



SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS  
Independent School District 833  
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## **626 LITERACY AND THE READ ACT**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to guarantee the implementation of the Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as the READ Act. The READ Act legislation was passed and signed into law on May 24, 2023 and replaced the previous Read Well by Third Grade legislation. The goal is for every child to be reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

SoWashCo Schools' goal is every child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals. Reading is central to a student's educational experience. As part of this policy, there will be requirements related to:

- A. The use of an approved literacy screener,
- B. The use of evidence-based curriculum,
- C. A systemic intervention system, and
- D. Required training for all district staff.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Evidence-based Curriculum, Intervention, or Materials" means curriculum or materials that are based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence, and have a demonstrated record of success.
- B. "Evidence-based Instruction" means teaching that is based on the best available scientific evidence, and that is explicit, systematic, and differentiated to meet the needs of individual students.
- C. "Fluency" means the ability of students to read text accurately, automatically, and with proper expression.
- D. "Foundational reading skills" includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, and fluency.

- E. "Literacy" includes all areas of communication, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- F. "Phonemic awareness" means the ability to notice, think about, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken syllables and words.
- G. "Phonics instruction" means the explicit, systematic, and direct instruction of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent and the application of this knowledge in reading and spelling.
- H. "Progress monitoring" means using data collected to inform whether interventions are working.
- I. "Reading comprehension" is an active process that requires intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and reader. Comprehension skills are taught explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and implementing specific strategies to help all readers derive meaning through intentional, problem-solving thinking processes.
- J. "Vocabulary development" means the process of acquiring new words. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

#### **IV. READING SCREENER**

- A. Students enrolled in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services, must be universally screened twice per year, within the first six weeks of the school year, and again within the last six weeks of the school year, for mastery of foundational reading skills, as measured by a screening tool approved by MDE.
- B. Students in grades 4 and above, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services, who do not demonstrate mastery of foundational reading skills, must be screened using a screening tool approved by MDE and must continue to receive evidence-based instruction, interventions, and progress monitoring until the students achieve grade-level proficiency or a family, in consultation with a teacher, opts a student out of the literacy screener. In such limited cases, the student must continue to receive progress monitoring and literacy interventions.
- C. When a student is administered a screener, the family will receive information about:

1. the student's reading proficiency as measured by a screener approved by MDE;
2. reading-related services currently being provided to the student and the student's progress; and
3. strategies for parents to use at home in helping their student succeed in becoming grade-level proficient in reading.

## **V. EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULUM**

- A. Literacy curriculum, intervention, and supplementary materials will be evidence-based.
- B. All staff are required to use the designated literacy curriculum, intervention, and supplementary materials.

## **VI. INTERVENTION**

- A. For each student identified under the screening identification process, the school will provide reading intervention to accelerate student growth with the goal of reading at or above grade level by the end of the current grade and school year.
- B. If a student does not read at or above grade level by the end of the current school year, the school district will continue to provide reading intervention. Intervention methods will encourage family engagement.
- C. Intervention programs must be taught by an intervention teacher or special education teacher who has successfully completed training in evidence-based reading instruction approved by MDE.

## **VII. STAFF TRAINING**

- A. SoWashCo Schools requires all teachers to be trained on evidence-based reading instruction. Teachers will be provided with training, or may provide proof of completion of a MDE approved training.
- B. SoWashCo Schools requires all support staff who provide reading interventions to be trained on evidence-based reading instruction. Teachers will be provided with training, or may provide proof of completion of a MDE approved training.

New policy

- C. The training will include all areas of literacy and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.
- D. In the 2024-25 school year, the school district will provide training required under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.123, subdivision 5, to all teaching staff and support staff who provide reading instruction.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120B.1118 (Read Act Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.12 (Read Act Goal and Interventions)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.123 (Read Act Implementation)  
Minn. Stat. § 123A.24 (Withdrawing from a Cooperative Unit;  
Appealing Denial of Membership)  
Minn. Stat. § 124D.68 (Graduation Incentives Program)  
Minn. Stat. § 124D.98 (Literacy Incentive Aid)  
Minn. Stat. § 125A.56 (Alternate Instruction Required before  
Assessment Referral)

**Cross References:** None