

*Mountain View Whisman School District*

**Agenda Item for Board Meeting of November 2, 2023**

**Agenda Category:** Discussion Agenda

**Agenda Item Title:** Elementary & PK/TK English Language Arts Curriculum Adoption Update

**Person Responsible:** Swati Dagar - Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
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**Background:** MVWSD's elementary English Language Arts curriculum adoption is aligned with our Strategic Plan 2027 Goal #1 - Providing effective and consistent instructional practices for all students. Our i-Ready student diagnostic data from May 2023 and August 2023 shows that phonics continues to be an area of need even beyond 2nd grade. We know that gaps in foundational skills lead to difficulties in reading comprehension as students progress through grade levels. Student data shows that language comprehension continues to be an area of development across grades.

Based on the science of reading evidence, reading must be taught systematically, including in both word recognition and language comprehension. The strands in the reading rope depict the subskills of word recognition and language comprehension and how each are interconnected and mutually supportive of one another. Over time, skilled readers, those who successfully comprehend what they read, become increasingly strategic with how they use their language comprehension and increasingly automatic with word recognition.

The current Elementary ELA curriculum, Benchmark Advance, follows a Balanced literacy approach. This approach has been proven to not be effective for all students. Research has shown that a systematic and explicit approach, structured literacy, is effective in ensuring all students become skilled readers.

**Elementary K-5 ELA Adoption Process and Timeline**

MVWSD sought Elementary ELA adoption committee members in August 2023, with the goal of gathering a team of primarily teachers, along with interested other staff members and parents. The district office team reviewed all applications and selected committee members that represent schools across the district, as well as all elementary grade levels. The final committee members were selected and notified in early September. The committee is comprised of 12 classroom teachers, the district ELD TOSA, a Reading Intervention Teacher, and two parents, along with district office leaders.

**Work So Far**

The Elementary ELA Adoption committee's work is broken into four phases: Phase 1 - Building Common Knowledge, Phase 2 - Preparation for Pilot, Phase 3- Pilots 1 & 2, and Phase 4 - Final Recommendations.

In Phase 1, the committee spent time developing the goals and outcomes for the process, learning about the science of reading, and understanding the instructional shifts and look fors in a structured literacy approach. The team committed to: adopting a curriculum built from the science of reading, parameters for adoption (print and digital availability, Spanish Language Arts included, etc), and the areas of MVWSD Must Haves (Equity & Access for all students, student engagement, support for English Learners and structured ELD, assessments, scaffolding, intervention, & extension, writing instruction, and a family/home connection). To prepare for Phase 2, the Educational Services Team reviewed the Ed Reports ratings to eliminate curriculum that scored red (does not meet) and yellow (partially meets). Ed Reports rates curricula on several gateway criteria that are rooted in the Science of Reading: text quality and complexity, alignment to the standards, tasks, and questions grounded in evidence, foundational skills development, and building knowledge and coherence.

The committee moved into Phase 2 in late September, where the team began its work on developing rubrics to rate the curriculum options in the areas of the MVWSD Must Haves and also through Content and Pedagogy by grade bands. The rating process occurred in two parts, first with the MVWSD Must Haves, then later with the Content and Pedagogy rubrics by grade bands.

Curriculum	Ed Reports	Must Haves	Content & Pedagogy
American Reading Company CORE	✓	X	X
<b>Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)</b>	✓	✓	✓
Benchmark Advance	✓	X	X
Bookworms	X	X	X
Calvert Education Curriculum	X	X	X
Center for the Collaborative Classroom Collaborative Literacy	X	X	X
Expeditionary Learning (EL Education)	✓	X	X
Fishtank Plus ELA	X	X	X
Fountas & Pinnell Classroom	X	X	X
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading	✓	✓	X
Lucy Calkins Units of Study	X	X	X
<b>McGraw Hill Wonders</b>	✓	✓	✓
National Geographic Reach for Reading	X	X	X
Savvas MyView Literacy	✓	X	X

### PK and TK Adoption Process and Timeline

MVWSD is also undergoing a process of curriculum review and pilot with the goal of adopting an integrated early childhood curriculum for the 2024-25 school year. Research on the science of language and learning in early childhood shows that vocabulary, attention, and general knowledge in three and four year olds are predictors of reading comprehension in third and fourth grades. Additionally, phonological awareness is necessary for word recognition

development. Effective early childhood teaching and learning occurs in an interconnected and recursive manner through social responsiveness, social interaction, explicit instruction, and purposeful play.

The PK and TK adoption committee will utilize an adoption process that mirrors the K-5 ELA adoption process, as there is no defined process for Pre-K and TK adoptions. The curriculum chosen will be built from the science of language and learning in early childhood, appropriate for 3 and 4 year old students, follows the continuum of pedagogical strategies for play-based learning, and will build a strong foundation for entering kindergarten. The two curriculum selected for pilot are Creative Curriculum from Teaching Strategies and Three Cheers for Pre-K from Savvas. Both curricula have Pre-K and TK versions.

### **Considerations**

Staff will need training on science of reading, structured literacy, and background on the corresponding instructional shifts as a foundation for teaching the new curriculum. This will require us to unlearn aspects of how we currently teach literacy through balanced literacy and be open to learning about literacy instruction based on the science of reading. Our PK/TK curriculum will need to reflect the needs of young 3 and 4 year old students and prepare them for Kindergarten. All curriculum options will have both pros and cons.

### **Next Steps**

The Elementary ELA Adoption Committee and PK/TK Adoption Committee will enter Phase 3 beginning in January, where teachers on the committee will begin piloting the first curriculum. The pilot phase will end with the second curriculum option in April. The curriculum will be piloted in 11 classrooms, each pilot will be six weeks long and cover at least one instructional unit or module. The committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees in Spring 2024.