

MERSD Literacy Update

12/15/20

Dr. Julie Riley



State of Literacy: USA, DESE, & MERSD

DESE Strategic Plan for Literacy: Our purpose

This plan describes how we will work towards realizing our ambitious vision. This work is critical for two reasons. **First, student ELA achievement in Massachusetts is stagnant.** The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed no significant difference in Massachusetts 4th grade reading achievement in 2017 compared to 2007. While Massachusetts currently leads the nation in reading achievement on NAEP, other states have accelerated growth over the last ten years, and particular student subgroups in other states have already surpassed their Massachusetts counterparts.

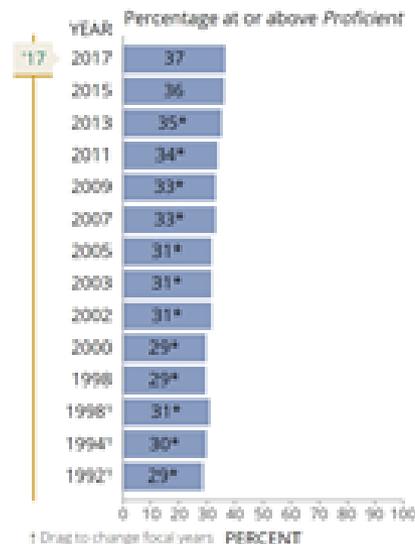
Furthermore, a recent report from the Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership exposed the reality that Massachusetts is only “**number one for some.**” While we are at the top on NAEP, that ranking conceals inequitable achievement among student groups. On the most recent NAEP reading assessment, 4th and 8th grade Black and Hispanic students in Massachusetts attained the same score as white students *in the lowest-performing state in the nation.* **A strengthened educational program in ELA/Literacy will contribute to closing the “opportunity gap” and enable ALL students in Massachusetts to reach their full potential as learners.**

NAEP Data on Proficient Readers

Nationally...Here is What We Know

The chart below lists the percentages of fourth-grade students performing at or above PROFICIENT achievement levels 1992-2017
Trends in fourth-grade NAEP reading achievement-level results

Nationally,
NAEP data
shows a
10 year
stagnation
in reading attainment
of grade 4 students



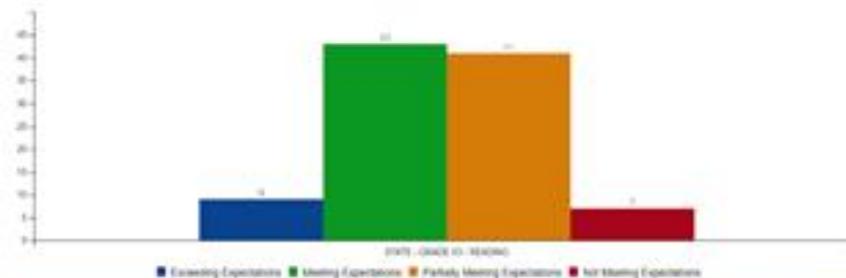
Massachusetts,
data
shows
a similar
stagnation:
1998: 223
to
2017: 236

MA ELA: 53% Proficient in Gr 3

Massachusetts 2018 Data

Next Generation MCAS Tests 2018
Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level for Massachusetts
Data Last Updated on September 27, 2018.

[View about this data](#)



| Grade and Subject | Meeting or Exceeding Expectations | Exceeding Expectations | Meeting Expectations | Partially Meeting Expectations | Not Meeting Expectations | No. of Students Included | Avg. Student Score | Avg. SDP | Included in Avg. SDP |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------------|
| | State | State | State | State | State | | | | |
| GRADE 03 - READING | 53 | 8 | 43 | 41 | 7 | 89,329 | 502.2 | N/A | N/A |
| GRADE 03 - MATHEMATICS | 53 | 13 | 43 | 38 | 13 | 89,436 | 505.6 | N/A | N/A |
| GRADE 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 53 | 12 | 43 | 38 | 9 | 71,726 | 501.9 | 50.0 | 57,278 |
| GRADE 04 - MATHEMATICS | 48 | 7 | 41 | 36 | 13 | 71,750 | 497.9 | 50.1 | 57,493 |
| GRADE 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 56 | 9 | 48 | 38 | 8 | 72,121 | 507.9 | 50.1 | 57,870 |
| GRADE 05 - MATHEMATICS | 48 | 8 | 41 | 34 | 13 | 72,162 | 497.9 | 50.0 | 57,690 |
| GRADE 06 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 51 | 10 | 45 | 37 | 13 | 70,968 | 501.9 | 50.1 | 58,387 |
| GRADE 06 - MATHEMATICS | 47 | 7 | 41 | 40 | 11 | 70,994 | 498.6 | 50.0 | 58,276 |
| GRADE 07 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 48 | 9 | 38 | 35 | 15 | 70,527 | 497.9 | 50.0 | 58,527 |
| GRADE 07 - MATHEMATICS | 48 | 7 | 38 | 40 | 14 | 70,511 | 497.9 | 50.0 | 58,572 |
| GRADE 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 51 | 10 | 41 | 34 | 15 | 71,732 | 496.1 | 50.0 | 57,918 |
| GRADE 08 - MATHEMATICS | 50 | 8 | 41 | 36 | 13 | 71,749 | 498.8 | 50.0 | 57,838 |
| GRADES 03 - 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | 53 | 8 | 42 | 38 | 11 | 426,268 | 502.9 | 50.0 | 333,500 |
| GRADES 03 - 08 - MATHEMATICS | 48 | 7 | 42 | 40 | 12 | 426,545 | 498.4 | 50.0 | 333,818 |

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement-level.aspx?level=03&subject=03&scorecode=000000&score=0018&subjectcode=03>

DESE Mass Literacy

The Background

- In the Massachusetts school system today, some of our children receive the instruction and support they need to develop a strong foundation for literacy — and some don't. **Only about half of Massachusetts third-graders today are meeting literacy expectations.** This statistic reflects not student effort or ability, but opportunity and support to learn. **To achieve equity, every student in our schools must receive the high-quality curriculum and evidence-based instruction they need and deserve.**
- Starting in 2018, staff in the Department's Office of Literacy and Humanities engaged educators and other stakeholders statewide to develop the Department's Literacy Strategic Plan, which is entitled *An Excellent Education in ELA and Literacy for All*. This strategic plan responds to the concerns of educators along with ELA/Literacy achievement data. As a result, it identifies two areas of focus for the Department's instructional support for English Language Arts and Literacy: high-quality core instruction and evidence-based early literacy.

A Focus on Evidence-Based Early Literacy

- To address the need for enhanced early literacy instruction, over the next several years the Department will issue guidance for early literacy programming paired with implementation supports, including resources, professional development, and grants. The guidance on this website serves three purposes:
 - To provide information about literacy acquisition and instruction that is based in current evidence
 - To describe evidence-based literacy practices that DESE seeks to see used in schools, and taught in educator preparation programs
 - To compile quality instructional resources and useful references to support educators.

DESE Mass Literacy

DESE Literacy Goals and Expectations Statement

Being able to read, write, and speak are essential for full participation in our society. Literacy affords access to ideas, opportunities, and so much more. But in Massachusetts's school systems today, many children do not receive the instruction and support they need to develop a strong foundation for literacy in grades preK-3.

Mass Literacy is a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. Evidence-based instruction, provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally responsive and sustaining, will put our youngest students on a path toward literacy for life.

Massachusetts Literacy Guide: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/>

Reading Stages

Pre - reading Initial Reading Confirmation and Fluency Reading for Learning Multiple Viewpoints Construction and Reconstruction

Core Reading Systems

Phonemic Awareness
 How Reading Works
 Word Identification
 Sight Words
 Phonics
 Vocabulary
 Comprehension
 Fluency

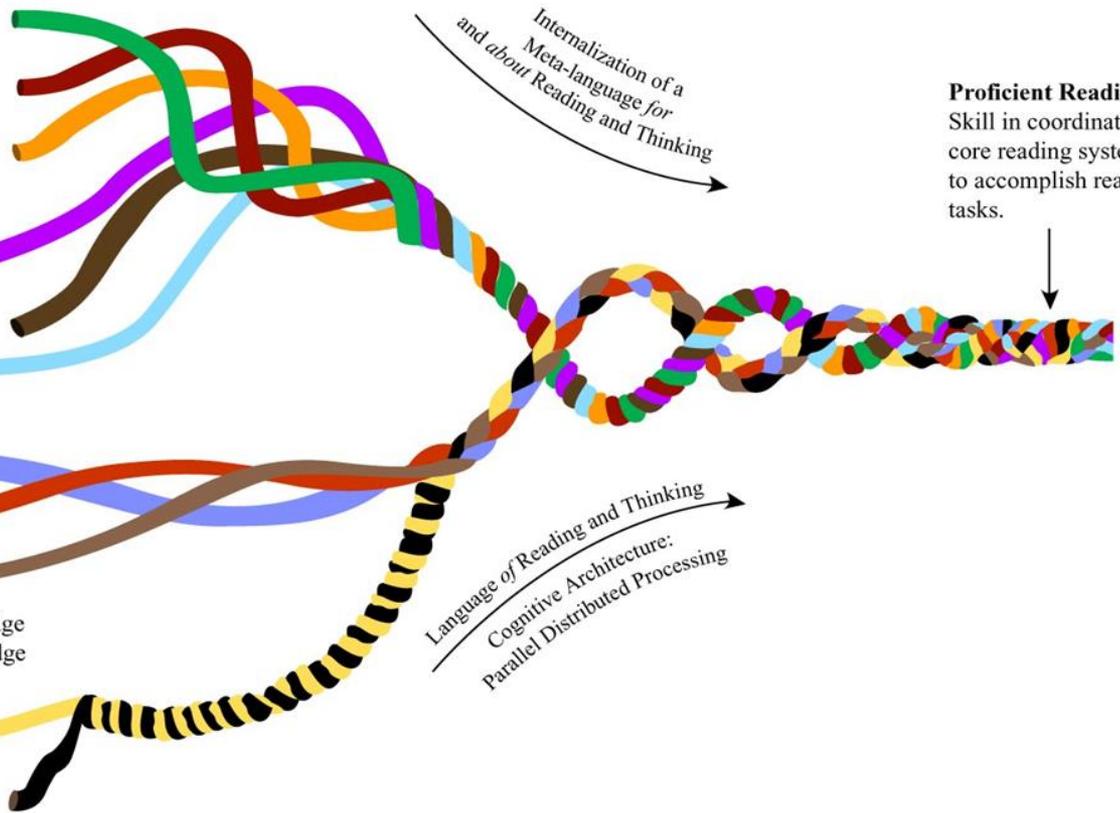
Mental Systems

Attention
 Perception
 Memory
 General Knowledge
 Domain Knowledge
 Word Meaning
 Language
 Syntax
 Semantics
 Thinking and Reasoning
 Comprehension
 Inferencing
 Interpretation
 Understanding

*Internalization of a
 Meta-language for
 and about Reading and Thinking*

*Language of Reading and Thinking
 Cognitive Architecture:
 Parallel Distributed Processing*

Proficient Reading:
 Skill in coordinating
 core reading systems
 to accomplish reading
 tasks.



DESE-Adopted Guidelines for Early Literacy

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Components of the Core Literacy Block</p> |  <p>Skills for Early Reading</p> |
|  <p>Students Experiencing Reading Difficulties</p> |  <p>Leading a Multi-tiered System of Support</p> |
|  <p>Pathway to Equity in Early Literacy</p> <p><i>"Evidence-based instruction and culturally responsive practice are both essential to harness, support, and cultivate the talents and knowledge of all our students."</i></p> | |

Components of the Core Literacy Block

The core literacy block includes three main components: Foundational Skills, Engaging with Complex Text, and Writing. Oral Language is the bedrock, and differentiated instruction happens throughout.

| Foundational Skills | Engaging with Complex Text | Writing |
|---|---|---|
| <p>The core literacy block includes systematic instruction with active practice in foundational skills every day in grades preK-3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-K Kindergarten Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 | <p>The core literacy block includes reading or listening to authentic and meaningful texts every day in grades preK-3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choosing and Using Complex Text Reading for Understanding Responding to Text | <p>The core literacy block includes systematic writing instruction with active practice every day in grades preK-3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence Structure & Conventions Craft of Writing Writing Process |
| <p>Oral Language</p> <p>Oral language develops through speaking and listening interactions, engaging with text, and explicit language instruction across all components of the literacy block.</p> <p>Vocabulary, Syntax, and Grammar</p> <p>All three core components can include differentiated instruction, such as small group instruction, independent, or center-based activities, depending on student needs.</p> | | |

DESE Mass Literacy-Next Steps

- GLEAM Grant: 5-year implementation grant for K-12 literacy support and instruction
 - 20 million state-funded grant to support literacy curriculum, support, and training
 - Early & adolescent literacy
- Regional: Northshore Leadership Series for administrators
- State: MASS Superintendents-Representative for Curriculum and Instruction in Literacy-support rollout
- DESE Sponsored Workshops & Webinars from researchers who helped develop the guiding documents
- Massachusetts Literacy Guide:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/>



MASS LITERACY
EMPOWERING educators and students in Massachusetts through evidence-based early literacy

MASS LITERACY WEBINAR SERIES

January 5 - Early Literacy Screening
January 13 - Equity in Early Literacy
January 27 - Early Literacy for Bilingual Students
February 9 - Long-range Development

Time - 3:30-4:15 PM

Join us to learn more about the research and the evidence-based practices featured in the [Mass Literacy Guide](#) from compelling voices in the field.

For more information contact
Steph.M.Kisame@doe.mass.gov

JANUARY 5
Dr. Nadine Cobell
Nadine Cobell is Associate Professor of Research at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School. Dr. Cobell is the Principal Investigator of the Cobell Lab. She spent her expertise as a research scholar in the development of the [Mass Literacy Guide](#).

JANUARY 13
Emily Hanford
Emily Hanford is a senior correspondent and producer for NPR's *Hidden Brain*. She has covered education for more than a decade. Her audio documentary and article, *How Words Work*, won a 2016 Peabody Award. It is based on a public service report from the Education Week Association.

JANUARY 27
Dr. Mariella Foltz
Dr. Foltz is Associate Professor of the Lynch School of Education, Boston College. Her research interests include bilingualism, oral story language and literacy development, and early childhood education. Dr. Foltz is one of DESE's Literacy Champions and serves on the advisory committee, steering, and content of the [Mass Literacy Guide](#).

FEBRUARY 9
Dr. Silvia Cobelli
Dr. Silvia Cobelli is Assistant Professor of education at the Florida Center for Reading Research, Florida State University. Her work focuses on how to strengthen children's language and literacy skills to support learning and literacy development and social recognition. Dr. Cobelli has expertise as a research scholar in the development of the [Mass Literacy Guide](#).

MERSD Summer 2020

Summer Literacy Program



Program Description

- Collaboration between YMCA, MERSD, and Hill for Literacy
- Summer program designed to support elementary-aged struggling readers
- Trained existing MERSD staff in evidence-based instructional practices

Virtual PD training on discrete set of reading skills including:

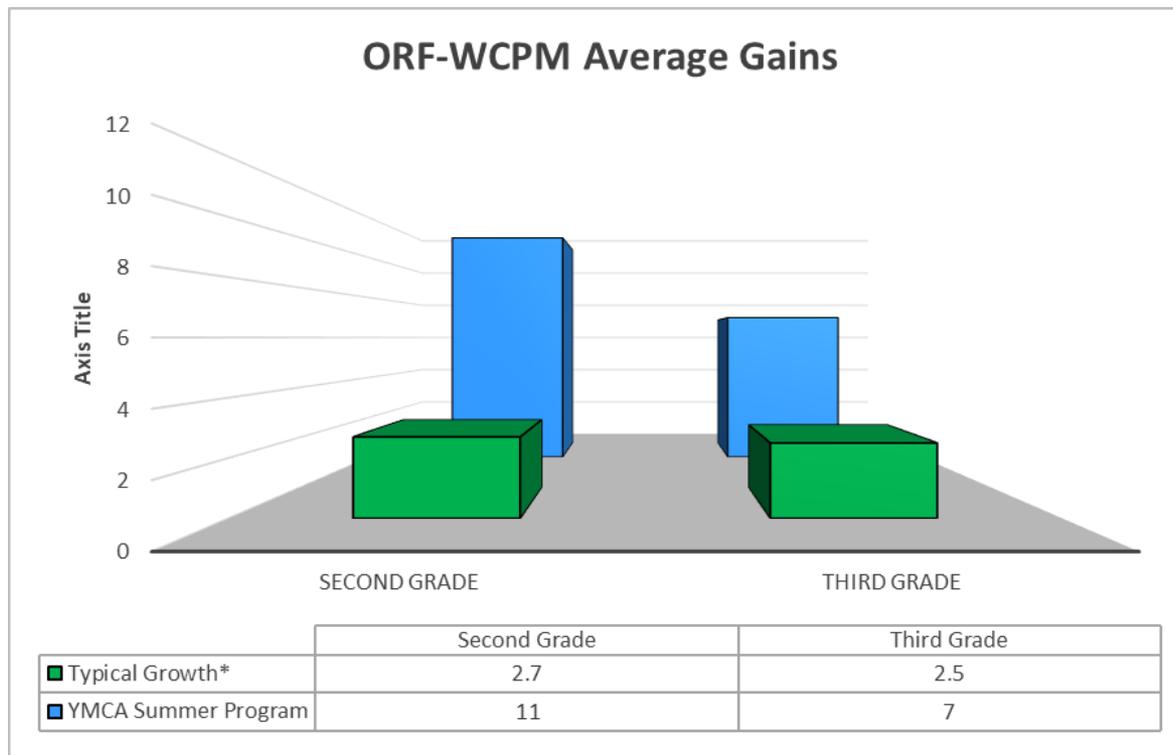
- Skills for Early Reading & facilitation of high quality reading instruction
- Development of routines for systematic instruction with active practices in Foundational Skills
- Developed lesson plans which included modeling, guided practice and corrective feedback
- Instructional routines set to target needs in: phonological awareness, sight word knowledge, phonics and decoding, fluent text reading, reading comprehension, and encoding.
- All instruction was delivered remotely via Zoom

MERSD Program Structure and Results

- 21 rising second and third graders from Memorial and Essex participated in the summer school program
- Students were identified by school personnel and/or parental sign ups to close significant gaps in their literacy development.
- Students were assessed during the first week of the program and grouped according to grade and skill level.
- Throughout the four week program, students received small group instruction three days per week for 30 minutes.

MERSD Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)- Words Correctly Read per Minute (WCPM)

Pre-post data indicates that students made significant gains across measures of decoding, word reading and oral reading fluency.



(*ORF-WCPM score is the number of words correct per minute on passages at a second or third grade reading level.)

Teacher Feedback

The following quotes were gathered from the two teachers regarding their experience during the YMCA reading program and the impact on their teaching as a result of the training and coaching model.

- I really appreciated all the training and guidance we received from the HILL.
- The gradual release of responsibility model of coaching helped me to build my confidence so that I wasn't overwhelmed with learning the whole routine at once.
- I was nervous about this at first, by now I am so glad I did it!
- The teaching routines moves at a quick pace which helps keep students actively engaged, especially remotely.
- I can easily see myself incorporating these skills into my lessons.
- Students learned to use the strategies on their own to sound out and blend unfamiliar words.
- The PD was more valuable than many other classes or workshops.
- I loved feeling the support of the coaches so that I did not have to listen to a lecture and go teach. The lesson was broken down and I mastered step by step before moving on.
- The materials we used were so easy to understand and use.
- The teaching strategies involved error correction procedures that helped all students to feel supported and successful.
- I will take everything I learned back to my classroom this fall.

Parent Feedback

- Eight respondents on a parent satisfaction survey proved to be overwhelmingly positive.
- One parent shared, “the online instructors were very engaging and kept [our child] focused and interested.”
- Another parent enthusiastically shared that their child “was engaged and the teachers were fabulous!”
- A third parent stated, “My husband and I were very impressed. To offer a complementary program to families to keep their kids reading out loud and in practice plus offering the Camp Dory option. It was just all splendid! So Appreciated!”
- In the additional comments section, the same parent added that they were “very pleased with how well organized and how well run this was. Thank YOU so much to those behind the scenes of this Literacy program, those at Camp Dory, the Y, and all who made the literacy /camp opportunity possible. It was a bright light in an otherwise uneventful summer of social distancing.” These comments were a few of many that conveyed that program met the needs of the families whose children attended.

Final Thoughts on Summer Literacy Learning



Over the last decade, parents, researchers, educators and policy-makers have raised concerns about the nature of literacy instruction.

At the same time, extraordinary scientific progress has revealed insights into learning processes that are critical for supporting struggling readers and those with dyslexia.

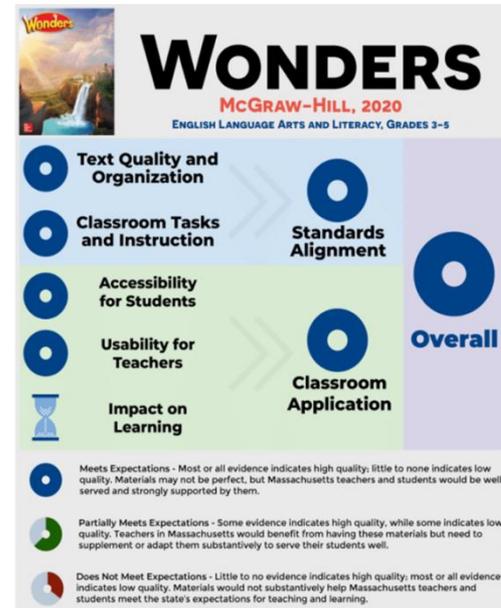
Initiatives like this summer program highlight the effective literacy instruction for educators by simultaneously building teachers' capacity, lesson planning, delivery of instructional strategies, and supporting the needs of various young readers.

Increasing literacy skills to a level where all students have the tools for achievement is not a simple task, but it is perhaps one of the most critical issues facing our society and it is certainly worth our investment.

MERSD Elements of Core Literacy Instruction

- **Whole Group:** Engages children in standards-aligned lessons that build language and vocabulary, develop close reading skills, and learn to write analytically.
- **Small Group:** Students benefit from small-group targeted support during teacher-guided small-group lessons. Teachers use data to group students and plan targeted lessons to meet students at their level of need.
- **Independent Practice:** During small-group time, students practices skills and extend learning by engaging in workstation activities, independent reading, or independent writing. Children might work in groups, pairs, or on their own to complete activities at workstations or online.
- Each unit of instruction focuses on high-interest themes with lessons that help to introduce and reinforce skills and strategies, including strong phonics and foundational skills at the early grades.

Wonders is an evidence- and research-based English Language Arts program designed to support children in Grades K-6 to build a strong foundation in literacy in all foundational aspects of literacy.



WONDERS
MCGRAW-HILL, 2020
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY, GRADES 3-5

Text Quality and Organization
Classroom Tasks and Instruction
Accessibility for Students
Usability for Teachers
Impact on Learning

Standards Alignment
Classroom Application

Overall

Meets Expectations - Most or all evidence indicates high quality; little to none indicates low quality. Materials may not be perfect, but Massachusetts teachers and students would be well served and strongly supported by them.

Partially Meets Expectations - Some evidence indicates high quality, while some indicates low quality. Teachers in Massachusetts would benefit from having these materials but need to supplement or adapt them substantively to serve their students well.

Does Not Meet Expectations - Little to no evidence indicates high quality; most or all evidence indicates low quality. Materials would not substantively help Massachusetts teachers and students meet the state's expectations for teaching and learning.

Research Background-Ed Reports

The materials for Wonders K-1-2 meet the expectations of alignment, including instruction and practice to develop grade-level skills and literacy understanding.

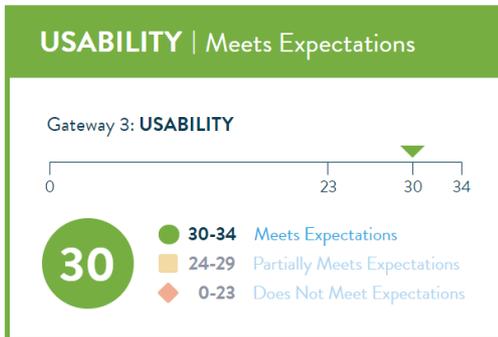
The materials include many high quality texts and tasks that support students' development of literacy skills.

The materials are vertically aligned and organized to build knowledge of topics and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate integrated skills. Instruction for foundational skills includes the core components necessary.

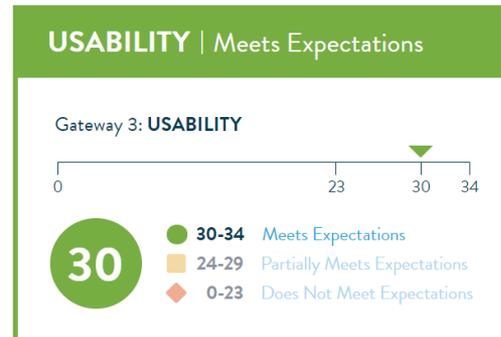
<https://www.edreports.org/>

Ed Reports K-2

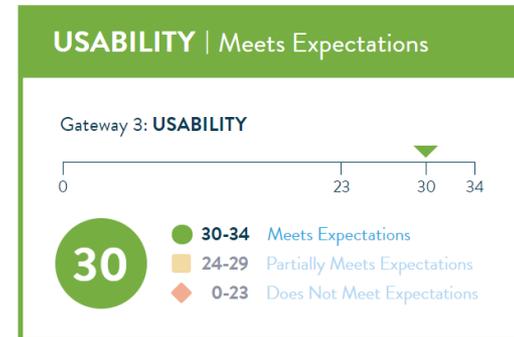
Kindergarten



First Grade

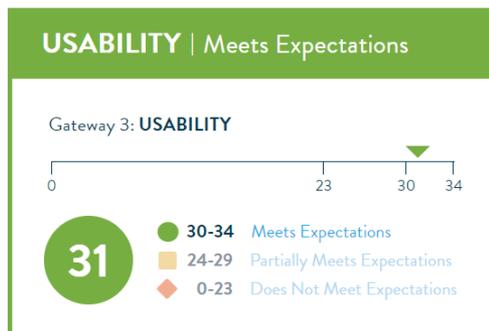


Second Grade

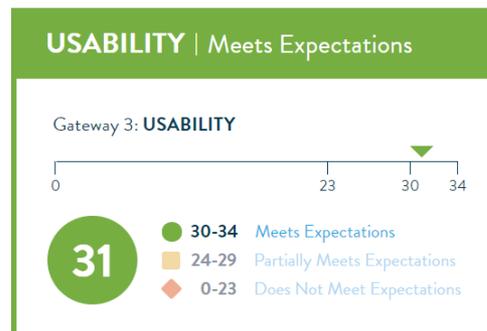


Ed Reports 3-5

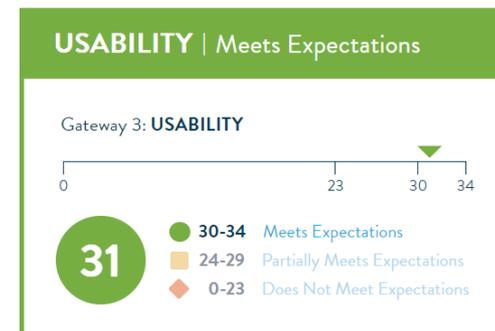
Third Grade



Fourth Grade



Fifth Grade





MERSD Implementation

August 2020-December 2020

- Wonders Materials Ordered and Delivered
- Professional Development for Staff:
 - September 8
 - September 30
 - October 2
 - October 16
 - October 30
 - December 7
 - Grade-Level Meeting Dates (October-December)
- October & November: Drop-In Sessions with Wonders Coach
- November & December: School-based Coaching
- Created Scope and Sequence Unit Guides for Remote Learning (K-5)

Thank you!

Next Steps:

- Continue to assess our data, implement, and train staff
- Focus on DESE research on science of reading
- Assess the application of K-5 elementary implementation and the bridge to adolescent literacy
- Determine application of practice of reading skills to 6-12 content area literacy