

IMRA Review Cycle 2024 Report



Publisher Name	Program Name
Pioneer Valley Educational Press, Inc	<i>Stepping Together, Grade K</i>
Subject	Grade Level
English Language Arts and Reading	Kindergarten

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Coverage: 100%
English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Coverage: N/A
Quality Review Overall Score: 220 / 307

IMRA Reviewers

Flags for Suitability Noncompliance

N/A

Indicator	Count of Flags
1. Prohibition on Common Core:	N/A
2. Alignment with Public Education’s Constitutional Goal	N/A
3. Parental Rights and Responsibilities	N/A
4. Prohibition on Forced Political Activity	N/A
5. Protecting Children’s Innocence	N/A
6. Promoting Sexual Risk Avoidance	N/A
7. Compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)	N/A

Flags for Suitability Compliance

N/A

Indicator	Count of Flags
Alignment with Public Education’s Constitutional Goal, 2.1.1	N/A
Promoting Sexual Risk Avoidance, 6.2	N/A

Alleged Factual Errors

N/A

Public Feedback

Flags for Suitability Noncompliance

N/A

Rubric Indicator	Count of Flags
1. Prohibition on Common Core:	N/A
2. Alignment with Public Education’s Constitutional Goal	N/A
3. Parental Rights and Responsibilities	N/A
4. Prohibition on Forced Political Activity	N/A
5. Protecting Children’s Innocence	N/A
6. Promoting Sexual Risk Avoidance	N/A
7. Compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)	N/A

Alleged Factual Errors

N/A

Public Comments

N/A

Quality Review Summary

Rubric Section	Quality Rating
1. Intentional Instructional Design	46 / 53
2. Progress Monitoring	18 / 28
3. Support for All Learners	22 / 32
4. Phonics Rule Compliance	23 / 36
5. Foundational Skills	111 / 158

Strengths

- **1.1 Course-Level Design:** Materials include the TEKS, ELPS, concepts, or knowledge taught. They provide explanations for concepts, guidance for lesson internalization, and resources to support administrators.
- **1.2 Unit-Level Design:** Materials include comprehensive unit overview, provide content knowledge and academic vocabulary for effective teaching, and suggestions to support families in their students' success.
- **3.1 Differentiation and Scaffolds:** Materials provide educators with guidance to pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary and references and implement differentiated instruction.
- **3.2 Instructional Methods:** Materials guide educators in effectively modeling, delivering, and facilitating lessons through explicit instructional approaches and varied practice opportunities.
- **4.4 Assessment:** Materials provide developmentally appropriate assessment tools with clear administration guidelines, systematic progress monitoring, and year-

long assessment opportunities aligned to grade-level phonics skills.

- **5.E.3 Decoding and Encoding One-Syllable or Multisyllabic Words:** Materials systematically introduce syllable types and division principles, with explicit instruction and varied activities for decoding and encoding one-syllable and multisyllabic words in both isolation and connected text.

Challenges

- **1.3 Lesson-Level Design:** Materials do not support educators in effective implementation due to a lack of learning objectives in each lesson.
- **2.1 Instructional Assessments:** Materials lack appropriate and clearly defined instructional assessments aligned to TEKS, fail to address varying levels of complexity, and do not guide educators on consistent administration of assessments.
- **2.2 Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring:** Materials do not include guidance for interpreting student performance or tools for students to track their growth.

- 3.3 Support for Emergent Bilingual Students: Materials provide no guidance on linguistic accommodations, bilingual/ESL program implementation, or support for emergent bilingual students, and offer no resources for dual language immersion or metalinguistic transfer.
- 4.1 Explicit (Direct) and Systematic Phonics Instruction: Materials lack systematic and sequenced instruction in phonics, provide no explicit daily practice opportunities, and fail to include isolated exercises, decodable texts, or cumulative review.
- 4.2 Daily Instructional Sequence and Routines: Materials do not ensure daily lessons with explicit instruction, teacher modeling, guided practice, feedback, or varied opportunities for collaborative and independent student practice.
- 4.3 Ongoing Practice Opportunities: Materials do not incorporate cumulative review or practice of explicitly taught phonics skills and lack decodable texts and opportunities for isolated and connected practice.
- 4.5 Progress Monitoring and Student Support: Materials offer no data-management tools for tracking progress and provide no guidance on progress monitoring frequency or strategies to accelerate learning toward mastery.
- 5.B.1 Oral Language Development: Materials do not provide systematic guidance for developing oral language, lack diverse methods for communication, and offer no opportunities for social or academic interaction.
- 5.C.1 Alphabet Knowledge: Materials do not provide a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and sounds, lack explicit instruction for letter identification and formation, and offer no resources for students to develop or reinforce alphabet knowledge.
- 5.C.2 Letter-Sound Correspondence: Materials fail to systematically introduce letter-sound relationships, provide no phoneme-letter instruction or corrective feedback, and lack activities for decoding skills practice.
- 5.D.1 Phonological Awareness: Materials lack a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness, fail to offer explicit instruction or corrective feedback, and do not provide practice or reinforcement aligned to grade-level TEKS.
- 5.D.2 Phonemic Awareness: Materials do not follow a systematic sequence for phonemic awareness, fail to provide explicit instruction and feedback, and lack connection between phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle.
- 5.E.1 Sound-Spelling Patterns: Materials do not offer a systematic sequence for introducing sound-spelling patterns, lack explicit instruction, and do not provide activities for practicing these patterns in both isolation and connected text.
- 5.E.2 Regular and Irregular High-Frequency Words: Materials fail to systematically introduce regular and irregular high-frequency words, provide no explicit instruction, and offer no

activities for decoding or encoding these words.

Summary

Pioneer Valley, *Stepping Together* is an English phonics K–2 program that ensures complete coverage of grade-level TEKS. The curriculum is organized into seven modules with five instructional days of lessons for each week, resulting in 175 total lessons. The five-day routine follows a typical structure of a warm-up, followed by a phonological awareness activity, then a word study/phonics activity, and concluding with either shared reading or interactive writing, with the fifth day dedicated to rereading and assessment. The Lesson Modules resource includes structured units and lesson overviews that provide the steps and materials for instruction.

Campus and district instructional leaders should consider the following:

- With a 69.1% score on Learning Quality, the product lacks some evidence-based best practices to provide explicit and systematic phonics instruction and support students in mastering alphabet knowledge. Instruction begins with a review of the short vowel sounds learned in grade K but does not include a review of consonant letters. The materials do not include instruction on r-controlled vowels *er*, *ir*, or *ur*, inflectional endings *-es*, *-s*, or *-ed*, or the consonant trigraph *-tch*.
- Materials do not include support for all learners or implementation supports for teachers that give students access to solid instruction or deep engagement.

Intentional Instructional Design

1.1	Course-Level Design	14/15
1.1a	Materials include a scope and sequence outlining the TEKS, ELPS, concepts, and knowledge taught in the course.	5/5
1.1b	Materials include suggested pacing (pacing guide/calendar) to support effective implementation for various instructional calendars (e.g., varying numbers of instructional days – 165, 180, 210).	1/2
1.1c	Materials include an explanation for the rationale of unit order as well as how concepts to be learned connect throughout the course.	2/2
1.1d	Materials include guidance, protocols, and/or templates for unit and lesson internalization.	2/2
1.1e	Materials include resources and guidance to support administrators and instructional coaches with implementing the materials as designed.	4/4

The materials include a scope and sequence outlining the TEKS, ELPS, concepts, and knowledge taught in the course. Materials include suggested pacing to supporting instructional calendars totaling 180 days. Materials include suggested pacing (pacing guide/calendar). Materials do not support effective implementation for various instructional calendars. Materials include an explanation for the rationale of unit order as well as how concepts to be learned connect throughout the course. Materials include guidance, protocols, and/or templates for unit and lesson internalization. Materials include resources and guidance to support administrators and instructional coaches with implementing the materials as designed.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a scope-and-sequence outlining the TEKS, ELPS, concepts, and knowledge taught in the course.

- The materials include a "Scope and Sequence" that spans the entire school year in "Appendix A" of the *Teaching Guide*. The "Scope and Sequence" consist of seven modules, each spanning over five weeks. Teachers can view the concepts and knowledge in each module. Each module outlines the instructional objectives for "Phonological Awareness," "Phonics," "Sight Words," and "Comprehension" activities. Every lesson component includes the TEKS correlation. For example, the "Phonological Awareness" activity for "Module 3, Week 1, Day 1" includes producing rhymes and has a corresponding TEKS of 2.A.i.
- The materials provide a written description of the TEKS, organized by their correlation to "Phonological Awareness" and "Phonics" activities, as shown in "Appendix B" of the *Teaching Guide*.
- The materials outline the ELPS within the scope and sequence, along with the TEKS for each lesson. In Chapter 7, 'Follow-Up Activities,' of the *Teaching Guide*, they also provide tips for teaching English language learners.

Materials include suggested pacing (pacing guide/calendar) to support effective implementation for various instructional calendars (e.g., varying numbers of instructional days–165, 180, and 210).

- The materials include suggested pacing to support implementation. For example, "Chapter 1" of the *Teaching Guide* overviews the structure of the weekly lesson plans. It explains that there are seven modules, each with five instructional days of lessons, resulting in a total of 175 lessons taught throughout the year. It states, "On Day 5, students have a chance to reread and revisit shared reading books, and teachers get the opportunity to assess students' growing literacy knowledge." There is no guidance for varying the number of instructional days.
- The materials do not provide guidance for varying the number of instructional days. The materials provide a detailed scope and sequence within "Appendix A" of the *Teaching Guide*. For every module, the chart details the week/title, "Phonological Awareness" activity, "Word Study" activity, "Phonics" activity, "Sight Word" activity, "Comprehension" activity, and writing focus for each day within the week. The "Phonological Awareness," "Phonics," and "Comprehension" Sections list the TEKS correlation.

Materials include an explanation for the rationale of unit order as well as how concepts to be learned connect throughout the course.

- The materials include an explanation for the rationale of unit order. The "Scope and Sequence" in "Appendix A" of the *Teaching Guide* outlines the module order and concepts taught. The materials also include a rationale for the progression of the units. The materials also provide a rationale for the structure of a lesson and explain how the concepts across lessons and units connect.
- The materials explain how concepts connect throughout the course. For example, the *Teaching Guide*, "Chapter 3, Step 2: Phonological Awareness" activities", describes the correlation between phonology exercises and phonics. For example, the materials state, "The phonological awareness activities within each of the modules develop in a systematic progression, whereby the tasks are sequenced from easy to more difficult..."

Materials include guidance, protocols, and/or templates for unit and lesson internalization.

- The *Teaching Guide* offers detailed guidance and protocols by mapping out the structure of the lessons within dedicated chapters. These chapters include "Phonological Awareness Activities," "Word Study/Phonics Activities," "Shared Reading/Interactive Writing," "Assessments," and "Follow-Up Activities." Teachers are able to internalize the lessons by reviewing detailed explanations of the lesson components, tips on gathering materials for a smooth delivery, and insights on ways to teach the lesson that will make it more effective.
- The materials provide weekly lesson plans for each module, which outline the instructional objective and supporting strategies. The *Teaching Guide* provides tables to support teacher internalization of each module. For example, in "Chapter 1," Table 1-2 outlines each module's

phonological awareness and phonics scope and sequence. "Chapter 5," Table 5-1, outlines comprehension skills by module and week.

- The materials provide resources for unit internalization. For example, the "Lesson Modules" guide provides each lesson component's instructional objective and strategies. "Module 1" includes phonological awareness, word study, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, text features, strategic processing, and writing. The guide also includes a vocabulary scope and sequence, materials to gather and prepare, and a weekly book list.

Materials include resources and guidance to support administrators and instructional coaches with implementing the materials as designed.

- The materials include resources to support administrators and instructional coaches in implementing the materials as designed. For example, the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provides a "Fidelity Implementation Checklist" to indicate whether instruction components are "Evident, A Work in Progress, or Not Observed." Administrators and instructional coaches can use this resource to observe how teachers implement the product in the classroom.
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website also includes 30 video clips that model instruction, such as "Shared Reading" and "Making Words." The materials include explicit guidance for coaches and administrators on the Fidelity Implementation Checklist. For example, it provides coaches with what to do before, during, and after observing a lesson. The materials also provide guidance on what to expect when doing an informal walkthrough versus a formal observation. It also provides the next steps of what the administrator should do after an observation session.

Intentional Instructional Design

1.2	Unit-Level Design	4/4
1.2a	Materials include comprehensive unit overviews that provide the background content knowledge and academic vocabulary necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit.	2/2
1.2b	Materials contain supports for families in both Spanish and English for each unit with suggestions on supporting the progress of their student.	2/2

The materials include comprehensive unit overviews that provide the background content knowledge and academic vocabulary necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit. Materials contain supports for families in both Spanish and English for each unit with suggestions on supporting the progress of their student.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include comprehensive unit overviews that provide the background content knowledge and academic vocabulary necessary to effectively teach the concepts in the unit.

- In the *Teaching Guide*, the "Introduction" portion of the chapters provides background knowledge on the concepts of each step in the lesson structure. For example, the "Introduction" of "Chapter 2" explains why exposing children to rhyming text can enhance their awareness of the sound patterns of speech.
- The materials in the "Lesson Modules" resource offer an overview of the instructional objectives and strategies at the beginning of each module and provide details on teaching the concepts in the lessons. For example, at the beginning of "Module 3," the materials provide the following strategies to address phonological awareness: produce rhymes, blend syllables, blend onset-rime, segment syllables, segment onset-rime, add/delete syllables, and delete onset.
- The "Key Terms" section at the end of the *Teaching Guide* provides the academic vocabulary to support teachers in effectively teaching concepts in the modules.

Materials contain supports for families in both Spanish and English for each unit with suggestions on supporting the progress of their student.

- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website includes a "Beginning-of-the-Year" letter for caregivers that offers a detailed explanation of the *Stepping Together* phonics program, including the daily lesson design and the objectives of the phonics modules. This letter is available in English and Spanish and provides information on how caregivers can create a reading routine at home. Suggestions include reading every night, finding a quiet spot, talking about the story, rereading, and going on a scavenger hunt to find sight words or phonics patterns.

- Each module (unit) is described in the "Beginning-of-the-Year" letter for caregivers. The activities listed include suggestions for how families can support their student's progress. The materials also include a parent letter in English and Spanish for each Module. These letters explain the phonics elements students study within the module and activities to reinforce student's learning.

Intentional Instructional Design

1.3	Lesson-Level Design	28/34
1.3a	Materials include comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans that include daily objectives, questions, tasks, materials, and instructional assessments required to meet the content and language standards of the lesson.	24/30
1.3b	Materials include a lesson overview outlining the suggested timing for each lesson component.	1/1
1.3c	Materials include a lesson overview listing the teacher and student materials necessary to effectively deliver the lesson.	2/2
1.3d	Materials include guidance on the effective use of lesson materials for extended practice (e.g., homework, extension, enrichment).	1/1

The materials include comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans that include questions, tasks, materials, and instructional assessments required to meet the content and language standards of the lesson. Materials do not include daily objectives required to meet the content or language standards of the lesson. Materials include a lesson overview outlining the suggested timing for each lesson component. Materials include a lesson overview listing the teacher and student materials necessary to effectively deliver the lesson. Materials include guidance on the effective use of lesson materials for extended practice (e.g., homework, extension, enrichment).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans that include daily objectives, questions, tasks, materials, and instructional assessments required to meet the content and language standards of the lesson.

- The materials provide comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans, including tasks, questions, and materials required to meet the content and language standards. For example, in "Module 3, Week 3, Day 1," after students echo and chorally read the book *A Family Picnic*, they orally answer questions relating to the book. For example, "What foods does the family eat at their picnic? Which foods would you like to have at a picnic?"
- Each "Module Overview" lists the materials for each lesson in the "Gather" and "Prepare" Sections at the beginning of each module. The materials are specified again within each daily lesson plan. For example, teachers are prompted to "Gather an ABC poster for Module 1" and then to utilize it in "Step 3" of the lesson plan for "Day 1, Week 1" of the module.
- The materials provide instructional assessments aligned with the content and language standards within the lesson plans. Day 5 of each weekly lesson includes several assessment options. For example, in "Module 6, Week 1, Day 5," the materials provide guidance on conducting a sight word assessment and phonics assessments over the skills practiced during the week. On the phonics assessments, students encode and decode words with the short vowels /a/, /i/, and /o/.

- The lesson plans in the Lesson Modules resource include a daily ‘phonics focus’ and ‘comprehension focus’ at the top. For example, the "Module 6, Week 3, Day 4" phonics focus is "Short Vowels *a*, *e*, and *u*." However, the materials do not include daily objectives to meet the content and language standards of the lessons.
- The materials include comprehensive, structured, detailed lesson plans that include questions, tasks, materials, and instructional assessments required to meet the language standards of the lessons. There are also "Tips for ELL" at the end of the lesson plans each week, located after day 5 of each week in the "Lesson Modules" resource.

Materials include a lesson overview outlining the suggested timing for each lesson component.

- The *Teaching Guide* details that lessons take 20 minutes. The materials recommend allocating "1-2 minutes for the warm-up, 2-3 minutes for phonological awareness, 3-5 minutes for word study/phonics, and 8-10 minutes for shared reading." The materials specify the time allotted to teach each concept in the daily lesson plan.
- The materials include guidance on the required time for lessons and activities by including a clock picture with the recommended amount of time. For example, "Module 2, Week 1, Day 1, Step 1 will take 1-2 minutes, Step 2 will take 2-3 minutes, Step 3 will take 3-5 minutes, and Step 4 will take 8-10 minutes." Another example states, "Module 2, Week 1, Day 5, Step 1 will take 1-2 minutes, Step 2 will take 8-10 minutes, and Step 3 will take 5-8 minutes."

Materials include a lesson overview listing the teacher and student materials necessary to effectively deliver the lesson.

- The materials include the teacher and student materials needed for every module in the module overview as well as at the beginning of each lesson. The two sections, "Gather" and "Prepare," list the materials. For example, under "Gather" in the "Module 4" overview, the following materials are listed: "ABC poster, class set of ABC chart/sound box cards, Sally the Cow Puppet, Stepping Together letter cards, Stepping Together picture cards, lapboards with write-on sleeves, dry-erase markers with erasers, pocket chart, pointer, sentence strip roll, marker, scissors, chart paper, white correction tape, paper and pencils, dry-erase boards (optional)."

Materials include guidance on the effective use of lesson materials for extended practice (e.g., homework, extension, enrichment).

- The *Teaching Guide* provides guidance on extended practice opportunities. For example, the materials state, "At the end of each week of Stepping Together lessons, we offer follow-up activities for students to do during independent work time..." "Follow-up" activities include completing the sentence starter, writing a book, creating an illustration, and a "Super Story" scavenger hunt.

- The materials include educational online activities through the digital learning platforms that offer interactive learning activities to enrich or extend the lesson. For example, there is a downloadable mini-book where students fill in the blanks and share them with their partners.
- The "Beginning of the Year Letter for Caregivers" outlines the scope and sequence for parents. It informs them of concepts they will learn and ways to create a reading routine for their child at home. It shares that students will begin reading decodable books in "Module 3" and will take the readers home to practice at home.

Progress Monitoring

2.1	Instructional Assessments	15/24
2.1a	Materials include a variety of instructional assessments at the unit and lesson level (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) that vary in types of tasks and questions.	8/12
2.1b	Materials include the definition and intended purpose for the types of instructional assessments included.	1/2
2.1c	Materials include teacher guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of instructional assessments.	2/2
2.1d	Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson.	2/6
2.1e	Instructional assessments include standards-aligned items at varying levels of complexity.	2/2

The materials include a variety of instructional assessments at the unit and lesson level (including formative and summative) that vary in types of tasks and questions. Materials do not include diagnostic assessments. Materials include the intended purpose for the types of instructional assessments. Materials do not include the definition for the types of instructional assessments. Materials include teacher guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of instructional assessments. Formative assessments are aligned to the objectives of the course, unit, lesson, and TEKS. Summative and diagnostic assessments are not aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson. Instructional assessments include standards-aligned items at varying levels of complexity.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a variety of instructional assessments at the unit and lesson level (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) that vary in types of tasks and questions.

- The materials include a summative assessment provided at the end of each module that measures the comprehension focus, encoding, and decoding of the targeted phonics skills and sight words covered throughout the module. For example, on the "Module 1" assessment, students identify rhyming words from a list (such as "coat" and "boat"), write their names, and identify characters from a story they have listened to.
- On the last day of every lesson plan, students take a formative assessment of the concepts taught that week. These formative assessments monitor progress on the phonics focus and sight words. The assessments vary in types of tasks and questions. Students encode words dictated by the teacher that follow the phonics focus of the week, decode sight words and words that follow the phonics focus, and write sight words dedicated by the teacher. For example, in "Module 4, Week 5," students encode the words "nap," "hop," "tag," and "got," which match the phonics focus of short vowels /a/ and /o/. Students write three to four sight words that the teacher selects from the list: "we, see, in, look, can, like, is, the, at, to."

Students read the decodable text, *We Can See*, while the teacher assesses decoding, retelling, and fluency.

- The materials provide ongoing formative assessment with varying questions throughout the lessons at each step. For example, when playing the "Name Game," students locate their initial letter on the ABC poster as the teacher observes and asks questions, or the teacher dictates a letter that students must encode. The materials do not provide diagnostic assessments.

Materials include the definition and intended purpose for the types of instructional assessments included.

- "Chapter 6" in the *Teaching Guide* provides the intended purpose of formative assessments, "Progress Monitoring Assessments," and summative assessments, "Module Summative Assessments." For example, the materials state, "Starting with Module 2, on Day 5 of each week of lessons, we include a short formative assessment to monitor progress and help you plan follow-up small-group and individual lessons." The materials also explain that the "Module Summative Assessments" are available at the end of each module and located in the online resources.
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website has "Teacher Administration Directions" for the "Module Summative Assessments," stating, "What is assessed in each module will correspond to what was taught in that module." There are no definitions for the types of instructional assessments included.

Materials include teacher guidance to ensure consistent and accurate administration of instructional assessments.

- The *Teaching Guide* includes a script for teachers to administer the formative "Progress Monitoring Assessments" efficiently. For example, for the "Letter Names and Sounds" assessment, the teacher would say, "Today you are going to write some of the letters we have been learning. I will say one letter at a time. Think about what the letter looks like and how we write it. Then write the letter as best as you can."
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website includes instructions for administering and scoring the "Module Summative Assessments" consistently and accurately.
- The "Appendix" of the *Teaching Guide* includes various checklists (the "Letter Formation Checklist," the "Letter-Sound Checklist," and the "Class Progress Monitoring Recording Sheet") that support the teacher in collecting consistent and purposeful data.

Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are aligned to the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lesson.

- Teachers can use various tasks and activities as formative assessments throughout the lessons. To align these tasks with the TEKS, teachers must cross-reference the tables provided in the *Teaching Guide*. For example, Tables 3-1 and 4-1 show how phonological awareness and word/study phonics activities align with the relevant TEKS. The lessons do not include the TEKS.
- The formative "Progress Monitoring Assessments" at the end of each weekly lesson plan align with the instructional objectives and strategies for each module, which align with the TEKS. For example, at the end of "Module 2, Week 1," students encode "R, r, C, c, I, B, and b," which aligns with the "Module 2 Word Study/Phonics Instructional Objectives to learn correct letter formation for "Rr, Cc, I, Bb, Nn, Zz, a, Jj, Ll, Qq, Mm, Tt,x, Pp, Ss and learn consonant letter sounds." The corresponding TEKS are listed in "Appendix A" of the *Teaching Guide*.
- The "Module Summative Assessments" do not list the TEKS. The Teacher Administration Directions for the "Module Summative Assessments" on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website state, "What is assessed in each module will correspond to what was taught in that module." However, there are occasions when the measures assessed do not align with the module objectives. For example, the summative assessment for "Module 1" requires students to write their names, but the students do not write their names during instruction in "Module 1." Students frequently play the "Name Game" throughout "Module 1," but this task does not provide opportunities for students to practice writing their names.
- The materials do not include a diagnostic assessment. Therefore, no diagnostic assessments align with the TEKS and objectives of the course, unit, or lessons.

Instructional assessments include standards-aligned items at varying levels of complexity.

- Students take formative assessments on day 5 of each weekly lesson. These assessments focus on encoding, decoding, and sight words. Various assessments require students to write, produce words verbally, choose a multiple-choice answer based on a comprehension question, and read words from a pre-made list. Formative assessments given at the end of each week vary in complexity based on the time of year. For example, teachers assess the sight word "the" at the beginning of the year and "what" toward the end of the year.
- According to the "Teacher Administration Directions for Module Summative Assessments" found on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website, "summative assessments grow in complexity across the modules to complement the changes in the instruction and learning as the modules progress." The instructional assessments include multiple-choice and open-response items aligned to the standards. Teachers administer some assessment items individually and some to the whole group. For example, on the "Module 1" summative assessment, teachers are instructed to "administer the phonological awareness portion individually to allow for the student's oral response while the teacher conducts the listening comprehension portion to the whole group."

Progress Monitoring

2.2	Data Analysis and Progress Monitoring	3/4
2.2a	Instructional assessments and scoring information provide guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance.	1/2
2.2b	Materials provide guidance for the use of included tasks and activities to respond to student trends in performance on assessments.	1/1
2.2c	Materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.	1/1

The instructional assessments and scoring information provide guidance for responding to student performance. Instructional assessments and scoring information do not provide guidance for interpreting student performance. Materials provide guidance for the use of included tasks and activities to respond to student trends in performance on assessments. Materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Instructional assessments and scoring information provide guidance for interpreting and responding to student performance.

- The materials do not include guidance for interpreting student performance. The materials provide scoring guides and recording forms for each module summative assessment. The materials provide explicit directions on how to score and record student assessment data. The materials instruct teachers to use the data to plan for reteaching opportunities but do not provide guidance on how to reflect on proficiency levels.
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provides guidance on responding to student performance on the "Module Summative" assessments in the "Teacher Administration Directions." The guidance instructs the teacher to use summative module data to plan for reteaching and/or small groups. The materials provide strategies to support students based on their assessment proficiency.
- The website also includes "Stepping Together Differentiation Tables: Kindergarten," which provides activities and corrective feedback for skills students have difficulty with or need enrichment.

Materials provide guidance for the use of included tasks and activities to respond to student trends in performance on assessments.

- The "Stepping Together Differentiation Tables" on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provide guidance on responding to student trends in performance and assessment. For example, the "Phonological Awareness Differentiation with Corrective

Feedback (Kindergarten)" tool provides scaffolding and enrichment activities for the teacher to administer based on trends in phonological awareness proficiency.

- The "Using Progress Monitoring Assessment Data" resource on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provides teacher guidance. For example, if a student has not reached proficiency in decoding, the materials suggest to "use data to determine if there is a pattern to students' errors in decoding. Modify subsequent lessons to include a targeted review of the phonic element that is not yet controlled."
- The "Appendixes" Section of the *Teaching Guide* provides guidance for teachers to respond to student assessment trends. For example, "Appendix E: Phonics Differentiation with Corrective Feedback (Kindergarten)" provides feedback for teachers to give to students to either scaffold or enrich instruction based on student performance for different formative tasks.

Materials include tools for students to track their own progress and growth.

- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website includes a downloadable "Student Data Tracker," allowing students to monitor their data on reading phonics words (decoding), reading sight words, writing words (encoding), and comprehension skills. The tracker aligns with module summative assessments. Students track their progress after completing the five-week modules. Students begin tracking their progress and growth in "Module 4."

Supports for All Learners

3.1	Differentiation and Scaffolds	8/8
3.1a	Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, activities, and/or paired (scaffolded) lessons for students who have not yet reached proficiency on grade-level content and skills.	3/3
3.1b	Materials include pre-teaching or embedded supports for unfamiliar vocabulary and references in text (e.g., figurative language, idioms, academic language). (T/S)	2/2
3.1c	Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, enrichment, and extension activities for students who have demonstrated proficiency in grade-level content and skills.	3/3

The materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, activities, and/or paired (scaffolded) lessons for students who have not yet reached proficiency on grade-level content and skills. Materials include pre-teaching or embedded supports for unfamiliar vocabulary and references in text (e.g., figurative language, idioms, academic language). Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, enrichment, and extension activities for students who have demonstrated proficiency in grade-level content and skills.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, activities, and/or paired (scaffolded) lessons for students who have not yet reached proficiency on grade-level content and skills.

- "Appendix D" through "Appendix G" in the "Appendixes" section of the *Teaching Guide* include specific recommendations for instruction and activities in differentiated/small group lessons to support students who have yet to reach proficiency in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension skills for the grade level. Next to each type of skill, activity, or focus in the charts, teachers are provided with directives on how to scaffold for these students. For example, "Appendix D" recommends the following activity for a student struggling with isolating words in a sentence: "Give the student a penny or chip for each word. Have them put the items in a line from left to right as they repeat the sentence. Then have them tap under each item as they repeat the sentence."
- "Appendix E" in the *Teaching Guide* provides paired (scaffolded) lessons for students who have yet to reach proficiency. For example, for students who struggle decoding words containing previously taught and current phonics skills, the material suggests connecting the word study activities to reading words in connected text.
- "Appendix F" in the *Teaching Guide* provides differentiated instruction ideas for students who have yet to reach proficiency in fluency. For example, for students who struggle with reading with appropriate pacing, the materials suggest having students read without their fingers once they master one-to-one matching. They also suggest students start by practicing reading two words fluently and gradually increasing the number of words as they reach mastery.

Materials include pre-teaching or embedded supports for unfamiliar vocabulary and references in text (e.g., figurative language, idioms, academic language). (T/S)

- The materials include pre-teaching for unfamiliar vocabulary and references in the text during the "Shared Reading" component of the lesson plans. For example, in "Module 2, Week 3," the teacher explains the concepts of "knights" and "armor" to introduce the text "Little Knight Goes Shopping."
- At the beginning of each module, a "Vocabulary Scope and Sequence" lists the words to teach for that module. The "Vocabulary Scope and Sequence" also outlines a vocabulary procedure teachers use before reading the book so students can connect to what they already know.
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website also includes vocabulary graphic organizers to support students' vocabulary development. Three graphic organizers, "Vocabulary 4 Square," "Vocabulary Builder," and "Word Connections," are available for download.

Materials include teacher guidance for differentiated instruction, enrichment, and extension activities for students who have demonstrated proficiency in grade-level content and skills.

- The charts in "Appendix D" through "Appendix G" of the *Teaching Guide* include various options for differentiated instruction and enrichment on phonological awareness activities, phonics activities, fluency, and comprehension. Next to each activity, teachers are provided with directives on differentiating and enriching instruction if a student has reached proficiency. Some examples of differentiation related to phonological awareness are in "Appendix D." If a student successfully hears and produces rhyming words, the teacher tells the student a new onset to substitute and say the new word. If a student successfully blends onset and rime, the teacher provides the 'Enrich' activity, having the student blend phonemes.
- "The Literacy Center Activities" in "Chapter 7" of the *Teaching Guide* provide teacher guidance for extension activities for students who have demonstrated proficiency in grade-level concepts.

Supports for All Learners

3.2	Instructional Methods	13/13
3.2a	Materials include prompts and guidance to support the teacher in modeling, explaining, and communicating the concept(s) to be learned explicitly (directly).	6/6
3.2b	Materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson delivery and facilitation using a variety of instructional approaches.	4/4
3.2c	Materials support multiple types of practice (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and include guidance for teachers and recommended structures (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to support effective implementation.	3/3

The materials include prompts and guidance to support the teacher in modeling, explaining, and communicating the concept(s) to be learned explicitly (directly). Materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson delivery and facilitation using a variety of instructional approaches. Materials support multiple types of practice (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and include guidance for teachers and recommended structures (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to support effective implementation.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include prompts and guidance to support the teacher in modeling, explaining, and communicating the concept(s) to be learned explicitly (directly).

- The Lesson Modules resource features scripted lesson plans with prompts for teachers to model and explain the explicitly taught concepts. For example, in Module 1, Week 4, Day 3, Step 2, the teacher says, "I am going to say two words. If the two words rhyme, put your thumb up. If they do not rhyme, put your thumb down." The lesson then continues to explain to students how to recognize rhymes.
- The Teaching Guide also provides guidance on phonological awareness instruction in Appendix C: Explicit Instruction of Sounds. This tool provides guidance for the teacher to model, explain, and communicate explicit instruction of sounds. For example, the tool explains how students should form their mouths to make the /h/ sound and that it's unvoiced. It also provides possible corrective feedback for teachers to give students on articulation. The Teaching Guide also provides a routine to guide and support teachers in modeling and explaining Shared Reading/Interactive Writing in Chapter 5. The chapter includes Table 5-2: Teaching Points for Shared Reading, which provides teaching points on demonstration and instruction to support teachers.

Materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson delivery and facilitation using a variety of instructional approaches.

- The materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson delivery using a variety of instructional approaches, such as active participation, hands-on activities, and hand motions. In Module 2, Week 4, Day 4, Step 2 of the Lesson Modules, students use hand movements to practice making compound words. The materials provide the teacher with a script to guide students through the motions. In Step 4 within the same lesson, teachers dictate a sentence during Interactive Writing practice, and then students use a hands-on approach with the Cut Up Sentence portion of the lesson.
- The materials include teacher guidance and recommendations for effective lesson facilitation by providing instructions and procedures for components within each lesson. For example, the Teaching Guide includes a procedure for the daily Warm-Up to guide teachers in facilitation. The procedure specifies the time needed and how to employ various scaffolds for learning.
- The lesson plans in the Lesson Modules resource provide guidance for facilitating individual lesson components. For example, when teaching students how to use sound boxes to write the sounds they hear in the word, the teacher is given the following guidance: "Distribute Sound Box Cards and dry-erase markers. Dictate the following words: *cap*, *bat*, *tap*, and *had*. Have students say each word slowly and write one sound in each box. Check the letters by saying the word as you run your finger under the boxes."

Materials support multiple types of practice (e.g., guided, independent, collaborative) and include guidance for teachers and recommended structures (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to support effective implementation.

- The lesson plans and resources support multiple types of practice for students, such as the literacy center activities outlined in Chapter 7 of the Teaching Guide that teachers can use to reinforce concepts taught. These literacy centers can be completed independently or in pairs. For example, the Rereading Shared Reading Books activity allows students to practice rereading books with a partner or individually. The daily lesson plans include guided practice in various forms. For example, Module 2, Week 1, Day 1, Step 4 includes a discussion in the Shared Reading component for students to work with a partner to use pictures to complete a graphic organizer to retell the book. On Day 5 of the same week, students will independently practice reading the decodable book.
- The scripted lesson plans outlined in the Lesson Modules resource provide guidance and instruction for teachers to teach the routines necessary to achieve effective implementation. For example, in Module 2, Week 1, Day 1, Steps 2 and 3, the script supports the teacher in modeling the activity and proceeding with guided practice for teaching rhyming. The Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources website also includes a downloadable guide called 'How to Facilitate Effective Discussions' that explains how to teach, model, and practice implementing structured conversations.

- The Lesson Modules resource provides instruction for the whole group, small group, and individual during the lesson plans in each module. Whole-group lessons and assessments inform instruction for small-group and individual instruction. Follow-up activities, outlined in Chapter 7 of the Teaching Guide, are provided "for students to do during independent work time" as well as "suggestions for literacy center or independent/small-group practice" to revisit skills previously taught during whole-group instruction, such as Remaking the Cut-Up Sentence.

Supports for All Learners

3.3	Supports for Emergent Bilingual Students	1/11
3.3a	Materials include teacher guidance on providing linguistic accommodations for various levels of language proficiency [as defined by the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)], which are designed to engage students in using increasingly more academic language.	0/2
3.3b	Materials include implementation guidance to support teachers in effectively using the materials in state-approved bilingual/ESL programs.	0/1
3.3c	Materials include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in developing academic vocabulary, increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral and written discourse.	1/8
3.3d	If designed for dual language immersion (DLI) programs, materials include resources that outline opportunities to address metalinguistic transfer from English to the partner language.	Not scored

The materials do not include teacher guidance on providing linguistic accommodations for various levels of language proficiency [as defined by the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)], which are designed to engage students in using increasingly more academic language. Materials do not include implementation guidance to support teachers in effectively using the materials in state-approved bilingual/ESL programs. Materials do not include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral and written discourse. Materials include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in developing academic vocabulary through oral, but not written discourse.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include teacher guidance on providing linguistic accommodations for various levels of language proficiency [as defined by the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)], which are designed to engage students in using increasingly more academic language.

- The materials do not provide teacher guidance on providing linguistic accommodations for various levels of language proficiency. "Chapter 7" of the *Teaching Guide* provides teachers with background knowledge on how to support emergent bilingual students, stating, "This includes providing context for concepts and vocabulary, using gestures to convey meaning, implementing sentence frames or stems to support the development of cognitive academic language, and providing repetition where appropriate."
- The "Tips for ELL" Section of the lesson plans provides general guidance for emergent bilingual students, such as using gestures to support students' understanding of specific vocabulary. However, the materials do not provide guidance for linguistic accommodations according to ELPS standards for varying levels of language proficiency.

Materials include implementation guidance to support teachers in effectively using the materials in state-approved bilingual/ESL programs.

- The materials do not provide implementation guidance for effectively using them in a state-approved bilingual/ESL program. However, they provide a "Tips for ELL" Section on day 5 of each lesson plan. For example, the tip in "Module 1, Week 1" states, "Speaking slowly supports English language learners in processing language. During the Listen Up activities, speak slowly so students can process what you ask them to do."

Materials include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in developing academic vocabulary, increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral and written discourse.

- The materials do not provide implementation guidance for effectively using them in a state-approved bilingual/ESL program. However, they provide a "Tips for ELL" Section on day 5 of each lesson plan. For example, the tip in "Module 1, Week 1" states, "Speaking slowly supports English language learners in processing language. During the Listen Up activities, speak slowly so students can process what you ask them to do."

Materials include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in developing academic vocabulary, increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral and written discourse.

- Each module begins with a "Vocabulary Scope and Sequence" and a vocabulary routine to implement. The materials do not include strategies to support emergent bilingual students in building academic vocabulary. The "Shared Reading" component of the lesson pre-teaches some concepts to build background knowledge and support comprehension, but these supports are not specifically for emergent bilingual students.
- The end of each weekly lesson plan includes "Tips for ELL" students to support emergent bilingual students with academic vocabulary. For example, "Module 2, Week 3" suggests using real objects to support the understanding of concepts and vocabulary through oral discourse. However, the materials do not include embedded guidance for teachers to support emergent bilingual students in increasing comprehension, building background knowledge, and making cross-linguistic connections through oral discourse.
- However, the materials do not provide guidance for teachers on supporting emergent bilingual students with academic vocabulary, comprehension, background knowledge, or cross-curricular connections through written discourse.

If designed for dual language immersion (DLI) programs, materials include resources that outline opportunities to address metalinguistic transfer from English to the partner language.

- Materials are not designed for dual language immersion programs.

Phonics Rule Compliance

4.1	Explicit (Direct) and Systematic Phonics Instruction	6/9
4.1a	Materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) and foundational skills.	2/4
4.1b	Materials include explicit (direct) and intentional daily opportunities for phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) and foundational skills.	1/2
4.1c	Materials include practice of phonics skills both in isolation and through decodable texts.	2/2
4.1d	Materials include opportunities for cumulative review of previously taught skills.	1/1

The materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of foundational skills. Materials do not include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) skills. Materials include intentional daily opportunities for phonics (sound-symbol correspondence). Materials do not include explicit (direct) opportunities for phonics (sound-symbol correspondence). Materials include practice of phonics skills both in isolation and through decodable texts. Materials include opportunities for cumulative review of previously taught skills.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) and foundational skills.

- The materials do not include systematic and sequenced instruction of phonics. "Table 1-2: Phonological Awareness and Phonics Scope and Sequence" in "Chapter 1" of the *Teaching Guide* outlines the phonics skills taught by module and week. However, the scope and sequence does not include short vowels until "Module 4," and the first six letters introduced (Bb, Rr, Cc, Nn, Jj, and Zz) do not demonstrate an early emphasis on high-priority letters.
- Materials include systematic and sequenced instruction of foundational skills. "Appendix A: Scopes and Sequences" in the *Teaching Guide* outlines the phonological awareness skills taught throughout the year, and each module increases in complexity. For example, students are working on segmenting sentences and recognizing rhymes in "Module 1" (at the beginning of the year) and segmenting phonemes in "Module 7" (at the end of the year).

Materials include explicit (direct) and intentional daily opportunities for phonics (sound-symbol correspondence) and foundational skills.

- The materials provide intentional daily opportunities for phonics. The "Lesson Modules" resource recommends "spending 3-5 minutes on daily Word Study/Phonics instruction during Step 3 of each lesson." Table 4-1 in the *Stepping Together Teaching Guide Kindergarten* provides an overview of the seven activities students will experience during this component of

the lesson. These activities include "Name Game, Picture Sorting, Letter Detective, Making Words, Sound Boxes, Breaking Words, and Decoding Words in Decodable Text."

- The materials do not provide explicit phonics instruction. The "Word Study/Phonics" component of the "Lesson Modules" resource provides activities for teaching phonics, but these activities do not provide explicit instruction on sound-symbol correspondence. "Chapter 4" of the *Teaching Guide* states, "Students learn sounds during Picture Sorting." "Chapter 4" of the *Teaching Guide* describes the steps of the "Picture Sorting" activity. The teacher introduces multiple letters or sounds and then instructs students to sort the "Stepping Together Picture Cards" based on whether they hear the sound in the word the picture card depicts. For example, in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 3, Step 3," the "Lesson Modules" resource states, "Gather the Stepping Together Picture Cards for *r* and *b*. Put the Stepping Together Letter Cards *r* and *b* in the pocket chart. *Together let's say the picture word on this card, the first sound, and the first letter.* Put the Stepping Together Picture Card under the correct letter." The scripted part of the lesson, indicated by the italics, does not require the teacher to explicitly model or explain the sound-symbol correspondence for the letters introduced.

Materials include practice of phonics skills both in isolation and through decodable texts.

- The "Lesson Modules" resource details opportunities for students to practice phonics skills in isolation in step three of each lesson. For example, in "Module 3, Week 5, Day 2," students make or read the words "at, fat, bat, hat, cat, rat" using the "Stepping Together Letter Cards": Aa, Bb, Cc, Ff, Hh, Rr, and Tt.
- Decodable texts, called "Super Stories," are introduced starting in "Module 3," with a new text presented each week. "Chapter 4" of the *Teaching Guide* states that "[Super Stories] contain the high-frequency word and phonics elements that were taught during the week." In "Module 3," students read the "Super Story" *I Can Read*. The first sentence of the text is, "I can read to Zac." While students have learned sight words "I" and "can" in "Module 3" and the sound-symbol correspondence for Bb, Rr, Cc, Nn, Jj, Zz, Ll, Mm, Tt, Bb, Pp, and Ss, students do not learn vowel sounds until "Module 4." Starting in "Module 4," students practice phonics skills using "Super Stories" that align with previously taught letters, sounds, and sight words. For example, in "Module 4, Week 2," students read the "Super Story" *Vans and Cabs*, which includes decodable words "at, van, Pat, sat, Zac, cab," along with the previously taught sight words and some non-decodable story words.

Materials include opportunities for cumulative review of previously taught skills.

- The scopes and sequences in the *Teaching Guide* outline the review of previously taught skills. For example, Table 1-2 in "Chapter 1" instructs teachers to begin teaching the short vowel /a/ in "Module 4, Week 1," to review the skill in "Week 5, Module 4," and review the skill again in "Module 5" and "Module 6."
- The "Lesson Modules" resource also includes a variety of instructional routines that serve as ongoing reviews by connecting previously taught phonics skills to new ones. For example, students review short vowel sounds for the letters /o/ and /a/ while reading the decodable

"Super Story" *We Can See* in "Module 4, Week 5, Day 4." This decodable connects previously taught consonant sounds to the recently taught short vowel sounds for students to decode words such as "log" and "mat." Earlier in the week, on days one, two, and three, students made, read, wrote, blended, and segmented words with these same letter sounds.

Phonics Rule Compliance

4.2	Daily Instructional Sequence and Routines	3/8
4.2a	Daily lessons include explicit (direct) instruction with teacher modeling.	0/1
4.2b	Daily lessons include opportunities for explicit (direct) guided instruction and immediate and corrective feedback.	0/3
4.2c	Daily lessons include a variety of opportunities for students to practice through collaborative learning and independent practice.	3/4

The daily lessons do not include explicit (direct) instruction with teacher modeling. Daily lessons do not include opportunities for explicit (direct) guided instruction and immediate and corrective feedback. Daily lessons include a variety of opportunities for students to practice through independent practice. Daily lessons do not include a variety of opportunities to practice through collaborative learning.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Daily lessons include explicit (direct) instruction with teacher modeling.

- The materials do not provide explicit phonics instruction. The "Word Study" and "Phonics" component of the "Lesson Modules" resource provides activities for teaching phonics, but these activities do not provide explicit instruction with teacher modeling. For example, in "Module 5, Week 1, Day 4, Step 3" of the "Lesson Modules" resource, the teacher is directed to "model decoding strategies for the first few words. Then have students finish reading the sentences" of the "Super Story" *Look at Me!* Although the materials include a suggestion to model, they do not provide the teacher with a script, specific language, or strategies for delivering direct instruction through modeling.

Daily lessons include opportunities for explicit (direct) guided instruction and immediate and corrective feedback.

- While there are opportunities for students to practice skills with the teacher as a group, the "Lesson Modules" resource does not provide any script or specific terms and phrases the teacher can use for explicit guided instruction. For example, in "Module 3, Week 4, Day 2, Step 3," the "Lesson Modules" resource states: "Have students stand at the front of the classroom holding the following Stepping Together Letter Cards: *b, e, h, m, and w.* *Make the word me.* Say a new word for students to make (encode), or tell them the letter(s) to change and have them read (decode): *he.* Have students make or read these words: *we* and *be.*" The scripted part of the lesson, indicated by the italics, does not include guided instruction on how the students should encode or decode new words.
- The *Teaching Guide* contains "Appendix E: Phonics Differentiation with Corrective Feedback," which includes activities to scaffold or enrich instruction with corrective feedback for phonics

skills. However, the materials do not provide immediate or corrective feedback within the daily lessons to support explicit guided instruction.

Daily lessons include a variety of opportunities for students to practice through collaborative learning and independent practice.

- Daily lessons include opportunities for students to practice independently during "Follow-Up Activities." For example, "Chapter 7" of the *Teaching Guide* offers numerous ideas for activities suitable for students to work on independently, such as the "Super Story" *Scavenger Hunt*, wherein students "find and color any word in the story that contains the phonic element" that was the focus of instruction for the week. Other opportunities for independent practice occur during the daily lessons. For example, in "Module 5, Week 1, Day 3, Step 3," the "Lesson Modules" resource describes students writing words dictated by the teacher (lap, lid, rid, rap) to practice encoding short /a/ and short /i/ vowel sounds.
- Daily lessons include an opportunity for students to practice through collaborative learning during "Literacy Center Activities." In "Module 5, Week 1, Day 5", the "Lesson Modules" resource suggests having "students read the *Look at Me!* Super Story to a buddy" as a "Literacy Center" option to practice decoding words with short /a/ and short /i/. The materials only provide collaborative learning opportunities through "Literacy Centers."

Phonics Rule Compliance

4.3	Ongoing Practice Opportunities	5/6
4.3a	Materials include intentional cumulative review and practice activities throughout the curriculum.	2/2
4.3b	Practice opportunities include only phonics skills that have been explicitly taught.	0/1
4.3c	Decodable texts incorporate cumulative practice of taught phonics skills.	1/1
4.3d	Lessons include an instructional focus with opportunities for practice in isolation and connected text.	2/2

The materials include intentional cumulative review and practice activities throughout the curriculum. Practice opportunities do not include only phonics skills that have been explicitly taught. Decodable texts incorporate cumulative practice of taught phonics skills. Lessons include an instructional focus with opportunities for practice in isolation and connected text.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include intentional cumulative review and practice activities throughout the curriculum.

- The decodable "Super Stories" are available weekly for intentional cumulative review by increasing complexity over the year. For example, the "Super Story" *Chop the Log* in "Module 7, Week 2" focuses on the recently taught initial digraphs /ch/ and /th/ while also including a cumulative review of short vowels /o/, /a/, and /e/ (introduced in "Module 4" and "Module 5") and consonants (introduced in "Modules 2" and "Module 3").
- "Chapter 5" of the *Teaching Guide* describes how intentional practice of the taught phonics skills through interactive writing occurs on days two and four of each week within the "Lesson Modules." The sentences used for interactive writing include newly taught sight words, the weekly phonic focus, and words with easy-to-hear sounds. The sentences sometimes have previously taught sight words and phonic skills for cumulative review. For example, in "Module 5, Week 1, Day 4, Step 4" of the "Lesson Modules," the dictated sentence is "I am in the big rain forest." Students share the marker with the teacher to "help write any dominant sounds and familiar sight words," review the sight word "am," and use "Sound Boxes" to encode the word "big." This activity is an opportunity to practice encoding words with the newly taught short vowel /i/ and a cumulative review with encoding consonants (previously taught in "Modules 2" and "Module 3").

Practice opportunities include only phonics skills that have been explicitly taught.

- The materials do not provide explicit phonics instruction; instruction only happens through practice opportunities. For example, in "Module 2, Week 4, Day 1," students learn the letters Tt and Mm by sorting picture cards with the teacher. The teacher instructs the students to name

the pictures, the first sound, and the first letter before placing the picture under the correct letter category. On "Day 2," students compare and contrast the letters before playing "I Spy." Students locate objects in the room starting with the letters Tt and Mm.

- In "Module 3, Week 3, Day 4," students read the decodable "Super Story" *I Like...*. This book contains the words "I, like, the, cat, bat." Students practice the sight word "the" in "Module 3, Week 3." The materials do not introduce the sight word "like" until "Module 3, Week 5," and short vowel /a/ until "Module 4, Week 1."

Decodable texts incorporate cumulative practice of taught phonics skills.

- Due to their increasing complexity over the course of the year, the decodable "Super Stories" are available each week for intentional cumulative review. For example, the "Super Story" *Chop the Log* in "Module 7, Week 2" focuses on the recently taught initial digraphs /ch/ and /th/ while also including a cumulative review of short vowels /o/, /a/, and /e/ (introduced in "Module 4" and "Module 5") and consonants (introduced in "Module 2" and "Module 3").
- Decodable texts incorporate the cumulative practice of taught phonics skills. For example, in "Module 4, Week 1," the "Super Story" *Cats and Rats* focuses on the recently taught phonics pattern short /a/ while, also including a cumulative review of consonants introduced in "Module 2" and "Module 3". Students read words such as "pat, cat, Zac, rat."

Lessons include an instructional focus with opportunities for practice in isolation and connected text.

- The "Lesson Modules" resource details opportunities for students to practice phonics skills in isolation in step three of each lesson. For example, in "Module 3, Week 5, Day 2," students make or read the words "at, fat, bat, hat, cat, rat" using the "Stepping Together Letter Cards": Aa, Bb, Cc, Ff, Hh, Rr, and Tt. The consonants practiced in this lesson were the instructional focus during "Module 2" and "Module 3."
- Decodable texts called "Super Stories" are introduced starting in "Module 3," with a new text presented each week. "Chapter 4" of the *Teaching Guide* states that "Super Stories contain the high-frequency word and phonics elements that were taught during the week." In "Module 3," students read the "Super Story" *I Can Read*. The first sentence of the text is, "I can read to Zac." While students have learned sight words "I" and "can" in "Module 3" and the sound-symbol correspondence for Bb, Rr, Cc, Nn, Jj, Zz, Ll, Mm, Tt, Bb, Pp, and Ss in "Module 2" and "Module 3," students do not learn vowel sounds until "Module 4."
- Starting in "Module 4," students practice phonics skills using "Super Stories" that align with previously taught letters, sounds, and sight words. For example, in "Module 4, Week 2," students read the "Super Story" *Vans and Cabs*, which includes decodable words "at, van, Pat, sat, Zac, cab," along with the previously taught sight words and some non-decodable story words. The consonants practiced in this connected text were the instructional focus during "Module 2" and "Module 3," and the short vowel /a/ was the instructional focus of "Module 4, Week 1."

Phonics Rule Compliance

4.4	Assessment	7/7
4.4a	Materials include a variety of assessment tools that are developmentally appropriate.	2/2
4.4b	Materials include clear, consistent directions for accurate administration of assessments.	2/2
4.4c	Materials include progress monitoring tools that systematically and accurately measure students' acquisition of grade-level phonics skills.	2/2
4.4d	Materials include assessment opportunities across the span of the school year aligned to progress monitoring tools.	1/1

The materials include a variety of assessment tools that are developmentally appropriate. Materials include clear, consistent directions for accurate administration of assessments. Materials include progress monitoring tools that systematically and accurately measure students' acquisition of grade-level phonics skills. Materials include assessment opportunities across the span of the school year aligned to progress monitoring tools.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a variety of assessment tools that are developmentally appropriate.

- The materials include a summative assessment at the end of each module that measures the comprehension focus, encoding, and decoding of the targeted phonics skills and sight words covered throughout the module. For example, on the "Module 1" assessment, students identify rhyming words from a list (such as "coat" and "boat"), write their names, and identify characters from a story they have listened to.
- On the last day of every lesson plan, students take a formative assessment of the concepts taught that week. These formative assessments monitor progress on the phonics focus and sight words.
- The materials provide ongoing formative assessment with varying questions throughout the lessons at each step. For example, when playing the "Name Game," students locate their initial letter on the ABC poster as the teacher observes and asks questions, or the teacher dictates a letter that students must encode.

Materials include clear, consistent directions for accurate administration of assessments.

- There are clear and consistent directions for accurately administering the "Module Summative Assessments," called "Teacher Administration Directions: Modules 1-7" on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website. These directions include guidance on when to administer portions of the assessment individually versus when to administer in a whole-group setting, as well as the steps, materials, and a scoring recording form. For example, on

the "Read the Text" component of the "Module Summative Assessments," teachers are directed to, "Locate the appropriate book, introduce the book using the provided synopsis, and then conduct a read aloud (Modules 1 and 2) or shared reading (Modules 3–7) of the book with students as indicated on the Teacher Assessment Script. When conducting a shared reading, utilize the shared reading structures (echo, choral, cloze) while reading, but do not pause to ask questions." This guidance ensures consistency throughout the administration of all "Module Summative Assessments."

Materials include progress monitoring tools that systematically and accurately measure students' acquisition of grade-level phonics skills.

- "Appendix J: Letter Formation Checklist" and "Appendix K: Letter-Sound Checklist" in the *Teaching Guide* offer tools to monitor students' progress in learning letter formation and sounds. These assessments occur on day five of each "Lesson Module." For example, "Module 3, Week 5, Day 5, Step 3" assesses letters Dd, Gg, Kk, and Ss and prompts teachers to record students' progress on the checklists.

Materials include assessment opportunities across the span of the school year aligned to progress monitoring tools.

- Progress monitoring happens weekly through formative assessments on day 5 of each "Lesson Module." These assessments align with the "Formation and Letter-Sound Checklist" ("Appendix J" and "Appendix K," respectively). Additionally, these tools align with the "Module Summative Assessments." For example, the "Module 3 Summative Assessment" requires students to encode six of the following letters: Yy, Dd, Ff, Rr, Bb, Tt, Vv, Ww, Nn, Hh, Jj, Mm, Ll, Gg, Kk, and Ss. By the end of "Module 3," teachers have recorded student progress in encoding these letters using the provided checklist.

Phonics Rule Compliance

4.5	Progress Monitoring and Student Support	2/6
4.5a	Materials include data-management tools for tracking individual student progress to make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate instruction.	1/1
4.5b	Materials include data-management tools for tracking whole-class student progress to analyze patterns and needs of students.	1/2
4.5c	Materials include specific guidance on determining frequency of progress monitoring based on students' strengths and needs.	0/2
4.5d	Materials include guidance on how to accelerate learning based on the progress monitoring data to reach mastery of specific concepts.	0/1

The materials include data-management tools for tracking individual student progress to make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate instruction. Materials include data-management tools for tracking whole-class student progress to analyze needs of students. Materials do not include data-management tools for tracking whole-class student progress to analyze patterns of students. Materials do not include specific guidance on determining frequency of progress monitoring based on students' strengths and needs. Materials do not include guidance on how to accelerate learning based on the progress monitoring data to reach mastery of specific concepts.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include data-management tools for tracking individual student progress to make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate instruction.

- The materials include a "Letter Formation" and a "Letter-Sound List" in "Appendix J" and "Appendix K" of the *Teaching Guide*. These data management tools track individual student progress. Teachers make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate learning based on student progress by utilizing these checklists and Table 6-1: "Using Progress Monitoring Assessment Data." The table provides instruction decisions for students who have reached proficiency and those who have not. They provide general suggestions for both decoding and encoding. For example, if students have not reached proficiency in decoding, a suggestion is to "Regroup students as needed."
- "Chapter 6" of the *Teaching Guide* to make appropriate instructional decisions to accelerate instruction based on whether or not students are achieving proficiency with decoding and encoding.

Materials include data-management tools for tracking whole-class student progress to analyze patterns and needs of students.

- The "Teacher Administration Directions: Modules 1-7: on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provide a whole-class data-management tool for teachers. This tool helps

teachers analyze students' needs in phonological awareness, sight words, name writing, listening comprehension, letter writing, and word writing in "Module 1" through "Module 3." It also tracks phonemic awareness, reading words, listening comprehension, writing words, and writing sentences in "Module 4" through "Module 7." However, this tool does not support teachers in interpreting the data to find and analyze patterns.

Materials include specific guidance on determining frequency of progress monitoring based on students' strengths and needs.

- The "Lesson Modules" resource includes formative assessments at the end of each week (on day five) to monitor progress. However, since every student completes these assessments, progress monitoring is not tailored to individual students' strengths and needs. There is no specific guidance on determining the frequency of progress monitoring based on students' strengths and needs.

Materials include guidance on how to accelerate learning based on the progress monitoring data to reach mastery of specific concepts.

- "Appendix E" in the *Teaching Guide* provides general guidance on scaffolding or enriching each type of phonics activity ("Picture Sorting," "Letter Detectives," "Making Words," "Sound Boxes," "Breaking Words," and "Decoding Words" in "Decodable Text"). An example of a scaffold to support students in selecting the correct letter(s) to represent sound is to "Model how to blend the sounds in the word." However, the materials do not explain how to use progress monitoring data to accelerate learning so students can master specific concepts.

Foundational Skills

5.B.1	Oral Language Development	13/21
5.B.1a	Materials include explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy through a variety of methods (e.g., modeling, guided practice, coaching, feedback, and independent practice). (T)	0/8
5.B.1b	Materials include opportunities for students to engage in social and academic communication for different purposes and audiences. (S)	4/4
5.B.1c	Materials include authentic opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. (S)	9/9

The materials do not include explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy through a variety of methods (e.g., modeling, guided practice, coaching, feedback, and independent practice). Materials include opportunities for students to engage in social and academic communication for different purposes and audiences. Materials include authentic opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include explicit (direct) and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy through a variety of methods (e.g., modeling, guided practice, coaching, feedback, and independent practice). (T)

- The materials do not include explicit and systematic instructional guidance on developing oral language and oracy. They do provide opportunities for students to practice oral language and oracy. For example, in "Module 2, Week 3, Step 4," after reading *Little Knight Goes Shopping*, the students turn and talk about the meaning of the word "buying." In "Module 3, Week 2, Day 1, Step 4," the teacher allows students to discuss the text *Life at the Beach*, saying, "Turn to the referenced page, and choose two animals and think about how the animals are alike in some way. Share your ideas with your partner." However, the materials do not provide explicit and systematic instructional guidance, such as expectations and procedures for students' engagement with a turn and talk.
- After "Module 2, Week 2, Day 5," in the "Tips for ELL" section, the teacher is instructed to do the following: "When using the terms, "alike" and "different," show concrete examples of each term using pictures in the book. To support the comprehension focus of analyzing relationships, provide the following oral language sentence frames: "A ___ and a ___ are alike because ___. A ___ and a ___ are different because ___." While this provides more specific guidance, it is not appropriate for all students.
- The *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website provides a tool, "How to Facilitate Effective Discussions," describing oral language examples. For example, the chart describes "Explain Your Thinking" as "Using evidence to support your thinking" and "Adding on to your

thinking." However, the chart provides generic teacher guidance rather than explicit and systematic guidance to develop oral language and oracy.

Materials include opportunities for students to engage in social and academic communication for different purposes and audiences. (S)

- The Lesson Modules provide opportunities to engage in both social and academic communication. For example, in "Module 2, Week 3, Day 3, Step 4," students engage in an academic conversation based on the shared reading *Little Knight Goes Shopping*. After reading the text, partners discuss the answer to the question, "Why do you think Little Knight wants to dress up?" to support their comprehension. Students engage in social communication by sharing what they like to dress up while making a personal connection to the text.
- The "Lesson Modules" allow students to communicate with different audiences. For example, in "Module 4, Week 1, Day 1, Step 4," the teacher prompts students to discuss with a partner their favorite thing that they can do that the knight in the story can also do. In "Module 1, Week 2, Day 2, Step 2," students play a game called "Listen Up: Do Three Things," in which they must actively listen to instructions and then share with the teacher which instruction they followed first, middle, and last.

Materials include authentic opportunities for students to listen actively, ask questions, engage in discussion to understand information, and share information and ideas. (S)

- The "Lesson Modules" resource provides opportunities within lesson plans for students to listen actively to understand and share information and ideas. For example, in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 1, Step 2," students listen to recognize rhymes. They put their thumb up if they hear rhyming words to show understanding. They listen to instructions and then share information in "Step 3" of the same lesson by completing the picture sorting activity. Another example occurs in "Module 3, Week 2, Day 1, Step 4," as students actively listen to understand as the teacher introduces the new shared reading *Life at the Beach*. The teacher encourages students to actively listen as ideas on what the text will be about are shared. Finally, students actively listen to the information in the text as the teacher prompts their purpose for reading: "We are going to look at different animals you can find at the beach. As we read, let's use the photographs to think about how the animals are alike in some way."
- The "Lesson Modules" resource provides opportunities within lesson plans for students to ask questions to understand and share information and ideas. For example, in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 3," the comprehension focus is asking and answering questions. In the lesson's shared reading portion ("Step 4"), the students ask their partner what Rusty (the main character from their shared reading, *Rusty Can Do It*) is doing in the text. They then share information and ideas using a graphic organizer to retell the story based on their discussion of Rusty's actions. There is a similar activity in "Module 2, Week 2, Day 1, Step 4": students ask questions about the scorpion and the elephant, using information from the text *Dangerous Animals* to help

them answer. For instance, "Who has a question about the scorpion that we can answer using this page?"

- The Lesson Modules resource provides opportunities within lesson plans for students to engage in discussion to understand and share information and ideas. For example, in "Module 2, Week 2, Day 3, Step 4," students discuss to support their understanding of the shared reading, *Dangerous Animals*. Partners share information and ideas about how one of the animals in the text is dangerous using evidence from the text. In "Module 3, Week 2, Day 1, Step 4," students discuss ideas and information about the shared reading to support their understanding of the text. The teacher guides students to turn to the referenced page and, "Choose two animals and think about how the animals are alike in some way. Share your ideas with your partner. How are a crab, turtle, and clam alike (all have shells)? Discuss other animals from the book that are alike in some way."

Foundational Skills

5.C.1	Alphabet Knowledge (K only)	12/24
5.C.1a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds. (PR 2.A.1)	0/2
5.C.1b	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase) and their corresponding sounds. (PR 2.A.1)(T)	0/6
5.C.1c	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3)(T)	0/4
5.C.1d	Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge both in isolation and in the context of meaningful print. (PR 2.A & 2.A.3)(S)	12/12

The materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds. Materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase) and their corresponding sounds. Materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide direct, explicit, and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase). Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge both in isolation and in the context of meaningful print.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds.

- Materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds. Table 1-2: "Phonological Awareness and Phonics Scope and Sequence" in "Chapter 1" of the *Teaching Guide* outlines the letters taught by module and week. "Appendix A" of the *Teaching Guide* provides a scope and sequence that includes the daily phonics activity, with letter instruction starting in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 1." However, the scope and sequence does not include short vowels until "Module 4," and the first six letters introduced (Bb, Rr, Cc, Nn, Jj, and Zz) do not demonstrate an early emphasis on high-priority letters. Therefore, there is no systematic sequence for introducing letter names and their corresponding sounds.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for teaching and developing student automaticity in the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase) and their corresponding sounds. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

- Materials do not include explicit instruction for teaching the identification of the 26 letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. The "Lesson Modules" resource includes instructions for identifying letters at the beginning of the year ("Module 1") using the "Name Game." According to "Chapter 4" of the Teaching Guide, the 'Name Game' activity exposes students to "attending to initial consonants and sounds, recognizing syllables, counting letters in a name, and identifying names with the same initial consonant or vowel letter and sound." Explicit instruction for the 26 letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds does not occur within the Name Game activity."
- The materials do not guide the teacher to provide direct and explicit instruction for teaching and developing automaticity in identifying the 26 letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. In "Module 2," the "Lesson Modules" resource includes activities such as "Picture Sorting" and "Letter Detective." These activities serve as instruction on letter identification and their sounds. "Picture Sorting" entails the teacher providing students with two "Stepping Together Letter Cards" and a set of "Stepping Together Picture Cards" and then asking students to sort the pictures into the pocket chart based on the sounds heard in the word the picture describes. For example, in "Module 2, Week 2, Day 3, Step 3," the teacher provides the "Stepping Together Picture Cards" for Jj and Rr, along with a pocket chart and the "Stepping Together Letter Cards" Jj and Rr. The lesson script states, "Together, let's say the picture word on this card, the first sound, and the first letter." The materials do not provide scripted instructions for the relevant letter names, sounds, and keywords.
- In the "Letter Detective" activity, the following instructional guidance is given (in this case, for letters Nn and Zz in "Module 2, Week 2, Day 2, Step 2"): "Write the letters Nn and Zz on the board. *How are the letters the same? How are the letters different? I spy something in the room that starts with Nn. I spy something in the room that starts with Zz.*" The italicized text indicates the portion of the lesson plan scripted for the teacher. However, it does not include explicit instruction that supports the development of automaticity in identifying letters and their corresponding sounds.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (T)

- The materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit and systematic instruction for letter formation for the 26 letters of the alphabet. "Chapter 5" of the *Teaching Guide*, titled "Shared Reading/Interactive Writing," provides instructions for the teacher on modeling letter formation. These instructions utilize the language and guidelines in Table 5-3: "Letter Formation Guide." For example, the table indicates "pull back and around" for lowercase "c" and "pull back and around" for uppercase "C." The table does not provide instructions on where to begin the placement of the upper and lowercase letters.

- The "Lesson Modules" do not include explicit instruction for the letter formation of the 26 alphabet letters. The "Lesson Modules" resource indicates which letters to teach on specific days for letter formation (such as "Letter Formation: c and b" in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 4, Step 4"), but the daily lesson plans do not include instructional guidance on letter formation. The lesson plans within the Lesson Modules only ever indicate lowercase letters, and the teacher would still have to cross-reference the daily lesson plans in the "Lesson Module" resource with Table 5-3 in the *Teaching Guide*.
- The materials do not provide a systematic approach to letter formation without guidance on incorporating and practicing fine and gross motor skills.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) alphabet knowledge both in isolation and in the context of meaningful print. (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

- The "Lesson Modules" resource includes activities for students to develop, practice, and reinforce alphabet knowledge in isolation, typically occurring in steps three and four of the daily lesson plans. For example, in "Module 3, Week 1, Day 1, Step 3", students develop alphabet knowledge by participating in the "Picture Sorting" activity with the "Stepping Together Letter Cards" Dd and Gg and "Stepping Together Picture Cards" for Dd and Gg. Alphabet knowledge for letters Dd and Gg is practiced the same week on "Day 3 in Step 3," in which students will participate in the "Letter Detective" activity of letters Dd and Gg. Cumulative review occurs in the "Module 4 Summative Assessment." In this assessment, students practice recognizing letters Dd and Gg and their corresponding sounds while decoding the words "rag" and "log" in the "Phonemic Awareness and Reading Words" portion of the assessment.
- The "Lesson Modules" resource includes activities for students to develop and reinforce alphabet knowledge in meaningful print through dictated sentences and decodable texts (known as 'Super Stories'). For example, in "Module 3, Week 1, Day 2," students develop alphabet knowledge by identifying and writing letter sounds /d/ and /g/ in the dictated sentence "I can read to my dog." Reinforcement through cumulative review typically occurs in opportunities to read the "Super Story." For example, in "Module 6, Week 2," students can practice decoding words with the letters Dd and Gg when reading the "Super Story" *The Dog, the Pig, and the Cub*. Students do not identify words with these letters; they only decode words with them.
- "Stepping Together" lessons are designed to include multi-modal activities for the purpose of being memory-building strategies. For instance, the inclusion and use of the "ABC Chart Card" and "ABC Poster" incorporates colorful pictures to create a sound-letter link. Large picture sorting cards are used as a tactile memory building strategy.

Foundational Skills

5.C.2	Letter-Sound Correspondence	12/18
5.C.2a	Materials explicitly (directly), and systematically introduce letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1)	0/4
5.C.2b	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2)(T)	0/2
5.C.2c	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. (PR 2.A & 2.A.3)(S)	12/12

The materials do not explicitly (directly), and systematically introduce letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding. Materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one syllable words in isolation and decodable connected text.

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials explicitly (directly), and systematically introduce letter-sound relationships in an order that allows for application to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1)

- The materials do not provide explicit instruction on letter-sound relationships that allow for application to basic decoding and encoding. The "Word Study" and "Phonics" components of the "Lesson Modules" resource provide activities for teaching phonics, but these activities do not provide explicit instruction on letter-sound relationships. For example, in "Module 2, Week 1, Day 3, Step 3," the "Lesson Modules" resource states, "Gather the Stepping Together Picture Cards for *r* and *b*. Put the Stepping Together Letter Cards *r* and *b* in the pocket chart. *Together let's say the picture word on this card, the first sound, and the first letter.* Put the Stepping Together Picture Card under the correct letter." The scripted part of the lesson, indicated by the italics, does not require the teacher to explicitly model or explain the letter-sound relationships for the letters introduced. Students cannot apply the letter-sound relationships to basic decoding and encoding without this explicit instruction.
- Table 1-2: "Phonological Awareness and Phonics Scope and Sequence" in "Chapter 1" of the *Teaching Guide* outlines the phonics skills taught by module and week. However, the scope and sequence does not include short vowels until "Module 4," and the first six letters introduced (Bb, Rr, Cc, Nn, Jj, and Zz) do not demonstrate an early emphasis on high-priority letters. This sequence inhibits students from applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships to basic decoding and encoding.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR.2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

- The "Lesson Modules" resource outlines lesson plans that do not script the teacher's direct and explicit instruction to connect phonemes to letters within words. Students only engage in activities such as "Picture Sorting," "Making Words," and "Sound Boxes" to practice connecting phonemes to letters.
- The materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit instruction focused on connecting phonemes to letters within words with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. The materials provide feedback support in "Appendix E: Phonics Differentiation with Corrective Feedback" in the *Teaching Guide* for each of the six activities. The guidance includes support in scaffolding or enriching the activities using corrective feedback. For instance, if a student needs scaffolding with isolating phonemes using sound boxes, the teacher models by slowly saying the word and stretching the sounds while running a finger under the boxes. However, the materials do not provide explanatory feedback for students based on common errors or misconceptions in relation to each lesson.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one syllable and multisyllable words in isolation and decodable connected text. (PR.2.A & 2.A.3)

(S)

- The "Lesson Modules" resource provides activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one-syllable words in isolation. For example, in "Module 4, Week 1, Day 2, Step 3", students develop their understanding of letter-sound correspondence by decoding one-syllable words, "pat, mat, man, cat, pan," with the newly introduced short vowel /a/. Letter-sound correspondence for the short vowel a is practiced the following week, "Week 2, Day 1, Step 3," in which students decode one-syllable words with the same vowel pattern: "mad, mat, pat, hat, had." Cumulative review occurs in "Module 4," the "Summative Assessment." In this assessment, students practice applying letter-sound correspondence to decode the one-syllable words "rag" and "nap" in the "Phonemic Awareness and Reading Words" portion of the assessment.
- The "Lesson Modules" resource provides activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce their understanding of applying letter-sound correspondence to decode one-syllable words in decodable connected texts (known as "Super Stories"). For example, in "Module 4, Week 1, Day 4, Step 3," students develop letter-sound correspondence by decoding one-syllable words with the short vowel /a/ in the "Super Story" *Cats and Rats*. Students review this skill by reading the same text in the decoding assessment on "Day 5, Step 3" of the same week. The following week ("Week 2") of the same module, students continue to

review one-syllable words with the short vowel /a/ in connected text when they read the "Super Story" *Vans and Cabs*. Practice through cumulative review occurs in "Module 6, Week 5," in which students practice decoding one-syllable words with the short vowel /a/ when reading the "Super Story" *The Big Van*.

Foundational Skills

5.D.1	Phonological Awareness (K–2)	4/12
5.D.1a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities in accordance with grade-level TEKS that begins with simple skills and larger units of sound (e.g., identifying and producing rhyming words, recognizing spoken alliteration, identifying the individual words in spoken sentences) and gradually transitions to more complex skills and smaller units of sound (e.g., adding, deleting, and substituting syllables). (PR 2.A.1)	0/4
5.D.1b	Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2)(T)	0/2
5.D.1C	Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3)(S)	4/6

The materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities in accordance with grade-level TEKS that begins with simple skills and larger units of sound (e.g., identifying and producing rhyming words, recognizing spoken alliteration, identifying the individual words in spoken sentences) and gradually transitions to more complex skills and smaller units of sound (e.g., adding, deleting, and substituting syllables). Materials do not include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop and practice phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS. Materials do not include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS (through cumulative review).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonological awareness activities in accordance with grade-level TEKS that begins with simple skills and larger units of sound (e.g., identifying and producing rhyming words, recognizing spoken alliteration, identifying the individual words in spoken sentences) and gradually transitions to more complex skills and smaller units of sound (e.g., adding, deleting, and substituting syllables). (PR 2.A.1)

- According to Appendix A of the Teaching Guide, larger units of sound (such as segmenting sentences and repeating and recognizing rhymes) start in Module 1, the beginning of the sequence of lessons. For example, in Module 1, Week 2, Day 4, Step 2 of the Lesson Modules resource, the teacher dictates a sentence that the students repeat back while counting the number of words. They also recall the first word in the sentence. However, the ‘repeating rhymes’ activity in Module 1 has students identifying the rhyme they hear at the end of each

word in a group of rhyming words without the teacher segmenting onset and rime to scaffold the activity for the students. This complex skill begins before students engage in activities involving simpler skills, such as recognizing rhymes or blending or segmenting syllables. Students begin blending, segmenting, and deleting syllables within Week 4 of Module 2, indicating that there is no systematic sequence within syllable awareness lessons. Phonological awareness activities (in Step 2 of the lesson plans in the Lesson Modules resource) also do not address alliteration, but they do address segmenting onset-rime and deleting onset. Therefore, the materials do not include a systematic sequence or align with all grade-level phonological awareness TEKS.

Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonological awareness skills with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR

2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

- The Lesson Modules resource outlines lesson plans that do not script the teacher's direct and explicit instruction on phonological awareness. For example, in a lesson on producing rhymes in Module 3, Week 1, Day 1, Step 2, the following guidance is provided: "Model: *I am going to say a word, and we are going to listen to how the word ends. Then we will say more words that end the same way. Say a word that ends with /an/: can. Have students repeat the word. Now say more words that have /an/: pan, tan, fan.*" The scripted component is in italics. However, the guidance does not provide specific language for explicit instruction on how to produce rhyming words.
- The materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit instruction focused on phonological awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. The materials provide feedback support in Appendix D: Phonological Awareness Differentiation with Corrective Feedback in the Teaching Guide for Rhyming, Blending, Segmenting, and Adding/Deleting activities. The guidance includes support in scaffolding or enriching the activities using corrective feedback. For instance, if a student needs scaffolding while "producing rhyming words," the teacher can "provide an example." However, the materials do not provide explanatory feedback for students based on common errors or misconceptions in relation to each lesson.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonological awareness skills connected to grade-level TEKS (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

e review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

- The Lesson Modules resource includes activities and resources to develop and practice phonological awareness skills. For example, in Module 2, Week 1, Day 2, Step 2, students develop the skill of blending compound words. The teacher models blending *base* and *ball* using Sally the Cow Puppet to make the compound word *baseball* and then engages the students in guided practice (with the words *ladybug*, *beanbag*, *snowman*, and *notepad*). In Module 2, Week 2, Day 2, Step 2, students practice blending compound words. Again, the

teacher models blending words to make a compound word, followed by guided practice (with the words *lighthouse*, *strawberry*, *seahorse*, and *raincoat*).

- Activities and resources in the Lesson Modules resource include memory-building strategies such as body movements and gestures, poems, songs, chants, and the Sally the Cow Puppet. For example, in Module 2, Week 3, Day 4, Step 2, students will use their fists to add words together to make compound words. In Module 5, Week 1, Day 3, Step 2, students will touch their heads, shoulders, and knees as they segment phonemes. In the 'Warm Up' (Step 1) of each lesson, teachers "read a familiar nursery rhyme, song, poem, or chant" to practice their rhyming skills.

Foundational Skills

5.D.2	Phonemic Awareness (K–2)	4/13
5.D.2a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. (PR 2.A.1)	0/3
5.D.2b	Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2) (T)	0/2
5.D.2C	Materials include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle, to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1) (T)	0/2
5.D.2d	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)	4/6

The materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. Materials do not include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. Materials do not include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle, to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic decoding and encoding. Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop and practice phonemic awareness skills. Materials do include a variety of activities and resources for students to reinforce phonemic awareness skills (through cumulative review).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing phonemic awareness activities that begins with identifying, blending, and segmenting phonemes, and gradually transitions to more complex manipulation practices such as adding, deleting, and substituting phonemes. (PR 2.A.1)

- Appendix A of the Teaching Guide outlines phonemic awareness activities on blending and segmenting phonemes beginning in Module 4, Week 4, on Days 2 and 3, respectively. According to the Lesson Modules resource, when introducing blending phonemes on Day 2, the teacher models saying "the sounds in a word" and putting "the sounds together to make the word" (*cat*) using Sally the Cow Puppet. The lesson plan then provides additional sounds for the teacher to use in guided practice for blending phonemes. When introducing segmenting phonemes the next day, the teacher models dictates a word (*cat*), has the students repeat it back to her, and then models stretching out the sounds and then isolating the phonemes (while tapping head, shoulders, and knees). The lesson plan then provides

additional words for the teacher to use in guided practice for segmenting phonemes. The sequence of introducing these skills in the same week and module is not systematic.

- According to Appendix A of the Teaching Guide, the complex skill of deleting onset is introduced in Module 3, Week 4, before blending and segmenting phonemes are introduced (in Module 4, Week 4). In the Lesson Modules resource in Step 2, Day 4, Week 4, Module 3, the teacher models deleting the onset (the phoneme /c/) of the word *cat* and then leads the students through guided practice (deleting /b/ from *bat*, /t/ from *tad*, /p/ from *pan*, and /w/ from *wag*). This is not systematically sequenced.

Materials include explicit (direct) instruction for teaching phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. (PR 2.A & 2.A.2) (T)

- The Lesson Modules resource outlines lesson plans that do not script the teacher's direct and explicit instruction on phonemic awareness. For example, in a lesson on blending phonemes in Module 4, Week 4, Day 2, Step 2, the following guidance is provided: "Model: *I am going to say the sounds in a word. We are going to put the sounds together to make the word.* Use the Sally the Cow Puppet to say the sounds in the word: c-ă-t. Have students repeat the sounds. Put the sounds together to make the word: *cat.*" The scripted component is in italics. However, the guidance does not provide specific language for explicit instruction on how to blend phonemes.
- The materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit instruction focused on phonemic awareness with recommended explanatory feedback for students based on common errors and misconceptions. The materials provide feedback support in Appendix D: Phonological Awareness Differentiation with Corrective Feedback in the Teaching Guide for Rhyming, Blending, Segmenting, and Adding/Deleting activities. The guidance includes support in scaffolding or enriching the activities using corrective feedback. For instance, if a student needs scaffolding while "blending phonemes," the teacher can "use hand motions." However, the materials do not provide explanatory feedback for students based on common errors or misconceptions in relation to each lesson.

Materials include explicit (direct) guidance for connecting phonemic awareness skills to the alphabetic principle, to support students in the transition from oral language activities to basic decoding and encoding. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

- According to Table 1-1: Five-Day Weekly Plan in Chapter 1 of the Teaching Guide, each lesson for Days 1 through 4 in the Lesson Modules resource includes a Step 2 Phonological Awareness Activity followed by a Step 3 Word Study / Phonics Activity. For example, in Module 4, Week 4, Day 3, students segment phonemes in Step 2 (the phonological awareness activity has the teacher model segmenting the phonemes in the word *cat* and then lead the students through guided practice) and encode in Step 3 (the phonics activity has the teacher dictate the words *nod*, *sob*, *lox*, and *hop* while students write the sounds in sound boxes). However, the lesson does not provide explicit or specific guidance to connect the oral activity in Step 2 to the encoding in Step 3.

- In Module 4, Week 5, Day 2, students blend phonemes in Step 2 (the phonological awareness activity includes the teacher modeling blending the sounds in the word *job* and then leading the students through guided practice) and encode or decode words in Step 3 (the phonics activity has students make the word *bag* and then either "make or read" the words: *bog*, *bob*, *lob*, *lab*, *jab*, and *job*). However, the lesson does not provide explicit or specific guidance to connect the oral activity in Step 2 to the decoding or encoding activity in Step 3.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce phonemic awareness skills (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

- The Lesson Modules resource includes various activities specifically designed to help students develop and practice their phonemic awareness skills within the lesson plans. Activities incorporate gestures, body movements, and other kinesthetic activities (including Sally the Cow Puppet) to help students practice phonemic awareness skills. For example, in Module 4, Week 4, Day 2, Step 2, the students develop the skill of blending phonemes. The teacher uses the Sally the Cow Puppet to model blending the phonemes in the word *cat* and then leads students through guided practice.
- The materials include a variety of resources for students to develop and practice phonemic awareness skills. In Module 4, Week 5, Day 2, Step 2, the students practice blending phonemes. The teacher uses the Sally the Cow Puppet to model blending the phonemes in the word *job* and then leads students through guided practice. Also, students use Sound Boxes throughout the materials to segment the sounds in words before encoding.

Foundational Skills

5.E.1	Sound-Spelling Patterns	14/16
5.E.1a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS. (PR 2.A.1)	0/1
5.E.1b	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. (PR 2.A.1)(T)	0/1
5.E.1c	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1)(T)	6/6
5.E.1d	Materials provide a variety of activities and resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3)(S)	8/8

The materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS. Materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns (through cumulative review). Materials provide a variety of activities and resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns, as outlined in the TEKS. (PR 2.A.1)

- Materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level sound-spelling patterns. Table 1-2: Phonological Awareness and Phonics Scope and Sequence in Chapter 1 of the Teaching Guide outlines the letters taught by module and week. Appendix A of the Teaching Guide provides a scope and sequence that includes the daily phonics activity, with letter instruction starting in Module 2, Week 1, Day 1. However, the scope and sequence does not include short vowels until Module 4, and the first six letters introduced (*b, r, c, n, j, and z*) do not demonstrate an early emphasis on high-priority letters.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. (PR 2.A.1)(T)

- The materials do not provide explicit instruction for grade-level sound-spelling patterns. The Word Study/Phonics component of the Lesson Modules resource provides activities for teaching sound-spelling patterns, but these activities do not provide explicit instruction.

Chapter 4 of the Teaching Guide states, "Students learn sounds during Picture Sorting." Chapter 4 of the Teaching Guide describes the steps of the Picture Sorting activity: the teacher introduces multiple letters or sounds and then instructs students to sort the Stepping Together Picture Cards based on whether they hear the sound in the word the picture card depicts. For example, in Module 2, Week 1, Day 3, Step 3, the Lesson Modules resource states, "Gather the Stepping Together Picture Cards for *r* and *b*. Put the Stepping Together Letter Cards *r* and *b* in the pocket chart. *Together let's say the picture word on this card, the first sound, and the first letter.* Put the Stepping Together Picture Card under the correct letter." The scripted part of the lesson, indicated by the italics, does not require the teacher to model or explain the sound-spelling pattern explicitly.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1) (T)

- The Lesson Modules resource includes activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce grade-level sound-spelling patterns. For example, in Module 4, Week 1, Day 2, Step 3, students develop the sound-spelling pattern for the short vowel *a*. In this 'Making Words' activity, students use the Stepping Together Letter Cards *a*, *c*, *m*, *n*, *p*, and *t* to make or read the words *cat*, *pat*, *mat*, *man*, and *pan*. Students practice this skill the next day (Day 3) in Step 3, participating in the 'Sound Boxes: Short Vowel *a*' activity. In this activity, students use Sound Box Cards and dry-erase markers to write the letters in the words *cap*, *bat*, *tap*, and *had* as the teacher dictates each word. The materials reinforce this skill through cumulative review in the Phonemic Awareness and Reading Words portion of the Module 5 Summative Assessment (found on the Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources website), during which students must read the word *tap* among other CVC words with previously taught sound-spelling patterns.
- Other activities for developing, practicing, and reinforcing grade-level sound-spelling patterns include 'Decoding Words in Decodable Texts' (such as in Module 4, Week 2, Day 4, Step 3), assessing the phonics focus through encoding and decoding (occurring on Day 5 of any given week in the Lesson Modules resource), 'Emergent Breaking Words' (such as in Module 6, Week 5, Day 3, Step 3), and 'Breaking Words' (such as in Module 7, Week 3, Day 3, Step 3).
- Additional resources for developing, practicing, and reinforcing grade-level sound-spelling patterns are the decodable texts called Super Stories. For example, in Module 4, Week 2, students practice the sound-spelling pattern for the short *a* when reading *Vans and Cabs*.

Materials provide a variety of activities and resources to support students in decoding and encoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3) (S)

- The Lesson Modules resource includes various activities and resources to support students in decoding words that include taught sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation and decodable connected text called Super Stories. For example, in Module 4, Week 1, Day 1, Step 3,

students are introduced to the sound-spelling pattern for the short vowel ‘a’. On Day 2 of the same week, students have the opportunity to decode words that include the sound-spelling pattern for the short vowel ‘a’ in isolation using the Stepping Together Letter Cards *a, d, h, m, p, s,* and *t* (*cat, pat, mat, man,* and *pan*) in the ‘Making Words’ activity. On Day 4 of the same week, students decode words in a decodable connected text when they read the Super Story *Cats and Rats*.

- The Lesson Modules resource includes various activities and resources to support encoding words that include teaching sound-spelling patterns, both in isolation and in decodable connected text. For example, in Module 4, Week 1, Day 1, Step 3, students are introduced to the sound-spelling pattern for the short vowel *a*. On Day 2 of the same week, students have the opportunity to encode words that include the sound-spelling pattern for the short vowel *a* in isolation using the Stepping Together Letter Cards *a, d, h, m, p, s,* and *t* (*cat, pat, mat, man,* and *pan*) in the ‘Making Words’ activity. In Module 4, the Summative Assessment (found on the Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources website), students apply encoding knowledge of previously taught sound-spelling patterns in connected text when they complete the Writing a Sentence portion of the assessment. The assessment provides the sentence to dictate for students to encode: "We can see a dog."

Foundational Skills

5.E.2	Regular and Irregular High-Frequency Words	36/42
5.E.2a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1)	0/2
5.E.2b	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for decoding and encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1)(T)	0/4
5.E.2c	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode and encode regular and irregular high-frequency words (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3)(S)	24/24
5.E.2d	Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in connected text (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1)(S)	12/12

The materials do not include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. Materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for decoding and encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode and encode regular and irregular high-frequency words (through cumulative review). Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in connected text (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1)

- The materials lack a coherent sequence for introducing regular and irregular words that align with the sound-spelling patterns taught in phonics. According to Appendix A of the teaching guide, sight words are introduced starting in module 3, with the words *to*, *at*, *the*, *is*, and *like*. However, regular high-frequency words *like* would not be decodable based on the spelling patterns taught. According to Table 1-2 of the teaching guide, students are not exposed to short vowel sounds to decode words until module 4, and the materials do not introduce long vowel sounds in the Kindergarten Stepping Together materials. The materials introduce irregular high-frequency words *the* before digraph *th* is introduced in week 2 of module 7, meaning that even though it is partially decodable, students would not yet know the sound-spelling correspondence for *th*. The materials introduce the sight words *and*, *am*, *my*, *for*, and *going* in module 5; however, the phonics focus of Weeks 1-4 in module 5 are on short vowels *a*, *i*, *u*, *o*, and *e*.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for decoding and encoding regular and irregular high-frequency words. (PR 2.A.1) (T)

- According to chapter 5 of the teaching guide, sight words are introduced on day 2 and reinforced on day 4 of the typical weekly lesson plans provided in the lesson modules resource. Day 2 includes the *Map the Letters*, *What's Missing*, and *Mix It and Fix It* activities. Day 4 consists of the activities *Rug Writing* and *Write and Retrieve*. Chapter 5 of the teaching guide outlines the directions for these activities, but the lesson plans do not provide detailed script instruction on teaching sight words. The lesson modules resource does not provide details or guidelines for the high-frequency words taught at the lesson or unit level.
- The lesson modules resource does not include any scripts or explicitly defined strategies, nor does it include guidance about regular or irregular high-frequency words and how to apply decoding strategies (either to the whole word or parts of words).

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode and encode regular and irregular high-frequency words (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3) (S)

- The materials include various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) skills to decode regular and irregular high-frequency words. According to chapter 5 of the teaching guide, students develop *Sight Words* on day 2 of the typical weekly lesson plans in the lesson modules resource through the activities *Map the Letters* (in which students make "a line on the easel for each sound" and "write the letters spelling the sound on the lines"), *What's Missing* (in which students are shown a high-frequency word with a missing letter and must tell the teacher which letter is missing) and *Mix It and Fix It* (in which students make the word using the Stepping Together Letter Cards included in the high-frequency word). The teaching guide directs teachers to "Direct students' attention to any irregular spellings (in this word, *ai* spells /e/)." For example, module 3, week 1, day 2, step 4 directs teachers to engage the students in *Map the Letters*, *What's Missing*, and *Mix It and Fix It* for the sight word *to*. Day 4 of the lesson modules resource typically includes the activity *Decoding Words in Decodable Text*, where students practice reading the sight word introduced the day prior. For example, module 3, week 1, day 4, step 3 directs teachers to "Practice reading the sight word *to*" within the *I Can Read Super Story*. The materials include reinforcement through cumulative review in the module assessments, in the sight word section, in which students must read all high-frequency words introduced within the module. For example, students must read the Sight Word *to* in the Module 3 Summative Assessment along with the words *at*, *the*, *is*, and *like*. Students develop, practice, and reinforce through cumulative review for regular high-frequency words (such as the sight word *at* in module 3) and irregular high-frequency words (such as the sight word *the* in module 3).
- The materials include various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) skills to encode regular and irregular high-frequency words. Students develop encoding sight words on day 2 of the typical weekly lesson plans in the lesson modules resource through the *Map the Letters*, *What's Missing*, and *Mix It and Fix It*

activities. On day 4 of the typical weekly lesson plans in the lesson modules resource, students practice encoding the previously taught sight word through *Rug Writing* (in which students use their index finger to ‘write’ the sight word on the rug) and *Write and Retrieve* (in which the students write the sight word at the bottom of their ABC chart). For example, in module 3, week 1, day 4, step 4, students engage in *Rug Writing and Write and Retrieve for the Sight Word to*. The materials are reinforced through cumulative review through the module assessments, in which students must write all high-frequency words introduced within the module. For example, students must write the sight word *to* in the module 3 summative assessment, along with the words *at*, *the*, *is*, and *like*. Students develop, practice, and reinforce through cumulative review for regular high-frequency words (such as the sight word *at* in module 3) and irregular high-frequency words (such as the sight word *the* in module 3).

Materials include a variety of activities and resources (including the use of memory-building strategies) for students to recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in connected text (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A.1) (S)

- There are a variety of activities and resources (including memory-building strategies) for students to recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in isolation in the lesson modules resource. Students recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in isolation while participating in the *Map the Letters*, *What’s Missing*, *Mix It and Fix It*, *Rug Writing*, and *Write and Retrieve* activities (utilizing the Stepping Together Letter Cards, ABC chart, the rug, dry erase boards, etc.). For example, in module 3, week 1, students participate in *Map the Letters*, *What’s Missing*, *Mix and Fix*, *Rug Writing*, and *Write and Retrieve* with the sight word *to*.
- There are a variety of activities and resources (including memory-building strategies) for students to recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in connected text in the lesson modules resource. Students recognize, read, and write high-frequency words in the connected text while participating in the decoding words in *Decodable Text*, *Dictated Sentence*, *Cut-Up Sentence*, and *Writing a Sentence* (found in the modules summative assessments beginning in module 4) activities (utilizing sentences to dictate, chart paper, sentence strips, Super Stories, etc.). For example, in module 3, week 1, students participate in *Decoding Words in Decodable Text* (using the Super Story *I Can Read*), *Dictated Sentences*, and *Cut-Up Sentences* (using the sentence "I can read to my friend," chart paper, sound boxes, and sentence strips) with the sight word *to*.

Foundational Skills

5.E.3	Decoding and Encoding One-Syllable or Multisyllabic Words	12/12
5.E.3a	Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level syllable types and syllable division principles, as outlined in the TEKS. (PR 2.A.1)	N/A
5.E.3b	Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for applying knowledge of syllable types and syllable division principles to decode and encode one-syllable or multisyllabic words. (PR 2.A.1)(T)	N/A
5.E.3c	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice and reinforce skills to decode and encode one-syllable or multisyllabic words (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3)(S)	12/12
5.E.3d	Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to practice decoding and encoding one-syllable or multisyllabic words, using knowledge of syllable types and syllable division principles, in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3)(S)	N/A

The materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce skills to decode and encode one-syllable or multisyllabic words (through cumulative review).

Evidence includes, but is not limited to:

Materials include a systematic sequence for introducing grade-level syllable types and syllable division principles, as outlined in the TEKS. (PR 2.A.1)

- This guidance is not applicable to the grade level.

Materials include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction for applying knowledge of syllable types and syllable division principles to decode and encode one-syllable or multisyllabic words. (PR 2.A.1)(T)

- The materials do not include guidance for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction on syllable types to decode and encode one-syllable words. Chapter 4 of the teaching guide outlines an activity called the Name Game in which teachers "clap the student's name" and ask, "Which name(s) have only one syllable? Find two names with the same number of syllables. Which name(s) have the most syllables?" However, the materials do not include specific and precise terms, phrasing, and statements teachers should use during core instruction on the syllable types found in the grade-level TEKS. Therefore, students do not have the opportunity to apply knowledge of syllable types to decode or encode one-syllable words.

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to develop, practice and reinforce skills to decode and encode one-syllable or multisyllabic words (through cumulative review). (PR 2.A.1 & 2.A.3) (S)

- The lesson module resource includes various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) skills to decode one-syllable words. For example, in module 4, week 1, day 2, step 3, students develop the skill of decoding one-syllable words (*pat, mat, man, cat, and pan*) with the newly introduced short vowel *a* in the *Making Words* activity. Students utilize the Stepping Together Letter Cards: *a, c, m, n, p,* and *t* to build and decode the words. Decoding one-syllable words with the same vowel pattern (short *a*) is practiced the same week on day 4 in step 3, in which the students participate in *Decoding Words in Decodable Text* utilizing the *Super Story Cats and Rats*. Reinforcement through cumulative review occurs in the Module 4 Summative Assessment. In this assessment, students practice applying letter-sound correspondence to decode the one-syllable words *rag* and *nap* in the *Phonemic Awareness and Reading Words* portion of the assessment.
- The lesson module resource includes various activities and resources for students to develop, practice, and reinforce (through cumulative review) skills to encode one-syllable words. For example, in module 4, week 1, day 2, step 3, students develop the skill of encoding one-syllable words (*pat, mat, man, cat, and pan*) with the newly introduced short vowel *a* in the *Making Words* activity. Students utilize the Stepping Together Letter Cards: *a, c, m, n, p,* and *t* to encode the words. On day 3 of the same week, students practice encoding one-syllable words with the same vowel pattern in the step 3 activity *Sound Boxes*. In this activity, students utilize Sound Box Cards and dry-erase markers to decode the words *cap, bat, tap, and had*. In the Module 4 Summative Assessment (found on the *Stepping Together Kindergarten Resources* website), students reinforce (through cumulative review) encoding one-syllable words with the same vowel pattern (amongst other previously taught phonics skills) when they complete the *Writing a Sentence* portion of the assessment. The assessment provides the sentence to dictate for students to encode: "We can see a dog."

Materials include a variety of activities and resources for students to practice decoding and encoding one-syllable or multisyllabic words, using knowledge of syllable types and syllable division principles, in isolation (e.g., word lists) and in decodable connected text that builds on previous instruction (e.g., within sentences or decodable texts). (PR 2.A & 2.A.3) (S)

- This guidance bullet is not applicable to the grade level.