ELA/Literacy Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool

03.ELA.2

WCSD 2018

Quality Review
GRADE 4

Washoe County School District
Every Child by Name and Face to Graduation.

Council of the Great City Schools

COMPONENT 1: TEXT COMPLEXITY

The guiding statements provided in this section will examine text complexity in order to differentiate quality and richness among the texts WCSD is considering for adoption. To address the grade four standards, the submitted materials need to create the conditions for rich and robust discussion and writing for ALL students (struggling readers, students with identified academic disabilities, English Learners, students who are performing at grade level, and advanced students).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
Literature and Informational Text C1a. The texts present rich and embedded relationships between and among characters, ideas, and concepts that are conveyed through masterful style and structure. (See exemplars in CCSS, Appendix B.)	They are seen, but the NF texts lack complexity compared to F	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ◉ 2) some ○ 1) weak
C1b. As well as, texts that contain rich content, ideas and academic language worthy of close reading.	F texts are more rich than NF	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ◉ 2) some ○ 1) weak

C1c. The materials consistently provide opportunities to read both literary and informational texts in the grades three through five text complexity band with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	Yes, the curriculum provides students with multiple opportunities in each genre, but the NF reads are not engaging for grade 4 students.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
C1d. Materials provide strategies for grade-level vocabulary acquisition.	Yes, but many of the texts do not support fourth grade students in meeting the demands of the standards.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
Overall, Journey's provides several complex texts for students in both F and NF genres. The F reads were prior published works before the curriculum, but the NF reads were written for the curriculum and were not published works prior. Therefore, although the NF reads are complex they do not engage fourth grade students as much as the F reads that were published prior. In addition, the text complexity does not support fourth grade students in meeting the demands of their standards. Some are too unfamiliar and do not provide supports for students.

COMPONENT 2: QUESTIONS AND TASKS

At least 80% of all questions in the submission are high-quality text-dependent and text-specific questions. The overwhelming majority of these questions reference specific text and draw student attention to the text they are reading. Text-dependent questions that address the grade four standards will be described in greater depth in Alignment Criterion II.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION I: RANGE AND QUALITY OF TEXTS

Materials must reflect a wide range of text types and genres, as required by the standards. In grade four, and across all other grade levels, there should be ample texts on topics that can support sustained study. Knowledge built at one grade level should be expanded in other grade levels. Topics should take into account individual student academic needs and interests in order to foster independent reading. It is also imperative that the included topics and themes are compelling enough to read multiple times and are aligned to district needs. Pay particular attention to the guidance provided in Appendix B of the Common Core State Standards.

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
Literature and Informational Text 1a. The range of materials, both print and digital, allows teachers and students to explore content that coherently and systematically builds knowledge and grade-level vocabulary across subjects, themes, and topics. (See CCSS Appendix B for examples of grade-level knowledge demands.) Text sets also address a wide variety of student interest, and are likely to foster independent reading.	There are several texts that fall within the grade 4 grade band, but there are many that also fall outside of the grade band range.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
1b. Text sets include a diverse range of high quality, culturally-responsive and appropriate topics and themes. Texts from diverse cultures reflect the same high-quality features that are demanded of all texts.	Many of the text sets fall outside of the grade level range making it too easy to read or too challenging depending on the text.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
1c. Materials include a rich and diverse sampling of literary texts including, but not limited to: • Stories, drama, prose, and poetry • Stories, myths, and traditional literature from diverse cultures	Yes.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
1d. The range of informational texts includes elections that: • Present historical events • Describe technical procedures • Present scientific ideas or concepts • Contain at least two texts on the same topic • Present first and secondhand accounts of the same event or topic • Contain relevant visual representations of information	Yes. There is a variety, but doesn't always meet in the grade level band range.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
1e. Student reading materials contain a range of increasingly challenging selections that allow teachers to build students' ability to comprehend complex text and expand vocabulary throughout the school year.	The process of reading complex texts does not change even when the complexity of a text becomes more challenging. Students are introduced to several complex texts, but go through the same process of analyzing instead of building their skills as the texts become more complex throughout the year.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
The curriculum provides a range of NF and F complex texts, but many of the texts provided do not fall within the grade level band range. Students also are not given new skills or strategies to analyze a complex text as the complexity of the text increases.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION II. QUESTIONS AND TASKS SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

Questions posed to students in the materials under review should support student learning in building reading comprehension, in finding and producing the textual evidence to support responses, and in developing grade-level academic language and domain-specific words and phrases. Text for grade four students must include text-dependent questions that require the use of higher order thinking skills. There should be a range of questions that require students to attend to the author's language as his/her vehicle for conveying meaning, as well as to support specific inferences with explicit details from the text. Most questions should require that the student refer to the text in several places in order to devise an answer—rather than asking only literal, "right there" types of questions—and should require the student to begin comparing texts, authors, and opinions (CCSS).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
Literature and Informational Text 2a. *Key Ideas and Details.* Questions and tasks require students to explicitly attend to the text, including, but not limited to: • Referring to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says and when making inferences • Summarizing text • Determining the theme of a story or main idea of a text from key details • Describing characters, settings, or events in depth • Explaining events, procedures, ideas, or concepts covered in historical, scientific, or technical reading selections, including what happened and why	Seldom use of having students come up with their own perspectives and conclusions throughout questioning.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
2b. *Craft and Structure*. Questions and tasks require students to explicitly attend to the text, including, but not limited to: • Determining the meaning of words and phrases as used in the text, including general academic and domain-specific words as well as those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (such as *Herculean*) • Explaining the differences between drama, prose, and poetry • Describing the overall structure of a text or structural elements of poems and drama • Comparing and contrasting the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including first- and second-hand accounts of the same event or topic, or first- and third-person narrations of a story	Some tasks can be completed without students referring back to the text.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
2c. *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.* Questions and tasks require students to explicitly attend to the text, including, but not limited to: • Explaining how an author uses reasons and evidence to support points • Making connections between the text of a story or a drama and prose • Interpreting information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively • Comparing and contrasting the treatment of similar themes, topics, and patterns of events in literature • Integrating information from two texts on the same topic	Students are asked text-dependent questions, but are not given opportunities to come up with their own inferences about topics.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
Overall, the text-dependent questions provide students with some opportunities to refer to the text and pull out evidence, but never lend to students coming up with their own inferences or perspectives on a topic. Many of the tasks do not require students to go back and pull evidence from the text meaning that students would not need to rely on the text to support their answers or ideas.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION III. WRITING TO SOURCES AND RESEARCH

The writing standards for each grade level highlight distinctive expectations about student writing. For details on grade-level writing expectations and writing exemplars for grade four, see the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy. The metrics below show key characteristics to look for in your review of materials.

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
3a. Writing assignments are explicitly connected to what students are reading, and routinely include writing over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) and extended time frames (for research, reflection, and revision) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Yes, but the writing tasks do not become more rigorous as students build their skills.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
3b. Text-dependent questions generally create the foundation for students to address culminating writing tasks, including: • Writing opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information • Writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly • Writing narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear sequences of events	no opportunity for students to come up with their own inferences or conclusions	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
3c. Reading materials can serve as models to explore writer's craft, demonstrate use of domain-specific words and phrases, and support student production of grade-level opinion, informational, and narrative writing.	Does not become more rigorous throughout they year.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
3d. Materials include explicit support to teachers, either in the teacher's edition or classroom materials, for writing instruction linked to the grade four writing standards, including: • Producing clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience • Developing and strengthening writing by planning, revising, and editing • Using technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing, as well as to interact and collaborate with others, demonstrating sufficient keyboarding skills • Graphic organizers, chart, etc. to aid in explicit teacher instruction Materials should also guide the teaching of specific components of grade four writing standards 1-3 (See CCSS).		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
3e. Materials provide opportunities and resources for students to conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic, including: • Investigating different aspects of a topic • Recalling relevant information from experiences or gathering information from print and digital sources • Taking notes and categorizing information • Providing a list of sources • Drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, or research		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
Although students are provided with writing opportunities with supports in all three genres of writing such as, informative/explanatory, opinion, and narrative the writing tasks never increase in rigor therefore students will have a hard time showing growth. Some performance tasks cannot be completed with only the text's provided by the unit. Students would need other background knowledge that is not provided for them by the curriculum.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION IV: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Materials provide guidance and support for explicit and systematic instruction and diagnostic support in grade-level phonics, vocabulary development, syntax, and reading fluency. Students must be able to recognize and pronounce words fluently in order to focus on the major goal of reading, which is comprehension. Effective foundational skills instruction in grade four includes an explicit and systematic focus on phonics and practice in applying phonics for students who are struggling. Building word analysis skills and fluency must also be contextualized within the materials (CCSS).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
4a. Materials provide teachers with guidance and support for explicit and systematic instruction of the grade four *Reading Standards for Foundational Skills* by providing instruction in phonics, word analysis, and reading with fluency to support comprehension. (Refer to CCSS, Appendix A for the research detailing the advancement of foundational skills in reading.)	There is not a clear sequence in learning the skills. All of the place. My worry is that this would create gaps within instructions.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
4b. Materials include a variety of opportunities for students to develop and apply word analysis and decoding skills, including: • Understanding grade-level vocabulary using an integrated approach (including affixes, multi-syllable words, etc.) • Understanding multisyllabic words in context and out of context • Self-correcting using word recognition skills and context clues, rereading text purposefully as needed • Developing fluency with grade-level regular and irregular spelling patterns • Spelling patterns and morphology	There is not a clear sequence in learning the skills. All of the place. My worry is that this would create gaps within instructions.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
4c. Materials provide regular practice in reading grade-level prose and poetry with accuracy, at an appropriate rate, and with appropriate expression.	There is not a clear sequence in learning the skills. All of the place. My worry is that this would create gaps within instructions.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak
4d. Materials guide students in reading grade-level texts with purpose and understanding, making frequent connections between the acquisition of foundational skills and access to the meaning of texts (including a set of text-dependent or text-specific questions to check for understanding).	There is not a clear sequence in learning the skills. All of the place. My worry is that this would create gaps within instructions.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
Fluency is emphasized daily. Addresses word study, but there is not consistent sequence, which could lead to gaps across the grade levels. There are opportunities for students to learn vocabulary and foundational skills, just inconsistent instead of a consistent pattern. There are opportunities, but not many lend for students to analyze words outside of the practice. We want students to be using other context pieces as well in order to make the connections.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION V: LANGUAGE

The Common Core State Standards for language focus on ensuring that students gain adequate mastery of a range of language skills and applications. Students are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills, knowledge, and vocabulary gained in preceding grades (CCSS).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
Conventions of Standard English 5a. There is evidence that grade-level grammar and conventions are addressed using an integrated and contextualized approach in daily instruction. Materials and tasks in grade four are designed to help build student understanding and use of: • Relative pronouns • Progressive verb tenses • Modal auxiliaries such as *can*, *may*, or *must* to convey various conditions • Correct ordering of adjectives within sentences • Prepositional phrases • Complete sentences and editing fragments and run-ons • Correct spelling and capitalization • Commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech or quotations • Commas before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence	Some lessons are on grammar objectives that are below grade 4 expectations and some lessons are on grammar objectives that are above the grade 4 expectations.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak
Knowledge of Language 5b. The materials support instruction on: • Choosing words and phrases to convey ideas precisely • Choosing punctuation for effect • Differentiating between contexts that call for formal and informal English	Some lessons are on grammar objectives that are below grade 4 expectations and some lessons are on grammar objectives that are above the grade 4 expectations.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 5c. The materials provide context, support, and strategies for teaching vocabulary acquisition skills, including: • Using context clues to unlock the meaning of words • Using Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of words • Consulting reference materials to determine pronunciation or the meaning of words	Some lessons are on grammar objectives that are below grade 4 expectations and some lessons are on grammar objectives that are above the grade 4 expectations.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak
5d. The materials provide embedded opportunities for students to encounter and develop an understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	Some lessons are on grammar objectives that are below grade 4 expectations and some lessons are on grammar objectives that are above the grade 4 expectations.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ○ 2) some evidence ● 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
There are some grade level grammar lessons, but many are below or above grade 4 expectations.

Some lessons are on grammar objectives that are below grade 4 expectations and some lessons are on grammar objectives that are above the grade 4 expectations.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION VI: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

To be CCSS-aligned, speaking and listening must be integrated into lessons, items, and tasks. These must reflect a progression of communication skills required for eventual college- and career-readiness. If grade four students are able to listen to others, discuss what they are learning, and voice their own confusion or misunderstandings, their learning becomes deeper and more meaningful. They are exposed, at this level, to points of view that may differ from their own, and they learn how to agree and disagree, express their own thoughts, and ask questions when they don't understand or need more clarification (CCSS).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
6a. *Comprehension and Collaboration.* Materials provide a language framework for student participation in academic conversations, including the ability to: • Come to a discussion prepared • Follow agreed upon rules/roles • Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information • Review key ideas and explain their own ideas • Use accurate, grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases	The discussions are explained and encouraged, but there are no directions or protocol for how to lead discussions.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
6b. *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas.* Materials provide a language framework for student planning of effective presentations, focusing on: • How to report on a topic using evidence to present findings from their research • How to tell a story or recount an experience in an organized manner • How to use appropriate facts and relevant details to support main ideas and themes • How to speak in complete sentences when appropriate to the task and situation clearly and at an acceptable pace • How to differentiate between contexts for formal English and situations where informal discourse is appropriate	There are limited directions for teachers to conduct evidence-based discussions. The discussions are encouraged, but not modeled or given a protocol for how to conduct these discussions in the classroom.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ● 2) some ○ 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ● 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
Although there is evidence of classroom discussions and evidence-based discussions, there is no teacher directions in how to lead these discussions. There is no protocol for students. This assumes teachers have knowledge in how to conduct these discussions. Many teachers will have the knowledge and experience to conduct these discussions, but what about new teachers or first-year teachers?

Protocols for student discussions are in the interactive lessons, but never in student editions of their workbooks.

ALIGNMENT CRITERION VII: SCAFFOLDING AND SUPPORTS

While scaffolds are not a part of the standards themselves, it is important to support teachers in meeting the needs of the range of students in their classrooms. In order to meet the reading, speaking, and writing needs of all grade four students, the materials must include supports for students to comprehend texts at the grades three through five-complexity band as required, and at the high end of this complexity band with scaffolding. Supports and scaffolds should draw students back to the text and provide strategies for vocabulary acquisition. All scaffolding and support requires ongoing formal and informal assessments that provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency and inform instruction.

It is important to note that scaffolding is not just intended for struggling students, but also for students who are ready for above grade-level work. As text complexity increases and tasks get increasingly challenging, the need for appropriate scaffolds for above grade-level access is equally important (CCSS).

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
7a. The texts promote differentiated instruction and instructional conversations about text to support student learning of: • Academic language • Linguistic frames for student talk and writing • Repeated grammatical structures and language		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak
7b. The materials include student supports such as: • Multiple digital and media versions of texts • Illustrations • Graphs and charts • Maps and photographs • Visual cues/notes that draw attention to words in the text that signal sequence or offer clues to meaning (i.e., where, when, and how key events occur)	Many of the questions and tasks do not support students in completing the ending culminating task.	○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
7c. The materials are designed to support teacher instruction by use of: • Explicit instructional directions accompanied by materials that are clearly aligned to stated goals and objectives that build student ability to read and comprehend grade-level text • Strategies to gradually increase difficulty as students' comprehension skills strengthen • Strategies to support student acquisition of knowledge supporting specific common core standards • Clear and detailed teacher directions and guidance for introducing new concepts and skills • Clear guidance for documenting student progress toward meeting grade-level standards		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak
7d. The materials provide support for student learning through varying modalities (i.e., there are provisions for print, digital, and other multimedia sources for information attainment).		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak

GUIDING STATEMENTS	SPECIFIC EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT/MATERIALS	EVIDENCE RATING
7e. The materials include assessments along with: • Suggestions for next steps to address a spectrum of performance levels and needs based on assessment results • Opportunities for students to demonstrate their expertise through the use of performance tasks • Pieces of challenging and complete text that can be used to assess student understanding and next instructional steps • Reading selections and questions that progress in a logical sequence for gradual release[1] • Enrichment tasks for students who are on target for meeting grade-level expectations • Steps to take when evidence suggests that students are starting to fall behind		○ 4) extensive ○ 3) sufficient ○ 2) some ● 1) weak

OVERALL RATING: ○ 4) extensive evidence ○ 3) sufficient evidence ○ 2) some evidence ○ 1) weak evidence

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Explain why the materials received this overall rating):
The supports are evident, but do not give teachers direction on how to support students. This worries me with first year teachers. Some teachers may need guidance in order to meet their students' needs effectively.

1 Gradual release: scaffolding of instruction so that students develop the ability to read and complete tasks and assignments independently and proficiently.