

Duval County Public Schools



Comprehensive Blueprint for Reading

Duval County Public Schools

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Introduction

The Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy was developed in alignment with the Superintendent's Strategic Plan. The purpose of this document is to provide the framework for organizing literacy instruction ensuring that every child meets or exceeds the Language Arts state standards. It will guide the implementation of the standards by specifying the (1) design of instructional materials, (2) curricular decisions and implementation, (3) Pre-K through grade 12 literacy instruction, and (4) professional development. The standards designate what to teach at specific grade levels and this plan provides guidelines and cited research-based approaches for implementing instruction to ensure increased proficiency for all students, including those with different learning needs (e.g., English language learners, students with learning disabilities, reading difficulties, and advanced learners). As a key component of literacy reform in DCPS, this plan is intended to guide the development of consistent quality Pre-K through Grade 12 literacy instruction, assessment and professional development across all schools within the district.

To provide clarity regarding what constitutes effective literacy instruction, the *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* identifies what is recommended in daily practice for reading and writing instruction at each grade level. This plan aligns the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Common Core standards with research-based best-practices by providing explicit, intentional and differentiated instruction centered on the needs of all students. An essential component is to address the expectations rigor in curriculum content and the manner in which the content is delivered. In alignment with our district-wide managed instructional system, this plan will provide current curricular coherence by articulating detailed practices that must be implemented in grade levels and classrooms across the district.

In an effort to accelerate and sustain all learners' proficiency in reading/language arts classes, seven principles are being used to guide the district's work and address the complexity of the content and context of language arts instruction. Our principles will direct the purpose, design, delivery, and evaluation of instruction. Accordingly, the *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* plan:

1. Will use the adopted English language arts state standards as the curricular platform and align curriculum, assessment, instruction, and organization to provide a comprehensive, coherent structure for language arts teaching and learning;
2. Will stress the importance of a balanced, comprehensive reading program;
3. Will emphasize that students must be fluent readers at least by the end of the third grade;
4. Will target the important skills, concepts, and strategies that students must be able to use after the third grade and provide remedial support as necessary.
5. Will provide guidance to ensure that all educators and learners understand
 - specific skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be taught and learned,
 - language arts standards are related and taught in a reciprocal process that builds on and strengthens one another, and
 - language arts standards in reading and writing can be learned across all academic disciplines;

6. Will promote a preventive rather than remedial approach, as supported by the research of Shaywitz, 2003, and Torgesen, 2001; and
7. Will address the full range of learners in all classrooms through differentiated instructional methods.

Acknowledgement of the developmental nature of literacy is the key premise of our guiding principles. An effective district-wide comprehensive literacy program is a powerful vehicle that enables students to become successful, independent readers and writers. Exemplary teachers provide a comprehensive program by providing meaningful instruction in reading, writing, listening, speaking, language, viewing and literature. As they model good reading and writing using the gradual model of instructional delivery, they connect skills and strategy development across the literacy continuum. The structure of the DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy is based on three essential components. Lessons begin with whole group instruction (mini-lesson) designed to introduce grade-level skills and concepts to all students. The majority of time in the literacy block (work period) is dedicated to differentiated small group instruction configured to provide students with meaningful learning experiences designed to meet specific learning needs. Finally, all students reconnect during the whole group instruction (closing) to conclude the reading or writing portion of the literacy block. This three-element design is based on best practice in instructional design. Differentiated instruction will be used to tailor lessons to meet an individual learner's particular instructional needs. All teachers should be able to regularly assess student reading difficulties and strengths in order to provide appropriate differentiated instruction to meet individual needs.

DCPS educators are expected to utilize the *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* for purposes of planning, discussing, and informing teaching and learning when working individually, with colleagues, families, and the community. The plan is based on the Response to Intervention (RtI) 3-tier model. Each grade level consists of three integral components:

1. Tier 1 focuses on the Core Curriculum. In this tier, literacy programs and resources, assessments, literacy block structure and instructional methods are identified along with student performance goals, best practices, and universal strategies. Information on access to the core curriculum for English language learners and students with disabilities and home/community connections is also included.
2. Tier 2 (Early Intervening Services/supplemental intervention); and
3. Tier 3 (intensive intervention), reading programs and supports, entrance/exit criteria, and progress monitoring information are provided for each identified targeted student population. Expectations for classroom environment and a plan for literacy professional development are also incorporated into the document.

The *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* is research and evidence-based and aligns with the district's K-12 Comprehensive Research Based Reading Plan; the Pre-K-Grade 12 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards; and the newly adopted *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science*. It is centered around the work and findings of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (*IRA/NCTE Standards for English Language Arts*), Robert Marzano's *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement* and *Classroom Instruction That Works* (the National Reading Panel, the National Institute for Literacy, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, *Reading Next*, *Writing Next*, and the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance: Institute of Education Sciences).

Support for the implementation of this literacy plan is addressed within this document. DCPS educators must have ongoing professional development focused on the key components of the *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* Plan through district sessions and job-embedded, school-based opportunities. Cross-department collaboration between school-based and district staff will also ensure consistency, coherence and alignment in message, expectations and aligned professional development for literacy. Families are also a crucial component of student success;

therefore, DCPS will also provide literacy sessions and supports for families that are aligned, targeted and focused. Furthermore, DCPS has numerous community connections and partnerships which provide additional resources.

The *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* is a document which will continue to be enhanced and updated to reflect the latest information that bridges research with practice for effective literacy instruction. Future work will include

- Aligning the ESOL reading programs and resources to the standards to make connections and determine any gaps,
- Conducting cross-walks between current state standards, the Common Core Standards, NAEP standards, the NCTE Standards for English Language Arts,
- Targeting Florida Assessment In Reading (FAIR) instructional support strategies to improve student areas of weakness,
- Annotating resources,
- Adding additional resource items through hot-links, and
- Identifying additional Tier 2 and tier 3 reading programs and supports for struggling and advanced/gifted learners.

How to Use the DCPS Comprehensive Literacy Plan

The *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* plan provides the products, tools and supports for literacy success. This document can be used in a variety of ways: when supporting and enhancing discussions and planning during grade level/content area professional learning community (PLC) and/or collaborative coaching cycle (CLC) meetings, during Literacy Leadership Team meetings, when coaching/modeling, and when determining professional development needs for experienced and/or novice teachers and coaches. Some suggestions for previewing and utilizing the document can include:

- Reading the vision for reading and writing and descriptions of the implementation in an intensive reading classrooms;
- Becoming familiar with the instructional time requirements specified for the grade levels;
- Identifying the literacy supports available in your school;
- Reviewing the expected format for teaching in the literacy block (and if applicable, refer to the intensive reading scheduling guidelines) and review the expectations for literacy at specific grade level(s);
- Understanding how RtI is integrated into the classroom through RtI Tier 1 (Core), Tier 2 (Supplemental Interventions/Early Intervening Services), and Tier 3 (Intensive Interventions);
- Knowing and effectively implement the literacy standards through research-based strategies and formative assessments;
- Implementing with fidelity the daily literacy instructional blocks using the foci, instructional groups (whole/small/whole), allocated times, instructional best practices and research, resources, assessment tools, and accommodations and modifications for ELL and students with disabilities;
- Implementing the content area literacy strategies across all social studies, mathematics and science classrooms;
- Reviewing the professional development section to determine professional development needs.
- Reviewing sections on district-level departments that support literacy, research/resources, and the appendices which includes more specific information on assistive technology tools, home/community connections, and glossaries.

DCPS Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs

Mission Statement

The Duval County Public School System is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities that will inspire all students to acquire and use the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy and culturally diverse world.

Vision

Every student will graduate from Duval County Public Schools with the knowledge and skills to be successful in post-secondary education and/or the workforce.

Core Beliefs

These beliefs serve as the foundation upon which the Board will rely to guide all policy decisions and actions.

- The academic success of every student in Duval County is the top priority of the Duval County School Board.
- The Duval County School Board believes that our greatest strength as a school district is the racial, gender, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of our students and community.
- The achievement gap in Duval County can and must be eliminated.
- All DCPS children can be academically prepared to reach their dreams.
- All DCPS children can learn at grade level.
- Every school in Duval County can be a high-performing organization, both academically and operationally.
- High quality teachers, supported with high quality, on-going professional development, must drive our rigorous, intellectually and artistically challenging curriculum.
- Academic and operational resources can and must be adequately distributed throughout all DCPS schools.
- All schools can be safe learning environments where every student and adult is valued and respected.

Commitments

- The academic success of every student in Duval County will be the top priority of the Duval County School Board.
- The Duval County School Board will develop and celebrate the racial, gender, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity of our students and community.
- The achievement gap will be eliminated in Duval County.
- All DCPS children will be academically prepared to reach their dreams.
- All DCPS children will learn at grade level.
- Every school in Duval County will be a high-performing organization, both academically and operationally.
- High-quality teachers, supported with high-quality, on-going professional development, will drive our rigorous, intellectually and artistically challenging curriculum.
- Academic and operational resources will be adequately distributed throughout all DCPS schools.

- All schools will be safe learning environments where every student and adult is valued and respected.

DCPS Theory of Action

A Theory of Action (TOA) is a set of organized, coherent strategies designed to operationalize the School Board's Core Beliefs and Commitments resulting in dramatic, positive academic growth in a large urban school district.

Our Theory of Action is to fully implement an Aligned Instructional System. An Aligned Instructional System (AIS) clearly articulates how schools and departments are to implement an aligned standards-based school design. The focus at the school level is to ensure effective implementation of curriculum and instruction through an aligned systematic cycle of content and performance standards, curriculum units with recommended learning schedules, common instructional materials, professional development with recommended content and pedagogy, formative and summative assessments, on-going common data collection and analysis of student progress, enrichments for students meeting standards, interventions when students do not meet the standards, and monitoring processes to ensure effectiveness. This system involves high performing teachers collaboratively creating, reviewing, and improving each element of the AIS.

An AIS Theory of Action allows for common expectations and common measurements which are a necessary pre-condition for a standards-based school district delivering what Robert Marzano calls a "guaranteed and viable" curriculum. Also, an AIS makes consistent district support in that aligned system possible. All stakeholders within the district should have an active role in the development and ongoing implementation of the AIS because of the experience, knowledge, and innovation of teachers and administrators at the school level are essential. Within the context of this aligned system, principals and faculties are empowered to conduct action research, create professional learning communities, use data to adjust lesson planning and student interventions, and take ownership for every student meeting high standards of achievement. There is mutual accountability to achieve specified targets for student performance gains with the goal of eliminating the achievement gap.

Elements of an Aligned Instructional System

1. **District curriculum** is expected to be implemented. Some school-based flexibility in the selection of supplemental materials and instructional methods may be allowed based upon the District Instructional Review Committee approval. The curriculum is structured as prescribed within units of instruction. It is the teacher's responsibility to develop and implement daily lessons aligned with the prescribed curriculum based on individual student needs. The curriculum is built using the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework. UbD helps teachers and students focus on essential questions and key ideas leading to enduring understanding. Elements of the curriculum include:
 - a. **State Standards**, currently known as the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS), are required in K-12 for each content area. Additionally, Duval County will continue to use the New Standards Performance Standards (NSPS) to provide guidance on what quality of student work meets the state standards and to benchmark our standards to international levels. We anticipate transitioning to the Common Core Standards as they are adopted and implemented in Florida.

- b. **Common units of instruction** organize the standards into teachable units of instruction for students. These units are sequenced via learning schedules and include pacing and common assessments to measure student proficiency. In all grades, the learning schedules for English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies follow the UbD format, articulating the essential questions and big ideas. Common assessments are embedded in the learning schedules to support monitoring progress of students. Students are expected to demonstrate understanding through completion of at least one performance task/project for each unit.

Model lessons aligned with the units of instruction are posted in a virtual environment called Riverdeep Learning Village. These lessons are juried by the district and school-based content specialists prior to posting. Teachers are encouraged to transition to the district on-line grading and lesson planning system, OnCourse[®] that the district is implementing.

Common assessments include district-developed interim (benchmark) assessments and appropriate state assessments administered periodically throughout the school year to provide information vital to the instructional process. End-of-course exams are administered in the four major content areas in grades 6-12. These assessments are in addition to the unit assessments discussed previously. Beyond the district assessments, Florida's assessment system is mandated - in grades 3-10 for reading and grades 3-8 in mathematics; grades 4, 8, and 10 for writing; and grades 5 and 8, for science. The state is currently developing and implementing End of Course (EOC) exams that will be administered in Algebra I, geometry and biology.

- c. **Common data management tools** are used to measure student progress toward meeting proficiency of the standards. Student data are disaggregated by a variety of categories including ethnicity, Student Economic Status (SES), Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English language learners (ELL), gender, etc.

2. **Pedagogy** is based on research-proven instructional strategies. The District has adopted the "Workshop Model" for literacy and mathematics; the "Five E's" for science instruction (Explain, Explore, Engage, Extend and Evaluate) and focus lessons based on the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) to ensure student engagement, flexible grouping, in-class "safety nets," critical-thinking activities, and differentiated instruction. Teachers are expected to monitor the progress of every student in their class and provide the necessary time and instructional support necessary to demonstrate proficiency thus increasing student achievement for all students. Additionally, there is an expectation for schools to implement Response to Intervention (RtI).

Professional development is focused on supporting the district curriculum, research-proven strategies for instructional delivery and leadership development. Academic Services, in collaboration with the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership, coordinates professional development according to district and school needs. Coaches are provided to support effective teaching and learning across the district.

3. **Common instructional materials** for all core and supplemental instruction, including technology-based programs, undergo a rigorous state and/or district adoption process to ensure quality and alignment with state standards and district expectations.
4. **Monitoring tools** have been developed so school chiefs, executive directors, principals, and district staff can have a common way to monitor the fidelity of the district's standards-based design implementation. School leadership teams utilize focused walk protocols to gather evidence on the implementation progress of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

5. **Common Safe and Civil Schools standards** are in place with professional development for school-wide interventions (Foundations) and individual classroom interventions (CHAMPS).

Alignment, Accountability, and Support Systems

Alignment

The School Board's AIS Theory of Action (TOA), frames the alignment, accountability and support systems in place to guarantee increased student achievement for all students. The District Strategic Plan provides both alignment and metrics for all School Improvement Plans (SIPs), the Comprehensive Support Plan, Turnaround Plan, and district division and department plans. District and school-based budgets reflect the priorities outlined in these plans.

- School Improvement Plans include district-determined measurable targets for student performance in reading, writing, mathematics, and science based on Florida's tests for grades 3-12. Targets are set to identify progress made on attaining acceptable levels of proficiency on both state and federal accountability measures. As a part of the SIP, schools establish a school-wide Professional Development Plan that is data-driven. Teachers and other professionals create individual plans that align with the school plan.

Accountability

- Teachers are evaluated based on student performance metrics and professional practice. Satisfactory evaluations lead to reappointment and performance pay. High performing teachers may be eligible for additional performance pay.
- The *School-Based Administrator's Performance Assessment System* is used for principal evaluations which lead to reappointment and performance pay. Principal ratings are based on schools meeting designated student performance targets, Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Principal Leadership Standards, and results of the school climate surveys. District staff are evaluated not only on the basis of quality of support services, but also on student performance metrics. Principals rate district departments on level of service quality. The ratings are used for improvement and evaluation of support departments.
- DCPS is fully accredited by the *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI)*. During the 2007-2008 school year, DCPS sought district accreditation by the SACS CASI that conducted a standards assessment review. The district accreditation process validated the successful implementation of the AIS Theory of Action and provides a comprehensive framework for continually improving student achievement.
- The Differentiated Accountability (DA) Model has been implemented in the state of Florida since 2008. Through DA, the state is allowed greater flexibility in providing the needed individualized technical assistance and interventions to schools with greatest need. Florida's DA plan streamlines the federal and state accountability systems and directs increasing school-wide interventions and school and district accountability based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school grade.

- Since 2001, DCPS has implemented various forms of performance pay as recruitment and retention incentives in the district's most challenged schools. The state of Florida began requiring performance pay as part of the Differentiated Accountability (DA) Model in 2008.

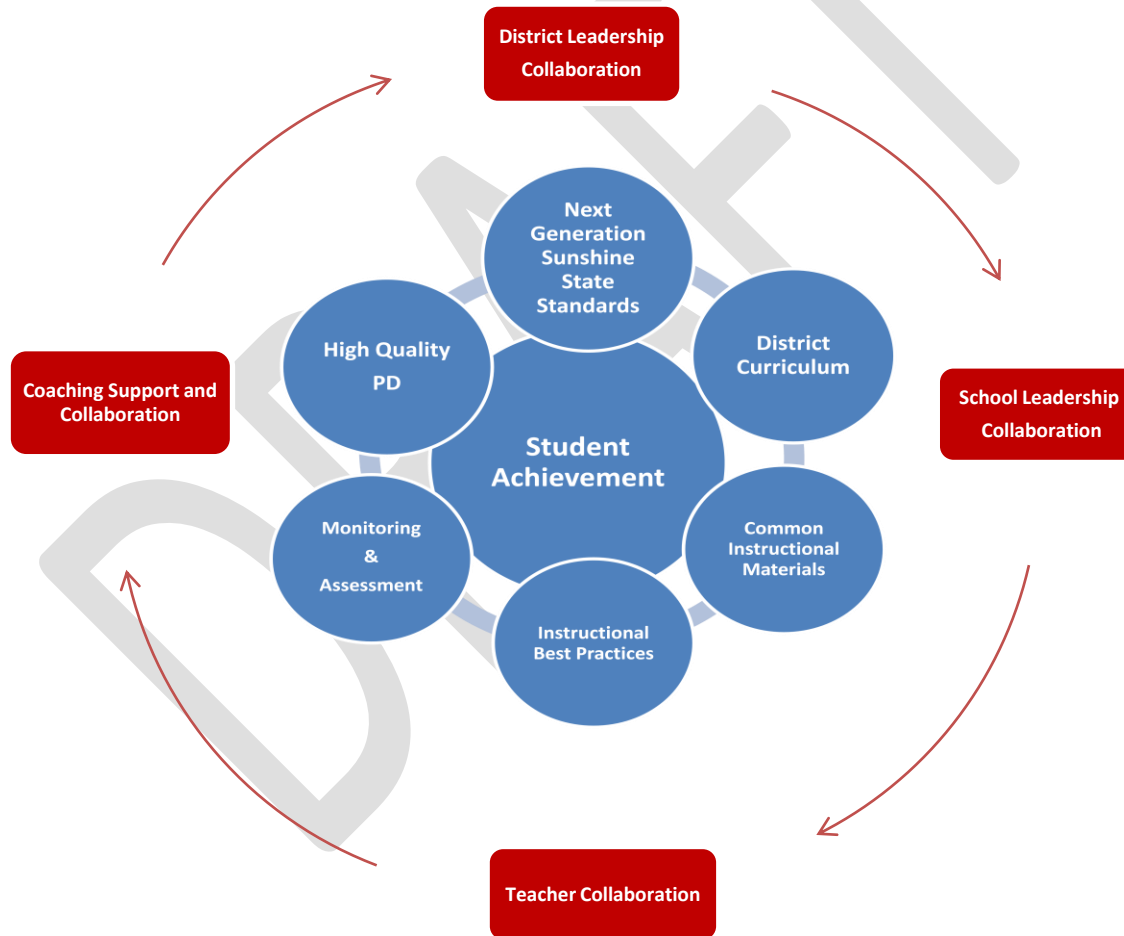
Support Systems

- Since 2007, DCPS has established an extensive support system for the district's most challenged schools. The district has been a leader in the implementation of a "Turnaround" Model based on the work of Mass Insights. The district Turnaround school criteria are based on the state and federal accountability systems. Schools designated Turnaround receive additional financial and human capital resources to ensure increased student achievement while narrowing the achievement gap. Schools are able to provide additional professional development days at the start of the school year; before and after school tutoring; Saturday school; reading, math and instructional coaches; volunteer liaisons; and business and faith-based partners. Turnaround schools remain within the model for at least three years to support the infrastructure for success.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are established and meet regularly. The PLCs discuss progress of students and how to assist them in meeting high standards of performance. In addition, cluster chiefs and executive directors have established Principal Professional Learning Communities to meet in small groups to analyze data and share strategies that help increase student achievement in their schools.
- Principals establish distributed leadership teams including Shared Decision Making (SDM) which may include building administrators, coaches and instructional staff. These teams provide guidance and support for instructional improvement based on the SIP. The principals, in collaboration with their School Advisory Councils (SACs), and their Shared Decision Making committees, determine the schools' budget and school-based staffing.

As Duval County Public Schools' Aligned Instructional System becomes institutionalized in all aspects of teaching and learning, increased academic achievement and elimination of the achievement gap will occur. It is the vision that all DCPS students graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to be ready for post secondary education and work with all stakeholders committed to ensuring this vision becomes a reality.

DCPS Comprehensive Literacy Framework

The *DCPS Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy* plan is a conceptual framework utilized for the development of instructional design that integrates reading, writing, listening, speaking, using language, employing technology, and researching across all content areas to promote high levels of critical thinking, learning, and student achievement.



Definition of Comprehensive Literacy

Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies - from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms - are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities and social trajectories and groups (National Council of Teachers of English, February 2008).

Comprehensive literacy is the ability to use reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and technological skills and strategies to access and communicate information effectively inside and outside of the classroom and across content areas (*Literacy for the 21st Century*, Tompkins, 2010; *What Content Area Teachers Should Know About Adolescent Literacy*, National Institute for Literacy, 2007).

Vision of Reading in DCPS

I. Commitment to the importance of reading throughout the general curriculum

- Every student must have strong literacy skills for school and life.
- Current reading programs, approaches and resources must be comprehensive and effectively directed, coordinated and combined to meet the needs of all students.
- A protected instructional time, dedicated specifically to literacy development, is provided so that students receive instruction during reading, English language arts and/or content area classes.
- Principals/school leaders and teachers must have a firm understanding of stages of reading development, the five areas of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension) and understand how to teach reading to a wide range of students.

II. Effective reading classrooms

- Teachers use research-based teaching methods to provide direct, explicit instruction for reading skills and strategies and develop students' critical thinking skills.
- Teachers create a literacy-rich supportive classroom environment.
- Teachers help struggling readers.
- Students read and respond to readings in all subjects.
- Students are motivated to read and learn and have opportunities and supports for independent, self-directed learning.
- Students collaborate with each other in pairs of small groups around a variety of texts.
- Students engage in reading authentic diverse texts, which vary in difficulty and topic, to create fluent and proficient readers.
- Students respond to text in a variety of manners (such as orally or in writing in response to reading).

- Teachers provide learning experiences that involve the use of technology as a tool for instructional purposes. They teach students to effectively navigate using 21st Century literacy tools.
- Informal formative assessments are used on a daily basis to make instructional decisions.
- Teachers express confidence in meeting the instructional needs of students with diverse abilities and backgrounds.
- Classrooms have well-stocked classroom libraries that offer a representation of a wide range of cultural, linguistic and diverse groups.
- Reading skills and strategies are learned in school and practiced both in and out of school.
- Teachers have common expectations for good reading.
- Teachers are experts in recognizing and analyzing a variety of reading difficulties and in addressing both process and skills — applying what research has learned about how good readers read.
- Reading is an ongoing, daily practice using reading process strategies.
- Teachers model fluent reading, good reader behaviors and the use of effective strategies and skills.
- Teachers differentiate instruction based on students’ needs.
- Teachers use teaching aides and devices to help students understand and remember content.
- Teachers use flexible grouping as a tool and an aid to instruction to help all students achieve.
- Teachers and others enjoy reading and share their joy with students

III. Reading across disciplines

- A. There is a strong literacy focus in content-area classes.
- Literacy is embedded in content area classroom instruction.
- Content area teachers provide instruction and reinforce literacy skills and strategies that are effective for their subject areas to have students read like subject-area experts.
- Content teachers use teaching reading and instructional strategies to help students understand and remember content.

IV. Professional development

- Professional development models and activities must promote lasting change and offer research-based strategies and demonstrations of best practice.
- There is a team-oriented approach that includes classroom teachers, literacy coaches/leaders, administrators and other literacy support staff for sustained learning (learning communities/teams to sustain participants in their efforts to reflect, examine, experiment, and change—shared expertise and collegiality).
- Teams meet regularly to discuss student progress and to align instruction.
- There is time, resources and common focus on reading.
- Professional development honors the principles of adult learning.
- There are consistent, long-term on-going opportunities for learning and professional growth.
- Professional development is connected and job-embedded.

V. School-wide reading reforms

- The principal/school leader has a clear commitment and enthusiasm for reading and has an essential role in making decisions to ensure optimal programming and use of resources for student learning.
- The principal and Reading Leadership Team (RLT) provide leadership for sustaining a vision of shared expectations for high quality learning.
- The principal supports the literacy coach/leader.
- Teacher leaders are enlisted as advocates for improving the teaching of reading in all classrooms.
- The RLT plans and implements a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program.
- There are multi-tiered interventions based on students' needs.
- Targeted interventions are provided for struggling readers.
- Focused small group interventions in the core reading elements (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) are provided.
- Strategic tutoring is available to provide intense, individualized instruction to help students learn strategies to become independent learners.
- Students read in school every day.
- There are long-term plans for reading that are communicated to the entire school community.
- The rationale for why reading matters is clearly articulated to staff and parents.
- Time and resources are provided for professional development, research materials and workshops for teachers to develop as readers and learn about research-proven classroom strategies.
- Challenges such as scheduling, use of space and funding are navigated using innovative, student-centered solutions.

VI. Reading assessment

- Reading programs and interventions are evaluated and re-evaluated on an on-going basis.
- There are on-going assessments of students' strengths and needs.
- The purpose and intended use of the assessments are clearly defined and communicated.
- Assessments are built around clear standards.
- Formative assessment occurs on a frequent basis. Data are used to inform instruction and make adjustments in instruction to meet student needs.
- Multiple assessments of reading are used to assess abilities and developmental levels.
- Students are actively engaged in the assessment process.
- Students are provided with skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to become independent readers.

Cited Research: Putting Reading First, Third Edition (2006); Reading Next (2004); Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science, Draft (2010); IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts (1996); Time to Act (2010); Stages of Reading Development (1995); CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook for Kindergarten Through Eighth Grade

Description of a Reading-Intensive Classroom

An effective reading intensive classroom is a print-rich environment that supports reading across the disciplines. It is full of a variety of purposeful and engaging literacy activities. All students are actively engaged in reading every day. Students utilize the reading process to read for a variety of purposes. They read a wide range of diverse literature and informational text. At all grade levels, students engage in reading high-quality texts. Teachers and other adults use reading to help students build or activate background knowledge, broaden experiences, make connections, expand their view of the world and think critically. Teachers model fluent reading and good reader behaviors and strategies. In reading classes the lessons focus on specific areas of reading and the reading process while lessons in content area classes focus on literacy skills and strategies that are effective for the subject areas. Students are constantly reading for a various purposes and applying reading skills and strategies to read fluently and comprehend a variety of texts. They use reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and technology to explore and communicate knowledge and understanding.

Cited Research: *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science, Draft (2010)*; *IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts (1996)*; *CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook for Kindergarten Through Eighth Grade (2000)*.

A Vision of Writing in DCPS

I. Commitment to the importance of writing throughout the general curriculum

- The bar has been raised for what counts as literate writing, what good writing requires, and how many people need to be literate.
- The assumption that writing well is an innate talent must change to a belief that everyone can learn to write.

II. Effective writing classrooms

- Teachers are writers themselves and have students write in all genres to include both process and on-demand writing.
- Teachers express confidence in meeting the instructional needs of students with diverse abilities and backgrounds.
- Students engage in diverse writing tasks to develop competence.
- Writing is learned in school very much the same way that it is practiced out of school.
- Teachers have common expectations for good writing.
- Teachers are experts in recognizing and analyzing a variety of writing difficulties and in addressing both process and product—applying what research has learned about how writers compose—getting beyond formulaic use of prewriting, drafting, and revision.
- Writing is an ongoing, daily practice using such writing process strategies as pair or group work, peer editing, completing multiple drafts, and conferencing.

III. Writing across disciplines

- Schools need to offer professional development in teaching writing to all staff.
- Substantive writing increases achievement on standardized tests.

- Writing is integrated with reading with students having opportunities to write in all subjects because it helps students reflect and think critically about content.
- Writing supports retention of content. Expressive writing can be a means of thinking through a problem in a class such as biology.

IV. Professional development

- Substantive writing increases achievement on standardized tests.
- Research shows that teacher expertise is the most significant factor in student success. Teacher quality is more powerful than a student's socioeconomic background.
- A changing and diverse student population is one reason why teachers need to keep learning new techniques and strategies.
- There must be a context for sustained learning (learning communities/teams to sustain participants in their efforts to reflect, examine, experiment, and change—shared expertise and collegiality).
- There must be time, resources, and common focus.

V. School-wide writing reforms

- The principal has an essential role in providing resources and leadership for sustaining a vision of shared expectations for high learning.
- A high standard of quality in classroom application is maintained.
- Students write in school every day.
- There are long-term plans that are communicated to the entire school community.
- The rationale for why writing matters is clearly articulated to staff and parents.
- The status of writing and of teaching is assessed.
- Teacher leaders are enlisted as advocates for improving the teaching of writing in all classrooms.
- Time and resources are provided for professional development, research materials, and workshops for teachers to develop as writers and learn about research-proven classroom strategies.
- Practical solutions to such problems as scheduling and funding are found.

VI. Writing assessment

- The purpose and intended use of the on-demand district timed writing assessments are clearly defined and communicated.
- Assessments are built around clear targets.
- Valid 6-point state rubrics have been provided and will be shared with students in terms they can understand.
- Multiple samples of writing (state released anchor papers) are used to assess abilities and developmental levels.
- Students are actively engaged in the assessment process.
- Performance is integrated with instruction.
- Students are provided with skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to become independent thinkers and writers
- Students have the opportunity and ability to articulate their own awareness of their progress in learning to write.

Program and Instructional Time Requirements

“Alignment is more powerful than race, socio-economic status, gender, school size or teacher bias for predicting results on standardized tests.”

Felicia Moss Mitchell (1998)

“Attempts at building knowledge and skills of students who experience multiple instructional programs are easily frustrated in an incoherent system. It becomes difficult to make even incremental gains in student outcomes if students must learn the idiosyncrasies of each classroom when changing schools or even when changing grades within a school.”

Ken Montgomery (2008)

It is for these reasons that our recommendation is for designated instructional time requirements in grade bands.

Requirements for All Schools	
Pre-K	90 minutes daily of literacy (reading, writing and oral language)
Kindergarten-Grade 5	90 minutes of reading (60 minutes of reading workshop and 30 minutes of Skill instruction); 45-60 minutes of daily writing, speaking/listening and oral language (writers workshop) optimal is 60 minutes of literacy and 60 minutes of writing
Grades 6-8	45-60 minutes of ELA; (optimal is 60 minutes of literacy/writing)
Grades 9-12	equivalent of one ELA period a day
Grades K-12	Reading interventions/courses

In order to **request a waiver** from the district approved core curriculum or textbook/materials, schools must meet the following criteria.

- Be in non-differentiated accountability status,
- Be a contracted/unique educational program (i.e. dedicated magnet),
- Have a school grade designation of A or B
- Submit an alternative plan to the district approved curriculum that also addresses the components of the Comprehensive Blueprint for Literacy (CBL), including vetted common assessments.
- Receive approval from the division of Academic Services.

Contracted schools will be held accountable via their contract. Additionally, should they choose to opt out of the instructional materials/textbook adoptions, they must submit a plan detailing how they will achieve the adopted state standards/Common Core Standards identified within the CBL.

Early Childhood/Pre-K Required Model for Instructional Block

Whole Group (20 min.)

- Modeled Reading/Writing (such as daily message)
 - Oral Language
 - Letter introduction
 - Introduction of vocabulary, phonological awareness
- Read Aloud with selected vocabulary OR Shared Big Book reading focusing on concepts of Print

Differentiated Small Group Instruction (60 min.)

- Explicit Small Group Reading Instruction
- Active Learning in Literacy Centers: writers' notebooks, oral language activities, computers, library (retelling), vocabulary building experiences

Whole Group (10 min.)

- Sharing
 - Letter knowledge
 - Extension to vocabulary
 - Emergent writing

*note that in Early Childhood/Pre-K, reading and writing are difficult to separate. For example, a modeled writing lesson will also include skills from reading such as phonics and phonemic awareness.

DCPS 90-Minute Reading Block: Required Daily Plan for Grades K-5
Readers Workshop

Opening
(Whole Group 10-15 minutes)

Mini-Lesson:

Instruction may be:
Strategies
Skills

Teacher work:

Provides the standard
Sets students up to learn with a guiding question
Gives the connection/purpose
Models/Teaches
Guided Practice-Monitor and support students' work
Model or facilitate book discussions

Student work:

Listen to the teacher
Follow along with lesson/work being modeled by the teacher
Guided Practice-Practice what the teacher has modeled

Work Time
(Differentiated Small Group Instruction 30-35 minutes)

Teacher work:

Conducts Guided Reading Groups or Strategy Groups
Assesses using Running Records
Conferences with students
Provides ad hoc instruction based on student needs

Student work:

Read independently
Read with a partner
Read with the teacher in guided reading groups
Participate in literature circles/book

Closing
(Whole Group 5-10 minutes)

Teacher work:

Listens to students' sharing
Assesses student progress

Students work:

Share and celebrate their reading work Articulate what has worked well for them while reading
Tell how the mini-lesson (skill/strategy) has helped them improve as a reader

Skills Block to Support Enhancement of Reading Skills
(Additional Time beyond the 90 minutes)

**DCPS 45-Minute English Language Arts Block: Expected Daily Plan for Grades 6-12
Readers or Writer's Workshop**

**Opening
(Whole Group 10-15 minutes)**

Mini-Lesson:

Instruction may be:
Strategies
Skills

Teacher work:

Provides the standard
Sets students up to learn with a guiding question
Gives the connection/purpose
Models/Teaches
Guided Practice-Monitor and support students' work
Model or facilitate book discussions

Student work:

Listen to the teacher
Follow along with lesson/work being modeled by the teacher
Guided Practice-Practice what the teacher has modeled

**Work Time
(Differentiated Small Group Instruction 30-35 minutes)**

Teacher work:

Conducts Guided Reading/Writing Groups or Strategy Groups
Assesses using Running Records
Conferences with students
Provides ad hoc instruction based on student needs

Student work:

Read/write independently
Read/write with a partner
Read/write with the teacher in guided reading/writing groups
Participate in literature circles/book

**Closing
(Whole Group 5-10 minutes)**

Teacher work:

Listens to students' sharing
Assesses student progress

Student work:

Share and celebrate their reading /writing work
Articulate what has worked well for them while reading/writing
Tell how the mini-lesson (skill/strategy) has helped improve you as a reader

**Skills Block to Support Enhancement of Reading Skills
(Additional Time beyond the 45 minutes)**

**DCPS 90-Minute English Language Arts Block: Expected Daily Plan for Grades 6-12
Readers or Writer's Workshop**

**Opening
(Whole Group 15-20 minutes)**

Mini-Lesson:

Instruction may be:
Strategies
Skills

Teacher work:

Provides the standard
Sets students up to learn with a guiding question
Gives the connection/purpose
Models/Teaches
Guided Practice-Monitor and support students' work
Model or facilitate book discussions

Students work:

Listen to the teacher
Follow along with lesson/work being modeled by the teacher
Guided Practice-Practice what the teacher has modeled

**Work Time
(Differentiated Small Group Instruction 45-60 minutes)**

Teacher work:

Conducts Guided Reading Groups or Strategy Groups
Assesses using Running Records
Conferences with students
Provides ad hoc instruction based on student needs

Students work:

Read/write independently
Read/write with a partner
Read/write with the teacher in guided reading/writing groups
Participate in literature circles/book

**Closing
(Whole Group 5-10 minutes)**

Teacher work:

Listens to students' sharing
Assesses student progress

Student work:

Share and celebrate their reading /writing work
Articulate what has worked well for them while reading/writing
Tell how the mini-lesson (skill/strategy) has helped improve you as a reader

**Skills Block to Support Enhancement of Reading Skills
(Additional Time beyond the 90 minutes)**

DCPS Literacy Support

Multiple district offices offer school-based support in the area of literacy to improve teaching and learning. Additionally, other outside consultants provide support.

School Based Support	District Support	Other Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Teacher • Reading Coach • Reading Teacher • Library Media Specialist • School Technology Contact • Support Facilitator • RtI Leadership Team • Reading Leadership Team • Department Chair • Special Education Teacher • Instructional Coach • English as a Second Language (ESOL) Teacher • Paraprofessional • FAIR Master Trainers • School Psychologist • Speech Pathologist • School Social Worker • School-based Mentors/Partners • Administrator/School Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District/Cluster Reading Specialist • English Language Arts Curriculum Supervisors • ESOL Curriculum Specialist • District Library Media Specialists • Instructional Technology Techs • Special Education Supervisors • Special Education Program Support Staff • World Language Supervisor • Research and Accountability • Secondary Intensive Reading Coordinator • Response to Intervention Coordinator • Florida Assessment in Reading Coordinator • Pearson Data Analyst- Literacy Curriculum Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schultz Center for Teaching and Learning • Lastinger Center • Educational Directions LLC

*Note: Support systems vary from school to school. Each District Office home page from the above table will include a hyperlink.