

Comprehensive Early Literacy Plan

The district recognizes that early literacy is fundamental to students' development of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking skills. The district will develop and implement reading and early literacy services to kindergarten through fourth grade students based on student need for additional support so that every student has the opportunity to build a strong foundation for academic success.

General requirements

The plan will include:

1. Use of annual screening assessments and other tools (e.g., Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills, Washington state early learning and development guidelines for birth through third grade, the second grade reading assessment under RCW 28A.300.310, local assessments) to identify at-risk readers; and
2. Research-based family involvement and engagement strategies, including those that help families and guardians learn to assist student reading and early literacy skills at home.

In order to keep parents informed and engaged in their student's reading progress, the district will require that report cards for students in kindergarten through fourth grade report the student's progress toward reading skill acquisition and whether the student is reading at grade level.

If the student is not reading at grade level, the teacher and other appropriate school personnel will: 1) Advise the parent or guardian as to which interventions and/or strategies the district will use to help improve the student's reading skills; and 2) Provide strategies for parents or guardians to use at home to assist their student in improving their reading skills.

Requirement specific to third grade students

Prior to the return of the results of the statewide student assessment in English language arts, teachers and parents of students in third grade who are reading below grade-level or who, based on formative or diagnostic assessment and other indicators are likely to score in the below basic level (level one in a four-level scoring system on the statewide student assessment) on the third grade statewide student assessment in English language arts will meet to discuss the student's progress. Teachers may use a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference to satisfy this meeting requirement.

At the meeting, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians of:

- The requirements of this policy;
- The intensive reading improvement strategies that will be available to their student before fourth grade; and
- The school district's grade placement policy for the following year.

If a third grade student scores below grade level on the third grade statewide student assessment in English language arts and no meeting took place prior to the return of the results as indicated above, the principal or designee will notify the student's parents/guardians of:

- The fact that their student scored below basic;
- The requirements of this policy with regard to such a score;
- The intensive improvement strategy options available;
- The school district's grade placement policy;
- Contact information for a school district employee who can respond to questions and provide additional information; and

- A reasonable deadline for obtaining the parent's consent regarding the student's improvement strategies that will be implemented and the student's grade placement.

The district must obtain parent/guardian consent regarding appropriate grade placement and the intensive improvement strategy to be implemented. For students to be placed in fourth grade, the strategies discussed must include one provided, supported or contracted by the school district that includes a summer program or other options developed to meet the needs of students to prepare for fourth grade. The strategy must be implemented in consultation with the parents/guardians.

If the district does not receive a response from a parent/guardian by the deadline or within a reasonable time thereafter, the principal or designee will make a decision on the student's grade placement for the following year and the intensive improvement strategies that will be implemented during the following school year. If the principal and parent cannot agree on the appropriate grade placement and improvement strategies from the list of available options, the district will honor the parent's request.

If a student does not have a score in English language arts on the third grade statewide assessment but the district determines or is able to anticipate (using district or classroom-based formative or diagnostic assessments or another standardized assessment), that that student is below basic, the district will follow the same process for third grade students listed in this policy.

Students in the transitional bilingual instruction program are exempt from this process, unless the student has participated in the program for three school years and receives a score of below basic on the third grade statewide student assessment in English language arts. Students with disabilities whose individualized education program (IEP) includes specially designed instruction in reading or English language arts are exempt from this process.

Intensive reading and literacy improvement strategies

The district will choose and implement intensive reading and literacy improvement strategies from a state menu of best practices established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The district may use a practice or strategy not present on the state menu of best practices for two years initially. If the district is able to demonstrate that it has achieved improved outcomes for students over the previous two school years at a level commensurate with best practices on the state menu, OSPI must approve use of the strategy for one additional school year. Subsequent approval is dependent on continuing improvement.

Students with disabilities whose individualized education program (IEP) includes specially designed instruction in reading or English language arts will be provided reading and literacy improvement strategies as provided in the IEP.

In any school where more than forty percent of tested students received a score of basic (level two on a four-level scoring system) or below basic on the third grade statewide student assessment in English language arts in the previous school year, the school district will implement an intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy from the state menu or an alternative strategy as referenced above for all students in grades kindergarten through four at the school.

Reporting requirement

The district will require each school to report the number of students in kindergarten through fourth grade who are reading below grade level and the interventions being provided to those students to improve their reading. The information will be disaggregated by subgroups of students. The district will aggregate the information and provide reports to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for delivery to the education committees of the legislature and the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee.

Cross References: 2421 - Promotion/Retention

Legal References: RCW 28A.320.202 – Comprehensive system of instruction and services in reading and early literacy
RCW 28A.320.203 – Reading skills –report cards
RCW 28A.655.230 Reading skills – Meeting for grade placement and strategies for student improvement – Exemptions.
RCW 28A.655.235 Reading skills – Intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy – Calculation of tested students at or below basic on third grade student assessment – State menu of best practices.

Management Resources: 2015 - October Policy Issue
OSPI's Comprehensive Literacy Plan [DRAFT]

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