

We are grateful to the EdReports Team for their thorough and overall positive review of the Achievement First Mathematics Program. The review identifies many of the strengths of the curriculum. As a result of these strengths, the program has earned the distinction of “Meets Expectations” for Gateway 1 for all grades but Grade 6 and falls just one point shy of the point range set for that distinction for Gateway 2 for all grades.

The Achievement First Mathematics Program is the result of many years of research and hard work by teachers, leaders, and partners. The curriculum was originally drafted with input from experts, including the math team at the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas in 2014. It has since undergone many rounds of revisions based on teacher, leader, and Navigator partner feedback and input from instructional experts including those at the UT Dana Center and Student Achievement Partners. We believe that the high scores in Gateways 1 and 2 by EdReports are reflective of all of these efforts, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to improve the curriculum based on the review.

While we believe that the review in conjunction with student achievement data from Achievement First and Navigator partner schools verifies that the program overall is strong, we are already in the process of revising the materials to ensure that they are even stronger before the 2021-2022 school year. We expect that after these revisions and a targeted re-review of Gateway 2, the Program will be rated “green” for both of the first two gateways, and we welcome the review of Gateway 3.

Strengths Identified by the Reports and How we Plan to Build on Those Strengths

Focus, Grades K-5 & 7-8

The EdReports Review found that the instructional materials for Grades K-5 and 7-8 devote over 65% (the minimum established by EdReports) of instructional time to the major work of each grade, with Grades K-5 devoting, on average over 80% of time to major content, and Grades 7 and 8 each devoting 68% of time to major standards and clusters. For all grades (K-8), the materials only assess grade-level content.

We plan to build on this strength in Grades K-4 by removing the above-grade-level problems presented in the Math Stories time and replacing them with on-grade-level non-routine applications; as a result, the overall percent of instructional time devoted to on-grade-level content will increase even further.

Coherence, Grades K-8

The Review found that the instructional materials for K-8 provide opportunities for the supporting standards to be used to enhance the major work of each grade level and that the supporting work of each grade is connected to the major standards/clusters for that grade level. Additionally, across all grades, the review found that content designated for one grade level is viable for one year.

Rigor and Balance, Grades K-8

According to the Review, the Achievement First Mathematics Program materials develop conceptual understanding and procedural skill and fluency and balance the three aspects of rigor.

As noted above, we plan to improve the K-4 Program by replacing all of the above-grade level sample problems provided for Math Stories with non-routine application problems, so that at least 20% and up to 40% of the sample problems provided are non-routine. We also plan to add more non-routine, independent application problems in Grades 5-8 through the addition of problems to mixed practice and the revision of some of the problems of the day. These revisions will effectively improve the already strong balance of routine and non-routine applications in all grades.

Areas for Growth and How we Plan to Address Them

Mathematical Practice-Content Connections, Grades K-8

While the Program identifies the Standards for Mathematical Practice in each unit and lesson, we sometimes over-identify the SMPs. The materials attend to the full meaning of most of the practice standards (MPs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 for Grades K-5 and MPs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8 for Grades 6-8), but do not consistently attend to the full meaning of MP 1 in Grades K-5, MP 4 in Grades 6-8 and, according to the Report, MP 5 across all grades. Additionally, the connections to the content are not always made clear to teachers through the materials.

We have planned revisions that we are confident will address the gaps in practice- content connections highlighted by the Review, both in terms of addressing the MPs that the review highlighted as under-addressed and in terms of making connections clear.

First, the above-mentioned revision of adding more independent, non-routine problems for students to make sense of and persevere in solving (as we noted we plan to do in our revision process) will fill the gap in addressing MP 1 in Grades K-4.

Second, we plan to re-identify the focal SMPs for each unit and lesson to ensure we are not over- or mis-identifying MPs, and finally, we plan to make connections to the content explicit to teachers by adding a section to the narrative portion of each lesson plan explaining how the embedded mathematical practices in that plan support and deepen the learning. We believe that by clarifying the connections between the content and all of the practice standards, EdReports will recognize that the Achievement First Mathematics Program attends to the full meaning of MP 5 in that there is an emphasis on students choosing from a variety of modeling and solution strategies throughout the program, even though students do not always pick their own concrete tools.

Focus, Grade 6

While Focus is a strength of the overall program highlighted by the review for most grade levels, Grade 6 partially met expectations in this area due to a lack of instructional time spent on the major work of the grade level. A minute-level analysis by the EdReports Team determined that approximately 58% of the instructional time is devoted to major content, just short of the 65% of time required.

We plan to revise the 6th Grade materials to ensure that at least 65% of overall instructional minutes are spent on the major work of the grade by shifting 3-5% of core lessons out of units addressing additional/ supporting standards to units addressing major ones and increasing the coverage of major standards in materials supporting the core lessons. This will result in a decrease in the number of lessons and spiraled review exercises aligned to statistics and probability and/or geometry and an increase in the number of lessons in expressions and equations and/or number sense.

Looking Ahead

We look forward to submitting the revised Achievement First Math Program materials to EdReports for a targeted re-review this spring; the new materials will be published and available to all via our [open source website](#) in July of 2021. If you are looking for more information about the program and how to implement it, please visit our [Navigator website](#) for support.