DOVER-SHERBORN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Elementary ELA Update

Dover & Sherborn School Committees

May 12, 2026

Timeline

Fall 2024 & Winter 2025

Review of research, current landscape, parent/caregiver feedback, Q&A doc

March-May 2025

Convene ELA Program Review Committee, establish Elementary ELA Vision Statement & Program Criteria

Summer 2026

Evaluate Units of Study, Fundations, Heggerty

Fall 2025

Units of Study is not meeting the established criteria set out by the committee

Fall 2025-Winter 2026

Research various Elementary ELA programs, interviews, site visits

Spring 2026

Announce the 2 pilot programs and launch pilot teacher PD

How are you feeling about our shift to a new ELA program?



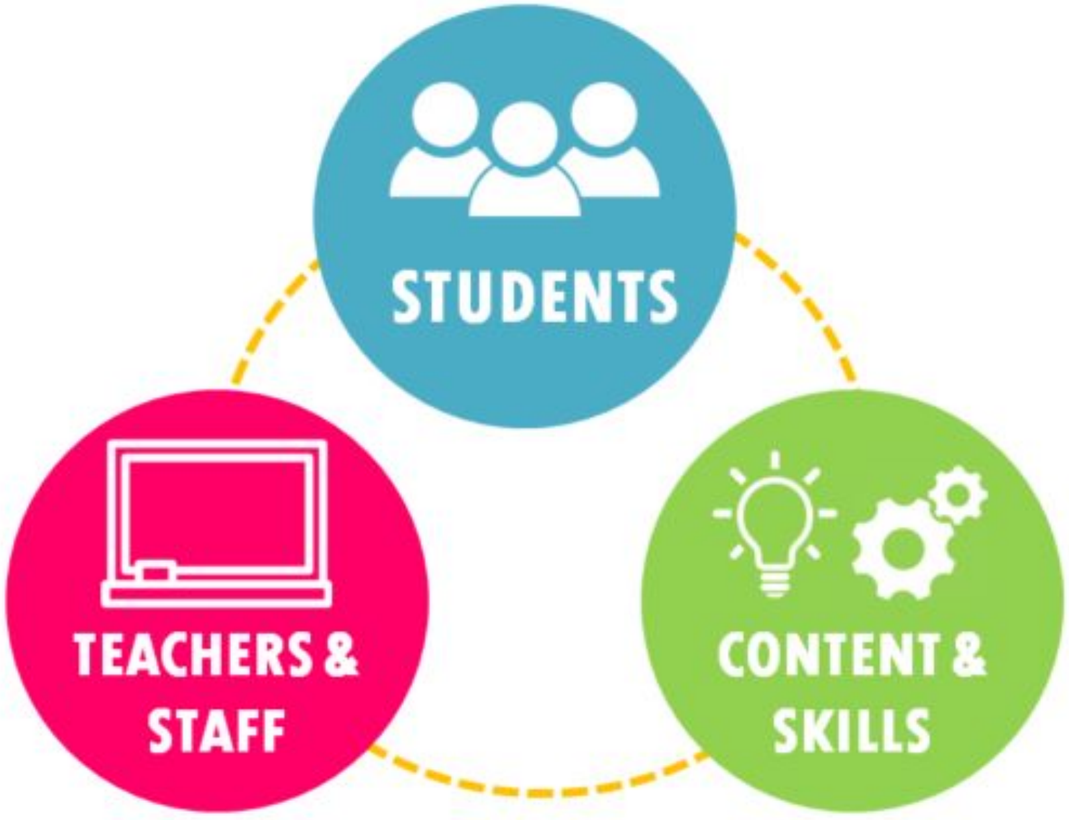
50 educator responses!

23 people said 'excited,' 15 said 'hopeful.'



Before we get to the 2 pilot programs…

There Is No Such Thing As a Perfect Program



The **ELA program** that we choose is only one part of the Instructional Core.

We rely on our **teachers** who make decisions on what to do with the curriculum and support them with PD time and coaching.

We also rely on our knowledge of the **students** we have sitting in front of us.

What shifts in ELA instruction are we prioritizing?



Priorities in ELA Programming

Knowledge-Based Programs

Curriculum focused on building deep topical knowledge.

Explicit Instruction

Systematic teaching methods that reduce cognitive load and improve retention.

Grade Level Texts

Whole class anchor texts ensuring all students access high-quality, complex material.

Structured Writing

A systematic approach to developing writing proficiency across all grades.

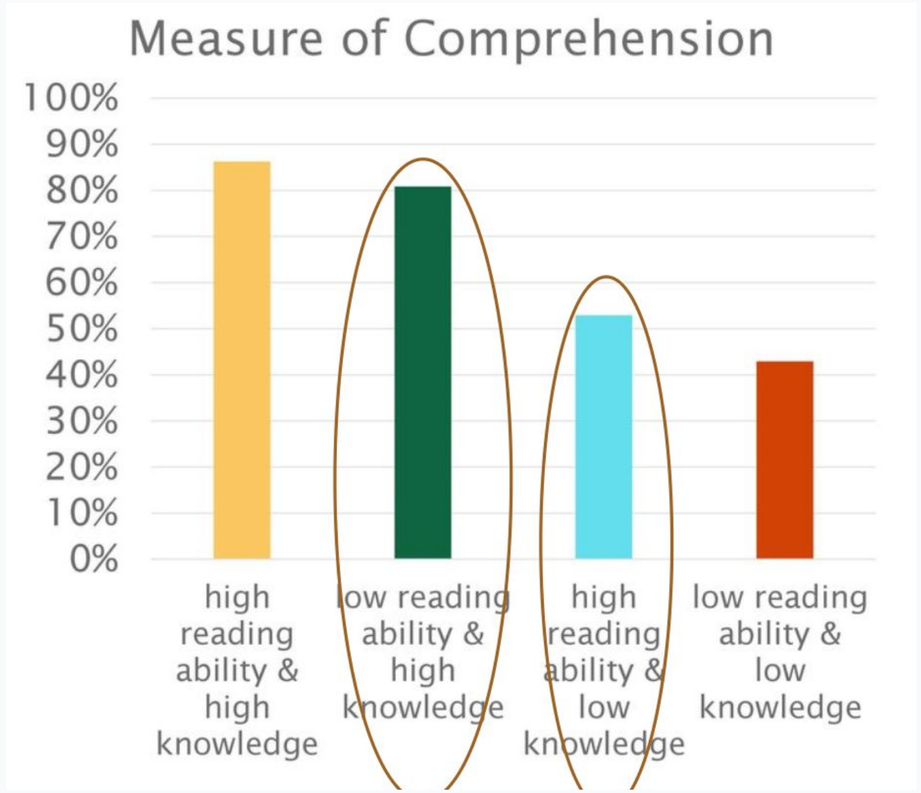
Foundational Skills

Phonics (K-2) and Morphology (3-5) based on a structured literacy approach.

Research & Evidence

Programming grounded in established literacy research for effective student outcomes.

The Importance of Knowledge



The Core Principle

To boost reading comprehension, students need to acquire academic knowledge, vocabulary and syntax.

Knowledge puts less stress on working memory (cognitive load), freeing up the brain for other tasks.

Research & Outcomes

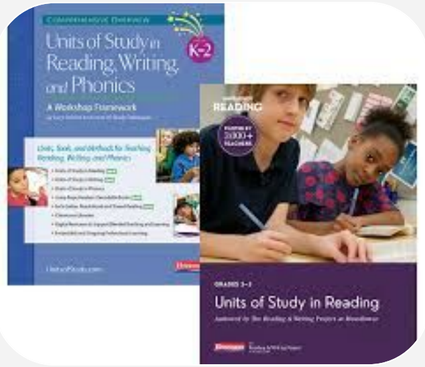
- Extra 30 mins/day of Social Studies significantly increased reading scores of 5th graders (Tyler & Kabourek 2020).
- Students who had a science-infused ELA curriculum significantly outperformed the control group on standardized reading tests at the end of 3rd grade (Kim 2024).
- Extra 30 mins/day of ELA/reading showed **no increase** in scores.
- Knowledge-rich students absorb information faster; others struggle to make anything stick.

Programs We Reviewed:

fish tank

ARC CORE®

The PROVEN CHOICE! Benchmark ADVANCE



Emerge! McGraw Hill Literacy

COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM
Learning Reimagined™

Education

W

Amplify CKLA

Arts & letters®

HMH into Reading™

myView LITERACY

How We Narrowed Down Programs

Process

- Site visits to other districts using various ELA programs.
- Meetings with other Assistant Superintendents and ELA Directors.
- Review edReports, Reading League, CURATE evaluations.
- Review of sample materials.

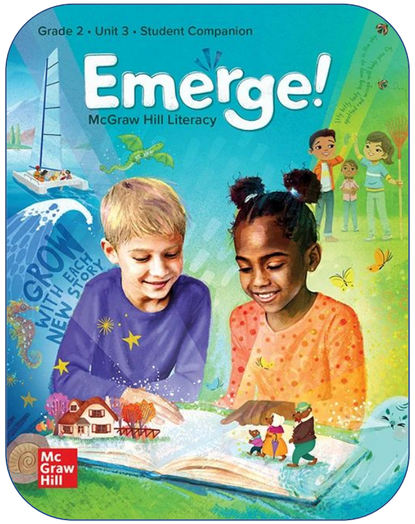
Key Factors

- DS Vision of ELA and Program Criteria established last spring.
- Student engagement.
- Educator feedback, prep time, efficacy.
- Number of units.
- Alignment with current research and evidence-based practices.
- Likely MA Literacy Bill.

McGraw Hill - Emerge

- **Comprehensive Integration:** foundational skills (phonics/morphology), reading, writing, and grammar taught within the context of the knowledge building units.
- **Text Variety:** Curated "multi-genre text sets"
- **Data-Driven:** formative and summative data helps inform small-group instruction. designed to support data-informed small-group instruction
- **Teacher Support:** Highly structured program with questioning and modeling provided to scaffold complex texts.
- **Consistency:** All grades follow similar unit structures for a cohesive learning experience.
- **Status:** New program currently under review by edReports.

Emerge!
McGraw Hill Literacy



Fishtank ELA

Paired with UFLI and Word Origins

- **Flexible Model:** Free, open-source knowledge-building program for reading, writing, and grammar.
- **Curriculum Assets:** Uses diverse, complete trade books; grade levels offer teacher choice between units.
- **Teacher Autonomy:** Lessons emphasize teacher decision-making for delivery.
- **Foundational Skills:** Paired with UFLI (K-2 phonics) and Word Origins (3-5 morphology); both are evidence-based programs, teacher friendly and a more grade appropriate pacing.
- **Student Access:** High repetition and clear scope/sequence help students access grade-level texts.

Next Steps

Supporting Pilot Teachers

- Professional development
- Site visits to other districts
- Support of literacy coaches
- Summer workshop days

Assessing Programs

- Rubrics for pilot teachers
- Observations & feedback
- Student & teacher input
- Common assessments

Purchasing Materials

Finalizing and purchasing all necessary pilot materials for the upcoming cycles.

Larger Staff Feedback

Gathering feedback from non-pilot teachers and staff, with a special focus on Special Educators and EL teachers.

Final Recommendation

Formal recommendation to School Committees on which program to adopt for the 2027-2028 school year.

THANK YOU!

Questions & Comments?

