LITERACY IMPROVEMENT

Student literacy (the ability to read and write English) is a foundational skill for both academic achievement within school, and life skills outside and after school. The purpose of this policy is to improve literacy outcomes for all students in the district. The Board sets an overall goal to increase student literacy (including growth toward proficiency), as measured by an assessment tool approved by the Superintendent.

Regular results of the Superintendent's approved literacy assessment tools will be reported to the Board as well as staff, parents, students, and the community.

Improving district students' literacy can be helped when stakeholders work together:

1. Students attending school regularly, and feeling engaged in their school community.
2. Parents/guardians and families supporting student attendance, as partners in their children's education.
3. Teachers using evidence-based instructional practices that are consistent throughout the district.
4. Teachers and administrators utilize data to identify struggling students in need of additional assistance.
5. Administrators providing professional development support to instructional staff.
6. The school board aligns and provides resources to support these activities.
7. The district partnering with organizations and resources in the larger community to support literacy for all.

The Board directs the Superintendent to investigate specific causes for low literacy in the district, and develop strategies to address those causes. Additionally, the district will undertake the following strategies to improve student literacy, which may be modified to address any specific causes identified above. The district will:

<u>Early Learning</u>

- Use literacy teaching practices for grades PreK-3 that are attested to the New York State Education Department as evidence-based and aligned with their literacy instructional best practices, and remove/end curriculum or instructional practices that do not align with such practices.

Instructional Practices and Student Support

- Use literacy instructional practices for all grades PreK-12 that are aligned with evidence-based best practices, and remove/end curriculum or instructional practices that do not align with such practices.
- Prioritize the use of instructional time to focus on literacy for all students, including uninterrupted blocks of time in the daily schedule. This may be implemented differently by grade level and student need, but literacy instruction is a priority at all grade levels.
- Ensure literacy materials are also culturally-responsive and relevant to students.
- Identify students eligible for Academic Intervention Services for literacy, and provide such services, as required by state regulations.
- Offer optional extra help outside of school hours and over the summer, which must be aligned with the literacy efforts occurring during the school day/year.
- For students struggling with literacy skills who are recommended for promotion to the next grade, identify their skill gaps and provide additional support during the next school year to focus on improving literacy. Such support may also be provided during the summer before the next school year begins.

Staff Support and Development

- Determine if additional resources are needed to address the needs of Multil-Lingual Learners and /English Language Learners. Such resources might be for all instructional staff, specifically for Bilingual and /English as New Language teachers, and for students themselves.
- Provide ongoing staff coaching, support and culturally-responsive professional learning where needed to improve the classroom climate, learning environment, and student engagement in the classroom.
- Place staff with strong skills teaching literacy in positions/locations to maximize use of their skills in the district.
- Provide professional learning that focuses on foundational skills (phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency), vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing.

Family-Community Activities

- Conduct outreach activities to educate the community on the district's literacy programs.
- Promote at-home everyday activities families can do together to support student literacy.
- Partner with local agencies and public libraries to support the district's literacy efforts.
- Offer parent/family learning sessions at times that are convenient for families.

Student Attendance and Engagement

- Promote student engagement in school via extracurricular and co-curricular activities that are relevant to students.
- Determine barriers to consistent student attendance, and factors that lead to chronic absenteeism, and work with students and families to improve school attendance.

Cross-ref:
1900, Parent and Family Engagement
4325, Academic Intervention Services
4750, Promotion and Retention
5100, Student Attendance
9700, Professional Learning and Staff Development

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