

ALIGNMENT

SPIRE[®]

MICHIGAN Dyslexia Handbook Alignment



Alignment to

Michigan State Board of Education Procedures
Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders

Alignment to the Michigan Dyslexia Handbook

EPS Learning's *SPIRE* 4th Edition offers explicit, teacher-led instruction in one foundational literacy concept at a time. It includes continual practice, corrective feedback, and checks for understanding. *SPIRE*'s 10-step lesson format offers a direct, systematic, and cumulative approach to teaching reading to individuals or small groups.

SPIRE's scope and sequence moves students intentionally through concepts, from simple to complex. Each lesson includes cumulative review of all previously taught concepts as well as introductory and reinforcing lessons.

Every *SPIRE* lesson follows the same 10-step teacher-led format.

Step 1 Phonogram Cards:

The teacher introduces new concepts and reviews previously learned concepts.

Step 2 Phonological Awareness:

The teacher engages the students in multisensory activities to help students recognize and produce rhymes; categorize, identify, and blend sounds; and segment words.

Step 3 Word Building:

Students build and manipulate words with letter tiles and then write the words.

Step 4 Decoding and Sentence Reading:

Students mark up words by underlining, linking, dividing, and boxing letters and letter combinations, then read words and sentences.

Step 5 Prereading:

Students perform a phoneme-grapheme analysis of a word from the lesson's passage that contains the target concept.

Step 6 Reading and Reading Comprehension:

Students identify new concept words in the lesson's passage and then read the text.

Step 7 Sound Dictation:

Students listen to ten sounds, then say and write the known letter combinations for those sounds.

Step 8 Prespelling:

Students orally analyze the phoneme-grapheme relationships in the first word of the Step 9 spelling list.


Step 9 Spelling:




Students spell ten dictated words, naming letters and sounding them out.



Step 10 Sentence Dictation:

Students listen to and then write two sentences that include words with the new concept.

The Michigan Dyslexia Handbook (2025) identifies the following features of quality Tier 2 reading interventions.



Features of quality Tier 2 interventions	SPIRE® Features	Status
Empirically validated curricula materials	<p>SPIRE has empirically validated curriculum materials. The program's effectiveness is supported by research and evidence.</p> <p>Research Base and Alignment: <i>SPIRE</i> is grounded in science of reading best practices. Its instructional design and content are aligned with the major models and findings of reading science, including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Reading Rope, and the National Reading Panel.</p> <p>Instructional Strategies: <i>SPIRE</i> is an Orton-Gillingham–based program that employs a multisensory approach to instruction. It provides systematic, explicit instruction in key areas such as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These instructional strategies are research-aligned and known to be effective for teaching the targeted learning outcomes. In addition, <i>SPIRE</i>'s design and delivery of instruction are aligned with the principles of Structured Literacy, including explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic-prescriptive instruction. Advanced skills in <i>SPIRE</i> are not introduced before prerequisite skills have been taught, aligning with the cumulative nature of Structured Literacy instruction.</p> <p>Evidence of Effectiveness: A study by LXD Research examined the relationship between <i>SPIRE</i> usage and student reading outcomes. The study was designed to satisfy Level 3 requirements (Promising Evidence) according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This ESSA Level 3 study demonstrates <i>SPIRE</i>'s effectiveness in improving literacy achievement among elementary-level students. (Two additional efficacy studies are underway.)</p>	 Aligned
Specialized instructional procedures that outline what learners need to do or say during a lesson	<p>SPIRE's instructional materials, particularly the program's Teacher's Guides (one for each level), outline what learners need to do or say during a lesson.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> lesson scripts include what the teacher should say during the lessons. The scripts also offer guidance for teacher actions, student actions, and student responses. Lessons are designed with high rates of student response, and the teacher is guided on how to elicit these responses.</p> <p>The program's instruction follows a gradual release of responsibility model. Students are provided with guidance and support during instruction and guided practice. They are asked to perform tasks independently only after skills have been explicitly taught and proficiency shown during guided practice and teacher monitoring.</p>	 Aligned
Concise instructional language	<p>SPIRE offers concise instructional language.</p> <p>The program provides the teacher with clear guidance at the start of each introductory lesson, including a description of the focus skill. Throughout each lesson, scripting supports student understanding with consistent, concise language. The teacher is guided to model and prompt complete-sentence responses when appropriate, using uniform language and cues across all activities and lessons.</p>	 Aligned
Teacher modeling of what learners are expected to do during lessons	<p>A key component of SPIRE's instructional design is teacher modeling of what students are expected to do during lessons.</p> <p>Each new skill is introduced with explicit instruction and modeling by the teacher, such as demonstrating how to segment spoken words into individual phonemes during word building. This approach follows the gradual release of responsibility model, in which the teacher models tasks first, then guides students, and finally assigns independent practice. The Teacher's Guides include scripted lessons with detailed guidance on how to model concepts, including the use of articulatory cues to support accurate pronunciation.</p>	 Aligned




Features of quality Tier 2 interventions	<i>SPiRE</i> ® Features	Status
Opportunities for learners to demonstrate what they are incrementally being taught during lessons	<p>A key element of <i>SPiRE</i>'s instructional design and methodology is the program's numerous opportunities for learners to frequently demonstrate what they are being taught during lessons. The program is designed to allow the teacher to monitor students' demonstrations of incremental learning as they happen during the lesson.</p> <p>Active Participation: In every <i>SPiRE</i> lesson, students actively engage with the teacher through frequent opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in response to teacher prompts and instructional tasks. This continuous interaction enables students to demonstrate understanding as new concepts are introduced and practiced.</p> <p>Modeling and Practice: Following explicit teacher modeling, students participate in guided and independent practice within the same lesson. Practice occurs across multiple levels—phoneme-grapheme, word, sentence, and connected text—allowing for incremental application of new skills.</p> <p>Manipulatives and Interactive Tasks: Hands-on tools and activities help reinforce learning and offer alternative ways for students to show what they've learned. Independent tasks, such as matching words to pictures, provide additional opportunities for skill reinforcement and demonstration.</p>	 Aligned
Affirmative, corrective, or informative feedback	<p><i>SPiRE</i> offers numerous types of feedback, including corrective feedback and elements that serve as informative and motivational feedback.</p> <p><i>SPiRE</i>'s Teacher's Guides include explicit error-correction procedures for each step of the 10-step lessons across all levels of the program. These steps may involve multisensory strategies, repetition, or the use of manipulatives. Lesson scripts specify expected student responses, enabling the teacher to quickly identify and address errors. For example, in Step 10 of <i>SPiRE</i>'s 10-step lesson (Sentence Dictation), the teacher guides students to review their writing and scaffolds corrections as needed. <i>SPiRE</i>'s introductory lessons also provide opportunities for immediate feedback based on student responses.</p>	 Aligned
Opportunities for individual learners to demonstrate their understanding	<p><i>SPiRE</i> offers numerous opportunities for individual learners to demonstrate their understanding through various activities, assessments, and features within the program.</p> <p>Active Participation and Frequent Responses: Throughout every <i>SPiRE</i> 10-step lesson, students are active participants given frequent opportunities to listen, speak, decode, encode, read, and write in response to teacher prompts, tasks, and activities.</p> <p><i>SPiRE</i> introductory lessons provide students with many opportunities to respond and engage in discourse with the teacher, allowing the teacher to provide immediate feedback based on student performance. Lesson steps focusing on phonological awareness, vocabulary discussion, activating background knowledge, and employing reading comprehension strategies include language-rich discourse and frequent student response.</p> <p>Differentiated Instruction: The flexibility within <i>SPiRE</i> allows the teacher to use student data (from individual performance) to make decisions about what individuals or small groups need to progress through the program. This includes providing additional reinforcing lessons for those who need more practice and building in scaffolds based on demonstrated needs.</p> <p>Guided and Independent Practice: <i>SPiRE</i>'s instructional design is grounded in the gradual release of responsibility model, with students demonstrating increasing independence in applying and thinking about newly learned skills. Concepts are reinforced through activities such as dictation, reading decodable texts, or writing sentences using newly learned concepts. Independent work options provide additional opportunities for practice.</p>	 Aligned




Features of quality Tier 2 interventions	SPIRE® Features	Status
<p>Opportunities for individual learners to demonstrate their understanding (continued)</p>	<p>Using Manipulatives: Students engage with manipulatives (e.g., magnetic letters to support word building and sound circles to support phoneme segmentation) during a variety of tasks across the 10-step lesson to support understanding and engagement.</p> <p>Individual Assessments: Students engaged with <i>SPIRE</i> are assessed individually to ensure concept mastery. The program includes various assessments that are administered one-on-one, including an Initial Placement Test, Informal Assessments, Concept Assessments, Concept Mastery Fluency Drills, Mid-Level Tests, and Pre- and Post-Level Tests.</p>	<p> Aligned</p>
<p>Mechanisms to control for task difficulty while gradually increasing the level of difficulty as learners progress</p>	<p>SPIRE incorporates several mechanisms to control task difficulty and gradually increase the level of difficulty as learners progress, primarily through its systematic structure, mastery-based approach, scaffolding, differentiation features, and adaptive technology components.</p> <p>Levels: The <i>SPIRE</i> program spans seven levels of progressively more complex intervention materials.</p> <p>Systematic, Sequential, and Cumulative Instruction: <i>SPIRE</i> provides explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative instruction in foundational reading skills. The instructional sequence moves logically from introducing basic single-sound concepts to integrating these sounds into words, phrases, and sentences. Skills build on one another, and previously learned concepts are reviewed in subsequent lessons. Advanced skills are not introduced before students have been taught the prerequisite skills.</p> <p>Mastery-Based Progression: Assessments are used to determine if students have mastered target concepts and are ready to move on to the next one. Ongoing assessments, such as Concept Assessments, confirm mastery and help the teacher determine which students need additional support before moving on. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Level Assessments also measure mastery of concepts before, during, and at the end of each level.</p> <p>Pacing Flexibility Based on Student Need: While lessons are designed to maintain a brisk instructional pace and reduce cognitive load, pacing through the scope and sequence is based on student needs. Ongoing progress monitoring enables the teacher to evaluate mastery, adjust pacing, and deliver specific reinforcing lessons as needed.</p> <p>Reinforcing Lessons: Multiple reinforcing lessons are provided for each concept. These allow the teacher to differentiate the amount of instruction and practice to give students who need to develop proficiency with certain skills. The teacher can decide based on student data whether individuals or small groups need one, two, or even three reinforcing lessons.</p> <p>Scaffolded Instruction and Differentiation: <i>SPIRE</i> provides a scaffolded approach to instruction to ensure students receive appropriate challenges and assistance as they progress. The program maintains high expectations while offering targeted support to meet individual needs. Teacher's Guides support differentiated instruction, allowing the teacher to tailor lessons. Tools such as student manipulatives and workbooks are used for guided and independent practice and support scaffolding. The soft scripting of lessons allows the teacher to flexibly use student data to make decisions about what individuals or small groups need to progress.</p> <p>Gradual Release of Responsibility: The instructional design is grounded in the gradual release of responsibility model in which students demonstrate increasing independence in thinking about and applying newly learned skills. Lessons include guided and independent practice activities. Students are asked to perform tasks independently only after skills have been explicitly taught and they have displayed proficiency during guided practice.</p>	<p> Aligned</p>


Features of quality Tier 2 interventions	SPIRE® Features	Status
Engagement opportunities to maintain learner success and instructional response	<p>SPIRE incorporates features designed to enhance learner engagement and facilitate data-driven instructional responses to support student success and address learning gaps.</p> <p>Multisensory and Interactive Learning: Lessons engages diverse learners through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile activities and frequent active participation (listening, speaking, reading, writing, manipulating).</p> <p>Consistent Structure for Early Success: Predictable lessons build students' confidence through supported practice before independent tasks.</p> <p>Mastery-Based Progression with Continuous Assessment: Students advance based on demonstrated understanding (80%+), supported by ongoing assessments that provide immediate feedback.</p> <p>Data-Driven Pacing and Support: Real-time data from assessments allows the teacher to adjust instruction (pace, repetition, support) to ensure learner success.</p>	<div>✓</div> <div>Aligned</div>

The Michigan Dyslexia Handbook (2025) recommends a “code-emphasis” synthetic phonics approach. This approach, which would be classified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading intervention, involves simultaneously teaching phonemic awareness alongside phonics in lessons. Using this approach means explicitly teaching the code system of written English at the sound, syllable, morpheme, and word level.





Features of code-emphasis phonics	<i>SPIRE</i> ® features that meet this requirement	Status
Instructional elements of code-emphasis synthetic phonics	<p><i>SPIRE</i> includes the following characteristics of code-emphasis phonics, which focuses on explicitly teaching students how to decode words by mapping graphemes to phonemes.</p> <p>Systematic and Explicit Instruction: <i>SPIRE</i> instruction is systematic and explicit, and concepts are taught until mastery is achieved. Instruction follows a logical sequence, progressing from basic single-sound concepts to their integration into words, phrases, and sentences.</p> <p>Focus on Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondence: <i>SPIRE</i> lessons integrate phonological awareness (culminating in phonemic awareness) and phonics. Phonemic awareness instruction is quickly paired with letters (graphemes) to maximize instructional benefit. Activities include moving from working with larger units of sound to more complex phonemic awareness tasks with the smallest units of language.</p> <p>Blending and Segmenting Skills: <i>SPIRE</i> explicitly includes blending and segmenting skills as core components of its instruction. Specific steps in the <i>SPIRE</i> 10-step lesson framework include practice with these skills.</p> <p>Emphasis on Decodable Texts: All passage and practice texts within the <i>SPIRE</i> program are fully decodable. These texts consist only of words made with previously taught sound-spelling correspondences and sight words. <i>SPIRE</i> offers sets of Decodable Readers (120 readers in total), which allow students to apply phonics skills to connected texts to improve decoding, fluency, and comprehension while building confidence.</p> <p>Prioritizing Decoding Over Using Picture or Context Clues: <i>SPIRE</i>'s instruction is grounded in science of reading best practices. The program's approach is centered on explicit instruction in phonics decoding and encoding through sound-symbol mapping and foundational skills. The decodable passages students read for comprehension and fluency have no pictures to ensure they focus only on the text. Later in the program, when students have mastered the most recently taught concept, students may read the same passage in an illustrated Decodable Reader.</p> <p>Cumulative and Reinforced Learning: <i>SPIRE</i>'s instructional scope and sequence demonstrates a systematic and cumulative design in which skills move from simple to complex and build on one another. Every <i>SPIRE</i> lesson includes numerous reinforcement lessons to ensure concept instruction can continue until mastery is reached. There are opportunities to practice newly taught skills in conjunction with already learned skills, leveraging the impact of interleaving skills that have been taught.</p>	 Aligned
Use an explicit teaching routine encompassing teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice	<p><i>SPIRE</i> utilizes an explicit teaching routine that encompasses teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. This structure is fundamental to <i>SPIRE</i>'s systematic and explicit instructional design.</p> <p>The gradual release of responsibility is inherent in <i>SPIRE</i>'s instructional design. The consistent 10-step lesson structure provides a predictable framework that supports a progression from teacher-led modeling to student independence. The systematic and cumulative nature of the program ensures that concepts build on one another, allowing students to integrate newly learned skills with previously mastered ones during practice.</p>	 Aligned




Features of code-emphasis phonics	SPIRE® features that meet this requirement	Status
<p>Use an explicit teaching routine encompassing teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice (continued)</p>	<p>Explicit Instruction and Modeling (“I do”): SPIRE’s teacher-led instruction is explicit. New information is presented clearly and directly so students do not need to infer during the introduction of new content, concepts, or skills. For example, when introducing a new task such as word building, the teacher models segmenting a spoken word into phonemes, identifying the graphemes for each phoneme, and blending the sounds to read the word before asking students to perform the task independently.</p> <p>Guided Practice (“We do”): Following the initial teacher-led introduction and modeling, students engage in guided and supported practice. During this phase, the teacher closely monitors student practice and provides immediate feedback.</p> <p>SPIRE’s manipulatives and student workbooks are used for guided-practice activities. For example, SPIRE’s word building with magnetic grapheme tiles and word list reading are both guided-practice opportunities. In addition, SPIRE lesson Step 7 (Sound Dictation) and Step 10 (Sentence Dictation) provide opportunities for guided practice with immediate feedback.</p> <p>Independent Practice (“You do”): Students are asked to independently perform tasks only after skills have been explicitly taught and the students have displayed a level of proficiency during guided practice. Independent activities such as independent practice with student versions of handwriting charts and student workbooks provide opportunities for independent application. Reading SPIRE decodable texts allows students to apply newly learned strategies in real reading situations independently.</p>	 Aligned
<p>Focus learners’ attention on speech sounds before focusing on letters (the next component within a phonics lesson described below)</p>	<p>SPIRE is designed to focus learners’ attention on speech sounds (phonemes) before focusing on the corresponding letters (graphemes) within its instructional routine, particularly in its foundational levels, and maintains this emphasis in later levels through dedicated steps.</p> <p>SPIRE’s foundational level (SPIRE Foundations, with 5-step lessons) is heavily focused on the auditory and oral manipulation of sounds. Listening (Step 1) focuses students’ attention on sounds in words, develops listening skills, and engages students in activities like Word Comparison to enhance phonemic awareness by discerning subtle differences in phonemes. Rhyming (Step 2) develops students’ ability to identify and manipulate rhyme, moving from simple identification to generation, and includes instruction on onset-rime awareness. Segmentation (Step 3) develops awareness of the one-to-one correspondence between spoken and written words, progressing from segmenting larger units (sentences, syllables) to individual phonemes.</p> <p>After these steps, which primarily involve perceiving aurally and manipulating sounds orally, the program explicitly introduces the phoneme-grapheme relationship. The next six levels of SPIRE (which have 10-step lessons) integrate phoneme-grapheme correspondence in Step 1 Phonogram Cards, introducing graphemes and their sounds.</p>	 Aligned
<p>Encourage “mouth awareness” (ask learners to determine whether their mouths are open or closed, and whether they are using their vocal cords, tongue, teeth, or lips when they make the sound)</p>	<p>SPIRE encourages “mouth awareness” by asking students to attend to how sounds are made using their mouth, including details about tongue, teeth, lip placement, vocal cords, and air flow.</p> <p>In the earliest levels of SPIRE, phonemes are introduced in a sequence with a particular emphasis on articulatory feature. The instructional structure helps teach the differences between voiced and unvoiced consonants by teaching them together. As phonemes are introduced, the teacher calls attention to how each sound is made in terms of air flow, tongue/teeth/lip placement, and voicing.</p> <p>During SPIRE’s 10-step teacher-led lessons, each phoneme is explicitly introduced with cues related to the articulatory gestures used for pronunciation to support mouth awareness as students work with target phonemes. Additional guidance is provided at the top of each introductory lesson showing the teacher how the sound should be made.</p>	 Aligned




Features of code-emphasis phonics	SPIRE® features that meet this requirement	Status
Include instruction in all the English phonemes; however, align the phoneme instruction with the graphemes that are the focus of the next part of the lesson	<p>SPIRE is designed to focus learners' attention on English speech sounds (phonemes) before or alongside focusing on the letters (graphemes) that represent them.</p> <p>In <i>SPIRE</i> Foundations, the program's foundational level, the instructional sequence explicitly focuses on the development of phonological and phonemic awareness before pairing this with understanding the alphabetic principle through explicit instruction in phoneme-grapheme relationships.</p> <p>In <i>SPIRE</i> lessons for Levels 1–6, there is a preliminary focus on individual phonemes and phoneme awareness before shifting to a focus on phoneme-grapheme correspondence. For example, Step 2 in <i>SPIRE</i>'s 10-step lesson is dedicated to instruction and practice with phonological awareness skills, progressing to more complex phonemic awareness tasks in which students work with the smallest units of language.</p> <p>In the program's earliest levels, phonemes are introduced with an emphasis on articulatory features, and the teacher calls attention to how each sound is made in terms of air flow, tongue/teeth/lip placement, and voicing.</p>	 Aligned
Engage learners' hands, eyes, and mouths when possible	<p>SPIRE, an Orton-Gillingham–based program, is explicitly designed to engage learners' hands, ears, eyes, and mouths as part of its multisensory instructional approach. The program uses VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile) strategies of instruction.</p> <p>Visual: While using the program, students look at graphemes, words, sentences, and passages throughout each lesson. Visual aids are incorporated, such as picture cards for rhyming and sounds. The teacher also provides visual cues related to articulatory gestures.</p> <p>Auditory: Students are given frequent opportunities to speak during <i>SPIRE</i> lessons. This includes repeating sounds and words, engaging in oral language activities, discussing vocabulary, activating background knowledge, and employing reading comprehension strategies through language-rich discourse. The program also encourages "mouth awareness," which involves asking learners to determine how sounds are made, attending to vocal cords; tongue, teeth, and lip placement; and air flow. Students have numerous opportunities to listen to the teacher and classroom peers during every <i>SPIRE</i> lesson.</p> <p>Kinesthetic/Tactile: <i>SPIRE</i> incorporates hands-on learning and movement, which includes the use of student manipulatives such as tokens to represent phonemes, phonogram cards for word building, sound work mats, syllable rectangles, and magnetic boards with grapheme tiles. Kinesthetic movements, such as "thumbs-up blending," are used to support skill development. The teacher is encouraged to use strategies like tracing sounds and words on students' palms before writing during dictation activities and incorporating gross motor movements and textures.</p>	 Aligned
Be brief	<p>SPIRE lessons offer flexibility in pacing. Within the 10-step lesson structure, individual steps have recommended times designed to maintain a brisk instructional pace and deliver content in manageable "chunks" to reduce cognitive load and fatigue.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> 10-step lessons are designed to take 45–60 minutes, but the 10 steps can be broken into two 30-minute blocks or split over two days, if preferred. <i>SPIRE</i> Teacher's Guides provide guidance for breaking the 10-step lesson across multiple days, such as Steps 1–4 on day one and Steps 5–10 on day two.</p>	 Aligned



Features of code-emphasis phonics	SPIRE® features that meet this requirement	Status
Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback	<p>Throughout each step of a <i>SPIRE</i> lesson, the teacher is guided to pair instruction with immediate affirmative and corrective feedback for student responses.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> has high rates of feedback built into the instructional design, allowing the teacher to check for student understanding at every level: phoneme-grapheme, word, sentence, and within connected text. Feedback can be aligned with instructional scripting to ensure consistent language. For example, feedback is integrated into lesson steps such as Decoding and Sentence Reading, where the teacher can correct vowel sounds or decoding errors immediately. During Sentence Dictation, the teacher guides students to check and correct their errors.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i>'s professional development training provides the teacher with explicit error correction procedures for steps in the program's lessons.</p>	<div> Aligned</div>



The Michigan Dyslexia Handbook (2025) states that quality phonics and word recognition lessons using a code-emphasis synthetic phonics instructional approach must use an explicit instructional routine and include the following components:

Required lesson components	SPIRE features that meet this requirement	Status
Purpose or goal of the lesson	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes a clear purpose or goal for the lesson, which is communicated to both the teacher and the students.</p> <p>In <i>SPIRE's</i> Teacher's Guides, at the start of each introductory lesson, the teacher is presented with information that clearly describes the focus skill of the lesson. The scripting across the lesson provides students with the same clear and concise language to support an understanding of what they are learning. As a new skill is introduced, the teacher first states that students will learn a new skill, then models it.</p> <p>The program's explicit nature means that the learning objectives and the skills being taught are made clear to everyone involved from the outset of the lesson.</p>	 Aligned
A brief review of the previous lesson	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes a review of previously taught concepts and skills that encompasses content from previous lessons.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> is designed to be systematic and cumulative. Lessons build on one another, moving from simple to complex concepts.</p> <p>A key element of the instructional design of <i>SPIRE</i> is the review of previously taught skills prior to instruction of new content. Across lessons, students engage in retrieval practice with previously taught skills and high-frequency words.</p> <p>The program provides students with frequent, distributed, and cumulative practice to help them consolidate skills and develop automaticity.</p>	 Aligned
Introduction of the new concept	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes an introduction of the new concept or skill for the lesson.</p> <p>The <i>SPIRE</i> explicit instructional routine clearly designates a time and method for introducing the new concept or skill at the beginning of its introductory lessons, providing the teacher with scripts and guidance to explicitly state the learning goal and model the new material.</p> <p>At the start of each introductory lesson, the program gives the teacher and students clear statements related to the information and skills being taught and the outcomes for each. The teacher first states that students will learn a new skill, which is immediately followed by modeling the skill, such as the name of the letter, the keyword, and the sound spelled by the letter. After this initial presentation, the concept is practiced in reinforcing lessons along with previously taught concepts.</p>	 Aligned
Guided practice opportunities	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes guided practice opportunities. The program is designed with a structured approach that moves from explicit instruction and modeling to supported practice with teacher guidance before students move to independent application.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> utilizes a gradual release of responsibility teaching model. Students are asked to independently perform tasks only after skills have been explicitly taught and they have demonstrated proficiency during guided practice.</p> <p>During <i>SPIRE</i> lessons, students practice target skills with close teacher guidance. This monitored practice allows the teacher to provide immediate corrective and affirmative feedback.</p> <p>Scaffolds are built into the instruction to support students during practice, and the teacher can differentiate this support based on student needs. For example, the teacher might use manipulatives or Elkonin boxes during dictation practice to support students who need additional scaffolding.</p>	 Aligned

Required lesson components	SPIRE features that meet this requirement	Status
Extended practice opportunities	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes extended practice opportunities. This is a core component of the program's design to ensure students achieve mastery and build automaticity.</p> <p>SPIRE emphasizes continual practice and review to ensure gains become permanent. Every lesson across all levels of SPIRE includes robust practice with target skills through various activities such as visual drills, blending, word building, word reading, fluency practice, sentence reading, passage reading, and dictation.</p> <p>After an introductory lesson for a new concept, SPIRE provides additional reinforcing lessons. The teacher can choose the number of reinforcing lessons to use based on students' individual needs.</p> <p>SPIRE's practice opportunities are varied, occurring at the phoneme-grapheme level with phoneme cards and word finds, at the word level through word building with magnetic grapheme tiles and word list reading, and at the sentence and connected text levels through dictation practice and reading decodable passages and books.</p> <p>The program includes independent practice activities for students. Student workbooks provide additional practice opportunities, including decoding practice, word-reading drills, and decodable passages.</p> <p>This combination of cumulative review, high-frequency practice within lessons, dedicated reinforcing lessons, varied formats, and independent practice tools provides extensive opportunities for students to practice skills multiple times in multiple ways until they reach mastery and develop automaticity.</p>	 Aligned
Dictation practice	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes dictation practice, which is a core component integrated throughout the lesson structure to provide practice with encoding (spelling) skills and simultaneous oral spelling.</p> <p>In SPIRE's 10-step lesson plan, dictation occurs in multiple steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondence often includes encoding practice. • Step 7: Sound Dictation provides practice with writing the letter(s) corresponding to dictated sounds. • Step 8: Prespelling is an oral activity in which students analyze the phoneme-grapheme relationships in the word they will spell before writing it. • Step 9: Spelling involves students spelling dictated words, applying their sound-symbol knowledge. • Step 10: Sentence Dictation requires students to write complete sentences that incorporate the new concept and previously learned skills. <p>Dictation serves multiple purposes, including: reinforcing phonological awareness and decoding abilities by explicitly teaching and practicing the connection between sounds and symbols in writing; providing practice with applying the target skill of the lesson; offering cumulative and distributed practice with previously taught skills; supporting handwriting practice, including letter formation and spacing; and developing vocabulary, as the teacher is encouraged to use the words in sentences to aid with comprehension.</p>	 Aligned
Connections to word meaning	<p>SPIRE's explicit instructional routine includes connections to word meaning. This is addressed through several integrated components within the program.</p> <p>SPIRE connects phonological awareness and phonics not only to decoding but also to vocabulary and comprehension. This integrated approach helps students understand that decoding words leads to understanding their meaning within text.</p>	 Aligned

Required lesson components	<i>SPIRE</i> features that meet this requirement	Status
Connections to word meaning (continued)	<p><i>SPIRE</i> vocabulary routines provide student-friendly definitions, which can be paired with images to support vocabulary development. These routines focus on Tier 2 vocabulary words and include activities designed for encoding, storage, and retrieval across multiple contexts, addressing multiple layers of language.</p> <p>Instruction includes morphology, teaching students to identify and understand the meaning of morphemes (root words, prefixes, and suffixes). <i>SPIRE</i> explicitly teaches decoding words with common derivational suffixes and describes how they change the meanings of words.</p> <p>Instructional routines in the Teacher's Guides, particularly in reinforcing lessons (Step 5: Prereading), build students' background knowledge, activate prior knowledge, and relate events in passages to real life. This helps students connect the language in the text to their existing understanding and experiences, enhancing comprehension of word and text meaning.</p>	 Aligned
Text reading by reading decodable sentences and passages (text includes many words containing the letter-sound associations and high-frequency words that were the focus of instruction)	<p><i>SPIRE</i>'s explicit instructional routine directly incorporates text reading through decodable sentences and passages. This essential component of the program allows students to apply their newly learned and previously taught phonics skills in connected text.</p> <p>Integrated Text Reading: Reading decodable sentences and passages is a core element of <i>SPIRE</i> lessons, in which students generalize learned skills in workbook and reinforcing activities.</p> <p>Decodable Text Focus: A defining feature of <i>SPIRE</i> is its consistent use of decodable text in sentences and passages, as well as its extensive library of Decodable Readers. This text is carefully constructed using only previously taught sounds and sight words, ensuring students can decode effectively without relying on guessing from pictures.</p> <p>Purposeful Application: Reading decodable text in <i>SPIRE</i> serves to provide direct application of phonetic concepts and high-frequency words in context, develop reading fluency through repeated practice and timed drills, and foster comprehension through activities such as activating background knowledge, questioning, discussion, and graphic organizers.</p>	 Aligned
Additional requirements	How <i>SPIRE</i> meets the requirement	
Word reading skill complexity increases across the grades, such as letter-sound combinations (grapheme types), syllable types, and orthographic rules (e.g., consonant doubling, changing "y" to "i" when adding suffixes) that learners are expected to know	<p><i>SPIRE</i>'s explicit instructional routine includes an increase in the complexity of word-reading skills taught as students progress through the levels. This progression is a core feature of the program's systematic and cumulative design.</p> <p>Systematic and Cumulative Progression: <i>SPIRE</i> follows a sequential, systematic approach, moving students through a developmental process from emergent literacy to accomplished, fluent reading. Skills build on one another, and advanced skills are not introduced until prerequisite skills have been taught.</p> <p>Increasing Grapheme and Phonetic Pattern Complexity: The program starts with basic consonant sounds and short vowels. As students advance, they are explicitly taught to decode words with increasingly complex letter-sound correspondences and patterns, including digraphs, trigraphs, and blends.</p> <p>Increasing Syllable Complexity: After mastering single-syllable words, students move on to learning syllable-division strategies to support the decoding of multisyllabic words with learned syllable patterns. The vocabulary presented in passages also becomes increasingly complex as students master more sounds and syllable-division patterns.</p> <p>Introduction of Morphology: Instruction in morphology, including suffixes, prefixes, and base words, begins in Level 3 of <i>SPIRE</i> and continues throughout the program.</p>	 Aligned

Required lesson components	SPIRE features that meet this requirement	Status
<p>Word reading skill complexity increases across the grades, such as letter-sound combinations (grapheme types), syllable types, and orthographic rules (e.g., consonant doubling, changing “y” to “i” when adding suffixes) that learners are expected to know (continued)</p>	<p>Orthographic Patterns and Spelling Rules: The program includes explicit instruction in spelling, which reinforces phonological awareness and decoding abilities. Students study the spelling of words and relate it to their sounds. The lessons build students’ knowledge of the orthography of the English language for both phonemes and morphemes.</p> <p>The increasing complexity across these areas (graphemes/phonetic patterns, syllables, and morphology/orthography) is designed to support students in applying their decoding skills to increasingly challenging words encountered in sentences and decodable passages.</p>	 Aligned
<p>Instructional emphasis on developing vocabulary and background/topic knowledge to support inferencing, understanding syntactically complex sentences and text structure, and monitoring comprehension is ongoing</p>	<p>SPIRE’s explicit instructional routine includes a strong emphasis on developing vocabulary and background/topic knowledge to support various aspects of comprehension, including inferencing, understanding syntactically complex sentences, text structure, and ongoing comprehension monitoring. This emphasis is integrated throughout the program’s structured lessons.</p> <p>SPIRE embeds vocabulary and comprehension instruction into its explicit phonics and phonological awareness lessons, reinforcing the connection between decoding and understanding text meaning. Instruction is intentionally integrated and cumulative, ensuring comprehension development is consistent across levels.</p> <p>Vocabulary Development: SPIRE includes explicit instruction in vocabulary strategies such as visualizing, using context clues, classifying, identifying known word parts, and understanding multiple-meaning words. These strategies are embedded within lessons and reinforced through soft scripting in Teacher’s Guides, which allows for student-specific discussion and activities. Both Tier 2 (academic) and Tier 3 (domain-specific) words are presented, with repeated opportunities to hear, see, and use vocabulary in context.</p> <p>Beginning in SPIRE Level 3, nonfiction passages are frequently included to build content knowledge. Vocabulary complexity increases alongside students’ mastery of phonics skills and syllable patterns. The teacher is guided to facilitate rich, interactive vocabulary discussions that deepen word knowledge and support comprehension.</p> <p>Building Background and Topic Knowledge: Step 5 of SPIRE’s reinforcing lessons includes pre-reading activities that activate prior knowledge and help students connect text content to their lives and experiences. These activities are culturally responsive and designed to enhance relevance and engagement. Building background knowledge is explicitly identified as a key support for comprehension.</p> <p>Supporting Inferencing: In SPIRE lesson Step 6, guided reading discussions include questions that go beyond literal comprehension, encouraging students to draw conclusions, infer meaning, and engage deeply with the text. These activities are supported by structured questioning and prompts that foster inferential thinking, even though the program may not have been submitted for formal review under specific comprehension criteria.</p> <p>Understanding Syntactically Complex Sentences: SPIRE addresses syntax explicitly through sentence reading, dictation, and comprehension activities (Step 4). Students are routinely exposed to grammatically correct and increasingly complex sentence structures. As students progress, they receive instruction in sentence variation and more advanced language mechanics.</p> <p>Understanding Text Structure: SPIRE lesson Step 6 incorporates instruction on recognizing and analyzing various text structures. Graphic organizers are provided with every Reinforcing Lesson to support this skill. SPIRE includes a wide range of genres—fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and content-area texts—which naturally introduces students to diverse structures.</p> <p>Monitoring Comprehension: Ongoing comprehension monitoring is built into every SPIRE reinforcing lesson. The teacher uses embedded pause points, guided questions, and graphic organizers to check for understanding and scaffold student responses.</p>	 Aligned

Required lesson components	SPIRE features that meet this requirement	Status
<p>Comprehension processes are developed by using quality texts that differ in complexity, genre, and format. Quality texts for developing comprehension include those that advance learners' science, social studies, and mathematics understanding; reflect learners' backgrounds and identities; include critical academic vocabulary; align to individual learner needs; and increase in complexity through scaffolded instruction.</p>	<p>SPIRE incorporates the use of quality texts that vary in complexity, genre, and format to develop comprehension processes.</p> <p>Quality and Diversity of Texts: <i>SPIRE</i> includes a diverse collection of carefully curated informational and literary texts. <i>SPIRE</i> Decodable Readers offer an extensive library of 120 books across various genres and themes.</p> <p>Varied Genres and Formats: <i>SPIRE</i> lesson texts include both fiction and nonfiction selections. The Decodable Readers encompass a wide range of genres, such as historical articles, science articles, poetry, folklore, literature, biographies, and ancient myths.</p> <p>Advancing Understanding in Other Subjects: Nonfiction topics, which are first introduced in <i>SPIRE</i> Level 3, are designed to build vocabulary and background knowledge, including through discussions of events in passages.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> professional development encourages the teacher to use above-grade-level texts during read-alouds to develop students' background knowledge and vocabulary in various subject areas.</p> <p>Reflecting Learners' Backgrounds and Identities: Through carefully curated content, <i>SPIRE</i> ensures diverse backgrounds and experiences are acknowledged and celebrated. Students encounter a range of characters, stories, and scenarios that reflect a variety of cultural contexts and perspectives, allowing them to see themselves and cultures outside of their own. The teacher is encouraged to allow students to share their own cultural experiences and perspectives during reading. In addition, pre-reading questions in Step 5 of <i>SPIRE</i> lessons relate events to students' personal experiences and cultures.</p> <p>Including Critical Academic Vocabulary: The reading step of each <i>SPIRE</i> lesson includes strategies such as making inferences and summarizing, discussing word meanings, asking comprehension questions about sentences, visualizing, and using graphic organizers for text structure and writing organization. The teacher is instructed to use pause points to ask questions to monitor understanding and to engage in text-based discussions.</p>	<p> Aligned</p>
<p>Teachers should read aloud daily to advance learners' comprehension, especially in the early elementary grade</p>	<p>Daily teacher read-alouds in <i>SPIRE</i> are an important practice within the program's framework. The teacher models oral reading to support the development of fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and background knowledge—particularly for students still learning to decode.</p> <p>Each <i>SPIRE</i> lesson includes a brief read-aloud passage after the decodable text. These passages connect to the topic of the decodable text, spark discussion to enhance comprehension, build vocabulary and background knowledge, and support understanding of the decodable passage.</p> <p><i>SPIRE</i> resources provide supplemental read-aloud materials to deepen content knowledge. In addition, <i>SPIRE</i> professional learning encourages read-alouds using diverse, complex texts—both narrative and expository—above grade level to build students' background knowledge and vocabulary.</p>	<p> Aligned</p>

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