ALIGNMENT

EPS Reading Accelerator

GEORGIA DOE High-Quality Instructional Materials Rubric

Alignment to

Georgia Department of Education
High-Quality Instructional Materials Rubric

Reading Accelerator Alignment to the GA DOE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS RUBRIC

Reading Accelerator, offered in Middle School and Elementary editions, is the fastest way to help striving readers in grades 3-8 cross the decoding threshold (Wang, et al. 2019).[1] *Reading Accelerator*'s intentional design aligns with decades of research on effective reading instruction. It follows a structured literacy approach, explicitly and systematically teaching foundational and advanced literacy skills to help students improve word recognition and language comprehension. The program is intended to be used as an acceleration strategy so that students can master the critical reading skills necessary to engage fully with grade-level content. It is a blended print and digital program that includes:

■ **Teacher's Guide**, which provides soft scripting for 54 two-part lessons that each cover a foundational skill or skill group. The A and B lessons both have the same five steps (Sound Round, Rapid Round, Break and Build, Push a Pencil, and Time for Texts). The A lesson has students reading words and sentences in step 5, while the B lesson has students reading connected text and completing a graphic organizer. Teachers also use Letter Card and Word Card decks as part of the program's educator-led instruction.

■ **Student Workbook**, which supports the teacher-led instruction. Each student has an engaging, age-appropriate workbook that provides practice with the 54 foundational skills being taught during teacher-led instruction.

■ **EPS Connect**, a platform that gives educators access to digital versions of the print materials (*Teacher's Guide* and *Student Workbook*), enhanced lesson scripting, Letter Cards and Word Cards for projection, data-tracking tools, and digital manipulatives.

■ **Reading Assistant**, a powerful AI-driven digital program that is the bridge between *Reading Accelerator*'s foundational skill instruction and the "real life" reading that students must be able to do in and out of school. While *Reading Accelerator* closes gaps in students' foundational reading skills, *Reading Assistant*'s advanced technology analyzes students' oral reading fluency in real time using authentic connected text, assesses students' abilities with foundational skills, provides in-the-moment micro-interventions as needed, and reports the results to educators to simplify instructional grouping. *Reading Assistant* includes a 3-in-1 screener (Benchmark Assessment, Dyslexia Screener, Progress Monitoring), reading practice to build fluency that includes in-the-moment, targeted micro-interventions as needed, and robust actionable reporting. *Reading Assistant*'s screener can be used to monitor progress with the 54 *Reading Accelerator* skills, and *Reading Assistant*'s reports can be used to help group students for small-group or individual instruction. *Reading Assistant* is available in English and Spanish.

[1]Wang, Z., Sabatini, J., O'Reilly, T., & Weeks, J. (2019). Decoding and reading comprehension: A test of the decoding threshold hypothesis. Journal of Educational Psychology, 111(3), 387. https://psycnet.apa.org/manuscript/2018-45827-001.pdf

Requirement	Reading Accelerator	Status
SECTION 1: Research Alignment: The program is aligned with science of reading research as defined in House Bill 538	*Reading Accelerator* fully aligns with the Georgia Early Literacy Act (House Bill 538). The program's intentional design aligns with decades of science-of-reading research on effective reading instruction. The program follows a structured literacy approach, explicitly and systematically teaching foundational and advanced literacy skills to help students improve word recognition and language comprehension and make the shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." *Reading Accelerator* provides teacher-led instruction for striving elementary and middle school students across all foundational literacy skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), as well as spelling, oral language, and writing. The program's lesson plans interweave their focus on foundational word recognition instruction with the following practices to promote language comprehension: building background knowledge, working with rich vocabulary and complex syntax, teaching reading comprehension strategies explicitly, and providing many opportunities to apply skills in written and oral language. *Reading Accelerator* is aligned with well-known models and findings from reading science best practices, including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Reading Rope, and the National Reading Panel, with evidence-aligned strategies included across the instructional routines within each lesson (e.g., blending, segmenting, and manipulating phonemes; phoneme-grapheme mapping; frequent and distributed skills practice; interweaving of skills; graphic organizers; dictation practice). *Reading Accelerator* is a hybrid print and online program, which can be used for whole-class or small-group instruction. Its 54 skill-based, teacher-led lessons use a multisensory approach to reading instruction and incorporate the power of technology to target specific reading skills and abilities. *Reading Accelerator*'s digital practice platform, *Reading Assistant*, provides students with individualized and targeted tutoring and micro-interventions related to foundational literacy skills. *Reading Assistant* instantiates and exemplifies the science of reading. The program has earned a STRONG Evidence for ESSA designation (ESSA 1). The program conforms to science-of-reading principles because it was created and shaped by scientists.	✓ **Aligned**
SECTION 2: Explicit, Systematic, Cumulative, Diagnostic Instruction The program introduces skills and content using an explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction approach.	*Reading Accelerator* provides explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction throughout its 54 teacher-led lessons. Each lesson covers one skill concept. Each concept is explicitly taught by the teacher, leaving nothing to chance. The teacher follows a set of defined instructional routines that ensure systematic delivery of the lessons. Every lesson includes previously taught skills, ensuring cumulative, ongoing reinforcement. Through *Reading Assistant*'s digital platform, teachers continuously receive real-time data that allows for a diagnostic instructional approach, ensuring that every student can gain mastery of every skill. Additionally, the print materials provide ongoing checks for understanding and opportunities for skill reinforcement. Each of the program's 54 teacher-led lessons follows the same five steps with embedded routines: 1. *Sound Round*: Phonemic awareness activities (2 minutes); 2. *Rapid Round*: Phonics review, instruction, modeling, and practice; heart word instruction (5 minutes); 3. *Break and Build*: Blending and segmenting activities (3 minutes); 4. *Push a Pencil*: Encoding activities (4 minutes); and 5. *Time for Texts*: Skill application in connected text with guided fluency practice and comprehension skill development (6 minutes). The accelerated pace of lessons is balanced by an intensive introduction of new concepts combined with continuous review and reinforcement. *Reading Accelerator* embeds a spiraled review of recently acquired competencies as students advance through the skill sequence. This cumulative review allows students to consolidate learning and build reading proficiency. The program's Teacher's Guide provides directions for implementation, guidance on how to differentiate lessons, and suggested feedback prompts. The program's online component, *Reading Assistant*, is a sophisticated AI-driven digital program that continuously monitors the student's progress in real time. *Reading Assistant* adjusts the delivery of tutoring, practice, feedback, and micro-interventions (as needed) to keep each student working in his or her zone of proximal development. This means *Reading Assistant* provides a range of tasks that the student can perform with scaffolding, ensuring that the student gets targeted, challenging but not overwhelming tasks that keep the student engaged and motivated to build self-efficacy.	✓ **Aligned**

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SECTION 3: **Related Elements** The program provides for correlation to Georgia ELA standards, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and a clear intersection of reading and writing instruction.	*Reading Accelerator* and *Reading Assistant* are designed to meet the GA ELA standards for foundational reading skills relevant to phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency. In addition, the program meets many of the foundational reading standards for comprehension, vocabulary, listening, and speaking. *Reading Accelerator* is designed for older elementary and middle school learners who have not acquired the foundational skills necessary to cross the decoding threshold. These students need to quickly close their foundational skill gaps so they can engage with grade-level reading materials. Outside of the special-education environment or intensive intervention classes, foundational literacy is not taught as part of the curriculum beyond grade 3. As a result, some educators working in intermediate and middle school classrooms have not received training in teaching foundational literacy. *Reading Accelerator* has been designed specifically to help teachers move striving students through the decoding threshold. *Reading Assistant*'s advanced AI-driven technology delivers a powerful assessment that is a placement test, dyslexia screener, and progress-monitoring tool. The program's technology continuously assesses student performance, making in-the-moment decisions to deliver micro-interventions or corrective feedback, as needed. *Reading Assistant* provides numerous data reports that provide real-time information on student performance. Several of these reports are aligned to the Georgia ELA Standards, so educators can view data in the context of the state's foundational reading standards. For example, the Diagnostic Report provides data about all aspects of a student's reading ability aligned to Georgia ELA standards. The Instructional Recommendations Report highlights areas of strength and areas in need of growth for each student aligned with the state's standards.	✓ **Aligned**
SECTION 4: **Phonological and Phonemic Awareness**	*Reading Accelerator* supports the development of phonological and phonemic awareness. The program integrates phonological and phonemic awareness with phonics instruction, never teaching it in isolation. Fifty-four foundational skills are included in the program, with two direct-instruction lessons for each skill, along with extensive practice opportunities. The instruction is cumulative, providing ongoing practice with previously taught skills. Each *Reading Accelerator* five-step lesson includes Step 1 (Sound Round) Phonemic awareness activities, which include rhyme (recognition and production), blend (words, syllables, onset and rime, sounds), segment (words, syllables, onset and rime, sounds, segment and count syllables), isolate sounds (initial, medial, final), delete (initial and final sound, first and last syllable), add (initial and final sound, first and last syllable), substitute (initial and final sound, first and last syllable). Step 2 (Rapid Round) reviews the phonics skills from previous lessons. Step 3 (Break and Build) includes segmenting and blending activities, critical for orthographic mapping. Step 4 (Push a Pencil) extends skills and further develops mapping through word and sentence dictation. Finally, Step 5 (Time for Texts) provides students with oral reading practice of words, sentences, and connected texts. The program's progression of skills (from the least complex to the most complex) is built on a spiraling scope and sequence that continuously reviews already-taught skills while new skills are being introduced. *Reading Accelerator*'s Teacher's Guide provides scripting and instructions for each lesson, including instructions for introducing and modeling pronunciation, offering feedback, grouping students, and teaching multilingual learners. *Reading Assistant* ensures ongoing oral reading fluency practice of connected texts, with in-the-moment corrective feedback and micro-interventions for mispronunciations.	✓ **Aligned**

Requirement	Reading Accelerator	Status
SECTION 5: Phonics and Word Study	*Reading Accelerator* supports the development of phonics and word acquisition. The program integrates phonological and phonemic awareness with phonics instruction, never teaching it in isolation. Fifty-four foundational skills are included in the program, with two direct-instruction lessons for each skill, along with extensive practice opportunities. The instruction is cumulative, providing ongoing practice with previously taught skills. Each *Reading Accelerator* lesson includes the following steps: Rapid Round, which includes phonics review, instruction, modeling, practice, and heart words; Break and Build, which includes blending and segmenting activities, and Push a Pencil, which includes encoding activities. During Push a Pencil, students listen to word or sentence dictation and write what they hear, strengthening their listening skills. Each step is accompanied by a script, so teachers deliver exactly what is needed for students to acquire these skills. *Reading Accelerator* includes morphology activities in every lesson. Morphology, the study of meaning-based word parts, is the "glue" that holds our language together, creating our semantic systems. Students who understand morphology can read with greater understanding and write with greater clarity. The program's Teacher's Guide includes a clear scope and sequence, beginning with basic letter-sound knowledge and increasing in complexity to multisyllabic words. The cumulative review of previously taught words is embedded in the instructional routines. The program includes lessons on prefixes, suffixes, inflected endings, irregular plurals, and possessive plurals. The program's instructional routines reinforce spelling skills, which are further supported by the Student Workbook activities. *Reading Accelerator* intentionally includes Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words in every lesson to ensure that students are continuously being challenged with unfamiliar words and provided with opportunities to use them. Tier 2 vocabulary words are high-frequency words used across academic content areas. Tier 3 vocabulary words are subject-specific, technical words. The vocabulary words and curriculum topics in the program's Elementary edition were selected based on the framework from Robert Marzano's *Teaching Basic, Advanced, and Academic Vocabulary* (2020). Vocabulary words span ELA, math, social studies, and science, including topics taught in elementary grades. By including content-specific and conceptual language that is intentionally beyond students' current reading levels (during oral language activities), these practice opportunities support deep understanding of vocabulary words and remove potential barriers to reading comprehension. The vocabulary words in the Middle School edition were selected based in part on the NGSS and the NCSS. *Reading Assistant* offers a structured, systematic scope and sequence. The program's advanced AI-driven progress-monitoring tool clearly informs teachers about student achievement as well as needs so they can provide more intensive support. The program also offers student grouping recommendations.	✓ **Aligned**
SECTION 6: Text Reading and Fluency	Text reading and fluency instruction are included in every *Reading Accelerator* lesson. Fluency work begins at the word level to ensure that activities lead to orthographic mapping, creating automaticity in word recognition. Word fluency work includes explicit instruction in, and practice with, high-frequency words, timed word reading, and the cumulative review of words containing previously learned skills. The program moves students quickly to connected text to strengthen fluency. Sentences and passages emphasize newly learned skills while reviewing previously taught ones. Additionally, independent student work includes reading practice via *Reading Assistant*, a digital platform that provides supportive mediation through just-in-time tutoring to quickly move students to more complex texts. The program offers formative assessment of reading accuracy and rate.	✓ **Aligned**

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SECTION 7: **Vocabulary**	*Reading Accelerator* is a true acceleration program. It includes grade-appropriate academic vocabulary (Tiers 2 and 3) that links to the curriculum typically taught in today's classrooms so striving readers can learn and understand the same vocabulary as their on-level peers. The Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words in every *Reading Accelerator* lesson ensure that striving students are continuously being challenged with unfamiliar words and provided with opportunities to use them. Tier 2 vocabulary words are high-frequency words used across academic content areas. Tier 3 vocabulary words are subject-specific, technical words. (For *Reading Accelerator* Elementary, the vocabulary words and curriculum topics are based on the framework from Robert Marzano's *Teaching Basic, Advanced, and Academic Vocabulary* (2020). For *Reading Accelerator* Middle School, the vocabulary words were selected based in part on the NGSS and the NCSS). By including content-specific and conceptual language that is intentionally beyond striving students' current reading levels, *Reading Accelerator* is providing practice opportunities to support deep understanding of vocabulary words and remove potential barriers to reading comprehension. The program's lesson plans interweave their focus on foundational word-recognition instruction with practices to promote language comprehension: building background knowledge, working with rich vocabulary and complex syntax, and explicitly teaching reading.	✓ **Aligned**
SECTION 8: **Listening and Reading Comprehension**	*Reading Accelerator* supports the development of listening skills and reading comprehension. Each of *Reading Accelerator*'s two-part lessons includes opportunities to connect reading to meaning, the result of a design focused on developing both word recognition and comprehension skills. A decodable passage is included with each *Reading Accelerator* teacher-led lesson, followed by a set of decodable cloze sentences to help ensure that students understand what they have read. During each lesson, students listen to dictated words or sentences and then write them. Following fluency practice with the decodable passage within *Reading Accelerator* lessons, students engage in reading comprehension activities to support meaning-making from text. Each *Reading Accelerator* lesson includes one of eleven graphic organizers that support key reading comprehension skills. These graphic organizers can be used as catalysts for more extensive, grade-appropriate writing activities on story elements and structure, language usage, and many other options. Students continue improving fluency through oral reading with *Reading Assistant*, a program that has students read aloud to an on-screen avatar. The avatar analyzes the student's oral reading in real time, providing in-the-moment feedback, correction, and micro-interventions if needed. The program models correct pronunciation if students struggle with vocabulary.	✓ **Aligned**

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