

**Textbook and Instructional Materials Waiver Request  
Knox County Schools  
Solid Start Science K-2  
Carolina Curriculum: Smithsonian Science 3-5**

**TDOE Standards Alignment**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Staff Review</b>
The extent of the textbook and/or instructional materials' alignment to Tennessee Academic Standards and, if necessary, the extent to which the LEA's plan would remediate any areas of misalignment.	The course content is aligned to teach the standards for the grade and subject.
How the LEA will address deficiencies identified by the Textbook Commission, if applicable.	N/A; The Textbook & Instructional Materials Quality Commission did not review the proposed materials.

**LEA Unique or Unusual Needs**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Submission</b>
The LEA's explanation of the unique or unusual needs that necessitate the use of the requested textbooks and/or instructional materials in the waiver application.	<b>K-2:</b> "SOLID Start (Science, Oral Language, and Literacy Development from the Start of School) is the best choice for our district because it provides true standards-based integration of science and literacy in a complete curriculum that meets the needs of all learners and best practices in science teaching. Developing the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively about science is critical for school success, lifelong learning, and participation in a global society. SOLID Start uses the research of how people learn to build their units and this was evident when our LEA's textbook committee evaluated the resource. This program offers the most cohesive support for early science instruction in Knox County, ensuring that students build both scientific understanding and literacy skills from the start of their education. This curriculum significantly outscored other curriculums reviewed by our textbook committee.

The Knox County textbook committee, which is comprised of 41 teachers across all regions and representing 34 schools, conducted a thorough evaluation of multiple programs using both the local textbook rubric and the state adoption criteria. The K-2 committee additionally reviewed SOLID Start, and it outscored other options in all areas, such as:

- Coherence: A well-structured progression of concepts, ensuring deep understanding.
- Science and Literacy Integration: A seamless connection between scientific exploration and language development.
- Concepts Before Vocabulary: Emphasizing conceptual understanding before terminology, which supports all learners.
- Accessibility for All Students: Materials and instructional strategies that promote learning for all students.

-Knox County Schools has already used portions of SOLID Start over the past two years, and teachers report:

- Higher student engagement in science lessons.
- Stronger development of science vocabulary and improved written communication.
- Increased confidence and participation in scientific discussions.
- Improvement in student desire to read and write during science time using SOLID Start.

Additionally, research from [Michigan State University](#) found that kindergarten classrooms using this curriculum outperformed non-participating classrooms in reading, demonstrating its effectiveness in strengthening early literacy skills.

SOLID Start is particularly well-suited for Knox County because it:

- Is an open educational resource, improving accessibility.
- Emphasizes communication and literacy, supporting district-wide priorities.
- Provides complete coverage of state standards with no instructional gaps.
- Uses readily available classroom materials, eliminating barriers to implementation.
- Supports diverse needs for the youngest learners.” – KCS

Application

**3-5:**

“Carolina Science Smithsonian is the best choice for our district because it provides standards aligned coherent materials with teacher supports. These teacher supports will support a teacher that is new to science and those that are veterans with content background and transition scaffolds to show coherence with the storyline of the standards. This program offers relevant learning experiences free from bias, and importantly accessible to all students in Knox County Schools. This curriculum significantly outscored other curriculums reviewed by our local textbook committee.

The Knox County textbook committee, which is composed of 41 teachers across all regions and representing 34 schools, conducted a thorough evaluation of multiple programs using both the local textbook rubric and the state adoption criteria. The 3-5 committee additionally reviewed Carolina Curriculum: Smithsonian, and it outscored other options in all areas, such as:

- Coherence: A well-structured progression of concepts, ensuring deep understanding.
- Teacher Supports: A seamless connection between what the teacher should be doing as a facilitator and how to connect activities to the central student ideas.
- Concepts Before Vocabulary: Emphasizing conceptual understanding before terminology, which supports all learners.
- Accessibility for All Students: Materials and instructional strategies that promote learning for all students.

Carolina Curriculum is particularly well-suited for Knox County because it supports continuing the work of curriculum based professional learning and shows a lesson sequence that does not give options that are outside the standards alignment confusing teachers. Instead there is a clear pathway to learning for students with a clear understanding of the learning journey for students productive struggle to mastery. With a district the size of Knox, clear materials with a coherent lesson pathway are essential for student and teacher support. These curriculum materials align most to work we have done for the past 6 years preparing teachers to teach science in a way that is different than delivering facts. This work has been done as a larger research project and our results over the past

	5 years show growth for teachers and students in teaching and learning science.” – KCS Application
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**State Board Staff Other**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Staff Review</b>
The availability of state-approved textbooks and/or instructional materials for the requested subject and course or grade.	Other approved <a href="#">K-5 science textbooks and instructional materials</a> for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year adoption cycle are available.
Compliance with applicable state laws (e.g., T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 related to Common Core and T.C.A. § 49-6-1019 related to Prohibited Concepts)	Yes. Materials were in compliance.
Optional: Evidence of improved student outcomes	<p><b>K-2:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>3-5:</b> KCS shared a <a href="#">program evaluation</a> conducted by the University of Memphis with funding from the U.S. Department of Education for the instructional materials in North and South Carolina. The evaluation found statistically significant and positive impacts on national science assessments overall and for female students.</p>