

## **Book Worms – Open Up Resources**

1. The following observations were made based on a review of the online resources made available by the publisher, and an in- person visit to review additional resources (mainly teacher guides and manuals) to the Taylor Education Administration Complex.
  - K-1 curricula – no issues with any of the kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> grade curricula. This curriculum is focused on developing initial alphabet and reading skills, with initial writing skills being introduced in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curricula – no issues with any of the grade 2 curricula. This curriculum is focused on continued building of reading and writing skills and adds initial grammar and spelling.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curricula – the teacher guide advocates New York State’s Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education framework as a model, adopting a style guide which focuses on the importance of racial identity. The teacher guide states, “Our language choices and additional guidance for teaching with texts that include themes of racial and ethnic diversity are also part of our efforts...” The teacher guide also downplays the primary importance of studying English as the guide states, “We adopted the term multilingual to replace English language learner to celebrate home language as an asset.” This is accomplished through units with titles like, “Fight for What is Right,” “Reaching our Goals,” and “Exposing Injustice.” In a workbook assignment, students are tasked with explaining the differences between a book on the Constitution and a book on the Congress based on a unit entitled “The Divided States of America.” In a chapter on choral reading entitled “Working out the Problems,” students are asked to opine on the fairness of states’ representation in Congress. Another shared reading features the discussion topic “why was it important that people do not have to be religious to be elected to be in government.”
  - 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade curricula - the teacher guide states, “students are given an opportunity to express their opinions on the injustices they have learned”, and in a module based on the Jamestown settlers, “students must write from a chosen settlers perspective (working class or wealthy class)”. A main reading text is devoted to the story of Mamie “Peanut” Johnson, who was one of three women to play professional baseball in the Negro leagues. This text is used to explore sexism, racism, and segregation. Another teaching text is “Love, Amelia” which addresses the experiences and treatment of Latino immigrants (was not able to discern if they were legal or illegal) who come to America from Mexico.
2. The following observations were made based on a review of the textbook vendor’s website (direct links in the textbook vendor’s websites are **highlighted in blue font** below):
  - <https://www.openupresources.org/> states “Our nonprofit’s **mission: to increase equity** in K–12 education”
  - <https://www.openupresources.org/reading-with-relevance/> states “A CASEL-certified SEL program. “Reading with Relevance is built to teach the five research based SEL competencies **and integrates social/emotional development into every lesson.**”
  - <https://www.openupresources.org/professional-learning/social-emotional-learning/> states “**By integrating intentional social/emotional development into every lesson, we are creating a generation of learners ready to understand, question, and remake the world around them.**”
  - <https://www.openupresources.org/about-us/kristopher-j-childs/> states “Chief Academics, Equity & Social Justice Officer - Dr. Childs brings his vast experience in K–16 to develop and drive forward key strategic initiatives of the organization in service of **dismantling systemic racism in K–12 education in the United States.**”
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/l-brooke-powers/> Brooke Powers, the **Managing Director of Academics, Equity, and Social Justice at Open Up Resources** states “ **I am passionate about equity** and access in education”
  - <https://news.openupresources.org/empower-your-classroom-join-our-5-part-workshop-series-on-classroom-equity> states “Empower Your Classroom: Join Our 5-Part Workshop Series on Classroom Equity”

- <https://news.openupresources.org/recapping-hive-2023-a-journey-of-equity-and-excellence> states “this year's conference became a dynamic platform where educators from around the nation converged to explore the intersections of diversity, equity, and inclusion in education.”
- <https://news.openupresources.org/empowering-children-to-grapple> states “the curriculum defines a culture of grappling as “one which students are supposed to make meaning of their own or with peers, rather than being taught by a teacher first.”
- <https://news.openupresources.org/launching-a-new-curriculum-creating-a-culture-of-discourse-and-community> states “traditional educational spaces, have, instead, elevated the voices of the teacher as expert and bearer of knowledge. It is a shift sometimes for educators and the children in our classrooms when they make the change to a student and discourse-centered curriculum, like the ones offered by Open Up Resources.”
- [https://access.openupresources.org/sign\\_in](https://access.openupresources.org/sign_in) offers example Curriculum Content [Grade 5 SR Module 1 Unit 1 Walk Two Moons | Bookworms: Open Up Resources - Teacher](#).
  - Walk Two Moons is a fictional novel about two characters dealing with family difficulties. There are two stories occurring simultaneously—one is the story of how Sal meets other children who are struggling to deal with their own family problems. The other is the story of how Sal’s grandparents take her on a journey to help her come to grips with her mother’s death. As you help students to track the story structures, it might be best to start with two story maps: one for the story of how Sal meets other children and one for the story of how Sal’s grandparents take her on a journey. It also might be best to allow the problems to be revisited and revised along the way. In the end, consider that the real problem in the story is how to accept things that cannot be changed, living with both sadness and hope at the same time. Lesson 8: The reading contains a scene where Grams, Gramps, and Sal smoke a pipe together. Lesson 12: In Chapter 19, Sal draws a stick figure being hung. She is expressing her hatred towards Mrs. Cadaver being with her father. Lesson 16: Chapter 23 is a very heavy chapter with sad content. Sals’ family comes from a Native American background. Throughout the text there are many references to her background, and you will see the use of Native American, Indian, and American Indian being discussed. You may wish to address this with students emphasizing the importance of honoring an individual’s preference.

### 3. My personal (subjective) evaluation.

- My review of this specific textbook supplier spanned approximately one (1) hour reviewing materials available online, and one (1) hour reviewing teaching guides etc. at the Taylor Educational Administrative Complex (TEAC). In addition, approximately one (1) hour of internet research was performed for each textbook supplier. **Book Worms – Open Up Resources was the least acceptable textbook provider. They offer an acceptable and philosophically neutral curriculum only for K-2.** Beginning in grades 3 through 5, Open Up Resources begins to introduce curricula that are progressively influenced by the tenants and themes of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI). Any doubt of this claim can be resolved by observing the themes that are explicitly promoted on their above corporate website references.
  - Click [here](#) for a catalog of concerns related to SEL.
  - Click [here](#) for a catalog of concerns related to DEI.
- The award of a contract to a textbook supplier based alone on the curriculum materials’ prospective deliverables and/or lowest evaluated price can be false economy if a prospective supplier does not affirmatively demonstrate its responsibility with respect to matters other than price. As Dr. Hornick correctly points out, “the primary goal of the OCPS textbook acquisition is to determine which materials are the best with respect to instructional and educational value. We may find we dislike the ‘cheapest’ vendor/materials **because the vendor includes content or themes we find objectionable**, and ultimately choose a different vendor.” OCPS procurement activities should also be harmonious with the OCPS Strategic Plan developed in 2023. A central

tenant of this plan was the avoidance of lightning rod issues related to Critical Race Theory (CRT), Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI), and Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

### ***Imagine Learning***

1. The following observations were made based on a review of the online resources made available by the publisher, and an in- person visit to review additional resources (mainly teacher guides and manuals) at the Taylor Education Administration Complex. All curricula employ an instructional approach that focuses on a variety of content areas as disciplines (instead of teaching reading vocabulary, comprehension and writing skills in isolation).
  - K curricula content focuses on toys, weather, and trees.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> grade curricula content focuses on tools, astronomy, and birds.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curricula content focuses on schools and community, fossils, and pollinators (bees).
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curricula content focuses on overcoming learning challenges, frogs, exploring literary classics, and the world of water. Generally speaking all K-3 curricula were neutral in terms of advocacy themes addressing personal and political belief systems.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> grade curricula content focuses on poetry and writers, animal defense mechanisms, the American Revolution, and Responding to Inequality (via the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment).
  - 5<sup>th</sup> grade curricula content focuses on stories on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, biodiversity in the rain forest, athlete leaders of social change, and the impact of natural disasters. **Unlike the other textbook suppliers, Imagine Learning did not provide any teaching manuals from which one could review and evaluate the advocacy themes developed for the Responding to Inequality, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and athlete leaders of social change curricula.**
2. The following observations were made based on a review of the textbook vendor’s website (direct links in the textbook vendor’s websites are [highlighted in blue font](#) below):
  - <https://www.imaginelearning.com/solutions/social-emotional-learning/purpose/> states “Imagine Purpose is **a complete, CASEL-aligned SEL solution** for your primary and secondary students and faculty and staff. Age-appropriate, foundational SEL curriculum for your youngest students in grades K–5 - Students are introduced to six primary emotions and begin by practicing recognizing emotions in themselves and others before they begin to practice regulating their emotions and appropriate emotional responses to others.”
  - <https://www.imaginelearning.com/about/equity-access/> states “**Equity & Access - Diversity and inclusivity strengthen our Imagine Learning team, enrich our lives, and help us design equitable educational experiences** where learners see themselves and can also learn about people, cultures, experiences, and perspectives different from their own. Our products support practices like Universal Design for Learning — where each learner’s unique learning journey is valued.
  - <https://www.imaginelearning.com/products/ela/> states “English Language Arts - **promote equity in literacy** with a suite of research-proven programs — because every student deserves to read, speak, and write on grade level.”
3. My personal (subjective) evaluation.
  - My review of this specific textbook supplier spanned approximately one (1) hour reviewing materials available online, and one (1) hour reviewing teaching guides etc. at the Taylor Educational Administrative Complex (TEAC). In addition, approximately one (1) hour of internet research was performed for each textbook supplier. **Imagine Learning offers an acceptable and philosophically neutral curriculum only for K-3.** In grades 4 and 5, Imagine Learning begins to introduce curricula that are progressively influenced by the tenants and themes of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Any doubt of this claim can be resolved by observing the themes that are explicitly promoted on their above corporate website references.
    - Click [here](#) for a catalog of concerns related to SEL.

- The award of a contract to a textbook supplier based alone on the curriculum materials' prospective deliverables and/or lowest evaluated price can be false economy if a prospective supplier does not affirmatively demonstrate its responsibility with respect to matters other than price. As Dr. Hornick correctly points out, "the primary goal of the OCPS textbook acquisition is to determine which materials are the best with respect to instructional and educational value. We may find we dislike the 'cheapest' vendor/materials **because the vendor includes content or themes we find objectionable**, and ultimately choose a different vendor." OCPS procurement activities should also be harmonious with the OCPS Strategic Plan developed in 2023. A central tenant of this plan was the avoidance of lightning rod issues related to Critical Race Theory (CRT), Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI), and Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

### **Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (Amplify CKLA).**

1. The following observations were made based on a review of the online resources made available by the publisher, and an in- person visit to review additional resources (mainly teacher guides and manuals) at the Taylor Education Administration Complex. All curricula employ an instructional approach that focuses on a variety of content areas as disciplines (instead of teaching reading vocabulary, comprehension and writing skills in isolation). In fact, Amplify's content areas were the most broad and diverse as demonstrated forthwith.
  - K curricula content focuses on nursery rhymes and fables, the five senses, plants, plants, farms, Native Americans, kings and queens, seasons and weather, Columbus and the Pilgrims, colonial towns, and townspeople, taking care of the earth, and presidents and American symbols.
  - 1st grade curricula content focuses on fables and stories, the human body, different lands and comparable stories, early world civilizations, early American civilizations, astronomy, the history of the earth, animals and habitats, fairy tales, American Independence, and frontier explorers.
  - 2nd grade curricula content focuses on fairy tales and tall tales, early Asian civilizations, ancient Greek civilization, Greek myths, the War of 1812, cycles of nature, westward expansion, insects, the US Civil War, the human body, immigration, and fighting for a cause.
  - 3rd grade curricula content focuses on "The Winds in the Willows", animal classification, the human body, ancient Roman civilization, light and sound, the Viking age, astronomy, Native American regions and cultures, early exploration of North America, colonial America, and ecology.
  - 4th grade curricula content focuses on personal narratives, empires in the Middle Ages, student inventors, geology, contemporary fiction, the American Revolution, "Treasure Island".
  - 5th grade curricula content focuses on personal narratives, early American civilizations, poetry, "The Adventures of Don Quixote", the Renaissance, the Reformation, "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Native Americans, and chemical matter.
2. The following observations were made based on a review of the textbook vendor's website (direct links in the textbook vendor's websites are **highlighted in blue font** below):
  - <https://www.coreknowledge.org/about-us/> states "We are a nonprofit working for educational excellence and equity built on strong foundations of shared knowledge. Our Mission and our Work – **dedicated to advancing excellence and equity in education**. After reviewing their texts and teaching materials, their reference to equity did not appear to fall under the umbrella of the same type of equity espoused by the other textbook providers.
3. My personal (subjective) evaluation.
  - My review of this specific textbook supplier spanned approximately one (1) hour reviewing materials available online, and one (1) hour reviewing teaching guides etc. at the Taylor Educational Administrative Complex (TEAC). In addition, approximately one (1) hour of internet research was performed for each textbook supplier. **Amplify - CKLA offers a fully acceptable and philosophically neutral curriculum for all grades. The breadth and depth of content was impressive.**

- The award of a contract to a textbook supplier based alone on the curriculum materials' prospective deliverables and/or lowest evaluated price can be false economy if a prospective supplier does not affirmatively demonstrate its responsibility with respect to matters other than price. As Dr. Hornick correctly points out, "the primary goal of the OCPS textbook acquisition is to determine which materials are the best with respect to instructional and educational value. We may find we dislike the 'cheapest' vendor/materials because the vendor includes content or themes we find objectionable, and ultimately choose a different vendor."
  - OCPS procurement activities should also be harmonious with the OCPS Strategic Plan developed in 2023. **There was no objectionable content or themes in Amplify's product offering.**