ADVANCING ADOLESCENT LITERACY
(GRADES 4-8)
Model Policy

{Title} The (insert name of Act or policy)

{Intent}

It is the intent of the Legislature that each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading and writing; that district school board policies facilitate effective core reading instruction and intervention services to address student reading and writing needs; and that each student and their parent or guardian are informed of the student's progress.

Definitions:

1. "Advanced Phonics" refers to the knowledge and strategies required to decode multisyllabic words, including morphology and information about the meaning, pronunciation, and parts of speech of words gained from knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes.
2. "Content Knowledge" is the specific facts, concepts and expertise a student has in a particular subject area. Content knowledge is critical for understanding and comprehension.
3. "Content Literacy" is a literacy instructional approach where students use general reading and writing strategies to learn information across subjects/content areas.
4. "Department" is the state educational agency.
5. "Disciplinary Literacy" is a literacy instructional approach that teaches students how to use literacy to think, interpret text and engage in advanced participation and conversations like a disciplinary expert would.
6. "Dysgraphia" is the condition of impaired letter writing that can interfere with learning to spell words in writing and speed of writing text. (International Dyslexia Association)
7. "Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed or both.
8. "Dyslexia Screening" is a brief assessment which measures critical skills which can help identify risk factors for dyslexia and can be predictors of future reading success.
9. "Educator Preparation Program" or "EPP" means any program that prepares individuals for licensure as elementary teachers, school leaders or other school personnel.
10. "Evidence-based" refers to a practice that has been peer reviewed through at least one study and uses methods proven effective through scientific research, rather than tradition or personal judgment.
11. "High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)" refers to instructional curricula, intervention programs, textbooks, teacher guides and supplemental materials that are aligned with academic standards and scientifically based reading research which help all students achieve grade level learning goals.
12. "Morphology" is the study of morphemes, which are meaningful units of words such as prefixes, roots, suffixes, and combining forms.

13. "Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)" is a framework for supporting and increasing academic, behavioral and social emotional outcomes for all students.

14. "Reading intervention" includes evidence-based strategies from scientifically based reading research frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and includes, but is not limited to, individual instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring or the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities.

15. "Science of reading" refers to the large body of evidence that informs how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

16. "Scientifically based reading research" is informed by scientific theories, principles and research. It applies rigorous, systematic and objective methods to gain knowledge from multiple disciplines to understand how children learn to read.

17. "Structured literacy" is an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written language aligned to the science of reading and is characterized by direct, explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative and diagnostic instruction in phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax and semantics.

18. "System of assessments" means a comprehensive assessment system that provides universal screening, diagnostic and summative assessments for use in a school district. The system of assessments should evaluate key indicators of reading success including word recognition, advanced phonics, vocabulary, morphology, fluency, sentence processing and comprehension.

19. "Three-cueing system" is any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, which may also be known as "MSV". The MSV model is a flawed instructional model that has been proven ineffective and harmful for reading instruction.

20. "Tier 1 instruction" also referred to as core instruction, is universal instruction provided to all students, and is typically guided by a comprehensive core reading program. Tier 1 instruction should be explicit, systematic, aligned to research and differentiated.

21. "Universal screener" means an assessment that is administered three times per year (beginning, middle and end) to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor reading outcomes and is typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level.

22. "Word Recognition" is the ability to read words accurately and automatically. It is a fundamental skill in reading.

(A) System of Support for Educators - The Department shall establish and maintain a comprehensive system of support that includes professional learning, coaching support, and educator preparation. This system is designed to support educators in grades four through eight. This system of support shall include:

(1) Professional learning for school and district leaders, teachers, literacy coaches, reading specialists or interventionists, tutors and other designated staff across content areas supporting students in grades four through eight. This professional learning grounded in the science of reading shall include:

a. strategies to increase educator knowledge of how to teach reading and writing skills for students in grades four through eight;

b. identification of literacy skills essential to specific content areas;

c. explicit and systematic instruction in advanced phonics, vocabulary, morphology, comprehension, content literacy, disciplinary literacy, knowledge building and writing;

d. evidence-based strategies for motivating and engaging adolescent learners;

e. evidence-based strategies for supporting multi-lingual learners; and

f. scientifically based reading research strategies for how to identify and address reading deficiencies in adolescent learners.

(2) Professional learning for literacy coaches, reading specialists or interventionists, tutors and other designated staff that shall include all items in Section A.1 above and include:

a. comprehensive training on the science of reading including explicit and systematic instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding and fluency;

b. approaches to assist educators in determining which students in grades four through eight may be at risk for development of reading and writing difficulties, including dyslexia, dysgraphia and other learning differences;

c. training in the identification of and the use of appropriate interventions, accommodations and teaching techniques for students with dysgraphia, dyslexia, a related reading disorder or reading deficiency; and

d. training in the identification of reading deficiencies based on screener and assessment data.

(3) Job-embedded coaching support for administrators and teachers of grades four through eight that includes:

a. On-site training on evidence-based reading instructional strategies and data-based decision making;

b. Content literacy instructional support to reinforce student use of general reading and writing strategies as they learn information across subjects/content areas;

c. Demonstration of lessons, co-teaching, modeling and/or teacher observation; and

d. Immediate feedback for improvement.

(4) A reading specialist or interventionist hired by each local school board that is employed by any school serving students in grades four through eight. The reading specialist or interventionist shall serve as an advisor on dyslexia and related reading disorders. Each reading specialist or interventionist shall be required to participate in professional learning as defined in Sections A.1 and A.2 of this policy.

(5) Educator preparation programs that equip candidates seeking licensure for special education and secondary education with training and instruction to:

a. Effectively teach reading aligned to scientifically based reading instruction, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, oral language development, advanced phonics including encoding, fluency, morphology including etymology, vocabulary, comprehension and content literacy instruction;

b. Implement reading instruction using HQIM from the list approved by the State Board of Education;

c. Provide effective instruction and interventions for a range of students with diverse needs, including multilingual students and students with characteristics of dyslexia;

d. Understand and use student data to make instructional decisions; and

e. Incorporate literacy instruction across content areas.

f. Understand the negative impacts of the three-cueing systems model, how to identify it in curriculum, and why it is a flawed model of teaching children to read.

(B) Assessment System – Data regarding students' strengths, weaknesses, and progress in learning is critical to support targeted instruction for students. The Department shall provide an approved list of one or more reliable and valid reading assessment systems for school district use for screening and monitoring student progress toward becoming a skilled reader.

(1) The reading assessment system shall include:

a. a universal screener that identifies students at risk of reading failure to be administered three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) with progress monitoring capabilities;

b. a diagnostic tool which identifies specific skill deficits in early foundational skills as well as deficits in advanced phonics, vocabulary and sentence level comprehension;

c. a summative assessment given at the end of a determined learning period to measure students' overall reading comprehension and mastery of skills taught; and

d. comprehensive training on the Department-approved assessment system(s) to ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills to administer the assessment and can use the data to inform instruction and interventions based on student needs.

(2) The Department shall consider, at a minimum, the following factors when developing an approved assessment system list:

a. The time required to conduct the assessment, with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time;

b. The availability of accommodations for students with specialized plans;

c. The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators and parents; and

d. How assessment results can be used to inform instruction and intervention.

(C) Reading Instruction and Intervention - State standards for literacy in grades four through eight shall align with evidence-based strategies and scientifically based reading research. To that end, all students shall have access to high-quality Tier 1 instruction that is differentiated to meet their diverse needs, and students with reading deficiencies shall receive targeted interventions.

(1) All students in grades four through eight shall receive Tier 1 instruction that includes advanced phonics, morphology, etymology, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension across content area courses.

(2) Daily class schedules should be adaptable and allocate sufficient instructional time for core instruction, intervention for students needing additional support and enrichment for students who are ready to broaden their academic skills.

(3) A list of content rich, science of reading aligned HQIM core literacy curricula, interventions and supplemental materials shall be developed by the Department and approved by the State Board of Education. The list of HQIM shall:

a. align with scientifically based reading research and state standards for use in districts for students in grades four through eight;

b. focus on advanced phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and content writing embedded throughout all subject areas including language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, etc., for all students;

c. focus on decoding, fluency, and language structure as well as vocabulary, comprehension and content writing for supplemental and intervention instruction; and

d. not include the use of the three-cueing systems model of word reading.

(4) Any incoming student in grades four through eight identified with deficiencies in reading shall be provided with more intensified interventions to address his or her specific deficiency. The district shall provide the following:

a. Access to instruction from a reading teacher, reading specialist or interventionist who has received intensive training in remediation of reading difficulties as defined in Sections A.1 and A.2 of this policy;

b. Reading intervention services and supports using High Quality Instructional Materials as defined in Section C.3 of this policy;

c. Time in the student schedule, in addition to core instruction, for intervention supports identified in the Individual Reading Success Plan;

d. Targeted small group reading intervention based on student needs as identified by the assessment system and specified in the Individual Reading Success Plan; and

e. Summer school remediation programs or other forms of remediation as appropriate to meet the academic needs of the student based on the results of the universal screener, diagnostic assessment and/or English-Language Arts state summative assessment.

(D) Parent or Guardian Notification - The parent of any student in grades four through eight who exhibits deficiencies in reading, based upon the vetted and approved assessment system, at any time during the school year must be notified in writing no later than 15 days after the identification of the reading deficiency. The parent or guardian notification shall:

(1) be a written notification that is made available in the parent's home language; and

(2) be written using the template provided by the Department that includes:

a) Notification that his or her child has been identified as having deficiencies in reading and that an Individual Reading Success Plan is being developed by the teacher, interventionist, principal, and other pertinent school personnel in collaboration with the parent(s) or guardian(s);

b) A description of the current services that are provided to the student and suggested resources or strategies that the parent can use to support reading at home; and

c) Notification that the parent will be informed in writing of their child's progress towards becoming a skilled reader throughout the school year with each progress report.

(E) Individual Reading Success Plan - Any student in grades four through eight who exhibits deficiencies in reading at any time, based upon the vetted and approved assessment system, shall receive an Individual Reading Success Plan (IRSP) no later than 30 days after the identification of the reading deficiency. The Individual Reading Success Plan shall:

(1) be created by the teacher, reading specialist or interventionist, principal, and other pertinent school personnel in collaboration with the parent(s) or guardian(s);

(2) offer intensive reading instructional intervention time for the student, while continuing grade level instruction, and will remain in place until the student no longer has a deficiency in reading as determined by the vetted and approved literacy universal screener or the state summative assessment; and

(3) be documented using the template provided by the Department, be shared with parent(s) or guardian(s) and include the following:

a) The student's specific deficiencies in reading as determined or identified by the universal screener or diagnostic assessment data provided or approved by the Department;

b) The goals and benchmarks for student growth in reading;

c) A description of the specific measures that will be used to evaluate and monitor the student's reading progress;

d) The alignment to an Individualized Education Program for students who receive special education services;

e) A description of the proposed interventions and supplemental instructional services which are from scientifically based reading research and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remedy the identified area(s) of reading deficiency;

f) Strategies, resources and materials that will be provided to the student's parent to support the student at home in making reading progress; and

g) Any additional services the teacher(s) deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading development.

(F) Accountability and Reporting

(1) Local school boards, in collaboration with district literacy leaders, shall develop and implement programs of prevention, intervention or remediation for students who are educationally at risk including, but not limited to, those who fail to achieve a passing score on the English-Language Arts state summative assessment in grades four through eight and multilingual students. Such programs shall include strategies and methods that are proven through scientifically based reading research.

(2) The District is responsible for conducting an Annual Review of Individual Reading Success Plans (IRSPs) during the first eight weeks of school for students who had an IRSP the previous school year. The review shall:

(a) Assess the effectiveness of prior interventions, additional support and services offered to the student the previous year;

(b) Identify updates needed to the supports offered through the Individual Reading Success Plan; and

(c) Include any initial members of the team that develops the Individual Reading Success Plan, not limited to, the teacher, reading specialist or interventionist, principal, and other pertinent school personnel and the parent(s) or guardian(s).

(3) Each district school board must annually report in writing to the Department of Education by October 1 of each year, the following information on the prior school year:

a) By grade, the number and percentage of all students in grades four through eight performing below grade level on local or statewide assessments;

b) By grade, the number and percentage of students who at any point during the school year had Individual Reading Success Plans and no longer qualify for them; and

c) By grade, the number and percentage of students retained in grades Kindergarten through eight.

d) By grade, the number and percentage of students retained in grades Kindergarten through eight who have an Individual Reading Success Plan.

(4) The Department of Education shall provide:

a) A uniform format for school districts to report the information required in Section F.2 of this policy. The format shall be developed with input from district literacy leaders in collaboration with district school boards and shall be provided to each school district no later than 90 days prior to the annual due date.

b) Guidance and technical assistance to aid school districts in implementing the (insert name of Act or policy).

(5) The State Board of Education shall have authority to enforce this chapter.

(6) The Legislature shall allocate sufficient funding for the implementation of this Act.