

Literacy Leadership Team Guiding Questions

Vision and Alignment

1. What are the most important literacy priorities identified in our school's reading plan?

WDMS will strengthen standards-aligned Tier 1 literacy instruction through the Science of Reading, academic vocabulary, comprehension, reading and writing across content, CER/Dandy Learning Loop, differentiated small groups, and frequent progress monitoring. The schoolwide goal is to increase ELA Achievement to 65%, Learning Gains to 70%, and Lowest 25% to 68% by May 2027.

2. How do these priorities align with district goals and the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards?

They align with the BCPS CERP and B.E.S.T. ELA Standards by emphasizing evidence-based reading, writing, speaking, listening, academic discourse, systematic instruction, and data-responsive differentiation. Curriculum Council will support consistent implementation through common instructional expectations, PLCs, and walkthroughs.

3. Which student groups require our greatest attention this year?

Priority groups include ESE, ELL/ESOL, 504, Lowest 25%, Level 1, and high-bubble Level 2 students. Supports will preserve grade-level rigor while providing targeted scaffolds, small groups, and interventions matched to documented skill needs.

4. What evidence demonstrates that our current literacy practices are meeting student needs?

FAST, BSA/common assessments, weekly formative checks, student work, CER responses, course performance, walkthrough evidence, and intervention progress data will be reviewed for growth. Effectiveness will be determined by movement toward proficiency, learning-gain, and Lowest 25% targets.

5. Where do we see the greatest opportunity for improvement?

The greatest opportunity is improving the consistency of rigorous Tier 1 ELA instruction, especially comprehension, academic vocabulary, student discourse, text-based writing, differentiated small groups, and timely reteaching based on student evidence.

Science of Reading Implementation

1. How consistently are Science of Reading practices visible across all K–5 classrooms?

During the 2026-2027 academic year SoR will align to Grades 6–8. Science of Reading practices will be monitored through ongoing walkthroughs for explicit instruction, vocabulary and comprehension development, reading/writing integration, small-group differentiation, corrective feedback, and use of student data to adjust instruction.

2. How are teachers providing explicit and systematic instruction?

○ Phonological awareness?

- For middle school students, phonological awareness will be addressed when diagnostic data identify a foundational skill gap and through district-approved intervention resources rather than as a universal Tier 1 routine.

○ Phonics?

- Phonics and decoding instruction will be provided when diagnostic data identify a need, using district-approved, explicit and systematic intervention practices aligned to the student's specific skill gap.

○ Fluency?

- Students with identified fluency needs will receive purposeful repeated reading, supported oral reading, and progress monitoring to improve accuracy, automaticity, and comprehension.

○ Vocabulary?

- Teachers will explicitly teach academic and content vocabulary using context, morphology, word relationships, Frayer/Word Frames, discussion, and repeated application in reading and writing. Students will have access to their content vocabulary dictionaries for ELL vocabulary focus.

○ Comprehension?

- Teachers will model and scaffold comprehension through close reading, questioning, summarizing, evidence selection, CER, discussion, and written responses to increasingly complex grade-level texts.

3. How do we ensure instruction is responsive to student data rather than solely following pacing?

Teachers will use FAST, BSA/common assessments, weekly formative data, student work, and progress monitoring to identify skill gaps and determine reteaching or intervention. Pacing adjustments will be approved by administration and must be supported by standard/benchmark mastery data and a clear plan for closing gaps.

4. What instructional practices should be strengthened schoolwide?

Schoolwide priorities include Science of Reading-aligned explicit instruction, academic vocabulary, comprehension, CER, academic discourse, differentiated small groups, chunking critical information, flexible grouping, corrective feedback, anchor charts, and reading and writing across content areas.

5. How are students receiving opportunities to apply literacy skills in authentic reading and writing tasks?

Students will read grade-level texts and sources, discuss and annotate evidence, hashtag notes, Cornell notes to write CER responses, summarize and compare ideas, revise thinking, and defend claims across ELA, Science, Social Studies, Math, and electives.

Core Reading Instruction (Tier 1)

1. What evidence indicates Tier 1 instruction is effective for most students?

Tier 1 effectiveness will be demonstrated through improving FAST/BSA performance, classroom mastery data, stronger student work and CER responses, positive walkthrough trends, and fewer students requiring additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 support.

2. Are instructional materials being implemented with fidelity?

Implementation will be monitored through district pacing and curriculum alignment, lesson evidence, walkthroughs, PLC reviews, common assessments, and coaching. Teachers will use district-approved materials and document data-based adjustments when additional instruction is needed.

3. How are teachers differentiating within Tier 1 instruction?

Tier 1 differentiation will include flexible grouping, scaffolded tasks, chunking, vocabulary supports, visuals, sentence frames, guided reasoning, modeling, corrective feedback, and appropriate ESE/ELL/504 accommodations while maintaining grade-level expectations. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions remain separate, targeted supports matched to identified reading deficits and monitored through intervention data.

4. How are teachers using student engagement strategies during literacy blocks?

Teachers will have a timed agenda to ensure CER, think-pair-share, purposeful grouping, interactive notebooks, anchor charts, discussion protocols, collaborative tasks, questioning, and revision so students carry more of the cognitive work with fidelity to support the gradual release model.

5. What classroom practices should be highlighted as exemplars?

Exemplars include visible standards and learning goals, explicit modeling, purposeful small groups, rigorous questioning, student-to-student discourse, text-based CER responses, immediate feedback, differentiation, and evidence that students revise and improve their thinking.

Assessment and Data Analysis

1. How are FAST and district assessment results informing instructional decisions?

FAST and district data will identify priority standards, student skill gaps, intervention needs, enrichment opportunities, and students requiring accelerated support. Each data review will result in a specific instructional action and reassessment plan.

2. Which grade levels are demonstrating the strongest growth? Why?

Current 2026–2027 PM1/BSA data must be fully disaggregated before identifying a grade level as demonstrating the strongest growth. The Literacy Leadership Team will compare grade-level, teacher, standard, and subgroup performance after each assessment window before drawing conclusions. Based on the 2025–2026 school year data, Grade 7, currently Grade 8 for 2026-2027 school year demonstrated the strongest academic performance and growth in ELA, as measured by the PM3 FAST ELA assessment, with 62% of students reaching proficiency. This growth reflects the impact of focused standards-based instruction, consistent progress monitoring, targeted intervention and small-group support, and the use of assessment data to adjust instruction based on student needs.

Moving forward, the school will analyze the instructional practices and supports that contributed to Grade 7's success and identify strategies that can be replicated across Grades 6 and 8 to strengthen overall ELA achievement.

3. Which grade levels require additional support?

Grade levels requiring additional support will be identified only after PM1 and classroom data are fully analyzed. Support will be prioritized where performance is below school targets, growth is insufficient, or subgroup gaps persist. As of current it is projected that Grade 8 for the 2026-2027 school year will receive additional support to increase their proficiency rate. The current focus will be on standards to increase students' proficiency in reading informational text and reading across genres and vocabulary. Reading prose and poetry is still an area of growth for all.

4. What trends are evident across grades?

Across Grades 6–8, a consistent trend indicates the need to increase students' ability to apply academic vocabulary, make connections across texts and content, and demonstrate clear evidence of standards mastery. Reading Prose and Poetry also remains an area for continued growth across all grade levels. Instructional support will therefore emphasize explicit vocabulary development, standards-aligned questioning, close reading, text-based evidence, and opportunities for students to demonstrate how their understanding of content connects directly to the targeted standard.

5. Which foundational skill deficits are most common?

The most common foundational skill deficits across Grades 6–8 are related to academic vocabulary development, comprehension of informational text, reading across genres, and the ability to connect evidence from a text to the targeted standard. Students also demonstrate a continued need for support with reading prose and poetry, determining meaning in context, making inferences, and explaining how textual evidence supports their understanding. A consistent trend across grade levels is that students may identify information within a text but need additional support using appropriate academic vocabulary and demonstrating how their understanding connects directly to standards mastery. Instructional support will therefore focus on explicit vocabulary instruction, close reading, text annotation, evidence-based responses, and frequent opportunities for students to explain their thinking using standards-aligned language.

6. How frequently are teachers reviewing student data?

Teachers review data on a consistent basis and use findings to make instructional adjustments based on their selection tests, PM1 and PM2 testing findings. Teachers will review how students are interacting test standards to identify barriers to mastery and provide a remediation or additional interventions as needed.

7. How do we ensure data discussions lead to instructional action?

We ensure data discussions lead to instructional action by having teachers review student performance data consistently and use the findings to make targeted instructional adjustments. Teachers analyze data from selection assessments, PM1, PM2, and other classroom-based assessments to determine areas of strength, identify standards that require additional support, and monitor progress over time. During data discussions, teachers examine how students are interacting with specific standards and assessment items to identify barriers to mastery, including vocabulary, comprehension, misconceptions, and gaps in prerequisite skills. Based on these findings, teachers adjust instructional strategies, provide targeted remediation, establish flexible small groups, and implement additional interventions or enrichment as needed. Follow-up data reviews are used to determine whether the instructional response was effective and whether students are progressing toward standards mastery.

Interventions

1. How are students identified for intervention?

Students are identified using multiple data points, including FAST, district assessments, classroom performance, diagnostic data, teacher observation, and progress monitoring. A single assessment score will not be used as the sole basis for intervention placement.

2. Are interventions aligned to specific student skill deficits?

Yes. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions will be matched to the specific reading deficit identified through Science of Reading-aligned diagnostic and progress-monitoring data and will use district-approved evidence-based resources.

3. How do we know interventions are working?

Intervention effectiveness will be determined through progress-monitoring data, targeted skill mastery, classroom performance, student work, and assessment trends. Supports will be continued, adjusted, intensified, or reduced based on documented student response.

4. What progress-monitoring data are being reviewed regularly?

Teams will review FAST, BSA/common assessments, weekly formative assessments, program-embedded intervention data, student work, course performance, and documented Tier 2/Tier 3 progress-monitoring results.

5. Are intervention groups flexible and adjusted based on student growth?

Yes. Tier 2 and Tier 3 groups will be adjusted based on current progress-monitoring data so students receive the appropriate skill focus, intensity, and level of support.

6. How are Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports coordinated with core instruction?

Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions supplement, not replace, standards-aligned Tier 1 instruction. They will target diagnosed reading deficits through explicit, systematic, teacher-led small-group or intensive instruction and will be monitored separately from Tier 1 differentiation.

7. What barriers exist to effective intervention implementation?

Potential barriers include staffing and scheduling, inconsistent implementation fidelity, insufficient progress monitoring, and interventions that are not closely matched to diagnosed skill gaps. These barriers will be reviewed through MTSS, PLCs, coaching, and Curriculum Council when schoolwide adjustments are needed.

Professional Learning and Coaching

1. What literacy professional learning has had the greatest impact on instruction?

Current priorities include Science of Reading implementation, CER, standards-aligned planning, academic discourse, differentiated small groups, formative assessment, student-

work analysis, and data-driven instruction. Impact will be measured through classroom implementation and student achievement evidence.

2. What additional support do teachers need?

Teachers, particularly new and novice staff, need modeling, co-planning, small-group instructional support, Science of Reading-aligned literacy strategies, differentiation for ESE/ELL/504 students, standards alignment, and feedback connected to student work and assessment data.

3. What trends emerge from classroom walkthroughs and coaching cycles?

Walkthrough and coaching trends will focus on consistency of rigor, explicit instruction, student discourse, differentiation, CER, small-group purpose, checks for understanding, and teacher response to misconceptions. Formal trends will be reported after sufficient 2026–2027 walkthrough evidence is collected.

4. How are coaching conversations connected to student achievement data?

Coaching will begin with student achievement or work evidence, identify the instructional need, establish a specific teacher action, observe implementation, and review whether the change improves student performance.

5. Which instructional practices should be coaching priorities?

Coaching priorities are Science of Reading-aligned explicit instruction, comprehension, academic vocabulary, differentiated small groups, CER, academic discourse, formative assessment, chunking, corrective feedback, flexible grouping, and student revision.

6. How can teacher leaders help build literacy capacity across the school?

Teacher leaders will model lessons, lead PLCs, analyze student work, share exemplars, support common planning, mentor novice teachers, and calibrate expectations across departments. Curriculum Council will connect these practices across content areas so literacy implementation remains coherent schoolwide.