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# MES PreK-3 Literacy Program Update

## Overview and Initial Steps to Align to The Science of Reading

Presented to the Marlborough BOE  
December 16, 2021

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## **MES Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan-Goal 1-Literacy**

Student Goal: All PreK-3 students will have access to systematic, explicit, and engaging foundational reading instruction so that each student makes growth towards becoming a proficient reader on the road to leading a literate life as measured by grade level standards.

## **MES Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan-Goal 1-Literacy**

Program Goal: By July 1, 2023, MES will implement a CSDE-approved or aligned reading curriculum model or program for grades Prek-3. The curriculum/program will be evidence- and research-based and focused upon student competency in oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, letter name fluency and word recognition automaticity, vocabulary, reading fluency and comprehension. The MES program shall be comprehensive, standards-based, sequential, and aligned to the instructional shifts associated with the Science of Reading (SoR).

# Teaching All Children to Read Effectively With Joy

- It is possible to teach all students how to read effectively and to experience the joy of reading when we start early and systematically and follow the significant body of research showing which practices are most effective.
- We will be shifting certain elements of our primary grades literacy program to align with the body of research known as the *Science of Reading*.

# The Science of Reading (SoR)

The Science of Reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

“After decades of multidisciplinary research, the scientific community has achieved broad consensus regarding how children learn to read, what causes reading difficulties, what the essential components of effective reading instruction are and why each is important, and how reading difficulties can be prevented or reduced.”

(Moats, 2020)

# The Science of Reading

The science of reading is derived from researchers from multiple fields:

cognitive psychology,  
communication sciences,  
developmental psychology,  
education,  
special education,  
implementation science,  
linguistics, and  
neuroscience.

## What does this science tell us?

The following processes are not only best for all readers, but can specifically target those who exhibit reading difficulties.

- Systematic, structured, sequential instruction focused on word-level reading via phonemic awareness, phonics, and alphabetic knowledge.
- The importance of:
  - ◆ language comprehension skills,
  - ◆ background knowledge
  - ◆ vocabulary building

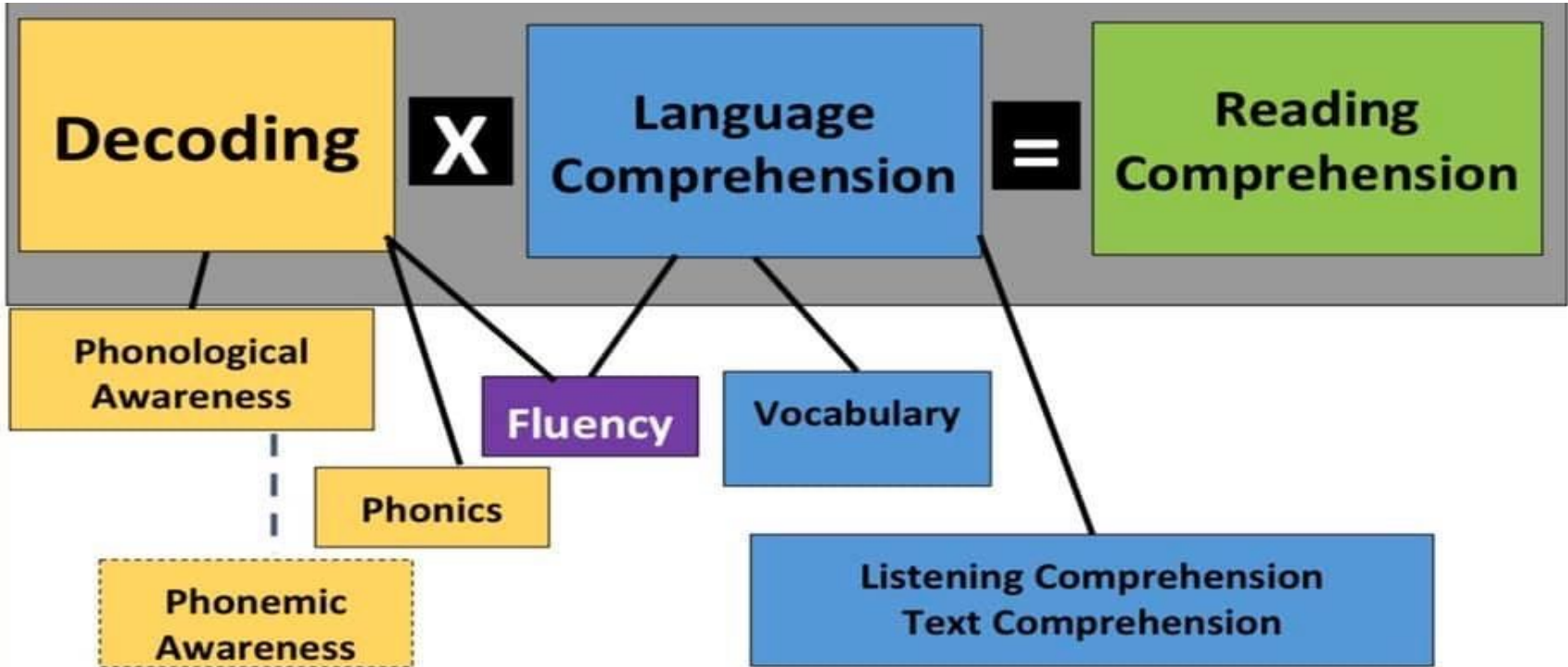
# The Elements of Foundational Reading

The *Simple View of Reading* has been empirically validated by over 150 scientific studies. It shows that reading comprehension is the product of two components - **decoding and language comprehension** - such that if either one is weak, reading comprehension is diminished.

While it is a simple view of a developmental process, skilled reading development is NOT simplistic. *Scarborough's Reading Rope* portrays a more in-depth understanding of the subcomponents within decoding (D) and language comprehension (LC).

# Elements of K-3 Structured Literacy

## THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING





# SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE

## THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

### LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE  
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY  
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES  
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING  
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

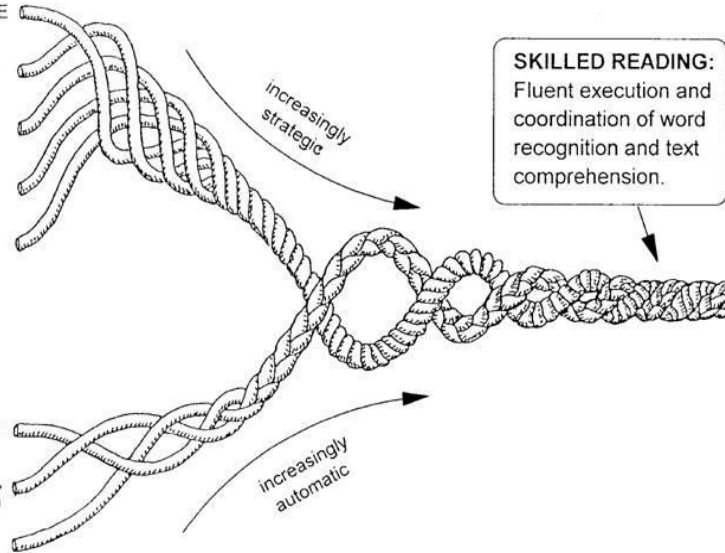
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE  
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

### WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS  
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING (alphabetic principle,  
spelling-sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION  
(of familiar words)



**SKILLED READING:**  
Fluent execution and  
coordination of word  
recognition and text  
comprehension.

## Evidence-Based Word Recognition Instructional Practices

Phonemic awareness and letter instruction: Instruction in the identification of phonemes in spoken words and how they link to letters

Explicit and systematic instruction in how to decode (read) and encode (spell) words, including word part analysis (e.g., syllables, morphemes)

Connected text reading to build reading accuracy automaticity, fluency, and comprehension

# Importance of Explicit and Systematic Phonics Instruction

Teaching students basic letter sound combinations gives them access to being able successfully sound out (decode) more than 80% of words in English print.

When students can decode effectively, they can read for meaning as words become multisyllabic and text becomes more complex as they move through the grades. They are better able to read fluently with strong comprehension. In addition, when students effectively decode, they effectively encode (automatically applying letter sounds to spell words and create sentences).

# Evidence-Based Language Comprehension Instructional Practices

Read-alouds from a variety of complex texts to build knowledge and vocabulary

Robust conversations to develop students' academic language (e.g., narrative and inferential language)

Explicit instruction in grammatical structures and academic vocabulary within the context of other reading activities

# Implications for Programming

- MES' Reading and language arts instruction will include deliberate, systematic, and explicit teaching of word recognition aimed towards developing students' subject-matter knowledge, vocabulary, sentence comprehension, and familiarity with the language in written texts.
- Through our curriculum, students will be exposed to a variety of texts as they learn concepts in science, literature, social studies, history, the arts, and culture.
  - We will write or identify a knowledge-rich ELA curriculum which is designed for this purpose
- Comprehension strategies will be taught and used as necessary to enhance understanding of text.

# The Right to Read Legislation and MES Actions

*Effective*  
JULY 1, 2021

The CT Department of Education **establishes a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success** (The Center), under a director who consults with a Reading Leadership Implementation Council (The Council).

*Not Later Than*  
JULY 1, 2022

The director of The Center, in consultation with The Council, **approves at least 5 reading curriculum models** or programs to be implemented by districts.

*For the School  
Year Commencing*  
JULY 1, 2022  
*And Then Each  
School Year*

The Center oversees an **intensive reading instruction program** to improve student literacy in grades K-3.

Fundations (for phonics) has been implemented in grades K-2 and will be implemented in preK and grade 3 next year. Decodable books (matched to the scope and sequence of Fundations) as well as Heggerty (phonemic awareness) will be integrated preK-2 in the 2022-23 school year. Ongoing Professional development will support implementation.

# The Right to Read Legislation cont.

*On or Before*  
**JAN. 1, 2023**

The Center develops a **coordinated state-wide reading plan for K-3** that contains research-driven strategies to produce effective reading instruction and improve student performance.

Fundations uses an explicit, systematic approach to teaching phonics.

*On or Before*  
**JULY 1, 2023**  
*And Then Biennially*

Each district notifies The Center about which **approved, evidence-based reading curriculum** it is implementing.

We have added the STAR Reading CBM, and C.O.R.E. assessments grades 1-2 as a benchmark assessment.

*For the School Year Commencing*  
**JULY 1, 2023**  
*And Then Each School Year*

Each district **implements a reading curriculum for grades PreK-3** from The Center's list of approved, evidence-based models.

The **Center compiles a list of reading assessments** for use by each district in identifying K-3 students who are below proficiency in reading.

# The Right to Read Legislation cont.

We will be ready!

*Not Later Than*  
**SEPT. 1, 2023**  
*And Then Biennially*

The **Center publicly reports** which approved, evidence-based reading curriculum is being implemented by each district.

ONGOING\*

The Center establishes a reading readiness program that provides **tiered supports in early literacy to alliance districts.**

*\*Within available appropriations*

*Not Later Than*  
**FEB. 1, 2024**

The Commissioner of Education conducts an **evaluation** of the activities of The Center and submits it to the General Assembly's **Education Committee and Appropriations Committee.**



# Investments & Additional Next Steps

Investments in professional development as well as material resources are necessary to our core business of educating children through a well-trained faculty.

The MES Literacy Committee will research high quality school-wide English Language Arts curricula / programs for implementation in K - 2 beginning in 2022 - 2023 and phased up to grade 3 (and potentially grades 4 - 6) in 2023 - 2024.

# Investments & Additional Next Steps

We are investing in decodable texts matched to Foundations (Geodes).

The Literacy Committee will review and revise our Prek-3 Reading and Writing screening and diagnostic assessments so that they effectively gauge student progress (strengths and needs) and inform instruction.