



Westonka Public Schools Literacy Plan

District goals defining how reading proficiency will be ensured for ALL elementary students in Kindergarten through Grade 4

Westonka students will be assessed to determine reading strengths and gaps starting in Kindergarten through grade 4. The goals of these assessments include:

- Increase the level of students that are proficient in reading
- Analyze disaggregated student achievement results and growth data in grades K-4
- Develop a plan for progress monitoring for students that are below grade level
- Increase student achievement in reading for all students

What are the district's current practices including effectiveness of core literacy instruction for all students and specifically for student groups that have not been making adequate growth to meet grade level objectives?

The elementary literacy program is based on the best-practice research, the Science of Reading and includes five essential domains of reading found in high-quality literacy programs. These domains include:

Phonological & Phonemic Awareness - Daily instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness to develop a solid foundation in reading and writing.

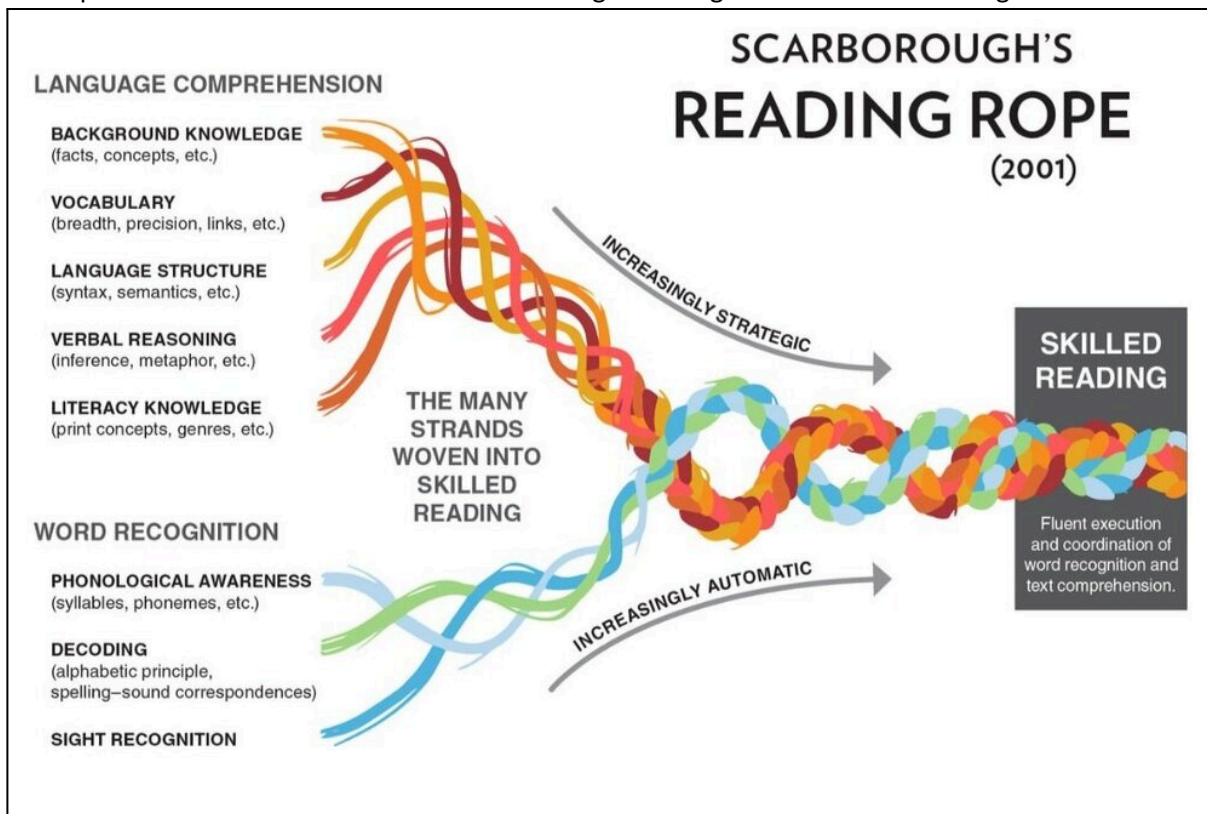
Phonics & Word Study - Daily lessons on phonemic awareness, sound/symbol relationships, blending, spelling and high-frequency word instruction at Grades K-2 and a focus on word analysis, spelling and vocabulary strategies at Grades 3-4.

Vocabulary - Instruction that focuses on high-frequency, robust and domain-specific academic vocabulary. Instruction also includes opportunities for students to discuss, define and use new words orally and create graphic organizers to articulate existing knowledge and extend their understanding of new words.

Fluency - Direct instruction in reading fluency development to improve student reading rate and inflection.

Comprehension - Instruction on helping students read a wide range of fiction and nonfiction (informational, persuasive, procedural and narrative) genres with full comprehension. Through comprehension skills development, students use strategies to learn, analyze and apply nonfiction content-area information while analyzing and appreciating fictional literary texts.

*Example of how the different elements of reading come together as “skilled reading”



Writing is also an important aspect of the district’s elementary literacy program through weekly intentional reading-writing connections and the use of genre-focused writing projects to develop narrative, persuasive and informational text writing skills. Grammar and conventions lessons are embedded throughout the writing program.

What are the district’s current practices and supports that have demonstrated success leading to improved results for groups of students not yet proficient?

Students that are not proficient in reading are benefiting from the school district’s implementation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) based on the Minnesota MTSS Framework. The Westonka Public School District MTSS Framework is designed to provide systematic support for all Westonka students’ social-emotional, academic, behavioral health/attendance needs.

The Westonka MTSS Framework provides services and interventions to identified learners at increasing levels of intensity through three tiers of support:

- Tier 1: Whole class core instruction
- Tier 2: Whole class core instruction + additional targeted instruction (often small group)
- Tier 3: Whole class core instruction + additional targeted instruction + intensive intervention (small group/individual)

The district’s reading intervention plans are embedded in the Westonka MTSS Framework and is based on a systematic approach of identifying students’ specific reading gaps and determining the best intervention program to use to address their gaps in reading. Reading intervention options include the following:

- Sonday System for decoding and phonics focus
- SRA Reading Mastery for phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension focus
- Classroom-based curriculum reading intervention options for comprehension focus

At both Westonka elementary schools, students that are not meeting grade level expectations in reading are closely monitored and are placed into effective reading intervention programs that provide these students more time to master grade level reading concepts and build their confidence with their reading abilities.

These systematic reading intervention programs are used by classroom teachers, special education teachers, the elementary reading literacy coach and academic paraprofessionals.

In addition, the Minnesota MCA-III assessments and FASTBridge assessments provide summative data on student acquisition of reading skills and results are used to review instructional practices, curriculum, and identify strengths and weaknesses in our reading and literacy programs. FASTBridge assessments are also used to progress monitor students not demonstrating grade-level reading proficiency in which identified students are given specific intervention instruction and then assessed on a regular basis to track improvement on a specific reading concept.

Hilltop Primary School and Shirley Hills Primary School staff use the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model and meet regularly to discuss ongoing formative assessments results that are linked to student learning. Teachers use this data to guide intervention teaching and identify students that are ready for enrichment instruction.

We believe that our continuous use of data-driven instruction is one of the key drivers of student achievement increases on local and state assessments and for meeting grade level reading benchmarks.

What does the district use to assess students' level of reading proficiency including assessments used, when administered, how proficiency is determined, and when and how results are communicated with parents of students in Kindergarten through Grade 4?

Hilltop Primary School and Shirley Hills Primary School staff believe that it is important to communicate reading assessment results to students and parents. Parent-student-teacher conferences are held twice a year to review academic progress, growth in reading along with other academic areas. Reading assessment results are also reported on each child's report card with grade level benchmarks so parents have a clear picture of their child's reading abilities throughout the school year.

The district uses multiple measures to assess a student's reading ability. The following are the assessments used to assess students' level of reading proficiency. They are given during the fall, winter and spring.

- FASTBridge early Reading Screener (Grades K-1)
- FASTBridge aReading Screener (Grades 2-4)
- FASTBridge Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) of Reading (Grades 1-4)
- Teacher College's Running Records Assessment (Grades K-4)
- Curriculum-Based Sight Words Assessment (Grade K)

What is the district's communication plan for sharing reading assessment results with parents or caregivers for all students not meeting grade level proficiency expectations?

For students not meeting grade level reading progress goals during the school year, communication between school and home through email, phone calls and face-to-face meetings are important aspects of supporting these students and their work on developing their reading skills.

In addition, parent-student-teacher conferences are held twice a year to review academic growth in reading plus reading assessment results are reported on each child's report card with grade level expectations so parents have a clear picture of their child's reading abilities at the end of each trimester.

What are the district's entrance and exit criteria for students needing instructional interventions based on reading assessment data?

Students participate in the district's reading intervention programs if they have not met one or more grade level reading assessment benchmarks. Student progress is formally tracked when participating in these reading intervention programs and students continue to participate in the intervention program(s) until the student demonstrates minimum grade level reading expectations.

How does the district screen for Dyslexia and Convergence Insufficiency Disorder?

To screen for a possible Dyslexia diagnosis, Westonka students complete the FASTBridge reading assessments appropriate for their grade level. These assessments are specifically designed to screen for gaps in reading skills which may be the result of Dyslexia. For students performing below grade level expectations, intervention reading support is offered and more analysis is conducted to determine the root cause of the student's reading difficulty. These efforts could potentially lead to a medical diagnosis of dyslexia for some students.

Convergence Insufficiency is a vision disorder where the eyes turn inward and results in visual discomfort. To screen for possible Convergence Insufficiency, the district's plan during the 23-24 school year is to ask Westonka staff during oral reading fluency testing to ask students if they have experienced any headaches or if their eyes hurt when reading. For students that answer yes, more investigation of the root cause of the headache and/or eye strain will be conducted. Students that display ongoing headaches and/or eye strain are referred to the building's student concern committee who will determine appropriate next steps to support these students.

What are resources and tools for parents and caregivers to support literacy practices at home?

Both Hilltop Primary School and Shirley Hills Primary School provide web-based programs that can be used with students outside of school to work on reading skills. Each building decides which programs to implement with students and their families. Please contact your child's teacher for more information.

