

SpringBoard English Language Arts Grades 6-8 Texas Edition

SpringBoard's Response to Texas Resource Review

The new Texas Edition of SpringBoard English Language Arts is a research-based, comprehensive instructional program developed by the College Board specifically to meet the expectations of the TEKS, while also preparing students for AP®, SAT®, and college-level work. SpringBoard integrates high-quality instructional materials with formative and summative assessments, along with highly rated professional development and coaching services. SpringBoard is designed to prepare and encourage all students for success in college and career.

We appreciate the detailed and positive review of Grades 6-8 conducted by the Texas Resource Review team as they have worked to identifying high quality materials in order to support districts, schools, and teachers in the rigorous process of selecting instructional materials. We value the feedback we receive in reviews of this nature because they allow us to reflect on our program and continuously improve. We appreciate the level of detail that went into conducting the review, and we are especially glad to see that TRR recognizes the strength of our integrated literacy instruction. While we feel the review was reflective of our program in general, we wish to take this opportunity to clarify and address a few areas where our program appeared to be lacking or did not fully align with the expectations of the review.

As a program back mapped from Advanced Placement®, SAT®, and the TEKS, we believe all students should be given rigorous opportunities with grade level materials. Our program is built on the same rigorous strategies and skills found in AP® classes and on the SAT®: critical thinking, problem solving, and deep contextual understanding. SpringBoard makes rigorous standards accessible to all students and helps to prepare them for success throughout middle school, high school, and in postsecondary opportunities. All students work with challenging texts, and tasks are deliberately and purposefully aligned to standards-based performance tasks that measure students' learning in relation to grade-level standards. In addition to the program materials, teachers and students have access to supports in reading, writing, and vocabulary development through our focused workshops and our partnerships with Zinc Learning Labs and Turnitin Revision Assistant. This focus on college-level preparedness results in instructional materials that are often very challenging for students, even those who perform above grade level.

The review indicates that our program partially meets the criterion for students who demonstrate proficiency above grade level (Section 5.1). As a program, we are focused on ensuring that all middle school students are prepared and empowered to attempt challenging coursework when they enter high school while also meeting the expectations of their grade-level standards. As such, our lessons are designed to provide access to grade-level content for all students while also embedding instructional opportunities that are building skills for high school and AP® coursework. Additionally, SpringBoard has often been criticized for being "too difficult" or "too challenging" for students, so this edition provides a wealth of support and opportunity for students performing below grade level, as they are the students least often given grade level work. While there are fewer explicit supports for students performing above grade level, those we include are strategic and focused, based on the content of each lesson. Beyond our daily instruction, we have designed our Close Reading and Writing Workshops

to be challenging and flexible enough that teachers can utilize supports for students performing below grade level expectations and remove supports, or require more independence, for students performing above grade level. Additionally, our partnership with Zinc Learning Labs affords teachers a range of opportunities, texts, and assessments that can be tailored to each student's needs.

We are pleased to know that the thoughtfully developed instructional supports, lesson design, and performance-based tasks are recognized by the TRR team as supporting high quality instruction. We want to emphasize that SpringBoard teachers are encouraged and supported to actively guide student reading, writing, and understanding of text; this guidance, as well as the formative assessment tools such as writing prompts, text-dependent questions, double-entry journals, graphic organizers, and analytical strategies such as SOAPStone, take students beyond the surface level and give teachers ample opportunities to monitor students' work to help them build independence in critical thinking and analysis. This provides teachers with the opportunity to assess not only understanding of texts, but also writing skills. The teacher edition provides support around how students should perform and important "look-fors" in their students' responses.

In closing, we appreciate the attention to detail and recognize the level of professionalism and consistency that went into conducting this review. At SpringBoard, we welcome feedback and have always used it to grow and improve to meet the needs of students and teachers in meaningful ways.