



October 7, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Subject: Dyslexia Update and Ready to Read Act Implementation

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide updated information on the work of the Howard County Public School System on implementation of the Ready to Read Act and the next steps to support students with reading difficulties and dyslexia.

During the SY19-20, HCPSS staff collaborated with colleagues from across the state of Maryland, community advisory groups, and colleagues from the non-public sector to share best practices to improve instruction for students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties. This collaboration has continued into the SY20-21.

The following are the updates to the continued focus on the implementation of the universal screener tool, the changes to first instruction, interventions that support students who demonstrate reading difficulties, and professional learning experiences for staff.

Universal Screening and Assessment of Reading

The Howard County Public School System collaborated with families and community members to identify a universal screener for students in kindergarten and other grade levels based on the requirements of the Senate Bill 0734 bill. The screener that was selected was Dibels 8. The purpose of the screener is to identify if students are at risk for reading difficulties. This screener is aligned to the expectation of Senate Bill 0734 “**Students With Reading Difficulties - Screenings and Interventions.**”

During the SY19-20, Reading Specialists and Reading Support Teachers were trained on administering the screener. The screening process started in February 2020; however, not all students were screened due to the closing of schools. This initial screening provided an opportunity for calibration of the screening process. During the SY20-21, while the bill requires one screening administration, HCPSS will administer the assessment three times during the school year. In accordance with the bill, parents of students who have been identified as at risk for reading difficulties will be notified and students will receive supplemental instruction. Progress monitoring for students receiving supplemental supports will occur using the progress monitoring tools that align with the specific interventions that have been selected for the students. Progress reports will be shared with families every four weeks.

The chart below provides the timeline for screening for the SY20-21.

Timeframe	Action	Who
10/26/2020 - 11/20/2020	Beginning of year (BOY) screener administration including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all kindergarten students • first grade students not previously screened in HCPSS or a Maryland LEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening cohorts (Central Office, RSTs, Reading Specialists, Interventionists) will administer assessment
11/30/2020 - 12/18/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data entered into Synergy database • results analyzed • students identified for supplemental instruction • interventions or supplemental instruction selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Specialists • Kindergarten Teachers • School Administrators • Special Educators • Interventionists • Reading Support Teachers
12/23/2020	Notification to parents of screener results, description of intervention, and area of focus for students identified at risk for reading difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teacher • Interventionists
1/4/2021	Interventions begin for identified students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected staff
2/16/2021 - 2/26/2021	Middle of year screener administration including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten students who scored in the intensive or strategic range on BOY screener 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Specialists • Reading Support Teachers • Central Office
5/17/2021 - 5/28/2021	End of year screener administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten students who scored in the intensive or strategic range on BOY screener • Kindergarten students who do not show mastery of grade level skills as measured through Being a Reader (BAR) assessments and Lexia Core5 data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Specialists • Reading Support Teachers • Central Office

The screening information from the SY19-20 will be used as a data point for determining interventions for this school year. Guidance will be given to school teams and Reading Specialists on what data to use to determine appropriate interventions for students (Appendix A).

First Instruction - Meeting the Needs of Students with Dyslexia in the Classroom

Beginning in 2019, HCPSS moved from a guided reading instructional approach in primary grades to reading instruction that includes a [structured literacy approach](#). [Being a Reader by the Center for Collaborative Classrooms](#) has been fully implemented in kindergarten through grade 2. Being a Reader is a comprehensive literacy program that includes explicit, systematic phonics instruction with multi-sensory components that are directly applied in decodable text. This program provides expectations and lessons for all students and comes with accompanying assessment materials to monitor student growth in phonics, comprehension, and fluency. Professional learning has been provided to all teachers in grades K-2 that support appropriate instructional practices and progress monitoring.

To support virtual instruction, the Elementary Language Arts program adopted [Lexia Core5](#). Lexia Core5 is a research-proven program which provides explicit, systematic, personalized learning in the six areas of reading instruction (phonics, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency), targeting skill gaps as they emerge, and providing teachers with the data and student-specific resources they need for individual or small-group instruction. Lexia Core5 is aligned to a [structured literacy approach](#) for students in grades PreK-5.

All elementary classroom teachers have participated in asynchronous professional learning experiences on the [Science of Reading and Structured Literacy](#). This training was provided as an asynchronous module in September, 2020. The teachers will participate in asynchronous training on dyslexia in November, 2020.

Academic Plan and Interventions

HCPSS continues to identify specific, intensive, and targeted reading interventions to support each student with specific needs at each grade level.

HCPSS has created a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) where the performance of a student is used to determine the level of student support required. Collaboration with individual school teams (Administrators, Special Educators, Reading Specialists, Reading Support Teachers, SLPs, Psychologists, etc.) will occur in order to engage in student-by-student discussions to meet the needs of each struggling reader. All parties are currently receiving ongoing professional learning on the MTSS process throughout the school year.

Currently, the following interventions are used to support students in reading:

- SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words), grades K- 12
- Wilson Reading System, grades 3-12

- Visualizing and Verbalizing, grades 1-5
- Really Great Reading multisensory phonics interventions program, grades 3-8
- System 44 and Read 180 reading programs, grades 6-8
- Achieve 3000 and Actively Learn programs, grades 9-12

The Cares Grant has provided an opportunity to provide specific training to 75 Elementary Reading Specialists and 55 Special Educators with an in-depth understanding of IMSE's Orton-Gillingham methodology. Staff will focus primarily on phonological awareness and phonics, along with encoding/decoding, and learn how to teach fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension using the Orton-Gillingham philosophy of multi-sensory, sequential, direct instruction.

During virtual instruction, HCPSS continues to utilize these programs during first instruction and intervention at the elementary level.

	First Instruction	Supplemental Intervention	Intensive Intervention and/or Tutoring
Synchronous Instructional Materials	Foundational Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a Reader instruction • Lessons from Lexia Core5 Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive Read Alouds • Being a Reader small group instruction • Standard aligned lessons • CommonLit • ReadWorks Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a Writer lessons 	Foundational Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIPPS • Really Great Reading • Heggerty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ coming soon Comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Specific Lessons (Canvas resources) 	Foundational Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIPPS • Really Great Reading • Wilson • Foundations • IMSE Orton-Gillingham approach
Asynchronous Instructional Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lexia Core5 • Independent Daily Reading (IDR) 		

During the SY20-21, HCPSS will focus on the following initiatives and next steps. HCPSS will:

- launch an HCPSS family communication webpage to provide a central space where families can easily access information and resources around reading difficulties and dyslexia (January, 2021);
- review and select assessment tools through the special education process for diagnosis of dyslexia in relation to a Specific Learning Disability (SLD);
- develop professional learning materials to promote understanding and teaching students that learn differently, make the intervention decisions, and provide instructional practices, as well as aligning the same message across our offices;
- develop an “Intervention and Problem Solving” online resource for teachers and interventionists;
- acquire assessment tools applied through the special education process to identify dyslexia in relation to a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), for grades K-8;
- provide continued professional learning to better equip classroom teachers and Reading Specialists to recognize dyslexia indicators and make instructional decisions;
- establish clear staff and community messages about dyslexia diagnosis and identification;
- develop an evaluation plan that includes measures of success for universal screening implementation;
- outline next steps for identifying and supporting secondary struggling readers in first instruction across content areas; and,
- form a partnership with [Jemicy School](#) to provide additional training about dyslexia to staff.

For more information regarding how we are moving forward in supporting students with dyslexia, please contact Bill Barnes, Chief Academic Officer.

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Board of Education Office

**Entry Criteria for Elementary School Reading Intervention
Grade 1**

Rationale:
When considering students for virtual reading interventions, Reading Specialists should use the most current data available meeting the students in their areas of need for the SY20-21 Multiple data points should be considered for all students using prior knowledge about students while also honoring the new data that has been collected to include students with the greatest instructional needs.
Consider multiple data points when making placement decisions
Data Points:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a Reader Assessment • DIBELS 8 Composite Score • Lexia Core5 Instructional Level • History: Reading Interventions, IIT • English Language Learners should only be considered if they have a WIDA ACCESS Language Proficiency level 3 or 4 <p>Intervention Options Foundational Skills: <i>SIPPs</i></p>

Entrance Criteria:

Data Point:	Data Collection Time Period:	Highest Priority:	Lower Priority:
Being a Reader Data:	Fall 2020	Letter Name, Set 1	Set 2
DIBELS 8 Score:	Winter 2020	Intensive	Strategic
Lexia Core5 Data:	Current	Level 1	Levels 2, 3, 4, 5
History:	SY19-20	Students with data points one or more years below grade level Currently going through the IIT process for foundational skills	Receiving an in-school intervention in March, 2020