

Lowell Area Schools  
Targeted Literacy Plan - 35j literacy grant

Lowell Area Schools literacy plan includes the following components:

- Increasing K-2 phonological awareness and phonics instructional knowledge and purchase decodable books
- Increasing 3-5 vocabulary through the use of content rich reading materials and purchase a variety of classroom materials
- Purchase a new K-5 literacy curriculum supported by the science of reading

A pilot program has been established to consider and recommend a new primary resource for ELA instruction in grades K-5. Our goal is to select from one of two curriculums by the end of January, 2025 and begin use of the chosen materials to start the 25/26 school year. Lowell is piloting CKLA, a program produced by Amplify and Open Court Reading, made by McGraw Hill. We have a total of 18 elementary teachers engaged in the current pilot.

Lowell continues to assess reading in grades K-5 by using the benchmark assessments noted below:

- NWEA MAP Reading Assessments (proctored fall, winter, and spring)
- Acadience Reading Assessments (proctored fall, winter, and spring)

The Lowell Area Schools literacy plan to target identified focus areas to address gaps in literacy practices is to continue the practices outlined in the Read By Grade Three Law for all grades. We will continue to utilize our assessment system to screen and diagnose gaps and use that data to target specific areas of professional development as required by the law.

Professional development would include focus on the state defined literacy essential document, Knowledge Matters/Science of Reading podcasts to spread awareness among staff, and synchronous training pertaining to the new literacy curriculum. Other professional development options include LETRS training, training through IMSE, and EduPath. We will track and monitor each staff member's attendance through the use of Google Forms and Surveys.

At present, our district has engaged in a number of Science of Reading strategies. Grade Level Problem Solving teams exist for each grade level in elementary schools. Strategies pertaining to SOR and data analysis are utilized throughout our district during these collaborative meetings. UFLI was purchased for all K-3 teachers in order to increase phonics skills for students and to create consistency amongst the instructional staff. In addition, our district is facilitating a Reading Project in order to define essential reading standards, learning targets, "I can" statements, common formative assessments, and curriculum maps. Finally, we have a K-12 Reading Vertical Team in place to study and provide consistency for best literacy practices on a tier 1 level. Reading improvement is one of our district's three school improvement goals.

Our district's PD plans will support our current district's efforts to improve literacy. Podcasts, based on the Science of Reading or Knowledge Matters, training for a new curriculum, etc. will inform staff of literacy best practices such as language comprehension, word recognition, providing abundant reading materials, instructional routines and resources, and in supporting educators in understanding the types assessment practices needed to identify students for support or enrichment. Increasing staff knowledge, as described, serves to address the "how" portion of our district's plan. We are moving forward with researching a new literacy curriculum because our current primary resource does not sufficiently match Science of Reading aspects.

We initially would use 35j funds to create choices for staff development to increase knowledge of the Science of Reading. Our district's K-5 focuses on building phonics skills, increasing phonological awareness, and increasing vocabulary through the usage of content rich materials in grades 3-5. In year two, our district's efforts to build a comprehensive literacy program would include the purchase of a new literacy curriculum with training for such. At present, Lowell Area Schools use the Units of Study as our primary resource.

We currently use Acadience and NWEA (MAP) to identify learning gaps in our current literacy practices. We plan to continue to use these tools to assess student achievement, areas of need, and/or areas for student enrichment. Our Reading Project grade level teams are also standardizing common formative assessments based on essential state standards.

As reading is one of the district's school improvement goals, a needs assessment was completed and is included in the MICIP plan. The needs assessment was based on the "5 Why's" tool as our data in literacy was considered. Several potential needs were identified as well as gap areas in reading.

Our goal is to use 35j funds to eventually purchase a new literacy curriculum. That said, our district continues to work on the "how" and "why" in light of our overall literacy improvement process. Our Reading Project, the district's K-12 Reading Team, work with our local intermediate school district, and ongoing staff development through our PLC systems will increase fundamental knowledge of all pertinent staff. This will better inform our curricular purchase in year two of the funding.