

Change Model Process Update K-5 Reading Program

1) The problem that needs to be solved

a) *Compelling reason for change*

South Portland School Department and its elementary teachers have strong resources guiding reading instruction, such as national standards and SPSD's Graduation Standards and Essential Learning Targets. In addition, the district provides reading instructional support through a K-5 Literacy Specialist position as well as support for instruction in the form of reading teachers and interventionists. Contributing to this support are the numerous professional development courses and sessions dedicated to reading instruction around best practice as well as tools such as Words Their Way (WTW), Developmental Reading Assessment2 (DRA2), leveled reading books, and the Developmental Spelling Inventory (DSI).

However, upon reflection by classroom practitioners and analysis of data, it has become clear that the district is not approaching reading instruction in a systematic and consistently explicit manner. From classroom to classroom, grade-to-grade, and building-to-building we lack a common vocabulary used to instruct our students. Currently, there is no organized sequence for introducing skills that is shared across all classrooms and buildings. Consequently, one teacher may introduce certain content at specific points in a student's learning while another teacher may introduce the same content in an entirely different sequence.

b) *Data to support the change*

NECAP Reading Data

Overall, on state testing, South Portland elementary students in grades 3-5 show an inconsistent pattern of performance.

Of significance are the following:

- grade 3 scores have dropped consistently the last 3 years of test administration with the last two years of administration showing scores lower than 5 years ago
- although not consistently dropping, grades 4 and 5 scores are not stable; overall students in grade 4 perform lower than they did the preceding year as grade 3 students 5 out of the past 5 years
- grade 5 students have performed at or below the state average 4 out of 5 years and overall are scoring lower than 5 years ago;
- % of student proficient is lower for the cohorts of students for whom we have 3 years of longitudinal data

The data suggests that current programming is not producing students adequately prepared in the area of reading when exiting their elementary education.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Grade 3	76.3	74.3	76.5	73.6	62.8
Grade 4	68.1	67	75	69.8	70
Grade 5	71.1	68.4	68.5	73.5	69.9

Most importantly, the scores of students in the subgroups of Special Education and ELL are lower than district averages and do not show consistent gains, if gains at all.

	2011-12	2012-13
Grade 3 - SpEd	58	56
Grade 3 - ELL	75	57
Grade 4 - Sp Ed	66	68
Grade 4 - ELL	-	62
Grade 5 - Sp Ed	77	56
Grade 5 - ELL	63	-

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	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Brown - SpEd	28	39	28
Brown - ELL	27	11	36
Dyer - SpEd	26	54	38
Dyer - ELL	30	50	78
Kaler - SpEd	35	22	22
Kaler - ELL	33	20	33
Skillin - SpEd	23	30	22
Skillin - ELL	35	29	47
Small - SpEd	25	53	46
Small - ELL	100	67	67

NWEA Reading Data

For the past two years, the percentage of students who met the year-end expectation (typical grade level performance) varied significantly between schools within the district.

	2012-13	Gap 2012-13	2013-14	Gap 2013-14
Grade 2	33% - 85%	52	27% - 90%	63
Grade 3	43% - 70%	27	34%-67%	33
Grade 4	33% - 76%	43	52%-83%	31
Grade 5	40%-77%	37	28% - 80%	52

The gap between lowest % meeting year-end expectation and the highest % meeting year-end expectation across the district is increasing. The data suggests that the achievement gap in SPSD is increasing in three out of four grades tested; therefore, the lower performing students are dropping more significantly than the higher performing students are increasing.

	% change
Grade 2	6%↓ 5%↑
Grade 3	9%↓ 3%↑
Grade 4	19%↓ 7%↑
Grade 5	12%↓ 3%↑

In the past 6 years of administration, any where from 1 to 3 years, scores show that cohorts of students are not meeting grade level norms.

	Grade 3 – 199.2	Grade 4 – 206.7	Grade 5 – 212.3
Brown	2	2	2
Dyer	1	3	2
Kaler	3	3	3
Skillin	3	2	3
Small	3	2	1

c) Research to support the change

The National Reading Panel report of 2000 outlined parameters of effective reading instruction used nationally to guide policy and locally to refine and plan instruction. In addition, there is a wealth of research that contributes to educators' understanding of best practice regarding teaching children to read. Below are highlights relevant to the areas of concern in SPSD.

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- *The "Report of the National Reading Panel" (NICHD, 2000) provides equally compelling evidence for explicit, systematic instruction for each of the five essential components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). [retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/clf/eightelements_04-purposefulinstruction]*
- *"Explicit instruction in reading makes a difference in student outcomes, especially for those who are low achieving." (Denton et al., 2003, p. 202) [retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/clf/eightelements_04-purposefulinstruction]*
- *"Explicitness has been a component of instruction in studies documenting improved outcomes in phonological awareness, decoding, and the application of comprehension strategies for the understanding of text." (Denton et al., 2003, p. 202) [retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/clf/eightelements_04-purposefulinstruction]*
- *Effective classroom reading instruction includes teaching phonemic awareness (in kindergarten and 1st grade, and for older students who need it) and phonics or word study explicitly and directly with opportunities to apply skills in reading and writing connected text (e.g., Ehri, 2003; Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, & Seidenberg, 2001; Snow et al., 1998), with integrated instruction in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (e.g., Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Jitendra, Edwards, Sacks, & Jacobson, 2004). [retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/clf/eightelements_04-purposefulinstruction]*
- *Systematic instruction is carefully sequenced, so that easier skills are taught before more difficult skills. Letter-sound correspondences and phonics skills (i.e., sounding out words, applying the "silent e rule") are taught in a predetermined order according to a clear scope and sequence so that there are no gaps in students' learning. The pace of introduction of new material is reasonable to allow struggling learners to master key skills, and much of each lesson consists of practice of previously introduced skills, strategies, and concepts and the integration of these with the newly taught material. Students' learning is monitored, so that teachers can reteach key skills when needed. [retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier1/effectiveteaching>]*

2) How and by whom will the decision be made

a) *Committee Composition*

The South Portland School Department uses teacher leaders as part of its curriculum, instruction and assessment structure. At the elementary level, each grade level has 2 Curriculum and Instruction Leaders. One Curriculum and Instruction Leader works on initiatives for math and science while the other focuses efforts on the ELA and social studies. The elementary Curriculum and Instruction Leaders for ELA and social studies in conjunction with the K-5 principals, the Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment form the core group of members of the K-5 Reading Program Review and Selection Committee.

As part of the Kaler Elementary School Improvement Grant (SIG), at a minimum, Kaler teachers in grades K-2 are expected to implement a reading program in school year 2015-16. Kaler has not been fully represented in the Curriculum and Instruction Leader structure this year so a representative from Kaler for each grade span (K-1, 2-3, 4-5) was added to the committee.

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Similarly, grade 2 teachers and Small School have been under-represented in the Curriculum and Instruction Leader structure this year, particularly for ELA and social studies. Thus, the committee asked for a grade 2 teacher from Small School to join.

Finally, the Data Coach from Kaler and the district K-5 Literacy Specialists were asked to participate due to their expertise with reading instruction and/or data.

b) Process & Timeline

This committee of 16 people has been engaged in the following 5-phase process.

Introductory Phase	Selection Phase	Input Phase	Adoption Phase	Implementation Phase
Committee creation	Reason for the change	Define Input (pilot, survey, site visits)	Recommendation to K- 5 admin team	
Timeline & Process Overview	Criteria development	Decide what to seek input on	K- 5 admin team decides what to propose to Board	
Norm-setting	Materials research	Seek Input	Change Model Proposal made to Board	
	Publisher's showcase & Evaluation of materials	Input debrief		
2/25/15 & 3/17/15	(3/17/15), 3/31/15; 4/28/15 5/12/15 & 5/19/15	(5/19 /15), 6/8/15 & 6/16/15		

Boxes in white in the Phases of Selection chart took place winter/spring 2015. Boxes in light gray will take place throughout the 2015-16 school year, and the dark gray boxes will take place if a program is adopted and put into implementation. The implementation phase will commence no sooner than 2016-17.

c) Decision-making Responsibility

Decisions regarding criteria for review and selecting a program, the types of input to seek, and which programs on which to seek input rests with the committee. The K-5 administrative team will review the recommendation of the committee and decide whether to make the proposal for a change in a K-5 reading program to the Board of Education.

3) Proposed Solution

Using the process outlined above, the committee will design a system for collecting teacher input during the 2015-16 school year. Throughout the year the feedback will be collected and analyzed and a final recommendation regarding adoption and implementation of a program will be made to the K-5 Administrators.

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4) Anticipated Results

As further input and exploration of potential programs is undertaken, a clearer sense of the anticipated results should become apparent. The committee will glean insights about expected results based on research associated with the program and the experiences of other schools in the State/Nation.

5) Capacity to make the change

As exploration of programs continues, research regarding costs related to purchase of materials as well as professional development will be sought. The consideration of implementation will also include a recommendation and an analysis of the capacity (in regards to finances and training) needed for a successful implementation.

6) Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people, groups or other entities that have an interest or concern in the actions, objectives and policies of an organization. In this change, stakeholders can be described in two categories. One category of stakeholders includes those that are invested in the change, while the other category includes those that are impacted by the change.

Teachers and administrators responsible for learning new approaches in instruction and assessment as well as learning how to use new materials are those that are invested in the change. The primary group that stands to be impacted by a change in a reading program is the elementary student population of South Portland. Considering the shorter term, choosing a program to serve as the foundation of reading instruction will yield improved reading achievement for students at the K-5 level.

Taking a longer range view and assuming a collateral impact can be garnered, the increased success of our students over time will result in greater achievement in programs at the upper levels, and potentially greater success for students as they enter the college/career phase of their lives. The impact to the South Portland community will include increased sense of pride in its youth and school system and a likely increase in the literacy rate of the adult population as some students will choose to reside in the area.