

EdReports Publisher Response

Bridge to Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum (K-2)

Thank you to the EdReports team for their comprehensive review of the Bridge to Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum. We welcome the feedback and look forward to implementing the suggestions provided.

The Bridge to Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum was developed in direct response to the feedback we received from Heggerty partners. For over two decades, schools have seen measurable success with the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum and were looking for a phonics curriculum to align directly. Bridge to Reading directly reflects the latest research on how children learn to read and has been awarded an ESSA II ranking. Additionally, Bridge to Reading has been proven to support student growth and to close foundational reading skill gaps between kindergarten and first grade.

We are happy to see EdReports recognize many of the program's strengths:

- Our gradual release model engages all learners with daily guidance for differentiated support.
- Multiple opportunities for reading practice—including decodable passages and decodable books—provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge of phonics skills and high-frequency words. Small group lesson plans provide teachers with guidance to tailor these lessons to specific phonics skills.
- Each and every lesson includes student application, allowing children daily opportunities to demonstrate and practice new learning.

The report also provides three focus areas for growth:

1. Assessment Requirements

The report noted that while access to summative and formative assessments

was present, they were not required.

Assessment is a critical component of any effective instructional program. Understanding that many schools and classrooms are inundated with assessment, B2R sought initially to strengthen the day-to-day formative assessment cycle, giving teachers the actionable daily insights into student progress they need to effectively plan ongoing individualized instruction.

Bridge to Reading provides regular opportunities for assessment, including weekly checks and opportunities for teachers to observe children applying new learning to reading and spelling during the “We Do” and “You Do” lesson portions. The provided curriculum-aligned assessment was intentional to measure students’ sound-spelling knowledge for the specific skills taught.

Understanding that many teachers are required to assess foundational skills via universal screeners, these embedded assessments are highly recommended but not explicitly required and designed to be administered in whole-group settings out of respect for teachers’ instructional time. The Heggerty approach to curriculum development centers around equipping and empowering educators. We know that no two classrooms are the same, and therefore, proactively include opportunities for individualization based on the unique needs of a district and/or classroom, including in this approach to assessment.

Development has begun for additional assessments, and we are excited to launch a new partnership with the Literably online reading assessment tool this fall to provide assessments measuring students’ phonemic awareness and decoding skills.

2. Timeline for Phonemic Awareness Instruction

The report references that Bridge to Reading for First Grade does not include daily, brief lessons in phonemic awareness past week 24.

In 2022, the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum was revised to reflect the latest research on how children best learn to develop these foundational reading skills. Part of that revision included reducing the weeks focused on phonemic awareness for grades 1 and 2. Bridge to Reading also reflects this evolved approach, providing daily whole-group instruction for 24 weeks, followed by optional lessons in weeks 25-30 for intervention to support whole group and small group instruction, as needed. This decision was intentionally made to reflect research showing that for most students, 24 weeks of explicit phonemic awareness instruction is sufficient and to maximize instructional time for additional phonics instruction and practice.

Research shows that most students develop phonemic proficiency during first grade. In Bridge to Reading, phonemic awareness instruction is not only provided at the beginning of each lesson as a warm-up to phonics instruction but is also embedded directly into phonics instruction and connected to print, as seen when students blend sounds to read words and segment words into sounds during writing and spelling.

3. Expanded Focus on Alphabet Knowledge and Fluency

The report notes that the kindergarten curriculum has limited opportunities for alphabet knowledge assessment.

Bridge to Reading provides students with explicit instruction in developing alphabet knowledge through daily practice with letter names and sounds. Additional resources to support student practice and assessment are in development.

The report also states that the first and second-grade curricula include limited opportunities for explicit, systematic instruction in oral reading fluency with limited opportunities for students to engage in supported practice to gain automaticity and prosody.

First and second-grade classrooms will currently find embedded fluency instruction with modeled reading through Sound stories, activities in the READ book, and weekly decodable passages. Additional connections for teachers are being added throughout, in addition to assessments to measure and monitor fluency growth for all learners throughout the school year.

Many of the improvements suggested within the report are in development and will be available to classrooms digitally via myHeggerty for the 2024-2025 school year.

These additional resources include:

- Assessment for letter formation and letter/sound recognition.
- Additional student practice for letter formation and letter/sound recognition.
- Explicit instruction for fluency with student practice.
- Fluency checks for assessment and teacher rubrics.
- Guidelines for analyzing Weekly Check results.
- Phonics decoding assessments including Red Words.

The Heggerty team looks forward to submitting the Bridge to Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum for reevaluation in the near future. If you have questions or would like to learn more about the Bridge to Reading curriculum, please contact our team at Heggerty.org/sales. To learn more about the Bridge to Reading research base and efficacy research, please visit

Heggerty.org/bridgetoreading/bridge-to-reading-research.