

Education Programs

Literacy and the READ Act

I. Purpose

This policy is to ensure that all students develop strong, foundational literacy skills necessary for academic success, lifelong learning, and full participation in school and society. This policy establishes the school district's commitment to implementing the Minnesota READ Act through evidence-based, structured literacy instruction aligned with the science of reading, and to meeting the goals of the Edina Strategic Plan by advancing equity, excellence, growth, and readiness for every learner.

II. General Statement of Policy

The school district affirms that literacy, particularly the ability to read proficiently, is essential to student achievement across all content areas and grade levels. In accordance with the READ Act, the district is committed to providing high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in structured literacy practices to ensure that every student, beginning in early childhood, develops the foundational reading skills required for grade-level proficiency.

III. Definitions

- A. "Evidence-based" means the instruction or item described is based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and has demonstrated a record of success in increasing students' reading competency in the areas of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Evidence-based literacy instruction is explicit, systematic, and includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and decoding, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension that can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Evidence-based instruction does not include the three-cueing system, as defined in subsection M.
- B. "Fluency" means the ability of students to read text accurately, automatically, and with proper expression.
- C. "Foundational reading skills" includes phonological and phonemic

awareness, phonics and decoding, and fluency. Foundational reading skills appropriate to each grade level must be mastered in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3. Struggling readers in grades 4 and above who do not demonstrate mastery of grade-level foundational reading skills will continue to receive explicit, systematic instruction to reach mastery.

- D. "Instructional coach" means an instructional leader with specialized knowledge in teaching and learning. A district instructional coach will provide job-embedded professional development.
- E. "Literacy specialist" means a person licensed by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as a teacher of reading, a special education teacher, or a kindergarten through grade 6 teacher, who has completed professional development approved by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in structured literacy. A literacy specialist employed by MDE under the READ Act, or by the district as a literacy lead, is not required to complete the approved training before August 30, 2025.
- F. "Literacy lead" means a literacy specialist with expertise in working with educators as adult learners. A district literacy lead will support the district's implementation of the READ Act; provide support to school-based coaches; support the implementation of structured literacy, interventions, curriculum delivery, and teacher training; assist with the development of personal learning plans; and train paraprofessionals and other support staff to support classroom literacy instruction. A literacy lead may be employed by the district, jointly by two or more districts, or may provide services to districts through a partnership with the regional service cooperatives or another district.
- G. "Multi-tiered system of support" or "MTSS" means a systemic, continuous improvement framework for ensuring positive social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes for every student. The MTSS framework provides access to layered tiers of culturally and linguistically responsive, evidence-based practices and relies on the understanding and belief that every student can learn and thrive. Through a MTSS at the core (Tier 1), supplemental (Tier 2), and intensive (Tier 3) levels, educators provide high quality, evidence-based instruction and intervention that is matched to a student's needs; progress is monitored to inform instruction and set goals; and data is used for educational decision making.
- H. "Oral language," also called " expressive language" or "receptive language," as defined within structured literacy, includes speaking and listening, and consists of five components: phonology, morphology, syntax,

semantics, and pragmatics.

- I. "Phonemic awareness" means the ability to notice, think about, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken syllables and words.
 - J. "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.
 - K. "Progress monitoring" means using data collected to inform whether interventions are working. Progress monitoring quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs using state-approved screening that is reliable and valid for the intended purpose.
 - L. "Reading comprehension" means a function of word recognition skills and language comprehension skills. It 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 cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning through intentional, problem-solving thinking processes.
 - M. "Structured literacy" means an approach to reading instruction in which teachers carefully structure important literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction to facilitate children's literacy learning and progress. Structured literacy is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit, sequential, and diagnostic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and oral language development, and reading comprehension. This approach is consistent with the principles identified in the science of reading and is designed to ensure all students develop strong foundational literacy skills.
 - N. "Three-cueing system," also known as "meaning structure visual (MSV)," means a method that teaches students to use meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues when attempting to read an unknown word.
 - O. "Vocabulary development" means the process of acquiring new words. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary growth is directly related to school achievement and is a strong predictor for reading success.
- IV. Reading Screener; Parent/Guardian Notification and Involvement
- A. The school district will administer an approved reading screener to

students in kindergarten through grade 3 within the first six weeks of the school year, by February 15 each year, and again within the last six weeks of the school year. The screener must be one of the screening tools approved by MDE.

- B. The district will identify any screener it uses in the district's annual literacy plan and submit screening data to MDE annually by June 15.
- C. The district, after administering each screener, will follow its language access plan under state law and give the parent of each student who is not reading at or above grade level information from the screener 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/guardians to use at home in helping their student succeed in becoming grade-level proficient in reading in English and in their native language.
- D. For students enrolled in dual language immersion programs, the district will measure the student's reading proficiency in English or in the program's partner language, if available, according to Article V below. Following its language access plan under state law, the district will notify families with timely information about students' reading proficiency, including how the student's reading proficiency is assessed, and reading-related services or supports provided to the student and the student's progress, and strategies for families to use at home in helping students succeed in becoming grade-level proficient in reading in English or the partner language. The dual language immersion program may provide information about national research on reading proficiency for students in dual language immersion programs in the parent notification.
- E. The district will not use this section to deny a student's right to a special education evaluation.

V. Identification and Reporting

- A. Students enrolled in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services, and students enrolled in dual language immersion programs, will be universally screened for mastery of foundational reading skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, oral language, and for characteristics of dyslexia as measured by approved screening

tools. The screening for characteristics of dyslexia may be integrated with universal screening for mastery of foundational skills and expressive and receptive language mastery. The screening tool used will be a valid and reliable universal screener that is highly correlated with foundational reading skills. For students reading at grade level, beginning in the winter of grade 2, the oral reading fluency screener may be used to assess reading difficulties, including characteristics of dyslexia, without requiring a separate screening of each subcomponent of foundational reading skills.

- B. The school district will submit data on student performance in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 on foundational reading skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, and oral language to MDE in the local literacy plan submission on an annual basis due on June 15.
- C. For students enrolled in dual language immersion programs:
 - 1. if students are screened in the partner language, they will be screened at the same interval as the screenings in English under Paragraph A above;
 - 2. if the program provides instruction in foundational reading skills in English, the students receiving that instruction will be screened in English;
 - 3. if the program provides instruction in foundational reading skills in the partner language, the students receiving that instruction will be screened in the partner language;
 - 4. if no screener is available in the partner language, the district will identify how students reading proficiency is assessed and how the district determines and provides targeted reading instruction in the partner language and supports to students identified as needing additional support in developing the mastery of foundational reading skills; and
 - 5. the partner language screening tool will be approved by the district for kindergarten through grade 3.
- D. Students in grades 4 and above, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services, who are not reading at grade level will be screened for reading difficulties, including characteristics of dyslexia, using a screening tool approved by MDE and will continue to receive evidence-based instruction, interventions, and progress monitoring until the students achieve grade-level proficiency. A parent/guardian, in consultation with a teacher, may opt a student out of

the literacy screener if the parent/guardian and teacher decide that continuing to screen would not be beneficial to the student. In such limited cases, the student will continue to receive progress monitoring and literacy interventions.

- E. Reading screeners in English, and in the predominant languages of district students where practicable, will identify and evaluate students' areas of academic need related to literacy. The district also will monitor progress and provide reading instruction appropriate to the specific needs of multilingual learners. The district will use an approved, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive screener and annually report summary screener results to the MDE Commissioner by June 15 in the form and manner determined by the MDE Commissioner.
- F. The district will include in its literacy plan a summary of the district's efforts to screen, identify, and provide interventions to students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia as measured by a screening tool approved by MDE. With respect to students screened or identified under the READ Act, the report will include:
 - 1. a summary of the district's efforts to screen for characteristics of reading difficulties, including dyslexia;
 - 2. the number of students universally screened for that reporting year;
 - 3. the number of students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia for that year; and
 - 4. an explanation of how students identified under this subdivision are provided with alternate instruction and interventions under state law.

VI. Intervention

- A. For each student identified under the screening identification process, the school district will provide aligned and targeted reading intervention to accelerate student growth and reach the goal of reading at or above grade level by the end of the current grade and school year.
- B. The district will implement progress monitoring for a student not reading at grade level.
- C. The district will use evidence-based curriculum and intervention materials at each grade level that are designed to ensure student mastery of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. If the district purchases new literacy

curriculum, or literacy intervention or supplementary materials, the curriculum or materials will be evidence-based. Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, the district will only use evidence-based literacy interventions.

- D. If a student does not read at or above grade level by the end of the current school year, the district will continue to provide aligned and targeted reading intervention as defined by the MTSS framework until the student reads at grade level. District intervention methods will encourage family engagement and, where possible, collaboration with appropriate school and community programs that specialize in evidence-based instructional practices and measure mastery of foundational reading skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, and oral language.
- E. Intervention programs will be taught by an intervention teacher or special education teacher who has successfully completed training in evidence-based reading instruction approved by MDE. Intervention may include but is not limited to requiring student attendance in summer school, intensified reading instruction that may require that the student be removed from the regular classroom for part of the school day, extended-day programs, or programs that strengthen students' cultural connections.
- F. The district will determine the format of the personal learning plan in collaboration with the student's educators and other appropriate professionals in consultation with the student's parent/guardian. The personal learning plan will include evidenced-based targeted instruction and ongoing progress monitoring, and address knowledge gaps and skill deficiencies through strategies such as specific exercises and practices during and outside of the regular school day, group interventions, periodic assessments or screeners, and reasonable timelines. The personal learning plan may include grade retention, if it is in the student's best interest; a student may not be retained solely due to delays in literacy or not demonstrating grade-level proficiency. The district will maintain and regularly update and modify the personal learning plan until the student reads at grade level. This paragraph does not apply to a student under an individualized education program.

VII. Local and Comprehensive Literacy Plan

- A. The school district will adopt a local literacy plan to have 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. The district will update and submit the plan to the MDE Commissioner by June 15 each year. The plan will be consistent with the READ Act, and include the following:

1. a process to assess students' foundational reading skills, oral language, and level of reading proficiency, and the screeners used, by school site and grade level, under the READ Act.
2. a process to notify and involve parents/guardians;
3. a description of how schools in the district will determine the personal learning plan that provides targeted evidenced-based reading instruction and includes an intervention strategy for a student and the process for intensifying or modifying the reading strategy in order to obtain measurable reading progress;
4. evidence-based intervention methods for students who are not reading at or above grade level and progress monitoring to provide information on the effectiveness of the intervention;
5. identification of staff development needs, including a plan to meet those needs;
6. the curricula used by school site and grade level;
7. a statement of whether the district has adopted a MTSS framework;
8. student data using the measures of foundational literacy skills and mastery identified by MDE for the following students:
 - a. students in kindergarten through grade 3;
 - b. students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia; and
 - c. students in grades 4 to 12 who are identified as not reading at grade level;
9. the number of teachers and other staff that have completed training approved by MDE;
10. the number of teachers and other staff proposed for training in structured literacy;
11. how the district used funding provided under the Read Act to implement the requirements of the Read Act;
12. beginning as soon as practicable after the end of the fiscal year 2026, how the district used literacy aid funding received under state law; and

13. beginning on December 31, 2025, for the district's dual language immersion program:
 - a. the program's partner language;
 - b. grade levels included in the program;
 - c. the language used to screen students' foundational reading skills;
 - d. the percentage of grade 3 students taking the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments; and
 - e. the number of students in the program in grades 4 to 12 who are identified as not reading at grade level.
- B. The district will post its literacy plan on the official district website annually by June 15th and submit it to the MDE Commissioner as required.
- C. The district will use a streamlined template developed by the MDE Commissioner for local literacy plans that meets READ Act requirements, and requires all reading instruction and teacher training in reading instruction to be evidence-based.

VIII. Staff Training

- A. The school district will provide training from a menu of approved evidence-based training programs to the following teachers and staff by July 1, 2026:
 1. reading intervention teachers working with students in kindergarten through grade 12;
 2. all classroom teachers of students in kindergarten through grade 3 and children in prekindergarten programs;
 3. kindergarten through grade 12 special education teachers responsible for foundational reading instruction;
 4. curriculum directors;
 5. instructional support staff, contractors, and volunteers who assist in providing reading interventions under the oversight and monitoring of a trained licensed teacher;

6. employees who select literacy instructional materials for a district; and
 7. teachers holding English as a second language teaching licenses.
- B. The district will provide training from a menu of approved evidence-based training programs to the following teachers and staff by July 1, 2027:
1. teachers who provide foundational reading instruction to students in grades 4 to 12;
 2. teachers who provide instruction to students in a state-approved alternative program; and
 3. teachers who provide instruction to students in a dual language immersion programs.

The MDE Commissioner may grant the district an extension to these deadlines.

- C. The district will employ or contract with a literacy lead or be actively supporting a designated literacy specialist through the process of becoming a literacy lead in accordance with the Read Act. The district may satisfy the requirements of this subdivision by contracting with another school board or cooperative unit under state law for the services of a literacy lead. The district literacy lead will collaborate with district administrators and staff to support the district's implementation of requirements under the READ Act.
- D. Training provided by the following may satisfy the professional development requirements under this Article:
1. a certified trained facilitator; or
 2. a training program that MDE has determined meets the professional development requirements under the READ Act.

IX. Staff Development

- A. The school district will provide training programs on evidence-based reading instruction to teachers and instructional staff in accordance with the READ Act. The training will include teaching in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

- B. The district will use the data under Article V. above to identify the staff development needs so that:
1. elementary teachers are able to implement explicit, systematic, evidence-based instruction in the five reading areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension with an emphasis on mastery of foundational reading skills and other literacy-related areas, including writing, until the student achieves grade-level reading and writing proficiency;
 2. elementary teachers have sufficient training to provide students with evidence-based reading and oral language instruction that meets students' developmental, linguistic, and literacy needs using the intervention methods or programs selected by the district for the identified students;
 3. licensed teachers employed by the district have regular opportunities to improve reading and writing instruction;
 4. licensed teachers recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and are able to serve the oral language and linguistic needs of students who are multilingual learners by maximizing strengths in their native languages in order to cultivate students' English language development, including ~~oral~~ academic language development, and build academic literacy; and
 5. licensed teachers are well trained in culturally responsive pedagogy that enables students to master content, develop skills to access content, and build relationships.
- C. The district will provide staff in early childhood programs sufficient training to provide children in early childhood programs with explicit, systematic instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness; oral language, including listening comprehension; vocabulary; and letter-sound correspondence.

X. Literacy Incentive Aid Uses

The school district will use its literacy aid to meet requirements and goals adopted in the district's local literacy plan.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 120B.119 (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 Cooperative Unit; Appealing Denial of Membership)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.32 (Language Access Plan)

Minn. Stat. § 124D.68 (Graduation Incentives Program)

Minn. Stat. § 124D.98 (Literacy Incentive Aid)

Minn. Stat. § 125A.56 (Alternate Instruction Required before Assessment Referral)

Policy

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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 273

Edina, Minnesota