



Wisconsin Act 20 Curriculum Crosswalk Toolkit

March 2024

Beginning in the school year 2024-2025, Wisconsin public schools, independent charter schools, and schools participating in the Choice program are required to implement K-3 literacy instruction that aligns with the statutory definition of science-based early literacy instruction. Developed in collaboration between DPI, educators and statewide partners, this toolkit allows a school or district to determine whether their early literacy curricular materials comply with statutory requirements. Educators and administrators are essential decision-makers of instructional materials based on their expertise of the educational strengths and needs of their local school communities.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

The D.C. Everest School District Curriculum/Literacy Department began the work of Act 20 prior to it passing into law. In 2019, we began by training all K-3 teachers, specialists, and principals in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Writing and Spelling). To-date, we require teachers to complete this professional development. As of 2023, we have removed all 3-cueing instructional models and curricular resources from our schools. Our team has vetted and replaced those materials with science-based early literacy instructional materials.

Sincerely, Dr. Kelly A. Thompson, Director of Curriculum and Literacy

Science-based Early Reading Instruction

Act 20 mandates that all Wisconsin schools provide science-based early reading instruction in both universal (core instruction) and intervention settings (see Wis Stat. sec. 118.015 [11]). Science-based early reading instruction is defined as systematic and explicit instruction in at least all of the following areas: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, background knowledge, oral language development, writing, comprehension, vocabulary building, and reading fluency. For each component, systematic and explicit instruction must be applied in the evaluation of curriculum resources. Systematic refers to “intentionally teaching identifiable skills within a scope and sequence” (WI DPI, 2020a, p. 44). Explicit instruction refers to designing lessons/units based on a gradual release of responsibility model. To meet the end goal of self-regulated independent practice, teachers use a cycle of teaching and learning including explaining, modeling, and offering guided practice with continuous, precise, and repetitive feedback (WI DPI, 2020a).

The WI DPI maintains that literacy learning is not a linear process but rather a multifaceted and complex process where multiple factors converge simultaneously (see Wisconsin’s Reading Model, p. 8). This view of literacy development acknowledges the importance of recognizing the need for overlapping skill building. In other words, students do not need to be completely secure in one area of literacy before learning about the next. Furthermore, the WI DPI recognizes the significance of cultural dimensions of literacy and thus advocates for instructional approaches that are culturally and linguistically sustaining (Wisconsin DPI, 2020b). Therefore, while Act 20 mandates explicit instruction, the WI DPI recommends the inclusion of additional comprehensive research-informed literacy practices based on real life experiences to support meaningful literacy learning. For example, researchers have reported that students who engage in purposeful literacy-rich guided play show statistically significant gains in early literacy (Cavanaugh et al., 2017; Maureen et al., 2020; Nicolopoulou et al., 2015).

Per Act 20, science-based early reading includes prohibiting the use of three-cueing when teaching and supporting word-solving. Act 20 defines three-cueing as an instructional model that relies on meaning, structure, and visual cues for teaching reading or teaching a pupil to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues or memory. This prohibition applies when the instructional goal is for the learner to solve unknown words. The WI DPI recognizes that such instruction is an evidence-based instructional approach when the goal is to support comprehension and building vocabulary (Capin et al., 2020; Foorman et al., 2016; Kuhn & Stahl, 1998; Nash & Snowling, 2010). Therefore, instruction in using context clues is allowable and appropriate when the learning goal is related to vocabulary and comprehension skill building.

Curricular Decisions Beyond Act 20

Wisconsin does not mandate a required list of curriculums for schools/districts to adopt. While the toolkit supports schools/districts in identifying a curriculum's alignment to Act 20, additional factors must be considered when selecting new resources (see *Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts*, pp. 70-74). These considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- aligns to the Wisconsin's Standards for English Language Arts.
- ensures representation and diversity, such as diverse voices, cultural experiences, and reflections of lived experiences.
- considers the reader and task, including motivation, knowledge/experiences, purpose, task complexity.
- empowers learners to read high-quality texts widely and deeply, for many purposes, including enjoyment.
- presents writing as a means of communication rather than stand-alone, isolated skills.
- offers opportunities for students to write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes.
- utilizes texts for a variety of instructional purposes (e.g., predictable texts for understanding language; decodable texts for applying phonics knowledge, authentic texts for comprehension).
- employs evidence-based practices (e.g., *Universal Design for Learning*) to ensure that each student can access and meaningfully engage in learning opportunities.
- provides resources for parents/caregivers and community members to support students' literacy development.
- includes lessons and other instructional materials that are user-friendly for educators.
- embeds professional learning to support implementation of the instructional materials.
- provides multiple forms of assessment.
- meets accessibility requirements (e.g., closed captions, Braille versions, screen readers).
- includes materials in multiple languages.

Tool 2: Curriculum Communication Template

The communication template helps school/district teams gather evidence of their alignment with Act 20 requirements and may be used as a public document to inform the community how the district is meeting Act 20's science-based early reading requirements. Educator teams may want to consider the following process:

1. Reconvene the curriculum crosswalk team.
2. Use the WI Act 20 Curriculum Crosswalk to review how the curriculum aligns with the Act 20 requirements.
3. Discuss and decide the format for communicating evidence (e.g., narratives, photos, charts).
4. Document evidence. See editable template:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1grDgTaKSnWd38SMHZSUXDRou1BNkAk1cN_B217b6Tvo/copy
 Share evidence of Act 20 compliance with relevant educational partners (e.g., school board, families, educators).

Instruction must include systematic and explicit instruction in components 1-9 as required under 2023 WI Act 20 118.015 (1c) (b). After a self-analysis, we find that our curricular resource(s) meet the requirements of WI Act 20 of 2023. The following evidence provides rationale for this determination:		
Required Component	Definition	Evidence
Phonological awareness	Refers to the skills of “word awareness, rhyme recognition, repetition and creation of alliteration, syllable counting or identification, onset, and rime manipulation” (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest currently utilizes are built on the components of direct/ explicit instruction.</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction: Heggerty, Foundations, Geodes</p>
Phonemic awareness	Refers to the skills of “identifying, isolating, blending, segmenting, and manipulating (adding, substituting, deleting) phoneme” (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest currently utilizes are built on the components of direct/ explicit instruction.</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction: Heggerty, Foundations, Geodes</p>

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Required Component	Definition	Evidence
<p>Phonics</p>	<p>Refers to the “relationships between sounds and words; this includes alphabetic principle, decoding, orthographic knowledge, encoding, and fluency” (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).</p>	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C Everest currently utilizes are built on the components of direct/explicit instruction</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction:</p> <p>Heggerty, Foundations, Geodes</p>
<p>Oral Language Development</p>	<p>Refers to developing a system of words and word combinations to communicate with others through speaking and listening (Foorman et al., 2016; Kosanovich et al., 2020).</p>	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C Everest currently utilizes are built on the components of direct/explicit instruction</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction:</p> <p>Heggerty, Foundations, Wit and Wisdom</p>
<p>Building Background Knowledge</p>	<p>Refers to “information that children learn and store in their memories, including details about themselves, other people, objects, and the surrounding world, encompassing beliefs, values, rules, and expectations within children's cultures, environments, and languages” (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching Learning, 2022, p. 3)</p>	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest currently utilizes are build on the components of direct/explicit instruction</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction:</p> <p>Geodes, Wit and Wisdom</p>

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Required Component	Definition	Evidence
Vocabulary building to develop lexical and morphological knowledge	Refers to instruction of expressive (words said and produced) and receptive vocabulary (words heard and understood) with the purpose of expanding students' knowledge of words and their meanings (Kosanovich, 2020, p. 1; UNESCO, 2020).	Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest utilizes are built on the components of explicit/direct instruction Evidence of explicit instruction: Foundations, Geodes, Wit and Wisdom
Writing	Refers to the “process through which people communicate thoughts and ideas... can include beginning scribbles, drawings, random letter strings, single-letter spellings, invented spelling, or complete sentences and paragraphs... also can include students dictating ideas to an adult or peer for transcription” (Graham et al., 2018, p. 42).	Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest utilizes are built on the components of explicit/direct instruction Evidence of explicit instruction: Foundations, Wit and Wisdom
Comprehension	Refers to “making meaning of what is viewed, read, or heard. Comprehension includes understanding what is expressed outright or implied as well as interpreting what is viewed, read, or heard by drawing on one's knowledge and experiences. Comprehension may also involve application and critical examination of the message in terms of intent, rhetorical choices, and credibility” (International Literacy Association, n.d.).	Evidence of systematic instruction: Curricular materials D.C. Everest utilizes are built on the components of explicit/direct instruction Evidence of explicit instruction: Geodes, Wit and Wisdom

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Required Component	Definition	Evidence
Reading fluency	Refers to “reading with accuracy, automaticity, and prosody” (WI DPI, 2020b, p. 76).	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction:</p> <p>Curricular materials utilized at D.C. Everest are built on the components of explicit/direct instruction</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction:</p> <p>Geodes, Wit and Wisdom</p>
Prohibits MSV	Refers to “any model, including the model referred to as meaning, structure, and visual cues, or MSV, of teaching a pupil to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues or memory” (WI Act 20, Section 11, 2023).	<p>Evidence of systematic instruction:</p> <p>Curricular materials utilized at D.C. Everest are built on the components of explicit/direct instruction</p> <p>Evidence of explicit instruction:</p> <p>Foundations, Geodes, Wit and Wisdom, Heggerty</p>

