

HOW WE TEACH READING AT CSD

The Colonial School District is committed to delivering the highest-quality reading instruction rooted in evidence-based best practices - all students that enter our schools will read well, read often, and read for life.

To make sure that we're meeting the needs of your child, we've been hard at work learning about and implementing what is known as the structured literacy approach, and wanted to update you on some of the shifts you can expect to hear about in the way we offer reading instruction.

The Science of Reading and Structured Literacy

- Informed by the body of research known as the “science of reading,” the structured literacy approach Pennsylvania schools are shifting to brings us closer to our goal of ensuring that at least 95% of our students are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade.
- This approach to reading instruction means that you will no longer see a “guided reading letter” assigned to your child’s reading level, as this is not the research-based best practice for teaching reading.
- Instead, your child’s teacher will provide a variety of reading readiness indicators throughout the year to chart your child’s reading growth.

For a detailed look at the research informing this approach to reading, scan this QR code:



The Simple View of Reading (SVR)

The Simple View of Reading, or SVR, illustrates that reading has two basic components:
word recognition (otherwise known as decoding) and language comprehension.

The SVR is represented by the following formula:



The SVR formula is supported by scientific research, and makes clear that:

1. *Strong reading comprehension cannot occur unless both decoding skills and language comprehension abilities are strong,*
2. *Intervention for struggling readers is effective only when it addresses the student's specific weaknesses, which may be decoding, language comprehension, or both.*
3. *Decoding and language comprehension skills are separable for both assessment and teaching, but both are required to achieve reading comprehension.*

(Farrell, Hunter, Davidson, & Osenga, 2021)

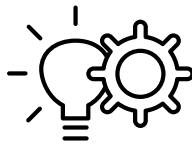
"THE BODY OF WORK REFERRED TO AS THE "SCIENCE OF READING" IS NOT AN IDEOLOGY, A PHILOSOPHY, A POLITICAL AGENDA, A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH, A PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION, NOR A SPECIFIC COMPONENT OF INSTRUCTION. IT IS THE EMERGING CONSENSUS FROM MANY RELATED DISCIPLINES, BASED ON LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF STUDIES, SUPPORTED BY HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF RESEARCH DOLLARS, CONDUCTED ACROSS THE WORLD IN MANY LANGUAGES. THESE STUDIES HAVE REVEALED A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW WE LEARN TO READ, WHAT GOES WRONG WHEN STUDENTS DON'T LEARN, AND WHAT KIND OF INSTRUCTION IS MOST LIKELY TO WORK THE BEST FOR THE MOST STUDENTS." - DR. LOUISA MOATS



Reading Instruction

AT K-5 CSD SCHOOLS

Code Emphasis in Primary Grades

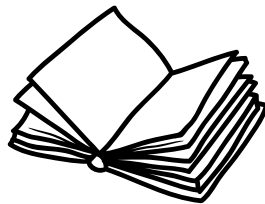


There are 44 speech sounds in English and 150 ways to read and spell them - this means that, especially in grades K-2, students intensely focus on acquiring the skills to “crack the code” of our alphabet to the speech sounds in English. Kids must first learn to decode/sound-out words before they can understand the meaning of text; therefore, we emphasize instruction in “cracking the code” in grades K-2.

Explicit and Systematic Phonics Instruction

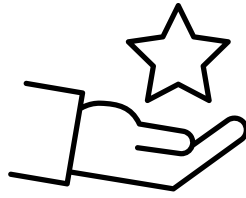


We will have an order - or continuum - of phonics skills, progressing from simple to complex, that K-3 students dive into on a daily basis through a program called Foundations. As they progress through the continuum, the goal is mastery of critical skills. In the intermediate grades (3-5), word study will continue with more grammar and morphology (learning about word parts such as Greek and Latin roots).



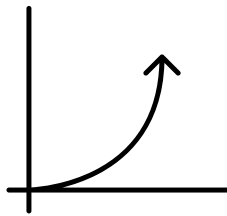
Early Intervention

If we see any signs that your child may be struggling with the foundational skills of reading, we will not take a ‘wait and see’ approach; we will immediately implement interventions and monitor their progress. The best solution to the problem of reading challenges is early identification and intervention.



Phonemic Awareness

This is the ability to get to the individual sounds in words by listening, identifying, and manipulating those sounds orally. While this skill will be emphasized in grades K-2, we will make sure all students have this necessary foundation. Students in the intermediate grades may need to practice these skills until they are secure in their abilities. If students have needs in any particular domain of literacy, they'll work on materials that address those needs.



Decodable Readers

Our early readers will be working with decodable readers. These are books or passages that only include words that the students can 'decode' (sound-out) according to the skills they have been taught thus far. Our kids need practice with the phonics skills they are learning and these books and passages provide that practice. Sometimes, your primary students may be bringing home a sheet of paper with a passage for practice rather than a book (reading books out loud at home is always recommended though!).



Small Group Instruction (SGI)

Students will be grouped in various ways based on needs in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, writing projects, target standards, comprehension, or knowledge building/interest - they will not be grouped based on a reading level. Activities in small group instruction are customized to the needs of each student - all of CSD's resources are research-validated for use in improving literacy outcomes.



Knowledge Building and Vocabulary

Research has indicated that reading comprehension is closely connected to the background knowledge we have on a topic we're reading about, and by understanding the vocabulary contained in the text. At

the K-3 level, Benchmark Workshop is the core resource your child will access

to build knowledge and vocabulary; for grades 4-5, the core resource

is Wonders. Our students will have the opportunity to build a broad knowledge base of history/social studies, science, and the arts by

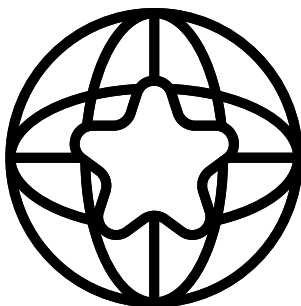
accessing complex texts, often read aloud by their teacher. In the

process, they will acquire more complex vocabulary. The research tells us that building both knowledge and vocabulary contributes significantly to reading comprehension, and should be taught beginning in the earliest grades.



Assessments

Your child will take a variety of assessments throughout the year to chart their growth in and mastery of key literacy skills. Instruction will be tailored to your child's specific needs based on the outcomes of these assessments. If your child shows a weakness in any area, teachers will monitor their progress and provide interventions to support their growth in targeted areas.



Comprehension

The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is for students to understand what they read. The model of The Simple View of Reading demonstrates that reading comprehension occurs when students have both Decoding/Word Recognition Skills and Language Comprehension skills. Children need the essential skills to get the “words off the page,” as well as knowledge, vocabulary, and a good understanding of how our language works in order to comprehend what they read. We must provide instruction that will help students achieve these goals.