

Elementary Literacy

Laying the Groundwork for Future Success

October 3, 2022

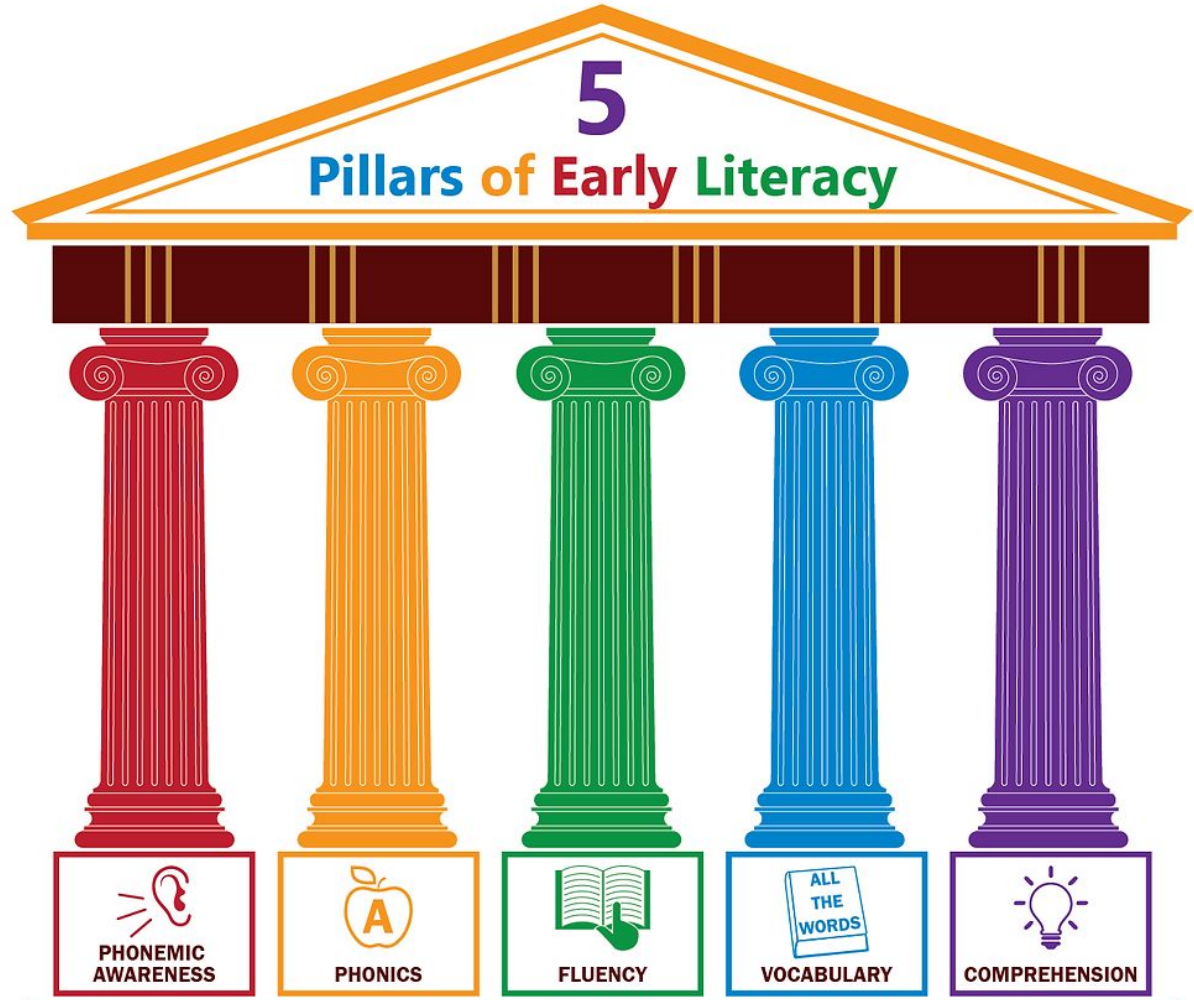
Renee McCall, Assistant Superintendent for
Teaching and Learning
Deana Lew, Elementary Literacy Coordinator



Reading is the gateway for children
that makes all other learning possible.

- *Barack Obama*

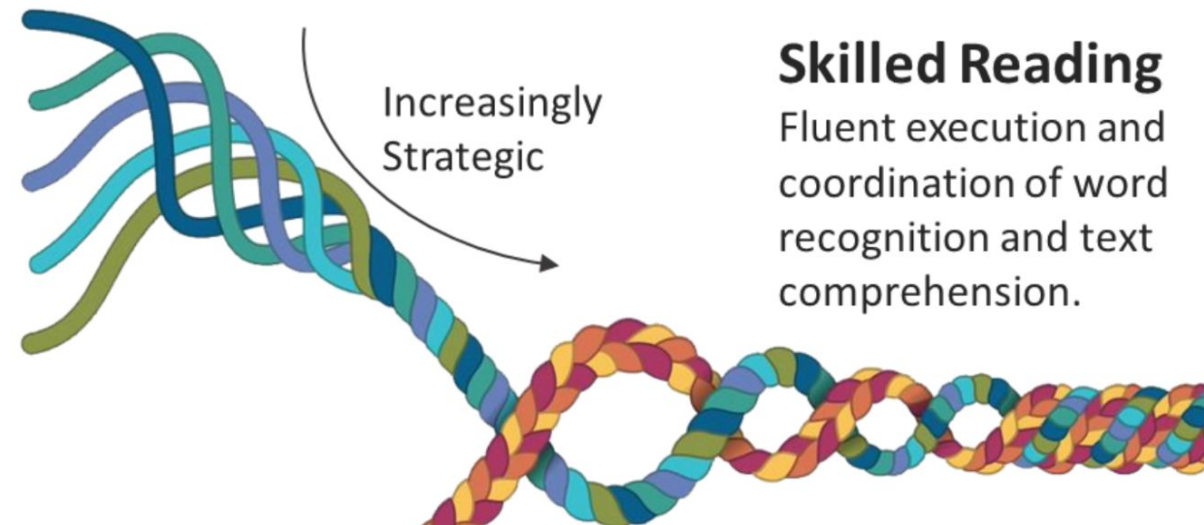
The National Reading Panel developed the building blocks of reading drawn from scientifically based reading research.



Elements of Reading Comprehension

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge



Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



Curriculum materials

- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness
- Foundations Phonics
- Decodable Texts
- NPS Units of Study in Reading
- Classroom Libraries
- Text Talk Vocabulary Program

Instructional Groupings

- Whole Group
- Small Groups
- Independent Work - 1-1 Conferences

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition

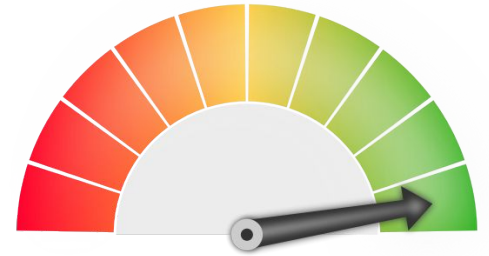
- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Reading Instruction in Newton Public Schools is...

- **Explicit and Direct:** deliberate teaching of concepts and strategies, with continuous student-teacher interaction.
- **Systematic:** Content begins with the easiest and most basic concepts and elements, and progresses methodically to more difficult concepts and elements.
- **Cumulative:** Each step builds on concepts previously learned.
- **Diagnostic and Responsive:** Instruction is based on careful, ongoing assessment.
- **Hands-On, Engaging, Culturally Responsive and Multimodal:** Components of instruction are relevant, affirming, and differentiated.
- **Scaffolded:** Teacher Demonstration is followed by guided and independent practice

Student Assessments

- EarlyBird Assessment(Kindergarten)
- i-Ready Diagnostic (Grades 1-5)
- Letter-Naming Fluency (Grade 1)
- Nonsense Word Fluency (Grades 1,2)
- Oral Reading Fluency (Grades 1-3)
- Benchmark Assessment System (Grades K-5)
- NPS Assessments
 - Letter ID/Letter Sound (Grades K-1)
 - High Frequency Words (K)
 - Foundations Word Pattern Survey (Grades K-3)
- On-Demand Writing Performance Assessments (Grades K-5)
- Ongoing Progress Monitoring



Rationale for New Reading Program

- *Most units written between 2002 and 2012.*

- + Standards aligned to Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Frameworks
- + Some degree of vertical alignment - author studies, traditional literature, realistic fiction
- + Opportunities for students to encounter grade-level and instructional level texts
- + Engaging and varied materials
- + Materials support literary analysis
- + Materials support connections between literary and informational texts.

- Lack texts written by authors and with characters of diverse identities in which a range of students can see themselves reflected. Some texts present negative stereotypes.
- Written by a variety of people in a variety of forms.
- Lack of cohesion
- Lacking informational text
- Spotty implementation

Curriculum Selection Process

- Spring 2019 - 15 Literacy Specialists
 - Conducted research, including reading multiple articles on effective reading instruction and created a vision statement
 - Reviewed 8 curricula using IMET (CCSS) and REL (What Works Clearinghouse) rubrics
 - Selected 4 curricula to move forward for committee to review
- SY 2019-2020, Aug - Dec 21 Elementary Reading Curriculum Advisory Committee (29 Members across schools, grades, roles)
 - Met for 20 hours
 - Created Quality Rubric and reviewed and rated materials
 - Visited 6 different schools to review curriculum and observe instruction across grade levels
 - Taught units in 5 grades at 4 different NPS Elementary schools
 - Rated and compared curriculums with Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard
 - Built teachers' knowledge about current reading research
 - Selected Fountas and Pinnell Classroom



Strengths of Fountas and Pinnell Classroom

- Flexibility for Teachers to Respond to Student Needs
- High Level of Student Engagement
- Common Language and Instructional Approaches across components:
 - Small Group, Whole Group, Interactive Read aloud etc
- Vast number of Culturally Responsive Texts - Diversity of Characters and Authors
- Differentiation and Support for Multilingual Students and Students with Disabilities
- Opportunities for Independent Reading and Student Text Selection
- Coordination and Integration with Writing and Assessment
- Opportunities for Integration with Science and Social Studies
- Clarity and Usefulness of Teacher Materials
- Extensive Written and Oral Response and Discourse
- Embedded Vocabulary Instruction
- Inquiry Based



Concerns

- Early grade guided reading instruction conflicts with some Science of Reading recommendations for prompting and use of leveled texts.
- Inconsistent cultural representation across grade levels and components of the program
- Poor rating from EdReports

Reading Debate: Approaches to Teaching Reading

Balanced Literacy

An instructional approach that ensures students become proficient readers by providing multiple opportunities for modeled instruction as well as guided, collaborative, and independent practice. Phonics is included.

Science of Reading

Evidence-based approach to literacy based on broad and complex research about how children learn to read. It includes: explicit teaching of phonics, language structure, and background knowledge.

What is the takeaway?

- There is no “one size fits all” approach
- Teachers’ expertise is the most important factor in student success
 - Responsiveness provides a differentiated learning experience that meets the unique needs of students

How NPS Meets Dyslexia Guidelines

Early literacy screeners are administered to K-3 students.

These screeners indicate potential risk factors for reading difficulties.

In response to the screeners, teachers and literacy staff provide timely and responsive instruction and intervention, with progress monitoring.

NPS leverages resources and evidence-based practices identified by DESE, such as short exercises to develop orthographic mapping.

Cultural Responsiveness and Equity

- **Concerns** - The Hidden Curriculum of Literacy Intervention research found that one level of F&P LLI books “present people of Color as inferior, deviant, and helpless and Whites as heroic, determined, innovative, and successful.”
- **NPS Action**
 - **Review of Fountas and Pinnell Classroom Materials using the Culturally Responsive Scorecard from Steinhardt School at NYU**
 - **Representation -- Culturally Aware:** A decent representation of diverse characters, accurate portrayals. Authors could be more diverse.
 - **Social Justice -- Culturally Aware:** High representation of diversity across race, gender, and ability. Promotes critical questions that relate to students lives, but may not promote equity explicitly.

Poor Ratings by EdReports

- “Measuring the circumference of an orange with a ruler.”
- Gateways - based on CKLA Direct Instruction Curriculum
- Review only a limited number of curriculum materials
- Review materials only and not impact of instruction on student learning

Current Timeline

September 2022 - June 2023

- Conduct a small scale pilot (7 classrooms) of 3 of the 8 components of FPC [Interactive Read Alouds, Reading Minilessons,(whole group) and Guided Reading (small group)]
- Gauge effectiveness of materials and level of student engagement through classroom observations, discussions with principals, literacy specialists, teachers, and students
- Continue to explore best practices and remain abreast of reading and literacy research
- Present findings and lessons learned through the pilot, and make an action plan detailing next steps.

Questions