



3rd Grade Reading Implementation

Ann Arbor Public Schools Fall, 2017 Update

"We make the path by walking."
- Robert Bly

Introduction

In October, 2016, Michigan Governor signed into law Public Act 306, 3rd grade reading legislation detailing additional steps that schools will implement to support students in achieving reading proficiency by 3rd grade.

The desired outcome in the Ann Arbor Public Schools is to leverage the 3rd grade reading legislative requirement as an opportunity to improve overall district systems in support of classroom teachers to ensure all students achieve early literacy and/or have a strategic plan of support in place moving forward.

Training teachers, coaching and intervening strategically with students within a stronger approach aligned to more discrete components of classroom literacy experience will frame key shifts in the work.

Current steps to implement systems improvement include: targeted work in developing our professional capacity across all PK-3rd grade classrooms, as well as a Literacy Expert team, adjusting our instructional focus and balance in the early grades, refining a process for identification, development of a Reading Plan, and targeted instructional intervention. Focus is on providing support to classroom teachers, through Literacy Experts and improved instructional tools to accomplish improved instruction for students who experience early literacy challenges.

Pathways of Early Literacy Work

In the AAPS, we are working over Fall, 2017 in the following pathways to achieve systems improvement in early literacy instruction and student outcomes:



1. **People: Developing a Highly Skilled Team**

Literacy Experts in all Schools

- Literacy Experts have been deployed to all elementary/K-8 campuses to improve the strength of our diagnostic and instructional approach to Y5-3rd literacy.
- Literacy Expert FTE is distributed based on projected number of students in need of intervention in schools. Total FTE at this time is 14 and distribution ranges from .25 to 1.5.
- Literacy Experts will support teachers in achieving the protocols of diagnosis, intervention, monitoring, and adjustments; Literacy Experts will support teachers and also work with small groups of students to deliver specialized literacy interventions.

Dyslexia Focus and AAPS Dyslexia Specialist

- Dyslexia Consultation is currently in progress with two top-tier organizations to ensure the details of our Literacy Plan are strategic and supportive of students with dyslexic challenges.
Director Pete Pullen, Eton Academy in Birmingham, MI and Director Joanne Pierson, Literacy Language and Learning Institute in Ann Arbor, MI
- Dyslexia Specialist – AAPS is currently posting a position for a Dyslexia Literacy Specialist position. This individual will consult across the district (similar to our ASD Specialists) to support teachers and school teams in developing and implementing a targeted support plan and to support and communicate with parents to support at home.
This Dyslexia support model is patterned after successful district plans implemented in Arlington, VA and Houston, TX.



2. **Process: Diagnosis, Reading Plan Development, Intervention, Monitoring, and Ongoing Adjustment**

- Over the first 30 days of school, based on the results of teacher observation, NWEA, Benchmark Assessments, and other sources of information, students who exhibit reading difficulties will be identified for additional diagnosis and support.
- Using more strategic checks into the child's literacy profile, the instructional team will identify discrete areas for targeted focus, developing a specific profile of need and creating an Individual Reading Improvement Plan to address the areas of challenge. The Individual Reading Improvement Plan will describe both the intervention, frequency/intensity, and outline the schedule for monitoring progress. The teacher and instructional team, including teacher, Literacy Expert, and principal will work together on the development of the Individual Reading Improvement Plan.
- The Individual Reading Improvement Plan will be communicated with the parents, including providing support with strategies that can be supported at home.



3. **Pedagogy: Instruction, Intervention Treatment & Tools**

- Literacy Intervention will occur according to customized plan developed by the team, and this literacy intervention will occur in both small group instruction within the classroom as well as targeted intervention delivered by the Literacy Expert, as described in the Reading Plan.
- Pedagogical shifts occurring in the classroom include focus on teaching the 5 literacy elements: vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension as well as organizing small groups identified by student area of need, not by text level – formation of these groups will be guided by strategic assessment feedback and supported by the Literacy Expert as needed.
- Teachers and Literacy Experts require more strategic tools to carry out this work, and so materials purchases include Bob Books (phonemes/phonics, LIPS, Linda-Moode Bell Materials, and the Lexia program, which can also be used by student from home.



4. **Prescribed Instruction: in the 5 Components of Literacy Building Capacity in Targeted Early Literacy Development for Classroom Teachers within Core Instruction**

- In addition to ensuring high-level credentials and training for Literacy Experts, during 2017-18, we will also be working to develop additional early literacy capacity for all PK-3rd grade classroom teachers, both in understanding, developing technique, and in the use of materials.
- Shifts occurring in the classroom include teaching small groups organized by student need, not by text level – formation of these groups will be guided by strategic assessment feedback.
- Throughout 2017-18, focus will be on 5 literacy elements: vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension.



5. **Parent Communication**

- Principals have communicated with parents generally during opening meetings of this year general information re: 3rd grade Reading legislation.
- The **AAPS 3rd Grade Reading brochure** will also be distributed to all parents, along with a letter from the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent that emphasizes the process for providing more supports, and our commitment that children *will NOT be held back* based on reading proficiency. Rather, intensive supports will be provided for all students who are not yet reading at grade level proficiency.
- Parents of students who experience challenges with reading will also be engaged in direct communication from the intervention team so that regular updates are shared regarding the student's reading progress throughout this school year.

Next Steps:

- Also examining opportunities at Preschool level.
- Will continue the work and learning together, and will update the Board regularly throughout this 2017-18 school year.