



LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | K-3 CURRICULUM REVIEW REPORT OCTOBER 2021




SUMMARY BY RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION¹ JANUARY | 2022

What did the curriculum review find?

- The curriculum falls short of giving teachers and students all the resources necessary to meet the depth of the standards.²
- The largest gap is in the assessment practices to guide instruction and remedy issues using the curricular materials.³

What was recommended to Loudoun County Public Schools?

<p><i>Pilot new, high-quality curriculum</i> fully aligned to English Language Arts (ELA) standards and the Science of Reading, focusing on helping educators use the materials rather than redesigning and revising current materials. New curriculum should be adopted by SY2023-2024.⁴</p>	<p><i>Ensure new curriculum include integrated assessments</i> that focus on helping educators understand when to assess students’ foundational reading skills, how to provide immediate feedback and support, and determine what curricular materials to use to support student mastery.⁵</p>
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	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations in Foundational Reading Skills (grades K and 1) Loudoun County Public Schools’s (LCPS) curricular materials do not develop foundational reading skills systematically, using research-based and transparent methods. This means materials do not provide explicit and systematic instruction and diagnostic support in: concepts of print, letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, word awareness and vocabulary development, syntax, and fluency.⁶</p>
	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations for Building Knowledge (grades 1 and 3) LCPS’s curricular materials do not build knowledge systematically through reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study.⁷</p>
	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations for Access to the Standards for All Students (grades K and 3) LCPS’s curricular materials are not designed to provide thoughtful supports/scaffolds to support all students in accessing the standards.⁸</p>

¹ Funding provided by Friends of Decoding Dyslexia
² LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 6
³ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 7
⁴ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 10
⁵ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 10
⁶ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 13 & p. 23
⁷ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 21 & 33
⁸ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 15 & 25

Action steps for LCPS to take now:

- Increase students' *access to high-quality instructional experiences* by helping them engage in the most critical grade-level work as quickly as possible and supporting teachers in planning, delivery, and analysis⁹
- Engage stakeholders to establish *a shared vision for excellent ELA instruction* and determine priorities for curriculum adoption¹⁰
- Prioritize gathering *classroom level data on the use* of current and new curricular materials and trends in use¹¹
- Develop a *comprehensive professional learning strategy to support teachers* in using, evaluating, and effectively adapting the curricular materials to provide effective instruction, including for students with unique needs and to address curricular gaps¹²



*Research shows that the most effective approach to reading instruction includes providing students with explicit and systematic phonics instruction.*¹³



*Building knowledge and vocabulary is crucial to closing the gap between struggling and proficient readers.*¹⁴

⁹ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p.11

¹⁰ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 11

¹¹ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 11 & 12

¹² LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 12

¹³ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 7

¹⁴ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 7

Why was the curriculum reviewed?

To see how well Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is preparing students for success in college and career.¹⁵ The [review](#) was meant to give staff and the community information to make informed decisions about the ELA curricular materials.¹⁶

[TNTP](#) reviewed LCPS's K-3 materials to see:

- How aligned the materials were to research-based practices,
- How much the intervention approaches matched student needs, led to student reading success, and informed instruction; and
- How much the screening and progress monitoring practices reflected research-based practices and informed instruction.¹⁷



How was it reviewed?

TNTP used the Student Achievement Partners' Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool ([IMET](#)) for ELA/Literacy to review the curricular materials. The IMET evaluates how well curriculum reflects the necessary components of strong ELA instruction.¹⁸

TNTP referred to the:

- Curriculum guides for each grade level;
- Unit and lesson planning guidance;
- Intervention materials; and
- Other resources.



What was reviewed?

- Units of Study Reading, Writing, and Phonics by Lucy Calkins
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness for Kindergarten and Primary

Students in LCPS need access to high-quality instructional experiences this year, particularly given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹

¹⁵ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p.3

¹⁶ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 3

¹⁷ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 3

¹⁸ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 5

¹⁹ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 11

CAUTION:

A review of materials is a first step to determine the quality of a curriculum. It doesn't take into account *HOW* the curriculum is being used by teachers in classrooms.²⁰

Why Curriculum Matters²¹

- The quality of curriculum impacts student learning
- A high-quality curriculum is the foundation for ensuring students have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college, career, and life
- Teachers' beliefs about which approaches to teaching reading align with standards is significantly related to the curriculum they use
- High-quality curriculum can help boost teachers' content knowledge and teaching practices
- Starting with a high-quality curriculum reduces the need to enhance the curriculum with other teaching materials

Characteristics of High-Quality Curriculum²²

- Adequately addresses phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills
- Has a scope and sequence for explicitly teaching skills based on how children learn to read
- Has clear, related learning goals and teaching objectives aligned to standards
- Has organized lessons that build on each other
- Includes consistent teaching routines, activities, and materials for learning and practicing skills
- Includes tools to regularly assess student learning and inform instruction



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²⁰ LCPS K-3 Curriculum Review Report, p. 12

²¹ EdReports. (2019); Kaufman, Opfer, Pane, & Thompson, (2018); Partelow & Shapiro (2018)

²² Foorman, Smith, & Kosanovich (2017)