



DENVER
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Culturally Sustaining
Curriculum and Instruction

Denver County School District 1 Plan to Meet Elementary Reading Instructional Program Requirements

Background

As noted in the letter "[RE: Elementary Reading Instructional Program Requirements](#)" sent to Superintendent Marrero on dated October 18, 2021, some of the core reading instructional program(s) identified in the unified improvement plan (UIP) for the Denver County School District 1 do not meet the definition of being scientifically or evidence-based as required in the Colorado READ Act. Given the [Universal Flexibility](#) model utilized in Denver Public Schools (DPS), individual schools have historically had some autonomy when selecting instructional programming and curricular resources. As a result, several schools (including those listed in the original letter) do not currently meet the standards set in S.B. 19-199.

Interim Plan

While the Universal Flexibility model remains Board of Education policy for DPS, we also recognize how essential it is for students to have access to evidence-based curricular resources. To that end, we are currently working to ensure that a.) all eligible educators are engaged in the CDE Modules on the Science of Reading and providing district resources (including companion modules and supportive Professional Learning) that help prepare all teachers to implement evidence-based instructional practices and b.) schools who are not currently using CDE approved resources are aware of the gaps in current programming so that they can engage in the next steps outlined in the Curriculum Adoption section below.

In preparation for the upcoming curricular adoption, our Literacy team has engaged in a comprehensive review of current curricular resources recommended by the CDE. This process has included input from teachers, leaders, community members and experts in Spanish parity in order to ensure ample inclusion of teacher and leader voice. Based on this review process, the team has recommended that DPS adopt CKLA/Caminos as our district supported curricular resource. To collect additional data on the implementation of this curriculum in the DPS context, 8 schools are currently piloting CKLA/Caminos. These schools are providing information on areas of strength and areas of growth in the curricular resource, with specific feedback on utilization of this resource in our DPS community to ultimately provide guidance for the upcoming adoption process. In addition, the pilots are providing an opportunity for us to consider how to best ensure parity within our English and Spanish resources and instruction.

Since the district as a whole will not engage in the process of adopting a new curricular resource until the Universal Flexibility window opens in January of 2022 (with the earliest implementation of materials being for school year 2022-23), we recognize the need to further align instruction to the science of reading across the district before the upcoming school year. To that end, DPS has also purchased evidence-based curricular resources for all schools to ensure improved practices are implemented (regardless of current core curricular resources). Specifically, each school has received the Heggerty Curriculum for grades K-2 to ensure that Phonemic Awareness is sufficiently targeted and supported. You can find additional details on this plan in the district FAQ [here](#).



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Curriculum Adoption

In order to ensure that all schools are using comprehensive evidence-based curricular resources, all schools serving students in K-3 will engage in a curriculum adoption process in January 2022. DPS has chosen to adopt CKLA/Caminos given its rating by the CDE and availability of equitable resources in English and Spanish. We have also modified our Universal Flexibility process to ensure all schools will ultimately adopt an evidence-based curricular option. You can see our current plans fully outlined in the presentation [here](#), but, in summation:

- We will utilize a passive opt-in option, meaning that all eligible schools will automatically be opted-in to CKLA/Caminos unless they actively opt-out.
- To actively opt-out, a school will need to:
 - Indicate proposed alternative from CDE approved (green) list
 - This ensures that any alternative curricular option will be evidence-based
 - Include rationale
 - Complete review rubric and plan to address noted gaps
 - Submissions will then be reviewed and approved with support of independent consultants
 - This final step ensures that all schools have a proactive plan to ensure the implementation of best practices

This outlined plan should ensure all of the named schools are able to transition to using an evidence-base curricular resource no later than the 2022-23 school year. By engaging in the review process for opt-out schools, we will also provide an opportunity to create a dialogue with any school in need of transitional support from a non-approved resource (i.e. Tools of the Mind) to a resource that meets all requirements and ensures best practices.

Named Schools and Portfolio Schools

The outlined plan will address the named schools below:

- Barnum Elementary School, Tools of the Mind
- Beach Court Elementary School, Tools of the Mind
- Bradley International School, Savvas Learning Company - Ready Gen
- Bromwell Elementary School, Lucy Calkins, Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- Cowell Elementary School, Tools of the Mind
- Creativity Challenge Community, Lucy Calkins - Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- Denver Center for International Studies at Fairmont, Fountas & Pinnell – Phonics and Lucy Calkins - Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- Doull Elementary School, Lucy Calkins - Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- Eagleton Elementary School, Lucy Calkins - Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- Highline Academy Southeast, National Geographic Reach for Reading (REACH)
- Lowry Elementary School, Tools of the Mind
- Maxwell Elementary School, Lucy Calkins - Units of Study
- McKinley-Thatcher Elementary School, Fountas & Pinnell - Phonics
- Park Hill School, Fountas & Pinnell, Leveled Literacy Intervention

- Reach Charter School, READ Well (*Surrender of charter effective 22-23 school year*)
- Schmitt Elementary School, Tools of the Mind
- Slavens K-8 School, Lucy Calkins - Units of Study for Teaching Reading
- SOAR at Green Valley Ranch - Fountas & Pinnell
- Teller Elementary School, Fountas & Pinnell and Tools of the Mind
- Willow Elementary School, Voyager Sopris - Read Well

For any Portfolio Schools (i.e. schools that utilize independent curricular resources), the Universal Flexibility process listed above will be applied to curricular reviews as well. Through this multi-year, comprehensive plan, we are certain that all schools in Denver County School District 1 will meet Elementary Reading Instructional Requirements.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alex Marerro

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