

Kirkwood School District K-3 Literacy Plan

The KSD Literacy Plan has been organized to align with the newly released Missouri State Literacy Plan. This document highlights current knowledge about literacy development and provides information on integrating literacy instruction with Missouri Learning Standards. It provides clear guidance on the components of a comprehensive literacy system, offers ideas and resources to promote literacy, and incorporates evidence-based practices necessary to achieve long-term success for our students.

The Kirkwood School District Literacy Plan should be viewed as a companion document to the Missouri plan, as we have chosen not to repeat the extensive research presented in the state document. Viewed in tandem, the plans provide an evidence-based resource for administrators and teachers, with useful information for parents and caregivers all along the K-12 continuum. The KSD plan is organized around the same five components as the Missouri plan: Leadership & Sustainability; Standards-Based Curriculum; Intentional Instruction, Intervention, & Enrichment; Assessment; and Partnerships. A similar structure will be used to explore each of the five components in Kirkwood:



Organized Around Five Components

- Leadership & Sustainability
- Standards-Based Curriculum
- Intentional Instruction, Intervention, & Enrichment
- Assessment
- Partnerships

1. Important phrases or ideas from the Missouri Plan that closely align with or may guide our philosophy in Kirkwood (grayed boxes in margin)
2. Key “What’s Our Status?” questions, also pulled directly from the Missouri document, that help districts consider where they stand on literacy
3. A brief summary of our current status in Kirkwood, based on key questions asked in the state document
4. Notes about the desired practice in our schools, building on current status and based on research
5. Planned or potential action steps to achieve desired practice

Leadership & Sustainability

Keys Questions:

- What structures are in place in our schools/district for us to share responsibility for student literacy achievement?
- How do our building/district leaders support literacy instruction across the curriculum and for all students?
- What supports are in place to sustain evidence-based practices in literacy?
- How does our school/district provide support for teachers to ensure professional growth in literacy?

Leadership is a key component for a successful implementation of our literacy plan. Several stakeholders may be involved within this component, including district and building administration, and instructional staff working collaboratively to ensure a common set of values and beliefs around research based best practices guides literacy instruction (Missouri Plan, page 6).

Current Status in KSD

While classroom teachers have the greatest direct impact on the literacy achievement of our students, there is little question that instructional leadership is essential for ongoing success to occur. This leadership is not limited to building principals, but individuals filling these roles must be deeply embedded in the work. Principals help shape the culture of a building, set the tone for instructional philosophy, and support teachers in meeting classroom expectations. They work with literacy specialists and/or coaches, problem solving around student needs and building instructional capacity within the school and across our district. Finally, principals play an integral role in setting schedules, analyzing data, and ensuring cohesive use of the written curriculum.

Kirkwood’s principals recognize the important role they play, and they are deeply committed to student and teacher success. Our current reality, however, affords principals relatively little time to devote to the day-to-day endeavors of instructional leadership. A district-level commitment to literacy is valuable, but it must be supported with time, energy, and resources that recognize the important work and ongoing learning needs of classroom teachers and building-level principals.

Of primary importance is the role of the administrative leader and principal... Booth and Roswell (2017) state, “There are two types of expertise needed in order to seriously improve literacy in schools: one area is expertise in the content of literacy; the other is expertise in leading the change process” (Missouri Plan, page 6).

Kirkwood's problem solving and support process is guided by national/international research around Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS builds on a Response to Intervention (RTI) model, first piloted in several Kirkwood schools roughly fifteen years ago. There are several MTSS factors inherent to our model, particularly as it pertains to teaching and learning in literacy:

1. Systematic screening of all students
2. High-quality, universal instruction in support of a comprehensive literacy curriculum
3. Multi-tiered systems to provide targeted and strategic intervention to identified learners
4. System-wide collaboration, communication, and data-guided decision-making.

Kirkwood's MTSS process requires that interdisciplinary teams are examining data and applying the process, on a systems level, to ensure all students are growing in the area of literacy.

Key to any MTSS process is high-quality Tier I curriculum and instruction – the learning opportunities afforded to all students. Curriculum and instruction will be explored further in Sections 2-3 of this document, but it's worth mentioning, once again, that building and district leaders help guide this work and related professional learning.

- Our district philosophy around comprehensive literacy instruction is consistent with research regarding acquisition of literacy skills, with a recognition that phonics and phonemic instruction has not historically been a strength.
- There is an understanding, across all levels, that literacy instruction impacts all curricular areas, with a recognition that cross curricular literacy skills need to be prioritized and supported in the classroom.
- District teams, such as the MTSS Leadership team and Instructional Specialist cohorts participate in leadership and learning around best practices in instruction driven by data.

High-quality professional learning has been made available to many teachers and principals, especially at K-5, in support of our reading curriculum. Considerable PD has been offered internally, at the building and district level, especially since the adoption of new reading curriculum and resources. The district has also funded two "home grown" institutes, bringing staff developers from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to Kirkwood for two four-day summer workshops in support of our Units of Study resources. Teacher participation has been mixed, in part because K-5 teachers are responsible for several curricular areas. Additional professional learning would enhance this work, especially if embedded within the school year and day.

It should be noted that the Missouri Literacy Plan offers research and support for literacy coaches in schools. Kirkwood currently has no instructional coaches, due to funding limitations, even as they are known to be an effective practice for building capacity, growing teachers, and increasing student literacy achievement ([Missouri State Literacy Plan](#)).

Desired Practice in KSD

Without question, we are fortunate to have strong leadership in Kirkwood schools – both in formal and informal roles. There is a strong commitment to student success and a philosophical stance that supports comprehensive literacy instruction for all students. We are also fortunate to be a regional leader in MTSS, ensuring students are regularly screened for needs and have opportunities for tiered instruction and supports. Students who struggle with core instruction deserve additional, targeted interventions – not the replacement instruction (i.e. reading class) that dominated education for decades.

The Missouri State Literacy Plan outlines nine things administrators should do to develop and implement a strong literacy program (see margin). Our principals do exceptional work in these areas, yet they would benefit from additional learning, support and time to focus on these importance endeavors. Time to focus on instructional leadership is often crowded out by the myriad of management tasks that can quickly fill a principal's day.

In order to develop and implement a strong literacy program, administrators

- *Articulate and monitor high expectations of all staff and students;*
- *Ensure ample time for enriched literacy development and learning for staff members;*
- *Ensure ample time for collaboration among staff members;*
- *Maximize time for literacy instruction within the classroom;*
- *Participate with faculty in embedded literacy training;*
- *Support opportunities for students, both within and outside of the school day, such as needed interventions and enrichment, homework help, early learning and parent involvement, credit recovery, and extra-curricular activities related to literacy, e.g., writing camps, book clubs, etc.;*
- *Comply with federal and state mandates and policies pertaining to literacy;*
- *Fund the resources necessary to sustain and grow K-12 literacy; and*
- *Provide time and tools for teachers to analyze assessment data and reflect on instructional practices (Missouri Plan, page 6).*

Literacy instruction has long been a hot-button topic, especially among educators. Recent advocacy and legislation around dyslexia has elevated the conversation among parents, with a renewed spotlight on research and pedagogical philosophies. It is essential that Kirkwood's leadership play an active role in communicating about literacy instruction, fostering understanding and interrupting myths and misstatements about curriculum, instruction, and resources.

- We must ensure teachers are prepared to include phonics and phonemic awareness instruction as part of our comprehensive literacy framework, particularly in K-3.
- We must support all teachers, across all disciplines and grade levels, in recognizing when readers are struggling and providing adequate, research-based supports.
- We must promote cohesive use of adopted resources, supporting teachers with implementation and communicating purpose with parents.

While much of the Missouri State Literacy Plan applies to our work in Kirkwood, there is little mention of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in the document. Our framework for supporting students, through intentional data collection and problem solving, helps foster shared ownership and responsibility for our students and their literacy success. Kirkwood's MTSS leadership team must work with building leaders to refine processes, develop protocols across schools, and support successful implementation in buildings. Ongoing turnover, of teachers and principals, requires that we revisit practices and retrain key personnel on a regular basis. Finally, we must be more intentional in communicating about aspects of our MTSS process and including families in meaningful ways.

Action Steps

1. Work with building principals to establish shared expectations for instructional leadership; address training needs identified through conversations and study of Missouri State Literacy Plan
2. Work with building and district-level MTSS leadership to further establish and refine common [MTSS processes and routines](#), in buildings and across system
 - Develop processes to ensure Tier I cohesion across the district system and fidelity within Tier II/III instruction
 - Redefine and articulate standard treatment protocols for use across district to inform classroom teachers and instructional specialists regarding appropriate supplementary instruction.
3. Commit funding and time to ensure all teachers have appropriate training to support readers in their classes (includes regular opportunities for review, reflection, and coaching to improve practice)
4. Conduct periodic program evaluation, within the six-year curriculum cycle, to determine impact on success of all students and subgroups of students
5. Explore opportunities to add literacy and/or instructional coaches in all schools

A strong, standards-based curriculum ensures students, teachers, administrators and parents of a rigorous and intentional curriculum aligned with Missouri Learning Standards to promote student learning and success in reading, writing, speaking and listening across all content areas (Missouri Plan, page 9).

Key Questions

- How do we ensure our written/taught/learned curriculum is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards expectations?
- What collaborative structures do we have in place to ensure Missouri Learning Standards expectations are the foundation of our written curriculum?
- What are our processes to write, review, revise and adopt curriculum?
- How do we address both the depth and breadth of the Missouri Learning Standards Expectations?

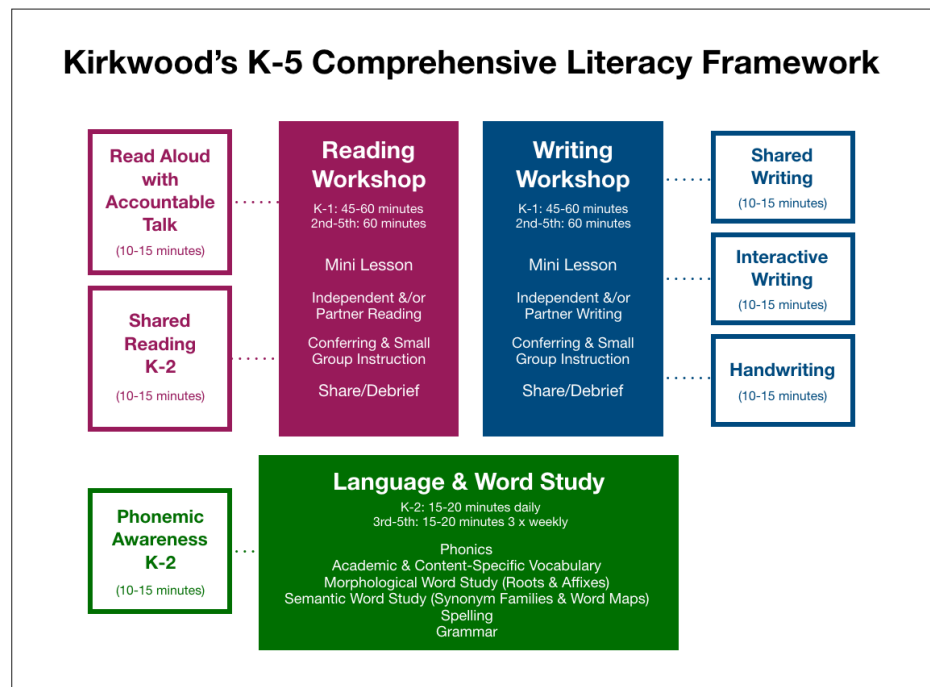
Current Status in KSD

Literacy curricula have been in a state of flux over the last decade, in part because of changing standards and standardized tests. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, with districts across Missouri adjusting curriculum to ensure alignment to these standards and prepare students for new assessments. A series of political moves led to new assessments and subsequent changes to the Missouri Learning Standards. The current Missouri Learning Standards in ELA/English were last updated in April 2016.

The Kirkwood School District adopted a new [six-year curriculum cycle](#) in 2019.

- Kirkwood’s K-5 reading curriculum was last updated in 2016, aligned with updated standards, and will move into Program Evaluation in 2020-21.
- The K-5 writing and speaking/listening curricula were last updated in 2013. Each are currently in the Research stage of curriculum work, to be revised for Board adoption in 2020-2021.
- ELA & English curriculum (grades 6-10) will be revised in 2019-2020, with full alignment with new Missouri Learning Standards expected by 2021-2022.

Kirkwood’s K-5 Comprehensive Literacy Framework (visual below) is grounded in best practice research and includes an intentional focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, word study, fluency and independent/shared reading and writing experiences. Central to this framework is a workshop model for instruction.



While phonemic awareness and phonics instruction have long been part of our stated curriculum, these areas have not been given consistent focus, time, or energy in many classrooms. No individual is to blame for this, as many teachers (in Kirkwood and beyond) have not had adequate time or training to teach these skills successfully to their students. Additional emphasis has been placed on this area of curriculum in the last 2-3 years, with professional learning for teachers and resource purchases to align with curriculum. In addition, a five-year plan has been developed to provide yearly literacy training to all teachers, K-12. This training meets and exceeds the Dyslexia training required by the state and will assist teachers in delivery of stated curriculum.

Desired Practice in KSD

With a new six-year curriculum cycle, there are now structures in place to review, monitor, and evaluate how the written and taught curriculum are impacting students. Our Research phase of the cycle also affords teacher leaders dedicated time to study best practices to inform curriculum revision.

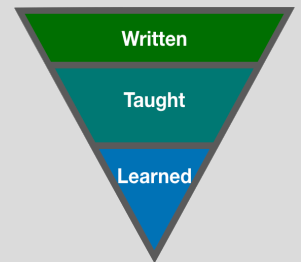
A strong written curriculum does not ensure guaranteed experiences for all students. Teachers need time to study curriculum, unpacking standards so they can best support students through differentiated instruction. Work to identify power standards will also help ensure alignment with meaningful common assessments and reporting criteria.

While teachers need some flexibility and autonomy to meet individual needs of learners, it is essential that curriculum is taught in a cohesive manner within and across schools. Not only will cohesion support guaranteed experiences for students, it will foster more collaborative planning and conversations among teachers. Building and district leaders need to expect and support this cohesiveness; this starts with being knowledgeable about curriculum and holding teachers accountable to expectations.

Action Steps

1. Continue work to align literacy curricula with Missouri Learning Standards and best practice research in literacy instruction
2. Engage teachers in study of Missouri Learning Standards and literacy research, with an emphasis on high leverage/power standards and research-based practices
3. Provide training to ensure personnel providing tiered/supplemental supports, including KSD and Special School District staff, have a strong working knowledge of Tier I literacy curricula
4. Use the six-year review cycle to review, monitor, and evaluate the stated, taught, and learned literacy curricula, making necessary adjustments to ensure we are meeting the needs of students
5. Review curricula across grade spans, with a focus on supporting students through transitions and across our system
6. Conduct a crosswalk of literacy power standards and curricula across disciplines, looking for ways to enhance literacy instruction across content areas

Even the best-written curriculum cannot ensure student learning and growth. The written, taught, and learned curriculum must be systematically reviewed, monitored and evaluated using internal and external data (Missouri Plan, page 9).



Intentional Instruction, Intervention, & Enrichment

Effective instruction focuses on all learner groups, including age- and grade-level groups, high school, and special populations such as special education, gifted, students with dyslexia and English learners. It is important to recognize that certain instructional strategies, structures and methodologies are more applicable and appropriate to specific learners (Missouri Plan, page 12).

For students to develop well-rounded literacy skills, instruction should interweave components of reading, writing, listening and speaking. While Missouri state standards in literacy set targets for where students should be at each grade level, it is necessary to understand that a student, regardless of grade level, may land at any point on the literacy continuum. Good instruction meets students where they are on the continuum and guides them forward (Missouri Plan, page 13).

After acquiring a solid foundation of early literacy skills, students need opportunities – preferably authentic – to build reading fluency and stamina (Missouri Plan, page 18).

Key Questions

- **How do we ensure instruction within the comprehensive literacy curriculum meets the needs of each student?**
- **How do we develop authentic readers, writers and critical thinkers in every classroom?**
- **How do we encourage listening and speaking in every classroom?**
- **How do we select quality resources and provide teachers with the training to implement them effectively?**

Current Status in KSD

Kirkwood's Tier I instruction emphasizes a workshop model for reading and writing instruction, with direct instruction and time for meaningful, independent exploration around authentic tasks. Inherent in this model is a minilesson with brief, direct instruction of a targeted skill, followed by guided or independent practice while the teacher confers with individuals or teaches small groups. Finally, learners come back together for a debrief or share to reflect on learning.

While a workshop approach is not specifically highlighted in the Missouri Literacy Plan, the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model – discussed at length in the document – is reflective of workshop teaching. Based on decades of research on cognitive learning, the model “moves intentionally from teachers modeling focused lessons (“I do it”), to joint responsibility between teachers and students (“We do it”), to student collaboration (“You do it together”) and finally to practice and application by the learner (“You do it alone”) (Frey & Fisher, 2007).

Kirkwood's K-5 Comprehensive Literacy Framework is multifaceted, with reading workshop, writing workshop, and language/word study at the heart of our daily work. It is important to highlight the breadth and depth of literacy instruction that occurs on a daily or regular basis in our classrooms.

- Read aloud with accountable talk
- Shared reading (K-2 classrooms)
- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Academic and content-specific vocabulary
- Morphological work study (roots and affixes)
- Semantic word study (families and word maps)
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Shared writing
- Interactive writing
- Handwriting (print and cursive)

The district utilizes leadership groups and surveys for selection of resources. We have several adopted K-5 resources to guide our Tier I (universal) literacy instruction, each with a distinct purpose. These resources support instruction within our curriculum but we will not achieve our comprehensive curricular goals if they are taught in isolation.

- K-5 Units of Study in Reading - Teachers College, Columbia University
- K-5 Units of Study in Writing - Teachers College, Columbia University
- Units of Study in Phonics - Teachers College, Columbia University
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness
- Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum & Classroom Resources

Speaking and listening skills are essential to literacy development. While these expressive and receptive skills are taught and practiced in reading and writing workshop, there are authentic, cross-curricular opportunities to use these skills throughout a student's day. This work is often written into curricula, across disciplines, and is assessed and reported to parents.

Early literacy instruction and intervention includes explicit teaching and multi-sensory practice with students, especially in support of phonics and phonemic awareness. This has become an area of emphasis in our K-2 classrooms, with recent training and the adoption of new resources. Instruction in phonics/phonemic awareness has not historically been a strength in our district, however, and numerous years of students have matriculated through the system without systematic, direct instruction in some fundamental literacy skills.

K-2 early literacy data have consistently pointed to gaps in phonemic awareness and phonic skills, yet many Kirkwood students tend to rebound in later grades through the development of other skills. Roughly 75% of all students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the MAP Grade Level Assessments in 2018-2019, down from 80-85% in previous years (taking a different, less-rigorous test). We cannot be satisfied with these scores, especially when our students of color have yet seen similar results. We know too many Kirkwood students continue to struggle as readers, some performing several years below grade level. Many of these students have diagnosed learning challenges, including but not limited to dyslexia, and so no doubt missed consistent instruction in fundamental literacy skills at an early age. Understanding and addressing these gaps is an ongoing task that must be met with a sense of urgency.

Intervention & Enrichment

The need for supplemental instruction/intervention (Tier II/III) is typically determined through an MTSS team process, guided by benchmark and local assessment data. A wide range of intervention programs, strategies, and resources are used across the district; it is essential that we align interventions to student needs, deliver instruction with fidelity, and regularly evaluate impact on students.

Regular education intervention has, at times and with some students, exceeded the intensity of instruction provided through special education. We must continue to work with our Special School District partners to seamless transitions and adequate supports of students who struggle.

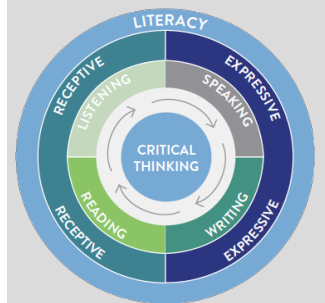
Enrichment in reading/writing often means students are engaged with more complex texts or tasks.

Desired Practice in KSD

The ultimate goal of any school district is success for all students, regardless of their needs. Our progress toward universal success in literacy is an ongoing process, aided by high quality staff, exceptional resources, and a supportive parent/community base. There are numerous factors that enhance opportunities for student success, both at home and in school, and we must we have a responsibility to meet students where they are and utilize high-impact instructional strategies to help move them along a literacy continuum.

A teacher's ability to differentiate instruction is supported by a deep understanding of standards and best practice research on literacy. Staff members should engage in regular collaborative conversations about reading, writing, speaking, and listening, analyzing student work and planning instruction. We must also support teachers with the use of culturally and linguistically responsive language. This may require additional training and coaching opportunities, particularly with academic and content-specific vocabulary.

All literacy learners need to be engaged in speaking, listening, reading and writing for authentic purposes many times throughout the school day. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are reciprocal processes; the goal of the reader or listener is to use language to understand the message the writer or speaker is attempting to convey while the goal of the writer or speaker is to use language to communicate an intended message to the targeted audience. (Missouri Plan, page 14).



Learning the system of phonics is a developmental process; as children experience text, they begin to develop an orthographic processing system to decode written language (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Strickland provides guidelines for phonics instruction and within those guidelines states, "Learners need to see the relevance of phonics for themselves in their own reading and writing" and "memorizing phonics rules does not ensure application of those rules." (Missouri Plan, page 16).

It is difficult for teachers to commit several hours a day toward literacy instruction without support from colleagues, administrators, and families.

- Kirkwood's K-5 Comprehensive Literacy Framework provides an outline for literacy success, but teachers cannot be successful within this framework without a schedule that allows for it.
- We must encourage teachers to make good use of adopted resources, especially those that have been heavily researched and vetted.
- Teachers need time to plan, ideally in collaborative settings, and they should have regular chances for microteaching and coaching.
- Conferencing should be a priority in our classrooms, viewed as key opportunities to build relationships and differentiate instruction.
- Phonemic awareness and phonics must remain a focus of our system, recognizing this focus on early literacy skills will further other aspects of literacy development.
- Teachers should be supported in growing the workshop model and Gradual Release of Responsibility, refining practices where its already in place while considering expansion into upper grades.
- Students should have regular opportunities for choice in their reading and writing, ensuring relevance while promoting rigorous thinking (critical and creative) in literacy.
- A focus on reading skills should be part of core curriculum, across grade levels and disciplines, so all students can be supported regardless of the classroom.

While Tier I instruction should be our primary focus, we must also have strong Tier II/III interventions and supports available to our students who struggle most. Coordination among tiers is important, within schools and across the system. Specialists who provide tiered instruction must also be knowledgeable about Tier I practices, ensuring consistent messaging and use of language with learners.

Resources available to support classroom learning are key to rigor, relevance, and student engagement. Classroom and school libraries should be regularly updated to include diverse, high quality texts of varied genres. Collections should align with instructional needs (i.e. both fiction and nonfiction) and appeal to student interests.

High quality professional learning opportunities have been ongoing in support of literacy, especially in K-5, but additional commitment and engagement is necessary. Because reading and writing are cross-curricular skills, it is important for all teachers to know key language and foundational literacy strategies.

Action Steps

1. Working with principals and teachers, unpack Missouri Learning Standards and recent literacy research; consider study of Intentional Instruction, Intervention, and Enrichment portion of the Missouri State Literacy Plan
2. Determine needs and direction for professional learning, aligned with curricula, instructional resources, and future expectations
3. Further align instructional practices and expectations within and across schools, with a focus on collaboration and cohesion across grade levels and schools
4. Revisit opportunities to calibrate universal and targeted vocabulary instruction
5. Ensure classroom and school libraries include diverse, high quality texts that appeal to student interests and support instructional goals.
6. Collaborate with Special School District to maximize efficiency and supports of struggling learners
7. Address recent legislation calling for students significantly below grade level to be offered extended hours of instruction beyond the school day and year
8. Study/assess perceived need for additional Tier II/III staff and resources, weighing options that may include a focus on Tier I instruction and/or instructional coaching.

Assessments

Key Questions

- **How have we developed an effective and coherent assessment system in our classrooms/buildings/district?**
- **How do we use ongoing classroom formative and summative assessments, district benchmarks and state-required assessments?**
- **How do we determine which assessments to use in our classrooms/buildings/district?**
- **How do we help educators become assessment literate?**

Current Status in KSD

Quality literacy assessments are essential to understanding student strengths and needs, informing classroom practice, and evaluating programmatic strategies and resources. Most assessments can be used in varied ways – depending on timing and intended purpose - and it's important that all stakeholders understand these differences.

Assessments that measure student progress or mastery are often described as formative (for learning) and summative (of learning). Formative assessments are generally informal in nature, used during instruction to adjust teaching and learning strategies. Summative assessments, on the other hand, are used to measure performance in a single measurement, usually at the end of a unit or instructional period.

- Anecdotal assessment data, often gathered during conferences with students, aids in differentiation and informs classroom instruction.
- K-5 pre- and post-assessments, included in the adopted Units of Study for Reading and Writing, are not currently administered consistently across grade levels or schools. These assessments could serve as formative and summative assessments, informing practice with individuals and aiding in program evaluation.

Students in grades 3-8 take annual Grade Level Assessments, as part of the Missouri Assessment Program. These summative assessments measure student performance against Missouri Learning Standards in English/Language Arts. Results of these tests do not inform classroom practice in meaningful ways, although they can be useful in program evaluation.

The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessments (F&P) help teachers determine students' independent and instructional reading levels. While useful for the diagnostic information they provide, they are time-consuming to administer and are not valued equally by all teachers and principals across the district. Assuming we continue the use of F&P with students, additional training will be necessary to ensure assessments are administered reliably and data are consistently measured.

In addition to mastery assessments, Kirkwood also relies heavily on benchmark assessments for screening, diagnostic assessments to better understand student needs, and progress monitoring assessments to systematically measure progress. These assessments are essential to our Multi-Tiered Student Support (MTSS) model and assist with measuring student Rate of Improvement (ROI) within and across years. Additional information about these assessments can be found in the Assessment Grid below.

Regular school-based data team meetings are opportunities for teachers to interact with data and increase their ability to use data to inform instruction. Ongoing training is available, at the team, school and district level, in support of FastBridge and eduClimber, our comprehensive data warehouse. While most Kirkwood teachers are fluent in reviewing and analyzing data, assessment information is sometimes misused due to lack of time, context, or understanding. Additional clarity would be beneficial, both with expectations and the "why" or purpose of various assessments.

Quality literacy assessments include implementation and analysis of a variety of assessment types. National, state, local, summative, interim and formative data sources all provide meaningful information about the effectiveness of literacy instruction. All literacy assessments are best used in combination with research-based effective practices, as well as teacher observation to monitor individual student progress (Missouri Plan, page 28).

One of the most valuable assets of formative assessment for students is the critical descriptive feedback it provides for individual student goal setting and subsequent tracking of the student's learning. The intended audiences for these assessments are students and teachers. Formative assessments are not intended to be included in the grading process or used to judge teacher performance (Missouri Plan, page 29).

Assessing literacy is a complex task. Assessments should reflect the multiple dimensions of reading and writing and the various purposes for assessment, as well as the diversity of the students being assessed (Missouri Plan, page 31).

Information in the KSD Assessment Grid may reflect desired practice, not necessarily current practice. It is meant to support understanding about the purpose/use of assessments and foster conversations about future efficiencies.

Assessment	Screening	Diagnostic	Progress Monitoring	Mastery Formative Summative	Skills Measured
FastBridge earlyReading	K-1	K-12	K-12		Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency
FastBridge CBMreading	1-3		1-12		Fluency (Rate & Accuracy)
FastBridge aReading	2-8				Broad reading abilities, including comprehension, based on research and aligned with standards
FastBridge AUTOreading	4-5	4-12	4-12		Automaticity in Phonics, Fluency (Rate & Accuracy), Morphology, Vocabulary
FastBridge CompEfficiency			4-12		Comprehension, Reading Rate
Insight	9-12				Comprehension, Vocabulary, Silent Reading Efficiency
Fountas & Pinnell		K-12			Fluency (Rate & Accuracy), Comprehension
Conferring		K-12		K-12	Broad reading abilities, including comprehension, based on research and aligned with standards
End of Unit Assessments (Lucy) Teachers College, Columbia Univ		3-5		3-5	Broad reading abilities, including comprehension, based on research and aligned with standards
Locally Developed Common Assessments		K-12		K-12	Broad reading abilities, including comprehension, aligned with standards
MAP Grade Level Assessments				3-8	Performance measured against grade level standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening

There is not currently a standard, district-wide tool used for measuring and reporting student reading performance against grade level expectations. This should be considered in the near future, with guidance provided to teachers and information clearly communicated to families.

Desired Practice in KSD

While there are numerous assessments being used in Kirkwood, our district would benefit from a more comprehensive assessment plan for meaningful use beyond our MTSS process. All teachers and principals should be assessment literate, understanding the purpose and effective use of available measures for benchmarking, gathering diagnostic information, progress monitoring, and formative/summative assessment of skills and/or content. Mastery assessments should align closely with standards, curriculum, and reporting criteria.

Periodic audits should be conducted to explore available assessment options, streamline efficiencies, and address any gaps that may exist. Teachers should regularly use assessments *of and for learning*, making use of existing unit assessments in reading and writing (grades 3-5). If staff do not value data from a given assessment, we should take steps to educate and support teachers and/or suspend the use of that measure.

Effective assessment should not only inform teachers, but also students and their families. It is difficult to determine “on grade level” performance in all areas of literacy development, but we should work collaboratively to identify one consistent measure for reporting reading comprehension and/or fluency. Efforts should be made to clearly communicate about student performance, including comparisons to established standards and growth over time and/or rate of improvement.

Action Steps

1. Select one agreed-upon measure to determine student performance against grade level, with established processes for communicating this information to families
2. Identify purposeful common assessments, as necessary and appropriate, to measure K-2 student performance and inform instructional practice
3. Commit to regular use and study of Tier I unit assessments included in curricula and provided within the 3rd-5th grade Units of Study
4. Consider training opportunities to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and inter-rater reliability with Fountas & Pinnell assessments
5. Use audits (district, building, and classroom level) to better understand and refine the purpose/use of any literacy assessment and maximize the value for classroom use, communication, and program evaluation
6. Develop and articulate a bank of diagnostic tools to be used to identify skill deficits and match student needs to interventions
7. Explore the use of NWEA MAP as a way to measure growth and skills mastery to ensure that each student is receiving targeted instruction to make appropriate academic growth

The best way to evaluate the assessment system is to complete assessment audits at the district, building, and classroom levels. An assessment audit provides teachers and districts with an opportunity to look at assessments with a critical lens in order to ensure they are useful and timely and provide the intended information. The audit provides a snapshot of large-scale assessments and screenings administered at each grade level in a given year. (Missouri Plan, page 31).

Partnerships among schools and businesses, community organizations, and other educational entities are essential components in fostering a culture of literacy. Each community offers unique opportunities for relationships and collaboration. The strength of any literacy program is reflected in the school district's ability to seek and build the affiliations available (Missouri Plan, page 37).

Key Questions

- **How do our programs and practices engage families/partners in literacy development?**
- **How do we communicate with stakeholders to encourage and promote literacy in our school community?**
- **How do we encourage a shared responsibility to foster a culture of literacy?**

Current Status in KSD

Family involvement is key to student success, and we must actively work with parents - in meaningful ways - to promote shared ownership in literacy. Kirkwood schools host a range of activities to engage parents and students in literacy learning, typically at the building level.

- Periodic events, during the school day and in evenings, provide opportunities to share data, celebrate books, and highlight fun reading/writing activities parents and students can do at home.
- Many schools host author visits, partnering with PTOs and/or local bookstores (i.e. Novel Neighbor, Eye See Me) to engage students with professional writers and/or illustrators.
- Several elementary schools offer story time opportunities for future kindergartners, building early relationships with these children and their families.
- Some schools have held regular tutoring programs within Meacham Park, working with staff and community members to support learners.
- There has been growing interest among many parents for additional literacy workshops and parent education, potentially offered at the district level to support consistent expectations and messaging.
- Kirkwood's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) structures have not historically included families in meaningful ways throughout the problem-solving process. Communication about this process is in place but can be improved in the future.

Our district has worked with OASIS St. Louis for over twenty years, providing weekly intergenerational tutoring opportunities for K-3 students and community members over the age of fifty. Countless Kirkwood students have benefited from these experiences.

Many KSD students have also benefited from summer participation in Sprog/New Horizons, offering affordable summer programming for Kirkwood students. Principals actively advocate for students to participate in this summer experience. The district recently expanded its partnership with Sprog, moving services onto the Kirkwood High School campus in 2019.

Many schools work directly with the Kirkwood Public Library, promoting reading programs and helping students/teachers secure library cards. Local service groups, such as Rotary and Optimist Clubs, have periodically supported district readers with funding and books.

Recent national conversations around dyslexia, phonics, and reading education have fueled additional opportunities for partnerships with parents and the District. A Literacy Advisory Committee was formed in 2018, providing district-level leaders regular opportunities to meet with parents passionate about literacy education. The current climate around literacy makes it even more important that we articulate beliefs and practices to parents and other stakeholders. We are fortunate to have these parents working with our district, in support of literacy success for all students.

Finally, it is easy to forget the important partnership Kirkwood has with Special School District. We are fortunate to have strong working relationships with our partner educators, working together on behalf of students and their families.

Desired Practice in KSD

Kirkwood families care greatly about our students and want to be informed about teaching and learning in schools. They are often our most passionate advocates, with generally high expectations of our teachers and their children. They also tend to be very busy, so we must be thoughtful and intentional about how and when to best engage families, when communicating about program and about their student's progress. Face-to-face conversations and parent workshops are only beneficial when people can be present, and today's technology allows people to seek and learn information asynchronously, on-demand when they need it. We may benefit from examining other districts and non-educational organizations, exploring creative ways (i.e. videos, podcasts, social media) to engage parents and families in meaningful ways.

We must also seek regular feedback from families about programming and their needs, particularly as they pertain to literacy. Our recent work with the Literacy Advisory Committee should continue, potentially expanding to include more diverse parents of children with a variety of learning strengths and needs.

Effective communication about student learning is an ongoing challenge. Parent feedback may assist our schools/district in refining rubrics and report cards to ensure clarity in communication, around expectations and student performance. Most families like to know how their child's performance has grown over time and how they rate against grade level standards. Communicating this successfully should be our goal.

Community partnerships should reflect a commitment to diverse and equitable support of all learners. We must be consciously aware of whether school events and/or partnerships appeal to some or all parents, actively working to include families of color in collaborative conversations. We cannot rely on others to come to us, so we must actively identify and reach out to parents and other potential partners.

Literacy collaboration opportunities with local colleges/universities, businesses, and other agencies have not been actively explored in recent years. We should be mindful of how opportunities match our needs and philosophy – not forcing partnerships that don't fit – but exploring possibilities would be worthwhile.

Action Steps

1. Work intentionally to ensure diverse and equitable representation - in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in parent/community meetings.
2. Refine use of report cards, rubrics, and digital resources to enhance parent understanding of student expectations and performance against standards
3. Identify creative ways to communicate about literacy and support potential parent education
4. Explore opportunities to better collaborate with current and potential partners (i.e. Adventure Club, SPROG, OASIS, A+ students, universities) in support of literacy
5. Integrate key literacy messaging into the District communication plan and processes
6. Collaborate with Special School District to ensure seamless transitions for students, effective communication with families, and adequate training for staff

The Kirkwood School District believe that all students should perform at or above grade level expectations in reading by the end of the third grade. As such, building and district SMART goals have been developed, in support of this K-3 Literacy Plan, to help guide our work in measurable ways. Benchmarks toward our common goal are listed below:

- By the end of Kindergarten - 80% of students will be at/above grade level (25th percentile) according to the Early Reading Composite or 20% below grade level making aggressive growth according to Rate of Improvement (ROI)
- By the end of 1st Grade - 85% of students will be at/above grade level (25th percentile) according to the Early Reading Composite or 15% below grade level making aggressive growth according to Rate of Improvement (ROI)
- By the end of 2nd Grade - 90% of students will be at/above grade level (25th percentile) according to aReading or 10% below grade level making aggressive growth according to Rate of Improvement (ROI)
- By the end of 3rd Grade - 95% of students will be at/above grade level according to aReading

The action steps listed throughout this document will inform our work and guide the Kirkwood School District toward broader literacy success with all students. There are overlaps across Missouri's five components, however, and we believe around several themes will yield high leverage results. These immediate priorities are listed below:

Instructional Leadership

1. Establish shared expectations for instructional leadership and address training needs for principals
2. Ensure cohesive instruction across the system and fidelity within tiered interventions

Teacher Growth

3. Engage teachers in study of Missouri Learning Standards and literacy research (i.e. MO Literacy Plan)
4. Identify and support teacher needs around all aspects of Kirkwood's Comprehensive Literacy Framework

Cohesion Across System

5. Ensure all personnel, including Special School District staff, have a strong working knowledge of instructional strategies
6. Tighten Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) processes & routines
7. Conduct a crosswalk of power standards and key practices to enhance literacy across content areas
8. Use audits to better understand and refine the purpose/use of any literacy assessments used in district
9. Collaborate with Special School District to ensure seamless transitions for students, effective communication with families, and adequate training for staff

Enhanced Clarity

10. Select one measure to determine student performance against grade level, with established processes for communicating this information to families
11. Refine use of report cards, rubrics, and digital resources to enhance parent understanding
12. Identify creative ways to communicate about literacy and support potential parent education

Additional Supports for Students

13. Address recent legislation calling for students significantly below grade level to be offered extended hours of instruction beyond the school day and year
14. Collaborate with current and potential partners (i.e. Adventure Club, SPROG, OASIS, A+ students, universities) to better support struggling readers