Washoe County School District K-5 Science
2020 Instructional Materials Evaluation Rubric
(Certified Teaching Professional Form)

Category 1: Designed for Three-Dimensional Learning

Criterion 1A: Phenomena and Problems

Instructional materials focus on students making sense of phenomena or designing solutions to problems which drives student learning.

- Students are engaged with phenomena or problems that can be explained or solved through the application of the three-dimensions.
- A good phenomenon builds on everyday student experiences and targets grade appropriate learning goals.
- Anchoring, investigative and everyday phenomena may be present.
- Engineering lessons require students to use elements of the science core ideas together with elements of core ideas from engineering design to solve problems.

Less of this:	**More** of this:
Phenomena are just for the initial hook.	Phenomena drives the learning.
Phenomena are fun or flashy to engage students.	Phenomena that builds on everyday experiences supports engagement.
Phenomena are brought in after students develop the science ideas so they can apply what they learned.	The development of science ideas is anchored in investigations of phenomena.
Engineering problems are unrelated to the science learning.	Engineering involves designing solutions to problems that arise from phenomena.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ Photographs of trash washed up on a beach that leads into a unit on waves in 4th grade physical science unit. (A first-hand experience, video, photograph or data set to start a learning sequence that becomes the "why" for further study grounded in everyday student experiences.)
- ◊ A time lapse video of a badger decomposing is shown to start a life science unit on matter and energy in ecosystems. Students return to the video throughout to explain what is happening.
- ◊ Garbage from the lunchroom is examined to start a unit on matter and how it changes in the 5th grade physical science unit.
- ◊ 3rd grade students explore balloons, aluminum cans, styrofoam beads, and transparent tape to make observations and generate questions about static electricity in the physical science unit, lesson 3.
- ◊ Students address the problem of communicating at a distance without sound following a study of light in the 1st grade physical science unit.

Specific Evidence from Materials
In the 2nd grade Bring Science Alive unit called Materials and Their Uses, the anchoring phenomenon is: Sometimes ponds are filled with water. Other times they are icy. Taking a look at Lesson 5 in which the lesson phenomenon is: Adding food coloring to icing makes a colorful treat, the proposed connection to the unit phenomenon is to ask students, "If more materials (e.g., pond lilies, scum, sand, algae, etc.) were added to the pond, do you think it will alter the ponds ability to freeze? Why or why not?

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 1A? Include your reasoning.
Criterion 1A is not supported by the materials in that, while the lesson would be fun and engaging, it lacks the development of science ideas to address the unit phenomenon. A lesson of adding food coloring to icing to make a colorful treat is very disconnected to the unit phenomenon of ponds being filled with water or freezing. Adding different materials to the frosting is interesting and engaging. Why not get pond water and try out some different materials such as pond lilies, scum, sand, algae, etc. to see how they impact the pond's ability to freeze?

Criterion 1B: Integrating the Three-Dimensions

Instructional materials integrate elements of the Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts and Disciplinary Core Ideas.

- Students develop and use multiple grade-appropriate elements of each dimension.
- The dimensions are integrated to work together and are not taught in isolation.
- Learning experiences integrate multiple different pairings of the dimensions to build understanding of the targeted performance expectations.
- Engineering is integrated with at least once per domain of science.

Less of this:	**More** of this:
Students only engage in a single practice element in a lesson.	The lesson helps students use and develop multiple practice elements.
Lessons teach the dimensions separately or only address them at the general level.	Lessons integrate grade-appropriate elements for each dimension.
Engineering lessons focus on trial and error activities that don't require science or engineering knowledge.	Grade-appropriate elements of engineering design and science core ideas are integrated with the other dimensions.
Engineering consists of challenges or step-by-step directions to build something.	Engineering is integrated into the grade-appropriate science core ideas and use explanations of phenomena to design solutions.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ 4th grade students conduct an investigation using fair tests in which variables are controlled and the number of trials considered, including collecting measurements and representing data in tables, with balls and ramps to determine cause and effect relationships of speed and energy in unit 2 lesson 4.
- ◊ Students ask questions about waves moving objects and collaboratively investigate how to make different looking waves in water and analyze how these waves affect a floating object in the physical science unit.
- ◊ 3rd grade students generate, test and refine solutions to keep two moving objects from touching each other by applying ideas learned about magnets in lesson 9.
- ◊ With teacher guidance, kindergarten students conduct an investigation with peers to compare the effects of different directions of pushes and pulls on playground balls, student chairs and erasers on different surfaces in the physical science unit, lesson 3.

Specific Evidence from Materials
In Lesson 5 of the 2nd grade Bring Science Alive unit called Materials and Their Uses, the structures and properties of how materials change are examined. Students plan and conduct an investigation by mixing different materials. The lesson focuses on how adding food coloring to icing makes it more colorful and then how adding other materials impacts the icing. Students examine patterns by identifying materials that can mix and then separate. Data is recorded and shared.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 1B? Include your reasoning.
The materials somewhat support the integration of the three dimensions in that in Lesson 5 students plan and conduct an investigation by examining patterns to look at how the structures and properties of the materials change when food coloring is added to make it more colorful. However, a strong connection

between the lesson phenomenon and the unit phenomenon is questionable. A side bar connection to the NGSS shows integrations of dimensions in lessons.

Criterion 1C: Coherence

Instructional materials help students develop increasingly sophisticated understandings within and across grade-levels.

- Lessons fit together to target a set of performance expectations with multiple opportunities for students to revise understandings over time.
- Instructional materials make connections between lessons, units and grade levels.
- Lessons build on students' prior learning in all three dimensions.
- Students engage in learning experiences with explicit connections to other science disciplines and other subjects with intention.

Less of this:	**More** of this:
Lessons are unrelated.	Lessons are presented in a logical sequence to develop understandings.
Lessons build on prior learning but only for the DCIs.	Lessons work together with students' foundational knowledge and practice from prior lessons and grade levels.
Science domains are taught in isolation.	When appropriate, science domains are integrated to show connections.
Other subjects, when included, are not intentionally chosen to support grade-level standards.	Grade-level appropriate standards from ELA, math or other subject areas are integrated with science learning.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ In the first unit, students address the physical science standards around the phenomena of garbage and partially address a life science standard related to decomposers. In the second unit on ecosystems, students extend and apply their understanding of decomposers which leads to an engineering problem about materials such as plastics that do not decompose.
- ◊ 5th grade students are investigating water sources around the Earth and make connections to properties of matter in both the physical science and earth science units and prior learning about weather and climate from 3rd grade.
- ◊ 2nd grade students plan and conduct an investigation with water and earth materials as a whole class in one lesson and then in the next lesson students work with a small group to plan and conduct another investigation with wind and earth materials to further learning of core ideas and practices.
- ◊ Students apply ELA learning to write a set of directions for conducting an investigation in the earth science unit, lesson 6.
- ◊ Students use line plots to analyze climate data in grade 3, unit 4.

Specific Evidence from Materials
2nd grade Bring Science Alive unit called Materials and Their Uses contains 6 lessons. Lesson 1 looks at the phenomenon: This green stuff is slimy and gooey. Students are asked to describe and classify materials by their properties. At the end of the lesson, students are asked to use what they learned to help explain the lesson phenomenon that this green stuff is slimy and gooey. Subsequent lesson phenomena include Ice cannot fit in the glass. But it can fit after it melts (Lesson2), Bridges can be made from many different materials (Lesson 3), Toy blocks can be rearranged to make many different shapes (Lesson 4), Adding food coloring to icing makes a colorful treat! (Lesson 5), and Ice cream melts on a hot day (Lesson 6).

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 1C? Include your reasoning.
The materials lack coherence in that there is a disconnect between the lesson phenomenon and the unit phenomenon. Some lesson concepts overlap but there is not strong evidence that one strongly builds on the other. A scope and sequence to review correlations throughout 2nd grade and to other grade levels was not found. However, there was a document with check marks to show when units are taught but no connection explanations.

Category 2: Instructional Supports

Criterion 2A: Assessing the Three-Dimensions

Instructional materials support monitoring student progress in all three dimensions.

- Multiple and varied assessments allow students to demonstrate learning in all three dimensions including application of knowledge in performance tasks.
- Formative assessments, including teacher, self and peer assessments, are embedded throughout to inform instruction.
- Assessments are unbiased and elicit direct, observable evidence from all students.
- A phenomena or problem drives tasks, and information from the task is required to complete it.
- Rubrics and scoring guidelines are provided for interpreting student performance including sample student responses

Less of this:	**More** of this:
Checks for understanding elicit only a few student responses or rely primarily on group projects.	Individual student artifacts are used to measure student understanding of each dimension.
Only summative assessments that measure the end point of understanding are provided.	Formative assessments provide feedback to adjust instruction and inform students of their progress.
Assessments are primarily rote memorization of facts and terminology.	Assessments reflect application of all three dimensions including tasks that are driven by phenomena or problems.
Only multiple-choice tests are given.	Multiple measures and types of assessment are used throughout.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ As students are engaged in a performance task in unit 3, lesson 2, there are indicators for teachers to look for and information about possible responses. This information is embedded in the lesson.
- ◊ In unit 1, there are two performance assessments, peer feedback throughout, exits slips, a summative assessment, and a prewrite.
- ◊ Individual student learning is assessed using written work that answers the driving question of the unit. (Earth Science, p. 76)

Specific Evidence from Materials
Assessing is done formatively through an interactive student notebook in each investigation and in a section called Reference Text. Formative assessment can also be found in Wrap-up and Lesson Games. Summative assessments are created in a test bank at the end of every lesson. Questions can be created for 3D assessing. Performance assessments are utilized at the end of every unit. A Performance Assessment Rubric can be accessed and is broken down by each dimension individually.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 2A? Include your reasoning.
It is questionable if Bring Science Alive supports 2A. Formatively, materials provide opportunity for students to explain their thinking. A summative assessment test can be created online. It is uncertain if the assessments in the units adequately assess student understanding of science concepts.

Criterion 2B: Instructional Experiences

Instructional materials support equitable access to science knowledge and practice for all students.

- Students engage with direct (preferably first-hand), shared experiences that are relevant and authentic, serve as the basis for learning and meet the developmental needs of elementary students.
- Students' questions, prior experiences and diverse backgrounds related to the phenomenon or problem drive learning.
- Materials provide an opportunity to learn by allowing for the development of scientific understandings over time using multiple modalities.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to make connections to and explore the natural world outside the classroom.

Less of this:	**More** of this:
The lesson focuses on a topic that some students have experienced.	Direct experiences in the classroom provide access and equity for all students.
Student questions and prior experiences are not connected to the learning.	Materials provide supports for connecting students' own questions to the targeted learning.
Students read about what others have done.	Students learn through concrete experiences.
Only one or two modalities are used.	Multiple modalities are used throughout each instructional segment.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ Students develop physical models of a landfill as open and closed systems to observe during the 5th grade garbage unit.
- ◊ Students identify components of garbage disposal in their homes and communities which connects the phenomena that started the unit.
- ◊ Students conduct a first-hand investigation of erosion and deposition using a stream table, observe time-lapse videos of landslides, engage in a virtual investigation, read accounts of earth changes by wind and record changes to the playground after a snow event in the 4th grade earth science unit.
- ◊ Students raise trout from eggs in the classroom and make observations over time as part of their study of traits in the life science unit.

Specific Evidence from Materials
The instructional learning experience in 2nd grade Bring Science Alive unit called Materials and Their Uses offers hands-on exploration as well as online and reading materials. Students learn through concrete learning experiences working with a variety of materials in Lesson 5. Students have an opportunity see video, answer questions online, and play lesson games.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 2B? Include your reasoning.
Students will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on experiences with Bring Science Alive materials. The instructional experiences are fun and engaging but strong connections to real world scientific relevance is questionable.

Criterion 2C: Student Sense-making

Instructional materials support equitable access to science knowledge and practice for all students.

- Materials support student sense-making at both an individual and group level.
- Classroom discourse focuses on expressing and clarifying student reasoning with opportunities for students to share ideas and feedback with each other that supports the iterative and collaborative co-construction of explanations.
- Materials include supports for oral and written language processing to involve students in scientific discourse for sense-making including a language-in-use approach.

Less of this:	**More** of this:
The teacher tells students what they need to know.	Students figure out explanations through classroom discourse with each other.
The teacher calls on a few students to share reasoning.	All students have the opportunity to share their thinking orally or in writing.
The focus is only on getting the "right" answer.	Sense-making begins with initial student ideas that progress in sophistication.
Vocabulary is front-loaded. All students are provided with sentence frames.	Specialized vocabulary is embedded in the instructional sequence with multiple opportunities to use and development over time. Writing supports are differentiated.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ 5th grade students develop models of how scents travel that are refined over the course of a three weeks using a combination of visual and written language providing multiple opportunities to develop precise vocabulary in the physical science unit.
- ◊ 3rd grade students answer questions in their notebook individually using pictures and words to explain their initial ideas about how static electricity works and have the opportunity to revise this after discussing with a peer and the whole class in the physical science unit.
- ◊ The teacher facilitates a class discussion using a word wall where kindergarten students share observations with a shoulder partner and the whole group about the kinds of things in their homes to figure out that the things we need come from nature.
- ◊ Suggested sentence frames are included to support oral and written responses when needed with the goal of independence.

Specific Evidence from Materials
Students share their thinking in writing through interactive notebooks in every lesson. In one of the lessons, student look for patterns and classify materials by their properties. They then identify a secret material by playing a game of Twenty Questions. Student then make sense of the phenomenon by making up a riddle for an object in the class.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 2C? Include your reasoning.
Materials lack strong evidence for student sense making in a scientific way that supports concept attainment. Students share ideas but strong collaborative co-construction of explanations appears limited.

Student notebooks do provide opportunities for students to “show what they know” and they are available in English and Spanish.

Criterion 2D: Teacher Supports

Instructional materials support teacher planning and instruction.

- Materials include background knowledge in both science content and pedagogy and student preconceptions.
- Materials have clear and concise instructional directions and connections to the standards.
- Materials provide guidance to support differentiated instruction, extra support and extensions at the appropriate level for a broad range of learners.
- Materials include professional learning and additional instructional planning resources.
- Materials have supports for families to extend learning and offers suggestions for how to help their student(s) at home.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ Information prior to lessons gives teachers things to except that students may already know in unit 1 p.12 in addition to how their understandings will build.
- ◊ 1st grade students have a choice to investigate different variables related to shadows, and suggestions are included as well as extensions to do at home. (Light unit, p. 40)
- ◊ The assessments include recommendations for additional supports when students don't meet expectations. "Students may struggle to articulate that scientists look back at the data they collect to look for patterns and to draw conclusions about phenomena. One way to support them in this thinking might be to share an anecdote such as, "When I was growing up, my mom used to measure my height by marking it on the wall in the pantry. When I look back at those marks, I notice patterns, like that I grew faster between the ages of 5 and 8 than I did when I was older."" (p.14)
- ◊ Students make observations of the sky with their families, looking for patterns over time. Families are provided with background information on how to record observations and what patterns to expect.

Specific Evidence from Materials
Teachers can set up classes online to include assignments, assessments, and grades. There is teacher support under Program Support with topics such as a Culturally Responsive Classroom and self-paced tutorials for getting started. There are also resources to explain lessons and connection to the NGSS.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 2D? Include your reasoning.
Criterion 2D is somewhat supported by the Bring Science Alive materials in that there is online support and explanations of lessons. In addition, editable slides are plentiful for teachers to plan lessons. Teacher background information for science content is limited.

Category 3: Student Materials

Criterion 3A: Program Design

Instructional materials represent a comprehensive K-5 core program.

- Materials provide instruction that correlates to our recommended instructional minutes for science.
- Materials are available in both English and Spanish.
- Graphic organizers and templates for science notebooks are included.
- Teacher and student materials have resources both in print and online.
- Multimedia supports are included such as videos, tutorials and simulations and when appropriate reflect the diversity of our students and society in a culturally responsive manner including different genders and sexual orientations, from many cultures and nations, both contemporary and historical.
- Technology options are appropriate for both classroom and home use possibly including translation capabilities.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ There are four units, each representing nine weeks of instruction at 180 minutes a week. This is short of our recommended minutes of 240 minutes a week for 5th grade.
- ◊ There are 132 60-min lessons for the whole year. This correlates to our recommended instructional minutes of 220 minutes per week for grades K-2. (3-4 60-min lessons per week)

Specific Evidence from Materials
Lessons can be planned for a 49 minutes fast tracks lesson or a 96 minutes lesson with fast tracks plus extension. Materials are available in print and online. There is an icon to select English or Spanish for online content reading. Multimedia includes content reading, games, and videos.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 3A? Include your reasoning.
It is inconclusive if the recommended science minutes would be met by the Bring Science Alive because a long-range planning document wasn't identified. The materials support a strong digital program design which include printable materials.

Criterion 3B: Science Equipment

Instructional materials include hands-on materials and equipment that support three-dimensional learning.

- Enough materials are included to allow students to do the investigations themselves.
- Materials are of a quality that will last through many uses.
- Materials include the tools necessary to make observations and measurements and conduct investigations.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ There are enough thermometers, graduated cylinders, balances, magnifying glasses and measuring tapes for a whole class to use in small groups.
- ◊ Everything is included to engage in the lessons except for things that would already be found in the classroom like tape and colored pencils.

Specific Evidence from Materials
The materials kit contains enough materials for 6 groups. The materials list identifies what is supplied by the company and what the teacher needs to provide. For example in Lesson 5 of 2nd grade Materials and Their Uses, the teacher only needs to provide a 6 qt bowl, a newspaper, and sticky notes since all the other lesson materials are supplied.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 3B? Include your reasoning.
Criterion 3B is supported by the Bring Science Alive materials in that most of the science equipment needed for the lessons is provided by the company. A picture of what the materials and equipment look like is useful for teachers to identify what is needed for each lesson. Print materials are also available to download and print in English and Spanish.

Criterion 3C: Reading Materials

Instructional materials include grade-appropriate texts that support three-dimensional learning.

- A range of text types and genres, both print and online, are embedded in learning experiences.
- Texts support context-specific academic vocabulary.
- Materials reflect the diversity of our students and society in a culturally responsive manner including different genders and sexual orientations, from many cultures and nations, both contemporary and historical.
- Materials include supports for reading comprehension for a variety of student needs including high-quality questions.

Examples of Evidence:

- ◊ Texts include an interview of Sylvia Earle and profiles of Chien Shiung Wu and Benjamin Banneker. These highlight the connections to the science students are learning. Pictures of scientists working in the field represent the diversity of our students.
- ◊ Cultural myths about the sun and stars are included in the earth/space science unit.
- ◊ Vocabulary is highlighted in the reading that follows a concrete experience where the vocabulary is first introduced.

Specific Evidence from Materials
Reading materials are in print and online is both English and Spanish. The online text has differentiated reading levels as well as a link to click on vocabulary words and their definitions. There are check for understanding opportunities in the reading in which a student selects a response from a drop-down menu or types a response using a word bank.

To what extent do the materials support Criterion 1A? Include your reasoning.
Criterion 3C is somewhat supported by the Bring Science Alive materials in that context specific vocabulary is woven in to the reading materials that appears to be appropriate for a 2nd grade learner. The quality of questions to lead learners to a deeper understanding of desired science concepts is questionable.

Evaluator: 57 Grade Level: 2 Program: Bring Science Alive

Referenced, adapted and formatted from the following documents:

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Washoe County School District Needs Evaluation

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