Colorado READ Act
EVALUATION

External Review for *Open up Resources: EL Education K-2 Language*

About the Review

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has contracted with WestEd (www.WestEd.org), a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan research and development organization, to conduct the legislatively mandated READ ACT Evaluation. CDE selected the WestEd-led partnership, including Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (www.apa-consulting.net) and RTI International (www.rti.org), through a competitive bidding process conducted between October and December 2019. The purpose of this component of the evaluation is to assess whether CDE-approved instructional programming meets the requirements of SB 19-199 and widely accepted professional standards. This report begins with summary ratings. It then details how summary ratings were made: the evidence base for the program; elements of scientifically based reading instruction; texts included; supports for students with disabilities and English Learners; and embedded assessments.

SB 19 – 199 Requirement	Rating
Is evidence-based (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (I))	● **Fully meets** ○ **Partially meets** ○ **Does not meet**
Provides explicit and systematic skill development in the areas of phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; reading fluency, including oral skills; and comprehension (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (II)), and is aligned with the preschool through elementary and secondary state standards for reading adopted by the State Board (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (II.5))	● **Fully meets** ○ **Partially meets** ○ **Does not meet**
Includes texts on core academic content to assist the student in maintaining or meeting grade-appropriate proficiency levels in academic subjects in addition to reading (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (V))	● **Fully meets** ○ **Partially meets** ○ **Does not meet**
Summary Rating: Compliance with SB 19-199 requirements	● **Fully meets** ○ **Largely meets** ○ **Partially meets** ○ **Does not meet**

Key: ● **Fully meets** ● **Largely meets** ● **Partially meets** ● **Does not meet**

Is evidence-based (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (I))

Our Approach

The scientific evidence base of this program was evaluated based on:

- ✓ Up to three vendor-identified research studies
- ☐ *What Works Clearinghouse* Reviews
- ☐ Logic model or theory of action

Ratings

The selected circle indicates the rating earned by this program.

- 🔵 **Fully meets:** ESSA Evidence Level 1 ☐ or 2 ☑
- ⚪ **Partially meets:** ESSA Evidence Level 3 ☐ or 4 ☐
- ⚪ **Does not meet:** Does not meet ESSA Evidence Levels 1–4

Additional Information

» The curriculum provided by Open Up Resources follows EL Education's curriculum without adaptation.

» The vendor provided one study for review.

» We assigned an ESSA evidence rating of 2 because the following quasi-experimental study showed evidence of impact on student reading outcomes: McMaken, J., Bocala, C., & Melchior, K. (2019). Evaluation of the EL Education language arts curriculum in grades K-2: Technical report. WestEd.

» Overall findings were positive. This study compared students in one district who used the EL Education language arts curriculum to both a national sample and a district sample of students who did not use the curriculum. The students who used EL Education outperformed the comparison students in both samples by an effect size of greater than 0.2 on reading comprehension measures.

» The researchers who conducted the research were not affiliated with the developer.
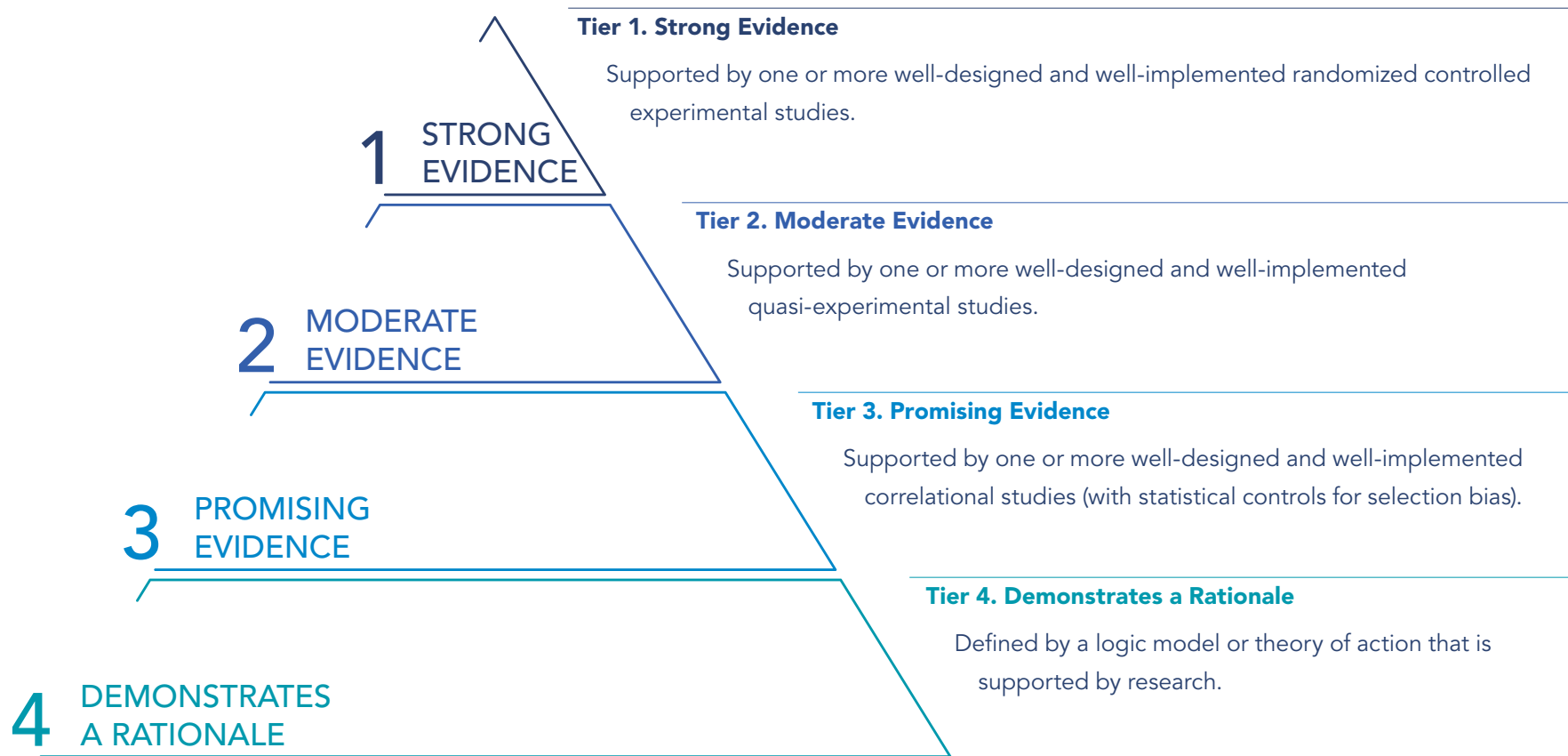
Why *What Works Clearinghouse*?

The *What Works Clearinghouse* is an investment of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) within the U.S. Department of Education. It reviews research on different programs, with the goal of providing educators with the information they need to make evidence based decisions. It focuses on the results from high quality research to answer the question "What works in education?"

When they are available, we use these high quality reports to supplement our own investigation of the evidence supporting the reading programs that we review.

OFF CYCLE PROGRAM

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015) establishes a four-tiered method of evaluating evidence. This framework is designed to ensure that states, districts, and schools can identify programs that work. Stronger research methods provide stronger evidence for a program, resulting in higher tiers of ESSA evidence levels. When a program has a higher tier rating, we can be more confident that it works.

1 STRONG EVIDENCE

Tier 1. Strong Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized controlled experimental studies.

2 MODERATE EVIDENCE

Tier 2. Moderate Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.

3 PROMISING EVIDENCE

Tier 3. Promising Evidence

Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).

4 DEMONSTRATES A RATIONALE

Tier 4. Demonstrates a Rationale

Defined by a logic model or theory of action that is supported by research.

Provides explicit and systematic skill development in the areas of phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; reading fluency, including oral skills; and comprehension (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (II)), and is aligned with the preschool through elementary and secondary state standards for reading adopted by the State Board (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (II.5))

Our Approach

We evaluated whether skill development across reading areas was present, explicit, and systematic, using vendor-supplied information and relevant EdReports indicators, when available. The scientific evidence base of this program was evaluated based on:

☐ EdReports

✓ Vendor-supplied information

Ratings

The selected circles indicate ratings on individual components of reading instruction.

Fully meets: Provides explicit and systematic skill development

Partially meets: Skill development may not be explicit or systematic

Does not meet: Skill development is absent

Phonemic Awareness
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Phonics
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Vocabulary Development
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Reading Fluency
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Comprehension: Close Reading
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Comprehension: Interactive Reading
● **Fully meets** ◯ **Partially meets** ◯ **Does not meet**

Two Types of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension was evaluated along two dimensions for a deeper look at what programs were offering.

Close reading: Approach to comprehension focused on the text itself.

Interactive reading: Approach to comprehension focused on text and outside information related to text content.

Includes texts on core academic content to assist the student in maintaining or meeting grade-appropriate proficiency levels in academic subjects in addition to reading (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (V))

Our Approach

This requirement was operationalized as four components.

(1) Texts are grade appropriate. We evaluated vendor-supplied documentation of qualitative and quantitative **text complexity** and relevant EdReport indicators, when available. This program was reviewed using:

☐ EdReports

✓ Vendor-supplied information

Ratings

The selected circles indicate the ratings earned by this program.

🔵 **Fully meets:** Appropriate level of **complexity** for the grade on two dimensions: (1) textual/linguistic demands (e.g., decodability, sentence complexity) and (2) content demands (e.g., complexity, subtlety)

◯ **Partially meets:** Appropriate level of **complexity** for the grade on one of two dimensions: (1) textual/linguistic demands (e.g., decodability, sentence complexity) and (2) content demands (e.g., complexity, subtlety)

◯ **Does not meet:** Limited opportunities for students to access grade-appropriate texts

Why EdReports?

These high quality independent reviews provide insight into the quality and complexity of texts included in the curriculum. They also consider whether curriculum embedded tasks support grade level learning.

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(2) Content of texts draws on a range of **subject areas** (e.g., English language arts, history/social studies, science). Types of texts reflect multiple **genres/formats (**e.g., fiction, biography, graphs, diagrams). This was evaluated using vendor-supplied documentation and relevant EdReports indicators, when available. This program was reviewed using:

☐ EdReports

✓ Vendor-supplied information

🔵 **Fully meets:** Content of texts draws on a range of **subject areas** (e.g., English language arts, history/social studies, science), and types of texts reflect multiple **genres and formats** (e.g., fiction, biography, graphs, diagrams)

◯ **Partially meets:** Content of texts draws on a range of **subject areas**, or types of texts reflect multiple **genres and formats**

◯ **Does not meet:** Content of texts does not draw on a range of **subject areas**, and types of texts do not reflect multiple **genres and formats**

Our Approach

(3) Program includes supports for **students with disabilities**. This was evaluated using vendor-supplied documentation and relevant EdReports indicators, when available. This program was reviewed using:

☐ EdReports

✓ Vendor-supplied information

(4) Program includes supports for students who are **English Learners**. This was evaluated using vendor-supplied documentation and relevant EdReports indicators, when available. This program was reviewed using:

☐ EdReports

✓ Vendor-supplied information

Ratings

○ **Fully meets:** Evidence of supports specific to **students with disabilities**

● **Partially meets:** Evidence of supports not specific to **students with disabilities**

○ **Does not meet:** No evidence of supports for **students with disabilities**

○ **Fully meets:** Supports exist for **English Learners** of varying English proficiency levels. Language supports are provided for **English Learners** to access grade-level content

● **Partially meets:** Supports exist but are not specific to **English Learners** or to **English Learners** of varying levels of proficiency. Language supports may be insufficient for ensuring that **English Learners** fully access grade-level content

○ **Does not meet:** No evidence of supports for **English Learners**

Includes evidence-based or scientifically based, valid, and reliable assessments (22-7-1209 (2) (b) (IV))

In place of a rating, we provide key information about embedded assessments:

The assessments serve the following purposes:

✓ Formative feedback

✓ Summative information

☐ Other

The assessments address the following targeted areas of scientifically based reading instruction:

✓ Phonemic awareness

✓ Phonics

✓ Reading fluency

✓ Vocabulary development

✓ Reading comprehension

Whether program complies with all SB 19-199 required elements

- **● Fully meets:** Received a rating of at least "Partially meets" on the evidence-based indicator and received a rating of "Fully meets" on all other indicators.
- **○ Largely meets:** Received a rating of at least "Partially meets" on all indicators.
- **○ Partially meets:** Received a rating of "Does not meet" on at least one but not all indicators.
- **○ Does not meet:** Received a rating of "Does not meet" on all indicators.

Our Ratings

A program can still qualify as "Fully meets" with an evidence based criterion that "Partially meets" because the evaluation team set a high bar for fully meeting this criterion: having at least one high quality (meeting ESSA Evidence Levels 1 or 2) research study that demonstrates positive impacts on student learning outcomes.

Additional Professional Standards

The evaluation team also reviewed evidence related to two additional professional standards, supports for students with disabilities and supports for English Learners. This evidence is not taken into consideration in the summary rating because it is not required by the READ Act minimum requirements.