

TO: Dr. Schuler and the Board of Education

FROM: Melissa Murphy

DATE: May 10, 2023

RE: K-5 English Language Arts Instructional Materials

One of the key strategies for the Vision 2026 Strategic Plan is to Implement Learning Acceleration Strategies and Programming. One of the key tasks on the 2022-23 work plan is to pilot and adopt K-5 instructional materials for English Language Arts. This memo serves as an overview of that work project.

Curriculum Selection and Pilot Process

Beginning the 2021-22 school year work began for elementary English Language Arts. This process began with research. It included professional learning for our principals and coaches on the ELA shifts based on science-based reading instruction. Next, our team reviewed multiple instructional materials. The team selected their top two materials to pilot. This pilot ran from October - April of this school year. There were approximately 50 staff members involved in the pilot. This included K-5 classroom teachers, Multilingual Specialists, Special Education teachers, LLC Directors, and Reading Coaches. All teachers piloted a unit from each of the two instructional materials. At the end of April, the staff met to discuss both materials. Time was spent with the staff analyzing both instructional materials that were piloted. At the conclusion of the day, 97% of the pilot teachers selected Bookworms as the set of materials they would recommend to the Board of Education for adoption.

Overview of Bookworms

Bookworms is a structured, high-volume, high-interest approach to building meaningful literacy, informed by the collaborative work of researchers the late Dr. Michael C. McKenna at the University of Virginia and Dr. Sharon Walpole at the University of Delaware. Bookworms is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum that includes instruction in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and foundational skills. Important characteristics of Bookworms include:

- Research informed the design of the curriculum
- Authentic texts are used
- The curriculum includes simple repetitive, evidence-based instructional routines
- Writing lessons are included in all modules and include a focus on narrative, opinion, and informational genres
- Small group instruction focuses on student-specific needs for securing foundational skills
- The structure of teaching includes three forty-five-minute blocks called, Shared Reading, ELA, and Differentiation

Staff Rationale for the Selection of Bookworms

The list below includes the strengths identified by our staff for recommending Bookworms.

- Explicit, systematic phonics instruction for both whole group learning and personalized instruction
- Direct instruction in reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills
- Student engagement with texts
- Usability for teachers

Materials to Purchase

For the adoption of Bookworms, each teacher will receive the following materials:

- 1) Copies of the Shared Reading tradebooks: Bookworms recommends one copy for every two students of the books. Through our pilot process, the staff requested one copy of each book per student for novels. The attached pricing reflects this request for students in grades 2-5.
- 2) Copies of ELA Read Aloud tradebooks: The ELA block consists of read-aloud of literature and nonfiction texts. Each teacher will receive one copy of these books.
- 3) Manuals: Each classroom teacher will receive a print copy of the teacher manuals. Additional copies of the manuals are included in the proposal for Multilingual Specialists and Reading Specialists.
- 4) Professional book for Word Study: The lessons for the Differentiation Block for K-3 come from a professional book titled, *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction: Resources for K-3*. All K-3 teachers will receive a copy along with reading specialists.
- 5) Workbooks: For each of the four modules, the student materials are packaged in a workbook. This requires each student to receive four workbooks for the school year. The proposal includes the purchase of workbooks for one year. This will be budgeted for yearly.

Multiyear Implementation Plan

Throughout the school year, the reading coaches and pilot teachers have provided feedback on implementing the materials. This had taken into account the big lift of math this school year. The staff has determined a phased-in approach outlined below.

2023-24: Full implementation of Bookworms in grades K-2 and implementation of the Shared Reading Block in grades 3-5. All grades 3-5 staff will receive all materials for Bookworms to familiarize themselves with the resources throughout the school year.

2024-25: Full implementation of Bookworms in grades 3-5 classrooms.