

# DISTRICT LITERACY PLAN

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# BOARD OF EDUCATION



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## Overview

Despite years of pedagogical debate in the area of reading instruction, the body of research about how students learn to read is unambiguous. In recent years, this body of research has come to be known as the Science of Reading, and outlines clear components of effective literacy instruction:

- **Letter Recognition, Alphabetic Knowledge and Concepts About Print:** Students need instruction and practice recognizing letters in upper and lower case forms, connecting letters to their primary sounds, and making the connection between language and print
- **Phonological and Phonemic Awareness:** Students need instruction on how to recognize and manipulate the sounds that make up words
- **Phonics and Word Recognition:** Students need explicit, sequential and systematic instruction on sound-spelling correspondence and patterns both in isolation and in the context of decodable texts
- **Fluency:** Students need regular practice reading and re-reading texts, with a focus on developing accuracy, appropriate rate and expression
- **Vocabulary and Knowledge:** Students need instruction and exposure to texts that allow them to develop robust vocabularies and a broad knowledge of the world that they can draw on to make meaning of a text
- **Text Comprehension:** Students comprehend what they read when they are both able to fluently decode the text and understand the words on the page; when these are both in place, students need instruction and practice analyzing, interpreting and evaluating texts using key ideas and details, craft and structure, and the integration of knowledge and ideas

DPSCD's comprehensive literacy plan, including instructional materials and frameworks, talent and professional development investments, and initiatives to foster a culture of literacy, is first and foremost grounded in the science of reading, but takes a holistic view of literacy. Research is also clear that to develop fully as readers, writers, speakers and listeners, students must also have access to:

- **Integrated writing, speaking and listening, and language** instruction
- topics, texts and pedagogical approaches that are **anti-racist, culturally relevant and engaging**

## **Kindergarten – Grade 2: Instructional Framework & Materials**

Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, all Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will be scheduled for a 150-minute ELA block, which includes Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. The block has three lesson types: Foundational Skills, Content Based Literacy Module Lessons, and a Small Group Instruction (SGI) block.

### **Foundational Skills**

In primary, this 150-minute block includes 50 minutes of uninterrupted time to develop reading foundational skills, including letter recognition, alphabetic knowledge and concepts about print (primarily in K), as well as phonological and phonemic awareness development, and systematic phonics instruction, as well as fluency practice. Phonics instruction includes opportunities to practice newly acquired phonics skills in context using controlled decodable readers. The foundational skills block also addresses Language standards connected to spelling and letter formation (writing). Each day, students experience approximately 30 minutes of teacher-led whole group instruction, including daily routines, a teacher led small group where students engaged with intentionally selected re-teach or practice activities differentiated based on student data, and focused on target skills, and a student led group where students practice newly learned skills from the lesson.

For the Foundational Skills, teachers use EL Educations' Language Arts Skills Block Materials. These instructional materials were first implemented during the 2018-19 school year, following a rigorous selection process which included convening teams of DPSCD teachers to assess the alignment and usability of available ELA curricula. The selection committee selected EL Education's Language Arts curriculum, which EdReports, a national non-profit which brings transparency to the instructional materials market, also scored among the top curricula for both alignment and usability. These instructional materials explicitly attend to the needs of young learners by incorporating music and song, bodily movement, and predictable, joyful rituals. To support strong implementation of these materials, the District has produced daily PowerPoints via the ModEL Detroit project, which make lesson preparation easier and support teachers in implementing daily activities, and has maintained digital licenses to Imagine Classroom (previously LearnZillion) an online platform with digital handouts, assignments videos and teacher planning tools for the curriculum.

Regular formative assessments are a key dimension of implementing the EL Education Foundational Skills Block; using "cycle assessments" teachers gather regular formative data to ensure that students are mastering target skills and quickly reteach as needed. This aspect of the curriculum is an area of opportunity and focus for implementation in the 2022-23 school year and beyond, and is therefore a feature of the teacher professional learning portion of this plan.

### **Content Based Literacy Module Lessons**

Primary students also develop knowledge, vocabulary and comprehension skills with 50 minutes of time dedicated to Module Lessons from EL Education. Module Lessons are organized around the four Ts, Topic, Targets, Texts and Task. This organization not only supports students in mastering grade level standards for reading comprehension, writing, speaking and listening in an integrated way, it also promotes student engagement and ownership of their learning.

- Topics: Are designed to be compelling and build knowledge of the world and community; for example, Kindergarten students engage with modules on Toys, Weather, and Trees, first grade students engage with modules on Tools and Work, The Sun, Moon and Stars, and Birds, while 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students engage with module on Schools and Community, Fossils, and the Secret World of Pollination.
- Targets: Each lesson and sequence of lesson builds toward mastery of grade level standards for the Michigan Standards for Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text, as well as writing and integrated speaking, listening and language standards. Teachers share student friendly learning targets for each lesson that help students understand what skills they are acquiring each day, and set a purpose for learning.
- Texts: These topics and targets allow for the integration of engaging texts worth reading, with rich craft and structure, and vocabulary. In primary, teacher read-alouds allow students to think and write about complex text as a means of developing richer comprehension and writing skills, while still developing their foundational skills.
- Tasks: Each module includes engaging writing tasks that allow students to synthesize their learning and ideas from the texts. Writing tasks range from Weather journals and informative writing on how animals depend on trees, to narrative writing on the stories of paleontologists, to poems about the sun.

Two key design principle of the EL Language Arts curriculum are the integration of character education and the use of authentic student work products. These two principles are central to the successful implementation of Module Lessons in primary grades.

### **Small Group Instruction**

The third and final component of the 150-minute primary literacy block is small group instruction (SGI). Small group instruction follows whole group instruction to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to offer data-driven and individualized supports to students. During the 50-minute block, teachers work with two to three small groups, using a rotational model; while one group is working with the teacher, students engage in meaningful activities to grow as readers. Dedicated SGI time is especially crucial in response to pandemic learning loss, as a greater proportion of students in grade 1 and 2 require intervention following online learning during their K and/or 1<sup>st</sup> grade years.

## ***Teacher Led Group***

In teacher-led group, teachers plan and “prescribe” activities based on student data from iReady, cycle assessments on Foundational Skills, student work from module lessons, and anecdotal data collected based on student observation. In primary, teachers select from the following resources to provide instruction:

<b>Instructional Material</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Which Students Are Targeted</b>
Orton-Gillingham Tier 2 Instruction	Orton-Gillingham is a research-based, multi-sensory phonics program that teaches students the systematic process of reading and spelling	Any student who is below grade level in phonics on their most recent iReady assessment
Foundational Skills Differentiation Pack	Part of the EL Education Foundational Skills materials, these resources provide targeted support to students on foundational reading skills; teachers and students use a decodable reader routine to work on phonics skills in context, allowing them to build fluency and comprehension	Any student who demonstrating mastery of grade level phonics standards and needs additional practice making meaning of what they read or reading accurately, with an appropriate rate and expression
iReady Tools for Instruction	Teacher-led mini-lessons aligned to iReady assessment domains which offer additional practice ideas for students developing specific skills; these resources should be directly connected to students’ iReady data and learning path	Any primary student

## ***Student Led Groups***

Student led groups of three to six students are self-managed in pre-defined classroom centers, while the teacher leads one small group with targeted instruction. These self-managed groups are still intentional and meaningful as opportunities to build students’ literacy skills.

<b>Center</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Accountable Independent Reading	In this center, students get “miles on the page,” cultivate their interests and a love of reading as they select texts to read on their own	<p>myON: myON is a digital library offering thousands of texts; students can select texts based on their interest</p> <p>Decodables and Cycle Poems: Students can pick up with continued practice on phonics skills in context with decodable readers or the foundational skills cycle poems that ground FS instruction in EL</p> <p>Scholastic Libraries: All K-2 Classrooms have classroom libraries stocked with texts at a range of reading levels that typically align to Module lessons so that students can explore interests; these libraries can also be supplemented with Local Author purchases</p> <p>Module Texts: Student may opt to spend more time with anchor read aloud texts, attending especially to identifying high frequency words, sound/spelling correspondences, and making meaning from rich illustrations</p>
Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Word Work, Vocabulary, Language	Students build phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and language skills independently through a range of games, activities and work pages	<p>EL Foundational Skills Activity Bank</p> <p>EL Foundational Skills Interactive Work Pages</p>
Writing	In this center, students reinforce phonics and decoding skills with opportunities to encode	Journal Writing: Modules often feature journaling which can be extended within this center

Center	Description	Resources
	language through writing while getting practice on grade level writing and language standards, including early grades mechanics and conventions such as capitalization and punctuation	Sentence Writing: Teachers can provide prompts to students to work on language and sentence conventions, aligned to standards.  Daily Writing Prompts: Teachers can provide prompts to spark students' creativity and promote further reflection and inquiry on habits of character, module topics, etc.
Fluency	Though a Fluency center may use some similar resources and texts as the AIR center, in Fluency centers, students use repeated reading, whisper reading, and partner reading to read accurately, at an appropriate rate, with expression	myOn, Decodables, Cycle Poems and Scholastic library books are all used for fluency work
iReady Individualized Online Learning Path	Students have access to individualized online lessons via iReady, matched to their needs	iReady

***Tier 3 Intervention***

During SGI blocks, students who need more intensive support to master phonics, based on their spring iReady diagnostics data, are also scheduled into Tier 3 interventions with an Orton Gillingham (OG) certified Academic Interventionist or certified Orton Gillingham District partner, such as Brainspring and Beyond Basics, for either 1:1 or small group support with OG.

The District's investment in Academic Interventionists and partners to implement Orton Gillingham is a crucial one for increasing reading achievement. Orton-Gillingham, which is proven to support students with reading difficulties including dyslexia, uses sight, hearing, touch and movement. AIs and partners implement OG's step-by-step learning process in pull out interventions so that students sequentially build their skills. OG routines emphasize



seeing, saying, sounding and writing letters, phonemes and morphemes to master both decoding and encoding.

## Grades 3 – 8: Instructional Materials & Framework

Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, all third through eighth grade students will be scheduled for 100 minutes of ELA, which includes Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. In Grades 3 – 8, students spend half of their ELA period on Content Based Literacy Module Lessons and the other half on Small Group Instruction (SGI), where they can continue to receive instruction on foundational skills should this be a barrier to their learning.

### Content Based Literacy Module Lessons

Like their peers in primary, students in intermediate and middle grades develop knowledge, vocabulary and comprehension skills with 50 minutes of time dedicated to Module Lessons from EL Education, and these lessons continue to be organized around the four Ts, Topic, Targets, Texts and Task.

- Topics: Are designed to be compelling and build knowledge of the world and community, while addressing issues of social and historical importance, aligned to the District's anti-racist commitment. These topics include human rights, responding to inequity, refugees, as well as the civil rights and social change movements.
- Targets: Each lesson and sequence of lesson builds toward mastery of grade level standards for the Michigan Standards for Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text, as well as writing and integrated speaking, listening and language standards. Teachers share student friendly learning targets for each lesson that help students understand what skills they are acquiring each day, and set a purpose for learning.
- Texts: These topics and targets allow for the integration of engaging texts worth reading, with rich craft and structure, and vocabulary. In intermediate and middle school, students engage with primary source material, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, seminal works of non-fiction such as the young reader's edition of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *A Mighty Long Way*, and contemporary classics in children's and young adult literature, such as *The Lightning Thief*, *Esperanza Rising* and *A Long Walk to Water*.
- Tasks: Each module includes engaging writing and/or research tasks that allow students to synthesize their learning and ideas from the texts. Many intermediate and middle grades tasks integrate technology, the arts and speaking standards into culminating performance tasks, such a reading strategy bookmarks or trading cards, posters on the qualities of leaders who can affect social change, poetry readings, and research presentations.

Just as in K-2, teachers in grades 3-8 have access to supports for planning module lessons, including daily lesson PowerPoints through the ModEL Detroit project, and curriculum guides which curate helpful planning resources for each lesson on to a single page.

The District has also adopted curriculum-embedded assessments from CenterPoint Assessments which assess students’ mastery of targeted standards, with M-STEP like questions.

**Small Group Instruction**

The second component of the 3-8 literacy block is small group instruction (SGI). Small group instruction follows whole group instruction to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to offer data-driven and individualized supports to students. Just as in early grades, during the 50-minute block, teachers work with two to three small groups, using a rotational model; while one group is working with the teacher, students engage in meaningful activities to grow as readers. Dedicated SGI time is especially crucial in response to pandemic learning loss, as many students currently in intermediate grades missed crucial foundational skills instruction necessary for their growth as readers.

***Teacher Led Group***

In teacher-led group, teachers plan and “prescribe” activities based on student data from iReady, student work and assessment data from module lessons and module assessments from CenterPoint, and anecdotal data collected based on student observation. In intermediate and middle school, teachers select from the following resources to provide instruction:

<b>Instructional Material</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Which Students Are Targeted</b>
Orton-Gillingham Tier 2 Instruction	Orton-Gillingham is a research-based, multi-sensory phonics program that teaches students the systematic process of reading and spelling	Any student who is below grade level in phonics on their most recent iReady assessment
ALL Block	An extension of work within Module Topics, ALL Block materials provide students with additional instruction and practice with vocabulary, writing, fluency and language standards	All students in grades 3-5

Instructional Material	Description	Which Students Are Targeted
Magnetic Reading	Magnetic Reading offers additional practice with grade level texts, with an emphasis on comprehension skill development	Students in grades 3 – 5 who are on grade level, or one year below grade level
iReady Tools for Instruction	Teacher-led mini-lessons aligned to iReady assessment domains which offer additional practice ideas for students developing specific skills; these resources should be directly connected to students’ iReady data and learning path	All 3-8 grade students

***Student Led Groups***

Student led groups of three to six students are self-managed in pre-defined classroom centers, while the teacher leads one small group with targeted instruction. These self-managed groups are still intentional and meaningful as opportunities to build students’ literacy skills, while also fostering students’ sense of independence by encouraging them to pursue their own reading and study of high interest topics.

Center	Description	Resources
Accountable Independent Reading	In this center, students get “miles on the page,” cultivate their interests and a love of reading as they select texts to read on their own	<p>myON: myON is a digital library offering thousands of texts; students can select texts based on their interest</p> <p>Newsela: Newsela is a digital library of relevant reading selections, featuring 10,000 texts across 20+ genres, that can be read at five different reading levels; these texts are paired with standards-aligned questions and are topically aligned to Module Lessons so that students can follow their curiosity as they learn more about Module topics</p>



Center	Description	Resources
		<p>Scholastic Libraries: All 3-8 Classrooms have classroom libraries stocked with texts at a range of reading levels that topically align to Module lessons so that students can explore interests; these libraries can also be supplemented with Local Author purchases</p> <p>Module Texts: Student may opt to spend more time with anchor module texts</p>
Word Work, Vocabulary, Language, Fluency	Students use ALL Block Task cards to independently practice targeted language, vocabulary and fluency skills	EL ALL Block Task Cards
Writing	In this center, students reinforce phonics and decoding skills with opportunities to encode language through writing while getting practice on grade level writing and language standards, including early grades mechanics and conventions such as capitalization and punctuation	<p>ALL Block Task Cards: Students respond to module-based prompts</p> <p>Journal Writing</p> <p>iReady Scaffolding Comprehension/Magnetic Reading writing activities</p> <p>Daily Writing Prompts: Teachers can provide prompts to spark students' creativity and promote further reflection and inquiry on habits of character, module topics, etc.</p>
Fluency	Though a Fluency center may use some similar resources and texts as the AIR center, in	myOn Newsela, Scholastic library books, and Module texts are also used for fluency work

Center	Description	Resources
	Fluency centers, students use repeated reading, whisper reading, and partner reading to read accurately, at an appropriate rate, with expression	
iReady	Students have access to individualized online lessons via iReady, matched to their needs	iReady

***Let's Read Volunteers***

"Let's Read" is a school-based initiative, led by volunteers who work daily with K-8 students who are identified as reading below a third grade reading level. This volunteer program was influenced by collaboration and discussion between DPSCD, The National Action Network, The Keep the Vote No Takeover Coalition, and long-time community activist Helen Moore.

Schools who have Let's Read volunteers integrate their support during the SGI block. In lieu of centers, Let's Read volunteers work directly with students in a 25-minute routine:

- Letter fluency and high frequency word flashcards
- Phonics skills workbook pages
- Reading and discussing a story to develop a love of reading

Each volunteer is able to work with two students per SGI block.

***Tier 3 Intervention***

During SGI blocks, students who need more intensive support to master foundational skills, based on their spring iReady diagnostics data, are also scheduled into Tier 3 interventions with an Orton Gillingham (OG) certified Academic Interventionist or certified Orton Gillingham District partner, such as Brainspring and Beyond Basics, for either 1:1 or small group support with OG.

As noted previously, dedicated personnel and partnerships to implement OG with high degrees of fidelity is a crucial learning loss recovery strategy. K-8, the routinized approach to multi-sensory foundational skills instruction is crucial. During each session of OG, staff organize lessons around the following learning routines:



- Three-Part Drill: Students say sounds for letters shown, write letters for sounds they hear on sand or whiteboards, and blend 10-20 words and pseudowords. The support staff's Phoneme/Grapheme chart is visible to complete this lesson portion.
- Vowel Intensive: Support Staff drills students on 2 to 3 short vowel sounds (vowel; vowel consonant; consonant vowel consonant). Students can use whiteboards or vowel-intensive sticks to master challenging sounds or skills.
- Multisensory Introduction of New Skill: Staff shows a new card; students engage in a tactile activity with their hands/bodies to learn the new skills.
- Application of Skill/Root: Students spell words or write out sentences while using the finger tapping mat.
- Syllabication: Students use Syllabication tile cards or worksheet form to break down words into syllables.
- Red Words: Students will use red screens, red crayons, or whiteboard markers to engage in a 9-step word process for high-frequency words.
- Oral Reading: Students practice applying skills in context using controlled reading materials from Phonics First.
- MaxScholar: Students practice differentiated skills on the MaxScholar platform, an online platform that features the Orton-Gillingham routines and practice opportunities for students.

Partner support from Beyond Basics has been concentrated in schools with both a high proportion of students who are three or more years below grade level to ensure that as many eligible students as possible can be scheduled into an Orton-Gillingham intervention with OG certified personnel.

## **Grades 9 – 12: Instructional Materials & Framework**

Unlike Grades K-8, which uses instructional minutes allocated in the school day, literacy learning in the high school space uses access to coursework to meet students' needs. Student are required to have at least one core ELA course each of their four years in high school. In addition, schools offer additional literacy learning through seminar courses that offer literacy foundational skills learning using Orton-Gillingham, as well as a suite of honors, advanced, dual enrollment and elective courses to accelerate students' learning and prepare them for college and career.

## Core Coursework

For the required course sequence in ELA, ELA I, II, III and IV teachers use Pearson's *MyPerspectives* as the core textbook series. These instructional materials were first implemented during the 2019-20 school year, following a rigorous selection process which included convening teams of DPSCD teachers to assess the alignment and usability of available ELA curricula, and with both student and parent input opportunities. The selection committee selected *MyPerspectives*, which EdReports, a national non-profit which brings transparency to the instructional materials market, also scored among the top curricula for both alignment and usability. These instructional materials offer a selection of appropriately complex text and include questions and tasks that integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening standards. These materials also attend to the needs of all learners with differentiation supports and digital access to the materials.

At the time of selection, the committee proactively identified a lack of authentic representation in the core texts featured across grades. Despite the success of adopting an aligned, rigorous curriculum, educators recognized that *MyPerspectives* did not provide both mirrors (works that reflect Detroit students' lives and culture) and windows (works that provide into others' experiences). As a result, a novel selection committee was convened to help fill some of the gaps of cultural connections, relevancy, and history. Eight novels were selected from this committee and paired with each of the units of grades 9-12.

Although the novels were selected to be aligned thematically, there was a still a need to tighten the connection between the literature and the curriculum and to enhance the historical and cultural relevance, and to weave in some contemporary connections that mirror these objectives for students, with a strong consideration of Detroit's culture and history. The District secured philanthropic funding to engage scholars and experts from around the county, including Dr. Ghody Muhammad, Dr. Ernest Morrell, Dr. David Kirkland, Dr. April Baker-Bell, as partners on the Detroit Perspectives project. The Detroit Perspectives is a multiyear project to develop curriculum guidance and supplements to *MyPerspectives*, ensuring that students engage texts that reflect the full, nuanced, and diverse lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, People of Color is essential to building a classroom community that is inclusive, equitable, and affirming. Reading stories of resistance and resilience, excellence and achievement, love and connection, beauty and joy written across literary genres and mediums sparks engagement and has the potential to inspire students to tell their own stories. DPP will provide students the opportunity to not only learn from and about brilliant BIPOC story tellers but it will also equip and empower students to demonstrate that they too are brilliant story tellers and their stories matter.

A key design element of DPP is incorporating the input and voice of students, teachers, district staff members, and Detroit community members into curriculum revisions. Revisions are currently underway, and are slated for complete by the end of 2023.

Educators already have access to novel supplements as well as high-interest and culturally relevant classroom libraries, as well as Newsela, for use in the core block. Curriculum Guides for high school have also already re-ordered high school units to ensure that high school students begin each school year engaged in high-interest, culturally relevant units of study. In high school, students read seminal works of fiction and non-fiction, including authors such as John Lewis, James Baldwin, All high school ELA curriculum guides have also been updated to include fluency and vocabulary instructional routines and clarify close reading scaffolds to ensure all learners are able to access the complex texts at the center of instruction.

During the 2022-23 year, the high school literacy team is also developing curriculum-embedded assessments to provide greater insight across classrooms into students' mastery of the standards over the course of the year. By the 2023-24 school year, the District plans to also layer in end of course assessments to provide clear and consistent measures of literacy achievement beyond the P/SAT.

### **SAT Preparation Course**

In addition to standard ELA coursework, students across all DPSCD high schools have access to a P/SAT preparation course. Schools are encouraged to schedule 10<sup>th</sup> and/or 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who just achieved, or are just below, the College and Career readiness benchmark into this course, which provides systematic instruction on why the SAT matters, the structure and design of the test, practice with P/SAT content and questions. The course is divided into two quarters of work with Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and two quarters of mathematics, following a common, practical lesson structure from the adopted instructional materials, College Spring:

- Warm up
- Learn
- Practice
- Reflect
- Additional Practice

The course also integrates Khan Academy P/SAT lessons and practice, ensuring that students in Detroit receive access to systematic preparation experiences like those purchased by their more affluent suburban peers, often for a thousand dollars or more.

### **Tutoring Seminar: Reading Foundational Skills**

All high schools also offer 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading seminars focused on supporting the acquisition of reading foundational skills that may not have been fully mastered in K-8. Students enrolled in this course receive direct, multi-sensory phonics instruction using Orton-Gillingham, administered by OG certified academic interventionists. An assigned teacher of record for this course is responsible for working with AIs to monitor student progress and issuing student grades.

A subset of schools extend this course structure to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. In these seminars, the teacher of record is supported by Beyond Basics, the District’s partner. Unlike the 9<sup>th</sup> grade seminar, where students work in small groups on the OG routines, each student enrolled in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade seminar receives individualized, 1:1 support from an OG certified tutor.

**Advanced Coursework**

The district has made a significant investment in expanded advanced coursework options for students, including Dual Enrollment, AP and IB courses. Over the next two years, the District will pursue greater structure and curriculum guidance for the AP sequence in particular, ensuring that English I and II Honors courses systematically prepare students for AP Language & Composition and AP Literature & Composition with Pre-AP vertical articulation in these grades. The District will also continue to expand Dual Enrollment offerings across schools.

**Literacy Across the Content Areas**

The State of Michigan has adopted content area literacy standards for Social Studies and Science, aligned to both the domain and state literacy standards. Though reading, writing, speaking and listening are part of the student experience in these subject areas with structures such as Document Based Questions (DBQs) in Social Studies, the District plans to pursue more aggressive alignment in Curriculum Guides to reading and writing standards within the content areas. Not only are mastery of these standards required for students to be college and career ready within a content domain, explicit attention to these standards through the curriculum guides and professional development with teachers will accelerate students’ literacy gains throughout their high school experience.

**Successes and Barriers to Implementing the K-12 Instructional Framework and Instructional Materials**

Prior to the adoption of EL Education and the supplemental resources for small group instruction, teachers in the District’s K-8 schools themselves expressed deep concerns about the academic opportunities presented by their schools’ instructional materials.

K-8	2017-18	2021-22
My school implements a rigorous academic curriculum	61%	80%

This significant improvement in teacher perception about the rigor of the curriculum is extremely positive and outpaces national urban comparison districts, who average 75% agreement to this question.

Improvements in teacher perception have been mirrored by improvements in how students describe their own academic experience at school. In the District’s K-8 schools, students in Grades 3-8 are surveyed annually on the academic expectations at their school. Before the curriculum adoption, the School Rigorous Expectations score for this survey was 69%, and climbed to 77% in 19-20; the survey was administered just before the COVID lockdown and signals considerable improvement linked to the implementation of the curriculum. Student perceptions have dropped to 74% over the past two years, as the consistency and rigor of teaching and learning have suffered through the pandemic.

Before the high school curriculum adoption, which was conducted in 2018-19 and first implemented during the interrupted 2019-20 school year, high school teachers expressed a similarly poor perception of their schools’ academic curriculum. Since the adoption, that perception has improved, but still lags behind teachers in K-8 schools.

High Schools	2017-18	2021-22
My school implements a rigorous academic curriculum	59%	63%

This perception gap may be, in no small part, to 9-12 teachers having yet to lead a full year of uninterrupted face to face instruction with the instructional materials, but it is also clear that high school students are calling out for additional challenge in their academic experience. 58% of high school students report that their school maintains rigorous academic expectations for them, up from 56% in 2018-19 prior to the curriculum adoption. Students are clear that they can do more.

The first year that the District implemented new literacy materials in K-8, the resulting student achievement data was unequivocal. The District’s literacy improvement outpaced the state’s gains in all but one grade level. 12.7 percent of DPSCD students in grades 3-7 English Language Arts (ELA) were proficient, up 1.2 percentage points from 2018. Four schools made an unprecedented proficiency improvement of more than 10 percentage points in a single year. English/Language Arts results were particularly promising in Partnership Schools, which improved by 5.6 percentage points from 2018. This is a crucial data point in understanding the effectiveness of EL Education at increasing student achievement, not just for on or early-on grade level learners, but for students across all schools, including those with historically low performance.

Midyear data from 2019-20, three months before the first COVID lockdown, indicated that the District was on track to another year of solid improvement. Unfortunately, the disruptions of the pandemic since that time have made accurate measurements of student learning more challenging, and required the District and its schools to establish a new



baseline for proficiency during the 2021-22 school year, as teachers and student strove to make academic growth.

During the 2021-22 school year, 51.6% of K-8 students made a year's worth of growth, and 23.4% made stretch, or "catch up" growth that would put them back on a path toward proficiency. This percentage of students making a year's worth of growth is approximately equal to the 2018-19 school year, a promising signal in the District's post-pandemic recovery. In high school, the District adopted growth methodology to assess student growth on the College Board suite of assessments, using fall to spring results. No prior year data is available for comparison, but 40.8% of students achieved their growth target in Evidenced Based Reading & Writing, and 12.2% achieved stretch growth.

Though the instructional minutes and aligned instructional materials are in place to support literacy development, several barriers have prevented exceptional gains in literacy achievement. These include:

- **Purposeful Planning:** Most primary teachers were self-contained, meaning that they are responsible for teaching all core subject areas to their students. Rigorous instructional materials adoptions across content areas have made it more challenging for teachers to deeply plan and internalize lesson content, and also more likely that rich and dynamic student experiences included in the curriculum would be skipped or executed only partially. In older grades, most teachers have fewer preps, but missed preparation periods were common due to COVID coverage, and the systems and routines for common planning in grade level or content area teams were inconsistent across schools.
- **Pacing/Consistent Implementation of All Lesson Components:** Out of the box, EL Education has four Modules per grade level; teachers found it difficult to manage instructional time and ensure strong instruction across all planned modules for the year. Foundational skills and small group instruction time were often sacrificed as teachers' grappled with tackling all four Modules. The District moved to just three Modules per year in response to this data and teacher input, but during the 2022-23 school year, a similar pattern persisted; anecdotally, teachers cited challenges with absences and the winter virtual learning period as barriers to ensure students had access to a year's worth of learning. In addition, some teachers were more cautious about implementing small group instruction components due to COVID social distancing requirements for students, while others struggled with consistent classroom management. This resulted in less regular access to individualized learning experiences for students. Finally, limited use of curriculum embedded assessments to measure student mastery over the course of the year meant that schools were not having regular enough conversations about what learning students had access to, and what standards were mastered, over the course of the year.

- **Educator Mastery of the Science of Reading:** According to the National Council of Teacher Quality, which assessed roughly 1100 teacher preparation programs’ approach to early reading teacher prep in 2020, only 18 programs had adequate coursework and training aligned to the science of reading. This means that, while the research is clear on how students learn to read, very few certified teachers were adequately prepared to teach in this way. This extends to administrators, whose own preparation did not address the science of reading and therefore they are not necessarily accustomed to attend to it in classrooms.
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Only 18.2% of primary learners were present for more than 90% of instructional days during the 21-22 school year. This absenteeism rate is nearly five percentage points above students in grades 3-12; just 22.7% percent of 3-12 students were not chronically absent. Our aim is to ensure that students’ receive at least a full year’s worth of learning, and consistent attendance is crucial to that.
- **Teacher Absenteeism:** Daily teacher attendance is also crucial to students’ success. During the 21-22 school year, the daily attendance rate for teachers hovered at around 90%, with significantly worse attendance on Mondays and Fridays. Not only do significant absences affect the students’ directly assigned to a teacher, they also disrupt the operations of the schools when staff typically assigned to provide students’ interventions and/or teachers with instructional support like Master Teachers, must be used to provide class coverage. It is important to note that though attendance during the 21-22 school year lagged behind 20-21 attendance for teachers, daily attendance rates comparable to pre-pandemic levels, so this challenge is a long-standing issue to address.
- **Instructional Leadership Team Support:** Principals, APs and Master Teachers invested significant time and capacity responding to COVID last school year, making it more challenging to be consistent and focused on instruction. Instructional leadership team practices have also varied widely between schools, and previous structures for professional learning did not explicitly attend to coherence between roles. Instructional leaders have called out for additional professional development and resources to implement key school improvement strategies.

## Key Improvement Strategies

All of the District’s planned literacy initiatives aim to build on the successes of initial implementations while directly tackling the barriers most acutely felt across schools.

Focus Area	Key Strategies
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<p>Purposeful Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure schools develop master schedules that center Common Planning time for teachers who teach common grades/subjects and/or use Wednesday PLC times for this work</li> <li>• Encourage K-5 departmentalization to reduce the planning load on teachers; in K-2 departmentalized teams, teachers will only teach Literacy, while their partner teacher teaches math, science and social studies; in 3-5 departmentalized teams, teachers will teach Literacy and Social Studies</li> <li>• In partnership with schools, develop a Common Planning Playbook that clarifies expectations, provides training resources like videos, and curates grab and go resources</li> <li>• Build Master Teachers' capacity to lead common planning and Administrators' capacity to support and monitor common planning activities</li> <li>• Publish lesson planning templates that support preparation for all lesson components</li> </ul>
<p>Pacing/ Consistent Implementation of All Lesson Components</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain fewer modules in the scope and sequence of the year (3 instead of 4) while attending intentionally to ensuring that every child receives a year's worth of learning</li> <li>• Update Curriculum Guides to reflect refinement of modules and pacing, including feedback from the field</li> <li>• Consistently use and reflect on data from curriculum embedded assessments to ensure that students' have access to a year's worth of learning and are making progress against standards over the course of the year</li> <li>• Develop end of course assessments for high school ELA to establish a consistent measurement across classrooms of student mastery in each course</li> </ul>
<p>Mastery of the Science of Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) Training for Teachers and Administrators, concentrated in Partnership Schools</li> <li>• Use LETRS training completion as a selection criteria for all K-12 Literacy Master Teachers by 23-24</li> </ul>
<p>Chronic Absenteeism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize Climate Leadership Teams across all schools to coordinate schoolwide and individual attendance supports</li> <li>• Intentionally align professional learning for all members of the Climate Leadership Team to a set of common SIP (School Improvement Plan) strategies</li> <li>• School-level incentives and interventions</li> </ul>



Teacher Absenteeism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue a letter of agreement with DFT to reward and incentivize excellent attendance</li> </ul>
Instructional Leadership Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce consistent Look Fors for excellent Literacy Instruction K-12 with transparent monitoring and data tools that allow ILTs to regular discuss instructional trends at their school and across their cohort to problem solve</li> <li>• Implement three cycles of continuous improvement with intentional focus areas: common planning, coaching cycles and data conversations focused on lesson structure, pace, questions and tasks, and student voice</li> <li>• Intentionally align professional learning for all members of the Instructional Leadership Team to the Look Fors and a set of common SIP (School Improvement Plan) strategies</li> </ul>

**Educator Support Model**

During the 2022-23 school year, the District significantly overhauled its model for Instructional Support at the school level. Each K-8 Assistant Superintendent was assigned two cross-content support teams for their cohort, organized geographically to the extent possible. Each team consists of a group of Curriculum Leaders and Training & Support Coordinators, including one literacy content expert for approximately every 12 schools. The high school team was staffed with cross-content support teams for their cohort, with 4 literacy staff members serving all high schools, intensifying the ratio of support. This change in structure yielded significant improvement in perceptions of support. 83% of Principals and APs agreed or strongly agreed that “The district provides content experts that support my school in implementing the state standards.” This is a 5%-point increase from 20-21, and an 8%-point increase since 19-20.

The District intends to build on the success of this model with deeper intentionally during the 2022-23 school year. Using the common look fors and focus area for each cycle of continuous improvement to inform their work and prioritization, Literacy content leaders will take on more direct ownership of Master Teachers support and own expected outcomes of support (i.e., improved instructional practice) for their caseload of schools. School support team members will continue to log their support of schools to allow for ongoing trend analysis and problem-solving.

**Professional Development**

As noted above, intentionally sequenced and focused professional learning across roles is a hallmark of the District’s evolved professional learning strategy. Though the PD catalog will continue to boast a wide array of options, the District team will prioritize a more focused set of learning experiences aligned to overarching goals for instructional improvement.



### ***Principals and APs***

Principals and APs will each have monthly role-alike meetings, as well as monthly cohort meetings. At each of these meetings, Principals and APs will receive connected learning experiences on facilitating Leadership Team meetings (instructional and culture) and supporting strong instruction through common planning, coaching cycles, monitoring activities, and observation and feedback through the evaluation process. Administrators will also engage in learning about literacy lesson structures, standards, questions, tasks and student voice protocols, as well as the intentional use of assessment data across their school.

### ***Master Teachers***

Master Teachers will experience professional development designed to support both their instructional practice and their instructional leadership skills. The year-long professional learning scope and sequence for the role features intentional work with lesson structure and a year's worth of learning, questions and tasks, and student voice, as well as common planning, coaching cycles and data conversations as mechanisms for improving literacy outcomes across classrooms. All current and prospective Master Teachers will also be strongly encouraged to complete LETRS training, regardless of their current grade level placement, to ensure that all schools have access to support on the science of reading.

### ***Teachers***

The primary mechanism of professional development for teachers is job embedded and collegial learning through weekly common planning and ongoing coaching cycles. In addition, teachers will continue to have access a variety of professional learning options in the catalog and through District PD days, including 100, 200, and 300 series on the core areas of focus for the year: lesson structure, year's worth of learning, questions and tasks, and student voice. Work with curriculum embedded assessments and performance tasks will also be a prominent focus area in the catalog. As noted previously, the District plans to broadly engage and pay for LETRS training for its primary grades teachers, with a particular focus on partnership schools and continue integrating culturally and historically relevant pedagogies and practices in professional learning experiences across content areas.

### ***Aspiring Teachers***

Elementary On the Rise Academy Fellows completing their teacher certification through the District's alternative certification program complete required literacy coursework grounded in the basics of Science of Reading. In addition, their coaches provide regular feedback to ensure their classrooms reflect literacy best practices.

### ***Academic Interventionists***

The District will continue to certify Academic Interventionists in Orton Gillingham and offer AI specific professional learning via PD days to build their capacity in using integrated OG assessments to drive their interactions with students. PD offerings will also follow the data

on needs, based on data collected in the common look for tool across schools, as well as data on student attendance in expected OG sessions.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers through the Let's Read program are a crucial part of small group instruction in the schools they support. All Let's read volunteers will receive new volunteer or refresher volunteer training on the Let's Read literacy routine, ensuring that letter/high frequency word recognition, phonics work, and shared reading support student achievement.

## **Culture of Literacy**

Building a culture of literacy that develops avid readers will dramatically increase students' academic achievement and equip them with the tools necessary to pursue successful, prosperous lives. These signature District programs foster a love of reading and reinforce the classroom learning experiences, and are therefore critical components of the District's overall literacy improvement plan.

### **Spelling Bee**

The District is proud to offer an annual Spelling Bee for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Spelling Bees not only reinforce critical language standards for students, they also generate a sense of pride and accomplishment in each participating classroom. The District's Bee includes classroom, school and districtwide competition rounds. The districtwide winners and runners up of the bee becomes eligible for the Wayne County Scripps Selling Bee qualifier, and if successful there, for the national Scripps Bee.

### **Rise Up, Read More**

Rise Up, Read More is a districtwide reading competition that encourages daily at-home reading by K-12 students. Rise Up, Read More is returning to full implementation during the 2022-23 school year. Reading as hobby and habit can bring pleasure to student's literacy experiences by engaging them in the stories of diverse humans and ideas, they might not otherwise encounter. Participating students log their reading on a digital or hard copy reading log. Students in K-3 are expected to read for 15 minutes/night, 4-8thgrade students are expected to read 30 minutes/night and 9-12thgrade students are expected to read for 45-60 minutes/night.

Schools who report the most books read per student enrolled are celebrated with end of semester and end of year prizes, including fun snacks, movie screenings, and parties.

### **Local Authors' Panel**

The Local Authors' Panel is an opportunity for local authors to share their craft in DPSCD's classroom libraries. First initiated during the 2021-22 school year, the Panel:

- Collects applications from local authors who wish to have their work featured in DPSCD classroom libraries
- Assembles a panel of teachers to review the submitted titles for craft, relevance and quality
- Provides principals with a catalog of approved titles and purchasing instructions should they wish to supplement classroom libraries using their school-based budget

During the first year of the panel, all submitted books were reviewed and selected by educators and students in the district, and were proud to make books from Tyrus Kendrix, Jahquan Hawkins, Patrice Lee, Christine Johnson, Michelle Anderson, Torie Anderson, Lyndsay Archer, Juliann Deadrick, Mary J. Holcolm, Andrea Pope, Shawn Fuqua, KariJo Wagner, D.J.Qu4d and Mazi Maki part of the inaugural catalog. The panel will convene each winter going forward.

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