

New York State Education Department K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide Frequently Asked Questions

On June 5, 2024, the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) hosted a webinar on the release of the new *K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide*. The Guide is designed for optional use by districts and schools in selecting high-quality K-3 literacy curricula and curricular materials designed to meet the needs of all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. In New York State, all curriculum decisions are made at the local level.

This resource addresses frequently asked questions during the June 5th event.

1. Where can I find the Guide?

The Guide is available on the Department’s [NYS Literacy Initiative webpage](#). There are two versions of the guide for accessibility and ease of use. The Word document has been created as an editable version. Both can be copied and shared.

- [K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide](#)
- [K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide](#) (editable format)

2. Is the use of this guide mandated?

No. The Department strongly encourages districts and schools to use the Guide as a resource when selecting high-quality K-3 literacy curricula and curricular materials.

3. If we use this guide to select a curriculum, does that mean it’s approved by the State?

No. The Guide is intended to support districts in identifying high-quality literacy curricular materials. While the criteria and indicators represent what the Department believes must be part of a high-quality curriculum and curricular materials, NYSED does not endorse any curricula including those reviewed and selected using the Guide.

4. Is the State going to provide a list of recommended literacy curricula or curricular resources?

No. The Guide is neither a curriculum nor a recommended list of curricula. NYSED is a non-endorsing agency. This means that the Department does not mandate, endorse, or advise on specific curricula or curricular resources.

5. Will you be developing a guide like this for grades beyond K-3 or other content areas?

The Department plans to develop a similar guide for other grade levels. However, specific aspects of the domains could be used in reviewing curricular materials for other grade levels and content areas as appropriate. For example, aside from the Learning Standards and Evidence-Based Practices Domain, which is specific to grades K-3, the Culturally Responsive and Social Emotional Learning, Supporting Needs of All Learners, Measuring Learning, and Usability Domains could apply to other grades and content areas.

6. Can just portions of the Guide be used?

The five domains in the Guide are equally important and not weighed by significance. Districts and schools are encouraged to use this guide in its entirety to reflect on their literacy curricula and to ensure alignment with evidence-based practices, the [New York State \(NYS\) Learning Standards](#), the [NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#), and the [NYS Social-Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#).

7. Are there other curriculum review tools that NYSED recommends districts/schools use?

The Department does not endorse or recommend other curriculum review tools. The Guide includes links to other tools used in its development; however, the references to these does not constitute endorsement by NYSED.

8. Where can districts/schools find information on research and evidence-based practices for reading?

NYSED's literacy briefs provide evidence-based practices and include references and resources at the end of each brief. The Department will also provide instructional best practices for teaching reading in prekindergarten through Grade 3. The P-3 Literacy Best Practices will be available by January 1, 2025.

9. What is the difference between curriculum and curricular materials?

Curriculum is the scope and sequence of learning experiences taught in a course or grade level that allows students to achieve the Standards. Curriculum is often divided into units and lessons and includes an outline of the content, concepts, and skills that will be taught, and in what sequence they will be taught.

Curricular materials are the resources used to support instruction and learning in the classroom. These can include but are not limited to, textbooks, online resources, workbooks, teacher manuals, and lesson plans.

All curriculum and instructional decisions are made at the local level. Districts and schools choose and/or develop curricula, curricular materials, and instruction to

meet the individual needs of their students, and to support all students in gaining the skills and knowledge articulated in the NYS Learning Standards.

10. What should districts/schools do if their current curriculum does not meet all the criteria or indicators outlined in the Guide?

The Department acknowledges that there may not be one perfect curriculum that meets all the criteria in the Guide. Likely, a district curriculum or collection of curricular materials will not be fully aligned with the Guide. The Department does not advocate the use of this Guide to holistically reject or discard entire curricula, nor does the Department require districts to purchase a new vendor-developed curriculum that can meet all expectations. The Guide can be used to identify gaps or aspects of the curricula that need to be revised or supplemented and/or to identify materials that should be repurposed.

11. Does the Guide provide information on instructional practices for reading?

No. This guide is designed to examine literacy curricula, not instructional practices for reading. The Department will be issuing separate guidance related to the new legislation written in Governor Hochul's ['Back to Basics Reading Plan'](#) that requires NYSED to provide school districts with instructional best practices for teaching reading.

12. Why does the Guide not include prekindergarten consistent with Governor Hochul's 'Back to Basics Reading Plan'?

The new legislation is intended to ensure that instructional best practices for teaching reading are implemented statewide. While the [NYS Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards](#) include emerging reading and writing skills for prekindergarten students and there are instructional programming implications for the formative years from birth to age 4, the Guide is not designed for reviewing prekindergarten curricula and curricular materials.