Dropout Prevention Plan

Reviewed/Revised July 2026

School Year 2026-2027

MADISON COUNTY
SCHOOLS

MARK OF EXCELLENCE

Madison County Schools

476 Highland Colony Parkway
Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157

Austin Brown, Superintendent

Madison Co. School Board
APPROVED
JUL 16 2026

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Introduction

The Purpose

A comprehensive Dropout Prevention Plan has been designed for Madison County Schools to address district and community concerns for students at-risk of dropping out of school. The plan is inclusive of goals, objectives, initiatives, procedures, and action plans to help all students meet or exceed the Mississippi College and Career Readiness standards. The plan is intended to serve as a resource guide for the district in how to address at-risk factors that may cause students to drop out of school.

IDENTIFYING AT-RISK STUDENTS

The district uses the following key indicators to identify targeted groups of students most at-risk of dropping out or most "in danger" of failing to achieve acceptable levels of academic achievement.

Education and Economic Key Indicators:

1. Promotions in grades kindergarten through second.
2. Passage rate on subject area tests.
3. Passage rate on the third grade reading summative assessment.
4. Results of formative assessments and universal screener (NWEA MAP – MVP).
5. Two or more grades behind peers, 25 percentile or below.
6. Attendance rates, office referrals, and suspensions/expulsions.
7. Poor grades/performance in core subjects.
8. Free Lunch.
9. Homeless, Foster Care and Migrant.
10. English Language Learners.

Part I
Dropout Prevention Plan
2026 – 2027 - District Schools

Madison County Schools **Austin Brown, Superintendent**

District Contact: Jessica G. Smith, Director of Federal Programs
476 Highland Colony Parkway — Ridgeland, MS 39157
Telephone: 601.499.0800 / FAX: 601.853.8865 jgsmith@madison-schools.com

High Schools	
Germantown High School (9-12) Cody Zumbro, Principal	Rosa Scott School (9) Devona Dew, Principal
Madison Central High School (10-12) Dr. Doug Jones, Principal	Velma Jackson High School (9-12) Perry Green, Principal
Ridgeland High School (9-12) Preston Nailor, Principal	
Middle Schools	
Germantown Middle School (6-8) Dr. Nason Lollar, Principal	Old Town Middle School (6-8) Levi Robinson, Principal
Madison Middle School (6-8) Thomas Adams, Principal	Shirley D. Simmons Middle School (6-8) Felicia Burton, Principal
Elementary Schools	
Ann Smith Elementary School (K-2) Harvey Williams, Jr. Principal	Madison Avenue Upper Elementary School (3-5) Brittany Hammett, Principal
Camden Elementary School (K-5) Dr. Fannie Green, Principal	Madison Crossing Elementary School (K-5) Dr. Debra Houghton, Principal
East Flora Elementary School (K-5) Dr. Marsha Peoples, Principal	Madison Station Elementary School (K-5) Kara Davis, Principal
Highland Elementary School (3-5) Carie Lyall, Principal	Mannsdale Elementary School (K-2) Holly Jones, Principal
Luther Branson Elementary School (K-5) Dr. Shannon Green, Principal	Mannsdale Upper Elementary School (3-5) Dr. Nicole Cockrell, Principal
Madison Avenue Elementary School (K-2) Brande Winstead, Principal	
District-wide	
Academic Options Center (K-12) Danny Bouchillon, Principal	Madison County Career & Technical Center (9-12) Dr. Bill Hardin, Principal

Madison County Schools
Committee Members

Austin Brown, Superintendent

Henry Coats, Assistant Superintendent

Jessica G. Smith, Director of Federal Programs

Crystal Chase, Assistant Director of Federal Programs

Kimberly Davis, Technical Assistance Specialist, Office of Federal Programs

Dr. Melissa Philley, Director of Curriculum

Dr. Greg Paczak, Director of Assessment and Accountability

Dr. Falana Burks, EL Director

Dr. Teague Burchfield, Director of High School Services

Dr. Doug Jones, Principal, Madison Central High School

Preston Nailor, Principal, Ridgeland High School

Devona Dew, Principal, Rosa Scott School

Perry Green, Principal, Velma Jackson High School

Dr. Nason Lollar, Principal, Germantown Middle School

Thomas Adams, Principal, Madison Middle School

Levi Robinson, Old Town Middle School

Felicia Burton, Principal, Shirley D. Simmons Middle School

Dr. Fannie Green, Principal, Camden Elementary School

Cody Zumbro, Principal, Germantown High School

Danny Bouchillon, Principal, Academic Options Center

Dr. Bill Hardin, Principal, Madison County Career & Technical Center

Kelli Dyess, Director of Behavior/Mental Health

Angela Capers, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher, Ann Smith Elementary

Dr. Yu Shi, EL Teacher Ridgeland High School

Elliott Young– Grade 12, High School Student Representative (Ridgeland High School)

Lilly Dennis- Grade 7, Middle School Student Representative (Germantown Middle School)

Amy Zarour, Parent Representative, Germantown Zone (Germantown High School)

Mackenzie Henry, Parent Representative, Madison Zone (Rosa Scott)

Erica Arrington, Parent Representative – Velma Jackson Zone (Shirley Simmons Middle School)

ToShunda Washington, Parent Representative-Ridgeland Zone (Ridgeland High School)

Madison County Schools

School Year 2026 – 2027 • Committee Members

Name / Position - Agency	Signature
Austin Brown, Superintendent	
Henry Coats, Assistant Superintendent	
Jessica G. Smith, Director Office of Federal Programs	
Crystal Chase, Assistant Director Office of Federal Programs	
Kimberly D. Davis Technical Assistance Specialist Office of Federal Programs	
Dr. Melissa Philley, Curriculum Director	
Dr. Greg Paczak, Director Assessment and Accountability	
Dr. Falana Burks, EL Director	
Dr. Teague Burchfield, Director of High School Services	
Dr. Doug Jones, Principal Madison Central High School	
Preston Nailor, Principal Ridgeland High School	
Devona Dew, Principal Rosa Scott School	
Perry Green, Principal Velma Jackson High School	
Dr. Nason Lollar, Principal Germantown Middle School	
Thomas Adams, Principal Madison Middle School	

Levi Robinson, Principal Old Town Middle School	
Felicia Burton, Principal Shirley D. Simmons Middle School	
Dr. Fannie Green, Principal Camden Elementary School	
Cody Zumbro, Principal Germantown High School	
Danny Bouchillion, Principal Academic Options Center	
Dr. Bill Hardin, Principal Madison County Career & Technical Center	
Kelli Dyess, Director of Behavior and Mental Health	
Angela Capers, Pre-K Teacher Ann Smith Elementary School	
Dr. Yu Shi, EL Teacher Ridgeland High School	
Elliot Young, RHS Student High School Student Representative	
Lilly Dennis, GMS Student Middle School Student Representative	
ToShunda Washington, Parent Representative, Ridgeland Zone	
Mackenzie Henry, Parent Representative, Madison Zone	
Erica Arrington, Parent Representative, Velma Jackson Zone	
Amy Zarzour, Parent Representative, Germantown	

Part II
Statement of Assurance

On behalf of the **Madison County Schools**, I hereby submit a local Dropout Prevention Plan to provide goals, objectives, services, and initiatives necessary to meet the three overarching goals of the state dropout prevention plan: 1) Increasing the state graduation rate, (2) reducing the state dropout rate, and (3) reducing the state truancy rate.

I hereby certify that the information contained in this plan is in compliance with the appropriate federal and state laws and regulations.

I hereby certify that our school district will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation conducted by or for the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district will submit reports as requested by the Mississippi Department of Education.

I hereby certify that our school district has consulted with parents, community partners, business partners, teachers, school staff, building administrators, and others in the development of this local dropout prevention plan.

I hereby certify that our school district has taken into account relevant, scientifically based research, strategies and evidence-based best practices indicating services most effective in preventing dropouts, as we focused on students in the earliest grades.

I hereby certify that our school district will prepare and submit an annual progress report on increasing the graduation rate, reducing the dropout rate and reducing the truancy rate.

I hereby certify that our school district will endorse and implement the Fifteen (15) Effective Strategies to promote a reduction in the dropout rate.

I hereby certify that our school district has based the dropout prevention plan on scientifically based research, evidence-based best practices and all laws in determining strategies to reduce the dropout rate for students with disabilities under IDEA.

I hereby certify that our school district will evaluate our district dropout prevention plan on an annual basis to determine appropriate changes needed for future school years.

I hereby certify that our District School Board has reviewed and approved this plan for submission to the Mississippi Department of Education.

Dropout Prevention Team Leader:

Name: Jessica G. Smith **Title**: Director of Federal Programs

Mailing Address: 476 Highland Colony Parkway, Ridgeland MS 39157 Telephone #: 601-499-0800

District Superintendent: Austin Brown (Signature)

School Board Chair: Sam Kelly (Signature)

Part III
Outcomes of the Needs Assessment
Identifying At-Risk Students

2026 Accountability Four–Year Graduation and Dropout Rates		
SCHOOLS	**GRADUATION RATES (%)**	**DROPOUT RATES (%)**
Germantown High School	**96.5**	**2.6**
Madison Central High School	**97.1**	**1.1**
Ridgeland High School	**86.7**	**9.2**
Rosa Scott School	**	**
Velma Jackson High School	**87.3**	**9.5**
Madison County School District (all students)	**93.8**	**4.0**
Madison County School District (students with disabilities)	**76.3**	**14.7**
Mississippi Statewide Results	**90.8**	**7.0**
Mississippi Statewide Results (students with disabilities)	**71.1**	**14.6**

*Office of Accountability 2026 Graduation and Dropout Rates, February 19, 2026
** Indicates the District or School did not meet the minimum n-count

District Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment Areas	Descriptions
Data	**The dropout prevention review committee looked at the following data points at the district and school levels:** 1. Graduation and Dropout data for **six 9th grade cohorts: 2016-2020 (2020 graduates); 2017-2021 (2021 graduates), 2018-2022 (2022 graduates); 2019-2023 (2023 graduates); 2020-2024 (2024 graduates) and 2021-2025 (2025 graduates).** *Appendix A.* 2. Comparison of dropout data with surrounding and similar districts. 3. Spring 2024 & Spring 2025 MAAP gains/losses, *Appendix B.* 4. Lower 25 percentile on universal screener. 5. Number of students behind two or more years. 6. Discipline referrals. 7. District initiatives for reducing student dropout risk factors. 8. District goals and objectives for reducing student dropout risk factors.
Prioritized List of Needs to Address Dilemmas	1. MAAP or End-of-Course Tests. 2. Students who failed the 3rd grade reading summative assessment. 3. On-going data analytics of assessment results. 4. Students in grades K-2 who are two or more grades below grade level. 5. Students in grades 6-12 who continue to need summer school. 6. Parent engagement concerning student progress. 7. Students, district-wide, who have excessive absentees. 8. Students with repeated office referrals. 9. Students who continue to populate on behavior screener results. 10. Students with limited English proficiency, homeless, foster care and/or migrant. 11. Instructional interventions for at-risk middle school students. 12. Daily classroom observations with immediate feedback. 13. Results of dual enrollment credit.
Short Term Goals	1. Increase academic performance of students. 2. Improve Average Daily Attendance and decrease excessive absentees for at-risk students. 3. Reduce office/discipline referrals. 4. Increase the passage rate on the 3rd grade reading summative assessment. 5. Increase literacy specialist support for English Language Arts teachers and implement the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). 6. Increase math specialist support for math teachers.

Long Term Goals	1. Increase the district graduation rate to **95% by 2026-2027, 9th grade cohort 2023-2024**. 2. Increase the graduation rates at the four district high schools to **95% or better.** 3. Increase the number of students taking the PSAT. 4. Increase the ACT scores. 5. Increase the number of students taking dual enrollment courses.
Recommendations for future needs assessments	**Each year the district will reassess goals and prioritized needs based on the following data related to student dropouts:** 1. Potential dropouts and at-risk students in grades K-8. 2. Diagnostic tests and standardized state data to detect students struggling in reading/language arts and mathematics. 3. Training and information to staff and parents on issues directly related to the student dropout rate. 4. Students in all grades who are two or more grades behind or in the lower 25 percentile. 5. Interventions for students struggling in reading and math. 6. Students who fail to meet Mississippi College and Career Readiness standards. 7. Students in grades 9-12 who fail a subject area test. 8. Students who have excessive absentees. 9. Address the social emotional learning (SEL) needs of students.

2025-2026 District Data Form
(Outcomes of Needs Assessment)

District Information	
Number of 9th grade students promoted. **971**	Does your district currently offer a "Fast-Track" program for high school students? ☐ Yes ☒ No
Number of students with 5 or more unexcused absences in school year 2025-2026. **7,090**	Number of students with 12 or more unexcused absences in school year 2025-2026. **2,081**
Number of discipline referrals (Unduplicated). **671** for Month 01 **2,870** for the entire school year 2025-2026	Number of students receiving Free/Reduced meals in school year 2025-2026. **4,955 (38.94%)**

SCHOOL DATA	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE	HIGH
Number of Schools	**11**	**4**	**5**
Cumulative Enrollment	**5,511**	**3,010**	**4,059**
Counselor/Student Ratio	**1/307**	**1/301**	**1/254**

District-wide Student Demographic Data

	Female	Male	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	Native American	White	Two or More Race
Number	6,170	6,532	656	5,231	1,028	*	*	5,516	255
Percentage	48.58	51.42	5.16	41.18	8.09	*	*	43.43	2.01

MDE 2025-2026 Office of Public Reporting

District-wide Staff Demographic Data (Teachers/Administrators)
October 2025

	Female	Male	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American or Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Race
Number	1,437	339	6	628	19	3	1,122	16
Percentage	81	19	0.003	35	0.011	0.001	62.5	0.009

Part IV

DISTRICT INITIATIVES

Elementary, middle and high schools will continue to:

- Provide school day tutorials to help students at-risk of failing.
- Provide ACT, Content Area and MAAP workshops to aid students in passing assessments.

The school district will continue to:

- Provide funding for small group academic tutorial sessions for students at-risk of failing.
- Provide a career day for students to explore future options in preparation for college and careers.
- Provide annual motivational sessions for junior and senior students to encourage improved achievement, high school graduation, and post-secondary education.

- Provide ***ActiveParent***. ActiveParent Online is a software program that allows parents in the Madison County Schools to review their children's grades, attendance, discipline, and other school news weekly. Parents may log on to ActiveParent or go to the district website to log in and use the program. Parents only need to register once. Passwords and usernames remain from one school year to the next.

- Utilize ***School Status.*** All schools have the capability of sending out all-call messages to parents about important events going on in the school. The district also has the same capability of sending out all-call messages to employees and parents of all students in the district.

- Conduct ***Title I Parent Meetings.*** Title I schools hold parent meetings to keep parents informed of Title I initiatives, school improvement efforts, and overall student progress. Meetings are held throughout the year and at various times to accommodate parent work schedules. The Office of Federal Programs publishes ***Title Talk***, a newsletter, to keep parents in the Title I community informed and abreast of what is going on in Title I schools and in the district.

- Work collaboratively with ***PTOs.*** Every school in the district has a PTO organization. Meetings are scheduled periodically throughout the year, and they provide an avenue for parents to get involved with the school experience.

Student Administration Manager (SAM). SAM is the district-wide monitoring information system used to track student attendance, enrollment, demographics, grades, and discipline records. The monitoring system provides an effective means by which to support the Mississippi Department of Education performance-based accreditation model. The SAM system provides timely and accurate reporting of educational data to meet state and federal requirements, and the system allows for student tracking to determine student mobility. With SAM, school officials can readily make appropriate referrals for interventions when warning signs occur to promote a reduction in dropout rates within the state.

Behavior Specialists. The district employs four behavior specialists for general education students. The behavior specialist assists teachers and administrators in identifying students who may benefit from additional support for behavior issues. The Multi-Tier System of Support process is utilized in an effort to keep students in class and growing academically and socially. The behavior specialist works closely with school administrators, support staff, and teachers to provide assistance to students who demonstrate chronic and/or significant behavioral-related concerns. Services include:

1. Providing professional development related to behavioral concerns (trauma-sensitive approaches, social emotional skills, classroom management, etc.)
2. Conducting Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA), developing Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), risk assessments, and modeling of positive behavior supports (PBS/PBIS).
3. Providing consultative services to school-based teams (We CARE) regarding students exhibiting at-risk behaviors (chronic absences, multiple office referrals, failing multiple classes)
4. Developing and facilitating safety, re-entry, transition, and other specialized plans to support student learning
5. Facilitating and supporting behavioral data collection (Universal Behavior Screener, direct observation, etc.)
6. Consulting with principals regarding disciplinary issues and data. Consulting with parents and other stakeholders to address the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of students within the district

Partners in Education. Local businesses and industries throughout school district community adopt schools and work with school officials and parent groups to help address the needs of schools. The relationship strengthens businesses and helps to bridge the gap between schools and the community. This may be inclusive of after-school jobs, opportunities for students to shadow someone in the workplace, donations to support programs or projects, or to help provide other experiences for some students who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

Mental Health Services. The district partners with two community health organizations to provide mental health, behavior modifications and rehabilitation services to students and families in the district.

Drug Awareness Program. Each school in the district plans a calendar of drug-awareness activities for the year to maintain a focus on drug awareness and safety for students. In an effort

to protect the health and safety of students from illegal and/or performance-enhancing drug use and to curtail the use of such drugs, the Board of Education for Madison County Schools has adopted a policy for random drug testing of all students who participate in extracurricular activities and for all students who purchase a parking decal/permit to drive on campus. The Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff desire that no student use or possess illegal or performance enhancing drugs.

Mental Health Therapists. Madison County Schools has found success with the creation of the mental health department. Currently, three (3) mental health therapists and one (1) social worker are employed by the district. Services are provided during the school day which supports students in a safe, trusted environment without stigma thus reducing major barriers. Therapists develop treatment plans and services to address the various mental health needs, teach positive decision-making, conduct mental health training for staff, and assist parents with referrals and resources.

In an effort to expand benefits to students, Madison County Schools has partnered with two community mental health providers. The partnerships provide additional services such as crisis assessment at school, continued therapeutic services during times school is not in session, and family therapy.

Parent/guardians consent to any services provided to students.

School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Madison County Schools provide food choices to satisfy the requirement of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The district offers the opportunity for students to start the day with a balanced breakfast at seventeen schools. Research has shown that children who start the day with a balanced breakfast are calmer, more relaxed and better prepared to learn and participate in learning experiences.

School Nurse Program. Madison County Schools currently has a total of 20 school nurses who serve the student population, eleven (11) for elementary schools, four (4) for middle schools, and five (5) for high schools. There is a school nurse in every elementary and middle school for six hours a day. The high school nurses serve full-time in the district. Chronic absenteeism is a critical problem influencing student academic achievement with potential long-term effects on health, education, and financial stability. Finding solutions, providing resources, and utilizing intervention methods to decrease the problem of chronic absenteeism is critical for enhancing educational outcomes for students. School nurses are vital team members who identify and mitigate health, safety, and social risk factors that are barriers to school attendance.

School Safety Officers. Each school has a safety officer to work with students and staff. Officers may assist the administration with student/parent conferences, discipline matters, and counseling interventions for student issues. Currently, the school district utilizes certified School Resource Officers and law enforcement officers that work in schools on a rotating basis.

Grandparents Day. Grandparents may visit elementary schools to have lunch with their grandchildren and teachers. During school visits, grandparents enjoy a hot meal and a presentation on what is going on in the school and a typical day in the life of their grandchildren.

Lunch Visits. Parents are welcome to join their children for school lunch. The visits require notification to the school office and clearance from school principals due to safety guidelines and planning for visits. This practice builds greater capacity for school and home connections.

STUDENT-CENTERED MEASUREABLE GOALS

The Madison County Schools' dropout prevention plan is inclusive of strategic goals, objectives, initiatives, and expectations required to meet or exceed the state's overarching goals for graduation rates and dropout rates. The Madison County Schools' graduation rate as of February 2026 is 93.8% and the dropout rate is 4.0%.

District Level Graduation and Dropout rates for the state of Mississippi can be reviewed at mdek12.org or Click Here.

	Statewide Rate (%)	Lowest State District Rate (%)	Highest State District Rate (%)	Madison County Schools (%)
Graduation Rates	90.8	68.5	100.0	93.8
Dropout Rates	7.0	0.0	25.8	4.0

The district's overarching goal is for students to develop into responsible, productive individuals who are equipped to make positive contributions to an ever-changing society. Madison County Schools strives to graduate students who are knowledgeable, creative, critical thinkers who can collaborate and communicate effectively. The district has identified five goals in its strategic plan.

1. Increase Academic Achievement

☐ Provide high quality instruction
☐ Implement best practices in teaching
☐ Provide multiple pathways for students exiting high school
☐ Provide extra support and safety nets for success

2. Strengthen School Culture

☐ Cultivate first-rate hospitality

☐Provide safe and healthy schools
☐Nurture student-centered settings
☐Encourage positive student behavior

3. Attract and Retain High Quality Teachers
☐Recruit instructional staff through multiple channels
☐Familiarize new instructional staff with practices and procedures
☐Provide professional development to promote lifelong learning
☐Provide leadership support to promote career security

4. Maximize Operational Effectiveness
☐Assess buildings and grounds
☐Invest in capital improvements
☐Modify processes upon evaluation

5. Collaborate with Community
☐Increase parent and family engagement
☐Engage with community stakeholders
☐Foster student/community collaboration

REDUCING THE RETENTION RATES IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN, FIRST AND SECOND

- **Pre-School**. Madison County Schools provides training in early childhood educational best practices in the areas of ELA, mathematics and social emotional. The purpose is to assist private and community-based preschool teachers with the necessary tools to prepare children for success in grades K-12.

- **Title I Pre-School**. The school district's five Title I pre-kindergarten classes offer early learning experiences to children who are most at-risk for school failure. Through the Office of Federal Programs, the district developed pre-school classes to mitigate the impact of at-risk characteristics; thereby assisting children in Title I school zones to become school ready when they enter kindergarten. The district has five (7) pre-kindergarten classes, twenty seats in each class: Ann Smith Elementary (5), East Flora Elementary (1), and Luther Branson Elementary (1).

- **Special Services Pre-School**. Madison County Schools also provides a half-day preschool program for special needs children identified through the child-find process.

TARGETING SUBGROUPS THAT NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

The district has invested in 23.5 literacy specialists' units to serve the elementary, middle high schools, and the Academic Options Center. Six schools have two or more literacy specialists: Ann Smith Elementary (**2**), East Flora Elementary (**2**), Highland Elementary (**2.5**), Madison Crossing Elementary (**2**), Madison Station Elementary (**2**), and Old Town Middle (**2**). Literacy specialists work with students in the Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) process. The literacy specialists pull the most at-risk students and provide intensive interventions in an effort to close academic achievement gaps. The specialists keep records of progress monitoring and provide teachers with scientifically, research/evidence-based interventions to be implemented for individualized student instruction. In the spring of 2021, the district invested in a dyslexia coordinator to address the needs of students diagnosed with dyslexia. In the spring of 2024, the school board approved a plan to hire a psychometrist to perform dyslexia diagnostics in order to provide in-house dyslexia diagnoses. In addition, the school board agreed to have after-school dyslexia therapists in each of our four zones-Ridgeland, Madison, Germantown, and Velma Jackson. The school district has also invested time in training district literacy specialists and teachers in Orton-Gillingham strategies and interventions. Although this multi-sensory method helps all children, it is especially effective for students diagnosed with dyslexia and other reading disabilities. In 2026, a part-time Biology specialist will be added to provide support for Biology teachers throughout the district.

A number of schools throughout the district offer before or after-school programs for struggling students as well as for other parents who desire an after-school alternative for their children. The district officers an English Learners Literacy Camp for EL students and Title I enrichment programs during the summer months for the most at-risk students. Throughout the school year, teachers volunteer hours to work with struggling students. Some schools have organized peer-student study teams. The district offers summer school for students, grades 6-12, who have failed and need to take certain courses for promotion to the next grade.

A summer reading academy is offered to struggling students. Research has demonstrated that by providing instruction in small groups to struggling students, school districts are able to close the achievement gap. The district's curriculum department conducts a summer reading program for Tier 2 and Tier 3 second and third grade students. These groups have been targeted due to Senate Bill 2347, the "Literacy-Based Promotion Act." The number of qualified second grade participants (up to 75 students) is determined by parental response. The number of third grade participants is determined by failures on the Literacy Based Promotion Third Grade Assessment. In the summer reading program, certified educators utilize evidence-based programs and provide small group instruction.

As an added measure to assist students who may be at-risk of failing and/or dropping out of school, the district has implemented Reading Plus, Lexia Power-Up (6-12), DreamBox Learning, and Phonics First, a multisensory reading program, and Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS). These are computer-based intervention programs utilized to support students and close the achievement gap.

For the 2026-2027 school year, the Madison County School District has twelve (12) mathematics specialists in place to provide curricular support and expertise in closing the achievement gaps for struggling students. Mathematics specialists will continue to:

- Conduct Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to discuss elements of K-5 Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for mathematics that are directly related to reading comprehension and to share strategies for students who struggle in these areas.

- Conduct MVP Algebra I data analysis meetings with the five high schools. These meetings involve item analysis for those topics addressed within the District Pacing Guide and results are organized for each teacher, for each block, and for "school to district" comparisons.

- Create school specific outlines (*as requested*) based on the MVP Algebra I End-of-Year assessments that will address multiple solution strategies to selected problems, including ways to solve them with and without calculators to strengthen both the teachers' instructional strategies *and their own mathematical content knowledge*, which impacts student achievement.

- Create supplemental tasks to promote student discussion/reasoning (verbal and written) in the classroom, tailored specifically for teachers, grade levels 6th, 7th, and 8th at all four middle schools.

- Create outlines based on topic requests from elementary schools identifying "key concepts/skills" from the standards, across K-5.

- Research and share teacher resources identifying common misconceptions/mistakes that students experience and instructional techniques.

- With input from the math specialists, several schools have acquired math intervention software programs (ex: DreamBox Learning, Imagine Learning and IXL Math) to assist struggling students. The team of specialists continues to investigate math intervention resources to find the best research-based tools for the district, long-term.

DROPOUT RECOVERY INITIATIVES FOR STUDENTS AGES 17 THROUGH 21

The Madison County Academic Options Center (MCAOC) is in place as an alternative education setting for students in grades K-12. Students are assigned and accepted into the Madison County Academic Options Center as a part of the Madison County School District's on-going mission to safely educate students academically and socially. MCAOC is a Tier III intervention initiated by the district to address a specific violation of the code of discipline. It can also be a Tier III

intervention initiated because of a student's non-response to previous Tier I and Tier II interventions for on-going behavior problems/violations in the regular school setting. MCAOC seeks to encourage and promote positive change in students. This includes the ability to accept and understand authority and its meaning and purpose in the school setting.

MISSION STATEMENT

The MCAOC strives to support and assist every Madison County School with the education of those students who are unsuccessful in their traditional school and need an alternative setting. The MCAOC attempts to identify each student's academic, social, and emotional needs. The intent of the MCAOC is to return each student to his/her home school with the skills necessary to be successful in a comprehensive school environment.

GOALS

- Promote positive changes in students through behavior modification and rehabilitation.
- Teach students the behaviors necessary to be successful at his/her home school.
- Prepare students to apply the appropriate behavior at his/her home school as to prevent being reassigned to the alternative school.

Other dropout recovery initiatives include:

- **Middle School Remedial Sessions and Tutorials.** Supports are in place to provide ongoing tutorials, remedial sessions and more time for under-achieving students to master content and to ensure that all students meet Mississippi College and Career Readiness standards.

- **Term Recovery.** Term recovery is offered to students in grades 9-12 who earn 55 to 64 for a term average in Carnegie Unit bearing courses. These students are given the opportunity to learn the content and earn a minimum passing grade of 65 for the specific recovered term. The district offers free credit recovery each summer and during the academic year. The district uses Edgenuity, an online, core intervention program for students in need of credit for core instruction or for credit recovery. Edgenuity provides the flexibility of allowing students to complete course work anytime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

BASIC CORE STRATEGIES AND MAKING THE MOST OF EDUCATION

Mentoring/Tutoring

- **English Learners (EL).** The district wide EL program serves EL students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Certified teachers and paraprofessionals provide English language acquisition lessons, mentoring and tutoring to help EL students learn the English language and acquire subject-area content proficiency.

- **Counseling Program.** District schools have counselors proportionate to school enrollments. Counselors provide individual and group counseling in the elementary schools. Counselors assist in developing discipline plans for students who have multiple office referrals, they arrange parent-teacher conferences, and they provide drug-awareness and character-education sessions/activities for students.

- **New Teacher Mentoring Program.** The district conducts a mentoring program for first year teachers and teachers new to the school district, ensuring greater capacity for student achievement. The program is coordinated by the district's Human Resources Director and Professional Development Coordinator. New teachers attend a mandatory day of professional development prior to the start of school to learn Madison County school culture (practices and procedures). New teachers also attend several afternoon sessions for professional learning throughout the school year. Each new teacher is also assigned an experienced, career-level teacher/mentor in his or her assigned building.

Service Learning

- **Mentoring Program.** The mentoring program is provided by district high school students who mentor, tutor, or help provide guidance to students in the elementary schools. Mentors have sponsors who guide the program at each high school. Mentors talk to students, read to students, and tutor elementary students. To be a mentor, high school students must meet specific requirements and criteria set by the district program developer and coordinators.

Professional Development

- **Professional Development Funds**. District professional development (PD) funds are used to train teachers in curriculum trends that will better prepare them to meet student needs and develop innovative teaching strategies that will increase student achievement and help increase the graduation rate and decrease the dropout rate in the school district.

- **Title I Funds**. Title I schools may use a portion of Title I funding to provide additional professional development and training to develop skills, techniques, and innovative strategies for teachers who work with at-risk students.

- **Title II Professional Development Funds**. Title II funds are used to provide high-quality professional development, district-wide, for all teachers and administrators.

Active Learning

- **Wellness Plan.** The district has a school board adopted wellness plan that focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles and a safe school/work environment.

Positive Behavior

Positive behavior strategies are evidence-based approaches for promoting behavior that is conducive to learning. The district is committed to a process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The Madison County School District has embraced "HEART," **H**elping **E**very child **A**chieve and **R**each success **T**ogether – Capturing the HEART and #MovingtheMark. The district has targeted five core competencies to help students develop a winning attitude and increase school/student achievement: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Educational Technology

The overall goal is to equip all stakeholders (teachers, students, administrators, staff, and parents) to use technology to positively impact and interact with the world around them.

- Teach digital citizenship.
- Integrate technology seamlessly in the teaching and learning process while ensuring that the use of technology adds value to learning.
- Develop a new set of knowledge and skills for the 21st century learner.
- Provide greater access to educational opportunities and differentiated instruction by utilizing access to technology, anytime, anywhere learning.
- Improve communication and widen the sense of community by expanding the way teachers, students, and parents can interact with each other.
- Integrate digital tools for students to develop products that demonstrate their understanding.
- Provide greater access to digital content in a variety of formats and modes.
- Madison County Schools (MCS) embarked on a 1:M Digital Initiative. This is an initiative that aims to enhance student learning by creating a personalized, student-centered learning environment where every student received a designated device to utilize at school and at

home: Grades 9-12 receive a MacBook Air, Grades 2-8 receive a Chromebook, and Grades K-1 receive an iPad.

- In the 2013-2014 school year, the district invested in a new Learning Management System (LMS), CANVAS. This is an important building block for the *1:M Digital Initiative* because an LMS provides a centralized, consistent virtual learning space through which parents, students, and teachers can work.

Personalized Learning

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI). Madison County Schools provides students with computer-based programs that supplement the regular education program. While the computer software may differ at each school, the purpose of the program is to improve student achievement and enhance student learning. It provides another avenue for students to learn.

- **MVP.** MVP allows teachers to administer district benchmark assessments. Teachers can then identify individual students' or classroom needs to reinforce or reteach skills.
- **NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).** MAP is a computer-based assessment that the district uses three times per year for progress monitoring in elementary schools.
- **Middle School Individual Student Plan (ISP).** Pathways to Success is a system that combines high academic standards with career exploration. Career Cluster Interest Surveys are administered to all 7th graders. Based on results, each 7th grader is assisted with developing an Individual Student Plan (**ISP**). The ISP details each student's chosen career cluster as well as a prescribed course of study to assist the student in reaching college and career goals. High school guidance counselors assist students in updating the ISP on an annual basis throughout high school.
- **High School Career Academies.** Career academies prepare students for real world job placement by incorporating academic and technical skills into course frameworks. The school district has implemented a total of six career academies at four high schools. The six career academies include:

  Academy of Culinary Arts – Ridgeland High School
  Academy of Engineering – Madison Central High School
  Academy of Engineering – Ridgeland High School
  Academy of Healthcare Excellence – Germantown High School
  Academy of Multimedia – Velma Jackson High School
  Academy of Multimedia and Communications – Madison Central High School

ACT/PSAT/SAT

Madison County Schools has strengthened its college and career preparation for students through the addition of three part-time College and Career (CCR) Test Prep Coordinators. These individuals work in concert with secondary school principals and teachers to develop materials that will strengthen the students' performance and will enhance the students' opportunity to potentially garner higher scores on the PSAT, ACT, and SAT, resulting in more scholarships

being awarded. Madison County Schools' goal is for the district's average on the ACT composite score to meet or exceed the national average.

TRANSITIONING TO THE HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS

School administrators, counselors, and other staff members will communicate effectively with assigned detention center liaisons to meet the academic needs of each student through distance learning while the student is housed in a youth detention facility. Counselors and school staff will provide social and emotional services to aid students transitioning to school from a youth detention facility.

As students transition from the detention center back to their home school, it is important that school personnel collaborate to foster an easy transition: teacher, school attendance officer, and other pertinent staff members. School and/or district personnel will attend student transition/exit meetings. Participation in transition/exit meetings helps ensure that all individuals have established a common goal as the student transitions back to the home school. Attendance clerks will verify each day that students served off campus are counted as present due to the student receiving educational services.

The district works to ensure that classrooms are safe environments for learning. The transition that a juvenile offender makes from secure confinement to school will likely shape the youth's transition back into the community. Madison County School District has implemented effective approaches for reintegrating youth from juvenile justice system settings into the education mainstream. The Madison County School District maintains an Academic Options Center to safely educate student academically and socially.

NATIONAL DROPOUT PREVENTION CENTER 15 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

The National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) has identified fifteen effective strategies determined to have the most impact on dropout prevention. The district's current and proposed initiatives for reducing the dropout rate address each of the NDPC's fifteen effective strategies. (***Appendix G***)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Six-Year Trends – Dropout and Graduation Rates
2019-2020 through 2021-2025

APPENDIX B
State Testing ACT Scores for Juniors

Spring 2025 District Test Results (State Assessments)

MAAP Data Percentage Comparison
Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

APPENDIX C
Literacy Specialists' Job Duties

Elementary School
Middle School
High School

Mathematics Specialist Description

APPENDIX D
Elementary Literacy Instructional Practices
2025-2026

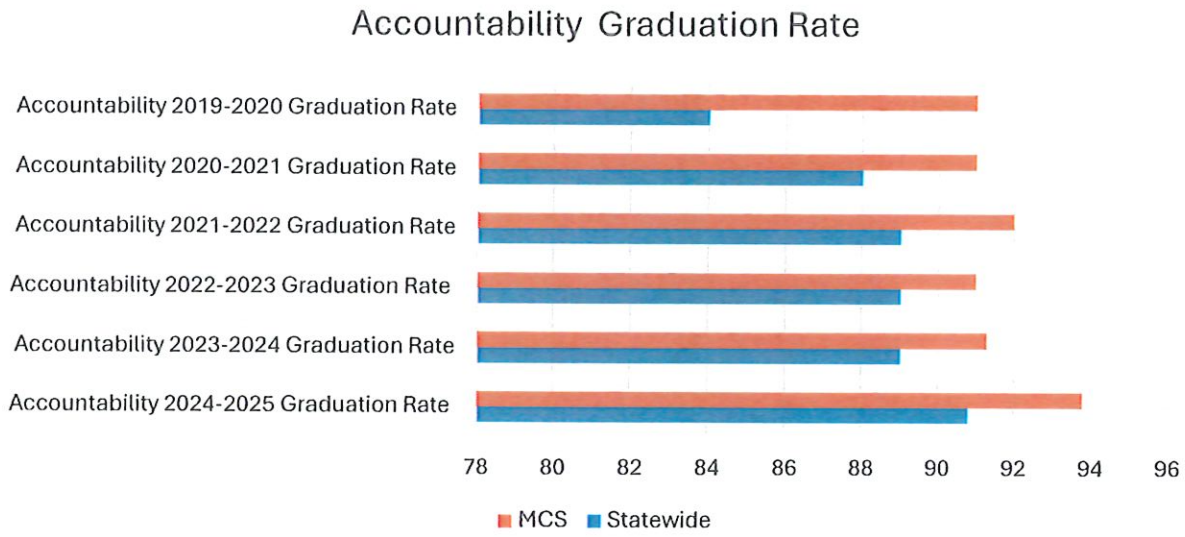
APPENDIX E
Middle School Literacy Expectations
2025-2026

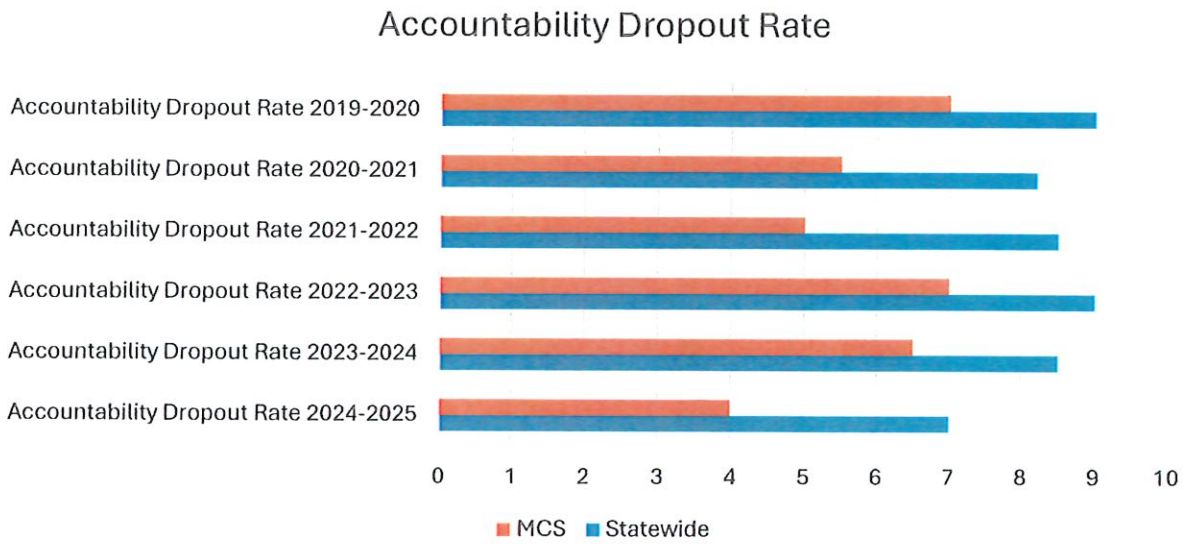
APPENDIX F
High School Literacy Expectations
2025-2026

APPENDIX G
The 15 Effective Strategies Defined

Appendix A

Six-Year Trends –Graduation and Dropout Rates
Cohorts 2019-2020 and through 2024-2025





Note: Data series are provided by cohort year along with year of graduation. For example, in the *MCS Graduation Rates* chart, the line of data that has *Accountability 2024-2025 Graduation Rate* shows data for students who were in the ninth grade for the first time during the 2021-2022 school year and graduated in 2025.

Appendix B

State Testing ACT Scores for Juniors
Spring 2025 & 2026

DISTRICT						
Year	Population	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
2025	1017	19.76	19.47	19.31	20.02	19.73
2026	936	18.7	18	18.9	19.2	18.6
GERMANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL						
Year	Population	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
2025	344	20.1	19.7	19.5	20.4	20.1
2026	312	19.5	18.4	19.5	20.4	19.6
MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL						
Year	Population	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
2025	375	21.9	22.0	21.4	22.1	21.7
2026	346	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.6	20.9
RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL						
Year	Population	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
2025	259	16.6	16.0	16.4	16.9	16.8
2026	224	18	17	18.3	18.8	17.5
VELMA JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL						
Year	Population	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
2025	39	17.3	16.2	17.2	18.0	17.4
2026	54	15.7	15	16.2	16	16.3

Appendix B Continued

Spring 2025 District Test Results (State Assessments)

MAAP Data- Grades 3-8 Percent Proficient or Above		
Grade Levels	**Language Arts**	**Math**
Grade 3	70.2	73.7
Grade 4	69.7	73.1
Grade 5	73.8	67.7
Grade 6	67.2	72.6
Grade 7	58.7	76.6
Grade 8	62.4	72.6

MAAP Data High School Subject Area Test Performance		
Subject Area	**Percent Proficient or Above**	**Percent Passing**
Algebra I	80.3	98
US History	80.8	94.7
Biology	70.9	85.6
English II	63.7	86.2

Appendix B Continued

MAAP Data Percentage Comparison

Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

Grades 3-8 Percent Proficient or Above +/-		
Grade Levels	English Language Arts	Math
Grade 3	**-8.5**	**-3.3**
Grade 4	**-6.3**	**+1.4**
Grade 5	**+5.6**	**-9.6**
Grade 6	**-5.2**	**+4.7**
Grade 7	**-6.2**	**-2.6**
Grade 8	**+1.7**	**-5.7**

High School Subject Area Test Percent Proficient or Above and Passing +/-		
Subject Area	Percent Proficient or Above	Percent Passing
Algebra I	**+4.7**	**+1.2**
US History	**-2**	**-1.2**
Biology	**+1.1**	**+1.5**
English II	**-9**	**-5.6**

Note: Positive values (+) indicate the percentage increased from 2024 to 2025. Negative values (-) indicate the percentage decreased from 2024 to 2025. Equal (=) indicates that the value remained the same as the previous year.

Appendix C

LITERACY SPECIALISTS' JOB DUTIES
MATH SPECIALIST DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Madison County Schools Elementary Literacy Specialist **Job Purpose:** To coordinate Multi-Tiered System of Support (**MTSS**) in accordance with the district's guidelines

Job Duties:

- Organize and facilitate Mandatory 20 meetings by the 20th day of school:
  - Pull roster from MSIS (obtain login information from the district data office).
  - Ensure accuracy by verifying student status with counselors, administration, and previous interventionist. o Gather and review data, including final grades from previous year's courses; summer school final averages and MAAP data.
  - Conduct TST meetings for students starting in Tier 3. o Conduct individual teacher meetings for student roll overs into Tier 2.
  - Conduct individual teacher meetings for students starting the year in Tier 1.5 (Academic Watch). o Enter meeting date into MSIS for all students on MSIS roster.
- Collect and file teachers' rules, procedures, rewards and consequences to document school wide PBIS efforts, and give copy to counselors for their reference.
- Compile a MTSS binder for the school containing all MTSS pertinent information.
- Assist with the 3 rounds of universal screening for academics and behaviors as determined by the current MTSS Policies and procedures: o Mandatory 20's – screening based on MAAP, previous retentions and previous year's final average (August/September)
  - Round 1 – screening based on NWEA MAP scores, CASE 21, and Term 1 average (Oct.)
  - Round 2 – screening based on NWEA MAP scores, CASE 21, and Semester 1 average (Jan.)
- Facilitate training sessions as determined by current MTSS Policies and Procedures:
  - Review State Board Policy 4300 and MCS MTSS Policies/ Procedures (review after each round of norming). o Review behavior universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, and/or TST only).
  - Review academic universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, and/or TST only).
- Facilitate individual teacher or subject area meetings every 5 weeks to coordinate Tier 2 efforts: o Review academic data. o Review discipline concerns.
  - Request Hearing/vision screener. o Review paperwork.
  - Review current Tier 2 students – current data.
- Analyze data twice each term (Mid-term and Term):
  - Discipline reports o Failure reports
  - Progress monitoring results (mid-term and term averages)
  - Generate MSIS list (verify transfer students have not been added to the list)
- Participate as a member of the school's We Care Team.
- Manage and house Tier 3 paperwork:

- Gather student background data (check cumulative folder, SAM, MSIS to collect academic data).
- Contact parents and complete family medical history. o Schedule, conduct and provide written follow-up of all Tier 3 meetings every 8 weeks:
  - Mail invitation to meeting
  - Complete Form 2
  - Collect documentation of intervention
  - Prepare and discuss progress monitoring/grades/and current testing data
  - Update/change intervention if necessary
  - Document progress
  - Send follow-up letter to parents summarizing results of the meeting

- Progress monitor and track data for Tier 3 students.
- Implement Tier 3 interventions.
- Maintain communication with parents regarding Tier 3 students.
- Work with principal and teachers to train on research-based intervention/evidence-based strategies (professional development, modeling, co-teaching).
- Assist various tiered students outside the classroom by analyzing grades (incomplete class or homework, failed tests, etc.) and promoting self-advocacy skills.
- Serve as a liaison between tiered students and teachers regarding classroom needs.
- Serve as a home-school liaison to answer parent questions/concerns about MTSS as necessary.
- Provide professional development opportunities as necessary.
- Assist with New Teacher Orientation.
- Maintain databases as appropriate:
  - End of year MSIS data (add all students placed in Tier 3) o SAM filters/active flags (keep current as students move through tiers) • Contact district psychometrist when an individual request for testing is made.
- Close out files:
  - Organize folder and make end-of-year decisions
  - Notify parent via letter o Transfer folders as appropriate o Make scheduling considerations o Update MSIS
  - Give principal end-of-year list
  - Make final decision summary list for Christyl Erickson, Curriculum/MTSS Director
- Any other duties deemed appropriate by the MCS Office of Curriculum

Job Title: Middle School Literacy Specialist

Job Purpose: To coordinate Multi-Tiered System of Support (**MTSS**) in accordance with the district's guidelines.

Job Duties:

- Organize and facilitate Mandatory 20 meetings by the 20th day of school:
  - Pull roster from MSIS.
  - Ensure accuracy by verifying student status with counselors, administration, and previous interventionist.
  - Gather and review data, including final grades from previous year's courses; summer school final averages and MAAP data.
  - Conduct TST meetings for students starting in Tier 3. o Conduct individual teacher meetings for student rollovers into Tier 2. o Conduct individual teacher meetings for students starting the year in Tier 1.5 (Academic Watch).
  - Enter meeting date into MSIS for all students on MSIS roster.
- Collect and file teachers' rules, procedures, rewards and consequences to document schoolwide PBIS efforts, and give copy to counselors for their reference.
- Compile MTSS binders for schools containing all MTSS pertinent information.
- Assist with the 3 rounds of universal screening for academics and behaviors as determined by the current MTSS Policies and Procedures: o Mandatory 20's - screening based on MAAP, previous retentions and previous year's final average (August/September)
  - Round 1- screening based on MAP scores, CASE 21, and Term 1 average (October) o Round 2- screening based on MAP scores, CASE 21, and Semester 1 average (January)
- Facilitate training sessions as determined by current MTSS Policies and Procedures:
  - Review State Board Policy 4300 and the district's MTSS Policies and Procedures (review after each round of norming) o Review behavior universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, and/or TST only)
  - Review academic universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, and/or TST only)
- Facilitate individual teacher or subject area meetings every 5 weeks to coordinate Tier 2 efforts:
  - Review academic data o Review discipline concerns o Review paperwork
  - Review current Tier 2 students –current data
- Analyze data twice each term (Mid-term and Term): o Discipline reports o Failure reports
  - Progress monitoring results (mid-term and term averages)
  - Generate MSIS list (verify transfer students have not been added to the list)
- Participate as a member of the school's We Care Team (may be asked to provide data on excessive absences, failures, and discipline gathered during mid-term and term data analysis).

- Manage and house T3 paperwork: o Gather student background data (check cum, SAM, MSIS, and re-check with teacher to verify attendance/current absences--make sure no new student discipline has arisen).
    - Request hearing/vision screener. o Contact parent and complete family medical history.
    - Schedule, conduct and provide written follow-up of all Tier 3 meetings:
        - Mail invitation to meeting
        - Complete Form 12
        - Collect documentation of intervention
        - Prepare and discuss progress monitoring/grades/and current testing data
        - Update/change intervention if necessary
        - Document progress on Form 11
        - Send follow-up letter to parents summarizing results of the meeting
- Progress monitor and track data for Tier 3 students.
- Implement Tier 3 interventions when appropriate.
- Maintain communicate on with parents regarding T3 students.
- Work with principal and teachers to train on research-based interventions/evidence-based strategies (professional development, modeling, and co-teaching).
- Assist various tiered students outside the classroom by analyzing grades (incomplete class or homework, failed tests, etc.) and promoting self-advocacy skills.
- Serve as a liaison between tiered students and teachers regarding classroom needs.
- Serve as a home-school liaison to answer parent questions/concerns about MTSS as necessary.
- Provide professional development opportunities as necessary.
- Assist with New Teacher Orientation.
- Maintain databases as appropriate:

    o End of year MSIS data (add all students placed in Tier 3) o Sam filters/active flags (keep current as students move through tiers) • Contact district psychometrists when an individual request for testing is made.
- Close out files:
    - Organize folders and make end of year decisions o Notify parents via letter and transfer folders as appropriate
    - Make scheduling considerations
    - Update MSIS and give principal end-of-year lists
    - Make final decision summary list for the Curriculum Director and the Director of Special Services
- Any other duties deemed appropriate by the MCS Office of Curriculum

Job Title: Madison County Schools High School Literacy Specialist

Job Purpose: To coordinate Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in accordance with the district's guidelines

Job Duties:

- Organize and facilitate Mandatory 20 meetings by the 20th day of school:
  - Pull roster from MSIS (obtain login information from the district data office) o Ensure accuracy by verifying student status with counselors and administration o Consult with middle school interventionist regarding 8th grade rollovers/new 9th grade Tier status. o Gather and review data, including final grades from previous year's English, math courses; summer school final averages, middle school MAAP data and high school MAAP data.
  - Train TST and conduct meetings for students starting in Tier 3. o Conduct individual teacher meetings for students starting the year in Tier 2.
  - Conduct individual teacher meetings for students starting the year in Tier 1.5 (Academic Watch). o Enter meeting date into MSIS for all students on MSIS roster.
- Collect and file teachers' rules, procedures, rewards and consequences to document school wide PBIS efforts, and give copy to counselors for their reference.
- Compile MTSS binders for schools containing all information pertinent to MTSS.
- Assist with the 3 rounds of universal screening for academics and behaviors as determined by the current MTSS Policies and Procedures: o Round 1 (Mandatory 20's) – screening based on MAAP (for 9th graders), Case 21, and previous year's final average

  o Round 2 (Winter) – screening based on MAAP and Semester 1 average o Round 3 (Spring) Screening – using final averages, summer school grades, and MAAP students are placed tentatively for the next academic year's Round 1
- Facilitate training sessions as determined by current MTSS Policies and Procedures:
  - Review MTSS Policies and Procedures including Policy 4300 o Review behavioral universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, individual teachers, and/or TST only)
  - Review academic universal screening and results (may be with counselors, administration, individual teachers, and/or TST only)
- Facilitate individual teacher or subject area meetings every 9 weeks to coordinate Tier 2 efforts:
  - Review academic data o Review discipline concerns o Review paperwork
  - Review current Tier 2 students – current data
- Analyze data:

- Progress monitoring results (term averages)

- Participate as a member of the school's We Care Team.

- Manage and house T3 paperwork:
  - Gather student background data (check cumulative folder, SAM, MSIS, Case 21, MAP/STAR, etc. to collect academic data) o Request Hearing/Vision screener o Contact parents and complete family medical history:
    - Schedule, conduct, and provide written follow-up of all Tier 3 meetings Mail invitation to meeting
    - Complete Form 2
    - Collect documentation of intervention
    - Prepare and discuss progress monitoring/grades/and current testing data
    - Update/change intervention if necessary
    - Document progress on Form 7
    - Send follow-up letter to parents summarizing results of the meeting
- Implement Tier 3 interventions as necessary.
- Progress monitor and track data for Tier 3 students.
- Maintain communication with parents regarding T3 students.
- Work with principal and teachers to train on research-based intervention/evidence-based strategies (professional development, modeling, and co-teaching).
- Assist various tiered students outside the classroom by analyzing grades (incomplete class or homework, failed tests, etc.) and promoting self-advocacy skills.
- Serve as a liaison between tiered students and teachers regarding classroom needs.
- Serve as a home-school liaison to answer parent questions/concerns about MTSS as necessary.
- Provide professional development opportunities as necessary.
- Contact district psychometrists when an individual request for testing is made.
- Assist with New Teacher Orientation and other district initiatives.
- Maintain databases as appropriate:
  - MSIS intervention rosters (check for updates periodically)
  - End-of-year MSIS data
  - SAM filters/active flags (keep current as students move through tiers) Any other duties deemed appropriate by the MCS Office of Curriculum

Madison County Schools
District Math Specialist Team
Math Specialist Description

Madison County Math Specialists collaborate as a team and with administrators, teachers, and other district specialists in a variety of contexts, including working with students in individual and small group settings, meeting with teachers during PLCs and planning times, analyzing benchmark testing data, co-teaching and/or modeling tasks in the classroom, and conducting indistrict professional development. As such, Math Specialists are expected to demonstrate expertise in mathematical content knowledge, current research-based instructional strategies, and interpersonal skills. Math Specialists are expected to continue to grow as professionals by attending professional development and professional conferences, investigating math education resources, and sharing materials among colleagues.

Minimum Requirements:

- A valid Mississippi Educator License; a Master's Degree in Mathematics Education or in Elementary Education (with an emphasis in mathematics) is preferred
- Minimum of 3 years of classroom experience
- In-depth knowledge of mathematical content and instructional strategies
- Ability to co-plan, co-teach, and/or model current best practices with teachers and administrators inside and outside the classroom
- Ability to collaborate flexibly with team members and other district personnel
- Ability to self-monitor, multi-task, and deliver a variety of high-quality instructional resources in a timely manner, based on the needs of students, teachers, and administrators
- Ability to travel throughout district and to participate in trainings for professional purposes

Basic Responsibilities:

- Meet with teachers during PLCs and planning times and respond with instructional resources/materials based on their requests.
- Co-plan, co-teach, and/or model current best practices in K-12 math classrooms.
- Observe students during Tier 1 instruction to help teachers identify student misconceptions and work with teachers to develop research-based strategies and classroom tasks for helping address those misconceptions.
- Work with students in individual and small group settings to strengthen long-term success in mathematics.
- Collaborate with Math Specialists to strengthen district Pacing Guides, Deconstructions, and other math curriculum resources.
- Actively participate in professional development opportunities (both presenting and attending), as determined to be appropriate by district supervisors.

Appendix D

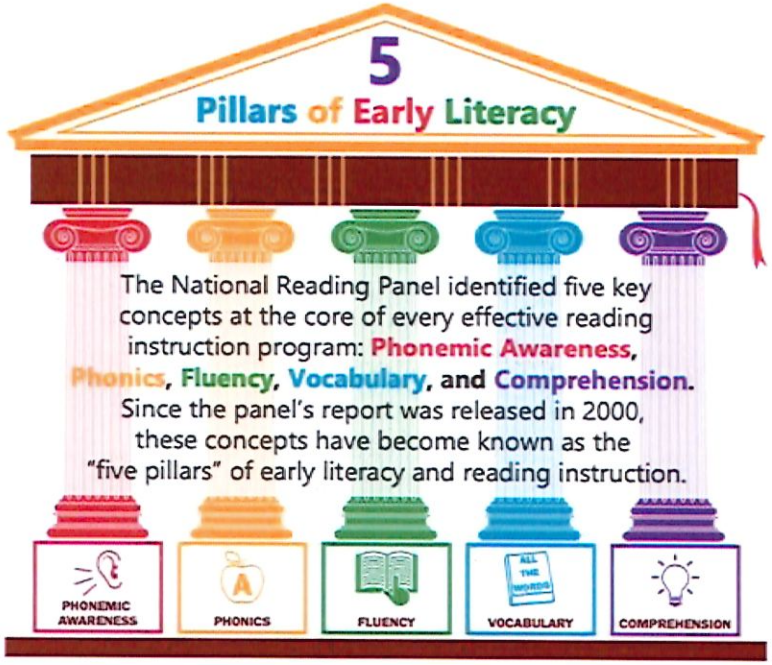
Elementary Literacy Instructional Practices

2026-2027

Madison County Schools
Elementary Literacy Instructional Practices
2026-2027

Rationale for Structured Literacy:

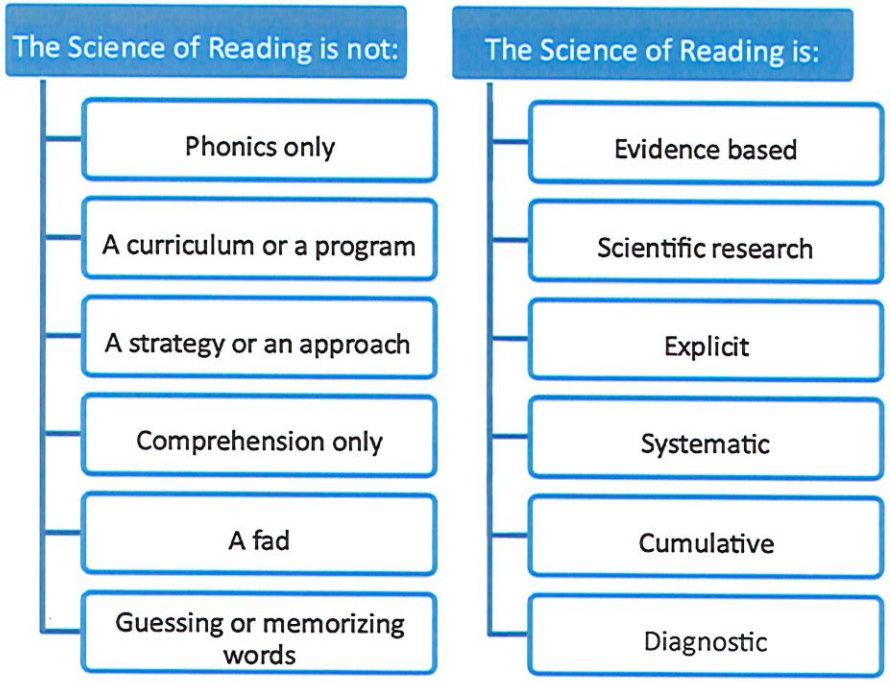
Teachers following a basal and/or a balanced literacy approach report they often spend a limited amount of time on teaching foundational skills and do not use a systematic approach. (*Student Achievement Partners*) This document is intended to support the needs of a typical K-5 classroom teacher by providing clear guidance around how to build critical foundational skills for word recognition along with the essential components of language development according to the National Reading Panel.



Explicit instruction of foundational skills is critical in early elementary school. Numerous studies point to the benefits of a structured program for reading success. For the purposes of this document, this means a program that begins with phonological awareness, follows a clear sequence of phonics patterns, provides direct, explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction with adequate student practice, and makes use of targeted assessments and supports. Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension skills are increasingly strategic in their implementation in each classroom. Differentiation is essential for the successful application of structured literacy.

What The Science of Reading is... And What It Isn't

This body of scientifically based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing is widely known as the Science of Reading. *(The Reading League)* The Reading League released the definitive guide to the Science of Reading as a free ebook. The Reading Universe is a website that also lists multiple resources that can be utilized by teachers and administrators.



The Reading League

The Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of Reading has been empirically validated by over 150 scientific studies. It shows us that reading comprehension is not the sum, but the product of two components- word recognition and language comprehension- such that if either one is weak, reading comprehension is diminished. No amount of skill in one component can compensate for a lack of skill in the other. While it is a simple view of a developmental process, skilled reading development is NOT simplistic.

Word Recognition (WR) x Language Comprehension (LC) = Reading Comprehension (RC)

The Simple View formula and supporting studies show that a student's reading comprehension (RC) score can be predicted if word recognition (WR) skills and language comprehension (LC) abilities are known. Notice that WR and LC are not added together to predict RC. They are multiplied. In the Simple View formula, the values of WR and LC must be between 0 and 1 (or 0% and 100%). A score of 0 means no skill or ability at all and 1 indicates perfection.



Word Recognition:

(WR) is defined as "efficient word recognition" (Hoover & Gough, 1990). This definition goes beyond the traditional definition of [just] decoding as the ability to sound out words based on phonics rules. This meaning expands to include fast and accurate reading of familiar and unfamiliar words in both lists and connected text (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). For the first Simple View studies, students read a list of pseudowords to assess decoding.

Language Comprehension:

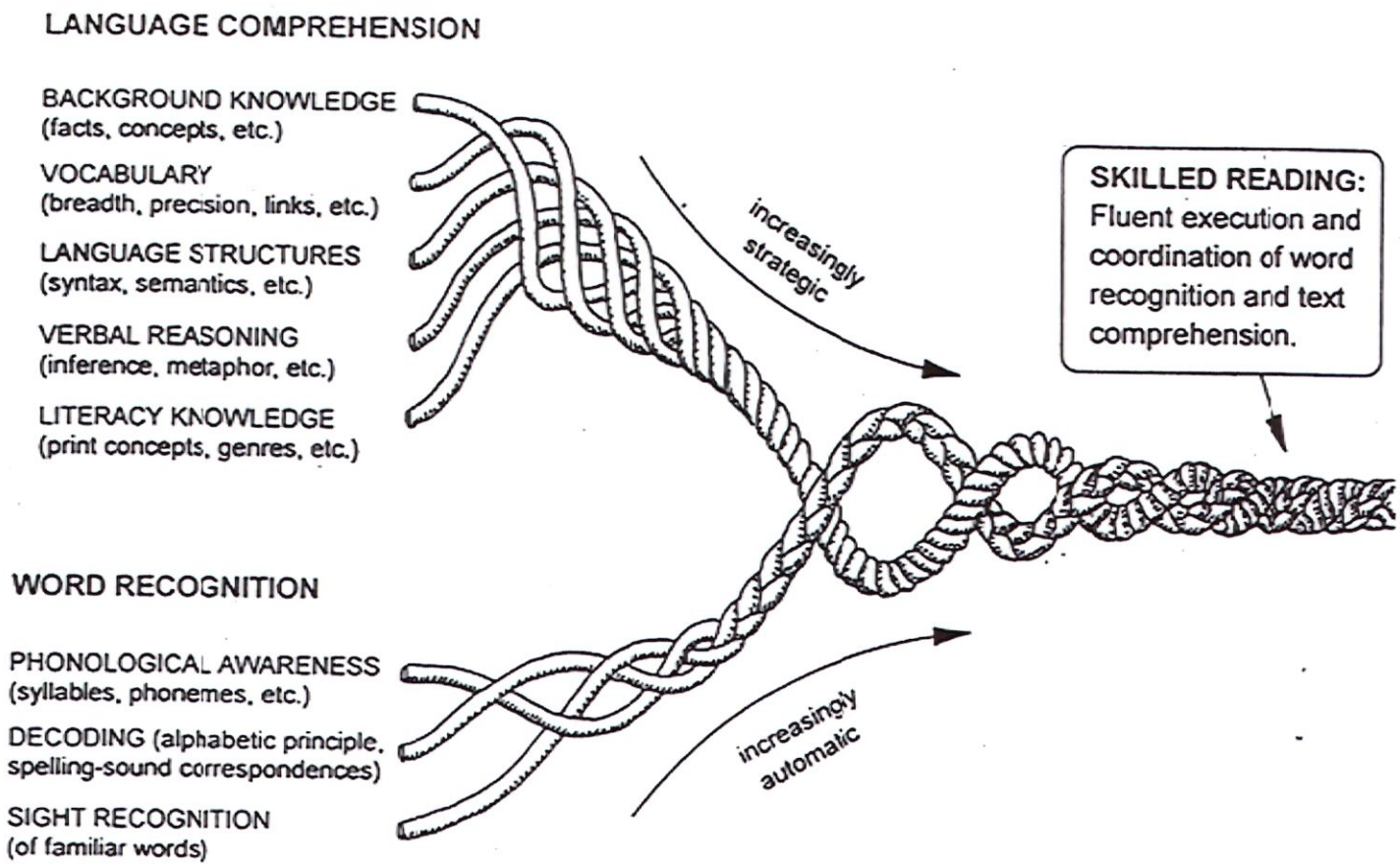
(LC) is called by several other names in various studies, including linguistic comprehension, listening comprehension, and comprehension. All of these terms are defined as the ability to derive meaning from spoken words when they are part of sentences or other discourse. Language comprehension abilities, at a minimum, encompass "receptive vocabulary, grammatical understanding, and discourse comprehension" (Catts, Adlof, & Weismer, 2006). For the Simple View studies, the student listens to a passage read aloud then retells the passage combined with answering oral questions that were not addressed in the retell.

Reading Comprehension:

(RC) differs from language comprehension because of the reliance on print, as opposed to oral language, to perceive the words and derive meaning (Hoover & Gough, 1990). In other words, language comprehension becomes reading comprehension when word meaning is derived from print. It is possible to have strong language comprehension and still be a poor reader if there is difficulty with decoding. For the SVR studies, the student reads a passage then retells the passage combined with answering oral questions that were not addressed in the retell. *(Farrell, Hunter, Davidson, and Osenga, 2019)*

Scarborough's Reading Rope

Scarborough's Rope is a visual metaphor for the development of skills over time represented by the strands of the rope that lead to skilled reading. *(Scarborough, H.S. 2001)* Use the model below to refer to the definitions on the following pages.


LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION
BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)
VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)
LANGUAGE STRUCTURES
(syntax, semantics, etc.)
VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)
increasingly strategic
SKILLED READING:
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.
WORD RECOGNITION
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)
DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)
SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)
increasingly automatic

The Lower Strands

Phonological Awareness

A skill set that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes (phonemic awareness).

Decoding

Decoding is the ability to apply knowledge of sound-letter relationships (phonics, encoding/spelling, Alphabetic Principle) to correctly pronounce written words.

Sight Recognition

The ability to read words accurately and effortlessly (automaticity). It includes high frequency words and sight words (AKA red, trick, heart words) and is frequently referred to as an orthographic lexicon. Sight word recognition is foundational to fluent reading.

The Upper Strands

Background Knowledge

Prior knowledge about a variety of subjects, topics, and ideas gained through experiences (lived or learned). Background knowledge is an essential component because it helps us make sense of new ideas and experiences and more likely that they will add to their body of knowledge. The more background knowledge students receive, the more prior knowledge and vocabulary they can bring to texts. This is especially important for readers who are still relying heavily on word decoding rather than rapid word recognition.

Vocabulary

An extensive and rich vocabulary enables readers to make sense of what they are reading. A reader with rich auditory and oral vocabularies will find it easier to read through texts that contain words they have not seen in print before. If the student can use their growing decoding skills and match their result with a word they already know the meaning of, they will be more confident in their abilities and will spend less overall effort on reading a text. Conclusive research reported explicit vocabulary instruction in the early

grades results in children learning more words (Graves & Silverman, 2010, citing Beck & McKeown, 2007). Explicit instruction about word meaning can be provided in many ways including the study of morphology (the study of words and their parts).

Language Structures

Syntax - The arrangement of words in a phrase or sentence. The English language has patterns and rules for the way we order our words (Grammar, punctuation). It also has some flexibility and variety in acceptable patterns, and even then, speakers and writers are allowed some leeway within these patterns.

Semantics - In linguistics, semantics is the study of the meanings of morphemes (smallest unit of meaning, ex. un-), words, phrases, and sentences. Knowledge of the meaning of a text is essential to reading.

Verbal Reasoning

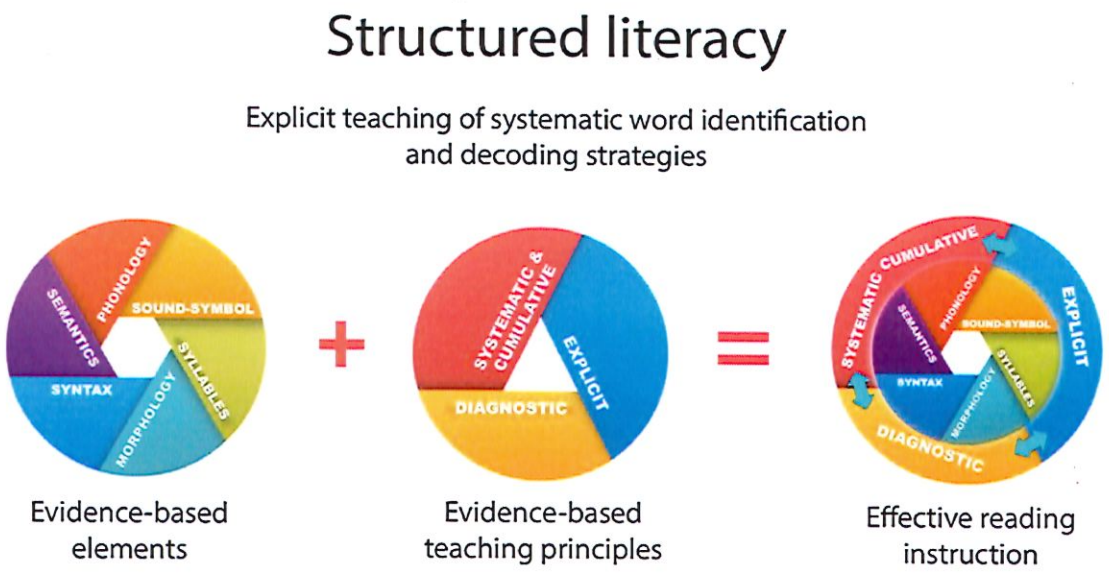
The **ability** to understand what you read or hear. It includes drawing conclusions from limited information and developing an understanding of how new ideas connect to what you already know. A reader must be able to grasp when words are being used literally or figuratively, understanding and utilizing terms such as inference, metaphor, and simile.

Literacy Knowledge

Students gain literacy knowledge by exposure to a wide array of genres (different types of books or stories defined by special characteristics) and print concepts (letters vs. words, 1:1 correspondence, reading left-to-right and top-to-bottom, spaces between written words, letter order matters, etc.).

Structured Literacy:

Structured Literacy includes the five components of phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Effective instruction must follow a continuum of addressing all elements with systematic, sequential, explicit, cumulative, and teach to mastery instruction *(Barksdale Reading Institute)*. A strong focus must be placed on phonological awareness, phonics, and vocabulary in the foundational years and continues to focus on building knowledge across content areas in the later years.



Source: © 2016 Cowen for International Dyslexia Association
https://app.box.com/s/2yqu2ke21mxs0hz9l77owdlorgvtesyq

Phonology (study of sound structure of spoken words) is a key element of Structured Literacy instruction. Phonemic awareness (ability to distinguish/segment/blend/manipulate sounds relevant to reading/spelling) is central to phonology.

Sound-Symbol Association (Phonics) Once students develop phoneme awareness, they must learn the alphabetic principle- how to map phonemes (sounds) to graphemes (letters and letter clusters) and vice versa.
Syllables (Phonics) Knowing the six syllable types and vowel-grapheme types help readers associate vowel spellings with vowel sounds. Syllable division rules help readers divide/decode unfamiliar words. Fluency is the accurate and automatic application of word recognition.

Morphology A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in language. Studying these base elements (base words, roots) and affixes (prefixes and suffixes) help readers decode and unlock the meanings of complex words.

Syntax The set of principles that dictate the sequence and function of words in a sentence – includes grammar, sentence structure, and the mechanics of language.

Semantics is concerned with meaning. Structured Literacy includes instruction in the comprehension and appreciation of written language. *(IDA)*

Key Features of Structured Literacy

Systematic and Cumulative: Systematic means that organization of material follows the logical order of language. The sequence begins with the easiest and most basic concepts and elements and progresses methodically to the more difficult. Cumulative means each step is based on concepts previously learned.

Explicit: Structured Literacy instruction requires direct teaching of concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction and does not assume students deduce concepts.

Diagnostic: Teachers must be adept at individualizing instruction (even within groups) based on careful and continuous assessment, both informal (e.g., observation) and formal (e.g., with standardized measures). Content must be mastered to the degree of automaticity needed to free attention and cognitive resources for comprehension and oral/written expression. (IDA)

Appendix E

Middle School Literacy Expectations

2026-2027

Middle School Literacy Instructional Practices

2026-2027

- **The difference between guided reading and literature circles**

Guided Reading	Literature Circles
Teacher directed, entire lesson of vocabulary, fluency and comprehension is built around a leveled text each week. Development of independent, strategic reading skills is the key concept. • Matching reading to instructionally leveled text • Flexible grouping • Teacher scaffolding, which capitalizes on the zone of proximal development by providing decoding and comprehension strategies. • Before Reading: Students are encouraged to make connections to the text, to take picture walks, and to make predictions (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). • During Reading: Students in small group, read aloud to the teacher, individually. The teacher provides decoding and comprehension strategies to the student, as the other	Student directed and each participant has a distinct role. Independent reading and collaborative learning are key concepts for LC. • Students choose their own reading. • Small temporary groups are formed based on book choice. • Different groups read different books. • Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule for discussion. • Kids use written notes to guide both their reading and discussion. • Discussion topics come from the students, not the teacher. • Group meetings strive to become open, natural conversations about books. • Students take on rotating tasks of distinct roles.

students read silently at their own pace. (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). - After Reading: In the After portion, there is an extension to the reading that targets a skill that the groups need. (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).	- The teacher serves as a facilitator and not as a group member or instructor. - Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation. - A spirit of fun about reading pervades the room. When books are finished, readers share with their classmates and new groups form around new reading choices.

Guided Reading

Guided Reading is one component of a comprehensive, high quality literacy effort that includes interactive read-aloud, literature discussion in whole or small groups, whole-group mini lessons, independent reading and individual conferences.
The Goal of Guided Reading is: "to help children learn how to use independent reading strategies successfully" using books that are not too hard or not too easy.
Essential Elements: see attachments taken from Continuum of Literacy Learning by Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell.
Amount of Time:
Once per week.

Components of Literacy Block: (Fountas & Pinnell)

1. **Interactive Read Aloud:** The teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small groups.

Involves students in reading for enjoyment From Kindergarten through eighth grade, literature study and discussion are a part of shared reading and interactive read-aloud (see Fountas and Pinnell 2001, 2006). Students may discuss the book as a whole class but they will also need to be engaged in more intimate routines like a "turn and talk" (focused on any aspect of text) for a minute or two a few times within the larger discussion. These types of routines provide opportunities for individuals to engage in more talk than would otherwise be possible in a whole-group discussion. Inserting such routines into your interactive read-aloud will make whole-group discussions livelier and give all students the opportunity for active participation.

- Demonstrates reading for a purpose
- Provides an adult demonstration of phrased fluent reading
- Develops sense of story
- Develops knowledge of how texts are structured
- Increases vocabulary
- Promotes oral language development Develops knowledge of written language syntax

**For Ten characteristics for Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion see attached.

**For framework for the continuum, see Interactive Read-Aloud of *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades Pk-8* pages 38-45.

2. **Shared Reading**: Using text (should be posted on overhead or chart, poems quotes, songs, etc.) that all students can see. The teacher involves students in reading together.
   - Demonstrates early strategies, such as word by word matching
   - Builds sense of story and ability to predict
   - Demonstrates the processes of reading extended text
   - Involves students in an enjoyable and purposeful way
   - Provides opportunity to participate and behave like a reader

3. **Guided reading:** The teacher works with a small group who has similar reading processes. The teacher selects and introduces new books and supports students reading the whole text themselves, making teaching points during and after the reading. Guided reading is **NOT ROUND ROBIN READING**.
   - Provides the opportunity to read many texts and a wide variety of texts
   - Provides opportunity to problem solve while reading for meaning
   - Provides the opportunity to attend to words in text
   - Provides opportunity to think about the text, within the text, and beyond the text (see attachment)

4. **Independent reading:** students read on their own or with partners from a wide range of materials. Some reading is from a special collection at their reading level.
    - Provides opportunity to apply reading strategies independently
    - Provides time to sustain reading behavior
    - Challenges the reader to solve words independently while reading texts well within high control
    - Promotes fluency through rereading
    - Builds confidence through sustain successful reading

Leveled text: texts that match the reader's ability…. books/texts that are not too easy or too hard. In the guided reading group, the students should be reading on their instructional level. A student should progress to the next level of text about every 4 weeks.

- Independent level: text that the reader can read with 95% + accuracy without support from someone else. (Using lexile/grade level to determine)
- **Instructional level**: text that the reader can read with 94% accuracy with support from someone else (using the lexile/grade level to determine)
- Frustration (Intervention) level: Text that the student is reading 93% or below (using lexile/grade level to determine)

Grouping: students are grouped with no more than 6 students per group. They are grouped by lexile or reading grade range/level for strengths in the reading process and appropriate level of text difficulty. **Groups are dynamic, flexible, and change on a regular basis.**

What about the rest of class: 6-8: independent reading and literature discussion circles/Writing in response to reading (small groups)

Fluency: Is more than rate; must include pausing, phrasing, word stress, and intonation.

Comprehension: Is more than retelling (See attachment, MCCRS)

Role of Principal: Provide PD; model for teachers; **ensure groups are meeting**; ensure book rooms are established/resources are available and routines in place to check out books; make sure every teacher is taught what guided reading is and **is not**; be able to communicate and defend guided reading and lexile level/range to parents; provide take home leveled resources for students to practice; place students so that groups are manageable for teacher

Professional development: Must occur yearly for all teachers.
*Note: Studies examined in this research that promoted scripted programs, focused on only economically disadvantaged students.

****Great non-fiction leveled resources for guided reading: Time for Kids, Scholastic News, Scope, and online-leveled resources (NewsELA). These resources are either low cost, or free, and may be purchased/obtained on multiple lexile/reading grade levels.** ****

Literacy Circles

Literature circles promote the pleasure of sharing reading experiences and thinking about what has been read through discussion and the opportunity to speak and be heard. This strategy encourages students to dig deeper into their books through questions and comments from group members and teachers. Literature circles usually comprise of three to five students - too many could result in less chance of being heard and feeling comfortable contributing, and partner work lacks the group diversity and dynamics that is central to this strategy.

It takes time to establish literature circles, and once established they tend to evolve from groups of students retelling the story read, to groups intensively talking and thinking about books. This includes discussing and comparing various aspects of books and making personal connections. Literature groups can become so motivated that the groups are totally student directed and monitored, with high levels of enthusiasm and commitment.

The reading preparation for literature circles is usually done independently before meeting for discussion. Younger students however may require, or prefer, reading with a partner or in a guided reading group to prepare for their heterogeneous literature circle. (Bookmates Publishing)

This strategy is suitable for students of all ages. Responses to, and interpretations of, books help students of any age gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011,2008)

For possible guidelines, see attached.

There are multiple sources online for implementing Literature Circles.
Whole group text discussion following Socratic Seminar guidelines is a great tool for literature interaction as well.

Appendix F

High School Literacy Expectations

High School Literacy Expectations
2026-2027

These high school literacy expectations apply to any school personnel (classroom teachers, school SPED department, instructional specialists, literacy specialists, EL department, instructional administrators, district tutors) who serve students in a literacy capacity. High School literacy instruction should include evidence/research-based comprehension strategies, morphology practice (affixes, roots), remediation of foundational skills as needed, and writing instruction.

District and school level administrators, along with other school support staff, will continue to provide support to teachers through planned implementation of evidence/research-based, literacy instructional best practices. Literacy Expectations include:

- Participate in building level PLCs
- Build relationships with faculty, staff, and students
- Collect and analyze student data for identification of at-risk students
- Facilitate instructional reading program(s) at the high school level
- Collaborate across content areas to provide reading instruction throughout the school

***Literacy Specialists may provide professional development and support for all school stakeholders. They are available to offer essential guidance for the school's entire literacy program. In Madison County High Schools, the Literacy Specialists will also provide additional instructional support for academically at-risk students.
High School Literacy Specialists will partner with Tier I Instructors to:

- Identify at-risk/drop-out risk students
- Support students who have not passed an End of Course test (state test)
- Support students who are failing multiple core classes due to academic deficits
- Provide resources and support to teachers so they can support their at-risk students in the classroom
- Attend PLC's, professional developments, and departmental meetings as needed

- Attend all We-Care meetings
- Be included on all staff communication

Please reach out to Dr. Melissa Philley at mphilley@madison-schools.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Appendix G

The 15 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES DEFINED National Dropout Prevention Center
(Four General Categories)

Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention Defined

LEADERSHIP

The Leadership strand begins with the SPN/NDPC Implementation Road Map and shows how to create systemic changes in climate and culture. It breaks down the roles of leaders in dropout prevention and covers effective professional learning and how to create safe learning environments. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- **Systemic Approach**—This strategy calls for a systemic approach and process for ongoing and continuous improvement across all grade levels and among all stakeholders through a shared and widely communicated vision and focus, tightly focused goals and objectives, selection of targeted research-based strategies and interventions, ongoing monitoring and feedback, and data-based decision making. It also requires aligning school policies, procedures, practices, and organizational structures and continuous effectiveness monitoring.

- **Professional Learning**—Adults who work with youth at risk of dropping out need to be provided with ongoing professional learning opportunities, support, and feedback. The professional learning should align with the agreed-upon vision and focus for the school/agency, the agreed- upon instructional framework of high-leverage research based practices and strategies, and the identified needs of the population served. The professional learning opportunities provided should be frequently monitored to determine the fidelity of implementation and the need for additional support and feedback.

- **Safe Learning Environments** - Safe, orderly, nurturing, inclusive, and inviting learning environments help students realize their potential as individuals and as engaged members of society. All students need to be physically and emotionally safe, expected to achieve, recognized, and celebrated equitably for accomplishments, and feel genuinely welcomed and supported. A safe and orderly learning environment provides physical and emotional security and daily experiences at all grade levels that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills. A comprehensive discipline plan and violence prevention plan should include conflict resolution strategies and deal with potential violence and crisis management. A safe, nurturing, and responsive learning environment supports all students, teachers, cultures, and subgroups; honors and supports diversity and social justice; treats students equitably; and recognizes the need for feedback, innovation, and second chances.

LEARNING ACCELERATORS

The Learning Accelerators strand goes through more classroom-oriented strategies. Individualized instruction, active learning, and technology will highlight researched strategies that improve graduation rates. This strand will include many future-focused ideas as effective learning accelerators constantly evolve and can be achieved in the following ways:

- **Individualized Instruction** - Learning experiences can be individualized, differentiated, or personalized (combining paced and tailored learning with flexibility in content or theme to fit each learner's interests, preferences, and prior experiences). In a fully personalized environment, the learning objectives, content, method, and pace may vary (so personalization encompasses differentiation and individualization).

- **Active Learning**—Active learning and student engagement strategies engage students in meaningful ways as partners in their learning. These strategies include student voice and choice, effective feedback, peer assessment, goal setting; cooperative learning; thinking critically, creatively, and reflectively; and micro-teaching, discussion, and twoway communication. To be most effective, teachers must provide students with tools and strategies to organize themselves and any new material; techniques to use while reading, writing, and doing math; and systematic steps to follow when working through a task or reflecting upon their own learning.

- **Educational Technology**—Instructional technology can effectively support teaching and learning while engaging students in meaningful, current, and authentic efforts; addressing multiple intelligences; and adapting to students' learning styles. Educational technology can effectively be used in individualized instruction and can not only help prepare students for the workforce but can empower students who struggle with self-esteem. Effective use of technologies depends upon the timely response to and application of the rapidly expanding choices and matches to identified student needs.

SUCCESS FOR ALL

The Success for All strand begins with equity and the achievement gap. Topics will focus on alternative schools, Career & Technical Education (CTE), and early childhood education in dropout prevention. The strand encompasses some of the most statistically effective strategies to ensure equity, access, and empowerment for all students. This can be achieved in the following ways through:

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**—Quality CTE programs, related career pathways, and guidance programs with pre-school through workforce (P-20W) orientation are essential for all students. Youth need workplace skills as well as awareness and focus to increase not only the likelihood that they will be prepared for their careers but also that school will be relevant to what is next.

- **Alternative Education**—Alternative or non-traditional schooling and delivery model options (e.g., alternative times and environments, blended learning, virtual learning, competency- based credit opportunities) provide alternative avenues to credit earning and graduation, with programs paying special attention to the student's individual and social needs, career goals, and academic requirements for obtaining a high school diploma and transitioning successfully to life beyond graduation.

- **Early Childhood Education**—Birth-to-five interventions demonstrate that providing a child additional enrichment can enhance brain development. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately drop out is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of school through the primary grades.

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OUTREACH

The Outreach strand is designed for people inside and outside schools (social services, tutors, community leaders, librarians, etc.), focusing on school community collaboration as the overarching theme. Outreach highlights promising practices in dropout prevention at all levels inside and outside schools and the importance of local investment from businesses and external agencies. This can be achieved in the following ways through:

- **School-Community Collaboration**—This strategy focuses on the power of an engaged and responsive community where everyone is accountable for the quality of education, resulting in a caring and collaborative environment where youth can thrive and achieve. Critical elements of this type of collaboration rely on effective, ongoing, and multidimensional communication, so dropout prevention is a communitywide and ongoing effort.

- **Family Engagement**—Research consistently finds that family engagement has a direct, positive effect on youth's achievement and is one of the most accurate predictors of a student's success in school. Critical elements of this type of collaboration rely on effective, ongoing, and multi- dimensional, two-way communication, ongoing needs assessments, and responsive family supports and interventions.

- **After-School/Out-of-School Opportunities**—Many schools provide after-school, before- school, and/or summer academic/enhancement/enrichment opportunities (e.g., tutoring, credit recovery, acceleration, homework support, etc.) that provide students with opportunities for assistance and recovery as well as high-interest options for discovery and learning. These opportunities often decrease information loss and inspire interest in otherwise inaccessible areas. Such experiences are especially important for at-risk students because out-of-school "gap time" is filled with constructive and engaging activities or needed academic support.

- **Service Learning**—Service learning connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning. This teaching/learning method promotes personal and social growth, career development, and civic responsibility and can be a powerful vehicle for effective school reform at all grade levels.

- **Mentoring** -is typically a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee based on trust. Mentoring offers a significant support structure for highrisk students. Tutoring, also typically a one-to- one activity, focuses on academic support and is an effective practice when addressing specific needs in collaboration with the student's base teacher.