ELAGSE1W2, ELAGSE1W5), focuses on informational writing, and includes engaging, well-structured tasks. High-quality mentor texts like <i>All About Eagles</i> support content understanding, and scaffolds and extensions ensure accessibility for diverse learners.	Yes, the lesson supports close reading, evidence-based writing, and academic vocabulary through the mentor text <i>All About Eagles</i> . It builds informational writing skills with process-based instruction but lacks balance with on-demand writing, formal research, or literary text integration.
Third Grade English	Yes, the unit targets grade-level GSE (ELAGSE3W1) with a clear instructional purpose of teaching opinion writing. It uses age-appropriate, high-quality texts and structured activities to guide students in organizing and supporting their opinions, effectively aligning with third-grade standards and text complexity expectations.	The unit incorporates close reading and text-based opinion writing, especially in Lessons 5 and 6 with the passage " <i>Are Video Games Good or Bad?</i> " It supports academic vocabulary and revision using A.R.M.S. and C.U.P.S. charts. While it includes opinion and narrative texts like <i>Be Kind</i> , it leans more heavily on informational texts. The focus is on process writing with drafts and peer feedback, but lacks emphasis on on-demand writing and short research projects.
5th Grade English	Yes, this unit targets fifth-grade Georgia Standards of Excellence (ELAGSE5W1, W5, W6, W7, W8) with a clear focus on developing opinion writing. It includes structured lessons, formative assessments, and a culminating task, using high-quality, age-appropriate texts like " <i>Should Governments Regulate Screen Time?</i> " to build critical thinking and support well-organized, text-based writing.	Yes, the unit features close reading, text-based evidence, and writing from sources, especially through the article " <i>Should Governments Regulate Screen Time?</i> " It introduces academic vocabulary and builds disciplinary knowledge through informational texts. The focus is on process writing with limited on-demand tasks, and it includes short, focused research aligned to ELAGSE5W7.

Rubric for Lessons & Units: EIP (from EQuIP Rubric)

III: Instructional Supports: Is the unit plan easy to understand and use? Does the unit cultivate student interest in reading, writing, and speaking about the texts? Does it provide all students (with scaffolding if necessary) with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level? Does it integrate appropriate supports for students who are EL, have disabilities, or read well below grade level?

IV: Assessment: Does the unit regularly assess whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills? Do the assessments elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level standards with appropriately complex text?

First Grade English

Yes, the unit is clear and well-structured, offering flexible formats (synchronous, asynchronous, unplugged) and engaging students through personal narrative writing shared with authentic audiences. It uses complex mentor texts and step-by-step skill-building, while providing strong supports for English learners and students with disabilities. Evidence-based strategies and differentiation ensure meaningful participation for all learners.

Yes, the unit effectively assesses progress toward ELAGSE1W3 through embedded formative assessments like conferences, peer sharing, and targeted tasks (e.g., adding dialogue). These tasks elicit observable evidence of learning and align with first-grade expectations. Authentic writing tasks, student reflection, and teacher feedback support independent application of grade-level writing skills.

Third Grade English

The unit is well-structured and aligned to ELAGSE3W1, effectively supporting opinion writing through age-appropriate texts and engaging activities. It fosters student interest and includes scaffolds for diverse learners, making it accessible, comprehensive, and easy to use.

The unit is clear and easy to use, emphasizing close reading and text-based opinion writing, especially in Lessons 5 and 6 with "Are Video Games Good or Bad?" It engages students through structured writing, drafting, peer feedback, and supports vocabulary and revision with A.R.M.S. and C.U.P.S. charts. While it includes some narrative texts like *Be Kind*, it leans on informational texts with appropriate complexity. Though it lacks emphasis on on-demand writing and short research, it effectively supports diverse learners with scaffolded, standards-aligned activities.

5th Grade English

The unit is easy to use and supports student engagement through close reading, opinion writing, and structured revision strategies like A.R.M.S. and C.U.P.S. Lessons and texts such as "Are Video Games Good or Bad?" and *Be Kind* foster interest and discussion, while scaffolded activities ensure access to appropriately complex material for all learners, including ELs and those with disabilities. However, it offers limited focus on on-demand writing and short research.

The unit supports close reading, text-based evidence, and writing from sources, especially through the article "Should Governments Regulate Screen Time?" It introduces academic vocabulary and builds disciplinary knowledge through informational texts, aligning with ELAGSE5W7. With a focus on process writing and some short, focused research tasks, it promotes skill development, though on-demand writing is limited.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

Some EIP artifacts were rated on the five EIP Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. Texts are worth reading. Should include high quality texts at appropriate lexile and qualitative complexity.	3
B. Balance of genres when appropriate; reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards.	3
C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible texts or passages according to RI/RL.9.	3
D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts.	3
E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings of the text relative to the demands of the standard.	3

Shorter artifacts were rated on the EQuIP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	1
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	1
R: Some criteria checked	0
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

Insight used criteria derived from leading assessment evaluation tools and appropriate for the purposes of this Audit, to assess English assessments on a 3-point scale. Evaluation tools of origin are linked.

Five English Assessment Criteria and 3-point scale

- A. Texts are worth reading. Should include high quality texts at appropriate lexile and qualitative complexity (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- B. Balance of genres when appropriate; reflect demands of shifts (citing evidence, building knowledge, text complexity) and standards (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- C. Assessments and tasks should include purposefully linked passages or questions that allude to other accessible texts or passages according to RI/RL.3, Integration of Concepts (from Assessment Evaluation Tool, achievethecore.org)
- D. Variety of item types to accurately assess a standard. Students should have the opportunity to write in response to high-quality texts (from Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, CCSSO)
- E. Items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the key understandings of the text relative to the demands of the standard (from EQulP rubric, achieve.org)

3	a significant majority or all aspects of the criterion
2	some aspects of the criterion
1	none or nearly none of the aspects of the criterion

For shorter artifacts, Insight used the EQulP Task Review Rubric for ELA. It assesses standard alignment, attention to text complexity and the shifts in the standards, and implementation support. Insight rated these artifacts with the following descriptors:

E	Most criteria checked
E/I	Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements
R	Some criteria checked
N	Task not recommended for instruction

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

The following tables show artifacts coded alphanumerically (based on the spreadsheet into which they were submitted) and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the English assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQulP task rubric.

	First Grade English				Third Grade English	
Criterion	1st Grade Unit 1 Reading Test	1st Grade Unit 2 Reading Test	1st Grade Unit 3 Reading Test	Reading Wonders Workbook	Read/Write Think: Exit Slip	HMH Writeable
A	3	3	3	3	E	E/I
B	3	3	3	3		
C	3	3	3	3		
D	3	3	3	3		
E	3	3	3	3		

	Third Grade English	Fifth Grade English	
Criterion	End of Unit - Writing Conventions (DCSD)	myView Literacy Interactive Notebook	SAAVAS myView Unit 3 Assessment
A	3	3	3
B	3	3	3
C	3	3	3
D	3	3	3
E	3	3	3

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - ENGLISH

The following short descriptions provide additional information on the artifacts ratings.

First Grade English	A. The 1st Grade Unit 1 Reading Test effectively assesses key early literacy standards through structured, text-based questions. While it aligns well with grade-level expectations, it relies heavily on multiple-choice items and lacks opportunities for deeper reasoning or varied response types. B. The 1st Grade Unit 2 Reading Test aligns well with literacy standards and uses clear, grade-appropriate questions to assess comprehension. However, its reliance on multiple-choice items limits rigor. Adding open-ended tasks and deeper text analysis would enhance its instructional value. C. The 1st Grade Unit 3 Reading Test aligns well with literacy standards and uses clear, grade-level questions. However, it relies solely on multiple-choice items, limiting rigor and depth. Including constructed responses would strengthen its ability to assess deeper comprehension. D. The <i>Wonders Workbook</i> supports 1st grade literacy with high-quality texts and varied tasks in reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. It aligns with standards and instructional shifts, offering strong assessments and genre balance. It could improve by adding more linked texts to deepen conceptual connections.
Third Grade English	A. The task demonstrates strong alignment to standards, supports shifts in the ELA standards such as writing with evidence and reflection, and is appropriate for a range of text complexities. It offers clear implementation support, is easy to use, and functions effectively as a formative assessment tool. Most criteria were fully met. B. HMH Writable earned an E/I because it aligns well with standards and writing shifts and includes valuable tools, but would benefit from more consistent attention to text complexity, task variety, or instructional guidance. C. The <i>End-of-Unit Writing Conventions</i> section in DCSD's Grade 3rd ELA received a 3 because it aligns with standards, embeds conventions throughout writing tasks, and includes formative checkpoints. However, it lacks explicit instruction, detailed rubrics, and differentiation supports.
Fifth Grade English	A. The <i>myView Literacy Interactive Notebook</i> meets nearly all expectations across the five criteria, justifying its score of 3 for high alignment, balanced content, and strong assessment design. B. The SAAVAS myView Unit 3 Assessment earned a 3 because it meets the expectations for high-quality ELA assessments: strong texts, alignment to standards, integration across content, task variety, and the ability to observe student mastery.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS

The following are notes regarding Scopes and Sequences, and/or Curriculum Maps, for the analyzed courses.

First Grade Math	The Georgia Inspire platform offers a standards-aligned ELA curriculum framework through customizable lesson collections organized into a coherent scope and sequence. It enables district and teacher-level planning with clear progression of content, pacing, and objectives tied directly to the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The tool supports vertically aligned instructional sequencing across grade levels and provides integrated access to lesson plans, resources, and standards connections. Additionally, its integration with SuitCASE allows for seamless linkage between curricular units and assessment tools, ensuring both horizontal coherence within grades and vertical articulation across grades
Fifth Grade Math	The Grade 5 Unit 3 Math Curriculum Map, titled <i>"Exploring Multiplication and Division of Whole Numbers,"</i> is a four-week unit that builds students' fluency in multi-digit multiplication and division, while integrating numerical expressions and real-world problem solving. Aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence, it emphasizes reasoning, place value, and application through three engaging performance tasks centered around planning a holiday party. Students interpret data, calculate costs, and create invoices using multiplication and division strategies. The unit supports differentiation, integrates technology and 21st-century skills, and includes strong scaffolds for diverse learners, with clear learning targets, formative assessments, and cross-curricular connections.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS

Sample unit plans, when available, were analyzed according to criteria derived from the analysis tools noted.

	Rubric for Lessons & Units: Math (from EQulP Rubric)	
	I: Alignment to the Depth of the SoLs. Does the unit target a set of grade-level Georgia math Standards of Learning? Are the math practice skills central to the lessons identified, handled in a grade-level appropriate way, and connected to the content being addressed? Is there a balance of rigor (procedures and conceptual understanding) appropriate for the standards being taught?	II: Key Math Shifts: Is the unit focused on the parts of it that constitute major work of the grade standards? Does content build on previous understandings, and are there opportunities for students to connect knowledge and skills vertically and horizontally? Is there opportunity for the appropriate balance of application, conceptual understanding, and procedural skill and fluency relative to the standards being taught?
First Grade Math	The Early Intervention Program (EIP) for Math does not follow a formal curriculum or scope and sequence. Instead, student instruction is guided by assessment data from the GloSS and IKAN tools, which determine each student's numeracy stage and number knowledge. These insights inform the selection of intervention activities from the Georgia Numeracy Project, the primary resource used. There are no structured units or end-of-unit assessments; evaluation occurs through Beginning, Middle, and End-of-Year GloSS and IKAN assessments. Instruction is individualized and hands-on, with formative assessments such as flashcards and number writing tasks used to monitor progress.	The instructional approach targets major grade-level math work through GloSS and IKAN assessments, which guide skill-based, developmentally appropriate instruction. While there is no formal unit structure, learning builds vertically on students' prior knowledge. Intervention activities support conceptual understanding, fluency, and application, though the absence of a structured curriculum may limit consistent horizontal alignment and balance across math shifts.
5th Grade Math	The Weekly Numeracy Project Activity Log aligns with 5th-grade Georgia Standards by targeting foundational skills like rounding, fractions, and decimals in a developmentally appropriate way. While standards aren't explicitly listed, tasks support both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Math practices are embedded through structured group work and hands-on tools, demonstrating a balanced approach to rigor and relevance.	The Weekly Numeracy Project Activity Log supports key math shifts by targeting foundational skills essential to 5th-grade major work, such as number sense, place value, and decimals. It builds on prior knowledge, encourages connections across concepts, and balances conceptual understanding, fluency, and application through scaffolded, hands-on instruction.

Rubric for Lessons & Units: Math (from EQulP Rubric)

	III: Instructional Supports: Is the unit plan easy to understand and use? Does the unit use and encourage precise use of mathematics, terminology, and academic language? Does it provide all students (with scaffolding if necessary) with multiple opportunities to engage with problems and tasks that stimulate mathematical thinking? Does it integrate appropriate supports for students who are EL, have disabilities, or operate well below grade level?	IV: Assessment: Does the unit regularly assess whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills using varied modes of curriculum-embedded pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessments? Do the assessments elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which students can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level standards?
First Grade English	The instructional approach described is flexible and accessible but lacks a traditional unit plan format, making it less structured for external users. It relies on formative and diagnostic assessments to tailor support to individual student needs, which promotes mathematical thinking through hands-on, skill-based tasks. While terminology and academic language are not explicitly emphasized, the use of tools like GloSS and IKAN suggests some level of precision. The intervention activities from the Georgia Numeracy Project provide scaffolded, developmentally appropriate support, particularly for students below grade level, though specific strategies for English Learners or students with disabilities are not detailed.	The instructional approach uses regular assessments to monitor student progress, though not in a traditional unit format. GloSS and IKAN assessments serve as curriculum-embedded diagnostic tools administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, providing data on students' numeracy development. Formative assessments, such as flashcards and number recognition tasks, offer ongoing checks for understanding through varied, hands-on methods. These assessments elicit direct, observable evidence of students' abilities but focus more on developmental stages than direct alignment with specific grade-level standards, which may limit clarity on independent mastery of all targeted standards.
5th Grade English	The Weekly Numeracy Project Activity Log is clear and easy to follow, with structured daily rotations and targeted small-group instruction tailored to student needs. It promotes mathematical thinking through repeated, hands-on tasks using tools like arrow cards and number lines, encouraging accurate use of math concepts and vocabulary. While academic language is not deeply emphasized in the documentation, the scaffolded activities are well-suited for students operating below grade level. The design reflects thoughtful support for learners with disabilities or foundational gaps, though more explicit strategies for English learners could strengthen the plan further.	The Weekly Numeracy Project Activity Log includes consistent formative assessment through daily small-group instruction, where student understanding is monitored in real-time as they engage with targeted tasks. While formal pre- or summative assessments are not documented, the structure allows for ongoing observation of skill development, particularly in foundational numeracy. The hands-on activities provide observable evidence of student progress, especially in demonstrating concepts like ordering, rounding, and representing numbers. However, the artifact would be strengthened by explicitly including assessment tools or student self-assessment opportunities tied directly to grade-level standards.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS

Most math artifacts were rated on the five Math Assessment Criteria:

Criteria	Average score (between 1-3)
A. The set of items is clearly consistent with the most important content of the identified standard, and items should be designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of a student's ability to independently demonstrate competency.	3
B. Item set is consistent with the standards' primary aspect of rigor (conceptual, procedural, and/or application).	3
C. Assessments should contain a variety of item types.	3
D. Assessment should demonstrate authentic connections between the content standards and the eight Standards for Mathematical Practices.	3
E. Majority of items on the assessment come from major work of the grade (priority standards).	3

Shorter artifacts were rated on the EQulP Task Review Rubric:

Descriptor	Number of Artifacts
E: Most criteria checked	0
E/I: Many criteria checked but could use minor improvements	0
R: Some criteria checked	0
N: Task not recommended for instruction	0

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS

The following tables name artifacts and their 1-3 ratings on Criteria A-F on the math assessment criteria, or E-N ratings on the adapted EQuIP task rubric.

	First Grade Math			Fifth Grade Math
Criterion	Multiplication Flash Cards	Counting by Tens (Bead Strings)	Creating Numbers	Numeracy Project Activity
A	3	3	3	3
B	3	3	2	3
C	3	3	2	2
D	3	3	2	2
E	3	3	3	3

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM - MATHEMATICS

The following short descriptions provide additional information on each artifact rated.

First Grade Math	A.The "Multiplication Cards – Stage 6" task earns a Level 3 rating because it is fully aligned with a priority Grade 3 standard (3.PAR.3) and provides clear, observable evidence of student mastery through repeated opportunities to solve and explain multiplication and division fact families. The activity strongly supports both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency, encouraging mental strategies and flexible thinking. Although it uses a single flashcard format, it generates a variety of problem types and demands multiple representations of mathematical relationships. Additionally, it authentically integrates several Standards for Mathematical Practice, including reasoning abstractly, using structure, and repeated reasoning. Overall, the task is rigorous, standards-based, and thoughtfully designed to promote deep and independent mathematical thinking. B.The <i>Bead Strings – Stage 3</i> activity receives a Level 3 rating for its strong alignment to Grade 1 standards and its support for conceptual development in early numeracy. By engaging students in visual and tactile grouping with clear benchmarks (multiples of 10), the task effectively elicits evidence of understanding through structured, scaffolded actions. It reinforces key math practices like using tools strategically and recognizing numerical structure while maintaining focus on major grade-level work. Despite its single-format design, the activity's multiple layers of engagement promote deep, standards-based learning. C.The <i>Creating Numbers – Stage 3</i> activity earns an average score of 2.4, reflecting strong alignment to foundational standards in numeral recognition and early place value understanding. The activity effectively engages students using tactile materials, supporting sensory and motor learning. While it reinforces important procedural skills and offers opportunities for engagement, it could be strengthened by incorporating varied task types and more explicit connections to mathematical practices and conceptual understanding. As designed, the task meets key instructional goals but falls slightly short of fully addressing the depth and variety expected in a Level 3 assessment.
Fifth Grade Math	A.This activity is strong in content alignment and instructional intent but could be improved by including more explicit, documented assessment types and stronger, intentional integration of all Mathematical Practices.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the requirements, description, standard; the Body Biography project is not grade level appropriate.

1. Continue to provide training and support for EIP teachers on effectively utilizing the Numeracy Project curriculum and understanding the underlying numeracy development strategies.

"...when they can understand the why, then I think they can also be more intentional about, even within the EIP classroom, which is already smaller, how they pull small groups, how they group students together....if they're really using the diagnostic.."

Providing ongoing training and support for EIP teachers on the Numeracy Project curriculum is essential to ensuring high-quality, targeted instruction for students performing below grade level. The Numeracy Project is grounded in developmental progressions of mathematical thinking, and a deep understanding of these strategies empowers teachers to diagnose student needs accurately and deliver instruction that builds foundational skills. Strengthening teacher capacity in this area promotes consistency across classrooms, enhances instructional effectiveness, and ultimately leads to improved student outcomes in early mathematics—making it a critical action item for the success of DCSD's EIP program.

2. Provide professional development for EIP teachers to build their knowledge of reading foundational skills and strategies for diagnosing and addressing specific student needs.

"I'd love to see us make the decision to provide the services, and not only provide the services, but to provide those services with intentionality and with fidelity."

Providing professional development on foundational reading skills equips DCSD's EIP teachers to better identify and address specific student needs. With stronger knowledge of literacy development and diagnostic strategies, teachers can deliver targeted, effective interventions that support early reading success and help close achievement gaps.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

3. Explore and identify a clear Tier 2 ELA resource that is aligned to the new state standards and can be used consistently across the district.

"...they can not necessarily meet grade level expectations because they're one to two years or more behind, but that they can show and demonstrate progress on some skill. So we're not driven by the standards the state standards. We're driven by what skills a student does not understand."

DCSD should explore and identify a clear Tier 2 ELA resource aligned to the new state standards to ensure consistent, high-quality support for students needing targeted interventions. A unified resource promotes instructional coherence across schools, allows for more effective teacher training and collaboration, and ensures alignment with the rigor and expectations of the updated standards. By using a common tool districtwide, DCSD can more accurately monitor student progress, close learning gaps, and provide equitable literacy support to all students performing below grade level.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: ESOL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Recommendations for Elementary & Secondary English

Establish role-specific, tiered professional development frameworks by cultivating a learning-centered culture by honoring the diverse professional learning needs across instructional roles.

- Develop and implement a tiered PD model that differentiates training for new and veteran teachers, special education and ESOL instructors, and literacy coaches. Each tier should align with the GSE and be rooted in real-time instructional needs. Offer PD in various formats (face-to-face, virtual, on-demand) to ensure accessibility and relevance.

2. Integrate inclusive co-teaching and planning structures by building systems of collaboration that elevate every learner and educator.

Formalize common planning times and co-teaching models that foster collaboration between general education, ESOL, and special education teachers. Embed strategies for differentiated instruction and language support into ELA core instruction. Align Curriculum Implementation with Collaborative Instructional Planning Establish protected planning structures where general education, ESOL, SPED, and gifted teachers co-design and adapt curriculum materials to meet diverse needs. Embed assessment analysis and instructional planning routines within weekly PLCs.

Recognizing the integral role of ESOL in enriching core instruction, especially within core subject areas such as ELA, this approach emphasizes inclusive planning structures, tiered professional development, and collaborative practices that support diverse educators and learners across instructional contexts.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following program-specific steps:

Curriculum Access, Alignment, and Collaboration

1. Calibrate and Build Capacity Around Use of the Centralized Curriculum Platform

While the district has established centralized, user-friendly digital platforms (Canvas and SharePoint) to house standards-aligned curriculum materials, instructional tools, accommodations guidance, and testing supports, there remains a critical need for consistent training and calibration across user roles. Special education and general education teachers must receive targeted professional development on how to effectively navigate, adapt, and apply these resources; particularly in support of IEPs and differentiated instruction. This recommendation strengthens equitable access by ensuring all teachers can meaningfully use centralized platforms. Reduces instructional fragmentation and enhances instructional coherence across buildings and departments.

2. Formalize Collaborative Instructional Planning Across Roles

Create protected planning time and structured co-planning protocols where special education, general education, and support staff jointly align instruction and accommodations to foster true collaboration, reduce duplication, and model inclusive instructional leadership. Promote team teaching and common planning calendars to bridge professional silos and improve shared ownership of student outcomes.

Professional Development and Support Structures

1. Implement Cross-Role, Differentiated PD on Content and SPED Pedagogy

Redesign professional development to include both general and special education teachers, focused on inclusive instruction, co-teaching models, IEP-aligned differentiation, and content-area pedagogy. Provide tiered PD pathways that are relevant to role and experience level to promote shared language, mutual respect, and aligned expertise across educator roles.

2. Balance Workload Through Distributed Leadership and PD Flexibility

Adjust PD expectations and delivery to respect the high administrative and instructional loads on special education teachers. Offer flexible formats; such as, asynchronous modules, job-embedded coaching, and recognize time constraints in evaluation and scheduling practices. This recommendation should reduce burnout, affirm professional value, and support retention of highly skilled educators.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

Usability of Resources and Technology Integration

1. Streamline Curriculum Navigation and Provide Targeted Training

Enhance confidence and effectiveness in implementing curriculum consistently across settings by developing onboarding modules and quick-start guides for navigating complex curriculum tools, particularly for new or itinerant special education teachers. Integrate walkthroughs, exemplars, and recorded demos into the resource hub.

2. Expand Access to Adaptive Technologies and Assessment Tools

Ensure all exceptional educators have access to the full range of digital learning platforms, assistive technologies, and online assessments. Prioritize inclusive access in technology rollouts and offer real-time troubleshooting and instructional support to close digital equity gaps and improve student access to grade-level content through technology.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: GIFTED

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Ensure that all teachers, not just those with gifted certification, are aware of and have access to the resources and professional learning opportunities available for supporting gifted students. The goal is to make resources accessible, demonstrate their value, and create a supportive environment for all teachers to support gifted students.

To accomplish this goal, Insight recommends the following key strategies:

- Comprehensive Professional Development Sessions
 - Invite all teachers to professional learning sessions, not just gifted-certified teachers. At these sessions, not only demonstrate how to use resources like Newsela and Critical Thinking Company materials, but show them how to integrate these resources into upcoming unit and lesson plans during the session. The session should include time for teachers to include these resources in upcoming plans, with the option to submit model lesson or unit plans (containing these gifted resources) as exemplars.
 - Develop assignments that require teachers to access and reflect on these materials, and include them in unit plans across content areas.
- Tracking and Follow-up
 - Monitor resource usage. As of March of 2025, only 433 out of 1600 DCSD teachers with access to Newsela had used it. This indicates that teachers may need ongoing support and training. Such follow-up would come after the comprehensive professional development sessions mentioned in #1.
- Demonstrate impact of gifted resources not only on gifted students, but all students.
 - Show how these resources can increase student engagement. By tracking the usage of resources like Newsela, the Gifted program staff at Curriculum and Instruction can highlight data (both quantitative and anecdotal) on student performance improvements of those teachers who are frequent users.
 - Make the benefits of using these resources clear and tangible by sharing success stories and samples of student achievement improvement data (that model teachers and C&I staff can connect to the use of gifted resources) from frequent users.
 - Audit walkthroughs (virtual and live) included four teachers across four different middle and high schools who were identified or self-identified as teaching Gifted sections. One walkthrough showed evidence of the teacher “develop[ing] higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities, (DCSD Walkthrough Tool)” but the others showed instruction containing mostly recall questions, or the walkthrough occurred during a time of independent student practice.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: GIFTED

Though this is a small sample size, it may indicate a need for more observation and feedback of Gifted-identified courses or sections to support more instruction that encourages higher-order critical thinking, writing, and speaking.

2. Insight recommends that the Gifted department closely analyze the anecdotal data from the 2025 DCSD Curriculum Audit survey, which included dozens of responses from teachers of gifted-designated courses or sections, or who otherwise teach gifted students. A sample of responses is below:

"My school has a high population of gifted and high achieving students. It would be nice to have resources to enrich those students or guides on how to stretch the standards for deeper understanding."

"Gifted students' classes frequently can not be taught during the gifted eligibility testing during the months in the Fall and Spring. Gifted students lose on average two months while the gifted teacher is testing for eligibility."

"Fortunately, Gifted has provided us with additional resources this year. We were introduced to them during our most recent professional development. I would love to have student workbooks containing creative thinking activities, brain exercises, and critical thinking lessons/activities."

"I enjoy creating my own material for the course. I think it provides a way for me to uniquely meet the needs of all learners in the gifted program. However, funding for purchasing of manipulative/hands on STEM-based resources would be great, as well as funding for experiential learning."

"There are no gifted textbooks, aligned planners, or guidelines for this course provided by Dekalb. I purchase all of the curriculum, resource, and supply needs as they arise. I often utilize Donors Choose and Parent donations from an Amazon list. Also, there are no resources for twice exceptional students at all despite the higher correlation of ADHD and autism with giftedness."

Many of these respondents report that DCSD-provided materials are insufficient for developing their gifted students. Some expressed needs included, but were not limited to, more challenging material to augment DCSD-provided textbooks, manipulatives, time to understand the digital gifted resources provided, and more time to teach their gifted students (instead of testing and other requirements).

Insight recommends that the Gifted department bucket then prioritize the expressed needs, then create action plans to address these needs.

SPECIALIZED CONTENT: IB AND AP

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on focus group conversations, survey data, and curriculum materials submissions, Insight recommends the following content-specific steps:

1. Continue strengthening the K-5 runway for IB programs.

IB curriculum promotes student-centered, thinking-oriented education, with a focus on interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary learning.

To ensure the success of the IB program at the elementary level, continue identifying champions within elementary schools who can help pilot and demonstrate the effectiveness of the IB framework. These champions should ensure the IB curriculum is implemented as intended, with a focus on developing students' critical thinking and communication skills. In schools with IB champions, this will not only promote the presence and continued growth of the IB program, but highlight the importance of cultivating and supporting K-5 conceptual learners who can take on complex academic challenges—regardless of curriculum or program of study.

2. Interviews, walkthroughs, and survey data reveal the opportunity for more student-centered instructional strategies--such as Socratic seminars, small group discussions, and inquiry-based activities--in AP classes. These student-centered approaches prioritize complex questions and collaborative, vibrant student discussion over lecture-based teaching from slides and textbooks and low-level repetition of simple problems (which focus groups indicate is an issue needing attention).

In order to expand AP course offerings and improve student outcomes (i.e., a focus on earning scores of 3 or higher on AP exams), DCSD should continue offering professional development for AP teachers.

The district currently offers Title II-funded professional development every summer. The district also currently offers office hours for AP teachers to share ideas and ask questions, but participation has been low. Insight recommends providing compensated professional learning time after school for AP teachers to collaborate and develop strategies.

PART III

GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN FOR PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

GAP ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN FOR PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

The Gap Analysis phase aims to understand the barriers between the current conditions and the ideal outcomes.

This phase consisted of over thirty-three hours of interviews with several different groups of stakeholders. Insight analyzed the contributions of participants for common trends that would yield priority actions the district should undertake to improve curriculum.

The data and evidence gathered from Curriculum Review and Gap Analysis were used to generate the suggested next steps in this report.

We hope the findings and recommendations in this report can serve as a springboard to the planning phase. We are so grateful for the opportunity to partner with you and look forward to supporting you on this journey in service of students.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Overall district recommendations

1. Establish district-wide definition of instructional excellence by adopting a district-wide Instructional Framework.

DCSD can complement the strength and, hopefully, growth of the Academic Coach program by ensuring those coaches have a district-wide definition of instructional excellence via a nationally-normed and reputable Instructional Framework.

Most focus groups expressed a desire for more consistency of definition of instructional excellence, to complement the availability and growing use of district-provided high-quality instructional materials. Insight recommends establishing a district Instructional Framework adoption steering committee that will determine the schedule for vetting of Instructional Frameworks, iterating off of candidates to create one that is DCSD-specific, and determining the quality and scope of professional development to help launch, guide and successfully implement the new Instructional Framework.

There are many examples of Instructional Frameworks that large districts like DCSD use to define instructional excellence, giving coaches, school leaders, district leaders, teachers, and families common language to assess and improve instruction.

For example, the Danielson Group's [Framework for Teaching](#) (FFT) outlines 22 components and 76 elements organized into Four Domains of Teaching Responsibility. Over the last two and a half decades, the FFT has been used by countless educators worldwide, and the Danielson Group has partnered with thousands of organizations supporting educators in 49 states and U.S. territories and 15 other countries.

Additionally, The Marzano Framework is a comprehensive instructional framework designed to enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes. Developed by Dr. Robert J. Marzano, this framework offers a structured approach for educators to assess and refine their teaching practices. Like Danielson's FFT, it is used by many districts in the vast majority of US states to define instructional excellence.

2. Strengthen and expand school-based Academic Coaching program.

The curriculum survey, most content-area focus groups, Academic Coach and Coordinator focus groups, and most district administrator and school leader groups, mentioned the necessity of school-based Academic Coaches for student academic growth, academic achievement, and teacher capacity building. Given the presence of a robust collection of instructional materials in all content areas in Canvas Curriculum Community, the role of 1:1 and group coaching relative to these materials becomes all the more critical.

We know that there are large, positive effects of coaching on teachers' instructional practice¹. We also know that frequent, high-quality observations and resulting meaningful feedback are among the most effective ways to promote educator efficacy². And yet more research suggests that coaching will not only increase the likelihood that educators adopt new teaching practices, but they will do so with a higher degree of quality as compared to their counterparts who do not receive coaching support following professional development. "Thus, when school-based professional development is also supported by coaching, improved student achievement is more likely"³.

The larger implication of this collection of research is that coaching support leads to lasting change in buildings that supersedes program and practice initiatives. Research indicates that effective coaching structures create a collaborative culture wherein the majority of staff takes ownership and responsibility for leading and applying improvement efforts in teaching and learning.

To build this lasting change, and to create a district-wide culture in which *everyone* – not just those who "need" it – gets a coach, it is recommended that the current Academic Coaching program be expanded district-wide. Currently, not every school has access to a school-based Academic Coach.

These new Academic Coaches would build on the work of the current Academic Coaches. Their duties would include supporting teachers by collaboratively planning through the district's high-quality instructional materials, coaching them towards goals defined by their school's and district's instructional priorities, leading PD, and facilitating PLCs. Each teacher would, at least once a year (more if needed), engage in at least one coaching cycle with a school-based Academic Coach. As any school-based Academic Coach or Coaches may not be able to coach all staff at the school, members of the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and teacher leaders could share in coaching duties.

¹Kraft, M., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018, August). "The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence."

²Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., & Carroll, K. (2012). The irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools. TNTP. http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_irreplaceables_2012.pdf

³Cornett, Jake & Knight, Jim. (2009). Research on Coaching. Coaching: Approaches and perspectives.

3. Expand training opportunities for Academic Coaches relative to the curriculum materials in Canvas and ensure clear understanding among all DCSD stakeholders of the role of the Academic Coach.

Survey data and focus groups reveal that teachers with access to a building-based academic coach generally appreciate, learn from, and want more contact with their academic coach. Conversations with different DCSD stakeholder groups also indicate that various duties and responsibilities sometimes prevent Academic Coaches (dependent on school and Area) from concentrating purely on the business of coaching.

Additionally, occasional disconnects between the curriculum materials in Curriculum Community/Canvas and what is being taught in classrooms (via walkthrough and artifact analysis data) may show the need for more interventions and support from Academic Coaches to teachers in their buildings.

In order to continue developing Academic Coaches to be strong partners to teachers, and to protect their time and space so they can be more teacher-facing, Insight recommends:

- Ensuring Academic Coaches get more time to dive into materials.
 - Provide dedicated professional development time during summer or before school starts specifically for material review.
 - Create structured training sessions where Academic Coaches can deeply explore new curriculum materials
 - Develop collaborative sessions where coaches can practice using materials together
 - Implement a phased rollout of new materials with built-in preparation time
- Clarifying the role of Academic Coaches to all stakeholders—school leaders, teachers, and district personnel
 - Reduce coaches' administrative duties to free up time for curriculum study
 - Limit additional district and school-level demands on coaches' time
- Streamlining the coaching process and reducing redundancy by continuing to develop Academic Coaches on coaching conversation templates and cycles that lead to teacher mastery and student growth.
- Ensuring Academic Coaches are ready and willing to tackle the opportunities that lie with a growing diverse population and the changes that come with it.
 - Academic Coaches should receive consistent training and have frequent mission-aligned conversations about promoting the idea that “all means all:” diverse student populations, especially in low-performing schools, can and will achieve.
 - Focus group conversations indicate the need for more support across all stakeholder groups for multilingual students and special education subgroups. For Academic Coaches, training on SLOP and Tier 2 and Tier 3 instructional strategies should be readily available and frequently attended.

The goals of academic coaching program are student growth, achievement, and teacher capacity building. Following these recommendations will continue to build lasting progress towards these goals.

4. Continue promoting Canvas as an interactive, user-friendly learning platform that supports teachers and students, vs. a static document storage system. A review of curriculum materials submitted by DCSD teachers across several content areas, as well as virtual and live walkthrough data, reveal a disconnect between what is being taught and what is available on Canvas.

Additionally, some teachers report that some DCSD-purchased curriculum materials are not available enough in Canvas. This may indicate an actual lack of access or the need for training to reliably integrate Curriculum Community materials with purchased materials.

Finally, survey questions and comments from teachers reveal a need for continuous, targeted training for teachers to be made aware of, understand, effectively utilize, and critically consume the work many other teachers, coaches, and leaders have put into Curriculum Community.

"The necessary materials needed for instruction are not easy to navigate. There is not a one stop shop. I have not seen a teacher copy of book. I only have student books 6-8. I do not have a pacing guide, very few lesson plan examples. For our subject, we should have access to a bank of lessons, lesson plans, activities and games etc. There is very little information on GADOE, Inspire, Canvas etc. Being newer to the district, I have never had such a non existent curriculum and help is scarce."

"Can't connect to Canvas. I still have a student who can't get onto our book online. I have sent emails and tried."

"There is no online resources available for Chemistry. Chemistry online textbook if present is not linked to Canvas, teachers can not assign and students can not use online textbook assignments, no training provided if online resources exist."

"The problem was HMH not synching with Canvas, and other teachers weren't actively using the resources, so no one knew yet."

"Being able to easily integrate resources that are given into Canvas would greatly improve their use. We should be able to utilize our LMS as a one-stop shop for the materials provided. Proper training on how to utilize what we are given needs to happen. We are given training when a new source is rolled out, but beyond that, we are frequently on our own. What happens when a new teacher comes in between adoptions?"

In order to make Canvas more engaging and accessible, Insight recommends:

- Addressing current limitations:
 - Identify by voluntary survey, then provide targeted support for, teachers who are less comfortable with technology
 - Create opportunities for teachers to share best practices by enabling cross-school collaboration within the Areas

- Provide continuous, targeted training.
 - Continue ensuring opportunities within sessions for teachers to practice using LMS tools
 - Have instructional technology specialists visit schools to hold Canvas-specific training refreshers and office hours
 - Work with principals to review LMS analytics
 - Offer hands-on district-wide training sessions for teachers *by content area*, at least once per semester, delivered jointly by content-area departments from C&I and technology specialists
 - Create voluntary "content chat" opportunities virtually
- Continuously address any access gaps between district-purchased curriculum materials (e.g., HMH) and Canvas
 - Publicize (through Area and school-specific messaging channels) opportunities for teachers to pinpoint both technical (e.g., broken links) and adaptive (e.g., unclear integration of district-purchased materials and Curriculum Community unit plans) challenge areas regarding missing or unclear access.
 - Respond to these challenge areas immediately by confirming receipt of message and targeting a date for resolution.

5. Improve communication about new curriculum materials, including timing of rollout and alignment to existing resources.

Interviews with school leaders, corroborated by survey data from teachers, emphasized the need for proactive, timely communication that helps them understand how new resources fit into their existing curriculum and support their specific student populations.

To improve communication about new curriculum materials, Insight recommends that DCSD:

- Inform principals earlier about new materials, ideally during the CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan) planning process
- Provide clear guidance on how new materials align with existing resources
- Explain the purpose and implementation strategy for new materials before they arrive
- Offer training before the school year starts to avoid overwhelming teachers
- Create on-demand training resources that teachers can access flexibly
- Ensure materials are shared with enough lead time for schools to integrate them into their planning

6. Ensure all schools have and follow clear guidelines for at least two school-based structures: curriculum-based coaching for school leaders, and curriculum-based teacher collaboration.

To better protect and support the time for school leaders to engage in curriculum-focused collaboration and coaching with their teachers, Insight recommends that DCSD:

- Better define what constitutes an emergency that would pull leaders away from instructional coaching and meetings. Focus group conversations with school leaders reveal a wish to be more involved in instructional leadership and guidance, but being drawn away by the various emergencies that demand time and space. DCSD has an opportunity to clarify that instruction is also an emergency, and begin co-defining (with various stakeholders across the DCSD community) what constitutes an emergency so that school leaders can dedicate more time to supporting teachers' instructional growth.
- Establish district-level protocols that prioritize leaders' time for in-building coaching and collaboration. DCSD may consider setting guidelines or goals for leaders on how much time should be spent directly supporting instruction (e.g., learning walks, walkthroughs, PLC participation, etc.). As principals are instructional leaders, a majority of their time should be spent supporting these activities.
- Provide ongoing training for school leaders on protecting instructional leadership time and effectively managing school-level priorities. This may include highlighting particular school leaders whose systems and structures allow them to keep their school-level priorities and goals around curriculum and instruction front and center.

Creating protective structures and protocols is crucial to ensuring leaders can focus on curriculum-focused support for their teachers.

Data from surveys and focus groups suggest that while collaboration time is often provided, the effectiveness varies by school. Some schools use PLC time well, while others, for various reasons, do not use these opportunities as well.

To better create and protect (where necessary) dedicated, uninterrupted time for teachers to analyze data, plan instruction, and share best practices, Insight recommends that DCSD:

- Create (or promote) clear, non-negotiable expectations for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and develop systems to monitor and support schools to meet those expectations. These expectations may include:
 - PLCs are a non-negotiable requirement
 - PLCs are structured intentionally
 - PLCs are consistently facilitated by trained leaders or Academic Coaches
- Provide leadership training on how to set up and manage effective PLCs according to DCSD's expectations. This may include scheduling double block specials to free up teacher collaboration time, virtual collaboration time, and collaboration time across schools within Areas, especially for teachers who do not have counterparts at their schools (i.e., "singletons").

PART IV

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I.	EQuIP Rubric for Lessons and Units – ELA (achieve.org)
II.	EQuIP Task Review Rubric – ELA (achieve.org)
III.	Assessment Evaluation Tool – ELA (achievethecore.org) *Non-negotiables 1 and 2 only. Remainder of tool can be found at https://achievethecore.org/page/1825/assessment-evaluation-tool
IV.	EQuIP Rubric for Lessons and Units – Mathematics (achieve.org)
V.	EQuIP Task Review Rubric – Mathematics (achieve.org)
VI.	Assessment Evaluation Tool – Mathematics (achievethecore.org) *Non-negotiables 1 to 3 only. Remainder of tool can be found at https://achievethecore.org/page/1825/assessment-evaluation-tool
VII.	EQuIP Rubric for Lessons and Units – Science (achieve.org) *Category I: NGSS 3D Design only. Remainder of tool can be found at https://www.nextgenscience.org/resources/equip-rubric-science
VIII.	NGSS Science Task Prescreen (nextgenscience.org)
IX.	Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality and Aligned Science Summative Assessments (nextgenscience.org) *Overview of science alignment criteria only. Remainder of tool can be found at https://www.nextgenscience.org/resources/criteria-procuring-and-evaluating-high-quality-and-aligned-summative-science-assessments
X.	Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons and Units (setda.org)
XI.	Council of Chief State School Officers – Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments (ccsso.org)
XII.	Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory at American Institutes for Research - Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction Rubric

Grade: Literacy Lesson/Unit Title:

Overall Rating:

I. Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS	II. Key Shifts in the CCSS	III. Instructional Supports	IV. Assessment
<i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i> - Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards. - Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction. - Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A & B). <u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u> - Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills. (Grades 3-5) Build students' content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.	<i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i> Reading Text Closely: Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction. Text-Based Evidence: Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media). Writing from Sources: Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays). Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. <u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u> Increasing Text Complexity: Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level. Building Disciplinary Knowledge: Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts. Balance of Texts: Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5). Balance of Writing: Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.	<i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i> - Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. - Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. - Provides <i>all</i> students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text. - Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence. - Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band. - Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u> - Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time. - Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities. - Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection. - Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5. - Include independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation; indicates how students are accountable for that reading. - Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.	<i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i> - Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s). - Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students. - Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. <u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u> - Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.
Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0



The EQuIP rubric is derived from the Tri-State Rubric and the collaborative development process led by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island and facilitated by Achieve. This version of the EQuIP rubric is current as of 02-25-13.



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EQuIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: ELA/Literacy (Grades 3-5) and ELA (Grades 6-12)

Directions: The Quality Review Rubric provides criteria to determine the quality and alignment of lessons and units to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in order to: (1) Identify exemplars/ models for teachers' use within and across states; (2) provide constructive criteria-based feedback to developers; and (3) review existing instructional materials to determine what revisions are needed.

Step 1 – Review Materials

- Record the grade and title of the lesson/unit on the recording form.
- Scan to see what the lesson/unit contains and how it is organized.
- Read key materials related to instruction, assessment and teacher guidance.
- Study and measure the text(s) that serves as the centerpiece for the lesson/unit, analyzing text complexity, quality, scope, and relationship to instruction.

Step 2 – Apply Criteria in Dimension I: Alignment

- Identify the grade-level CCSS that the lesson/unit targets.
- Closely examine the materials through the "lens" of each criterion.
- Individually check each criterion for which clear and substantial evidence is found.
- Identify and record input on specific improvements that might be made to meet criteria or strengthen alignment.
- Enter your rating 0 – 3 for Dimension I: Alignment

Note: Dimension I is non-negotiable. In order for the review to continue, a rating of 2 or 3 is required. If the review is discontinued, consider general feedback that might be given to developers/ teachers regarding next steps.

Step 3 – Apply Criteria in Dimensions II – IV

- Closely examine the lesson/unit through the "lens" of each criterion.
- Record comments on criteria met, improvements needed and then rate 0 – 3.

When working in a group, individuals may choose to compare ratings after each dimension or delay conversation until each person has rated and recorded their input for the remaining Dimensions II – IV.

Step 4 – Apply an Overall Rating and Provide Summary Comments

- Review ratings for Dimensions I – IV adding/clarifying comments as needed.
- Write summary comments for your overall rating on your recording sheet.
- Total dimension ratings and record overall rating E, E/I, R, N – adjust as necessary.

If working in a group, individuals should record their overall rating prior to conversation.

Step 5 – Compare Overall Ratings and Determine Next Steps

- Note the evidence cited to arrive at final ratings, summary comments and similarities and differences among raters. Recommend next steps for the lesson/unit and provide recommendations for improvement and/or ratings to developers/teachers.

Additional Guidance for ELA/Literacy – When selecting text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose, see *The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy* at www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy; and the *Supplement for Appendix A: New Research on Text Complexity as well as Quantitative and Qualitative Measures* at www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/text-complexity. See *The Publishers' Criteria* for Grades K-2 and the same for Grades 3-12 at www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools.

Rating Scales

Note: Rating for Dimension I: Alignment is non-negotiable and requires a rating of 2 or 3. If rating is 0 or 1 then the review does not continue.

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension

0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

3: Exemplifies CCSS Quality – meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.

2: Approaching CCSS Quality – meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.

1: Developing toward CCSS Quality – needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.

0: Not representing CCSS Quality – does not address the criteria in the dimension.

Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

E: Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (total 11 – 12)

E/I: Exemplar if Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (total 8 – 10)

R: Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (total 3 – 7)

N: Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (total 0 – 2)

Descriptors for Overall Rating:

E: Exemplifies CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.

E/I: Approaching CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.

R: Developing toward CCSS Quality – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.

N: Not representing CCSS Quality – Not aligned and does not address criteria.

EQulP Task Review Rubric – ELA

Task Title _____ Grade _____ Date _____ Rating:

Targeted Standards _____

I. Alignment to the CCSS	II. Attention to Text Complexity & the Instructional Shifts
<i>The task clearly aligns with one or more CCSS.</i> ☐ The task directly aligns with the content and expectations of one or more CCSS. ☐ The task addresses a question worth answering and requires analysis of a grade-level text and/or topic. ☐ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band.	<i>The task supports the key shifts that are reflected in the CCSS.</i> ☐ The task involves reading grade-level texts closely, attending to key ideas and details, language, and/or craft and structure. ☐ The task involves rich and rigorous evidence-based speaking and/or writing. ☐ The task provides opportunities to build important disciplinary knowledge and vocabulary.
Notes and observations regarding alignment and attention to the instructional shifts of the CCSS:	

III. Support for Implementation
<i>The task includes relevant supporting information or materials that ensure effective administration of the task and evaluation of student thinking.</i> ☐ The task can be used to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which each student can demonstrate the skills and knowledge addressed in the targeted CCSS. ☐ Supporting materials include answer keys, rubrics, and/or scoring guidelines that are clearly connected to the targeted CCSS and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. ☐ The task's prompts and directions provide sufficient guidance for the teacher to administer it effectively and for the students to complete it successfully. ☐ The task is accessible to and appropriate for <u>all</u> learners, including students who are English language learners or are working below or above grade level. ☐ The task cultivates student interest and/or engagement in reading, writing, and speaking about text.
Notes and observations regarding support features that may be required for effective administration of the task:

Rating Descriptors:

- E:** Most criteria are checked, including all three in Dimension I and those that are appropriate for the task's purpose in Dimension II and III. The task is likely to promote successful learning and/or assessment of the skills and knowledge required in the targeted CCSS.
- E/I:** Many criteria are checked. The task is aligned to the CCSS and has potential but could benefit from some minor improvements.
- R:** Some criteria are checked. The task has potential but needs significant revision to be considered effective.
- N:** The task is not recommended for instruction and/or assessment of the CCSS.

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)

ELA/Literacy, Grades 3–12

Assessment Evaluation Tool

ELA/Literacy, Grades 3–12

This ELA/literacy AET is designed to help educators determine whether or not assessments and sets of assessments are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The substantial instructional Shifts (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/>) at the heart of the Common Core State Standards are:

- **Complexity:** Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
- **Evidence:** Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
- **Knowledge:** Building knowledge through content-rich non-fiction

The AET draws directly from the following documents:

- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>)
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in ELA/Literacy grades 3 – 12 (http://corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_3-12.pdf)
- Supplement to Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity (www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf)

When to use the AET

1. Purchasing assessments: Many factors go into local purchasing decisions. Alignment to the Standards is a critical factor to consider. The AET is designed to evaluate alignment of

assessments and sets of assessments to the Shifts and the major features of the CCSS. It also provides suggestions of additional indicators to consider in the assessment evaluation and purchasing process.

2. Evaluating assessments in use: The AET can be used to analyze the degree of alignment of existing assessments and sets of assessments and help to highlight specific, concrete flaws in alignment. Even where assessments currently in use fail to meet one or more of these criteria, the pattern of failure is likely to be informative. States and districts can use the evaluation to create a thoughtful plan to modify assessments and sets of assessments in such a way that they better meet the requirements of the Standards.
3. Developing assessments: This tool can be used to provide guidance for and evaluation of alignment for creating locally developed assessments and sets of assessments. Those developing new aligned assessments should use the criteria within the AET to guide test blueprint construction, item specifications development, and item evaluation procedures.

Who Uses the AET

The AET is designed for use by educators and administrators including content specialists, assessment specialists, administrators and educators at the school, district or state level. Evaluating assessments and sets of assessments requires both subject-matter and technical expertise. Evaluators should be well versed in the Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>) for all grades in which assessments are being evaluated. Evaluators also should be familiar with the substantial instructional Shifts (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/>) of Complexity, Evidence and Knowledge that are listed above. If possible, it would be helpful if at least one member of the evaluation team is well versed in ELA/literacy assessment.

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Download this tool at <http://achievethecore.org/AET>

2

Getting Started

Prior to Evaluation

Assemble all of the materials necessary for the evaluation, e.g., test forms, test blueprints, test item metadata, item bank summaries, sample score reports. It is essential to have materials for all grades covered by the assessment program, as some criteria cannot be rated without having access to each grade. In addition, each evaluator should have a reference copy of the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in ELA/Literacy grades 3 – 12.

Sections 1 – 3 below should be completed to produce a comprehensive picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the assessments under evaluation. Information about areas in need of improvement should be shared with internal and external stakeholders.

Navigating the Tool

The AET contains criteria for five ELA/literacy domains: Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking and Listening. Assessments do not have to contain all of the ELA/literacy domains in order to be evaluated with the AET or to align with the CCSS. Choose the Non-Negotiables and/or Alignment Criteria that apply to the assessments being evaluated.

If reading is being assessed*, begin with Section 1: Non-Negotiable Alignment Criteria (p. 4).

- The Non-Negotiable Alignment Criteria must each be met in full for reading assessments to be considered aligned to the Shifts and the major features of the Common Core State Standards. Each Non-Negotiable Alignment Criterion has three metrics associated with it; every one of these metrics must be met in order for the criterion as a whole to be met.
- Examine the relevant materials and use evidence to rate the materials against each criterion and its associated metrics.
- Record and explain the evidence upon which the rating is based.

Continue to Section 2: Alignment Criteria (p. 14).

- The Alignment Criteria for the domains covered by the assessment program under evaluation must each be met for materials to be considered aligned to the Shifts and the major features of the Common Core State Standards. Each Alignment Criterion has two or more metrics associated with it; a specific number of these metrics must be met or partially met in order for the criterion as a whole to be met.
- The domains covered within the Alignment Criteria section are: Reading, Writing, Language, and/or Speaking and Listening.
- Examine the materials in relation to the relevant criteria, assigning each metric a point value. Rate each criterion as "Meets" or "Does Not Meet" based on the number of points assigned. The more points the materials receive on the alignment criteria, the better they are aligned.
- Record and explain the evidence upon which the rating is based.

Complete Section 3: Evaluation Summary (p. 43).

- Compile all of the results from Sections 1 and 2 to determine if the assessments are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the CCSS.

Proceed to Section 4: Indicators of Quality (p. 45).

- Indicators of Quality are important considerations that will help evaluators better understand the overall quality of an assessment program. These considerations are not criteria for alignment to the CCSS, but they provide valuable information about additional program characteristics, such as ensuring accessibility for all students. Evaluators may want to add their own indicators to the examples provided.

NOTE: The word "text" has been used to apply to written, audio, video, and quantitative stimuli. The AET should be applied to non-print materials as appropriate.

* It is assumed that reading will be a significant component of most assessment systems subject to evaluation. When an assessment does not include Reading, the Alignment Criteria for the domains being evaluated (Writing, Language, Speaking and Listening) should be used.

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Download this tool at <http://achievethecore.org/AET>

3

Directions for Non-Negotiable 1

Reading – Complexity and Quality of Texts

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Non-Negotiable 1: Texts are worthy of student time and attention; they have the appropriate level of complexity for the grade, according to both quantitative and qualitative analyses of text complexity.

Required Materials

- The texts in the test forms for each grade level or (for an item bank) a random sample of texts for each grade level
- Metadata accompanying the texts, especially quantitative and qualitative analyses of text complexity and copyright acknowledgements

Rating this Criterion

The assessments should be rated for each of the following three metrics as Meets or Does Not Meet. If any one of the metrics is rated as Does Not Meet, then the assessments fail Non-Negotiable 1. If all metrics are rated as Meets, the assessments pass this Non-Negotiable.

Whether the assessments are rated as Meets or Does Not Meet, provide specific examples of evidence in support of the ratings, including evidence of any specific gaps in the assessments.

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

4

Non-Negotiable 1

Reading – Complexity and Quality of Texts

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Metric	Procedure for Evaluation	Evidence
NN Metric 1A: At least 90% of texts used for assessment are placed within the grade band indicated by a quantitative analysis, with the average complexity of texts increasing grade-by-grade. Exceptions—in which the text is placed above the indicated grade band—are usually reserved for literary texts in the upper grades. When materials are published, the quantitative data accompany the materials.	Every text should be accompanied by data from at least one research-based quantitative tool for grade band placement (poetry and drama excepted). The same tool(s) should be used consistently across the grade levels. If quantitative data is not available, evaluators should obtain a Lexile or other rating for the text (see http://achievethecore.org/text-complexity). For each grade, examine the metadata or other explanatory materials accompanying either the texts on the test form(s) or a representative sample of at least three literary and three informational texts from the item bank. Make a list of each text title and the grade to which it has been assigned; group by grade band. Note the grade band indicated by the quantitative tool(s) and the actual grade band placement. Calculate an overall percentage of the texts that have been placed at or below the grade band indicated by the quantitative data, allowing exceptions for literary texts as appropriate.	Rating ☐ Meets ☐ Does Not Meet

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Title of Assessment: _____

5

Non-Negotiable 1

Reading – Complexity and Quality of Texts

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Metric

NN Metric 1B:

At least 90% of texts used for assessment are placed within the grade level indicated by a qualitative analysis. When materials are published, the qualitative analysis accompanies the materials.

Procedure for Evaluation

Every text should be accompanied by a qualitative analysis for grade level placement (including poetry and drama).

If a qualitative analysis is not available, evaluators should do a brief analysis using a format like the one at <http://achievethecore.org/qualitative-text-analysis>.

For each grade, examine the qualitative analyses in the metadata or other explanatory materials accompanying the same texts from Non-Negotiable 1A above. Note the grade level indicated by the qualitative tools and the actual grade level placement.

Calculate an overall percentage of the texts that have been placed at the grade level indicated by the qualitative analysis.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

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Title of Assessment: _____

6

Non-Negotiable 1

Reading – Complexity and Quality of Texts

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Metric

NN Metric 1C:

At least 95% of texts used for assessment are of publishable quality—preferably previously published but at minimum edited by professional publication editors (not only assessment editors). History/social studies and science/technical texts, specifically, reflect the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the particular academic discipline.

Procedure for Evaluation

All texts should be high quality and content rich—worthy of student attention. Nearly all texts should be previously published rather than “commissioned” because published texts have been selected and edited by professional publication editors.

For each grade, examine the metadata or other explanatory materials accompanying the same texts from Non-Negotiable 1A above.

Look for an acknowledgment line for each text (usually found at the front of the test booklet or below the text), which cites an author or publisher and date of publication, or look for a statement that the text has been edited by a professional publication editor.

Label the texts that are accompanied by an acknowledgment line or are shown to have been edited professionally.

Identify any texts that do not represent quality literary or informational writing.

Calculate the percentage of texts that are not of publishable quality.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

7

Non-Negotiable 1

Reading – Complexity and Quality of Texts

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Non-Negotiable 1: Texts are worthy of student time and attention; they have the appropriate level of complexity for the grade, according to both quantitative and qualitative analyses of text complexity.

Rating for Non-Negotiable 1

If all three metrics above were rated as Meets, then rate Non-Negotiable 1 as Meets. If one or more of the metrics were rated as Does Not Meet, then rate Non-Negotiable 1 as Does Not Meet. Check the final rating.

Then, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these materials in light of this Criterion.

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Strengths / Weaknesses:

Before moving to Non-Negotiable 2, record the final Meets or Does Not Meet rating in the Evaluation Summary on Page 43.

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

8

Directions for Non-Negotiable 2

Reading – Text-Dependent and Standards-Based Questions

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
ELA/Literacy, Grades 3 -12

Non-Negotiable 2: High-quality reading test questions are text-dependent and Standards-based; they require students to read closely, find the answers within the text, and use textual evidence to support responses.

Required Materials

- The test questions in the test forms for each grade level or (for an item bank) a representative sample of test questions
- Metadata accompanying the test questions, showing the alignment of each question to the CCSS

Rating this Criterion

The assessments should be rated for each of the following three metrics as Meets or Does Not Meet. If any one of the metrics is rated as Does Not Meet, then the assessments fail Non-Negotiable 2. If all metrics are rated as Meets, the assessments pass this Non-Negotiable.

Whether the assessments are rated as Meets or Does Not Meet, provide specific examples of evidence in support of the ratings, including evidence of any specific gaps in the assessments.

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

9

Non-Negotiable 2

Reading – Text-Dependent and Standards-Based Questions

Metric

NN Metric 2A:

At least 90% of the questions are text dependent: they require close reading and analysis of the text, focus on its central ideas and important particulars, and require answers based on what is in (not outside) the text.

Procedure for Evaluation

Questions should require thoughtful reading of the text, not just skimming or superficial consideration. As a set, questions should enable students to demonstrate deep understanding of the unique aspects of the text. Students should be able to answer the questions correctly without prior knowledge. Questions should be derived from a reading text (i.e., not “stand alone” questions).

For each grade, examine either the test questions on the test form(s) or a representative sample of at least 15 questions based on literary texts and 15 based on informational texts per grade in the item bank.

Identify the questions that do not meet this metric: List the sequence numbers of any questions that do not require close reading and analysis, e.g., the questions assess simple recall or minor textual points. List the sequence numbers of any questions that, as a set, focus on peripheral aspects of the text, failing to permit students to demonstrate deep understanding of the text. List the sequence numbers of any questions that call on students’ prior knowledge or are “stand-alone” questions.

Calculate percentages of test questions that do not meet the metric.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Non-Negotiable 2

Reading – Text-Dependent and Standards-Based Questions

Metric

NN Metric 2B:

At least 90% of test questions reflect the range of cognitive demand required by the Standards.

Procedure for Evaluation

At every grade level, the Standards should be assessed with items that reflect a range of rigor and cognitive demand, depending on the requirements of individual Standards. Questions should reflect this range at each grade, always avoiding simple recall or surface analysis.

For each grade, examine the same test questions from Non-Negotiable 2A above.

List the sequence numbers of any questions that do not rise to the range of cognitive demand or rigor required by individual Standards.

Calculate a percentage of test questions that do not meet this metric.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Non-Negotiable 2

Reading – Text-Dependent and Standards-Based Questions

Metric

NN Metric 2C:

At least 90% of test questions assess the specifics of the Standards at each grade level (not just the Anchor Standards) and do not employ “generic” answer choices applicable to any text.

Procedure for Evaluation

Questions should assess the specific requirements delineated by the Standards. For example, if a Standard requires a focus on two central ideas, two ideas should be assessed; if a Standard calls for the meaning of figurative language, meaning should be assessed, not literary terms like *metaphor* or *personification*.

Questions should not be aligned only to Anchor Standards. Multiple-choice or technology-enhanced items should be text-specific, not relying on “generic” choices (e.g., “to inform,” “to persuade,” “to entertain”) that could be used for any text. Not every Standard must be assessed with every text.

For each grade, examine the test questions assembled under Non-Negotiable 2A above, along with their metadata. Identify the questions that do not meet this metric: List the sequence numbers of any questions that fail to assess the specific requirements of the Standards at the grade level. List the sequence numbers of any questions that are aligned only to the Anchor Standards. List the sequence numbers of any questions that provide “generic” answer choices that could be used for any text.

Calculate percentages of questions that do not meet the metric.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Non-Negotiable 2

Reading – Text-Dependent and Standards-Based Questions

Non-Negotiable 2: High-quality reading test questions are text-dependent and Standards-based; they require students to read closely, find the answers within the text, and use textual evidence to support responses.

Rating for Non-Negotiable 2

If all three metrics above were rated as Meets, then rate Non-Negotiable 2 as Meets. If one or more of the metrics were rated as Does Not Meet, then rate Non-Negotiable 2 as Does Not Meet. Check the final rating.

Then, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these materials in light of this Criterion.

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Strengths / Weaknesses:

Before moving to the Alignment Criteria, record the final Meets or Does Not Meet rating in the Evaluation Summary on Page 43.

Now continue by evaluating the Alignment Criteria 1-4 for Reading.

I. Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS	II. Key Shifts in the CCSS	III. Instructional Supports	IV. Assessment
<i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i> - Targets a set of grade-level CCSS mathematics standard(s) to the full depth of the standards for teaching and learning. - Standards for Mathematical Practice that are central to the lesson are identified, handled in a grade-appropriate way, and well connected to the content being addressed. - Presents a balance of mathematical procedures and deeper conceptual understanding inherent in the CCSS.	<i>The lesson/unit reflects evidence of key shifts that are reflected in the CCSS:</i> Focus: Lessons and units targeting the major work of the grade provide an especially in-depth treatment, with especially high expectations. Lessons and units targeting supporting work of the grade have visible connection to the major work of the grade and are sufficiently brief. Lessons and units do not hold students responsible for material from later grades. Coherence: The content develops through reasoning about the new concepts on the basis of previous understandings. Where appropriate, provides opportunities for students to connect knowledge and skills within or across clusters, domains and learning progressions. Rigor: Requires students to engage with and demonstrate challenging mathematics with appropriate balance among the following: Application: Provides opportunities for students to independently apply mathematical concepts in real-world situations and solve challenging problems with persistence, choosing and applying an appropriate model or strategy to new situations. Conceptual Understanding: Develops students' conceptual understanding through tasks, brief problems, questions, multiple representations and opportunities for students to write and speak about their understanding. Procedural Skill and Fluency: Expects, supports and provides guidelines for procedural skill and fluency with core calculations and mathematical procedures (when called for in the standards for the grade) to be performed quickly and accurately.	<i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i> - Includes clear and sufficient guidance to support teaching and learning of the targeted standards, including, when appropriate, the use of technology and media. - Uses and encourages precise and accurate mathematics, academic language, terminology and concrete or abstract representations (e.g., pictures, symbols, expressions, equations, graphics, models) in the discipline. - Engages students in productive struggle through relevant, thought-provoking questions, problems and tasks that stimulate interest and elicit mathematical thinking. - Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. - Provides appropriate level and type of scaffolding, differentiation, intervention and support for a broad range of learners. - Supports diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, interests and styles. - Provides extra supports for students working below grade level. - Provides extensions for students with high interest or working above grade level. <i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i> - Recommend and facilitate a mix of instructional approaches for a variety of learners such as using multiple representations (e.g., including models, using a range of questions, checking for understanding, flexible grouping, pair-share). - Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their mathematical understanding independently. - Demonstrate an effective sequence and a progression of learning where the concepts or skills advance and deepen over time. - Expect, support and provide guidelines for procedural skill and fluency with core calculations and mathematical procedures (when called for in the standards for the grade) to be performed quickly and accurately.	<i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i> - Is designed to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the targeted CCSS. - Assesses student proficiency using methods that are accessible and unbiased, including the use of grade-level language in student prompts. - Includes aligned rubrics, answer keys and scoring guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. <i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i> - Use varied modes of curriculum-embedded assessments that may include pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.
Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0	Rating: 3 2 1 0



The EQIP rubric is derived from the Tri-State Rubric and the collaborative development process led by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island and facilitated by Achieve. This version of the EQIP rubric is current as of 06-15-13.
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EQIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Mathematics

Directions: The Quality Review Rubric provides criteria to determine the quality and alignment of lessons and units to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in order to: (1) Identify exemplars/ models for teachers' use within and across states; (2) provide constructive criteria-based feedback to developers; and (3) review existing instructional materials to determine what revisions are needed.

Step 1 – Review Materials

- Record the grade and title of the lesson/unit on the recording form.
- Scan to see what the lesson/unit contains and how it is organized.
- Read key materials related to instruction, assessment and teacher guidance.
- Study and work the task that serves as the centerpiece for the lesson/unit, analyzing the content and mathematical practices the tasks require.

Step 2 – Apply Criteria in Dimension I: Alignment

- Identify the grade-level CCSS that the lesson/unit targets.
- Closely examine the materials through the “lens” of each criterion.
- Individually check each criterion for which clear and substantial evidence is found.
- Identify and record input on specific improvements that might be made to meet criteria or strengthen alignment.
- Enter your rating 0 – 3 for Dimension I: Alignment.

Note: Dimension I is non-negotiable. In order for the review to continue, a rating of 2 or 3 is required. If the review is discontinued, consider general feedback that might be given to developers/teachers regarding next steps.

Step 3 – Apply Criteria in Dimensions II – IV

- Closely examine the lesson/unit through the “lens” of each criterion.
- Record comments on criteria met, improvements needed and then rate 0 – 3.

When working in a group, individuals may choose to compare ratings after each dimension or delay conversation until each person has rated and recorded their input for the remaining Dimensions II – IV.

Step 4 – Apply an Overall Rating and Provide Summary Comments

- Review ratings for Dimensions I – IV adding/clarifying comments as needed.
- Write summary comments for your overall rating on your recording sheet.
- Total dimension ratings and record overall rating E, E/I, R, N – adjust as necessary.

If working in a group, individuals should record their overall rating prior to conversation.

Step 5 – Compare Overall Ratings and Determine Next Steps

- Note the evidence cited to arrive at final ratings, summary comments and similarities and differences among raters. Recommend next steps for the lesson/unit and provide recommendations for improvement and/or ratings to developers/teachers.

Additional Guidance on Dimension II: Shifts - When considering *Focus* it is important that lessons or units targeting additional and supporting clusters are sufficiently brief – this ensures that students will spend the strong majority of the year on major work of the grade. See the *K-8 Publishers Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics*, particularly pages 8-9 for further information on the focus criterion with respect to major work of the grade at www.corestandards.org/assets/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Summer%202012_FINAL.pdf. With respect to *Coherence* it is important that the learning objectives are linked to CCSS cluster headings (see www.corestandards.org/Math).

Rating Scales

Rating for Dimension I: Alignment is non-negotiable and requires a rating of 2 or 3. If rating is 0 or 1 then the review does not continue.

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension
- 2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension
- 1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension
- 0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: **Exemplifies CCSS Quality** - meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.
- 2: **Approaching CCSS Quality** - meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 1: **Developing toward CCSS Quality** - needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 0: **Not representing CCSS Quality** - does not address the criteria in the dimension.

Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

- E: Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (total 11 – 12)
- E/I: Exemplar *if* Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (total 8 – 10)
- R: Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (total 3 – 7)
- N: Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (total 0 – 2)

Descriptor for Overall Ratings:

- E: **Exemplifies CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.
- E/I: **Approaching CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.
- R: **Developing toward CCSS Quality** – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.
- N: **Not representing CCSS Quality** – Not aligned and does not address criteria.

EQIP Task Review Rubric – Mathematics

Task Title _____ Grade _____ Date _____ Rating:

Targeted Standards _____ Mathematical Practices _____

I. Alignment to the CCSS	II. Attention to the Instructional Shifts
<i>The task clearly aligns with one or more CCSS.</i> ☐ The performance expectations of the task address the mathematics, with precision and accuracy, for <u>at least part</u> of one CCSS. ☐ The task includes opportunities for a student to apply, and a teacher to observe, at least one Standard for Mathematical Practice.	<i>The task supports the key shifts that are reflected in the CCSS.</i> ☐ The task requires students to engage fully with the mathematics of the task, including providing opportunities for the appropriate aspects of rigor, <u>as required by the targeted standards</u>: - To independently apply mathematical concepts to real world situations - To apply their conceptual understanding of the mathematical content addressed - To practice and use core calculations and mathematical procedures quickly and accurately ☐ The task requires students to connect foundational knowledge to grade-level concepts, as required by the coherence in the standards. ☐ The task addresses, <u>or can be used to support</u>, a critical concept(s) for the grade level.
Notes and observations regarding alignment and attention to the instructional shifts of the CCSS:	

III. Support for Implementation
<i>The task includes relevant supporting information or materials that ensure effective administration of the task and evaluation of student thinking.</i> ☐ The task can be used to elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which each student can demonstrate the skills and knowledge addressed in the targeted CCSS. ☐ Supporting materials include answer keys, rubrics, and/or scoring guidelines that are clearly connected to the targeted CCSS and provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. ☐ The task's prompts and directions provide sufficient guidance for the teacher to administer it effectively and for the students to complete it successfully. ☐ The task is accessible to and appropriate for <u>all</u> learners, including students who are English language learners or are working below or above grade level. ☐ The task cultivates student interest and/or engagement in the mathematics.
Notes and observations regarding support features that may be required for effective administration of the task:

Rating Descriptors:

E: Most criteria are checked, including both in Dimension I and those that are appropriate for the task's purpose in Dimension II and III. The task is likely to promote successful learning and/or assessment of the skills and knowledge required in the targeted CCSS.

E/I: Many criteria are checked. The task is aligned to the CCSS and has potential but could benefit from some minor improvements.

R: Some criteria are checked. The task has potential but needs significant revision to be considered effective.

N: The task is not recommended for instruction and/or assessment of the CCSS.

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)

Mathematics, Grades K–12

Assessment Evaluation Tool

Mathematics, Grades K–12

This Math AET is designed to help educators determine whether assessments and sets of assessments are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The substantial instructional Shifts (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/>) at the heart of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics are:

- **Focus** strongly where the Standards focus
- **Coherence**: Think across grades and link to major topics within the grade
- **Rigor**: In major topics, pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity.

The AET draws directly from the following documents:

- Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (www.corestandards.org/Math)
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf), and Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_HS_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf).

When to use the AET

1. Purchasing assessments: Many factors go into local purchasing decisions. Alignment to the Standards is a critical factor to consider. This tool is designed to evaluate alignment of assessments and sets of assessments to the Shifts and the major features of the CCSS. It also provides suggestions of additional indicators to consider in the assessment evaluation and purchasing process.

2. Evaluating assessments in use: The AET can be used to analyze the degree of alignment of existing assessments and sets of assessments and help to highlight specific, concrete flaws in alignment. Even where assessments currently in use fail to meet one or more of these criteria, the pattern of failure is likely to be informative. States and districts can use the evaluation to create a thoughtful plan to modify assessments and sets of assessments in such a way that they better meet the requirements of the Standards.
3. Developing assessments: This tool can be used to provide guidance for and evaluation of alignment for creating locally developed assessments and sets of assessments. States and districts creating new aligned assessments and sets of assessments should use the criteria within the AET to guide the development of test blueprints, item specifications, and item review.

Who Uses the AET

The AET is designed for use by educators and administrators including content specialists, assessment specialists, administrators and educators at the school, district or state level. The AET is designed for use by educators and administrators including content specialists, assessment specialists, administrators and educators at the school, district or state level. Evaluating assessments and sets of assessments requires both subject-matter and technical expertise. Evaluators should be well versed in the Standards (www.corestandards.org/Math) for all grades in which assessments are being evaluated. This includes understanding the Major Work of the grade (www.achievethecore.org/focus) and the widely applicable pre-requisites in high school (www.achievethecore.org/prerequisites), the Supporting and Additional work, how the content fits into the progressions in the Standards (www.achievethecore.org/progressions), and the expectations of the Standards with respect to conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. Evaluators also should be familiar with the substantial instructional Shifts (<http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/>) of Focus, Coherence and Rigor that are listed above.

The IMET was developed by Student Achievement Partners. Educators may use or adapt. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Download this tool at <http://achievethecore.org/AET>

2

Getting Started

Prior to Evaluation

Assemble all of the materials necessary for the evaluation, e.g., test blueprints, item specifications, operational forms, test items, metadata for those items, score reports, etc. It is essential for evaluators to have materials for all grades covered by the assessment program, as some criteria cannot be rated without having access to each grade. In addition, each evaluator should have a reference copy of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013), and the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013).

Sections 1–3 below should be completed to produce a comprehensive picture of the alignment to the Shifts and major features of the CCSSM for the assessments under evaluation. Information about areas in need of improvement should be shared with internal and external stakeholders.

Navigating the Tool

Begin with Section 1: Non-Negotiable Alignment Criteria (p. 4)

- The Non-Negotiable Alignment Criteria must each be met in full for assessments to be considered aligned to the Shifts and the major features of the Common Core State Standards. Each Non-Negotiable Alignment Criterion has one or more metrics associated with it; every one of these metrics must be met in order for the criterion as a whole to be met.

- Examine the relevant assessments and use evidence to rate the materials against each criterion and its associated metric(s).
- Record and explain the evidence upon which the rating is based.

Continue to Section 2: Alignment Criteria (p. 14)

- The Alignment Criteria must each be met for assessments to be considered aligned to the Shifts and major features of the Common Core State Standards. Each Alignment Criterion has one or more metric associated with it; a specific number of these metrics must be met or partially met in order for the criterion as a whole to be met.
- Examine the assessments in relation to these criteria, assigning each metric a point value. Rate the criterion as "Meets" or "Does Not Meet" based on the number of points assigned. The more points the assessments receive on the Alignment Criteria, the better they are aligned.
- Record and explain the evidence upon which the rating is based.

Complete Section 3: Evaluation Summary (p. 34)

- Compile all of the results from Sections 1 and 2 to determine if the assessments are aligned to the Shifts and major features of the CCSS.

Proceed to Section 4: Indicators of Quality (p. 36)

- Indicators of Quality are important considerations that will help evaluators better understand the overall quality of an assessment program. These considerations are not criteria for alignment to the CCSS, but they provide valuable information about additional program characteristics, such as ensuring accessibility for all students. Evaluators may want to add their own indicators to the examples provided.

The IMET was developed by Student Achievement Partners. Educators may use or adapt. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Download this tool at <http://achievethecore.org/AET>

3

Directions for Non-Negotiable 1

Focus on Major Work

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Non-Negotiable 1: The large majority of points in each grade K–8 are devoted to the Major Work of the grade, and the majority of points in each high school course are devoted to widely applicable prerequisites.

Required Materials

- Test blueprints and operational forms
- “Focus by Grade Level” (achievethecore.org/focus) and the widely applicable prerequisites for postsecondary work (achievethecore.org/prerequisites).
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013, pp. 8) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf)
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013, pp. 7) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_HS_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf)
- Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Standards.pdf)

Evidence, then the assessments fail this Non-Negotiable. If the metrics is rated as Meets, then the assessments pass this Non-Negotiable.

If the metric is rated as Meets, provide specific examples of evidence of this. If the assessment Does Not Meet the metric, include evidence of specific gaps found in the materials. If the materials provide Insufficient Evidence, explain what is missing from the materials or what within the materials is unclear.

Rating this Criterion

The metric will be rated as Meets or Does Not Meet/Insufficient Evidence. If the metric is rated as Does Not Meet/Insufficient

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Title of Assessment: _____

4

Non-Negotiable 1

Focus on Major Work

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Metric

NN Metric 1A:

For grades K–8, the assessment or set of assessments for each grade meet or exceed the following percentages:

- 85% or more of the total score points in the assessment(s) for each grade Kindergarten, 1, and 2 align exclusively to the Major Work of the grade.
- 75% or more of the total score points in the assessment(s) for each grade 3, 4, and 5 align exclusively to the Major Work of the grade.
- 65% or more of the total score points in the assessment(s) for each grade 6, 7, and 8 align exclusively to the Major Work of the grade.

For high school, the assessment or set of assessments for each course meet or exceed the following percentage:

50% or more of the total score points in each high school course assessment align to widely applicable prerequisites for postsecondary work.

Procedure for Evaluation

Familiarize yourself with the Major Work of the grade using the “Focus by Grade Level” documents and/or the widely applicable prerequisites using the “Widely Applicable Prerequisites” document.

Evaluate the blueprint or operational form(s) for each grade/course by counting the total number of points aligned to the Major Work of the grade or widely applicable prerequisites and divide by the total number of points on the test.

For context, read Criterion #1 in the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013) and Criterion #1 in the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013).

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet / Insufficient Evidence

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Title of Assessment: _____

5

Non-Negotiable 1

Focus on Major Work

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Non-Negotiable 1: The large majority of points in each grade K–8 are devoted to the Major Work of the grade, and the majority of points in each high school course are devoted to widely applicable prerequisites.

Rating for Non-Negotiable 1

If metrics were rated as Meets, then rate Non-Negotiable 1 as Meets. If one or more metrics were rated as Does Not Meet, then rate Non-Negotiable 1 as Does Not Meet. Check the final rating.

Then, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these materials in light of this Criterion.

Rating

- ☐ Meets
☐ Does Not Meet

Strengths / Weaknesses:

Before moving to Non-Negotiable 2, record the final Meets or Does Not Meet rating in the Evaluation Summary on Page 34.

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

6

Directions for Non-Negotiable 2

Freedom from Major Obstacles to Focus

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Non-Negotiable 2: No item assesses topics directly or indirectly before they are introduced in the CCSSM.

Required Materials

- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013, pp. 9) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf)
- Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Standards.pdf)
- Item specifications and operational forms or a representative sample of at least 20 operational items per grade/course
- “Focus by Grade Level” (achievethecore.org/focus) and the widely applicable prerequisites for postsecondary work (achievethecore.org/prerequisites).

If the metric is rated as Meets, provide specific examples of evidence of this. If the assessment Does Not Meet the metric, include evidence of specific gaps found in the materials. If the materials provide Insufficient Evidence, explain what is missing from the materials or what within the materials is unclear.

Rating this Criterion

The metric will be rated as Meets or Does Not Meet/Insufficient Evidence. If the metric is rated as Does Not Meet/Insufficient Evidence, then the assessments fail this Non-Negotiable. If the metrics is rated as Meets, then the assessments pass this Non-Negotiable.

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7

Non-Negotiable 2

Freedom from Major Obstacles to Focus

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Metric

NN Metric 2A:

100% of items on the assessment(s) assess knowledge of topics when they are introduced in the CCSSM.

Commonly misaligned topics include, but are not limited to:

- Probability, including chance, likely outcomes, probability models. (Introduced in the CCSSM in grade 7)
- Statistical distributions, including center, variation, clumping, outliers, mean, median, mode, range, quartiles; and statistical association or trends, including two-way tables, bivariate measurement data, scatter plots, trend line, line of best fit, correlation. (Introduced in the CCSSM in grades 6–8; see CCSSM for specific expectations by grade level.)
- Similarity, congruence, or geometric transformations. (Introduced in the CCSSM in grade 8)
- Symmetry of shapes, including line/ reflection symmetry, rotational symmetry. (Introduced in the CCSSM in grade 4)

Procedure for Evaluation

Evaluate item specifications to see if content limits specify that the commonly misaligned topics listed in the metric are not assessed in grades prior to the grade introduced in the CCSSM.

Evaluate operational form(s) or a representative sample of at least 20 operational items per grade/course looking for commonly misaligned topics prior to the grade levels introduced by the CCSSM.

For context, read Criterion #2 in the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013).

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet / Insufficient Evidence

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Title of Assessment: _____

8

Non-Negotiable 2

Freedom from Major Obstacles to Focus

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Non-Negotiable 2: No item assesses topics directly or indirectly before they are introduced in the CCSSM.

Rating for Non-Negotiable 2

If the metric was rated as Meets, then rate Non-Negotiable 2 as Meets. If metric was rated as Does Not Meet, then rate Non-Negotiable 2 as Does Not Meet. Check the final rating.

Then, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these materials in light of this Criterion.

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet

Strengths / Weaknesses:

Before moving to Non-Negotiable 3, record the final Meets or Does Not Meet rating in the Evaluation Summary on Page 34.

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Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

9

Directions for Non-Negotiable 3

Test Items Reflect the Coherence of the Standards

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Non-Negotiable 3: Test items elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the targeted Standard(s), reflecting the coherence of the CCSSM.

Required Materials

- Test blueprints and operational forms or a representative sample of at least 20 operational items per grade/course
- Metadata accompanying the items, showing the alignment of each question to the CCSS
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013, pp. 13) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf)
- Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013, pp. 11 and 16) (http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_HS_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf)
- Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (http://corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Standards.pdf)
- "Focus by Grade Level" (achievethecore.org/focus) and the widely applicable prerequisites for postsecondary work (achievethecore.org/prerequisites).

Rating this Criterion

Each metric will be rated as Meets or Does Not Meet/Insufficient Evidence. If any metric is rated as Does Not Meet/Insufficient Evidence, then the assessments fail this Non-Negotiable. If all metrics are rated as Meets, then the assessments pass this Non-Negotiable.

If the metric is rated as Meets, provide specific examples of evidence of this. If the assessment Does Not Meet the metric, include evidence of specific gaps found in the materials. If the materials provide Insufficient Evidence, explain what is missing from the materials or what within the materials is unclear.

Published v.2 2014 – send feedback to info@studentsachieve.net

Reviewer Initials: _____

Title of Assessment: _____

10

Non-Negotiable 3

Test Items Reflect the Coherence of the Standards

Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
Mathematics, Grades K–12

Metric

NN Metric 3A:

Items exhibit alignment to the CCSSM for the grade or course by directly reflecting the language of individual Standards. All, or nearly all, items aligned to a single Standard should assess the central concern of the Standard in question.

Procedure for Evaluation

Evaluate operational form(s) or a representative sample of at least 20 operational items for each grade/course to check the alignment to the Standards for Mathematical Content. NOTE: An example of evaluating this metric might include ensuring that items aligned to 6.EE.A.3 put an emphasis on applying properties of operations and generating equivalent expressions, not just mechanically simplifying.

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet / Insufficient Evidence

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Title of Assessment: _____

11

Non-Negotiable 3

Test Items Reflect the Coherence of the Standards

Metric

NN Metric 3B:

Assessments exhibit alignment to the CCSSM for that grade or course: Operational forms for each grade/course include items that directly assess multiple levels of the content hierarchy (i.e. standard, cluster, and domain).

Procedure for Evaluation

Evaluate blueprints or operational form(s) for each grade/course to see if one or more items assess at the cluster, domain, or grade level.

For context, read Criterion #6 in the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Grades K–8 (Spring 2013) and Criterion #4 in the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, High School (Spring 2013).

Evidence

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet / Insufficient Evidence

Non-Negotiable 3

Test Items Reflect the Coherence of the Standards

Non-Negotiable 3: Test items elicit direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the targeted Standard(s), reflecting the coherence of the CCSSM.

Rating for Non-Negotiable 3

If metrics were rated as Meets, then rate Non-Negotiable 3 as Meets. If one or more metrics were rated as Does Not Meet, then rate Non-Negotiable 3 as Does Not Meet. Check the final rating.

Then, briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of these materials in light of this Criterion.

Rating

- ☐ Meets
- ☐ Does Not Meet

Strengths / Weaknesses:

Before moving to Alignment Criterion 1, record the final Meets or Does Not Meet rating in the Evaluation Summary on Page 34.

Now continue by evaluating Alignment Criterion 1 for Rigor and Balance.

EQulP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science

Version 3.1

Introduction:

The Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQulP) Rubric for science provides criteria by which to measure the alignment and overall quality of lessons and units with respect to the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS). The purposes of the rubric and review process are to: (1) review existing lessons and units to determine what revisions are needed; (2) provide constructive criterion-based feedback and suggestions for improvement to developers; (3) identify exemplars/models for teachers' use within and across states; and (4) to inform the development of new lessons and units.

To effectively apply this rubric, an understanding of the National Research Council's [A Framework for K–12 Science Education](#) and the [Next Generation Science Standards](#), including the NGSS shifts ([Appendix A of the NGSS](#)), is needed. Unlike in the [EQulP Rubrics for mathematics and ELA](#), there is not a category in the science rubric for shifts. Over the course of the rubric development, writers and reviewers noted that the shifts fit naturally into the other three categories. For example, the blending of the three-dimensions, or three-dimensional learning, is addressed in each of the three categories; coherence is addressed in the first two categories; connections to the Common Core State Standards is addressed in the first category; etc. Each category includes criteria by which to evaluate the integration of engineering, when included in a lesson or unit, through practices or disciplinary core ideas. Another difference between the EQulP Rubrics from mathematics and ELA is in the name of the categories; the rubric for science refers to them simply as *categories*, whereas the math and ELA rubrics refer to the categories as *dimensions*. This distinction was made because the Next Generation Science Standards already uses the term *dimensions* to refer to practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts.

The [architecture of the NGSS](#) is significantly different from other sets of standards. The three dimensions, crafted into performance expectations, describe what is to be assessed following instruction and therefore are the measure of proficiency. A lesson or unit may provide opportunities for students to demonstrate performance of practices connected with their understanding of core ideas and crosscutting concepts as foundational pieces. This three-dimensional learning leads toward eventual mastery of performance expectations. In this scenario, quality materials should clearly describe or show how the lesson or unit works coherently with previous and following lessons or units to help build toward eventual mastery of performance expectations. The term *element* is used in the rubric to represent the relevant, bulleted practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts that are articulated in the foundation boxes of the standards and in K–12 grade-banded progressions and the [NGSS Appendices](#). Given the understanding that lessons and units should integrate the practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts in ways that make sense instructionally and not replicate the exact integration in the performance expectations, the new term *elements* is needed to describe these smaller units of the three dimensions. Although it is unlikely that a single lesson would provide adequate opportunities for a student to demonstrate proficiency on an entire performance expectation, high-quality units are more likely to provide these opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on one or more performances expectations.

There is a recognition among educators that curriculum and instruction will need to shift with the adoption of the NGSS, but it is currently difficult to find instructional materials designed for the NGSS. The power of the rubric is in the feedback and suggestions for improvement it provides curriculum developers and the productive conversations in which educators engage while evaluating materials using the quality review process. For curriculum developers, the rubric and review process provide evidence of the quality and the degree to which the lesson or unit is designed for the NGSS. Additionally, the rubric and review process generate suggestions for improvement on how materials can be further improved and better designed to match up with the vision of the *Framework* and the NGSS.

Version 3.1 — published April 2021

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Educators may use or adapt. If modified, please attribute EQulP and re-title.



EQulP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science

Lessons and units designed for the NGSS include clear and compelling evidence of the following:

I. NGSS 3D Design	II. NGSS Instructional Supports	III. Monitoring NGSS Student Progress
<i>The lesson/unit is designed so students make sense of phenomena and/or design solutions to problems by engaging in student performances that integrate the three dimensions of the NGSS.</i> A. Explaining Phenomena/Designing Solutions: Making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to a problem drive student learning. - Student questions and prior experiences related to the phenomenon or problem motivate sense-making and/or problem solving. - The focus of the lesson is to support students in making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to problems. - When engineering is a learning focus, it is integrated with developing disciplinary core ideas from physical, life, and/or earth and space sciences. B. Three Dimensions: Builds understanding of multiple grade-appropriate elements of the science and engineering practices (SEPs), disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), and crosscutting concepts (CCCs) that are deliberately selected to aid student sense-making of phenomena and/or designing of solutions. - Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the SEP(s). - Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the DCI(s). - Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the CCC(s). C. Integrating the Three Dimensions: Student sense-making of phenomena and/or designing of solutions requires student performances that integrate elements of the SEPs, CCCs, and DCIs.	<i>The lesson/unit supports three-dimensional teaching and learning for ALL students by placing the lesson in a sequence of learning for all three dimensions and providing support for teachers to engage all students.</i> A. Relevance and Authenticity: Engages students in authentic and meaningful scenarios that reflect the practice of science and engineering as experienced in the real world. - Students experience phenomena or design problems as directly as possible (firsthand or through media representations). - Includes suggestions for how to connect instruction to the students' home, neighborhood, community and/or culture as appropriate. - Provides opportunities for students to connect their explanation of a phenomenon and/or their design solution to a problem to questions from their own experience. B. Student Ideas: Provides opportunities for students to express, clarify, justify, interpret, and represent their ideas and to respond to peer and teacher feedback orally and/or in written form as appropriate. C. Building Progressions: Identifies and builds on students' prior learning <u>in all three dimensions</u>, including providing the following support to teachers: - Explicitly identifying prior student learning expected for all three dimensions - Clearly explaining how the prior learning will be built upon D. Scientific Accuracy: Uses scientifically accurate and grade-appropriate scientific information, phenomena, and representations to support students' three-dimensional learning. E. Differentiated Instruction: Provides guidance for teachers to support differentiated instruction by including: - Supportive ways to access instruction, including appropriate linguistic, visual, and kinesthetic engagement opportunities that are essential for effective science and engineering learning and particularly beneficial for multilingual learners and students with disabilities. - Extra support (e.g., phenomena, representations, tasks) for students who are struggling to meet the targeted expectations. - Extensions for students with high interest or who have already met the performance expectations to develop deeper understanding of the practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts.	<i>The lesson/unit supports monitoring student progress in all three dimensions of the NGSS as students make sense of phenomena and/or design solutions to problems.</i> A. Monitoring 3D student performances: Elicits direct, observable evidence of three-dimensional learning; students are using practices with core ideas and crosscutting concepts to make sense of phenomena and/or to design solutions. B. Formative: Embeds formative assessment processes throughout that evaluate student learning to inform instruction. C. Scoring guidance: Includes aligned rubrics and scoring guidelines that provide guidance for interpreting student performance along the three dimensions to support teachers in (a) planning instruction and (b) providing ongoing feedback to students. D. Unbiased tasks/items: Assesses student proficiency using methods, vocabulary, representations, and examples that are accessible and unbiased for all students.

EQuIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science

Units designed for the NGSS will also include clear and compelling evidence of the following additional criteria:

I. NGSS 3D Design	II. NGSS Instructional Supports	III. Monitoring NGSS Student Progress
D. Unit Coherence: Lessons fit together to target a set of performance expectations. i. Each lesson builds on prior lessons by addressing questions raised in those lessons, cultivating new questions that build on what students figured out, or cultivating new questions from related phenomena, problems, and prior student experiences. ii. The lessons help students develop toward proficiency in a targeted set of performance expectations. E. Multiple Science Domains: When appropriate, links are made across the science domains of life science, physical science and Earth and space science. i. Disciplinary core ideas from different disciplines are used together to explain phenomena. ii. The usefulness of crosscutting concepts to make sense of phenomena or design solutions to problems across science domains is highlighted. F. Math and ELA: Provides grade-appropriate connection(s) to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and/or English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects.	F. Teacher Support for Unit Coherence: Supports teachers in facilitating coherent student learning experiences over time by: i. Providing strategies for linking student engagement across lessons (e.g. cultivating new student questions at the end of a lesson in a way that leads to future lessons, helping students connect related problems and phenomena across lessons, etc.). ii. Providing strategies for ensuring student sense-making and/or problem-solving is linked to learning in all three dimensions. G. Scaffolded differentiation over time: Provides supports to help students engage in the practices as needed and gradually adjusts supports over time so that students are increasingly responsible for making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to problems.	E. Coherent Assessment system: Includes pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessment measures that assess three-dimensional learning. F. Opportunity to learn: Provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate performance of practices connected with their understanding of disciplinary core ideas and crosscutting concepts and receive feedback.

EQuIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science (Version 3.1)

3

Using the EQuIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science

The first step in the review process is to become familiar with the rubric, the lesson or unit, and the practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts targeted in the lesson or unit. The three categories in the rubric are: NGSS 3D Design, NGSS Instructional Supports, and Monitoring NGSS Student Progress. Each criterion within each category should be considered separately as part of the complete review process and are used to provide sufficient information for determination of overall quality of the lesson or unit.

For the purposes of using the rubric, a **lesson is defined as:** a set of instructional activities and assessments that may extend over several class periods or days; it is more than a single activity. A **unit is defined as:** a set of lessons that extend over a longer period of time. If you are reviewing a lesson, you will use only the first section of the rubric (page 2). If you are reviewing an instructional unit, you apply all of the criteria of the rubric (pages 2 and 3) across the unit. You'll notice that the definition of a "unit" is intentionally broad here. If you are reviewing instructional materials that cover more than a few days of instruction, use the full unit list of criteria.

Also important to the review process is feedback and suggestions for improvement to the developer of the resource. For this purpose, a set of response forms is included so that the reviewer can effectively provide criterion-based feedback and suggestions for improvement for each category. The response forms correspond to the criteria of the rubric. Evidence for each criterion must be identified and documented and criterion-based feedback and suggestions for improvement should be given to help improve the lesson or unit.

While it is possible for the rubric to be applied by an individual, the quality review process works best with a team of reviewers, as a collaborative process, with the individuals recording their thoughts and then discussing with other team members before finalizing their feedback and suggestions for improvement. Discussions should focus on understanding all reviewers' interpretations of the criteria and the evidence they have found. With professional learning support for the group, this process will provide higher quality feedback about the lessons and also calibrate responses across reviewers in a way that moves them toward agreement about quality with respect to the NGSS. Commentary needs to be constructive, with all lessons or units considered "works in progress." Reviewers must be respectful of team members and the resource contributor. Contributors should see the review process as an opportunity to gather feedback and suggestions for improvement rather than to advocate for their work. All feedback and suggestions for improvement should be criterion-based and have supporting evidence from the lesson or unit cited.

In order to apply the rubric with reliability and with fidelity to its intent, it is recommended that those applying the rubric to lessons and units be supported to attend EQuIP professional learning based on the EQuIP Facilitator's Guide. There is guidance within the rubric below and in the Facilitator's Guide, but application of the rubric is much more successful with the support of professional learning. It is difficult to develop proficiency at using the rubric without at least two days of high quality professional learning that engages participants in evaluating lessons and units.

Step 1 – Review Materials

The first step in the review process is to become familiar with the rubric and the lesson or unit that is being evaluated.

- Review the rubric and record the grade and title of the lesson or unit on the response form.
- Scan the lesson/unit to see what it's about; identify what practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts are targeted; and determine how it is organized.
- Read key materials related to instruction, assessment, and teacher guidance.
- Read the definitions of "lesson" and "unit" near the top of this page and decide as a group whether you will be using the shorter list of criteria for a lesson, or the longer list of criteria that apply to a unit.

Step 2 – Apply Criteria in Category I: NGSS 3D Design

Evaluate the lesson or unit using the criteria in the first category, first individually and then as a team.

- Closely examine the lesson or unit through the "lens" of each criterion in the first category.
- For each criterion, record where you find it in the lesson/unit (the evidence) and why/how this evidence is an indicator the criterion is being met (the reasoning)
- As individuals, check the box for each criterion on the response form that indicates the degree to which evidence could be identified.
- Identify and record input on specific improvements that might be made to meet criteria or strengthen alignment.

EQuIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science (Version 3.1)

4

- Look across the criteria of the category (A–C for a lesson and A–F for a unit), evaluate the degree to which they are met, and enter your 0–3 rating for Category I: NGSS 3D Design (see scale description below)
- As a team, discuss criteria for which clear and substantial evidence is found, as well as criterion-based suggestions for specific improvements that might be needed to meet criteria. As a team, enter your 0–3 rating for Dimension I: NGSS 3D Design.

*If the rubric is being used to approve or vet resources and the lesson or unit does not score at least a “2” in **Category I: NGSS 3D Designed**, the review should stop and feedback should be provided to the lesson developer(s) to guide revisions. If the rubric is being used locally for revising and building lessons, professional judgment should guide whether to continue reviewing the lesson. Categories II and III may be time consuming to evaluate if Category I has not been met and the feedback may not be useful if significant revisions are needed in Category I, but evaluating these criteria in a group may support deeper and more common understanding of the criteria in these categories and more complete feedback to the lesson developer (if they are not in the room) so that Categories II and III are more likely to be met with fewer cycles of revision.*

Step 3 – Apply Criteria in Categories II and III: Instructional Supports and Monitoring Student Progress

The third step is to evaluate the lesson or unit using the criteria in the second and third categories, first individually and then as a group.

- Closely examine the lesson or unit through the “lens” of each criterion in the second and third categories of the response form.
- For each criterion, record where you find it in the lesson/unit (the evidence) and why/how this evidence is an indicator the criterion is being met (the reasoning)
- Individually check the box for each criterion on the response form that indicates the degree to which evidence could be identified.
- Record any suggestions for improvement and then rate each category using the 0–3 rating scale in the forms below.

When working in a group, teams may choose to compare ratings after each category or delay conversation until each person has rated and recorded input for both Categories II and III. Complete consensus among team members is not required but discussion is a key component of the review process that moves the group to a better understanding of the criteria.

Step 4 – Apply an Overall Rating and Provide Summary Comments

- Review ratings for Categories I–III, adding/clarifying comments as needed.
- Write summary comments for your overall rating on your recording sheet.
- Total category ratings, reflect on the overall quality of the lesson or unit, and record the overall rating of E, E/I, R, or N.

If working in a group, individuals should record their overall rating prior to conversation.

Step 5 – Compare Overall Ratings and Recommend Next Steps

- Note the evidence cited to arrive at final ratings, summary comments and similarities and differences among raters. Recommend next steps for the lesson/unit and provide recommendations for improvement and/or ratings to developers/teachers.

Rating Scales

Rating for Category I: NGSS 3D Designed is non-negotiable and requires a rating of 2 or 3. If rating is 0 or 1 then a review for resource approval does not continue.

Rating Scale for Categories I, II, & III:

Rating scales are different for each category and can be found after each category in the rubric.

Descriptors for Categories I, II, & III:

- 3: Exemplifies NGSS Quality**—meets the standard described by criteria in the category, as explained in criterion-based observations.
- 2: Approaching NGSS Quality**—meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 1: Developing toward NGSS Quality**—needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 0: Not representing NGSS Quality**—does not address the criteria in the category.

Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

E: Example of high quality NGSS design—High quality design for the NGSS across all three categories of the rubric; a lesson or unit with this rating will still need adjustments for a specific classroom, but the support is there to make this possible; exemplifies most criteria across Categories I, II, & III of the rubric. (total score ~8–9)

E/I: Example of high quality NGSS design if Improved—Adequate design for the NGSS, but would benefit from some improvement in one or more categories; most criteria have at least adequate evidence (total score ~6–7)

R: Revision needed—Partially designed for the NGSS, but needs significant revision in one or more categories (total ~3–5)

N: Not ready to review—Not designed for the NGSS; does not meet criteria (total 0–2)

EQIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science (Version 3.1)

5



EQIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science (Version 3.1)

Reviewer Name or ID: _____ Grade: _____ Lesson/Unit Title: _____

Category I: NGSS 3D Design (lessons and units): *The lesson/unit is designed so students make sense of phenomena and/or design solutions to problems by engaging in student performances that integrate the three dimensions of the NGSS.*

Lesson and Unit Criteria Lessons and units designed for the NGSS include clear and compelling evidence of the following:	Specific evidence from materials (what happened/where did it happen) and reviewer's reasoning (how/why is this evidence)	Evidence of Quality?	Suggestions for improvement
A. Explaining Phenomena/Designing Solutions: Making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to a problem drive student learning. i. Student questions and prior experiences related to the phenomenon or problem motivate sense-making and/or problem solving. ii. The focus of the lesson is to support students in making sense of phenomena and/or designing solutions to problems. iii. When engineering is a learning focus, it is integrated with developing disciplinary core ideas from physical, life, and/or earth and space sciences.		☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive	
B. Three Dimensions: Builds understanding of multiple grade-appropriate elements of the science and engineering practices (SEPs), disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), and crosscutting concepts (CCCs) that are deliberately selected to aid student sense-making of phenomena and/or designing of solutions. i. Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the SEP(s). ii. Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the DCI(s). iii. Provides opportunities to <i>develop and use</i> specific elements of the CCC(s).	Document evidence and reasoning, and evaluate whether or not there is sufficient evidence of quality for each dimension separately - i. - ii. - iii.	Evidence of Quality? ☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive ☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive (All 3 dimensions must be rated at least “adequate” to mark “adequate” overall)	
Evidence needs to be at the <i>element level</i> of the dimensions (see rubric introduction for a description of what is meant by “element”)			

EQIP Rubric for Lessons & Units: Science (Version 3.1)

6

C. Integrating the Three Dimensions: Student sense-making of phenomena and/or designing of solutions requires student performances that integrate elements of the SEPs, CCCs, and DCIs.		☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive	
Rating for Category I. NGSS 3D Design—lessons After carefully weighing the evidence, reasoning, and suggestions for improvement, rate the degree to which there is enough evidence to support a claim that the lesson meets these criteria. <i>If you are evaluating an instructional unit rather than a single lesson, continue on to evaluate criteria D-F and rate Category I overall below.</i>	Lesson Rating scale for Category I (Criteria A–C only): 3: Extensive evidence to meet at least two criteria (and at least adequate evidence for the third) 2: Adequate evidence to meet all three criteria in the category 1: Adequate evidence to meet at least one criterion in the category, but insufficient evidence for at least one other criterion 0: Inadequate (or no) evidence to meet any of the criteria in the category		Circle Rating 0 1 2 3 After rating the lesson, read below for next steps

What's next if the lesson rating is less than a 2?

*If the rubric is being used to approve or vet resources and the lesson or unit does not score at least a "2" in **Category I: NGSS 3D Designed**, the review should stop and feedback should be provided to the lesson developer(s) to guide revisions. If the rubric is being used locally for revising and building lessons, professional judgment should guide whether to continue reviewing the lesson. Categories II and III may be time consuming to evaluate if Category I has not been met and the feedback may not be useful if significant revisions are needed in Category I, but evaluating these criteria in a group may support deeper and more common understanding of the criteria in these categories and more complete feedback to the lesson developer (if they are not in the room) so that Categories II and III are more likely to be met with fewer cycles of revision.*

What's next if the lesson rating is a 2 or 3?

If you are evaluating a lesson that shows sufficient evidence of quality to warrant a rating of either a 2 or a 3 for Category I, proceed to Category II: NGSS Instructional Supports

Category I: NGSS 3D Design (additional criteria for units only):

If you are evaluating a lesson, it is not necessary to evaluate criteria D–F. Please enter your rating for a single lesson above (after C).

Unit Criteria	Specific evidence from materials and reviewers' reasoning	Evidence of Quality?	Suggestions for improvement
A unit or longer lesson designed for the NGSS will also include clear and compelling evidence of the following: D. Unit Coherence: Lessons fit together to target a set of performance expectations. i. Each lesson builds on prior lessons by addressing questions raised in those lessons, cultivating new questions that build on what students figured out, or cultivating new questions from related phenomena, problems, and prior student experiences. ii. The lessons help students develop toward proficiency in a targeted set of performance expectations.		☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive	
E. Multiple Science Domains: <i>When appropriate</i>, links are made across the science domains of life science, physical science and Earth and space science. i. Disciplinary core ideas from different disciplines are used together to explain phenomena. ii. The usefulness of crosscutting concepts to make sense of phenomena or design solutions to problems <i>across science domains</i> is highlighted.		☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive	
F. Math and ELA: Provides grade-appropriate connection(s) to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and/or English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects.		☐ None ☐ Inadequate ☐ Adequate ☐ Extensive	
Rating for Category I. NGSS 3D Designed—units After carefully weighing the evidence, reasoning, and suggestions for improvement, rate the degree to which the criteria are met across the unit.	Unit Rating Scale for Category I (Criteria A–F): 3: At least adequate evidence for all of the unit criteria in the category; extensive evidence for criteria A–C 2: At least some evidence for all unit criteria in Category I (A–F); adequate evidence for criteria A–C 1: Adequate evidence for some criteria in Category I, but inadequate/no evidence for at least one criterion A–C 0: Inadequate (or no) evidence to meet any criteria in Category I (A–F)		Circle Rating 0 1 2 3

*If the rubric is being used to approve or vet resources and the unit does not score at least a "2" overall in **Category I: NGSS 3D Design**, the review should stop here and feedback should be provided to the unit developer(s) to guide revisions. If the rubric is being used locally for revising and building units, professional judgment should be used on whether or not to continue reviewing the unit. For example, a unit that is weak in one aspect of criterion A, but that the reviewers think is easy to fix, might warrant continued review to provide more complete feedback to the unit developer(s).*

Science Task Prescreen

Introduction

The purpose of the Science Task Prescreen is to conduct a quick review of assessment tasks to determine whether they might be designed for standards based on the *Framework for K-12 Science Education*, like the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The Prescreen is intended to reveal whether tasks include “red flags”—i.e., challenges commonly found in science assessment tasks.

Evaluating tasks using the Prescreen questions can help educators decide whether a task is worth diving into more deeply. Those interested in pursuing a more rigorous evaluation of tasks should use the Science Task Screener; however, the Task Screener assumes a deeper understanding of *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* and the NGSS. Those who are familiar with the assessment tasks, but not very familiar with the *Framework* or NGSS, should start with the Prescreen as a bridge to understand the key features of tasks developed for the NGSS and *Framework*. For those less familiar with the *Framework*, it will be particularly helpful to use the Prescreen as part of a collaborative professional learning process, to help build a common understanding of the questions and what constitutes as evidence to address them.

Because the Prescreen is a quick screening tool as opposed to a comprehensive evaluation tool, the questions in the Prescreen focus on features that are non-negotiable, easily identified, and reflect the most serious “fatal flaws” seen in attempts to develop science tasks. While there are indeed many other critically important features of science assessments, they are excluded here for the purposes of screening, and are addressed in the Task Screener. For more information about how the Prescreen was developed and its relationship to the Task Screener, please see these [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Using the Task Prescreen to evaluate science assessment tasks

While it is possible for the Prescreen to be applied by an individual, it is more powerful when used as part of a collaborative review process. These high-level questions can drive very meaningful conversations and help reviewers come to a common understanding of features of NGSS tasks. Reviewers should carefully discuss their answers to the questions and the evidence in the task that led them to those answers to come to a common understanding of language and expectations.

The Prescreen is organized around a short series of yes-or-no questions. In applying the Prescreen to a task, follow these simple steps:

1. Read through the task and complete the task as though you were a student.
2. Read through any additional support materials for the task.
3. Answer the questions in the Prescreen regarding the task and note any red flags.
4. Discuss the answers to the questions and evidence to support those answers with other reviewers.
5. Use your analysis to determine next steps for the task.

Because the Prescreen is applied at the level of the task rather than individual questions, reviewers will need to answer the questions based on evidence from the task as a whole. After reviewing the task using the Prescreen, reviewers should consider the red flags they have identified and determine, based on their needs, whether the assessment:

- A. Warrants further review.** If tasks have few red flags, they might be effective tasks and would benefit from a deeper evaluation. This might be particularly relevant for assessments that are used as major components of a lesson or unit; used across multiple classrooms or schools; or used in other high-impact, higher-stakes scenarios, such as tasks used as part of district- or state-wide assessment efforts. Red flags can be used to determine if the assessment has potential and to focus the major areas of improvement that might be needed.
- B. Should not be used.** Reviewers can use the red flags to determine that, for their current purposes, the task should simply not be used.

Science Task Prescreen

Task Title _____ Grade _____ Date _____

SEP: _____ DCI: _____ CCC: _____

Task Purpose: _____

Before you begin: Complete the task as a student would. Then, consider any support materials provided to teachers or students, such as contextual information about the task and answer keys/rubrics.

Prescreen: Answer the following high-level questions to identify any major red flags (🚩) in your task. If you find one or more red flags, consider the purpose of the task and the evidence gathered to determine whether the task warrants a deeper dive.

Question	Yes	No
1. Is there a phenomenon or problem driving the task?	☐	☐ 🚩
2. Can the majority of the task be answered without using information provided by the task scenario?	☐ 🚩	☐
3. Can significant portions of the task be answered successfully by using rote knowledge (e.g., definitions, prescriptive or memorized procedure)?	☐ 🚩	☐
4. Does the majority of the task require students to use reasoning to successfully complete the task?	☐	☐ 🚩
5. Does the task require students to use some understanding of disciplinary core ideas to successfully complete the task?	☐	☐ 🚩
6. Do students have to use at least one science and engineering practice to successfully complete the task?	☐	☐ 🚩
7. Are the dimensions assessed separately in the majority of the task?	☐ 🚩	☐
8. Is the task coherent and comprehensible from the student perspective?	☐	☐ 🚩

Based on your assessment needs and the task purpose recorded above, make a recommendation about this task moving forward (choose one) :

- ☐ Warrants further review.
- ☐ Should not be used.

Summarize your evidence and reasoning:

CRITERIA FOR PROCURING AND EVALUATING HIGH-QUALITY AND ALIGNED SUMMATIVE SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS

Version 1.0 – March 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

A growing number of states have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring better outcomes for all students by developing, adopting, and implementing rigorous science standards based on the National Research Council's *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*, such as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Fully meeting the vision set forth by the *Framework* and standards designed to implement it requires high-quality and aligned assessments that can provide actionable information to students, teachers, and families. Three-dimensional standards—those that integrate the Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs), Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs), and Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs)—based on the *Framework* are comprehensive, and it is unlikely that most states will assess the full range of depth and breadth in a single summative assessment opportunity for each student. States have several decisions to make regarding how to translate the depth and breadth of their science standards into appropriate statewide summative science assessments. While those decisions will vary from state to state, there *is* a common vision underlying all three-dimensional assessment efforts—and this document describes the criteria that define those common features in a statewide summative assessment.

Achieve developed this document with extensive input from experts and practitioners in the science and assessment fields. It is grounded in our collective and evolving understanding of how best to assess multi-dimensional standards, in the research that defines what all students should know and be able to do in science, and in lessons learned from early state processes in developing three-dimensional assessments. Regardless of each state's approach, this document is intended to be a useful resource for anyone developing and/or evaluating statewide summative assessments aligned to their *Framework*-based three-dimensional science standards.

THE PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE FOR THIS DOCUMENT

This document describes the features of a statewide summative science assessment that has been designed to embody standards based on the *Framework for K-12 Science Education*, such as the NGSS—to reflect its intent, grounded in the specific expectations of three-dimensional standards. Importantly, this document outlines the expectations for high-quality statewide summative science assessments that are designed and administered, in part, to meet federal requirements for science testing under Title I Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act. As such, the criteria and evidence described here are grounded in the expectations outlined in the *Framework* and the NGSS as well as those described by federal peer review guidelines. In other words, while the priority for these criteria is to embody the intent of the NGSS and *Framework*, they are intentionally bounded by what would be needed and feasible to meet federal expectations for statewide summative assessments. They do not describe the expectations for other forms of science assessments that states and districts might use, such as interim or benchmark assessments or classroom-embedded summative and formative assessments. As such, expectations for a complete state system of science assessment is beyond the scope of this document. It is important to note that this is not because specifying the criteria for a full system of assessments is not important, but because this is a common component of the assessment system that all states are grappling with.

This document is intended to support state assessment directors, science supervisors, science assessment leads, test developers, and organizations that conduct independent evaluations of alignment of statewide summative assessments to state standards.

TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

Throughout this document, the term ‘assessment’ is used to refer to the full suite of statewide summative science assessments being developed or selected by a state for a given grade level (inclusive of multiple forms, years of administration, etc.). Some of the evidence descriptors are specific to what an evaluator might examine on an operational test form (the tests that students might see, plus answer keys and associated alignment claims)—these are labeled as ‘test forms’ and are distinguished from ‘documentation’, which include supporting information that relates to the development and interpretation of the entire assessment suite.

The term ‘tasks’ is used instead of the more traditional ‘items’ to better reflect the nature of questions on assessments designed for Framework-based standards. A task includes all scenario/stimuli and prompts associated with a common activity; it can utilize multiple item formats, can have multiple parts, and can require students to respond to open-ended questions. The term ‘prompt’ is used to identify the specific questions associated with a task. Generally, one or more prompts combine to form a task. A ‘scenario’ is the phenomenon or problem-based context used to engage students in the scientific thinking required by the task. A scenario is coherent, engaging, relevant, and provides students with the scientific information (descriptions, data, models, arguments, etc.) they need to successfully respond to the task using the SEPs, CCCs, and DCIs targeted by the task. Throughout the document, ‘targeted standards’ are referenced—these indicate the state standards a task is intended to assess, and includes both complete performance expectations as well as the specific SEPs, CCCs, and DCIs.

This document contains science-specific (e.g., scientific interpretations of the word ‘evidence’) and NGSS-specific (e.g., the use of the word ‘element’ to refer to the specific bulleted ideas described in the *Framework* and the NGSS appendices) uses of words and phrases to convey intentional ideas. A full glossary of specific language uses can be found in [Appendix A](#).

This document is also built on some key principles underlying assessments for which these criteria are appropriate. These principles are detailed in [Appendix B](#).

EQUITY IN SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS

Ensuring that all students, including those from non-dominant groups, have access to a high-quality and rigorous science education that prepares them for college, career, and citizenship is at the heart of the *Framework* and the NGSS. This emphasis on student equity must extend to current efforts in assessments. Because statewide summative assessment data is used to evaluate and act on student science proficiency among student subgroups, it is imperative that *Framework*-based tests intentionally support students from non-dominant communities in demonstrating their scientific knowledge and abilities. It is difficult to make a validity argument for an assessment if students are incorrectly answering questions because of linguistic barriers or language mismatch, poor engagement, cultural insensitivities or bias, or inappropriately signaled scenarios that lead

students to answer the posed questions without using the targeted knowledge and skill. Because other resources provide extensive guidance about general accessibility and accommodations in assessments, this document focuses on the aspects of student equity and diversity that are most closely tied to content on science assessments, including the design of phenomena, problems, and tasks eliciting three-dimensional performances from students. This is embedded throughout the criteria, rather than posed as a separate expectation, to emphasize that a focus on equity cannot be separated from expectations for high-quality and aligned assessments—one cannot have a high-quality assessment that doesn’t support all students. For more detail about how diversity and equity are included in each criterion, please see the FAQs.

II. OVERVIEW OF SCIENCE ALIGNMENT CRITERIA

The criteria for science build on those described for mathematics, English language arts, and testing practice by the [CCSSO Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High Quality Assessments](#) (CCSSO, 2014). Like the CCSSO Criteria for aligned mathematics and ELA assessments, the current document describes the features all science assessments should demonstrate to be considered aligned to *Framework*-based science standards, as well as the kinds of evidence test developers could provide to show how well a given assessment meets the criteria. These criteria and associated evidence descriptors describe the baseline of common features for assessments. As states articulate their goals and intended uses for their science assessment, they may add to the criteria as appropriate. Additionally, the criteria challenge states to envision three-dimensional items, which are accessible by all students and grounded in the vision of the *Framework for K-12 Science Education*.

To demonstrate it is aligned to the NGSS or similar Framework-based standards, statewide summative science assessments must meet the following criteria:

Criterion	Description
1. Design. Assessments are intentionally designed to assess state science standards in order to provide evidence to support, refute, or qualify state-specific claims about students’ achievement in science.	Assessment tasks, and the precise determinations of how well they align to standards, are informed by the design of the assessment, including how tasks individually and collectively provide valid evidence to support an assessment’s claims and reporting priorities, and under what conditions.
2. Three-dimensional performance. Assessments require students to make sense of phenomena and solve problems by integrating the three dimensions. Assessment tasks elicit sense-making and problem solving by focusing strongly on reasoning using scientific and engineering evidence, models, and principles.	Assessments provide evidence of student knowledge and practice described by the targeted standards by requiring students to use the three dimensions (SEPs, CCCs, and DCIs) to identify and interpret evidence and engage in scientific reasoning as they make sense of phenomena and address problems.
3. Phenomena. Assessment scenarios focus on relevant, engaging, and rich phenomena and problems that elicit meaningful student performances. Assessment tasks are driven by meaningful and engaging scenarios.	Assessment tasks are situated in the context of meaningful scenarios, and are designed to elicit grade-appropriate, three-dimensional responses (i.e., responses in which students use multiple dimensions together).

4. Scope. Assessments are balanced across domains, and assess a range of knowledge and application within each dimension.	The summative assessments sample across conceptual understanding of core science ideas and crosscutting concepts, elements of scientific practices, and purposeful application of science as described by <i>Framework</i> -based standards.
5. Cognitive complexity. Assessments require a range of analytical thinking.	The assessments allow for robust information to be gathered for students with varied levels of achievement by providing opportunities that require all students to demonstrate varying levels of reasoning across life, physical, and Earth and space sciences as well as engineering, via SEPs and CCCs that range in grade-appropriate sophistication. Accommodations maintain the range of higher order analytical thinking skills as appropriate.
6. Technical Quality. Assessment tasks are of high technical quality and represent varied task types.	High-quality, fair, and unbiased tasks and a variety of types are strategically used to assess the standard(s). Tasks are designed with a focus on ensuring students from non-dominant communities are supported in demonstrating what they know and can do in science.
7. Reports. Assessments reports yield valuable information on student progress toward three-dimensional learning.	Assessment reports should be designed with specific uses in mind, transparently detail those uses, and illustrate student progress on the continuum toward the goals established by the standards at each grade band. Reports . Reports should focus on connecting the assessment purpose and appropriate uses of the assessment information, and on the integration and application of the knowledge and abilities described by the standards, and how they are addressed by the assessment..

This document does not address every aspect of assessment design that would need to be considered as states develop and evaluate their assessments; rather, it focuses on the features of content alignment (across all three dimensions) to the *Framework* and the NGSS. Many of the other important considerations states will have to contend with (e.g., accessibility) are addressed in the CCSSO Criteria.

The criteria, and evidence needed to meet the criteria, presented in this document represent a few notable shifts from traditional alignment expectations:

- 1) **The importance of an intentional design approach.** Traditional conceptualizations of alignment, that prioritize how well items “hit” targeted standards and “cover” the breadth of standards will not work for the NGSS given the breadth and depth of expectations both within a given standard and across the range of standards for a given grade level or band. To effectively assess the NGSS within common summative testing constraints, states will need to establish their priorities for the assessment. For example, states will need to determine:



Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units

The purpose of this rubric is to measure the alignment and overall quality of lessons and units with respect to the Washington State Social Studies Learning Standards and the Washington ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies Standards. This rubric also evaluates lessons and units for integration with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework. The rubric is divided into four dimensions:

I. Alignment to Standards	Each of these dimensions is rated on a scale of 0 to 3: 0—Does not meet any of the criteria in the dimension 1—Meets some of the criteria in the dimension 2—Meets many of the criteria in the dimension 3—Meets all of the criteria in the dimension
II. Teaching Strategies	
III. Instructional Supports	
IV. Assessment	

This rubric is designed to evaluate:

Lessons that include instructional activities and assessments that may extend over a few class periods or days

Units that include integrated and focused lessons that extend over a longer period of time

The rubric is not designed to evaluate a single task or stand-alone activity.

Intended Use:

Review existing lessons and units to determine what revisions or supplements are needed

Inform the development of new lessons and units

Build the capacity of educators to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials for use in their classrooms and schools.

Reviewed resources may be in either print, digital, or online formats. They may carry different licensing types from open educational resources (OER) to all rights reserved.

Review Process

- Reviews using this rubric are best accomplished collaboratively, with team members providing specific evidence of how a resource meets dimension criteria and discussing the results.
- Look at the criteria in each dimension through the lens of the intended grade band.
- Check a criterion box only if there is clear and substantial evidence of the criterion (there are no “half-checks”). There may be instances when reviewers find clear and substantial evidence of a criterion and there are still constructive suggestions that can be made. In such cases, reviewers may provide feedback related to criteria that have been checked.
- For some resources, certain criteria will not be applicable. As a result, it’s acceptable to give a “3” rating without having all of the criteria checked within a dimension; just support all ratings with specific evidence.

If recommendations for improvement are too significant, then the rating should be less than a “3.” There should be a relationship between the number of checks and the overall rating. There shouldn’t be huge misalignment, but it comes down to professional judgment. Reviewers should stand back and look at the review in its totality.



This rubric is modeled on the EQuIP rubrics derived from the Tri-State Rubric and the collaborative development process led by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island and facilitated by Achieve. This Social Studies adaptation by the [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) is based on versions from Massachusetts, Ohio, Kentucky, and Rhode Island and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution license](#).

1 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Recommendations:

To effectively apply this rubric, an understanding of the [Washington State Social Studies Learning Standards \(GLEs\)](#), the [Washington State ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies Standards \(Common Core State Standards\)](#), and the [C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#) is needed.



Notes

- Materials from other states may need to be adapted to work within Washington learning standards. Prior to any adaptation, make sure edits are permitted under the resource license type.
- Even an exemplary unit may have to be adapted to meet the specific needs of your learners. Teaching is a changing practice; there will always be new and updated resources.

Additional Resources

[Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction - Social Studies](#)
[Washington State Social Studies Laws/Regulations](#)
[Washington Social Studies Teachers Connect](#)
[Washington State Council for the Social Studies](#)
[C3 Resources from the C3 Literacy Collaborative](#)

We express our gratitude to all the educators involved in the adaptation of this rubric. Without their support and expertise in the field of Social Studies, this resource would not be possible. This work was funded through a grant from the [Washington State OER Project](#) and administered by [Educational Service District 105](#).

version 2.3
updated 5/31/2016



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2 of 7

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____



3 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____

II. Teaching Strategies				
<i>The lesson/unit infuses the strategies in the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards.</i>				
☐	Integrates content and skills purposefully: Thoughtfully introduces appropriate and relevant content for students to ground their inquiries and build disciplinary skills and conceptual knowledge.			
☐	Crafts questions that spark and sustain inquiry: Provides deeper-level questions and/or gives students the opportunity to construct compelling and supporting questions to initiate and sustain an inquiry.			
☐	Students work collaboratively: Engages students in disciplinary content to develop, examine, and communicate ideas.			
<i>The lesson/unit promotes literacy practices in the Washington State Learning Standards.</i>				
☐	Credible primary and/or secondary sources: When applicable, resource includes multiple perspectives.			
☐	Grade-level texts: Resource includes readings that match grade band text complexity and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose.			
☐	Text-based evidence: Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing through specific, thought-provoking questions.			
☐	Writing from sources: Routinely expects that students draw and properly cite evidence from texts to inform, explain, or make an argument in a written form (notes, summaries, short responses or formal essays).			
☐	Academic vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.			
☐	Research: Builds and presents knowledge through the process of analysis and synthesis as appropriate.			
<i>A longer lesson or unit should also:</i>				
☐	Increase text complexity: Focuses students on reading a progression of complex texts where the learning is sequenced, scaffolded, and supported to advance students toward independent reading.			
☐	Make reading text closely and examining textual evidence a factor of the instructional focus.			
☐	Build disciplinary knowledge in one or more of the following Washington State social studies strands (civics, economics, geography, history, and social studies skills).			
☐	Provide state, tribal, and other perspectives, when applicable, while presenting or contrasting the unit within a global context.			
☐	Integrate 21st Century skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration).			
☐	Provide tangible opportunities for taking informed action: Students, where curricularly appropriate, have the opportunity to culminate their academic inquiries through civic engagement.			
Summary of Observations and Suggestions for Improvement:				
Rating:	3	2	1	0



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4 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension.
- 2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension.
- 1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension.
- 0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension.



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5 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____

III. Instructional Supports

The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs.

- ☐ Includes a clear and specific purpose for instruction as well as specific guidance to support teaching and learning of targeted standards.
- ☐ Cultivates student interest and engagement in history/social studies.
- ☐ Supports learning of the core ideas, concepts, and practices of the C3 Inquiry Cycle as appropriate.
- ☐ Recommends and facilitates a mix of instructional approaches and best practices for a variety of learners, such as modeling, questioning strategies, checking for understanding, flexible grouping, pair-share, and scaffolding.
- ☐ Elicits students' prior knowledge and addresses common student conceptions/misconceptions.
- ☐ Supports students in making and evaluating evidence-based claims.
- ☐ Uses digital tools and media as appropriate to deepen student learning.
- ☐ Contains text features as appropriate to support student learning.
- ☐ Requires student involvement in and responsibility for their learning.

A longer lesson or unit should also:

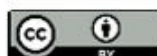
- ☐ Demonstrate effective sequencing where the concepts and skills advance and deepen over time.
- ☐ Provide for various approaches to learning: relevant and transferable skills, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and reflection.
- ☐ Use appropriate scaffolding, supporting student progress towards independent learning (may be more applicable across several units or the year).

Summary of Observations and Suggestions for Improvement:

Rating: 3 2 1 0

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension.
- 2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension.
- 1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension.
- 0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension.



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6 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____

IV. Assessment

The lesson/unit provides sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.

- ☐ Elicits evidence that a student can independently demonstrate that they can meet the targeted Washington State or other standard(s) identified in the lesson/unit.
- ☐ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines for interpreting student performance.
- ☐ Measures progress of fundamental understandings through embedded formative assessments that focus on learning target(s) and/or engage students in self-reflection.

A longer lesson or unit should also:

- ☐ Use varied modes of curriculum-embedded assessments that may include pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessment measures.

Summary of Observations and Suggestions for Improvement:

Rating: 3 2 1 0

Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension.
2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension.
1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension.
0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension.



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7 of 7

Washington Quality Review Rubric for Social Studies Lessons & Units – Version 2.3

Unit Title: _____ Reviewer ID: _____

Total Score:

Overall Rating:

Summary Comments

Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

E: Exemplar - Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions **(total 11-12)**

E/I: Exemplar if Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions **(total 8-10)**.

R: Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions **(total 3 – 7)**

N: Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria **(total 0-2)**

version 2.3
updated 5/31/2016



This rubric is modeled on the EQulP rubrics derived from the Tri-State Rubric and the collaborative development process led by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island and facilitated by Achieve. This Social Studies adaptation by the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is based on versions from Massachusetts, Ohio, Kentucky, and Rhode Island and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution license](#).

8 of 7



CRITERIA for PROCURING and EVALUATING HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

States have demonstrated their leadership and commitment to ensuring the success of all students by adopting college- and career-readiness standards. To realize the potential of these standards, states require assessments that match the depth, breadth, and rigor of the standards; accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness; and provide valid data to inform teaching and learning.

Assessment of College and Career Readiness. States have taken different approaches to establishing college- and career-readiness standards and to putting in place high-quality aligned assessments. Many states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); some have modified the CCSS to meet their state's context and needs; and others have developed standards independent of the CCSS. To provide assessments that are aligned to these standards, many states are working together through assessment consortia, while others are taking alternative paths for transition. This document is grounded in best practices for assessment development and in the research that defines college and career readiness for English Language Arts(ELA)/literacy and mathematics. Thus, regardless of each state's approach, this document is intended to be a useful resource for any state procuring and/or evaluating assessments aligned to their college- and career-readiness standards.

Assessment Criteria for States to Consider. This document provides criteria for states to consider as they develop procurements and evaluate options for high-quality state summative assessments aligned to college- and career-readiness standards. The criteria build on the states' [high-quality summative assessment principles](#) (CCSSO, 2013) which articulate their commitment to high-quality assessments aligned to college and career readiness. To assist states in operationalizing their commitment, this document pays particular attention to not only the criteria states could ask vendors to meet, but also to the evidence states could ask vendors to provide to demonstrate criteria have been – or will be – met. States will, of course, adapt these criteria to reflect their context, standards, and procurement regulations.

Contents of this Document. This document begins with an overview of the assessment criteria and continues with a chart containing detailed criteria and sample evidence. These criteria do not cover every area that a state would have to address in a procurement or evaluation process. Instead, they focus on the critical characteristics that should be met by high-quality assessments aligned to college- and career-readiness standards. A more comprehensive source for the development and validation of assessments is the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, and NCME, 1999). The assessment criteria and evidence discussed herein were developed by referencing the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and several other key sources listed in the bibliography. Additional state-specific criteria at the end of the document highlight a few of the most important additional issues that states may wish to consider in a procurement or evaluation process.

Notes about Evidence and Terminology. This document is intended to support states in selecting assessments that meet a high bar for quality. Thus, the document suggests the evidence that states will need to review in order to make informed judgments on vendors' claims about the quality of their proposed assessments. Of course, vendors may propose assessments that are yet to be developed, assessments in development, and/or existing assessments. In designing procurement or evaluation procedures, states may therefore find it helpful to design the process for awarding "points" so as neither to reward existing (but poor quality) tests just because they have data available, nor to reward well-intentioned conceptual designs that are not executable. To support this goal, vendors should be asked to provide the most rigorous level of evidence they have available, consistent with the stage of assessment development they are in. The types of evidence that vendors should be expected to provide at different stages of development are described below:

- For assessments to be newly created, the most rigorous level of evidence will include the vendor’s descriptions of their established and proven processes; data from similar assessments; proposed test blueprints and other specifications (e.g., test design documents, test specifications, item specifications, scoring specifications); exemplar test items, passages, and forms; proposed studies, reports, and technical documentation to be created during assessment development and operation; and the processes for responding to such data. In addition, the vendor’s prior experience, expertise, and letters of recommendation should be included.
- For assessments that are currently in development, the most rigorous level of evidence will depend on the stage of assessment development. Evidence should include test blueprints and other specifications (e.g., test design documents, test specifications, item specifications, scoring specifications), and exemplar test items, passages, and forms. In addition, evidence should include as much of the data described below regarding pre-existing assessments as is available. Where such evidence is not available, vendors should provide descriptions of their established and proven processes; data from similar assessments, proposed studies, reports, and technical documentation to be created during assessment development and operation; and the process for responding to such data. In addition, the vendor’s prior experience, expertise, and letters of recommendation should be included.
- For pre-existing assessments, the most rigorous level of evidence will include comprehensive validity evidence; test blueprints and other specifications (e.g., test design documents, test specifications, item specifications, scoring specifications); annual technical reports; results of studies on scaling, equating, and reporting; and exemplar test items, passages, and forms.

Additionally, regardless of the stage of test development, states may find it helpful to put in place best practice quality assurance and other processes so that states can monitor quality throughout development and administration, and periodically evaluate evidence to ensure criteria are being met.

Finally, a note about terminology. In this document, the term “assessments” generally refers to the entire suite of summative assessments a state would procure – that is, tests of ELA/literacy and mathematics in each grade assessed. In sections specifically about ELA/literacy or mathematics, however, the term refers to the set of summative assessments in that content area. The terms “assessment” and “test” are often used interchangeably when discussing a single grade level/content area. Throughout the document, the term “tasks” refers to extended-response, open-ended test items; “test items” refers to the stimuli used to elicit a response through, for example, multiple-choice or constructed-response items as well as tasks; and “forms” are systematic collections of test items and tasks that comprise the testing experience for a particular student in a grade/content area.

Overview of Assessment Criteria

A. Meet Overall Assessment Goals and Ensure Technical Quality

- A.1 Indicating progress toward college and career readiness
- A.2 Ensuring that assessments are valid for required and intended purposes
- A.3 Ensuring that assessments are reliable
- A.4 Ensuring that assessments are designed and implemented to yield valid and consistent test score interpretations within and across years
- A.5 Providing accessibility to *all* students, including English learners and students with disabilities
- A.6 Ensuring transparency of test design and expectations
- A.7 Meeting all requirements for data privacy and ownership

B. Align to Standards – English Language Arts/Literacy

- B.1 Assessing student reading and writing achievement in both ELA and literacy
- B.2 Focusing on complexity of texts
- B.3 Requiring students to read closely and use evidence from texts
- B.4 Requiring a range of cognitive demand
- B.5 Assessing writing
- B.6 Emphasizing vocabulary and language skills
- B.7 Assessing research and inquiry
- B.8 Assessing speaking and listening
- B.9 Ensuring high-quality items and a variety of item types

C. Align to Standards – Mathematics

- C.1 Focusing strongly on the content most needed for success in later mathematics
- C.2 Assessing a balance of concepts, procedures, and applications
- C.3 Connecting practice to content
- C.4 Requiring a range of cognitive demand
- C.5 Ensuring high-quality items and a variety of item types

D. Yield Valuable Reports on Student Progress and Performance

- D.1 Focusing on student achievement and progress to readiness
- D.2 Providing timely data that inform instruction

E. Adhere to Best Practices in Test Administration

- E.1 Maintaining necessary standardization and ensuring test security

F. State Specific Criteria (as desired)

Sample criteria might include

- Requiring involvement of the state’s K-12 educators and institutions of higher education
- Procuring a system of aligned assessments, including diagnostic and interim assessments
- Ensuring interoperability of computer-administered items

A. Meet Overall Assessment Goals and Ensure Technical Quality^{*}

Criteria	Evidence
A.1 Indicating progress toward college and career readiness: Scores and performance levels on assessments are mapped to determinations of college and career readiness at the high school level and for other grades to being on track to college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation.	- A description is provided of the process for developing performance level descriptors and setting performance standards (i.e., “cut scores”), including - Appropriate involvement of higher education and career/technical experts in determining the score at which there is a high probability that a student is college and career ready; - External evidence used to inform the setting of performance standards and a rationale for why certain forms of evidence are included and others are not (e.g., student performance on current state assessments, NAEP, TIMSS, PISA, ASVAB, ACT, SAT, results from Smarter Balanced and PARCC, relevant data on post-secondary performance, remediation, and workforce readiness); - Evidence and a rationale that the method(s) for including external benchmarks are valid for the intended purposes; and - Standard setting studies, the resulting performance level descriptors and performance standards, and the specific data on which they are based (when available). - A description is provided of the intended studies that will be conducted to evaluate the validity of performance standards over time.
A.2 Ensuring that assessments are valid for required and intended purposes: Assessments produce data, including student achievement data and student growth data required under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and ESEA Flexibility, that can be used to validly inform the following: - School effectiveness and improvement; - Individual principal and teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation and identification of professional development and support needs; - Individual student gains and performance; and - Other purposes defined by the state.	- A well-articulated validity evaluation based on an interpretive argument (e.g., Kane, 2006) is provided that includes, at a minimum - Evidence of the validity of using results from the assessments for the three primary purposes, as well as any additional purposes required by the state (specify sources of data). - Evidence that scoring and reporting structures are consistent with structures of the state’s standards (specify sources of data). - Evidence that total test and relevant sub-scores are related to external variables as expected (e.g., other measures of the construct). To the extent possible, include evidence that the items are “instructionally sensitive,” that is, that item performance is more related to the quality of instruction than to out-of-school factors such as demographic variables. - Evidence that the assessments lead to the intended outcomes (i.e., meet the intended purposes) and minimize unintended negative consequences. Consequential evidence

^{*} The term “technical quality” here refers to the qualities necessary to ensure that scoring and generalization inferences based on test scores are valid both within and across years. This document prioritizes certain aspects of technical quality, but as noted in the introduction, readers should also refer to other sources, primarily *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*.

Criteria	Evidence
	should flow from a well-articulated theory of action about how the assessments are intended to work and be integrated with the larger accountability system. - The set of content standards against which the assessments are designed is provided. If these standards are the state’s standards, evidence is provided that the content of the assessments reflects the standards, including the cognitive demand of the standards. If they are not the state’s standards, evidence is provided of the extent of alignment with the state’s standards. - Evidence is provided to ensure the content validity of test forms and the usefulness of score reports (e.g., test blueprints demonstrate the learning progressions reflected in the standards, and experts in the content and progression toward readiness are significantly involved in the development process).
A.3 Ensuring that assessments are reliable: Assessments minimize error that may distort interpretations of results, estimate the magnitude of error, and inform users of its magnitude.	- Evidence is provided of the reliability of assessment scores, based on the state’s student population and reported subpopulations (specify sources of data). - Evidence is provided that the scores are reliable for the intended purposes for essentially all students, as indicated by the standard error of measurement across the score continuum (i.e., conditional standard error). - Evidence is provided of the precision of the assessments at cut scores, and consistency of student level classification (specify sources of data). - Evidence is provided of generalizability for all relevant sources, such as variability of groups, internal consistency of item responses, variability among schools, consistency from form to form of the test, and inter-rater consistency in scoring (specify sources of data).
A.4 Ensuring that assessments are designed and implemented to yield valid and consistent test score interpretations within and across years: Assessment forms yield consistent score meanings over time, forms within year, student groups, and delivery mechanisms (e.g., paper, computer, including multiple computer platforms).	- A description is provided of the process used to ensure comparability of assessments and assessment results across groups and time. - Evidence is provided of valid and reliable linking procedures to ensure that the scores derived from the assessments are comparable within year across various test “forms” and across time. - Evidence is provided that the linking design and results are valid for test scores across the achievement continuum.
Score scales used facilitate accurate and meaningful inferences about test performance.	- Evidence is provided that the procedures used to transform raw scores to scale scores is coherent with the test design and the intended claims, including the types of Item Response Theory (IRT) calibration and scaling methods (if used) and other methods for facilitating meaningful score interpretations over tests and time. - Evidence is provided that the assessments are designed and scaled to ensure the primary

Criteria	Evidence
	interpretations of the assessment can be fulfilled. For example, if the assessments are used as data sources for growth or value-added models for accountability purposes, evidence should be provided that the scaling and design features would support such uses, such as ensuring appropriate amounts of measurement information throughout the scale, as appropriate. Evidence is provided, where a vertical or other score scale is used, that the scaling design and procedures lead to valid and reliable score interpretations over the full length of the scale proposed; and evidence is provided that the scale is able to maintain these properties over time (or a description of the proposed procedures is provided).
A.5 Providing accessibility to all students, including English learners and students with disabilities:	
Following the principles of universal design: The assessments are developed in accordance with the principles of universal design and sound testing practice, so that the testing interface, whether paper- or technology-based, does not impede student performance.	- A description is provided of the item development process used to reduce construct irrelevance (e.g., eliminating unnecessary clutter in graphics, reducing construct-irrelevant reading load as much as possible), including - The <i>test item</i> development process to remove potential challenges due to factors such as disability, ethnicity, culture, geographic location, socioeconomic condition, or gender; and <i>Test form</i> development specifications that ensure that assessments are clear and comprehensible for all students. - Evidence is provided, including exemplar tests (paper and pencil forms or screen shots) illustrating principles of universal design.
Offering appropriate accommodations and modifications: Allowable accommodations and modifications that maintain the constructs being assessed are offered where feasible and appropriate, and consider the access needs (e.g., cognitive, processing, sensory, physical, language) of the vast majority of students.	- A description is provided of the accessibility features that will be available, consistent with state policy (e.g., magnification, audio representation of graphic elements, linguistic simplification, text-to-speech, speech-to-text, Braille). - A description is provided of access to translations and definitions, consistent with state policy. - A description is provided of the construct validity of the available accessibility features with a plan that ensures that the scores of students who have accommodations or modifications that do not maintain the construct being assessed are not combined with those of the bulk of students when computing or reporting scores.
Assessments produce valid and reliable scores for English learners.	Evidence is provided that test items and accessibility features permit English learners to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities and do not contain features that unnecessarily prevent them from accessing the content of the item. Evidence should address: presentation, response, setting, and timing and scheduling (specify sources of data).
Assessments produce valid and reliable scores for students with disabilities.	Evidence is provided that test items and accessibility features permit students with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities and do not contain features that

Criteria	Evidence
	unnecessarily prevent them from accessing the content of the item. Evidence should address: presentation, response, setting, and timing and scheduling (specify sources of data).
A.6 Ensuring transparency of test design and expectations: Assessment design documents (e.g., item and test specifications) and sample test questions are made publicly available so that all stakeholders understand the purposes, expectations, and uses of the college- and career-ready assessments.	- Evidence is provided, including test blueprints, showing the range of state standards covered, reporting categories, and percentage of assessment items and score points by reporting category. - Evidence is provided, including a release plan, showing the extent to which a representative sample of items will be released on a regular basis (e.g., annually) across every grade level and content area. - Sample items with annotations and answer rationales are provided. - Scoring rubrics for constructed-response items with sample responses are provided for each level of the rubric. - Item development specifications are provided. - Additional information is provided to the state to demonstrate the overall quality of the assessment design, including - Estimated testing time by grade level and content area; - Number of forms available by grade level and content area; - Plan for what percentage of items will be refreshed and how frequently; - Specifications for the various levels of cognitive demand and how each is to be represented by grade level and content area; and - For ELA/Literacy, data from text complexity analyses.
A.7 Meeting all requirements for data privacy and ownership: All assessments must meet federal and state requirements for student privacy, and all data is owned exclusively by the state.	- An assurance is provided of student privacy protection, reflecting compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and requirements. - An assurance is provided of state ownership of all data, reflecting knowledge of state laws and requirements. - An assurance is provided that the state will receive all underlying data, in a timely and useable fashion, so it can do further analysis as desired, including, for example, achievement, verification, forensic, and security analyses. - A description is provided for how data will be managed securely, including, for example, as data is transferred between vendors and the state.

Criteria	Evidence
B.1 Assessing student reading and writing achievement in both ELA and literacy: The assessments are English language arts and literacy tests that are based on an aligned balance of high-quality literary and informational texts.	- Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar literary and informational passages are provided for each grade level, demonstrating the expectations below are met. - Texts are balanced across literary and informational text types and across genres, with more informational than literary texts used as the assessments move up in the grade bands, as the state's standards require. <i>For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include</i> <i>In grades 3-8, approximately half of the texts are literature and half are informational;</i> <i>In high school, because comprehension of complex informational texts is crucial for readiness, texts are approximately one-third literature and two-thirds informational; and</i> <i>In all grades, informational texts are primarily expository rather than narrative in structure, and in grades 6-12, informational texts are approximately one-third each literary nonfiction, history/social studies, and science/technical.</i> - Texts and other stimuli (e.g., audio, visual, graphic) are previously published or of publishable quality. They are content-rich, exhibit exceptional craft and thought, and/or provide useful information. - History/social studies and science/technical texts, specifically, reflect the quality of writing that is produced by authorities in the particular academic discipline.
B.2 Focusing on complexity of texts: The assessments require appropriate levels of text complexity; they raise the bar for text complexity each year so students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. Multiple forms of authentic, previously published texts are assessed, including written, audio, visual, and graphic, as technology and assessment constraints permit.	- Text complexity measurements, exemplar literary and informational passages for each grade level, and other evidence (e.g., data, tools, procedures) are provided to demonstrate the expectations below are met. - At each grade, reading texts have sufficient complexity, and the average complexity of texts increases grade-by-grade, meeting college- and career-ready levels by the end of high school. - A rationale and evidence are provided for how text complexity is quantitatively and qualitatively measured and used to place each text at the appropriate grade level. <i>For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include</i> <i>Texts are placed in a grade band using at least one research-based quantitative measure;</i> <i>Texts are placed at a grade level using a qualitative analysis measure, reflecting the expert judgment of educators; and</i> <i>Most of the texts are placed within the grade band indicated by the quantitative</i>

Criteria	Evidence
B.3 Requiring students to read closely and use evidence from texts: Reading assessments consist of test questions or tasks, as appropriate, that demand that students read carefully and deeply and use specific evidence from increasingly complex texts to obtain and defend correct responses.	<i>analysis, with exceptions usually found in high school literary texts.</i> - Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items are provided for each grade level, demonstrating the expectations below are met. - All reading questions are text-dependent and - Arise from and require close reading and analysis of text; - Focus on the central ideas and important particulars of the text, rather than on superficial or peripheral concepts; and - Assess the depth and specific requirements delineated in the standards at each grade level (i.e., the concepts, topics, and texts specifically named in the grade-level standards). - Many reading questions require students to directly provide textual evidence in support of their responses. <i>For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include</i> <i>A majority of reading score points is devoted to questions that ask students to directly provide textual evidence in support of their responses (e.g., constructed-response and/or two-part evidence-based selected-response item formats).</i>
B.4 Requiring a range of cognitive demand: The assessments require all students to demonstrate a range of higher-order, analytical thinking skills in reading and writing based on the depth and complexity of college- and career-ready standards, allowing robust information to be gathered for students with varied levels of achievement.	- Test blueprints and other specifications are provided to demonstrate that the distribution of cognitive demand for each grade level and content area is sufficient to assess the depth and complexity of the state's standards, as evidenced by use of a generic taxonomy (e.g., Webb's Depth of Knowledge) or, preferably, classifications specific to the discipline and drawn from the requirements of the standards themselves and item response modes, such as - The complexity of the text on which an item is based; - The range of textual evidence an item requires (how many parts of text[s] students must locate and use to response to the item correctly); - The level of inference required; and - The mode of student response (e.g., selected-response, constructed-response). - A rationale is provided justifying the distribution of cognitive demand for each grade level and content area. - Exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, illustrating each level of cognitive demand, and accompanied by a description of the process used to determine an item's cognitive level.
B.5 Assessing writing: Assessments emphasize writing tasks that require students to engage in close reading and analysis of texts so that students can demonstrate college- and career-ready abilities.	- Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, demonstrating the expectations below are met. - Writing tasks reflect the types of writing that will prepare students for the work required in college and the workplace, balancing expository, persuasive/argument, and narrative writing, as state standards require. At higher grade levels, the balance shifts toward more exposition and argument.

Criteria	Evidence
	For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include ○ Taking all forms of the test together, writing tasks are approximately one-third each exposition, argument, and narrative (some tasks may represent blended structures), with the balance shifting toward more exposition and argument at the higher grade levels. • Tasks (including narrative tasks) require students to confront text or other stimuli directly, to draw on textual evidence, and to support valid inferences from text or stimuli.
B.6 Emphasizing vocabulary and language skills: The assessments require students to demonstrate proficiency in the use of language, including vocabulary and conventions.	• Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, demonstrating the expectations below are met. • Vocabulary items reflect requirements for college and career readiness, including ○ Focusing on general academic (tier 2) words; ○ Asking students to use context to determine meaning; and ○ Assessing words that are important to the central ideas of the text. • Language is assessed within writing assessments as part of the scoring rubric, or it is assessed with test items that specifically address language skills. Language assessments reflect requirements for college and career readiness by ○ Mirroring real-world activities (e.g., actual editing or revision, actual writing); and ○ Focusing on common student errors and those conventions most important for readiness. • Assessments place sufficient emphasis on vocabulary and language skills (i.e., a significant percentage of the score points is devoted to these skills).
B.7 Assessing research and inquiry: The assessments require students to demonstrate research and inquiry skills, demonstrated by the ability to find, process, synthesize, organize, and use information from sources.	• Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, demonstrating the expectations below are met. • Test items assessing research and inquiry mirror real world activities and require students to analyze, synthesize, organize, and use information from sources. For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include ○ Research tasks require writing to sources, including analyzing, selecting, and organizing evidence from more than one source, and often from sources in diverse formats; and ○ When assessment constraints permit, real or simulated research tasks comprise a significant percentage of score points when all forms of the reading and writing test are considered together.
B.8 Assessing speaking and listening: Over time, and as assessment advances allow, the assessments measure the speaking and listening communication skills students need for college and career readiness.	• Over time, and as assessment advances allow, the speaking and listening skills required for college and career readiness are assessed. For example, for common core aligned assessments, test items assessing speaking ○ Assess students' ability to express well-supported ideas clearly and to probe others' ideas; and

Criteria for High-Quality Assessments

Page 10

Criteria	Evidence
	○ Include items that measure students' ability to marshal evidence from research and orally present findings in a performance task. For example, for common core aligned assessments, test items assessing listening ○ Are based on texts and other stimuli that meet the criteria for complexity, range, and quality outlined in criteria B.1 and B.2 above; and ○ Permit the evaluation of active listening skills (e.g., taking notes on main ideas, elaborating on remarks of others).
B.9 Ensuring high-quality items and a variety of item types: High-quality items and a variety of types are strategically used to appropriately assess the standard(s).	• Specifications are provided to demonstrate that the distribution of item types for each grade level and content area is sufficient to strategically assess the depth and complexity of the standards being addressed. Item types may include, for example, selected-response, two-part evidence-based selected-response, short and extended constructed-response, technology-enhanced, and performance tasks. • To support claims of quality, the following are provided: ○ Exemplar items for each item type used in each grade band; ○ Rationales for the use of the specific item types; ○ Specifications showing the proportion of item types on a form; ○ For constructed response and performance tasks, a scoring plan (e.g., machine-scored, hand-scored, by whom, how trained), scoring rubrics, and sample student work to confirm the validity of the scoring process; and ○ A description of the process used for ensuring the technical quality, alignment to standards, and editorial accuracy of the items.

C. Align to Standards – Mathematics

Criteria	Evidence
C.1 Focusing strongly on the content most needed for success in later mathematics: The assessments help educators keep students on track to readiness by focusing strongly on the content most needed in each grade or course for later mathematics.	• Test blueprints and other specifications are provided, demonstrating that the vast majority of score points in each assessment focuses on the content that is most important for students to master in that grade band in order to reach college and career readiness. For each grade band, this content consists of ○ Elementary grades – number and operations; ○ Middle school – ratio, proportional relationships, pre-algebra, and algebra; and ○ High school – prerequisites for careers and a wide range of postsecondary studies, particularly algebra, functions, and modeling applications. For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include ○ In elementary grades, at least three-quarters of the points in each grade align exclusively to the major work of the grade; ○ In middle school grades, at least two-thirds of the points in each grade align exclusively

Criteria for High-Quality Assessments

Page 11

Criteria	Evidence
	to the major work of the grade; and - o In high school, at least half of the points in each course align exclusively to prerequisites for careers and a wide range of postsecondary studies. • The assessment design reflects the state's standards and reflects a coherent progression of mathematics content from grade to grade and course to course.
C.2 Assessing a balance of concepts, procedures, and applications: The assessments measure conceptual understanding, fluency and procedural skill, and application of mathematics, as set out in college- and career-ready standards.	• Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, demonstrating the expectations below are met. • The distribution of score points reflects a balance of mathematical concepts, procedures/fluency, and applications, as the state's standards require. For example, for common core aligned assessments, at least one-quarter of the points come from each of the following categories: - o Conceptual understanding problems in which students to respond to well-designed conceptual problems; - o Procedural skill and fluency problems (e.g., purely procedural problems, some requiring use of efficient algorithms, and others inviting opportunistic strategies); and - o Application problems (e.g., in elementary and middle grades, solving grade-appropriate word problems reflecting growing complexity across the grades; in high school, rich application problems requiring students to demonstrate college and career readiness). • All students, whether high performing or low performing, are required to respond to items within the categories of conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and applications, so they have the opportunity to show what they know and can do.
C.3 Connecting practice to content: The assessments include brief questions and also longer questions that connect the most important mathematical content of the grade or course to mathematical practices, for example, modeling and making mathematical arguments.	• Test blueprints and other specifications as well as exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, demonstrating the expectations below are met. • Assessments for each grade and course meaningfully connect mathematical practices and processes with mathematical content (especially with the most important mathematical content at each grade), as required by the state's standards. • Explanatory materials (citing test blueprints and other specifications) describe the connection for each grade or course between content and mathematical practices and processes. For example, for common core aligned assessments, goals include - o Every test item that assesses mathematical practices is also aligned to one or more content standards (most often within the major work of the grade); and - o Through the grades, test items reflect growing sophistication of mathematical practices with appropriate expectations at each grade level.

Criteria	Evidence
C.4 Requiring a range of cognitive demand: The assessments require all students to demonstrate a range of higher-order, analytical thinking skills in mathematics based on the depth and complexity of college- and career-ready standards, allowing robust information to be gathered for students with varied levels of achievement. Assessments include questions, tasks, and prompts about the basic content of the grade or course as well as questions that reflect the complex challenge of college- and career-ready standards.	• Test blueprints and other specifications are provided to demonstrate that the distribution of cognitive demand for each grade level is sufficient to assess the depth and complexity of the state's standards, as evidenced by use of a generic taxonomy (e.g., Webb's Depth of Knowledge) or, preferably, classifications specific to the discipline and drawn from mathematical factors, such as - o Mathematical topic coverage in the task (single topic vs. two topics vs. three topics vs. four or more topics); - o Nature of reasoning (none, simple, moderate, complex); - o Nature of computation (none, simple numeric, complex numeric or simple symbolic, complex symbolic); - o Nature of application (none, routine word problem, non-routine or less well-posed word problem, fuller coverage of the modeling cycle); and - o Cognitive actions (knowing or remembering, executing, understanding, investigating, or proving). • A rationale is provided justifying the distribution of cognitive demand for each grade level and content area. • Exemplar test items for each grade level are provided, illustrating each level of cognitive demand, and accompanied by a description of the process used to determine an item's cognitive level.
C.5 Ensuring high-quality items and a variety of item types: High-quality items and a variety of item types are strategically used to appropriately assess the standard(s).	• Specifications are provided to demonstrate that the distribution of item types for each grade level and content area is sufficient to strategically assess the depth and complexity of the standards being addressed. Item types may include selected-response, short and extended constructed-response, technology-enhanced, and multi-step problems. • To support claims of quality the following are provided: - o The list and distribution of the types of work students will be asked to produce (e.g., facts, computation, diagrams, models, explanations); - o Exemplar items for each item type used in each grade band; - o Rationales for the use of the specific item types; - o Specifications showing the proportion of item types on a form; - o For constructed response items, a scoring plan (e.g., machine-scored, hand-scored, by whom, how trained), scoring rubrics, and sample student work to confirm the validity of the scoring process; and - o A description of the process used for ensuring the technical quality, alignment to standards, and editorial accuracy of the items.

D. Yield Valuable Reports on Student Progress and Performance

Criteria	Evidence
D.1 Focusing on student achievement and progress to readiness: Score reports illustrate a student's progress on the continuum toward college and career readiness, grade by grade, and course by course. Reports stress the most important content, skills, and processes, and how the assessment focuses on them, to show whether or not students are on track to readiness.	- A list of reports is provided, and for each report, a sample that shows, at a minimum - Scores and sub-scores that will be reported with emphasis on the most important content, skills, and processes for each grade or course; - Explanations of results that are instructionally valuable and easily understood by essentially all audiences; - Results expressed in terms of performance standards (i.e., proficiency "cut scores"), not just scale scores or percentiles; and - Progress on the continuum toward college and career readiness, which can be expressed by whether a student has sufficiently mastered the current grade or course content and is therefore prepared for the next level. (Note: Not all reporting information need be numerical; for example, actual student work on a released item could be presented, along with the rubric for the item and a discussion of common errors.) - The reporting structure can be supported by the assessment design, as demonstrated by evidence, including data confirming that test blueprints include a sufficient number of items for each reporting category, so that scores and sub-scores lead to the intended interpretations and minimize the possibility of misinterpretation.
D.2 Providing timely data that inform instruction: Reports are instructionally valuable, easy to understand by all audiences, and delivered in time to provide useful, actionable data to students, parents, and teachers.	- A timeline and other evidence are provided to show when assessment results will be available for each report. - A description is provided of the process and technology that will be used to issue reports in as timely a manner as possible. - Evidence, including results of user testing, is provided to demonstrate the utility of the reports for each intended audience.

E. Adhere to Best Practices in Test Administration

Criteria	Evidence
E.1 Maintaining necessary standardization and ensuring test security: In order to ensure the validity, fairness, and integrity of state test results, the assessment systems maintain the security of the items and tests as well as the answer documents and related ancillary materials that result from test administrations.	- A comprehensive security plan is provided with auditable policies and procedures for test development, administration, score reporting, data management, and detection of irregularities consistent with NCES and CCSO recommendations for, at a minimum - Training for all personnel – both test developers and administrators; - Secure management of assessments and assessment data, so that no individual gains access to unauthorized information; - Test administration and environment; and - Methods used to detect testing irregularities before, during, and after testing, and steps

Criteria for High-Quality Assessments

Page 14

Criteria	Evidence
	to address them. A description is provided of how security safeguards have been tested and validated for computer-based tests and for paper-and-pencil tests, as relevant.

F. State Specific Criteria (as desired)

It is likely that states will supplement the above criteria with criteria specific to their needs. These might, for example, include

- Requiring involvement of the state's K-12 educators, institutions of higher education, and career/technical experts** in the design, development, and/or scoring of the assessments;
- Procuring a system of aligned assessments, including diagnostic and interim assessments** designed to target and improve instruction as well as measure progress and performance; and
- Ensuring interoperability of computer-administered items** consistent in all ways with the specifications laid out in the *Assessment Interoperability Framework* (2012) developed by the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) project, so that tests and items owned by the state can be easily ported from one technology platform to another.

Criteria for High-Quality Assessments

Page 15

Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction Rubric



The What Works Clearinghouse™ is a federally funded source of scientific evidence for what works in education. The What Works Clearinghouse aims to disseminate findings from rigorous education research to the education community. One mechanism for accomplishing this aim is the production of practice guides. Panels of national content experts, including both researchers and practitioners, create practice guides by systematically reviewing existing research on a topic and making recommendations based on both the best available research and their expertise. The practice guides contain evidence-based recommendations for instructional practices.

The What Works Clearinghouse has produced multiple practice guides on the topic of literacy.¹ The rubric discussed in this document—the Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction Rubric—focuses on two of the four recommendations (recommendations 2 and 3) from the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. The rubric was authored by literacy experts from the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest.²

Recommendations 2 and 3 were selected as the focus for the rubric because they are closely tied to skills in phonological awareness and phonics:

- Recommendation 2: Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.
 - 2.1. Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech.
 - 2.2. Teach students letter–sound relations.
 - 2.3. Use word-building and other activities to link students’ knowledge of letter–sound relationships with phonemic awareness.
- Recommendation 3: Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.
 - 3.1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
 - 3.2. Instruct students in common sound–spelling patterns.

¹ Students in kindergarten through grade 3 require instruction in both foundational reading skills and reading comprehension to be successful readers. To learn more about experts’ recommendations for instructional practices in reading comprehension, see the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. To learn about recommendations pertaining to oral language, academic vocabulary, and reading fluency, see recommendations 1 and 4 in *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*.

² There is no overlap between the authors of this rubric and the authors of the *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade* practice guide.

- 3.3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.
- 3.4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
- 3.5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
- 3.6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

The rubric contains items associated with each part of recommendation 2 (2.1., 2.2., and 2.3.) and recommendation 3 (3.1., 3.2., 3.3., 3.4., 3.5., and 3.6.). School leaders—including principals, assistant principals, and literacy coaches—can use this rubric to measure whether teacher instruction is aligned with these What Works Clearinghouse recommendations and the instructional practices discussed in the practice guide. This document provides information about the purpose and audience for the rubric, the content of the rubric, and instructions for rubric use and scoring.

Why this rubric?

Recommendations 2 and 3 from the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade* are backed by strong evidence. Strong evidence, according to What Works Clearinghouse guidelines, is present when “positive findings are demonstrated in multiple well-designed, well-executed studies, leaving little or no doubt that the positive effects are caused by the recommended practice.”³ To generate these two recommendations, the panel reviewed studies about interventions conducted in English in kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms where 50 percent or more of the students were in general education and native English speakers.

Based on the rigor of the evidence, experts reached consensus that these recommendations should be implemented as part of high-quality instruction in primary grades. Panel members recommend implementation of instructional practices related to recommendation 2 (*Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters*) starting in kindergarten with continued implementation during grade 1 and implementation of instructional practices related to recommendation 3 (*Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words*) starting in mid-kindergarten through the end of grade 3. However, teachers should address all recommendations that are developmentally appropriate for the students in their classrooms based on assessment of their students’ current skill levels.

The purpose of the rubric is to provide a tool for school leaders to support the implementation of these recommendations in their schools. School leaders can support implementation by setting clear expectations and providing instructional coaching on phonological awareness and phonics. The rubric—and the recommended process for its use detailed in this document—will enable school leaders to communicate with teachers about the need to incorporate recommended instructional practices into primary classrooms and then to measure how teachers implement instructional practices in phonological awareness and phonics. After observation, school leaders can meet with teachers to discuss the ratings on the rubric and set goals for improvement. The rubric is designed to scaffold collaboration between school leaders and teachers and is not designed for use in formal teacher performance evaluations or as an accountability metric.

What does this rubric measure?

This section describes what the rubric is designed to measure. The rubric is divided into two sections: one related to recommendation 2 (*Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters*) and one related to recommendation 3 (*Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words*). The school leader may choose to use one or both sections of the rubric with the teacher depending on what practices the leader will observe. Within each section, the rubric includes measures of the extent to which instruction is systematic, explicit, and data-driven.

³ Definitions of evidence levels can be found on page 49 of the practice guide, *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Details about the studies supporting these recommendations are available in appendix D of the same practice guide.

Experts agree that high-quality instruction should be systematic, explicit, and data-driven (Gersten et al., 2008; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Systematic and explicit instruction in phonological awareness and phonics is essential for most students to become successful readers. Students who receive systematic and explicit instruction in phonics in kindergarten and grade 1 progress more in reading than those who do not (Ehri et al., 2001; Foorman et al., 1998). Data-driven instruction allows teachers to be more efficient in serving students because it enables teachers to differentiate instruction to meet students' reading needs (Gersten et al., 2008). Definitions of these key concepts are as follows:

- **Systematic instruction** involves teaching a carefully ordered set of letter–sound correspondences sequentially. The set includes teaching individual letters and corresponding sounds, consonant patterns, vowel patterns, and syllable-construction patterns. The *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade* practice guide includes suggestions on how to order instruction on individual letters and sounds (see pages 18 and 19 of the practice guide) and consonant, vowel, and syllable-construction patterns for systematic phonics instruction (see example 3.3. in the practice guide).
- **Explicit instruction** is just as important for students' success in reading and is especially beneficial for students at risk for reading difficulties (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). In explicit instruction, teachers offer explicit modeling of skills and then guide student practice by offering specific and timely corrective feedback.
- **Data-driven instruction** also is a key element of any effective reading instruction. School leaders and reading teachers can learn more about data-driven instruction by reading the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades* (Gersten et al., 2008). Effective teachers screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning and middle of the school year, and then provide differentiated instruction that is responsive to student needs. In addition, effective teachers regularly monitor the progress of students receiving interventions to determine if students are making adequate progress or if a change in the intensity or focus of the instruction or intervention is needed.

Instructions for rubric use

This section provides instructions for how to use the rubric, including activities to conduct before, during, and after classroom observations. The rubric is designed as a tool to help school leaders and teachers to work collaboratively towards improving instruction in phonological awareness and phonics. Before and after classroom observations, the school leader will meet with the classroom teacher to discuss expectations.

Before the observation

- **Review the Pre-Observation Checklist of Recommended Instructional Strategies** (see appendix A).
- **Become familiar with the rubric** (see appendix B) and the recommendations outlined in the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide.
- **Share the rubric and the Pre-Observation Checklist of Recommended Instructional Strategies** with teachers in advance so that they are familiar with both resources and can ask any questions they have ahead of time.
- **Discuss goals for the observation with the teacher.** During meetings with teachers prior to classroom observations, the school leader will determine which parts of the recommendation the teacher plans to cover in the observed lesson and how. The school leader will place a check next to these activities in the *Pre-Observation Checklist of Recommended Instructional Strategies*. If the teacher employs instructional

strategies associated with only one part of one recommendation (for example, 2.1., 2.2., or 2.3.), then the rating should be based only on items pertaining to that part.

- **Request a copy of the lesson plan** that the teacher will follow to understand which aspects of the recommendations the teacher will cover during the observation.
- **Select a date and time for the observation** and determine which instructional activities will occur during this classroom period.
- **Schedule time to meet with the teacher** after the observation to ask any follow-up questions.
- **Gather materials** needed for the observation, such as the rubric, a clipboard, extra paper, and pens.

During the observation

- **Use the *Pre-Observation Checklist of Recommended Instructional Strategies* (see appendix A)** completed in advance of the observation to monitor implementation of instructional activities. Note and describe any additional activities that may not be included in the checklist.
- **Focus on observing and taking notes.** The notes will serve as evidence to inform the rubric scoring process after the observation is completed. Notes may include details about the instructional practices that teachers are using and how students respond to this instruction.

After the observation

- **Review the gathered evidence** and generate follow-up questions for the teacher.
- **Meet with the teacher to ask follow-up questions.** School leaders may need to ask follow-up questions to assign ratings for all items. Follow-up questions could elicit additional information that is hard to collect during observations alone. For example, school leaders may ask the following questions:
 - How did you provide feedback to students during guided practice?
 - How did you know if students understood the targeted skill?
 - Can you tell me some of the ways, in general, that you help students who struggle to develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters?

School leaders can use teacher responses to these questions to inform their ratings. If relevant, the teacher might choose to bring artifacts of student work or artifacts from lesson planning.

- **Consider all evidence and assign a score for each row** on the rubric using the following 5-point implementation scale:
 - 5 = The criterion was completely met.
 - 4 = The criterion was substantially met.
 - 3 = The criterion was adequately met.
 - 2 = The criterion was partially met.
 - 1 = The criterion was not met.
- **Complete the scoring for the rubric.** If the teacher only used instructional activities pertaining to one of the recommendations, sum the scores for the 10 rows pertaining to that recommendation and divide by 10. If the teacher used instructional activities pertaining to both recommendations, sum the scores for all 20 rows and divide by 20.

- **Discuss the rating with the teacher.** Talk to the teacher about the observations and decision points that determine ratings. Consider asking the teacher to rate himself or herself using the rubric to ensure the teacher is understanding the goals of using this rubric. Use the discussion to revise the rating on the rubric if needed.
- **Set goals for improvement in practice.** School leaders can set goals through a collaborative conversation with teachers. To start this conversation, school leaders may ask the following types of questions:
 - What are some ways that you could improve your instructional practice in phonological awareness and phonics?
 - How can I support you in improving your instructional practice in phonological awareness and phonics? How can others in our school or district support you in reaching these goals?
- **Use the rubric again to measure whether goals have been met.** To foster professional growth over time, school leaders may decide to collect multiple measures across activities that are intended to address the same recommendation. In this scenario, school leaders may decide to complete the rubric independently or collaboratively the first time, share feedback with the teacher, and complete a second observation to assess whether the feedback has informed changes to the teacher’s instructional practice.

References

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Appendix A. Pre-observation checklist of recommended instructional strategies

Directions for school leaders using this pre-observation checklist: *Meet with the teacher in advance of the observation to share the rubric and set expectations for what you will observe. Place a check mark next to the instructional activities you will have the opportunity to observe.*

Recommendation 2. Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.

2.1 Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech.

☐	Teach students how sentences can be broken into words and that some words can be broken into smaller words orally. Have students practice identifying unique words in sentences or compound words (see example 2.1. in the practice guide for an example exercise).
☐	Teach students how words can be broken into syllables. - Have students practice identifying and manipulating syllables within familiar words by placing their hands on their chin and paying attention to the number of times their chin moves down as they say words slowly. - Have students hold up a finger for each syllable as they say a word. - Have students blend syllables articulated by the teacher into a word.
☐	Teach students how to recognize smaller units within a syllable called onsets (initial consonant, consonant blend, or diagraph in a syllable) and rimes (vowel and the remaining phonemes in that syllable). Have students segment familiar one-syllable words into their onsets and rimes and manipulate the onsets and rimes to make new words (see example 2.2. in the practice guide for example exercises).
☐	Teach students how to isolate and segment words into their smallest units of sound (individual phonemes) . At first, have students practice isolating and manipulating individual phonemes using two- or three-phoneme words (for example, <i>dig, sun, at</i>). Then, have students practice with more advanced words (for example, <i>splash, brick, party</i>). - Students can practice this skill using Elkonin sound boxes (see example 2.3 in the practice guide for an example exercise). Students can use colored discs or letter tiles to mark the unique sounds they hear in words using the Elkonin sound boxes. - Students also can sort pictures based on the beginning, middle, or ending sounds of words that the picture represents.

2.2. Teach students letter-sound relations.

☐	Teach students consonants and short vowel sounds represented by single letters first. Teach students the letters and their corresponding sounds. For example, the first group of phonemes could be /s/, /m/, /d/, /p/, /a/. - For each phoneme, begin by naming the letter and then introduce the letters in uppercase and lowercase. - Show a memorable picture of a familiar word containing the phoneme (for example, <i>pig</i>). For each picture, incorporate the corresponding sound of the letter so that students remember the character and sound when they see the letter in print (see example 2.4. in the practice guide). - Say the sound that the phoneme makes and have students repeat it. - Review the phoneme and have students practice writing the phoneme in meaningful contexts, such as their names or familiar words.
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Directions for school leaders using this pre-observation checklist: *Meet with the teacher in advance of the observation to share the rubric and set expectations for what you will observe. Place a check mark next to the instructional activities you will have the opportunity to observe.*

☐	Teach consonant blends (for example, <i>fl, sm, st</i>) and common two-letter consonant digraphs (for example, <i>sh, th, ch</i>). Each sound in the consonant blend can be taught, and then the teacher can model how to blend the sounds together. The digraph makes a single sound and must be taught as a unit. • For each phoneme, begin by naming the letters and introduce the letters in uppercase and lowercase. • Show a memorable picture of a familiar word containing the phoneme (for example, <i>flag</i> or <i>chip</i>). For each picture, incorporate the corresponding sound of the letters so that students remember the character and sound when they see the letter in print. • Say the sound that the phoneme makes and have students repeat it. • Review the phoneme and have students practice writing the phoneme in meaningful contexts, such as their names or familiar words.
☐	Teach long vowels with the silent <i>e</i> (for example, <i>cane, lake</i>). • For each phoneme, begin by naming the letters and introduce the letters in uppercase and lowercase. • Show a memorable picture of a familiar word containing the phoneme (for example, <i>bike</i>). For each picture, incorporate the corresponding sound of the letters so that students remember the character and sound when they see the letters in print. • Say the sound that the phoneme makes and have students repeat it. • Review the phoneme and have students practice writing the phoneme in meaningful contexts, such as their names or familiar words.
☐	Teach two-letter vowel teams (vowel digraphs; for example, <i>ea</i> and <i>ou</i>). • For each phoneme, begin by naming the letter and introduce the letters in uppercase and lowercase. • Show a memorable picture of a familiar word containing the phoneme (for example, <i>team</i>). For each picture, incorporate the corresponding sound of the letters so that students remember the character and sound when they see the letters in print. • Say the sound that the phoneme makes and have students repeat it. • Review the phoneme and have students practice writing the phoneme in meaningful contexts, such as their names or familiar words.
2.3. Use word-building and other activities to link students' knowledge of letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness.	
☐	Teach students how CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words are composed and how each letter or phoneme in a word contributes to its spelling and pronunciation. • Provide students with a set of letter tiles or magnetic letters and have them add or remove letters to create words or to change one word into a different word (see example 2.5. in the practice guide).
☐	Teach students about the composition of more advanced words using advanced phonemic patterns, such as CVC words with a silent <i>e</i> or with two consonants for the initial or final sounds. • Provide students with a set of letter tiles or magnetic letters and have them add or remove letters to create words or to change one word into a different word (see example 2.5. in the practice guide).

Directions for school leaders using this pre-observation checklist: *Meet with the teacher in advance of the observation to share the rubric and set expectations for what you will observe. Place a check mark next to the instructional activities you will have the opportunity to observe.*

Recommendation 3. Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

3.1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce recognizable pronunciation.

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| ☐ | <p>Teach students how to blend simple CVC words (see exercise 3.1. in the practice guide) by using chunking (reading the sounds from left to right but adding each sound to the previous sound before going on to the next sound in the word) or sounding out the word (saying each letter or letter combination one by one until the end of the word and then saying them all together again quickly).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students use a pocket chart or an Elkonin sound box with letter tiles to manipulate letters as they make sounds (see examples 3.1. and 3.2. in the practice guide). |
| ☐ | <p>Teach students to blend more advanced words (for example, words that have consonant blends) using chunking or sounding out, as described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students use a pocket chart or an Elkonin sound box with letter tiles to manipulate letters as they make sounds (see examples 3.1. and 3.2. in the practice guide). |

3.2. Instruct students in common sound–spelling patterns.

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| | <p>Teach students how letters are often combined to form unique sounds that appear in multiple words.</p> |
| ☐ | <p>Teacher can teach spelling patterns by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving students words cards with and without the target pattern and asking them to sort cards into groups or sort them on a word wall in the classroom. Asking students to think of words that use a given spelling pattern and pronunciation. If these words are at the students' reading level, teachers can ask students to try writing them. Using Elkonin sound boxes to build words with specific sound–spelling patterns (see example 3.4.). |
| ☐ | <p>Offer instruction on the following consonant patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consonant digraphs (for example, <i>th, sh, ch, ph, ng</i>) and trigraphs (for example, <i>tch, dge</i>), which are multi-letter combinations that stand for one phoneme). Blends, which are two or more consecutive consonants that retain their individual sounds (for example, <i>scr, st, cl</i>). Silent-letter combinations, which are two letters, with one representing the phoneme and the other not pronounced (for example, <i>kn, wr, gn, rh, mb</i>). |
| ☐ | <p>Offer instruction on the following vowel patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vowel teams, which are a combination of two, three, or four letters standing for a single vowel sound (for example, <i>ee, oo, ao, igh, eigh</i>). Vowel diphthongs, which are complex speech sounds or glides that begin with one vowel and gradually change to another vowel within the same syllable (for example, <i>oi, ou</i>). R-controlled vowels or bossy r's, which are vowels making a unique sound when followed by an <i>r</i> (for example, <i>ar, er, ir, or, ur</i>). Long e (for example, <i>ee, ie, ea, e_e, ey, ei, y, ea</i>). Long a (for example, <i>a_e, ai, ay, a_y, ei, ea, ey</i>). |

Directions for school leaders using this pre-observation checklist: *Meet with the teacher in advance of the observation to share the rubric and set expectations for what you will observe. Place a check mark next to the instructional activities you will have the opportunity to observe.*

☐	Offer instruction on the following syllable-construction patterns: • Closed syllables have a short vowel spelled with a single vowel letter and ending in one or more consonants (for example, <i>in-sect</i>, <i>stu-dent</i>). • The VCe pattern has a long vowel spelled with one vowel + one consonant + silent <i>e</i> (for example, <i>com-pete</i>, <i>base-ball</i>). • Open syllables end with a long vowel sound and are spelled with a single vowel letter (for example, <i>pro-gram</i>, <i>tor-na-do</i>). • Vowel team, or multiple letters spelling the vowel (for example, <i>train-er</i>, <i>neigh-bor-hood</i>). • Vowel-<i>r</i> words have a vowel pronunciation that changes before /r/ (for example, <i>char-ter</i>, <i>cir-cus</i>). • Consonant-<i>le</i> words have an unaccented final syllable containing a consonant before <i>l</i> followed by a silent <i>e</i> (for example, <i>drib-ble</i>, <i>puz-zle</i>).
3.3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.	
☐	Teach students about suffixes (for example, <i>-s</i>, <i>-ed</i>, <i>-ing</i>, <i>-est</i>) and prefixes (for example, <i>dis-</i>, <i>mis-</i>, <i>pre-</i>), and how to combine them with basic roots (for example, <i>aqua</i>, <i>cent</i>, <i>uni</i>) to form words. • Have students practice new word parts by writing words or manipulating parts of words to create new words and then reading the words aloud. • Have students practice building and modifying words by adding suffixes to words using Elkonin sound boxes (see example 3.5. in the practice guide). • Help students decode more complex words by teaching a word-analysis strategy: identify the word parts and vowels of the target word, say the different parts of the word, and repeat the full sentence in which the word appears (see example 3.6. in the practice guide).
☐	Teach students about contractions (for example, <i>aren't</i>, <i>it's</i>). • Have students practice new word parts by writing words or manipulating parts of words to create new words and then reading the words aloud. • Help students decode more complex words by teaching a word-analysis strategy: identify the word parts and vowels of the target word, say the different parts of the word, and repeat the full sentence in which the word appears (see example 3.6. in the practice guide).
3.4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.	
☐	Give each student a copy of a word list for the letter combination being taught. Ask students to underline the letter combination in each word in the word list (see example 3.7. in the practice guide).
☐	Give each student a connected text passage for the letter combination being taught. Ask students to underline the letter combination in each word in the connected text passage (see example 3.7. in the practice guide).
☐	Write or display the words and passage on a board for the whole group to read together.

Directions for school leaders using this pre-observation checklist: *Meet with the teacher in advance of the observation to share the rubric and set expectations for what you will observe. Place a check mark next to the instructional activities you will have the opportunity to observe.*

3.5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

- ☐ Teach irregular words (words that have exceptions to the typical sound–spelling patterns and are not easy for early readers to decode) as whole words rather than as a combination of sound units. Have students practice reading the words frequently until they learn to recognize them quickly.
- Use flashcards to directly teach any new words. Show students a word and pronounce it. Have students repeat the word, spell the word, and say the whole word again. Then mix up the cards and provide practice so that students learn to recognize the words quickly.
 - Select a small number of high-frequency words that students have just encountered in a text. Read a word aloud and then ask students to point to the word in the text, spell the word, and repeat the word aloud.
 - Create a word wall of high-frequency words in the classroom. Have students read the word wall with a partner. Refer to the wall often and ask students to point out a word on the wall when they come across it.
 - Present students with a list of new high-frequency words to learn. Teach each word. Then ask students to write the words on large cards or construction paper, with different students writing different words. Have them add the words to the word wall in the classroom.
 - Write the words on flashcards and have students practice them in small groups, as in example 3.9. in the practice guide.
 - Have students practice their high-frequency words outside of their regular literacy instruction, as in example 3.10. in the practice guide.

- ☐ Teach regular words by having students apply their letter–sound skills—for example, using Elkonin sound boxes—to identify the word initially. Have students practice reading the words frequently until they learn to recognize them quickly.
- Use flashcards to directly teach any new words. Show students a word and pronounce it. Have students repeat the word, spell the word, and say the whole word again. Then mix up the cards and provide practice so that students learn to recognize the words quickly.
 - Select a small number of high-frequency words that students have just encountered in a text. Read a word aloud and then ask students to point to the word in the text, spell the word, and repeat the word aloud.
 - Create a word wall of high-frequency words in the classroom. Have students read the word wall with a partner. Refer to the wall often and ask students to point out a word on the wall when they come across it.
 - Present students with a list of new high-frequency words to learn. Teach each word. Then ask students to write the words on large cards or construction paper, with different students writing different words. Have them add the words to the word wall in the classroom.
 - Write the words on flashcards and have students practice them in small groups, as in example 3.9 in the practice guide.
 - Have students practice their high-frequency words outside of their regular literacy instruction, as in example 3.10. in the practice guide.

3.6. Introduce nondecodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

- ☐ Before introducing a new text, identify any **nondecodable words** (words composed of irregular sound–spelling patterns or sound–spelling patterns that students have not yet learned) that are repeated often within the text, that are meaningful, and that students will encounter in future texts or settings. Introduce these nondecodable words to students before reading the new text, including their spelling and meaning.

Appendix B. Phonological awareness and phonics instruction rubric

Directions: In each row record findings based on the extent to which the criterion is met using the 1–5 rating scale. Sources of information for filling out the rubric may include, but are not limited to, conversations with the teacher, artifacts (for example, lesson plans or student work), and observation of instruction.

The criterion was ...										
1 not met		2 partially met		3 adequately met		4 substantially met		5 completely met		
Recommendation 2. Develop awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.										
Systematic	Row 1: Teacher can articulate how instruction fits into a carefully defined, ordered sequence of letter–sound relationships rooted in a scope and sequence.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 2: Instruction builds upon mastery of earlier skills.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 3: Teacher uses the recommended sequence of instructional activities from the practice guide while teaching the targeted skill or skills (see appendix A).					1	2	3	4	5
Explicit	Row 4: Teacher models skills through a demonstration or think-aloud.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 5: Teacher provides clear and specific directions for student practice of the targeted skill or skills.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 6: Teacher explicitly states the rules or patterns related to segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 7: As needed, teacher offers timely corrective feedback during students’ practice.					1	2	3	4	5
Data-driven	Row 8: Instruction is responsive to students’ skill levels shown in recent data.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 9: Teacher uses at least one type of formative assessment to gauge student understanding of the targeted skill or skills.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 10: Teacher can articulate a plan for using data to identify students who need additional support or an intervention related to developing awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.					1	2	3	4	5
Recommendation 3. Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.										
Systematic	Row 11: Teacher can articulate how instruction fits into a carefully defined, ordered sequence of letter–sound relationships and spelling patterns rooted in a scope and sequence.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 12: Instruction builds upon mastery of earlier skills.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 13: Teacher uses the recommended sequence of instructional activities from the practice guide while teaching the targeted skill or skills (see appendix A).					1	2	3	4	5
Explicit	Row 14: Teacher models skills through a demonstration or think-aloud.					1	2	3	4	5
	Row 15: Teacher provides clear and specific directions for student practice of the targeted skill or skills.					1	2	3	4	5

	Row 16: Teacher explicitly states the rules or patterns related to decoding, analyzing word parts, and writing and recognizing words.	1	2	3	4	5
	Row 17: As needed, teacher offers timely corrective feedback during students' practice.	1	2	3	4	5
Data-driven	Row 18: Instruction is responsive to students' skill levels shown in recent data.	1	2	3	4	5
	Row 19: Teacher uses at least one type of formative assessment to gauge student understanding of the targeted skill or skills.	1	2	3	4	5
	Row 20: Teacher can articulate a plan for using data to identify students who need additional support or an intervention related to developing awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters.	1	2	3	4	5
Scoring directions: All rows should be completed within recommendations 2 and 3. Add up the total score across rows 1–10 and divide by 10 to produce a subscore corresponding with recommendation 2. Add up the total score across rows 11–20 and divide by 10 produce a subscore corresponding with recommendation 3. Add up rows 1–20 and divide by 20 to produce an overall score related to both recommendations.						
Score for recommendation 2:						
Score for recommendation 3:						
Overall score for recommendations 2 and 3:						