



Drexel R-IV School District  
Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Kindergarten - Eighth Grade

Approved by the  
Drexel R-IV Board of Education  
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## **Introduction**

The Oxford Dictionary's definition of literacy is the ability to read and write. It sounds simple, but, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 21% to 23% of adults in the United States were at "the lowest levels of literacy, unable to read with the fluency, accuracy, and comprehension necessary to decipher newspapers, health guidelines, schedules, or manuals." This is not what we want for our students and their futures.

That is precisely why the Drexel R-IV School District is implementing a Literacy Plan as a resource for parents, caregivers, teachers, and administrators across the district. One of the main goals of this plan is to address the crucial role early education plays in a child's literacy development. Studies say that "if a student does not learn to read by the end of first grade, they are likely to remain poor readers and suffer academic difficulties across all subjects" (Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986; Olson, Keenan, Byrne, and Samuelsson, 2014; Sparks, Patton, and Murdoch, 2014). In regards to this statistic, the Literacy Plan will be used as an informational and/or resourceful guide for teachers and administrators to use to help with instruction and alignment of goals.

The Drexel R-IV Literacy Plan is organized around the same five components as the Missouri plan: Standards-Based Curriculum; Leadership & Sustainability; Intentional Instruction, Intervention, & Enrichment; Assessment; and Partnerships.

### **Goals**

The Drexel R-IV Literacy Plan is designed with these goals in mind:

- Align curriculum with the Missouri Learning Standards.
- Assess literacy needs through screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments.
- Provide evidence-based instruction that aligns with each student's individual needs.
- Leaders at every level (building and classroom) will communicate their findings about literacy instruction, promote understanding and correct any falsehoods about the curriculum, instruction, and resources.
- All Drexel staff members will commit to the belief that early literacy achievement is key.

### **Action Steps**

1. Continue professional development that provides opportunities for teachers to learn and develop proper instruction and curriculum (LETRS training for K-6)
2. Continue to develop curriculum that aligns to the Missouri Learning Standards
3. Use a multitude of assessments to gather data on our students
4. Separate the students into tiers based on their performance on said assessments

5. Use further assessments to narrow down the issues the students are facing.
6. Provide targeted instruction using evidence-based instruction
7. Meet and reassess monthly with building and grade level teams

## **I. Standards-Based Curriculum**

The Drexel School District aligns its curriculum to the Missouri Learning Standards. The Missouri Learning Standards are a set of guidelines educators must follow to “help ensure students learn basic and higher-order skills, including problem solving and critical thinking.” Each standard provides a detailed description of what children, Pre-K-12 should be learning and mastering in order to successfully move forward in their education. There are also examples of activities that teachers can use or model their curriculum after.

Using the Missouri Learning Standards ensures that students are obtaining the appropriate grade-level information and skills. This involves real world skills students must master to obtain their goals. Therefore, Drexel will develop a comprehensive literacy curriculum that aligns with the Missouri Learning Standards for English Language Arts. The curriculum will include explicit instruction in phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Included in our curriculum will be SMART goals for improving literacy skills, based on the results of the needs assessment.

- [Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards \(K-5\)](#)
- [Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards \(6-12\)](#)

## II. Leadership and Sustainability

Building and district leaders are instrumental to developing a successful literacy system. The approach requires a common vision and coordination at all levels of the educational system.

Areas of focus for building and district leaders include:

- **Goals and Vision-** A common understanding and shared commitment to the desired future state (Vision) and the milestones towards the vision (Goals).
- **Policies & Procedures-** Published documents that account for federal and state mandates and provide guidance for new and existing players within the system.
- **Funding & Resources-** Support the entire system and are critical to sustainability. Increasingly, both must be leveraged or shared to maximize scarce funding and human resources.
- **District & School Systems-** Key sites in the delivery of education and improving literacy.
- **Assessment and Data Provide-** Critical feedback on teacher effectiveness and students' strengths and weaknesses
- **Professional Development & Instructional Practices-** Learning opportunities that result in improved teacher, instructional leader, and district leadership knowledge and practice and most importantly, in improvements in student learning outcomes.
- **Core Curriculum & Supplemental Materials-** Content used for literacy instruction for all students and for intervention for those exceeding or not meeting benchmarks. The core curriculum is accessible to all students. Supplemental materials are used to help students meet the benchmarks.

### Classroom Teachers and Educational Specialists

In achieving better literacy for all, the importance of teachers cannot be overstated. The Drexel R-IV District Literacy Plan is designed to support teachers at all levels as they systematically work to support students' learning. As literacy is emphasized in the content areas, literacy becomes a shared expectation.

Drexel's approach includes:

- Effective data-based decision making
- Assessment and feedback at all levels of the system
- Increased coordination and communication of teachers, caregivers, specialists, principals, and the district
- Data-informed planning and resource allocation
- Adaptive, differentiated instruction

**Parents, families, and caregivers**

- Have the knowledge and skills needed to promote optimal child health, development and early learning
- Take an active role in their child's education and educational goals
- Become active partners in governance and provide input to help shape policies and systems
- Communicate the value and importance of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills with their children

### **III. Intentional Instruction, Intervention, and Enrichment**

Drexel's Comprehensive Literacy Plan is based around three main ideas:

- 1) Success in early literacy is essential
- 2) Identify when early intervention is needed
- 3) First a student must *learn to read*, then *s/he can read to learn*

#### **Literacy requires many skills - an integrated cognitive process**

Literacy is not confined only to reading. It is an ongoing process that involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, and critical thinking. All elements are closely interwoven and necessary for a child to be literate and navigate successfully in the world.

#### **Responsive and Differentiated Instruction**

Drexel R-IV uses data to guide instruction and interventions for all students. This multi-level approach integrates standards, assessment and intervention within a school-wide prevention model to maximize student learning.

In the early learning settings, the approach entails responsive caregiving and individual child support. In the classroom setting, teachers identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions based on the student's responsiveness. This process is designed to optimize language and literacy instruction to address and prevent any gaps immediately. Differentiated assessments and instruction are used so that each individual learner receives the intensity of instruction he or she needs.

#### **Multi-level Instructional Framework**

Effective teachers practice differentiated instruction with flexible grouping in small groups. Teachers have small groups for students who need additional support on specific concepts and skills.

- Core Program (Tier I) - All students receive quality core instruction covering all areas of literacy development.
- Strategic Instruction (Tier II) - Supplemental instruction in small groups in addition to the Tier I instruction.
- Intensive Intervention (Tier III) - Targeted intervention to help make progress towards content standards.

This differentiated approach does not end in the classroom. It provides a common language so that educators can collaborate on progress monitoring results and instructional planning in the classroom, and at the district.

## Instruction and Intervention

Effective evidence based teaching practice is critical to improving literacy

outcomes.

## Tools

- **Scientific research-** Provides the latest information and findings on brain development and learning and can help inform instructional practices.
- **High quality materials that can be modified-** Drexel selects instructional materials that align to the district curriculum and supports the Missouri Learning Standards.
- **Technology-** Drexel uses technology to teach technology skills that integrate technology into instruction and assessment and includes access to a variety of technology tools.
- **Monitor progress and respond appropriately-** Drexel utilizes assessment data to monitor and improve instruction through modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and small group work.

## Approach

- **Standards-based instruction-** Drexel aligns curriculum to the Missouri Learning Standards
- **Make learning meaningful-** Drexel is committed to providing positive and meaningful feedback to students.
- **Student-focused learning environments-** Appropriate classroom management principles, processes, and practices foster a safe, positive, student-focused learning environment.
- **Curriculum** is evidence-based and focuses on the diverse needs and literacy abilities of each student.
- **Inform, involve, and collaborate with families and community members** as partners in each child's educational journey and use information about student achievement and performance.
- **Use instructional methods** that foster critical thinking, questioning, inquiry, student decision-making, and independent learning tied to standards.
- **Be creative and collaborative,** develop a solid knowledge about and commitment to the science of reading, literacy instruction and participate in ongoing professional development.

## What are the literacy expectations for our students?

When students enter school, they start by developing foundational skills that will soon become essential literacy skills. The skills begin with the two major components of literacy which form the building blocks for accessing and comprehending expository and informational texts.

### Elementary Progression

#### Reading:

- Language comprehension x word recognition= skilled reading
- Begins with recognition of syllables, phonemes, etc. (phonemic awareness), decoding, and recognizing familiar words (word recognition).
- Additional skills such as background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures (syntax, semantics, etc), verbal reasoning (inferences, metaphors, etc.), and literacy knowledge (print concepts, genres, etc.) build as well
- Blends together to create fluent reading with comprehension

#### The Simple View of Reading



#### Writing:

- Starts with conveying meaning through pictures and print
- Expands to organizing writing around a central idea, elaborating using complete sentences, and synthesizing information from a number of sources
- Competence becomes evident through paragraphing, summarizing, and synthesizing in exposition, argumentation, and content-area writing
- Fiction writing reflects an awareness of its role to entertain, explore human relationships, and persuade

#### Communication:

- Students learn how to listen attentively and by orally sharing their own ideas
- As they progress through the elementary grades, they continue to develop listening and presentation skills while adjusting language based on audience, setting and purpose

### Secondary Progression:

#### Reading:

- Independent reading is purposeful, automatic, and results in comprehension

- Students continue to increase their skills in unpacking content and academic vocabulary
- Ability to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources

#### **Writing:**

- Ability to write narrative, explanatory/informative, and argumentative texts independently with confidence, proficiency, and accuracy
- Students employ writing process and revision process techniques with efficacy
- Students choose the most appropriate mode and style of writing to achieve the desired result for the intended audience and purpose

#### **Communication:**

- Students synthesize interpersonal and personal intercultural communication norms to guide, monitor, and adjust their own communication

#### **Prevention, Intervention, and Disabilities**

It is important to include students with disabilities in core literacy classes. All students learn from the same stories, poems, and other resources with appropriate modifications, such as reading aloud, partner reading, digital text display, and books on tape. Access to the general education instructional program lays the foundation for literacy.

#### **Parents as Teachers**

##### **What is the Parents As Teachers (PAT) program?**

Parents as Teachers is an international, non-profit organization that promotes optimal early development, learning and health of young children (birth-five) by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.

(<https://parentsasteachers.org/what-we-do>)

##### **What does a PAT visit consist of?**

Each family is seen an average of one visit per month and visits last an average of 60 minutes each. In addition to a PAT visit, group connections/community events will take place once a month. The parent educator will also assist in the screening of incoming kindergarten students for the following school year.

##### **What is the goal for the PAT program?**

Parents as Teachers is a program dedicated to supporting parents in many areas. Parents can expect the parent educator to partner, support and promote their child's development through individualized activities that will prepare their child for future success in school and life. Developmental screenings provide information on the individual growth and development of each child, as well as health, hearing, vision and dental checks. Annual developmental screenings can support continued growth and identify potential delays or concerns.

**Who is the PAT's educator for Drexel R-IV?**

Jill Marks is the Parent Educator for the Drexel PAT program. Jill Marks is a certified elementary teacher who is currently employed with the district.. Additionally, Jill has taken training courses through the Parents as Teachers program to become a certified parent educator.

**IV. Assessments**

The use of assessments is critical to improve literacy outcomes in the Drexel School District. Effective assessments enable evidence-based decision making in the classroom, school, and district. To be effective, assessments must be valid and reliable.

There are many types of assessments, each tailored to provide meaningful and timely information to improve student outcomes. It is important to assess students using multiple measures and multiple ways, both formal and informal.

**The Role of Assessments**

- Determine a child's progress toward standards
- Ensure students have mastered the skills they need
- Identify needs and assist in planning
- Guide instruction and identify where intervention is needed
- Enable collaboration and communication between teachers and administrators
- Set priorities at all levels - individual classroom, school, and district

**The Role of Assessments in Early Childhood**

Assessments in a child's earliest years provide information on how the child is progressing, what skills they have mastered, and what skills they are still developing.

In literacy, meaningful assessments are connected to child development. Communication is the basis for reading and writing and, for very young children, communication is first expressed through touch and oral language. Assessing a child's progress in key areas of development is important to support their continued learning.

Assessments for young children require an understanding of family context, including language and culture, and are typically done by gathering information from parents. As children move into preschool settings, on-going assessments continue to provide essential data to help in the development of the whole child.

## Comprehensive Literacy Assessment System

Drexel uses the following assessments to get baseline data, progress monitor, and to make instructional data-driven decisions.

| Assessment                                                       | Grade Level Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brigance Early Childhood Screen                                  | 3 years to 1st grade<br>*Formal checking of a child's recommended development at varying ages (Language and Literacy Development)                                                                             |
| Brigance Inventory of Early Development Standardized             | Kindergarten<br>*Measures 5 development areas of a child (Language and literacy)                                                                                                                              |
| iReady                                                           | K-8<br>*Formative assessment<br>*Reading skills screener<br>*Gives teachers and administrators data to monitor progress                                                                                       |
| Heggerty                                                         | K-3<br>*Assesses various reading skills (phonics and phonemic awareness)<br>*Administered 1:1                                                                                                                 |
| Fountas and Pinnell<br><br>LETRS Phonics and Word Reading Survey | K-5<br>*Reading screener and progress monitor<br>*Administered 1:1<br><br>1-5<br>*Identifying which correspondences and patterns the student has learned and ones that need to be taught<br>*Administered 1:1 |
| MAP Grade Level/End of Course Assessments                        | 3-12<br>*Provides data related to proficiency of Missouri Learning Standards<br>*Provides data for instructional program evaluation                                                                           |

## **District Assessments**

Each grade level and course has common unit assessments administered in predetermined testing windows. This is a formative assessment for teachers to analyze to see where reteaching may be needed.

## **Missouri State Required Assessments**

- MAP Grade-Level assessment is a yearly standards-based test that measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Missouri. All students in grades 3-8 in Missouri public and charter schools take the Grade-Level assessment.
- MAP End-of-Course assessments are taken when a student has received and mastered instruction on the Missouri Learning Standards for a course, regardless of grade level.

## **Using Assessment Data**

While assessments provide necessary data, an effective system is required to interpret and use assessment data to drive instruction and improvement. Drexel utilizes data cycles in teacher collaboration meetings. Teachers analyze standards, students' performance on Missouri Learning Standards and district priority standards to determine next steps in whole group and small group instruction. Teachers meet to review student data to determine which students need additional support and which instructional resources should be utilized (who needs Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention).

## V. Partnerships

Parents and families are a child's first teacher, and need to have the necessary support to help children "learn to learn" in their first years of life. Improved coordination between systems will improve literacy outcomes for children by providing resources and support for parents, families and caregivers.

Drexel's comprehensive system includes:

- **Family Engagement-** Multi-strategy communication with families to convey key literacy messages, such as nightly reading, screen-time minimization, adequate sleep, and a nutritious breakfast.
  - Understandable and engaging to all parents (including expectant parents), families and caregivers
  - Incorporates home language and culture
  - Programs and activities to involve parents in the classroom
  - Strategies to improve parent skills and leadership so they can be active partners in, and advocate for their child's education
- **Community Engagement-** Build community engagement in and support for literacy plan, including families, after school programs, libraries and tutoring/enrichment providers
  - Culturally and language appropriate information and referral system that addresses all aspects of child health and development

### Parents and Caregivers:

What can parents and caregivers do to support literacy at home?

#### Birth to School Entry Parents

- Read to your child and provide various types of books, such as stories, alphabet books, books with numbers, how-to books, books about different cultures or parts of the world, books written in family members' native language
- When reading, ask the following questions:
  - What do you think this book is about?
  - What do you think will happen next?
  - Tell me about this story.
  - Ask "open-ended" questions versus "yes/no" questions. For example, "Tell me what you liked best about this book" rather than "Did you like this book?"
- Write out child's name calling out each letter
- Display pictures and posters with word labels (maps, animals, community)
- Provide writing and drawing tools that can be used indoors or outdoors
- Provide opportunities for your child to write, acknowledging what is done
- Encourage children to develop fine motor skills by drawing pictures using

- shapes and colors
- Interact with your child to match letters and numbers

### Elementary School Parents

- Read with your child and encourage and support reading outside of school
- Practice identifying letter names and sounds
- Read books to your child that build vocabulary and have more complex sentences than what they can read alone
- Talk with your child about the books you read together. Ask open-ended questions, talk about unfamiliar words, and help make connections to their world around them
- Limit screen time and prioritize reading and writing time
- Provide opportunities for your child to write, acknowledging what is done
- Talk about local, state, national, and world events. Encourage your child to listen and speak

### Middle School Parents

- Expect and encourage reading at home for at least twenty minutes a day, five days a week
- Set an example for reading at home by reading yourself. Engage in book discussions with friends and family
- Provide access to appropriate books and reading materials at your child's level of difficulty and of high interest
- Talk to your child's teacher
- Encourage your child to participate in book clubs and discussions. Encourage your child to exchange books with friends and share ideas about what they have read
- Talk about and use vocabulary your child notices from reading
- Encourage your child to write about what they read and to write creative stories, poetry, notes to friends and family, or in a journal
- Limit screen time and prioritize reading and writing time
- Set aside a quiet study hour where parents/family members are reading or writing while children do homework
- Take an active interest in homework (e.g., look over their work and respond positively, check that the homework is finished, ask questions about what they have learned)
- Talk about local, state, national and world events. Encourage your child to listen and speak. Encourage older children to critique and analyze what they have read or heard.

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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