



High-Quality Instructional Materials Rubric for K-5 Science-Based Literacy Programs Guidance Document

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PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE’s) [Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) (CLP) seeks to move the District toward a reality in which all learners receive the effective literacy instruction and evidence-based interventions they need in order to become successful readers. The CLP’s guiding principles for literacy begin with inclusive literacy instruction to help ensure that all learners have access to equitable, culturally and linguistically responsive, high-quality, science-based literacy curriculum. Additionally, [DC Law 23-191 Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties Amendment Act of 2020](#) requires that **“each LEA shall adopt a science-based reading program.”**¹ This document is designed to provide DC local education agencies (LEAs) with guidance to support their adoption of high-quality science-based literacy programs.

- **Defining the science of reading:** The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop, why some have difficulty, and how educators can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.²
- **Science-based literacy programs:** Science-based literacy programs effectively integrate instructional content and practices that are in direct alignment with established research on how to teach students how to read and write.
 - **Structured literacy** is a science-based instructional model that focuses on building the foundational literacy skills of phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences, syllables, morphology, syntax, and semantics using an approach that is explicit, systematic, and cumulative.³ Structured literacy programs have been shown to be effective in teaching all students how to read and write.⁴ This includes English learners (ELs) as well as students at risk for reading difficulties.⁵
- **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM):** OSSE defines HQIM as sequential, comprehensive materials that are evidence-based and aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). [The CCSS for English Language Arts](#), adopted by the District of Columbia in 2010, establishes rigorous guidelines that reflect the skills and knowledge students need to succeed at each grade level. For literacy instruction, high-quality instructional materials can include core programming, supplemental programming, and intervention programming.

1 [D.C. Law 23-191. Addressing Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties Amendment Act of 2020. | D.C. Law Library \(dccouncil.gov\)](#)

2 The Science of Reading: a Defining Guide, The Reading League 2022

3 Cowen, 2016; IDA, 2018

4 Moats, 2019; Young, 2018

5 Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2009

ADOPTING AND IMPLEMENTING SCIENCE-BASED LITERACY PROGRAMS

[DC Law 23-191](#) requires that “each LEA shall adopt a science-based reading program.” Within this context, OSSE defines “**adopt**” to mean “acquire, purchase, or develop” and “**implement**” to mean “trained staff and regularly use to drive instruction.” In support of LEA adoption and implementation of science-based literacy programs, OSSE has developed the following resources:

- **The Science-Based Literacy Programs List:** a list of programs that meet the definitions of science-based and high-quality instructional materials.
- **The HQIM rubric:** a tool for evaluating whether a program meets the requirements of a high-quality science-based literacy program.

If an LEA has adopted or is currently implementing a core literacy program(s) **included** on the Science-Based Literacy Programs List:

- LEAs will confirm core literacy programs when submitting compliance documents to OSSE every year in October.

If an LEA has adopted or is currently implementing a core literacy program(s) **not included** on the Science-Based Literacy Programs List:

- LEAs will use the HQIM rubric to analyze and evaluate literacy programs for alignment to the essential components of literacy instruction.
- LEAs will submit completed rubrics with evidence to OSSE for review and approval. LEAs will submit rubrics in October of every year consistent with the requirements of [DC Law 23-191](#).

THE HQIM RUBRIC FOR K-5 SCIENCE-BASED LITERACY PROGRAMS

The HQIM rubric is a tool to support LEAs in reviewing core literacy program alignment to the essential components and key criteria of a high-quality, science-based literacy program. The HQIM rubric is organized using evidence-based components of effective literacy instruction.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE CORE LITERACY INSTRUCTION							
Grade	Phonological and Phonemic Awareness	Phonics & Word Study	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Writing	Small Group Instruction and Differentiation
Kindergarten	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 2	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 3	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 4	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grade 5	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Definitions of the literacy components can be found in the glossary tab of the HQIM rubric*

USING THE HQIM RUBRIC

The HQIM rubric includes each of [the components of effective literacy instruction](#) and describes corresponding criteria. These criteria represent instructional content and practices that are in direct alignment with established research on how to teach students how to read and write. LEAs will use the HQIM rubric to analyze whether a program's instructional materials align with the key criteria for each component. By completing the HQIM rubric, LEAs will thoroughly review programmatic alignments to current reading research. OSSE recommends LEAs take the following steps:

ESTABLISH A PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

- Convene LEA administrators, literacy specialists, academic coaches, and teachers who support literacy instruction in grades K-5 to collaboratively review literacy programming.

GATHER LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- Instructional materials can include program manuals, teacher guides, lesson plans, read-aloud books, decodable texts, word cards, spelling cards, big books, and student workbooks.

EVALUATE PROGRAM MATERIALS WITH THE HQIM RUBRIC

- Review teams analyze and rate instructional materials using the key criteria of each literacy component. LEAs will evaluate whether their instructional materials meet, partially meet, or do not meet these criteria. If the instructional materials meet or partially meet the expectations of the key criteria, the review team fills out the rubric's notes column and documents the evidence.

DOCUMENT AND SUBMIT EVIDENCE

- Review teams scan and upload evidence of instructional material alignment to the key criteria (e.g., scanned pages from teachers manuals, program lesson plans, student texts). An example can be found in the HQIM rubric. LEAs will submit evidence for key criteria to OSSE via a designated Box folder.

RUBRIC RATINGS AND DEFINITIONS

LEAs will use the HQIM rubric to analyze and evaluate literacy program materials to determine if they meet, partially meet, or do not meet the criteria of high-quality, science-based literacy instructional materials. The definition of each rating is outlined below.

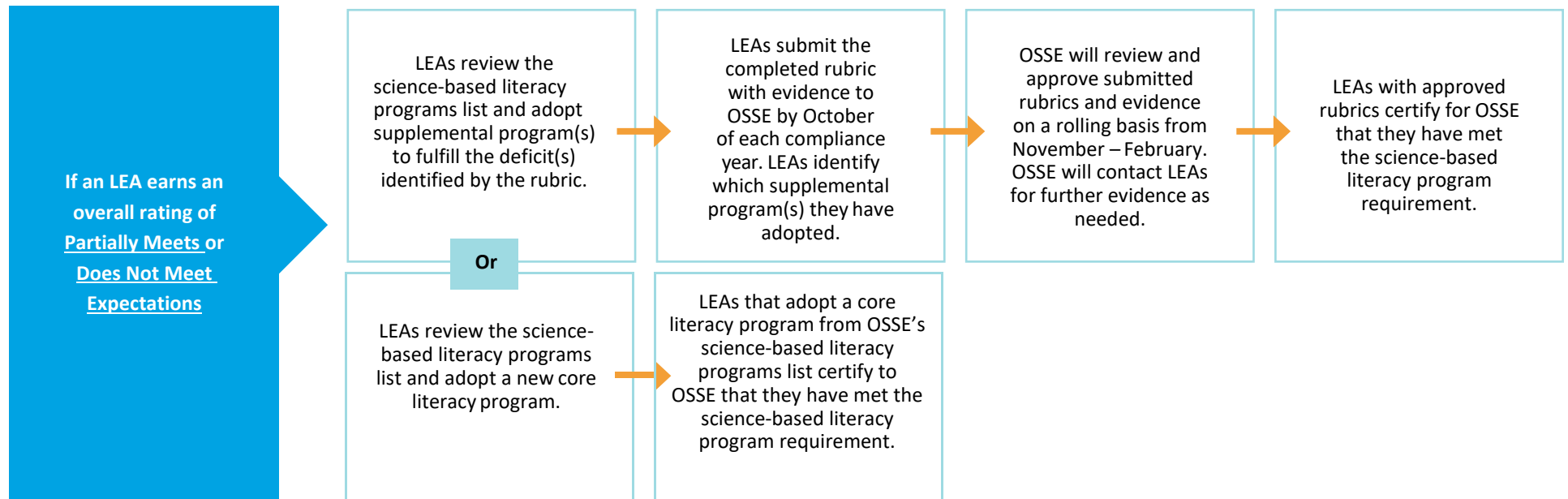
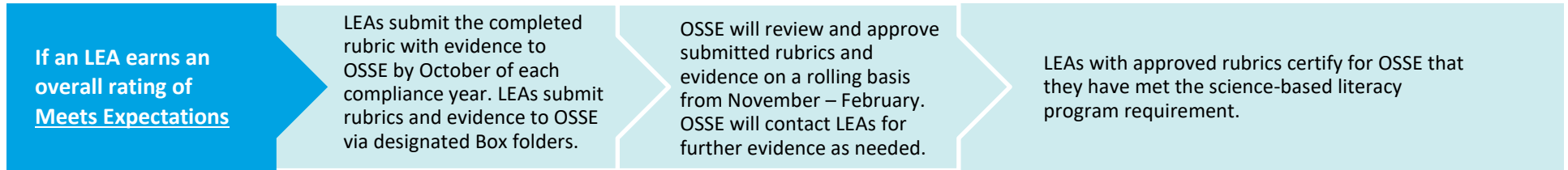
MEETS EXPECTATIONS	Items marked as “Meets Expectations” demonstrate evidence of the key criteria for each applicable grade band.
PARTIALLY MEETS EXPECTATIONS	Items marked as “Partially Meets Expectations” demonstrate partial evidence of the key criteria for each applicable grade band or describe instructional materials for which the criteria are fully met for one grade but not met in other grades within the grade band.
DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS	Items marked as “Does Not Meet Expectations” demonstrate limited to no evidence of the key criteria can be found in the program materials.

For a program to meet the expectations for a high-quality, science-based literacy program for both the K-2 and 3-5 grade bands, no more than two components can be rated as “Partially Meets Expectations,” and no components can be rated as “Does Not Meet Expectations.” **For a program to meet the expectations for a high-quality, science-based literacy program for K-2 instruction**, the phonics component must be rated as “meets expectations.” This is a non-negotiable component of science-based literacy programs for K-2.

When all the key criteria of a given component have been rated, the rubric will auto-calculate a rating for that component. When all the components have been rated, the rubric will auto-calculate an overall rating that can be found in the HQIM rubric’s ratings tab.

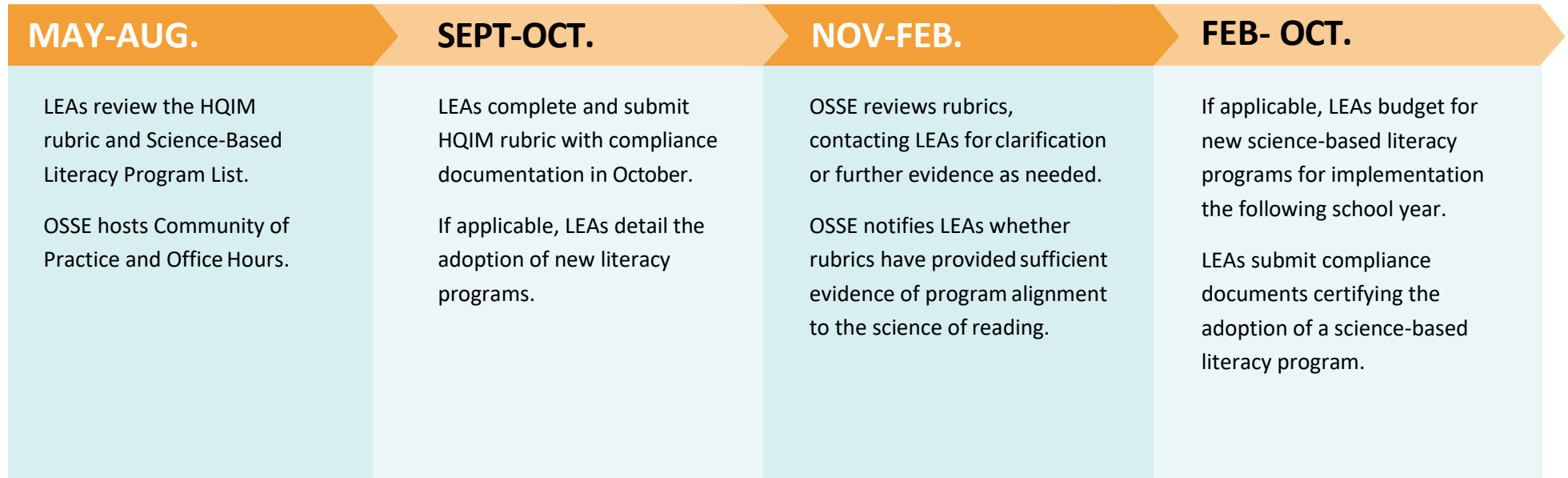
COMPLETING THE RUBRIC

LEAs must follow the steps below to submit completed HQIM rubrics and evidence to OSSE. LEAs will submit complete rubrics and evidence to OSSE for review via designated Box folders.



COMPLIANCE TIMELINE

[DC Law 23-191](#) requires LEAs to send a letter to OSSE reporting on whether the LEA has complied with the requirements set forth in the previous school year. The graphic below represents the compliance timeline for the science-based literacy program requirement.



RESOURCES

OSSE will provide LEAs resources to support the identification and adoption of a high-quality, science-based literacy program. The following resources can be found on [the DC Law 23-191 webpage](#)

- Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) for [DC Law 23-191](#)
- The HQIM rubric
- The High-Quality, Science-Based Literacy Programs List
- Guidance on submitting complete rubrics and evidence via Box folders

CONTACT INFORMATION

Additional information about how OSSE is supporting literacy in DC can be found here: [Literacy DC | osse](#)

Additional information about the legislation and guidance from OSSE can be found on the Dyslexia DC webpage: osse.dc.gov/page/Dyslexia

For questions, contact Dustin Tamsen at Dustin.Tamsen@dc.gov.



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