NORTH DAKOTA SCIENCE OF READING

Curriculum Materials Considerations for North Dakota Schools

2026–2027

GRADES K-5

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How to Use This Guide

This Guide was developed to support school districts in making informed investments in evidence-based curriculum materials. Keep the following in mind while using this tool:

There is no perfect curriculum.
Select materials based on your students' needs, evidence of effectiveness, and alignment with the Science of Reading.

Build educator and administrator knowledge first.
Strong knowledge of evidence-based reading instruction is essential for using curriculum materials effectively and maximizing student learning.

Determine a comprehensive decision-making process.
The Instruction Partners Curriculum Support Guide provides tools and guidance for adopting and implementing curriculum materials.

Expect the Guide to evolve.
The Guide reflects current research, evidence, and experience and will be updated annually as new information becomes available. Be sure you are using the most current edition.

North Dakota Context to Consider

NDCC 15.1-21-12.1 *Reading curriculum — Content — Professional development — Reports to legislative management*

Beginning July 1, 2022, each school district and nonpublic school shall ensure the portion of its curriculum related to reading:

- Is scientifically based, evidence-based, and research-based;
- Focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; and
- Uses systematic direct instruction for students in kindergarten through grade three to ensure all students obtain necessary early reading skills.

The North Dakota ELA Content Standards set expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level.

Section 1: Introduction to the Science of Reading (SOR)

The Science of Reading (SOR) is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research on reading and related issues in reading and writing. According to the *Science of Reading: Defining Guide* (The Reading League [TRL], 2022), this research has been conducted over the last five decades worldwide and is derived from thousands of studies in multiple languages. The Science of Reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence that informs how proficient reading and writing develop, why some students have difficulty, and how we can most effectively assess and teach — improving student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

The Science of Reading draws on research from multiple fields:	The Science of Reading is NOT...
• cognitive psychology • communication sciences • developmental psychology • education • implementation science • linguistics • neuroscience • school psychology	• an ideology or philosophy • a fad, trend, new idea, or pendulum swing • a political agenda • a one-size-fits-all approach • a program of instruction • a single, specific component of instruction, such as phonics

Section 2: Leading and Making Curriculum Materials Decisions

Implementing new curriculum materials is an investment of school resources, including educator time and district funds. The North Dakota Science of Reading (ND SOR) Leadership Team recommends that decisions regarding the selection of curriculum materials be made through a comprehensive, team-based approach.

Before reviewing the curriculum materials and recommendations in this Guide, we strongly encourage your team to engage with Instruction Partners' *Curriculum Support Guide*.

✎ **TO DO: Access the *Curriculum Support Guide* created by Instruction Partners. This guide provides a framework, with action steps and tools, to help you select, prepare for, and support the use of great materials in your school.**
https://curriculumsupport.instructionpartners.org/

Section 3: Curriculum Material Types

Type	Explanation Additional Considerations
Core Materials	Core Materials are those that are aligned with the Science of Reading, promote systematic and explicit Tier 1 instruction, and are designed to teach grade-level standards for the Five Big Ideas of Reading. Core instruction is designed for both whole-group and small-group settings and supports differentiated instruction. *Taken collectively, a district's core materials must teach all Five Big Ideas of Reading. A single Core program may not address all five; in such instances, districts should consider more than one program and/or build curriculum supports to ensure all areas are addressed in instruction. If different resources are used across grade levels, the district will need to plan for vertical alignment.*
Supplemental Materials	Supplemental Materials are those aligned with the Science of Reading that provide additional Tier 1 instructional support to strengthen a Core Program. They meet the criteria to support and extend the critical elements of core instruction for one or more of the Five Big Ideas of Reading. If a student needs support beyond what the Core Program provides to meet grade-level standards, schools may use Supplemental Materials to reteach and provide additional practice. *Supplemental Materials should support skills in one or more of the Five Big Ideas that are not represented, or that need strengthening, within a Core Program.*
Intervention Materials	Intervention Materials are those aligned with the Science of Reading that provide explicit, direct instruction in a systematic, sequential, and cumulative fashion and follow a logical plan focused on a targeted area of reading development. Intervention is primarily provided in small groups or one-to-one settings.
Resources	A Resource is an aligned learning tool that supports Science of Reading–based instruction; however, it does not meet all instructional criteria for use in supplemental or core programs. Resources can support students who may need more guided practice, independent practice, or simply reinforcement in a targeted area of reading development in whole- or small-group settings. *While resources can be an integral part of a comprehensive reading program, they are not included in this Guide.*

Adapted with permission from the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Literacy Curriculum Approval Process.

Section 4: Core & Supplemental Material Recommendations

Because the ND SOR Leadership Team does not have the capacity to review all curriculum materials on the market, we focused our efforts on materials approved by other states with SOR curriculum requirements. Each resource was first screened for the nine contrary practices outlined in North Dakota's Statement of Contrary Practices (see Red Flags to Avoid below).

🚩 Red Flags to Avoid

Cognitive science research conducted over the past four decades does not support some methods for teaching foundational reading skills (Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989; Dehaene, 2013). Within this Guide, you will not find any programs that use:

- the Three Cueing Systems Model of Reading
- visual memory as the primary basis for teaching word recognition
- a scope and sequence for word recognition that is not systematic
- too few practice opportunities for most students to master foundational skills

For additional red flags, review North Dakota's Statement of Contrary Practices and The Reading League's Primary Considerations for Decision Makers.

Grades K–5 Core & Supplemental Materials

The Big Ideas of Reading that each material addresses are noted in the Big 5 Focus column; refer to the key at the top of the table. Taken collectively, a district's core materials should address all Five Big Ideas. To qualify as Supplemental, a material must adequately address at least one of the Five Big Ideas.

Materials are listed alphabetically by program name within each category. This is not an exhaustive list.

PA = Phonemic Awareness **P** = Phonics **F** = Fluency — **Word Recognition (WR)**

V = Vocabulary **C** = Comprehension — **Language Comprehension (LC)**

Program	Company	Big 5 Focus	Grade	Core / Supplemental	Considerations
CORE MATERIALS					
95% Group Core Phonics (2020)	95% Group	PA P F	K–5	CORE	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Arts & Letters (2025)	Great Minds	V C F	K–5	CORE	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Bookworms (2022)	Open Up Resources	PA P V C F	K–5	CORE	• *Taught in three 45-minute instructional blocks* • *More practice with foundational skills may be necessary* • *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) (2025)	Amplify	PA P V C F	PreK–5	CORE	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Emerge! (2026)	McGraw Hill	PA P V C F	K–5	CORE	• *First year of publication*
Fishtank (2025)	Fishtank Learning	V C F	K–12	CORE	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*

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Program	Company	Big 5 Focus	Grade	Core / Supplemental	Considerations
Functional Phonics & Morphology (2023)	University of Minnesota	**PA P F**	**K–5**	**CORE**	• *K–5 Foundational Skills only*
Magnetic Reading Foundations (2023)	Curriculum Associates	**PA P F**	**K–2**	**CORE**	• *K–2 Foundational Skills only*
Open Court Reading (2023)	McGraw Hill	**PA P V C F**	**K–5**	**CORE**	• *Text complexity is questionable* • *The writing component is not connected to reading* • *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Pathways to Reading (2021, 2022)	Pathways to Reading	**PA P F**	**K–2**	**CORE**	• *K–2 Foundational Skills only*
Reading Horizons Discovery (2024)	Reading Horizons	**PA P F**	**K–3**	**CORE**	• *K–3 Foundational Skills only* • *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Really Great Reading (2023)	Really Great Reading	**PA P F**	**PreK–5**	**CORE**	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports* • *Launchpad (PreK); Countdown (K); Blast (1st grade); HD Word (2+ grades)*

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Program	Company	Big 5 Focus	Grade	Core / Supplemental	Considerations
Success for All (2022)	Success for All Foundation	PA P V C F	K–8	CORE	• *Professional development and coaching must be purchased with the curriculum* • *Staff time must be allocated for a Success for All coach/coordinator in the school building* • *Includes whole-school improvement components that address noninstructional issues*
UFLI Foundations (2022)	University of Florida Literacy Institute	PA P F	K–2	CORE	• *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports* • *Consider pairing with Word Origins for 3–5*
Wit & Wisdom (2023)	Great Minds	V C	K–5	CORE	• *Ongoing professional learning and additional planning time are likely needed*
Word Origins (2026)	University of Florida Literacy Institute	PA P F	3+	CORE	• *Word study for grades 3 and up* • *Consider pairing with UFLI Foundations for K–2*
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS					
CLAVES (2025)	IES Grant Funded	V C	4+	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *CLAVES is a language-based literacy curriculum designed for upper elementary multilingual students and their peers.* • *Also focuses on morphology and syntax*
Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI)	University of Oregon	PA P F	K–2	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *Enhancements are available for more than 11 specific core reading programs in grades K–2.*

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Program	Company	Big 5 Focus	Grade	Core / Supplemental	Considerations
Geodes (2019)	Great Minds	**F**	**K–3**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *Aligned with specific core resources. Confirm that Geodes align with your core program.*
Let's Know (2013)	LARRC, Ohio State University	**V C**	**PreK–3**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *A 25-week curriculum supplement designed to improve children's language skills and their reading comprehension. Includes three 7-week units and one 4-week unit, which span one academic year for each grade (PreK to Grade 3). Eleven books are used across the four units.*
Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) Reading • Kindergarten • 1st Grade • 2nd–5th • High School	Lynn and Doug Fuchs via Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research, IRIS Center	**PA P F C**	**K–12**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *With PALS, every student in the class is paired, and each pair includes one student who is academically stronger than the other. PALS sessions last 20–45 minutes, two to four times a week. Each PALS manual provides all the information needed to implement PALS in your classroom, including teacher-directed scripted lessons and student materials.*
Read Side by Side (2022)	Read Side by Side	**V C**	**3–8**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *A three-part curriculum that incorporates read-alouds, book clubs, and independent reading*
Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)	SRSD or Releasing Writers	**Writing**	**K–12**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to enhance the core program for all students*	• *SRSD is a structured, explicit approach that provides students with strategies and deliberate practice in skills (e.g., structured sentence expansion, variation, and cohesion exercises). These lighten the cognitive load and enable students to translate their ideas onto paper more easily.*

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Program	Company	Big 5 Focus	Grade	Core / Supplemental	Considerations
Spellography (2022)	95% Group	**Spelling**	**4–5**	**SUPPLEMENTAL** *to prevent/remediate skill deficits for students in the core who are somewhat below grade level*	• *Best used in small-group instruction with 4th–5th graders who need more practice with spelling. There are four books (A–D). Each book takes approximately 12–16 weeks to complete, with 30-minute daily lessons.*
STATE-FUNDED RESOURCES					
Amira	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	**PA P F**	**K–5**	Note: The 69th Legislative Assembly has secured funds to continue providing Amira Learning for high-use, high-fidelity school districts at no cost to students and families through June 2027.	
Waterford	Waterford Upstart	**PA P**	**PreK–2**	Note: The 69th Legislative Assembly has identified funds to provide early childhood learning opportunities to families through the Waterford Upstart program.	

Section 5: Intervention Material Recommendations

Because the ND SOR Leadership Team does not have the capacity to review all intervention materials on the market, we focused our efforts on materials approved by other states with SOR intervention requirements. We relied primarily on the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) Academic Intervention Tools Chart (2020) to review studies on the intervention resources included in this document. Use student data to identify each student's needs and select an appropriate intervention.

The Simple View of Reading is a widely accepted framework showing that reading comprehension is the product of two basic components: word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension. Understanding the Simple View of Reading can help educators assess language and literacy strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate, evidence-based interventions.

Intervention materials below are categorized by the component of the Simple View of Reading they target.

Grades K–12 Intervention Materials

Materials are listed alphabetically by program name. This is not an exhaustive list.

Program	Company	Focus	Grade	Support Level	Considerations
Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy & Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy	University of Kansas	**Writing**	**2–12**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Appropriate for students who need explicit instruction in basic concepts and terms, such as "subject," "verb," or "infinitive." The data suggest this resource is effective for students with learning disabilities.*
Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LIPS)®	Gander Publishing	**Word Recognition**	**K–3**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Designed for struggling readers; approximately 20 minutes per day over two years.*
Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS)	Minnesota Center for Reading Research	**Word Recognition**	**K–5**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*PRESS interventions are targeted to the specific skill area that students need. The PRESS data-driven decision-making process and interventions are compatible with a variety of assessment systems.*

Program	Company	Focus	Grade	Support Level	Considerations
Phonics for Reading	Curriculum Associates	**Word Recognition**	**3–12**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Administer the "Phonics for Reading" Placement Test to determine where to begin. Scheduling is important when implementing this resource. One lesson may be completed in:* • *3 sessions of 30 minutes each* • *2 sessions of 45 minutes each* • *1 session of 90 minutes each*
RAVE-O	Nido Learning	**Word Recognition**	**1–5**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*RAVE-O is delivered in 30-minute sessions to small groups (typically 1–6 students). The program consists of 3 modules, each containing approximately 50 lessons. A placement assessment helps determine the starting point for each student's curriculum.*
Reading Mastery Transformations	McGraw Hill	**Word Recognition** + **Language Comprehension**	**PreK–5**	**Core Replacement (Intensive)**	• *Administer the program placement test to determine where to begin. Scheduling is important when implementing this resource. Most lessons are 90 minutes. Approximately 85–90% of each daily lesson reviews previously taught content, and 10–15% introduces new content.* • *Read detailed review at the Reading League Curriculum Navigation Reports*
Readsters Phonics Plug-In One and Two	Readsters	**Word Recognition**	**K–3**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*The Phonics Plug-In units are designed for small-group instruction. Ideally, groups should include no more than four students. Each unit includes individually administered Unit Check-Ups to determine whether a student is ready to move on to the next unit.*

Program	Company	Focus	Grade	Support Level	Considerations
REWARDS and REWARDS Plus	Voyager Sopris	**Word Recognition**	**4–12**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	REWARDS focuses on decoding multisyllabic words, identifying and understanding prefixes and suffixes, and increasing reading fluency at the word and passage levels. *Designed for 4th–12th graders who have mastered foundational skills associated with 1st–2nd grade. This program is appropriate for struggling students reading between the 2.5 and 5.0 grade levels and/or students who read grade-level materials slowly (60–120 wpm).* • *The intermediate level is designed for grades 4–6 and includes 25 lessons of approximately 60 minutes each.* • *The secondary level is designed for grades 7–12 and includes 20 lessons of approximately 60–90 minutes each.*
SIPPS	Collaborative Classroom	**Word Recognition**	**K–12**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Administer the program placement test to determine where to begin. Scheduling is important when implementing this resource. Lessons average approximately 30–50 minutes. For students in need of additional support, the Intensive Multisensory Instruction for SIPPS Handbook provides teachers with enhanced routines. The program consists of the following levels:* **K–3 Students** • *Beginning Level: entry point* • *Extension Level: for students who know 60–70 high-frequency words; focuses on reading and spelling CVC patterns* • *Challenge Level: for students who have mastered single-syllable phonics and need to decode longer, multisyllabic words* **4–12 Students** • *Plus Level: for students reading at a 1st- or 2nd-grade level; provides age-appropriate content for older readers as they master the foundational skills* • *Challenge Level: for older students who have mastered single-syllable phonics and need to decode longer, multisyllabic words*

Program	Company	Focus	Grade	Support Level	Considerations
Sound Partners	Voyager Sopris	Word Recognition	K–3	Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)	• *This program is designed to be implemented by paraeducator tutors for approximately 30 minutes per day in small groups.* • *Sound Partners benefits students learning to read in grades K–1 and provides intervention for students in grades 2–3.*
S.P.I.R.E. 4th Edition with S.P.I.R.E. Foundations: Sounds Sensible	EPS Learning	Word Recognition	K–8	Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)	*S.P.I.R.E. Foundations: Sounds Sensible is the foundational level (precursor) to S.P.I.R.E. It builds phonemic awareness and mastery of 20 consonants and short a.* *The complete S.P.I.R.E. program comprises six levels. Administer the program placement test to determine where to begin. Scheduling is important when implementing this resource. One lesson may be completed in:* • *2 sessions of 30 minutes each* • *1 session of 60 minutes each*
Story Champs 2.0	Language Dynamics Group	Language Comprehension	PreK–2	Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)	*Story Champs® is a semi-manualized program with explicit teaching procedures that is flexible enough to allow for differentiation. Story Champs lessons can be implemented in various arrangements, including large groups, small groups, and individual students. Each lesson lasts 15–45 minutes, depending on the grouping arrangement and students' language needs.*
Word Connections 2nd Edition	University of Texas at Austin	Word Recognition	3–5+	Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)	*Word Connections was developed for students in third grade and above who continue to experience challenges with word reading despite having developed foundational decoding skills. It includes 40 lessons (40 minutes each), divided into four units of instruction. The recommended group size is approximately five students.* **This resource can be downloaded at no cost:** https://www.jessicatoste.com/wordconnections

Program	Company	Focus	Grade	Support Level	Considerations
Word Flight	Foundations in Learning	**Word Recognition**	**2–8**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Delivered in 20-minute daily online sessions. In addition to the online components, the program includes curriculum guides and daily lesson plans.*
Word Gen Elementary	SERP Institute	**Language Comprehension**	**4–5**	**Prevent / Remediate (Tier 2–3)**	*Word Gen Elementary develops academic language, argumentation, perspective-taking, and writing. There are 12 two-week units for each grade, with 40–50-minute lessons each day. Each unit introduces approximately 5–6 high-utility "focus words."* **This resource can be downloaded at no cost:** https://www.serpinstitute.org/wordgen-elementary

Closing & Contact Information

The ND SOR Leadership Team's vision is for this Guide to be used by schools as part of their team-based curriculum materials review and selection process. As we continue learning about reading instruction with our member districts, we anticipate updating this resource annually.

If you have questions or need further technical assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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