

Tulsa Public Schools Plan for Improving Student Achievement in Reading

Tulsa READS!

Executive Summary

Schools successful in fostering high levels of reading achievement share common elements:

- All adults in the school work together on the reading program.
- All adults build systematic program links across the grades.
- All adults accept responsibility for all children.
- All adults closely monitor students' progress.

(CIERA, 1998).

Tulsa READS! is one element of the TPS curriculum reform to improve the teaching and learning of reading in Tulsa Public Schools. This district initiative for reading success exists to insure that all students become independent readers through high quality, research-based instruction. The initiative maintains a solid research-based literacy plan.

However, the district's reading plan is one component of a BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAM to develop all aspects of language acquisition and use:

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION COMPONENTS	BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAM COMPONENTS
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guided reading instruction ▪ Self-selected reading ▪ Working with words ▪ Writing
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	

The Balanced Literacy Plan begins at the pre-kindergarten level and exists through the twelfth grade. Basic language development, listening skills, and reading acquisition are emphasized at the elementary level. The following areas of development compose the curriculum for reading and writing:

LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM			
	Listening and Speaking	Reading	Writing
Components of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sounds of Language (phonemic awareness & phonics) ▪ Vocabulary Development ▪ Listening Skills & Strategies ▪ Speaking Fluently & Correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phonemic awareness ▪ Phonics ▪ Fluency ▪ Vocabulary development ▪ Reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-writing ▪ Writing / fluency ▪ Writing / form & function ▪ Editing & revising ▪ Presenting & publishing

"Teaching reading is rocket science." In order for teachers to acquire the necessary level of professional learning, TPS offers continued training and support for teachers to enable them to use research-based instructional materials, employ effective instructional strategies, and engage in appropriate, ongoing assessment. The plan offers additional support through the employment of Instruction Facilitators who serve as curriculum experts and teachers of teachers at selected school sites, the designation of 'Literacy First' schools, and the designation of 'Reading First' schools.

The primary goal of *Tulsa READS!* calls for every student to read on grade level by third grade and to maintain grade level reading performance throughout their school years.

SCHOOL MODELS OF INSTRUCTION FOR ELEMENTARY READING	
TPS elementary schools offer one of the two models for reading instruction shown here.	
<p>BASAL MODEL</p> <p>The basic core instructional program for elementary reading is the Scott Foresman basal reading series. Using that program as the core for reading and language arts, teachers follow the Aligned Teaching Units to insure that all of the tested PASS objectives are mastered. In addition to the basal, supplemental materials for reading and <i>Fill the Gaps</i> resources provide additional tools.</p> <p>Students are given periodic assessments to aid progress monitoring throughout the year. In the spring, the state criterion-referenced test is used at designated grade levels.</p>	<p>COMBINED MODEL</p> <p>Elementary schools may opt to utilize the combined model for reading instruction. Within this model, one (reading) group at each grade level, composed of struggling readers, uses the SRA Reading Mastery or Reading Mastery + reading program. This program offers a sharp focus on the emerging skills of phonemic awareness and phonics. This approach provides a 'fast cycle' option to help close the gap for struggling readers who are below level.</p>

Tulsa Public Schools offers a resource to teachers, called the **Aligned Teaching Units (ATUs)** for required reading and math courses for specific grade levels.

- ATUs correlate to the progress-monitoring tests administered throughout the school year to students in reading and math.
- The ATUs also provide indicators for instructional resource options that align with the tested PASS objectives found in both the progress-monitoring tests as well as the criterion-referenced tests required by the State of Oklahoma for all public school students at designated grade levels.

At the elementary level, the following elements set the standards for the school's *balanced literacy program*:

1. A 90-minute *uninterrupted* block of time will be devoted to reading instruction on a daily basis.
2. Daily reading and writing experiences are provided for ALL students.
3. A 3-tiered model for reading instruction offers the following support to students:
 - a. 90 minutes of instruction for all students, PLUS
 - b. 30 minutes of additional instructional time for *supplemental services* offered to students who need extra time, extra practice, or reteaching in reading,
 - c. Another 30-minute *intervention* period for intense skill development for students who are significantly below level in reading.

Other priorities for the comprehensive reading plan are as follows:

- Provide a balanced reading program for all students using the district approved reading/language arts programs.
- Use disaggregated data to guide reading instruction.
- Foster development of higher order thinking skills through daily instruction and activities.
- Participate in regular professional development activities and collaborative planning between teachers and the school's library media specialist to strengthen reading education practices.
- Involve parents in the reading achievement of their students.
- Partner with TPS libraries and the Tulsa City-County Library System to support students and families.
- Work with the library media specialist to integrate reading and information literacy activities and facilitate use of the Organized Investigator research model.
- Use a variety of identified assessments to diagnose needs and prescribe specific instruction to monitor progress in student reading achievement.
- Develop a site plan for improvement in reading.
- Integrate reading and writing activities across the curriculum.
- Attend periodic reflective sessions with instructional staff to monitor and adjust the reading program.
- Standardize reading goals, plans, resources, and strategies across the district.