Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports & Alignment

Structuring Guide for Reading
2018-2019 Academic Year

Reading: Structuring
Introduction to Document
The Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Structuring Guides have been created to assist teams in documenting the structures necessary to begin the implementation of a Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). This document may contain tools that are to be used in conjunction with content area specific documents for reading, mathematics, behavior, and social-emotional content areas. All Kansas MTSS documents are aligned with the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM), which describes the critical components of a MTSS and what each looks like when fully implemented, and the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Research Base, which provides a basic overview of the research support for a MTSS.

www.ksdetasn.org/mtss

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Introduction
In Kansas, there is a belief that all children can learn. Fundamentally, every student should be challenged to achieve high standards, both academically and behaviorally. A systemic framework for ensuring all students have this experience is referred to as the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Simply put, Kansas MTSS is a set of evidence-based practices implemented across a system to meet the needs of all learners. Horner et al. (2005) stressed the importance of supporting children both academically and behaviorally in order to enable them to reach their fullest learning potential. Kansas MTSS builds a system of prevention, early intervention, and support to ensure that all children learn. Additionally, Kansas MTSS establishes a system that intentionally focuses on leadership, professional development, and an empowering culture, in addition to a focus on student learning.

Kansas MTSS incorporates a continuum of assessment, curriculum, and instruction. This systemic approach supports both struggling and advanced learners through the selection and implementation of increasingly intense evidence-based interventions in response to both academic and behavioral needs. A brief to help start this conversation is located at https://ksdetasn.org/resources/1266. Whether your program is implementing a single content or planning to integrate academic and behavior contents, it is essential that you begin with the System’s Guide and then the content guides. The Kansas MTSS Framework establishes a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop that includes ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that each Kansas student achieves high standards.

Across the nation, schools use a variety of curricula, interventions, and methods to monitor student learning, both academically and socially. The goal of Kansas MTSS is to provide an integrated systemic approach to meet the needs of all students. To achieve this, resources must be used in an effective and efficient way. While Kansas MTSS does not necessarily require additional resources or adding to existing practices, it does involve evaluating current practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness, addressing areas that are missing, and replacing ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research and/or evidence. Kansas MTSS is a guiding framework for school improvement and accreditation activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.

More than 30 years of research exists indicating how children learn to read, why some children fail at reading, and what components and practices are necessary to provide effective instruction in reading. A multi-tiered reading model has been designed to implement these research findings and meet the instructional needs of all readers. The MTSS is a prevention model aimed at providing early supports to students before they fall behind or become disengaged from school because of advanced learning needs. A multi-tier reading model uses scientific, research-based reading researched practices and the five essential areas of reading. Considerable research supports the importance of using systematic and explicit instruction when teaching the five
essential areas of reading—namely, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The 4-Part Processing Model for word recognition proposed by Seidenberg and McClellan (1989) supports the research of cognitive psychologists regarding the reading processing systems. The 4-Part Processor is a graphic representation of the four parts of the brain that are involved in reading. The phonological processor symbol on the graphic represents the back part of the frontal lobe of the brain that is responsible for speech-sound awareness. The orthographic processor symbol on the graphic represents the lower back occipital part of the brain that is responsible for letter and letter-pattern recognition. The angular gyrus is where the phonological and orthographic processing systems communicate to support word recognition. The meaning and context processor symbols represent the temporal areas in which meaning and comprehension take place.

The four-part processor concept helps explain the various ways in which reading problems might develop and why reading instruction should target several kinds of skills. The goal of instruction is to educate all of the processing systems and enable them to work together. “The model shows why recognition and fast processing of sounds, letter patterns, and morphemes—as well as word meanings, language comprehension, and background knowledge—are all important components of skilled reading” (LETRS Module 1, 2nd Edition). According to Snowling (as cited in Perfetti, 2005, p.3), “word recognition is the foundation of reading; all other processes are dependent on it.”

A multi-tier reading model emphasizes early identification, supplemental instruction, ongoing assessment, and the use of assessment data to identify students who need intervention, as
assessment selection is a critical step in the MTSS process. The efficiency of the MTSS process varies depending on the assessments selected to drive the process. Teaching all students to read requires a system for the early identification of at-risk students as well as a system for providing those students with the interventions they need to become proficient readers by third grade. Good classroom instruction should meet the needs of most students, but an efficient system for providing high-quality interventions is required to meet the needs of all students.

**MTSS in Preschool Programs**

The application of MTSS for early literacy in preschool programs is both appropriate and useful for ensuring that young children enter kindergarten ready for more formal instruction. Early childhood research has clearly identified skills and knowledge in oral language, phonological awareness, and print knowledge as important components of early childhood early literacy (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

The general practices and procedures provided in this guide can and should be applied by leadership teams when integrating preschool into their MTSS. However, for appropriate integration to occur, it is important that leadership teams understand the similarities and differences between programming for very young children and formal schooling. At times, the application of an MTSS to this population will look slightly different than what is put into place for school-aged children. This guide will provide an overview of MTSS for Literacy in preschool, however further information can be found in the MTSS Early Childhood Literacy Structuring Guide.

**Application of MTSS to Preschool Programs**

**Creating a Comprehensive Assessment Plan**

Creating the comprehensive assessment system is the first major structuring tasks that must be completed by the leadership teams. Part of the comprehensive planning work involves selecting a universal screener, progress monitor, diagnostic, and outcomes assessments.

**Selecting a Screening Assessment**

It is important that universal screening tools assess the critical skills that fall within the five essential areas of reading and are highly predictive of future performance. Measures that can be administered quickly yet reliably, while still providing data that can be used with confidence to make instructional decisions, are most desirable.

The simple skills of reading measured by curriculum-based measurements (CBM) predict eventual reading comprehension so well that testing only needs to take 7-15 minutes per child. What is tested is simpler than what is taught: Both foundational skills and comprehension will need to be taught, even though comprehension may not be tested thoroughly (Moats &

**Universal Screening for Preschool**

Unlike the developmental screening tools, a universal screening tool is used to compare students to a normative sample or standard for the purposes of identifying which students may be at risk for later learning difficulties based on indicators that are predictive of later achievement. A developmental screening tool identifies children who may have a developmental delay, while a universal screening tool identifies students who may be at risk and ranks them based on that risk into levels/tiers. This distinct difference makes the data from universal screening tools particularly helpful for supporting a process for tiered intervention. Universal screening tools are appropriate for early literacy and assess the predictive elements of early literacy: oral language, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. They are valid and reliable for this purpose, can be used with confidence to make instructional decisions, and can be given at least three times per school year.

**Universal Screening for Grades K-8**

All students in grades K-8 (Early Reading K-3 and Adolescent Reading 4-8) should be screened three times per year regarding critical literacy skills. The skills measured will depend upon grade level and the time of year. The publisher of each potential universal screening instrument should be able to provide a manual or technical guide that will enable teams to determine whether or not the critical skills are covered (See Appendix A: Critical Skills for Universal Screening).

**Universal Screening for Grades 9-12**

In grades 9-12, screening is a multi-step process focused on reading comprehension. The first step in this screening process involves assessing students’ grade-level comprehension skills once a year in the fall or when they identify students in need of reading intervention or advanced learning needs that may need extension or acceleration opportunities. This can be done by administering group assessments or computer-adaptive group assessments.

For districts who do not have a secondary level screener as part of their selected universal screener, the following table provides a few examples of assessments that can be used as the initial step for universal screening for grades 9-12.
Universal Screening for Grades 9-12

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Critical Skills for Universal Screening (Grades K-8)

The second step in the screening process is to determine why students are struggling with comprehension. This step requires collecting more information. Information will be collected in the following ways:

1. Students who do not pass the grade-level comprehension assessment need a closer look at their accuracy and fluency. Students should be assessed at the level closest to their current grade placement that offers both a fluency and comprehension measure. Students who score below target on the comprehension measure would need to be assessed with the fluency measure.

2. Students scoring below target on the fluency measure are placed into groups according to fluency and accuracy scores.

3. Students may need an informal diagnostic assessment to determine appropriate intervention (e.g., QPS, PAST).

4. Other indicators, such as attendance, tardies, and office referrals, should be considered in addition to the assessment data.

Decision Rules for the Universal Screener

The decision rules that need to be established are the cut points/criteria on the universal screening assessments that will be used to determine which students are performing adequately as well as which students need supplemental or intensive support due to advanced or at-risk level have demonstrated grade-level performance on the screener should continue to be on track through high-quality core instruction.

Students whose scores indicate a need for intervention (advanced or at-risk) will receive differentiated instruction in the core as well as additional support.
Grades Pre-K-8
Some universal screening tools have pre-established cut points or benchmarks that can be used, whereas others are based on normative information and utilize percentile ranks as a means of identifying students who may be in need of additional support. Screening tools that have preset benchmarks identify students at risk of falling into the strategic (students needing additional intervention) or intensive category (students needing substantial intervention) (Farrell, Hancock, & Smartt, 2006).

Grades 9-12
Since screening is a multi-step process for students in grades 9-12, the leadership team will need to determine which grade-level comprehension assessment will be administered to all students in these grades once a year. To maximize efficiency, these comprehension assessments are typically group-administered assessments. More examples and information for group-administered comprehension assessment for grades 9-12 can be found in Measure for Measure: A Critical Consumers’ Guide to Reading Comprehension Assessments for Adolescents (Morsy, Kieffer, & Snow, 2010). Next, leadership teams will then need to determine which assessment to administer to the students in grades 9-12 who did not pass the grade-level comprehension assessment and need intervention.

Selecting a Progress-Monitoring Assessment K-12
Students make more academic progress when progress monitoring occurs regularly and data are collected to make instructional decisions, resulting in students making more academic progress than when teachers do not use progress monitoring. Teachers' accuracy in judging student progress increases when progress monitoring is used consistently (Stecker & Fuchs, 2000).

During core instruction, all students are progress monitored through the use of common formative assessments administered throughout the year. These assessments are tied to content-area instruction and help teachers determine if students have learned the concepts and skills. The instruction may be adjusted to re-teach concepts or provide additional practice on skills not yet mastered.

For students receiving supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) instruction, progress-monitoring data are collected more frequently and are used to chart the growth of individual students. Progress monitoring for students receiving supplemental or intensive instruction answers two questions:
1. Is the instructional intervention working?
2. Should the intervention be continued, adjusted, or discontinued?

The tools recommended for progress monitoring include the same tests as the universal screener that was originally used to identify the students requiring interventions (Torgesen, 2006). These
curriculum-based measurements (CBM) are recommended because they exhibit the following traits:

1. measure small increments of change
2. have sufficient multiple forms to allow for frequent (weekly or bi-weekly) administration (20 to 30 alternate forms are sufficient)
3. provide data that may be used to create growth charts of the students’ learning over time.

The evidence indicates strong effects on students’ reading, spelling, and mathematics achievement when teachers rely on CBM for progress monitoring, especially when teachers graph the scores to help plan instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002). Having students chart their own progress can also increase motivation and participation (Bos & Vaughn, 2006). The ultimate goal of the MTSS is to return the student to a less intensive level of support as soon as possible while continuing to monitor the student’s progress in case the need for additional supports re-emerges.

**Progress Monitoring in Preschool**
Unlike the K-12 MTSS system, preschool universal screening tools generally cannot also be used as progress monitoring tools, because they cannot be given with enough frequency to monitor intervention effectiveness and be used to make changes to the level of intervention a student receives. Instead, preschool programs are encouraged to use mastery monitoring strategies as a means to assess and monitor the progress of students receiving tiered intervention. Mastery monitoring strategies are teacher designed and involve directly collecting data on students’ mastery of specific skills being taught in intervention.

**Matching Progress-Monitoring Assessment to Instructional Focus K-12**
Progress monitoring for students receiving supplemental and intense instruction is critical so that teachers can determine if the intervention is working or needs to be adjusted. The assessment instrument chosen for progress monitoring must be able to measure the reading skills being taught in the intervention being provided. Therefore, appropriately matching the progress-monitoring measure and the intervention is critical to ensuring student progress.

**Frequency of Progress Monitoring K-12**
Collecting and graphing progress-monitoring data over a series of weeks will provide a visual pattern of skill acquisition for students receiving additional support. Most recommendations on the frequency of progress monitoring indicate the need to collect data every two to three weeks for students receiving supplemental instruction and weekly for students receiving intense instruction.

**Decision Rules for Progress-Monitoring Assessments for K-12**
It is critical for the leadership team to determine if enough data are available to make an instructional decision. Leadership teams will need to determine the progress-monitoring
assessment that will be used and document the following decisions:

- The assessment selected for which students/which grades.
- The areas assessed.
- Who will administer the assessment.

This information should be documented on the Comprehensive Assessment Plan. Planning for data management should be initiated by determining who will be responsible for entering the data and producing reports once the assessment data are collected. The leadership team should consider any needed technical training needed for this to occur.

The leadership team must also determine how many data points will be collected and analyzed to determine whether the current instruction is succeeding or whether an adjustment in instruction is needed. Some researchers recommend that instruction be adjusted after three consecutive data points fall below the aim line (Shinn, 1989).

**Frequency of Progress Monitoring**

Given at least six data points, examine the last four consecutive scores to determine instructional success (Hosp, Hosp, & Howell, 2007; Stecker & Fuchs, 2000):

- If all four scores fall below the goal line, an adjustment in instruction is recommended.
- If all four scores fall above the goal line, a goal increase is recommended.
- If neither applies, continue collecting data until the four-point rule can be applied.

Teams should select a decision rule for the number of data points needed before deciding whether an adjustment in instruction is needed.

Decision rules for entering tiers are initially based on the assessment’s universal screening instructional recommendations. When students are receiving intervention and are being monitored for progress in their grade level, the grade-level cut-score for the time of year is used to determine exit criterion and movement between tiers. The fluid movement of groups is critical. Students who achieve exit criteria and are removed from specific intervention groups increase their motivation (Hall, 2007). It may be necessary to continue monitoring these students’ progress for a short period to ensure that they can maintain their current skill level without the previously provided support. It is recommended that the leadership team provide time for scheduled meetings for collaborative teams to review data, discuss student progress, and determine students’ movement between tiers.

**Diagnostic Process and Assessments K-12**

The term *diagnostic assessment* has two meanings in MTSS for reading. The first meaning refers to a diagnostic process that involves the use of informal surveys and tests that probe a student’s reading knowledge and skill in depth so that teachers can determine the student’s instructional
focus. The second meaning refers to formal diagnostic assessments using standardized tests.

**Selecting Diagnostic Assessments for Literacy K-12**

It is not necessary for leadership teams to identify a formal diagnostic process to determine instructional focus in preschool.

**Diagnostic Process for Reading to Determine Instructional Focus K-12**

- If available, begin with the assessment system’s grouping recommendation.
- At many grade levels, students are grouped based on accuracy and fluency data.
- For inaccurate readers, further informal diagnostics will be administered.

**Formal Diagnostic Assessment**

The leadership team must also identify diagnostic assessments that will be made available within their comprehensive assessment plan. When selecting diagnostic assessments, the team should ensure the technical adequacy of each assessment. Diagnostic assessments are designed to provide more precise, detailed, and instructionally relevant information regarding students’ knowledge and skill. The purpose of diagnostic assessment is to provide very specific information about students’ skills and should focus on sampling students’ knowledge in ways that are instructionally relevant. Diagnostic assessments can be conducted at any time during the year when a more in-depth analysis of students’ strengths and weaknesses is needed.

A diagnostic assessment should provide more in-depth information and be used for instruction-related decisions. Thus, the diagnostic assessment should answer the following questions:

- What are the student’s strengths?
- What are the student’s needs?
- What instruction is needed?

As leadership teams undertake the task of selecting diagnostic assessments, the following considerations are offered:

- What is the amount of time it takes to administer the assessment?
- Is this assessment effective and accurate in diagnosing students’ instructional needs?
- What training is available to learn how to administer the diagnostic assessments and interpret the results?

The Resource Appendix B: Diagnostic Assessments for Reading can be found in the Appendix of this document.

**Selecting Diagnostic Assessments for Reading K-12**

At a minimum, a set of diagnostic assessment instruments needs to be available to assess critical skills in reading. From this set of instruments, the tool(s) needed to assess an individual student’s
presenting concerns will be selected. Literacy skills develop along a continuum regardless of a student’s age or grade level. Therefore, each building—kindergarten through high school—must identify a set of diagnostic assessment instruments measuring a range of very specific skills.

These skills include the Five Essential Reading Components—namely, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Not all students will be assessed using all of these instruments, but the building must have diagnostic assessments available to assess each of these components. Included as a resource in the back of this guide is a reading diagnostic assessment list; although not exhaustive, these diagnostic assessments identified are commonly used in Kansas schools to help the leadership teams to develop a comprehensive assessment plan.

For leadership teams working at the secondary level, it is important to note that some diagnostic reading assessments were developed for younger students; however, these assessments can still be appropriately used to identify the needs of older students whose skill level is much lower than that of their peers.

**Decision Rules for Diagnostic Assessments**

Most diagnostic assessments provide either age-based or grade-based norms, or rubric scoring used to determine whether or not a student has significant problems in specific skill domains. Formal diagnostic assessments require a lot of building resources, which should be used only when progress-monitoring data indicate that further information is necessary to adequately plan instruction. Decision rules will ensure that students who need diagnostic assessment will receive it in an efficient and effective way.

All buildings should establish decision rules to address when additional diagnostic assessments will be given. The leadership team needs to review each selected diagnostic assessment to determine the skills assessed and time required for administration. The team should determine decision rules for when diagnostic assessments will be administered as well as document all decision rules established during the comprehensive assessment plan.

All buildings should address decision rules related to:

1. How data from the diagnostic process will be used to assign students to homogenous groups.
2. When additional formal diagnostic assessments will be administered.

**Professional Development for Assessments**

Once assessments have been selected, the leadership team should provide appropriate professional development and ongoing support to all staff members expected to use them. See the Systems Guide for guidance on professional development of assessments.
**Models of Instruction: Scheduling**

Preschool populations by their very nature include children of a wide variety of skill level. Therefore, preschool daily schedules are designed to provide multiple opportunities for differentiated instruction along the developmental continuum. All children, including those needing Tier 1, 2, or 3 support, should participate in the core early literacy curriculum with differentiation provided. Differentiation of core curriculum is considered at Tier 1 for all students.

When considering how to provide intervention for students needing Tier 2/3 support, Kansas MTSS recommends that preschool programs not follow the “walk to intervention model” typically used in K-12 programs. Instead of grouping students across classrooms or bringing in someone the child does not know to provide intervention, Tier 2/3 intervention should ideally be provided in a child’s classroom by familiar adults. It is especially important for young children to develop positive and secure relationships with a small number of adults. In addition, familiar adults who already work with students are more likely and able to provide distributed practice on target skills during the day. Research suggests that preschool teacher-child relationships play a significant role in influencing young children’s social and emotional development (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009). Therefore, children identified through universal screening as requiring more support should receive that support through additional small groups and/or embedded learning opportunities within the daily routine and play.

Using the decision rules determined by your universal screening tool, children needing additional instruction in key early literacy skills will be identified to participate in intervention focused on the following:

1. oral/language/vocabulary,
2. phonological awareness/alphabet knowledge, or
3. a comprehensive intervention targeting all areas – oral language, vocabulary, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness.

**K-12 Models of Instruction**

The building leadership team will select a model for providing the necessary tiered instruction to meet students’ needs. There are a variety of possible models of instruction. The culture and logistics specific to a building will influence the implementation of any of the described models or the team’s creation of a model that is unique to the building.

Depending on the configuration of the building, intermediate students (grades 4-6) may follow the K-3 elementary model; if they are departmentalized, the model of instruction will be more like those for middle and high school facilities, in which all students are included in content-area classes.
A model that is growing in popularity is the Walk to Intervention Model, in which a school provides common intervention times either for the same grade levels or across grade levels. During this common intervention time, students go to different classrooms for intervention. Interventions in this model can be provided by various staff members such as classroom teachers, specialists, and instructional aides. An advantage of this model is that tailored instruction can be provided for advanced learners. When choosing an intervention delivery model, it is essential to consider the following recommendations for supplemental and intensive instruction and advantages and disadvantages of each model of support.

**Core K-12**

**Early Reading (Grade K-3)**

Core instruction provided to all students in the building should be consistent with research-based practices and the district allocation of instructional minutes. Core instruction in reading should occur for a minimum of 90 minutes of uninterrupted time daily for kindergarten through third grade. The time allotted for core instruction must be sufficient to include differentiated instruction. Additional time will be needed for language arts instruction.

**Adolescent Literacy (Grades 4-12)**

In buildings that have departmentalized intermediate grades (4-6), the model of instruction will be more like those for middle and high school buildings in which all students are included in content-area classes. Content-area classes are considered to be the core class at the secondary level. Essentially, core (Tier 1) instruction is designed to support the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension in all students and to encourage struggling readers to apply the strategies emphasized during intervention instruction. Further information about secondary core instruction is available at the end of this guide.

**Strategic (Tier 2) K-12**

**Early Reading (Grade K-3)**

Time for Tier 2 instruction should be built into the master schedule in order to manage instructional time and ensuring that students have access to the full core curriculum. It is suggested that an additional 30 minutes of targeted Tier 2 instruction should be provided beyond the core, at least three to four days per week (Gersten et al., 2008; McCook, 2006) and should be conducted in small homogeneous groups of three to five students.

**Adolescent Literacy (Grades 4-12)**

Strategic (Tier 2) intervention is designed to provide support to students who need targeted, focused instruction in reading. It is intended to focus primarily on instruction in comprehension and vocabulary strategies, with instruction in phonics such as word reading and/or reading fluency provided when needed.
For intermediate grades (4-6), an additional 30 minutes of targeted Tier 2 intervention should be provided beyond the core for reading at least three to four days per week (McCook, 2006) in homogeneous groups of three to five students.

For middle and high school students, homogeneous instruction can be provided to groups as large as 10 to 16 students for 30 to 50 minutes per day or one class period, at least three to four days per week (McCook, 2006). When using specific programs, it is necessary to follow program guidelines if group sizes are specified.

**Intensive (Tier 3) K-12**

**Early Reading (Grade K-3)**

Students in Tier 3 instruction will have more explicit and systematic instruction, increased intervention time, and fewer students in the group.

The recommended time for Tier 3 intensive intervention is 60 minutes. These 60 minutes can be provided all in one block or in two 30-minute blocks, depending on what’s best suited for the student and schedule. The ideal group size for intensive instruction should be no larger than three students.

**Adolescent Literacy (Grades 4-12)**

Intensive (Tier 3) instruction should be skill based and focused on direct instruction; this is also known as explicit teaching, “which is a systematic method for presenting material in small steps, pausing to check for student understanding and eliciting active and successful participation from all students” (Rosenshine, 1986, p. 60). Intensive support is provided to small, homogeneous, groups of one to four students for 50 to 60 minutes per day (Denton, Bryan, Wexler, Reed, & Vaughn, 2007).

The leadership team needs to review the current assessment data on students in the building to obtain a rough estimate of the number of students who will need some type of intervention. The team should then review the models in the Tiered System of Support Comparison of Models tool and discuss the pros and cons of each model. A model of support should be selected that appears to be appropriate for the number of students in the school who might need intervention and that aligns with the building’s core beliefs.

**Scheduling K-12**

When creating the schedule to put into practice the selected model of instruction, it is prudent to first ensure that classrooms are receiving adequate time for core instruction, then ensure that sufficient time is being considered for supplemental and intense intervention for reading. Building leadership teams may need to review considerations about providing services to
students who need interventions for both reading and math, given the challenges of scheduling intervention time and the staff members who provide those interventions.

**Intervention Considerations**

Because intervention instruction must be aligned with core instruction, leadership teams should consider including collaborative planning time within the schedule.

- Time for intensive supports should be built into the master schedule, but providing the amount of time needed for intensive instruction may not be possible without infringing upon other allocated time periods in the schedule.
- The fluidity of grouping becomes critical to ensure that students can move to less intensive supports as quickly as possible to reduce the loss of other instructional time.

**Scheduling for Early and Intermediate Reading in Typical Elementary School Models (Grades K-6)**

It is generally necessary to schedule intervention blocks for the entire school schedule prior to scheduling the 90-minute reading blocks. Staggering intervention blocks allows the school to use all staff members more efficiently over the course of the day. Schedules need to be created for the purpose of optimizing the value of academics. Creating the schedule in a spreadsheet format and color-coding the boxes to reflect the different blocks makes it easier for the team to manipulate the school day. Half-day kindergarten programs may have unique challenges for scheduling; thus, it may be easier to schedule this group last (Jones, Burns, & Pirri, 2010).

The following example demonstrates how a building can create a schedule to make the Walk to Intervention model work. Simply put, this approach preserves a block of time at each grade level (K-6) for core instruction (90-minute Reading) and supplemental intervention (30-minute Reading) in these content areas. No “special” classes are scheduled during this time, and all teachers and instructional aides are part of the supplemental intervention. Of course, students who would be best served by a particular specialist should be assigned to that specialist during instructional grouping. In some schools, an enrichment teacher or librarian also works with classes during this intervention time to ensure that students with advanced learning needs receive enrichment and extension opportunities. In the schedule depicted below, the class has a consistent time each day, thereby allowing for structure and predictability. Many schools find that this type of schedule results in improved student behavior as well as enhanced academic achievement. This type of scheduling requires planning and flexibility so that students can move in and out of instructional groups when needed as dictated by the data.

**Blocking a Walk to Intervention Schedule**

The following is an example of a Walk to Intervention schedule K-2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Kdg. Grade</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
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<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>10:00-10:30</td>
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<td>Intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
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<td>Intervention</td>
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<td>11:00-11:30</td>
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<td>Intervention</td>
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<td>11:30-12:00</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>12:00-12:30</td>
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</table>

**Scheduling for Adolescent Reading**

**Intermediate Grades (4-12)**

Scheduling for students in the intermediate grades (4-6) may look very different depending on whether or not these grades use a departmentalized structure. If the building does not use a departmentalized structure at these grade levels, the structuring models and schedule will look more like those described for K-3. However, in schools that have departmentalized intermediate grades, the model and schedule issues will be more like those for secondary buildings.

Planning the schedule for middle and high schools may be more complex due to the increased number of students and the time demands for required and elective courses. The schedule for
core content courses at the high school level will be impacted by NCA and state graduation requirements. Despite these limitations, core instruction provided to adolescent students needs to include adequate time for the provision of differentiated instruction.

In summary, the leadership team needs to:
- Identify the amounts of time needed for core, strategic, and intense instruction.
- Identify staff members who can provide needed instruction throughout the day.
- Develop a detailed schedule for core, strategic, and intense instruction.

**What Research Tells Us About Reading Development**
Within the two decades, neuroscientists have provided a much clearer picture of how reading develops within the brain. Multiple researchers have attempted to provide representations of this process. This section is designed to provide a brief overview of some of this work.

**Simple View of Reading and Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001)**
The relationships of the five areas of reading are represented in the Gough & Tunner’s Simple View of Reading formula that is supported by scientific research.

Decoding (word recognition) \( \times \) Language Comprehension = Reading Comprehension or a Proficient Reader.

Scarborough’s “Rope” Model (Scarborough, 2001) (depicted below) expands on the Simple View and demonstrates how these components interact with one another. Fluent reading depends on both the automaticity of word recognition and comprehension sub skills. These sub skills are like strands in a rope that become increasingly integrated as reading develops.

According to this formula, reading is the product of word recognition (phoneme awareness, phonics, and fluency) and language comprehension (fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Therefore, a proficient reader must have both good word recognition skills and language comprehension.

The following is recognized as Scarborough’s Reading Rope:
Connecticut Longitudinal Study
According to the Connecticut Longitudinal Study (Foorman, Francis, Beeler, Winikates, and Fletcher, 1997; Shankweiler et al., 1999; Shaywitz, 2003), the relationship between decoding and comprehension changes as students learn to read. In this study, decoding in first grade accounted for about 80% of passage comprehension compared to 50% in the fourth grade and 40% by eighth grade. Although in the eighth grade comprehension is still dependent on decoding by almost half, it shows that teaching reading is not a balance of skills, but rather the ability to provide the right doses at the right time (Moats & Tolman, 2009). Therefore, the emphasis on the big ideas of reading in the core curriculum changes according to the grade level, as depicted in the following graphic:

Although all components of a comprehensive lesson are needed at all levels, different skills and activities are emphasized at different stages of reading development.
**Chall’s Stages of Reading Development**

Chall (1983) developed the following stages of reading development, which help in understanding how the challenges of learning and teaching reading change over time. These stages are not necessarily linear, and the emphasis at each stage is dynamic, flexible, and dependent on student strengths and needs. Since each stage builds on skills that are mastered in earlier stages, the lack of mastery at any one stage can halt the progress beyond that level. Teachers must use assessments to determine individual readers’ developmental stage, plan instruction that meets the needs of the readers at that developmental stage, and teach the concepts and strategies needed. It is important to understand that reading growth relies on effective instruction described in the core curriculum (Tier 1) for the literacy learning section of this document.

Stage 0: Pre-reading or Pre-alphabetic (typical of preschool through late kindergarten).
- Oral language development.

Stage 1: Initial Reading or Alphabetic Decoding (Learning to Read) (typical of late kindergarten through early grade 2).
- Letters represent sounds.
- Sound-spelling relationships.

Stage 2: Confirmation and Fluency (typical of grades 2 and 3).
- Decoding skills.
- Fluency.
- Additional strategies.

Stage 3: Reading to Learn (typical of grades 4 to 8).
- Expand vocabularies.
- Build background and world knowledge.
- Develop strategic habits.

Stage 4: Multiple Viewpoints (typical of grades 9-12)
- Analyze texts critically.
- Understand multiple points of view.

Stage 5: Construction and Reconstruction (typical of college and adulthood).
- Construct understanding based on analysis and synthesis.

**Critical Components of a Core Curriculum: PreK-12**

A research synthesis conducted by the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP; 2008) identified
four areas of emergent literacy that have a strong relationship with subsequent reading ability and should therefore be a strong focus of the preschool curriculum. The four areas identified by the NELP include:

- (Sound) Phonological awareness.
- Oral language (speaking and listening).
- Alphabet knowledge.
- Print awareness.

Phonological Awareness
Phonological awareness is an understanding of how spoken language can be divided into smaller components as well as the ability to manipulate these components (Yopp, 1992). It is an auditory skill that involves spoken words (rather than print) and includes skills such as dividing words into syllables, rhyming, identifying beginning and final sounds, segmenting words into onsets-rimes, segmenting initial and final sounds, blending sounds into words, segmenting words into sounds, and/or deleting/manipulating sounds in words (Schuele & Boudreau, 2008). Phonological awareness is the foundation upon which older preschool children and kindergarteners begin to build phonemic awareness skills and, later, phonics and spelling.

Oral Language
Language ability sets the foundation upon which all other communication and literacy skills are built, including the ability to read. Oral language describes the ability to both understand and produce language and is a broad category that includes the following:

1. Vocabulary—including expressive, receptive, and definitional vocabulary.
2. Grammar—an understanding and ability to apply language rules.
3. Syntax—an understanding and ability to apply rules governing how sentences are organized.

Developmental researchers have provided compelling reasons for implementing curriculum and instructional practices that support oral language development. Specifically, a direct link exists between the oral language development of young children and subsequent reading comprehension. In an effort to explain the intellectual disparity between children in low/high socioeconomic groups, researchers Hart and Risly (1995) conducted an extensive multi-year study that focused on the quality and frequency of parental interaction with their young children. Children of more advantaged families were exposed to a far greater number of words, as well as more advanced words, which explained their significantly higher vocabulary at age three (as much as five times larger than children from disadvantaged homes). This gap in word knowledge continues to rise as children get older, which some researchers believe explains struggles with reading comprehension at the fourth-grade level (Biemiller, 2005). Preschool and early primary
curriculum supporting opportunities for rich language experiences can help mitigate any pre-existing word knowledge gap and promote a more positive trajectory for later reading and comprehension ability.

**Alphabet Knowledge**

Young children must also be intentionally taught about letters and letter sounds. They need hands-on exploration of letters and the opportunity to use letters and sounds in meaningful contexts (e.g., environmental print, name labels, writing notes) and in their play. Just surrounding children with letters, alphabet books, and letter activities isn't enough; to take advantage of a literacy-rich environment, children need instruction about letters and their sounds.

Learning the alphabet is the third essential emergent literacy skill. There is evidence to suggest that teaching young children letter names does support their ability to use sound cues contained in the letter names (e.g., /b/ in B, /f/ in F) to learn letter sounds (Phillips & Piasta, 2013); however, it is the letter-sound connection that is most important.

**Print Knowledge**

Print awareness was a fourth preschool curricular area identified by NELP (2008), because it provides the meaningful context for children’s literacy learning. Children with print awareness understand that written language is related to oral language and that written language carries meaning. Teachers promote print awareness through talk about print in books, making sure that young children understand the organization of print in books, drawing attention to letters and sounds in print, encouraging children to play with letters and print, and supporting children’s understanding of the relationship between oral and written language.

Print awareness is a necessary foundational skill that serves as a prerequisite for learning to read. Without print awareness, children will struggle to understand the context for other literacy skills.

**Research on Elementary and Secondary Literacy: National Reading Panel**

The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) made it clear that the best approach to reading instruction is one that incorporates explicit instruction in five essential areas of reading: phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, enhanced vocabulary, and comprehension. The research included for vocabulary evidence provided by the National Reading Panel consisted mostly of studies of students in third grade and older, while the research on comprehension involved mostly students in fourth grade and above.

**Application of the NRP Results to Elementary and Secondary Education**

The following is a summary of the panel's findings (University of Oregon):

- **Phonemic Awareness:** Children who learn to read through specific instruction in
phonemic awareness improved their reading skills more than those who learn without attention to phonemic awareness.

- **Phonics**: Students showed marked benefits from explicit phonics instruction from kindergarten through sixth grade. The panel also found that systematic, synthetic phonics instruction (teaching students explicitly to convert letters into sounds and then blend the sounds to form recognized words) had a positive and significant effect on disabled readers’ reading skills. Systematic, synthetic phonics instruction was also significantly more effective in improving low socioeconomic status, alphabetic knowledge, and word reading skills (NICHD, 2006).

- **Fluency**: Reading fluently improved the students’ abilities to recognize new words; read with greater speed, accuracy, and expression; and better understand what they read.

- **Vocabulary**: Vocabulary instruction and repeated contact with vocabulary words are important.

- **Comprehension**: In general, the panel found that teaching a combination of reading comprehension techniques/strategies is the most effective.

**Phonemic Awareness**

Phonological awareness is the umbrella term for multiple phonological skills, including phonemic awareness. These skills occur along a predictable continuum (see below). Phonemic awareness refers to knowing that spoken words are made up of smaller parts called phonemes. Teaching phonemic awareness gives children a basic foundation that helps them learn to read and spell. Phonemic awareness is an auditory skill that needs to be taught explicitly and embedded in the core curriculum. Focusing instruction on just a few types of phonemic awareness at a time produces better results. Research has found that blending and segmentation are the two critical skills that must be taught. Therefore, instruction must focus on blending and segmenting words at the phoneme, or sound, level.

**Phonics**

Phonics teaches students about the relationship between phonemes and printed letters and explains how to use this knowledge to read and spell. Like phonological awareness, phonics skills also occur along a continuum (see below).

The Four Part Processing Model explains why a systematic, organized approach to teaching phonics is necessary. Although research has shown that explicit instruction is necessary for phonics instruction, the key element for its success is providing opportunities to read decodable words (words containing previously taught sound-spelling) in context (Adams, 1990; Juel & Roper-Schneider, 1985; Stahl, Osborn, & Pearson, 1992). According to Blevins (2000), students who receive phonics instruction achieve the most in both decoding and comprehension if the text they read contains high percentages of decodable words. Therefore, it is critical that phonics skills be taught first in isolation and then practiced in decodable text. Blevins further found that
children who received explicit phonics instruction followed up by controlled-text reading (decodable text) and guided opportunities to spell words during dictation outperformed those students in decoding and spelling tasks who did not receive this type of practice. Phonics skills should always be the first practice students are encouraged to try. Many core curricula include instructional routines for the use of phonics skills. The Florida Center for Reading Research is also a strong resource for early reading instructional routines if they are not embedded in the core.

The following example of how to teach a skill-based phonics lesson can be found in *Teaching Phonics & Word Study in the Intermediate Grades* (Blevins, 2000).

Teaching a Skill-Based Phonics Lesson
1. Review and Warm-Up.
   - Repeated reading and warm-up.
2. Introduce New Skill.
   - Explicit instruction of sound-spelling relationship.
3. Guided Practice.
   - Blending and word-building exercises.
4. Apply to text.
   - Reading connected decodable text.
5. Apply to Writing.

Since word study skills help students read words more effectively and efficiently, these skills uniquely contribute to reading comprehension (Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006; Scammacca et al., 2007). Phonics involves the relationship between sounds and their spellings. Advanced phonics builds on the skills taught in primary grades such as consonants, short vowels, and silent *e* and enables students to read multisyllabic words with often complex vowel and syllabication patterns. It also includes the study of structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, roots) (Blevins, 2000). Instruction in advanced word study teaches students to be flexible decoders who can access word analysis and word recognition strategies as well as recognize irregular words that do not fit predictable patterns. The proficient use of decoding strategies is a requisite skill for fluent reading. Word study practices cue students to the letter patterns and structural features associated with predictable speech sounds. Students learn how to identify and break words into syllable types (e.g., *r*-controlled vowels [-ar, ire], vowel-consonant-*e*) and to read by blending the parts together.

**Advanced Phonics and Word Study**
Instructional practices that focus on reading at the word level are called word study practices. Since word study skills help students read words more effectively and efficiently, these skills uniquely contribute to reading comprehension (Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006; Scammacca et
al., 2007). Phonics involves the relationship between sounds and their spellings. Advanced phonics builds on the skills taught in primary grades such as consonants, short vowels, and silent e and enables students to read multisyllabic words with often complex vowel and syllabication patterns. It also includes the study of structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, roots) (Blevins, 2000). Instruction in advanced word study teaches students to be flexible decoders who can access word analysis and word recognition strategies as well as recognize irregular words that do not fit predictable patterns. The proficient use of decoding strategies is a requisite skill for fluent reading. Word study practices cue students to the letter patterns and structural features associated with predictable speech sounds.

Effective word study instruction not only includes advanced phonics skills, but also provides information about and strategies for analyzing words based on the meaning and structure of their parts. Students are often taught the six syllable types as well as the meanings of prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, roots, and important vocabulary. They also learn to break difficult words apart into smaller known units.

“Syllable types instruction teaches students to attend to patterns in the English language and, when mastered, enables them to decode lengthy words unaided. This research-based strategy is part of an effective curriculum for teaching reading” (McKenna, 2008). The six syllable types are as follows:

1. Closed (a single vowel followed by one or more consonants).
2. Open (ends with a single vowel that is usually long).
3. Vowel-consonant-silent e (a single vowel followed by a consonant, then the vowel e).
4. Vowel teams (two adjacent vowels).
5. R-controlled (vowel sounds followed by r).
6. Final stable (found in multisyllabic words and have several configurations).

Fluency
Hasbrouck and Glaser (2012) define fluency as reasonably accurate reading, at an appropriate rate, with suitable prosody, that leads to accurate and deep comprehension and motivation to read. During fluency instructions, students need to learn how to perform the following:

- Read words (in isolation and in connected text) accurately and automatically, with little attention or effort.
- Automatically recognize words (decoding).
- Read at an appropriate rate and with suitable expression (prosody).

When teaching fluency, teachers should perform the following:

- Provide opportunities for oral repeated reading with support and feedback.
- Match reading texts and instruction to students’ reading levels.
- Provide opportunities to read narrative and expository texts.
Vocabulary
The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) determined that vocabulary instruction leads to gains in comprehension. Research has shown strong reciprocal relationships between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Findings on vocabulary yielded several specific implications for teaching reading:
- Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly.
- Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.
- Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology all enhance the acquisition of vocabulary.

Teachers should provide explicit vocabulary instruction both as part of reading and language arts classes as well as part of content areas classes such as science and social studies. Teachers should provide repeated exposure to new words in multiple contexts and allow for sufficient practice sessions in vocabulary instruction. Students should be given opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts, such as discussion, writing, and extended reading. Learning specialized vocabularies contributes to the success of reading among adolescent students. By giving students explicit instruction in vocabulary, content area teachers help them learn the meaning of new words and strengthen their independent skills in constructing the meaning of text (Kamil, 2008).

Comprehension
The main points of comprehension are as follows (Coyne, Chard, Zipoli, & Ruby, 2007):
- Automaticity and fluency with decoding.
- Background and world knowledge (academic vocabulary).
- Content engagement.
- Strategy knowledge and use.

Comprehension teaches specific plans or strategies that students can use to help them understand what they are reading. The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) determined that explicit or formal instruction in the application of comprehension strategies is highly effective in enhancing understanding. The teacher generally demonstrates such strategies for students until the students are able to carry them out independently.

Explicitly teaching comprehension and vocabulary strategies involve the following five components:
- An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used.
- Teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy in action.
- Collaborative use of the strategy in action.
• Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility.
• Independent use of the strategy.

The panel also identified the following seven ways to teach text comprehension that helped improve reading strategies:
• Comprehension monitoring (develop awareness of understanding of text).
• Graphic and semantic organizers (create graphic representations of the material to assist comprehension).
• Question answering (answer questions posed by teacher with immediate feedback).
• Question generation (question self about text).
• Visual imagery (construct mental images of the text to enhance memory).
• Summarization (identify the main or most important ideas, consolidate with prior knowledge gained from text).

Skills, Strategies, and Activities
In order to provide effective literacy instruction for students, teachers must understand how skills, strategies, and activities are different.

Skills relate to the idea of proficiency. The student can orchestrate all the aspects of the task well and in most cases automatically (e.g., reading, knitting, cooking).

Strategies are a set of procedures or steps which an individual learns and then uses more and more independently in order to solve a problem (e.g., chunking). Strategies are more like systematic aids to learning. While strategies have some basic steps or procedures, they are adjusted to meet the demands of each new, but related, task.

Activities are structures that reinforce instruction and promote the development of strategies and of skillfulness in reading (e.g., phoneme/grapheme mapping and word sorts). Activities are good for reinforcing/solidifying things, but not for teaching something new.

Curriculum
An understanding of reader development, the five areas of reading, and how reading skills are acquired is essential when considering a school’s curriculum materials. This knowledge will assist schools in ensuring that the highest-quality curriculum is selected and that the essential components are addressed through Tier 1 (core), Tier 2, and Tier 3 curricula.

Core Curriculum: Preschool
Preschool programs promote later conventional reading by supporting the development of early literacy skills. Curriculum and instruction should fit within the preschool culture while addressing the broad developmental needs of the young children both individually and age
appropriately. An effective preschool literacy curriculum is designed to support the “whole child” through integrated learning experiences throughout the preschool day (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). These experiences should be proactively and intentionally designed to provide a combination of teacher-directed and child-initiated learning opportunities, within large and small groups, learning center activities, play, and everyday classroom routines.

Kansas MTSS Framework advocates for the selection of a comprehensive, evidence-based preschool curriculum that addresses all domains of learning outlined in the Kansas Early Learning Standards. While your MTSS efforts are focused on academics and/or social behavior, when it comes to intervention, it is important that programs use curricula that address the needs of the whole child. Programs are encouraged to use resources such as the Head Start Preschool Consumer Reports (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/article/choosing-preschool-curriculum) and/or the What Works Clearing House (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW/Results?filters=,Pre-K,Literacy) to examine the research evaluations of different preschool curricula.

In addition, programs should examine their selected curriculum to determine whether the four essential areas of preschool literacy instruction are adequately addressed. Some comprehensive curricula provide strong support for early literacy, while others may not include all four essential areas with equal weight. If this is the case, supplemental early literacy materials may also need to be used to strengthen the overall program and ensure that student outcomes are maximized.

Core Curriculum: K-12
At all levels, the staff needs to consider what core skills and knowledge will be required of all students and what core curriculum materials will be used to provide that instruction. Regardless of whether the core skills and knowledge are taught through a comprehensive core curriculum, such as what is typically seen at the elementary level or through content area classes as students transition to the secondary level, the purpose is still the same. Each school must establish and provide curriculum materials that will be used to teach core skills, strategies, and knowledge.

Materials comprising the core curriculum must support good-quality classroom instruction to ensure that all students meet or exceed state and local standards, benchmarks, and indicators in all areas, and the materials should also be evaluated to determine the adequacy of support these materials provide for the acquisition of core skills, strategies, and knowledge. A first step in determining the core curriculum’s effectiveness is to identify what is being taught at each grade level and in each course and the curricular materials currently being used. Core curriculum should be evaluated and selected to ensure that the curriculum at each grade level systematically and explicitly focuses on the acquisition of skills. After careful analysis, the leadership team should determine if the core curriculum is adequate or if it needs to be strengthened.
One way to determine if the core curriculum is adequate is by analyzing universal screening data. Analysis of the universal screening data at the systems level provides information that may be used to examine the effectiveness of the instructional supports to help determine when changes should be made. When used at the systems level, the universal screening data should be used formatively to identify needs for support at the school level. Instructional supports may include aspects of the system such as the curricula and programs used in the school including both the core reading program and any supplemental materials or interventions and the fidelity of implementation of curricular/instructional programs. Keep in mind that major curricular decisions should not be based on a single data point, but trend data over time.

In addition to using universal screening data, the document “Reviewing Reading Programs K-6” provides guidelines to assist teams in reviewing core reading programs and can be found at the Center on Instruction’s website (www.centeroninstruction.org). In reviewing materials, educators will be positioned to make the necessary decisions as to whether there are existing gaps in the materials that should be filled. Educators will also be able to make decisions about discontinuing or replacing curricula in a coordinated and consistent manner due to the lack of effectiveness or a research base.

**Core Curriculum (K-3)**
A strong core reading program must meet district curriculum mandates, align with the Kansas State Standards, and be based on the five essential components of reading instruction. The following examples demonstrate how to include the right doses of the five big ideas in a 90-minute core lesson for grades K-3:

**Core Curriculum (Grades 4-12)**
Because reading skills are more embedded in content subject matter for older students, a cross-curricular approach is essential in order to meet student needs (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). A strong core curriculum for adolescent readers must meet district curriculum mandates and align with the Kansas Common Core Standards.

Kamil et al. (2008) recommended improving adolescent literacy in core content areas by providing explicit vocabulary instruction, direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction, opportunities for an extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, and increased student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. Specific practices for these recommendations include the following:

**Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**
- Dedicate a portion of regular classroom lessons to explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide repeated exposure to new words in multiple contexts and allow for sufficient practice sessions in vocabulary instruction.
• Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.
• Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.

Opportunities for Extended Discussion of Text Meaning and Interpretation
• Carefully prepare for the discussion by selecting engaging materials and developing stimulating questions.
• Ask follow-up questions that help provide continuity and extend the discussion.
• Provide a task or discussion format that students can follow when they discuss text in small groups.
• Develop and practice the use of specific discussion protocol.

Student Motivation and Engagement
• Establish meaningful and engaging content-learning goals around the essential ideas of a discipline as well as around the specific learning processes used to access those ideas.
• Provide a positive learning environment that promotes student autonomy in learning.
• Make reading experiences more relevant to students’ interests, everyday life, and/or important current events.
• Build classroom conditions to promote higher reading engagement and conceptual learning through such strategies as goal setting, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning.

Direct and Explicit Comprehension Strategy Instruction
• Carefully select the text to use when beginning to teach a given strategy.
• Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts.
• Make sure that the text is appropriate for the students’ reading level.
• Use a direct and explicit instruction lesson plan to teach students how to use comprehension strategies.

Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that students are learning. Talk about comprehension strategies while teaching them.

Core curriculum teachers at the secondary level can promote literacy by planning and focusing on critical content and comprehension strategies to provide targeted instruction so that all students may achieve mastery (Deshler, 2006). Strategies must be taught in all classes so that the use of those strategies within content reading assignments can be modeled and cues provided for their application. All teachers should be provided with strategies as part of their core curriculum to assist students with the acquisition of information by reading content area materials in all subject areas. In order to do this, teachers should select appropriate, common instructional strategies and procedures that can be taught across all content areas to reinforce and build
vocabulary and comprehension. Since these strategies are considered the core curriculum across content area classes, it is critical that these strategies are taught with fidelity.

Students should be provided with enough guided practice to be able to apply a strategy before teachers introduce a new strategy or procedure. Professional development activities will be necessary to help teachers move from using initial strategies to applying multiple strategies and procedures.

The following is a Secondary Instructional Model Example:
Core – content area class period that includes:
- Teaching one common comprehension strategy at a time across content classes using common procedures
Supplemental (Tier 2) – Required elective
- Targeted strategy instruction
Intensive (Tier 3) – Required class
- Targeted skill instruction
- Comprehensive program

Interventions K-12 for Supplemental and Intensive Instruction

**Establishing Effective Interventions for Reading**

Interventions K-12 (Tier 2 & Tier 3)

According to Torgesen, (2006, p. 1), “we will never teach all our students to read if we do not teach our students who have the greatest difficulties to read. Getting to 100% requires going through the bottom 20%.” The most efficient way to provide interventions for struggling learners is through small groups in addition to core instruction. This allows the instruction to be targeted to the students’ specific needs, while providing more opportunities to respond and receive feedback. Intervention curricula at Tier 2 and Tier 3 should be different from core curriculum and provide targeted and/or comprehensive intervention support. Targeted skill-based lessons are lessons that are more systematic, explicit, and focused on a small number of specific skills at a time (e.g., consonant digraphs, vowel teams, r-controlled vowels, etc.) (Moats, 2005).

Moats (2001) suggested that the choice of reading interventions depends on a student’s instructional need and what is likely to work best, not based on chronological age or grade level. Research has demonstrated that older students who struggle with reading at the word level benefit from instruction in word study (Scammacca et al., 2007). “A student who has difficulty decoding words should receive instruction in word study whether he is in first grade, fourth grade, or 12th grade. The instructional materials used may vary depending on age and grade level, but the learning objectives remain the same” (Boardman et al., 2008, p. 5).
In an MTSS, the universal screening data (accuracy and fluency scores) and the diagnostic process are used to group students according to their needs and targeted instructional focus. This method provides an efficient method to determine an appropriate instructional match to meet students’ needs. The following graphic provides an example of how students are grouped in an MTSS using oral reading fluency scores from the universal screener to determine the instructional focus for intervention groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determining Instructional Focus Using Oral Reading Fluency Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1: Accurate and Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension/Vocabulary Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2: Accurate but Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3: Inaccurate and Slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Phonological Awareness/Phonics/Sight Word Recognition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4: Inaccurate but Fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Monitoring/Accuracy Focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although interventions may be guided by different programs than the classroom core program, the way the skills and knowledge are taught should be consistent with the instruction provided in the classroom. Instruction in the classroom and the intervention group should be complementary and mutually reinforcing. Regular collaborative team meetings in which classroom teachers and intervention specialists discuss student needs and progress are key to a successful school-level intervention system.

For supplemental and intensive support to be provided in grades K-3, curriculum materials must be selected that focus on skill-based instruction, which refers to the five essential areas of reading (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). For intensive supports, curricular materials may be different from those used for supplemental instruction, as students are typically missing many skills or concepts, thus requiring a more comprehensive intervention. Once these curricular materials are provided with fidelity, the problem-solving aspect of the MTSS hybrid model may be used to further intensify and customize supports for students at the intensive level.

Instruction for supplemental support for adolescents is typically provided through targeted strategy-based instruction, while intensive support for adolescents is skill-based instruction. These targeted strategies will be described in more depth in the Instruction Section.

Just as staff reviewed and evaluated the core curriculum, it is imperative to review current supplemental and intensive materials to determine what will work best to meet students’
academic needs. Curricula for supplemental and intensive instruction should utilize SBRR interventions that are aligned to the core curricula, but it is not necessary to use published programs.

Teams should identify the current materials and critically evaluate them to ensure that all essential skills are represented and that the materials will support both targeted skill- or strategy-based instruction (supplemental) as well as comprehensive instruction (intensive). In doing this, staff will be positioned to make the necessary decisions regarding whether gaps exist in materials that should be filled. Staff members will also be able to make decisions about discontinuing or replacing curricula in a coordinated and consistent manner due to the lack of effectiveness or research support.

A variety of evidence-based interventions and instructional materials can be found to match learners’ needs within each of the groups. It is important to remember that programs do not teach. Success does not depend on which program you buy but on how trained your teachers are to deliver excellent instruction. Prior to selecting, purchasing, or using any instructional materials, teams will want to carefully review the research base and match it to the student population (Hall, 2011).

After making final curricular selections, building teams should develop a curriculum protocol so that staff members will know what curriculum to use for core instruction and intervention. The interventions are chosen from a list of scientific research bases designed for specific areas of concern. The collaborative teams determine which intervention is to be used first based on universal screening CBM data. Once the intervention begins, progress monitoring data are used to determine if the intervention needs to be adjusted, intensified, or customized based on pre-established decision rules (McCook, 2006). Once the curriculum protocol is developed, building teams need to determine a management system for organizing and using the materials selected to ensure that all staff members providing supplemental and intensive intervention know where materials are located and how they are organized, thereby allowing for efficient planning for instruction.

The goal of interventions should always be to accelerate learning. If student performance indicates that this is not happening, the intervention needs to be adjusted. “If instructional groups are too large, instruction is not properly paced or focused, or too many intervention sessions are cancelled, then impacts on student performance will be reduced” (Torgesen, 2006, p. 4).

According to Torgesen (2006, p. 4), one of the biggest risks of intervention groups is that we begin to expect a lower standard of performance for students who require them. He states that, in order for intervention groups to work properly, intervention systems require school-level monitoring and regular adjustments. This is accomplished through collaborative teams meeting on a regular basis to analyze students’ progress, making adjustments to instruction and using the
Self-Correcting Feedback Loop for communication.

At least eight key aspects are involved in developing and maintaining an effective intervention system (Torgesen, 2006):

1. Strong motivation on the part of teachers and school leaders to be relentless in their efforts to leave no child behind.
2. A psychometrically reliable system for identifying students who need interventions in order to make normal progress in learning to read.
3. A similarly reliable system for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. This involves progress monitoring using repeated administration of the same tests originally used to identify the students to receive interventions.
4. Regular team meetings and leadership to enforce and enable the use of data to adjust interventions as needed.
5. Regular adjustments to interventions based on student progress. The most frequent adjustments should involve group size and time (intensity), but may also involve a change of teacher or program.
6. Enough personnel to provide the interventions with sufficient intensity (small group size and daily, uninterrupted intervention sessions); this may be the biggest challenge of all.
7. Programs and materials to guide the interventions that are consistent with evidence-based research.
8. Training, support, and monitoring to ensure that intervention programs are implemented with high fidelity and quality.

Providing Supplemental (Tier 2) or Intensive (Tier 3) Interventions
Typically, the most effective intervention teachers are likely to be those with the most training and experience. It is critical that the leadership team ensure that intervention programs are implemented regularly with fidelity. The very best intervention programs are only as good as the level of their implementation with students. This translates into the need for building leadership teams to ensure that staff members are not pulled away from intervention groups for other tasks and that the quality of instruction/intervention is monitored on a regular basis. Without this kind of proactive and ongoing support the effectiveness of intervention is likely to diminish (Torgesen, 2006).

Effective Intervention for Reading Instruction
Important characteristics for an effective intervention system have been identified, including the following interventions (Torgesen, 2006, p. 7):

- Must be based on the student’s need determined by assessment data.
- Should be offered as soon as it is clear that the student is lagging behind in the development of skills or knowledge critical to reading growth.
- Must significantly increase the intensity of instruction and practice, which is
accomplished primarily by increasing instructional time, reducing the size of the instructional group, or doing both.

- Must provide the opportunity for explicit (direct) and systematic instruction and practice along with cumulative review to ensure mastery.
- Must provide skillful instruction including good error correction procedures, along with many opportunities for immediate positive feedback and reward.
- Must be guided by, and responsive to, data on student progress.
- Must be motivating, engaging, and supportive—a positive atmosphere is essential.

**Professional Development for Curricula**

Once the curriculum materials have been selected, it is necessary to provide professional development that is comprehensive, sustained, and intensive enough to support all staff members who are expected to use the curricula to provide instruction. Simply having curriculum materials available at each level (i.e., core content, supplemental, intense) does not ensure appropriate use. Staff must have a working knowledge of the curriculum content and materials as well as an understanding of the planning and pacing process for lesson development. Leadership teams must set clear expectations that curricular materials will be implemented and used with fidelity and provide professional development to support such outcomes.

Professional development activities must be differentiated in order to support the individual needs of staff members as they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills enabling them to implement the specified curriculum with fidelity. Initial and ongoing training should be differentiated based upon expectation of use, alignment of materials, and prior knowledge of the content area; such training should also build on prior professional development activities.

**Ensuring Fidelity of Curricula**

The professional development plan for curriculum implementation is dynamic in nature and results in the curriculum being implemented with fidelity. It is a plan that proactively identifies activities based on individual staff learning needs and will result in the knowledge and skills necessary to utilize the curriculum. It ensures that staff members are accessing and utilizing curricular materials in the expected manner by planning for and conducting intermediate and follow-up activities. To accomplish this, leadership teams should establish methods for monitoring the use of the curriculum by individual teachers from which information is collected and utilized to differentiate among ongoing professional development and support for each staff member.

Activities for monitoring the individuals’ fidelity of curriculum implementation are not intended to be punitive, but rather, should be understood as a piece of the overall professional development plan, resulting in further staff support as needed. To accomplish this, a method to check for the correct use of the curriculum materials needs to be established. Many purchased
curricula and programs come with fidelity-monitoring tools such as observation or walk-through forms. Leadership teams are responsible for establishing a plan to monitor and support the correct and effective use of curriculum materials.

**Planning Professional Development**

The Building Leadership Team will identify the professional development needs related to curriculum implementation by identifying and considering the targeted staff and the qualities of each specified curriculum.

**Core Curriculum**—It is important that all staff members with instructional responsibility have a solid understanding of the core curriculum and receive professional development that enables them to implement it with fidelity. In this instance, this includes the staff responsible for instruction at all three MTSS levels. This is necessary to ensure that the curriculum that is implemented at the supplemental or intensive level is aligned with the core curriculum.

**Supplemental and Intensive Curricula**—It is not necessary that all staff in a building know how to implement the supplemental and/or intensive curricula; however, it is important that everyone involved in collaborative teams understand the skills targeted in each curriculum so all can be involved in instructional planning.

The most effective intervention teachers are likely to be those with the most training and experience. However, in the absence of well-trained and experienced intervention specialists, less experienced teachers or even qualified para-professionals can deliver effective interventions if they are trained to use a well-developed, explicit, and systematic intervention program. A good rule of thumb is that the less experienced the teacher, the more structured and “scripted” the intervention program should be (Torgesen, 2006, p. 5).

Media specialists, art teachers, and even assistant principals can provide effective interventions when they have been trained to use a well-structured and systematic intervention program.

One of the leadership team’s challenges is to identify resources that may already be available in the system to provide effective interventions for students. It is critical that the leadership team ensure that intervention programs are implemented regularly with fidelity.

In planning professional development, it is helpful for the leadership team to consider the following questions specific to each curriculum selected:
TEAM DISCUSSION

1. Which staff members are expected to implement the curriculum?

2. Which staff members, if any, have experience with or have previously received professional development on the curriculum?

3. Which staff members will not be implementing the curriculum but will be expected to align instruction with it?

4. Which staff members need to attend initial professional development on the curriculum?

5. When (date) will staff members be first expected to use the curriculum?

6. When (date) will initial professional development be provided?

7. Who will provide the professional development?

8. Who and how will it be ensured that staff members have all materials necessary to implement the curriculum?

9. Who will monitor the use/implementation (fidelity) of the curriculum?

10. What method will be used to monitor the use/implementation (fidelity) of the curriculum?

11. How frequently will the use/implementation (fidelity) of the curriculum be monitored?

12. When and how will ongoing professional development for staff members using the curriculum be provided?

13. When and how will professional development for staff members needing additional support to use the curriculum effectively be provided?

14. Who and how will professional development for new staff be provided?

These questions are designed to help leadership teams as they begin the development of an overall professional development plan. Once specific decisions are made, the Building Leadership Team may record the results on the building’s results based on the staff development
plan and/or on the Professional Development Planning tool.

**Instruction**
A combination of curriculum and instructional practices are used to support students in achieving outcomes. It is important to distinguish between curriculum and instruction. The curriculum is what is taught; instruction is how it is taught. With the understanding that these two components are united in practice, structuring for the MTSS addresses each separately. This facilitates critical discussions around the selection of curriculum and instructional practices that will be used in the system. Classroom instruction works coherently with the content of student materials (texts, activities, homework, manipulatives, etc.) to reinforce the acquisition of specific skills. This sets up a constant interaction between the curricular materials that will be used to teach important concepts, strategies, and skills and the instructional practices used to deliver them.

**Evidence-Based Instructional Practices**
While having the correct materials is important, Louisa Moats emphasized the importance of highly trained teachers when she said, “programs do not teach students to read, teachers do” (DIBELS Summit, 2010). Teachers at all grades must be prepared to provide strong initial instruction in critical skills and knowledge to their classroom as a whole and in small groups for intervention instruction. At every grade and developmental stage, specific skills must be taught and specific knowledge acquired. Teachers must be able to support student growth in critical areas by providing research-based instructional strategies that include explicit and systematic instruction, ample practice opportunities, scaffolding techniques, and differentiated instruction to meet students’ instructional needs.

**Instructional Practices K-12**

**Explicit Instruction**
Explicit instruction for school-age children means that students are told what they will learn and are given the procedural knowledge to learn. In practice, explicit instruction means that the teacher provides three types of instruction (Ellis, Worthington, & Larkin, 1994; Pearson & Dole, 1987):

- Declarative – the teacher tells the students what concept or strategy they need to learn.
- Procedural – the teacher explains and models how to use the concept or strategy.
- Conditional – the teacher explains when the student will use the concept or strategy.


**Systematic Instruction**
Systematic instruction refers to teachers providing instruction in a step-by-step manner, with careful planning of the instructional sequence, including the sequence of examples. This
increases the likelihood of early success with new concepts and problems, which can then be supported by sequencing examples of increasing complexity. Such instruction ensures that students have an opportunity to apply their knowledge to a wide range of material and promotes the transfer of knowledge, or generalization, to unfamiliar examples (Jayanthi, Gersten, & Baker, 2008).

Systematic instruction should include ample practice opportunities that are planned for reinforcement of previously taught skills. Such practice should fulfill the following (Moats, 2005):

- Provide opportunities to apply what students have been taught in order to accomplish specific tasks.
- Follow in a logical relationship with what has just been taught in the program.
- Provide students with opportunities to independently apply previously learned information once skills are internalized.

**Scaffolded Instruction**

Scaffolded instruction is “the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning” (Dickson, Chard, & Simmons, 1993). Scaffolding is a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992).

The following framework may be helpful when incorporating scaffolding during a lesson. In this evidence-based practice, the teacher performs the following (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992):

- Models and explains the concept and/or strategy being taught (I Do).
- Provides guided practice with students practicing what the teacher modeled while the teacher provides prompts and feedback to support the beginning application of the concept or strategy (We Do).
- Provides opportunity for independent practice so that students may internalize the concepts and/or strategies (You Do).

When students are learning new or difficult tasks, they are given more assistance. As they begin to demonstrate task mastery, the assistance or support is decreased gradually in order to shift the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students. Thus, as the students assume more responsibility for their learning, the teacher provides less support.

**Ample Opportunities for Practice with Corrective Feedback**

One aspect of instructional practice extensively supported by the research is the provision of ample opportunities for practice. Ample practice opportunities need to be provided to students with corrective feedback and should follow in a logical relationship with what has just been taught in the program.
In this evidence-based practice, students are provided with supported opportunities to apply what they have been taught in order to accomplish specific reading tasks as well as opportunities to independently apply previously learned information once skills are internalized. However, it is important for teachers to provide students with corrective feedback along with the opportunity to practice.

**Instructional Routines**

Instructional routines are a set of teaching behaviors that can be used any time teachers present new information or provide practice on information. When teachers use an instructional routine consistently, students can focus their attention on the content instead of dividing their cognitive energy between the task and the content (Archer, 2011). Instructional Routines and the Empowering Teachers website can be found at www.fcrr.org/assessment/ET/index.html.

Information on the alignment of instructional routines to the Common Core state standards can be found at centeroninstruction.org, “Using Instructional Routines to Differentiate Instruction, A Guide for Teachers.” This guide will assist K-3 teachers using the instructional routines which are located on the website called Empowering Teachers, created by the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University, fcrr.org. 50 Instructional Routines to Develop Content Literacy is also available for older students by Pearson.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated instruction is an organized way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning by teaching students at their individual skill level and helping them to achieve maximum growth as learners. Differentiation of teacher-directed instruction refers to a teacher’s response to learners’ needs guided by general principals of differentiation, such as the use of data, sequence of instruction, flexible grouping, materials and resources, and teachers’ and reading coaches’ collaboration in planning. It involves using multiple approaches to the content, process, product, and learning environment. Teachers can differentiate instruction by content (what students learn), process (how students learn), product (how students demonstrate what they learn), and learning environment (the “climate” of the classroom) according to student readiness based on data, student interests, and time and group size.

**Differentiating Content**

- Presenting information at various levels of difficulty.
- Presenting ideas through both auditory and visual means.
- Using peer tutors.
- Meeting with small groups—re-teaching or extending content.
Differentiating Process

- Tiered activities: All learners work with the same important information and skills but proceed with different levels of support, challenge, or complexities.
- Provide interest centers that encourage students to explore subsets of class topics.
- Develop personal agendas.
- Provide manipulatives or other hands-on support.
- Vary the length of time a student may take to complete a task.

Differentiating Product

- Provide options of how to express information learned.
- Use rubrics that match and extend varied skill levels.
- Allow students to work alone or in small groups for products.
- Encourage students to create their own product assignments.

Differentiating Learning Environment

- Provide places to work around the room that are quiet or invite collaboration.
- Provide materials that are culturally sensitive.
- Set clear guidelines for independent work that matches student needs.
- Develop routines that allow students to get help when the teacher is not available (working in small groups).
- Help students understand that some learners need to move around while others sit quietly.

When differentiating instruction, teachers should first determine the students’ readiness based on formative assessments, then determine students’ interests and use this information to design instruction and monitor student progress (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

The steps involved in tiering a lesson are as follows (Shores & Chester, 2009):
1. Start with the standard.
2. Define key concepts, generalizations, and objectives within the standard. What should all students know, understand, and be able to do?
3. Think about students’ readiness, pre-requisite skills, etc. What kind of scaffolding will be necessary?
4. Determine which part of the lesson to tier. This involves content, process, or product.
5. Determine the type of tiering to do. This involves readiness, interest, time, and group size.
6. Create the lesson and clone the activity along the ladder.
7. Match a version of the task to a student based on student profile and task requirements.
Emergent Literacy Instruction: Preschool
From birth, young children begin the process of developing early literacy skills that build a foundation for later reading ability. These skills do not develop in isolation, but are intertwined with other developmental domains (Notari-Syverson, O’Connor, & Vadasy, 1998). The natural curiosity of young children pushes them into actively exploring every aspect of their world, from relationships to physical surroundings. Specific interests spark in-depth investigations, while playtime provides meaningful opportunities to practice and become proficient in specific skills. In order to capitalize on young children’s need for active engagement in the learning process, preschool teachers must create environments and utilize instructional strategies actively and sequentially to build children’s language and conceptual knowledge and promote the development of specific code-focused skills.

How preschool educators teach is as important as what they teach young children. Early literacy experts advocate for a balanced approach to preschool instruction (National Institute for Literacy, 2009). Strong early literacy programs provide a combination of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, differentiation, grouping strategies (large, small, and individual), and flexible schedules that allow for sustained and in-depth learning through play and responsive/nurturing teaching techniques (Neuman, 2010).

The NELP synthesis identified oral language (speaking and listening), phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and print knowledge as the essential preschool early literacy curricular areas (National Institute for Literacy, 2009).

Oral Language
Children learn to understand and use language through conversations within meaningful contexts and daily activities (Hart & Risley, 1995). Preschool teachers must incorporate opportunities and design activities that encourage children to talk and interact (Wasik, Bond & Hindman, 2006). Conversations involve more than listening to others model language; they are opportunities for children to learn to express their thoughts, get what they need, resolve conflicts, and learn from adults and one another.

A language-rich classroom provides multiple daily opportunities for children to be engaged in conversations with their peers, individually with adults, and in group settings. It also involves a rich and engaging environment that sparks young children’s interests and fuels their conversations. Educators create opportunities for children to engage in conversations by designing spaces, activities, and routines that allow for the use of everyday activities as opportunities for rich conversational talk. They also take time to listen and respond to the things children are saying and ask open-ended questions that challenge children to express their ideas and thoughts.
Young children's vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in reading, listening comprehension, and decoding. Beginning readers use their word knowledge to decode by matching a phonological representation to a known word (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). For comprehension tasks, vocabulary can be thought of as "little pieces of knowledge" providing the background information necessary to comprehend both oral and written language (Neuman, 2011). Intentional vocabulary instruction is an important but often neglected instructional area in preschool. A child's vocabulary size at age 3 is one of the strongest predictors of his/her third grade reading achievement (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). Additionally, vocabulary skills are a significant predictor of reading comprehension after the third grade (Biemiller, 2005).

Unfortunately, the vocabulary skills of many preschool children considered “at risk” are already drastically behind their peers by the time they are three (Hart & Risley, 1995). For this reason, it is important for preschool early literacy curriculum to include explicit vocabulary instruction that focuses on both contextual and definitional information, along with multiple word exposures across settings (Coyne, Simmons, & Kame’enui, 2004).

Learning new vocabulary begins with word curiosity or “word consciousness” (Graves, 2000). Once a word is noticed, students use the context to create an initial meaning (Carey & Bartlett, 1978). As children link this new word to additional contexts, their understanding increases, and they further refine their definition. (Christ & Wang, 2010).

Storybook reading provides an excellent opportunity for exposure to both language and new vocabulary (Neuman & Dwyer, 2008). Using an interactive storybook reading approach pulls children into talking about the book through the use of open-ended questioning. Interactive reading can be done in whole group settings but is most effective for promoting oral language development when it is done in small-group and one-on-one book reading contexts.

Dialogic reading is a specific type of interactive storybook reading with a strong research base in preschool. The acronym PEER has been developed to describe this process: Prompt with a question about the story; Evaluate the response given to the question; Expand on the response (through paraphrasing and/or adding information); and Repeat the initial question to check understanding of the new information. In addition to the PEER process, adults are encouraged to ask a range of question prompts to keep the dialogue going and provide scaffolding support using the acronym CROWD to represent the variety of questions that should be used: Completion questions; Recall questions; Open-ended questions; “Wh” questions (who, what, where, when, why), and Distancing questions. The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge: (CONNECT) has created a free online training module specifically focused on Dialogic Reading Practices at http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-6.
 Phonological Awareness

Understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds is fundamental to learning to read. Phonological awareness is a term that describes an individual's ability to detect and manipulate the sound structure of words independent of their meaning (Lonigan, 2006) and is an important and reliable predictor of later reading ability (NELP, 2008).

Strong early literacy preschool curricula provide opportunities for children to practice recognizing the sound structure of words in increasingly complex ways from the whole word, syllables, onset/rimes, and phonemes (Vukelich & Christie, 2004). While these skills can be easily embedded into meaningful and playful preschool activities, such as singing songs, playing games, or storybook reading, it is important for preschool programs to have a systematic approach to teaching phonological awareness skills.

The development of phonological awareness is the foundation for later phonics instruction, which is necessary for students to become capable readers. An important goal of early literacy instruction and intervention in preschool is to maximize the number of children who enter kindergarten with sufficient phonological skills to benefit from more formal phonics instruction.

Phonological awareness is more than rhyming in preschool. The development of phonological awareness proceeds along a continuum from awareness of larger to smaller units of sound (words to syllables to individual phonemes [sounds]). This is not a stage model in which a child masters one level before learning the next. Instead, the levels overlap and children show beginning levels of skill on more complex tasks, while still mastering less complex tasks (Philips, Clancy-Menchetti & Lonigan, 2008). Phonological awareness also involves a range of manipulation and detection skills specific to the sound structure of words. The chart below describes the approximate developmental acquisition of basic phonological awareness skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2-3 years</th>
<th>3-4 years</th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhyming</strong> (Match and produce word endings [rhymes])</td>
<td>Participate in rhyming activities</td>
<td>Match rhyming words</td>
<td>Produce words that rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliteration</strong> (Match and produce words with the same initial sounds)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Recognize words with a common initial sound</td>
<td>Produce words with a common initial sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blending</strong> (Combine syllables and sounds to make words)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Combine a sequence of isolated syllables to produce words</td>
<td>Combine a sequence of isolated sounds to produce words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segmenting</strong> (pull words apart into syllables and sounds)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Identify syllables in words</td>
<td>Identify initial sounds in words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preschool educators must also understand the complexities of different types of phonological awareness tasks. Differing units of sound can make a task more or less challenging. Tasks that involve larger units of sound are generally easier for a child than smaller ones (e.g., clapping out syllables is easier than clapping out the sounds of a word). Tasks can also be more or less difficult depending on what the child is asked to do. Identity tasks (e.g., rhyme oddity, first-sound matching), synthesis tasks (e.g., syllable or phoneme blending), or analysis tasks (e.g., word or syllable segmenting or deleting, phoneme-counting tasks) can change the complexity. Blending tasks are normally easier than analysis tasks, and tasks that involve generating a response are more difficult than recognition tasks (Philips, Clancy-Menchetti & Lonigan, 2008).

Preschool schedules provide multiple daily opportunities to teach phonological awareness skills. Singing songs, reciting poems, storybook reading, writing, transition games, and play all provide a context that can be used to think about and manipulate sounds and words. The challenge is to ensure that teachers have a curriculum that outlines a scope and sequence for instruction and that they also understand the developmental continuum so they can provide appropriate scaffolding to support each learner.
**Alphabet Knowledge**

In addition to oral language and phonological awareness, the NELP identified alphabet knowledge as a fundamental skill for “breaking the reading code.” Alphabet knowledge speaks to the ability to identify individual letters by name and by their formation in print (both lower case and upper case identification). Alphabet knowledge also includes the general understanding that individual letters represent specific sounds, yet it does not include the ability to identify the letter sounds (phonemic awareness). Recognizing the alphabet is one of the most accurate predictors of early reading success (Sayeski, Burgess, Pianta, & Lloyd, 2001). In order to learn to read, a child must know most of his letters, but not all are necessary in the earliest stages.

Young children must also be intentionally taught about letters and letter sounds. They need hands-on exploration of letters and the opportunity to use letters and sounds in meaningful contexts (e.g., environmental print, name labels, writing notes) and in their play. Just surrounding children with letters, alphabet books, and letter activities isn't enough; to take advantage of a literacy-rich environment, children need instruction about letters and their sounds.

Learning the alphabet is the third essential emergent literacy skill. There is evidence to suggest that teaching young children letter names does support their ability to use sound cues contained in the letter names (e.g., /b/ in B, /f/ in F) to learn letter sounds (Phillips & Piasta, 2013), however it is the letter-sound connection that is most important.

Research suggests there may be an advantage to teaching both upper- and lower-case letters together rather than teaching first upper- and then lower-case letters (Phillips & Piasta, 2013). Yet, research does not provide much guidance about the best sequence for teaching the alphabet. We do know that children tend to learn letters that have the most meaning to them first, so beginning with the letters in children's names may have a slight advantage (Justice Pence, Bowles, & Wiggins, 2006).

A child’s ability to identify the letters of the alphabet when entering kindergarten is a factor that has been correlated with beginning reading success (NELP, 2008). However, learning to identify the letters in a rote and isolated manner, such as “the letter of the week,” is neither effective nor appropriate (Venn & Jahn, 2003). When preschool programs go through the alphabet one letter each week, they are not able to get through the alphabet more than one time each school year. This method does not allow opportunities for children to compare and contrast several letters at a time. Instead, alphabet knowledge should be taught in meaningful contexts that enable children to discriminate between individual letters. For young children, this includes familiar words, such as their own name, that of their classmates, and words they frequently see in the environment.
**Code-Focused Instruction**

Code-focused instruction is the systematic, sequential, explicit, and intentional instruction of phonological awareness skills and alphabet knowledge. While these skills can be taught independently, there is a greater impact when they are taught in conjunction (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). For this reason, as you look at intervention materials, Kansas MTSS recommends grouping phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge into a single intervention focus.

**Print Awareness**

Print awareness was a fourth curricular area identified by NELP (2008), because it provides a meaningful context for children’s literacy learning. Children with print awareness understand that written language is related to oral language and that written language carries meaning. Teachers promote print awareness through talk about print in books, making sure young children understand the organization of print in books, drawing attention to letters and sounds in print, encouraging children to play with letters and print, and supporting children’s understanding of the relationship between oral and written language.

Print awareness is a necessary foundational skill that serves as a prerequisite for learning to read. Without print awareness, children will struggle to understand the context for other literacy skills. Research has linked the use of consistent print referencing during shared reading to the development of early literacy for young children who are typically developing and those who are at risk (Justice & Sofka, 2010).


**Core Reading Instruction**

**Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness is critical to learning to read. Instruction should follow a progression of task difficulty, moving from the easiest to the most difficult tasks, since phonological awareness skills develop in a predictable progression (Gillon, 2004). Even older readers often need to work on phonological awareness skills. According to research, orthographic mapping requires an advanced level of phonemic proficiency and manipulation tasks such as phoneme deletion and substitution. Orthographic mapping is the process that readers use to turn unknown words into instantaneously retrievable known words. There is evidence that adolescents who struggle to read may not have acquired these higher-level phonemic tasks.
Phonics and Word Study
For younger at-risk and struggling readers, the recommended instructional practice includes explicit instruction and practice in word study. Students who inaccurately decode can benefit from phonics or word study instruction to improve their accuracy skills. Although many struggling readers at the secondary level are proficient in reading single-syllable words (stint, core, plan), they may lack strategies to decode the multisyllabic words that are common in higher-level reading materials (Archer, Gleason, & Vachon, 2003). Often termed advanced word study, interventions in this area generally include instruction in word recognition and word analysis (Curtis, 2004).

When using word analysis strategies, students read unknown words part by part and use known meanings, or semantic features, of the smaller chunks to assist them in decoding the longer word. The following are recommended instructional practices for word study (Boardman et al., 2008):

- Teach students to identify and break words into syllable types.
- Teach students when and how to read multisyllabic words by blending the parts together.
- Teach students to recognize irregular words that do not follow predictable patterns.
- Teach students the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, and roots; instruction should include ways in which words relate to each other (e.g., trans: transfer, translate, transform, transition).
- Teach students how to break words into word parts and combine word parts to create words based on their roots, bases, or other features.
- Teach students how and when to use structural analysis to decode unknown words.

An example of a word study strategy is syllable chunking. Within the syllable chunking strategy, the following steps take place:

1. Students read the word aloud.
2. Students explain the word’s meaning.
3. Students orally divide the word’s pronunciation into its syllables or beats by raising a finger as each beat is pronounced and then stating the number of beats.
4. Students match the pronounced form of each beat to its spelling by exposing that part of the spelling as it is pronounced, while covering the other letters.
5. Students blend the syllables to say the whole word.

Fluency
Fluency is clearly an important reading skill, yet not all students will need the same amount of fluency instruction (Boardman et al., 2008). While reading fluency may be the gateway to reading comprehension, skilled word-level reading appears to be the gateway to reading fluency (Kilpatrick, 2016).

Often, fluency is simply defined as the rate or speed of reading words. While rate is one aspect of
fluency, fluency encompasses more than rate. In fact, the skill of fluency, as defined by Hasbrouck and Glaser (2012), is “Reasonably accurate reading at an appropriate rate with suitable prosody that leads to accurate and deep comprehension and motivation to read.” If students need fluency intervention, it is important to provide instruction in all aspects of fluency: accuracy, rate, and prosody.

Teaching fluency should include guided oral reading in which students read out loud to someone who corrects their mistakes and provides them feedback. Two examples of widely used research-based strategies to improve fluency are:

- **Repeated Reading**: Practicing text until the reading is fluid and flowing.
- **Partner Reading**: Two students take turns reading aloud to one another in a variety of ways.

Repeated reading is necessary only for students whose WCPM is below expectations. Meanwhile, partner reading is a widely used research-based strategy that lets students practice oral reading with immediate and explicit feedback and incorporates the opportunity to engage in comprehension practice.

**Paired Repeated** readings (Koskinen & Blum, 1986) are a combination of repeated and partner readings. A student reads a short passage three times to a partner and receives feedback. Then the partners switch roles. Pairing above-level readers with on-level readers and on-level readers with below-level readers works best.

Data from oral reading fluency passages should be used to partner students. A student who is a somewhat stronger reader can be paired with a relatively weaker reader. However, do not pair the strongest reader in the class with the weakest reader. The key is to have a model of good reading for the weaker partner (Boardman et al., 2008). When pairing students:

1. Rank and order students based upon oral reading fluency data.
2. Divide the student list into two equal columns: the higher performing students and the lower performing students.
3. Pair the top reader in column one with the top reader in column two. Continue until all the students have partners.

Although two partners of slightly differing ability are partnered, both may benefit in their fluency development. Since students are taught to monitor their partner’s reading, it engages both partners in fluency monitoring practices and improves their own self-monitoring during reading. It is recommended that partner reading be used three to five days per week, but only for students who are at the stage of their reading development at which they will benefit from practicing reading fluently. Fluency practice need not take long periods of time and can be
effectively implemented in 15 to 20 minutes per day or every other day. The rest of the instructional time should be spent on enhancing the other components of improving fluency, depending on the students’ need.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to students’ knowledge and memory of words’ meanings. One of the oldest findings of educational research is that reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are highly correlated with one another and that knowledge of individual word meanings accounts for as much as 50-60 percent of the variance in reading comprehension (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). In order to keep up with literacy demands as they progress through the grades, it is estimated that students must learn the meanings of approximately 2,000–3,000 words a year. Because word knowledge continues to be developed, grown, and refined throughout our lives and is typically acquired over many exposures, and because we can’t possibly directly teach 2,000-3,000 words a year, educators should consider the following instructional approaches when planning for vocabulary instruction:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction with opportunities to link the meanings to text
- Indirect encounters with words
- Word consciousness
- Independent word-learning strategies

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction. It is beneficial to identify a set of key vocabulary words to teach explicitly and in depth. Research has shown that direct instruction of at least 400 words per year (i.e., 10 words per week during the school year) produces gains in vocabulary and comprehension (Beck et al., 2002; Biemiller, 2003). However, to keep up with the number of words students must learn over twelve years of school, students can be given in-depth instruction of 20 words per week for 36 weeks per school year. To maximize instructional time, it is essential that words for explicit and direct instruction be chosen carefully. Typically, these words are academic vocabulary terms and are a combination of general academic words and domain-specific academic words.

To teach words explicitly, follow an instructional routine that includes a student-friendly definition and provides examples and non-examples, with multiple opportunities to practice using the terms and multiple exposures to the words.

Indirect Encounters with Words. Research shows that breadth of word knowledge has a stronger relationship with reading comprehension than depth/fluency of word knowledge (Tannenbaum et al., 2006). To ensure this breadth of word knowledge and since it is not possible to explicitly teach 2,000-3,000 words a year, it is necessary that teachers provide opportunities for indirect encounters with words. These indirect exposures can take the form of wide,
independent reading, reading aloud, and listening to language.

**Word Consciousness**
Word consciousness involves building an interest and curiosity about words and an enjoyment of learning new words. Activities that can foster word consciousness include creating a word-rich classroom, studying word histories, playing word games, and displaying word walls. These types of activities can be implemented school-wide to enhance motivation for learning new words.

**Independent Word Learning Strategies**
Teaching students how to apply word analysis skills can help them exponentially grow their own vocabularies. Vocabulary instruction should include study of morphology (prefixes, suffixes, root words and their meanings) and how to apply morphology as a cognitive strategy when students encounter an unknown word. Because students may not know how to apply these strategies, it is important that instruction occur on the application of such a strategy.

Kieffer and LeSaux (2007) suggest the following steps for using morphology as a cognitive strategy:

1. Recognize that you don’t know the word.
2. Analyze the word for morphemes that you recognize.
3. Hypothesize the meaning of the word based on word parts.
4. Check the hypothesis with the context.

**Comprehension**
The ultimate goal of reading is to obtain meaning from the text. Students who struggle to understand and remember what they read require explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies. Even when a student is working on basic reading skills, the goal is comprehension. Most students demonstrate improved reading outcomes when they are taught reading comprehension strategies. Thus, most comprehension instructional practices can be implemented class wide in any setting in which reading for meaning is emphasized, including content areas.

Word study, fluency, and vocabulary are all essential to facilitating reading comprehension. Because the need to gain meaning from text increases dramatically as students progress through school, knowing how to apply comprehension strategies is necessary for adolescent readers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005).

Strategies are most beneficial when students learn and practice them in meaningful contexts. For example, use a relevant text or textbook in the content area targeted for instruction to teach students how to derive the main idea. Multi-component strategies combine several comprehension strategies into an organizational system, or plan, for reading. Over time, teachers should provide instruction in previewing, mental imagery, main idea, questioning, and
summarizing.

Recommended comprehension instructional practices include:

- Giving students adequate instruction to become proficient in each strategy before combining strategies in a multi-component approach.
- Using the same procedures across content area classes when teaching a specific strategy.
- Actively engaging students in using multiple strategies through cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, group discussions, and other interactive modes.
- Supporting students in generalizing strategy use across contexts, with a goal of students applying strategies independently and automatically whenever they are reading (they need support and practice to generalize skills).
- Teaching students to self-regulate their use of strategies in order to know which strategy to use, when to use it, and why. To benefit from reading tasks, reading must be flexible so that students can shift their approach if one strategy or technique is not working.

Early Reading Instruction (Grades K-3)

Especially in the primary grades, teachers must be prepared to provide strong initial instruction in the critical reading skills previously described herein. Teachers must be able to provide skill-based, systematic, and explicit instruction to the entire class while simultaneously being able to work with small groups of students who have different instructional needs. Students with diverse needs are best supported when instruction is at the right level and focused on the areas of most critical need. According to Torgesen et al. (2007), without strong core classroom instruction including differentiation by classroom teachers, school resources may be overwhelmed by the demands placed on individual staff members providing intervention.

Thus, it is important that the following occur (Torgesen et al., 2007):

- Teachers provide explicit, well-organized, and engaging whole-group instruction.
- Small-group instruction be differentiated appropriately based on students’ needs.
- Other students be involved in independent learning activities that are appropriate and engaging while the teacher is teaching a small group of students.

Core instruction provided to all students in the building should be consistent with research-based practices and the district’s allocation of instructional minutes. A core reading block should include high-quality instruction with a minimum of 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction, including both whole-group and small-group instruction as well as opportunities for practice. Instruction in small groups should be teacher led and involve flexible, differentiated, homogeneous groups. In addition to small-group instruction, the core should also include differentiated, independent student centers that are based on data.
Adolescent Core Reading Instruction (Grades 4-12)

For adolescents, the focus for learning shifts to being more content driven, focusing on the ability to build content knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. Core instruction should support the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension in all students.

Leadership teams need to examine the efficacy of core instruction in order to ensure that the needs of students are being met. In order to assist students in becoming critical thinkers, the use of embedded strategy instruction across content areas is encouraged. When buildings consistently use strategies embedded in content areas, students can “focus on comprehension and content knowledge,” and learning across all content areas is enhanced (Johnson, 2009). Teachers need to create multiple opportunities for students to practice using the strategies as applied to content-specific materials and situations and provide adequate feedback on their use. Without explicit strategy instruction, researchers note that many students are not able to perform at grade level and have gaps in their ability to read and write at the secondary level (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007).

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (Kamil et al., 2008) and the National Reading Panel’s (2000) report are major sources for identifying strategies that can have an immediate impact on student reading achievement, including adolescent reading in grades 4-12.

The IES Practice Guide can be found at: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/8](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/8).

Strategic and Intensive Instruction (Grades K-12)

Even with excellent Tier 1 instruction, some students will need additional intervention and supports to make adequate progress. Instruction plays a critical role in helping students who require intervention to accelerate their learning. The most efficient way to provide instruction for intervention is in small groups in addition to the core program. During intervention, students are grouped by instructional need, not chronological age or grade. The instruction in intervention should align with the practices that occur in the core program, although it may be necessary to intensify the instruction depending on the needs of the students. The fluidity of grouping at this level becomes critical to ensure that students can return to less intensive instruction as quickly as possible to reduce the loss of other instructional time.

Instruction during intervention should:

- Occur in small group sizes, which allows for more opportunities for student response and corrective feedback (see KS MTSS recommendations on grade levels and group sizes).
- Be aligned with the instructional practices in the core program.
• Be more systematic, explicit, and focused on a small number of specific skills at a time.
• Be delivered with at a quick, engaging pace.
• Be provided with extensive and explicit modeling and scaffolding.
• Use graphic organizers to reduce cognitive load, if needed.
• Use multi-sensory instruction (manipulatives, more concrete representations, etc.).

In addition, there are differences in intensity between strategic and intensive instruction. These include the following:
• More time is needed for intervention.
• More intensive and explicit instruction.
• More customization of instruction.
• Smaller group size.
• Increased opportunities to respond.
• Immediate corrective feedback.
• More frequent progress monitoring.

Professional Development for Instruction and Ensuring Fidelity
It is imperative that the leadership team plan for the significantly challenging task of providing support to staff. In order for staff members to change their instructional practices and fully support MTSS, professional development must be carefully planned and implemented.

The first step is selecting instructional strategies/practices, which should be recorded on the Tier 1 Protocol. The second step is planning ongoing support of staff to implement the necessary practices. To achieve fidelity of implementation, staff members need initial training as well as ongoing coaching and support to use these practices effectively and efficiently.

The building should also have a process in place to formally monitor implementation of the instructional practices. In this manner, response and support via coaching can be provided in a timely and encouraging manner.

The following steps can be used to decide how to support staff in the use of evidence-based instructional practices:
• Develop a plan to provide professional development to appropriate instructional staff members (including EL, Migrant, Title, SPED, paraprofessionals, etc.).
• Determine the key elements of instruction that need to be monitored for fidelity.
• Determine a method (e.g., walk-through, peer coaching, etc.) to monitor key elements for fidelity.
• Develop and implement a plan to provide training and coaching to instructional staff members who need additional assistance in providing instruction, as identified through monitoring. Monitor the plan for fidelity of implementation.
Professional development activities must be differentiated in order to support the individual needs of staff members as they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, enabling them to implement the specified instructional strategies and practices with fidelity. Initial and ongoing training should be differentiated based upon expectation of use, alignment of practices, and prior knowledge and should also be built on prior professional development activities. The leadership team needs to review the Tier 1 Protocol to remind the team which instructional practices were identified to be supported.

**Planning Professional Development**

The Building Leadership Team will identify the professional development needs related to the implementation of instructional strategies and practices by identifying and considering the targeted staff and the qualities of each specified practice.

In planning professional development, it is helpful for the leadership team to consider the following questions specific to each instructional strategy or practice:

- Which staff members, if any, have experience with or have previously received professional development on the strategy/practice?
- Which staff members need to attend initial professional development on the strategy/practice?
- Who will provide the professional development and when (date) will initial professional development be provided?
- Who will monitor the use/implementation (fidelity) of the strategy/practice and how often?
- Which method will be used to monitor the use/implementation (fidelity) of the strategy/practice (walk through, peer observations, etc.)?
- How will this practice be sustained for new staff members and others who need additional support?

These questions are designed to help leadership teams as they begin the development of an overall professional development plan. Once specific decisions are made, the Building Leadership Team should record the results on the building’s results-based staff development plan and/or on a Professional Development Plan. The leadership team should also consider whether the discussion of professional development and fidelity of instruction has led to a need to develop an action plan or to add any items to the Stop-Doing list.

**Review Policies and Practices for Instruction**

Now that the instructional practices plan has been completed, the leadership team should review district and building policies and practices regarding instruction to identify whether there are any policies and practices that need to be changed to align with the Tier 1 Protocol.
team should also consider whether the discussion of policies and practices regarding instruction has led to a need to develop an action plan or to add any items to the Stop-Doing list.

**TEAM DISCUSSION**

| 1. Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what instructional strategies are used? |
| 2. What are the practices (routines/traditions) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what instructional strategies are used? |
| 3. Are there any practices that might belong on the Stop-Doing list? |

**Review the Action Plan**

Once the leadership team has finalized the instructional practices on the Tier 1 Protocol, there should be a plan for communicating the decisions regarding instruction.

- Are there steps that need to be carried out in order to communicate decisions about instruction?
- Is there anything that needs to be added to the action plan or Stop-Doing list?

**Secondary Level Structuring Supplement**

**Introduction**

This structuring supplement was created to provide guidance regarding the unique challenges schools face when structuring a school in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports for students in grades 7 and above.

Unfortunately, the current state of reading performance among American students in grades 4 through 8 has not been encouraging. According to 2011 NAEP data, there has been no significant change in eighth grade since 1992. Only 34% of the nation’s eighth graders were proficient readers in 2011, and the figures are even more dismal for African-American, Hispanic, and low SES students, ranging from 15% to 26% proficient (Report Card, 2011).

“Typically, middle school struggling readers are identified when they fail to demonstrate adequate reading comprehension proficiency on high-stakes tests or standardized achievement tests” (Denton et al., 2007). Historically, reading intervention has responded at the secondary level by focusing on comprehension and comprehension strategies. However, the root cause of comprehension issues lies much deeper. There are many reasons that students may not comprehend at grade level proficiency. Often they struggle with fluency, and fluency depends on
mastering automatic word recognition. In fact, a large number of struggling adolescent readers have phonological awareness and phonics deficits. Because of the number of underlying issues that could inhibit students’ progress as readers, the Kansas MTSS Framework follows a systematic assessment approach to determine where reading has become problematic for a student.

The information provided in the supplement will give leadership teams more information regarding the assessment, curriculum, and instruction as it specifically relates to secondary-level students.

**Assessment Process for Grades 7-12**

During structuring, the building leadership team members will select what they will use for their universal screener. It is essential to determine the specific skill deficit that is impeding an adolescent reader’s comprehension. This could be inaccuracy in reading words, inadequate fluency, or a lack of proficiency in comprehension strategies. Because of the wide range of possible skill difficulties, an assessment system must be designed to target a particular deficit. In grades 7 and 8, a general comprehension assessment is an appropriate universal screener and is given to all students three times a year. In grades 9-12, screening is a multi-step process focused on reading comprehension. The first step in this screening process involves assessing students’ grade-level comprehension skills once a year in the fall. Students who move in during the year should also be given this screener. This allows teams to identify students in need of reading intervention as well as those who need extension or acceleration opportunities. This can be done by administering group assessments or computer-adaptive group assessments, such as Northwest Evaluation Association/Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), SRI, STAR Reading, Scantron, or other screeners.

**Curriculum for Grades 7-12**

**Core Curriculum**

At the secondary level, the core reading curriculum is implemented as part of content area classes. Because reading skills are more embedded in content subject matter for older students, a cross-curricular approach is essential in order to meet students’ needs (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). A strong core curriculum for adolescent readers must meet district curriculum mandates and align with the Kansas Common Core Standards. “The idea is not that content-area teachers should become reading and writing teachers, but rather that they should emphasize the reading and writing practices that are specific to their subjects, so students are encouraged to read and write like historians, scientists, mathematicians, and other subject-area experts” (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

Essentially, the core (Tier 1) curriculum is designed to support the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension in all students and to encourage struggling readers to apply the
strategies emphasized during intervention instruction. Kamil et al. (2008) recommended improving adolescent literacy in core content areas by providing explicit vocabulary instruction, direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction, opportunities for an extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, and increased student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. Selecting a common comprehension or vocabulary strategy to be used throughout the building in all content areas is important with older students for transition of the skill. When a strategy is only practiced during intervention, the older struggling reader “compartmentalizes” that skill as something only to be used at intervention time. However, if the strategy is used across the content area classes, students get multiple opportunities each day to practice and internalize that strategy (Denton, et al 2007). “To leverage time for increased interaction with texts across subject areas, teachers will need to reconceptualize their understanding of what it means to teach in a subject area. In other words, teachers need to realize they are not just teaching content knowledge but also ways of reading and writing specific to a subject area” (Carnegie, 2006).

All teachers must be provided with strategies as part of their core curriculum to assist students with the acquisition of information by reading content area materials in all subject areas. These strategies include the comprehension strategies recommended by the National Reading Panel as well as strategies for vocabulary acquisition, such as morphological analysis. In addition, teachers must consider the importance of teaching academic vocabulary in the content areas. Knowledge development of general academic words should occur while developing knowledge of the overall discipline. Studying disciplinary texts with appropriate scaffolding will help students understand discipline-specific words (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Professional development activities will be necessary to help teachers move from using initial strategies to applying multiple strategies and procedures.

**Intervention**

**Tier II**

Supplemental (Tier 2) intervention is designed to provide supplemental support to students who need targeted, focused instruction in reading. It is intended to focus primarily on instruction in comprehension and vocabulary strategies, with instruction in phonics such as word reading and/or reading fluency provided when needed. Some examples of supplemental strategies and materials might include a syllable-chunking strategy (referenced in the main structuring guide), using Cornell notes or the Rewards or Read Naturally curriculum, depending on the student’s individual needs.

For middle and high school students, homogeneous instruction can be provided to groups of 10 to 16 students for 30 to 50 minutes per day or one class period, at least three to four days per week (McCook, 2006). When using specific programs, it is necessary to follow program guidelines if group sizes are specified.
Tier III
Examples of Tier 3 curriculum include programs such as Phonics Boost, High Noon Decodable readers, or Wilson Reading. Refer to the resource list in the Implementation guide for more ideas. Intensive support for adolescent readers is provided in small, homogenous groups of one to four students for 50 to 60 minutes per day (Denton et al., 2007).

An important point to remember when providing interventions at any level is that the skills taught through the curricular materials are focused on the students instructional needs as determined by assessment and not by the student’s chronological age or grade level.

Instruction for Grades 7-12
The research-based instructional practices outlined in the Kansas MTSS Structuring Guide: Module 2 Reading are applicable to adolescent readers. Instruction at the secondary level should be explicit, differentiated, scaffolded, and systematic and provide many opportunities for student response and teacher corrective feedback.

*Reading Next* (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004) outlines the instructional elements that contribute to successful systems that are designed to improve adolescent reading achievement in middle and high school. Six of the elements directly target content literacy instruction:

1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read.
2. Effective instructional practices embedded in content – language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area.
3. Extended time for literacy, including two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content-area classes.
4. Text-based collaborative learning involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts.
5. Diverse texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics.
6. Intensive writing – instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, p. 4).

Further guidance from Kamil et al. (2008) is provided in the main structuring guide in terms of providing direct and explicit comprehension and vocabulary strategy instruction and providing opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation. In addition to comprehension and vocabulary strategy instruction, instruction should include study in morphology. Students need to be taught how to use the morphological structure of words to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words. Content area teachers can focus on teaching prefixes, suffixes, and base words. This strategy allows students to gain meaning from the complex words they
encounter in content area texts.

The research on reading instruction for struggling adolescent readers shows that providing a strong research-based core curriculum combined with targeted intervention can be very effective. In their meta-analysis of multiple studies, the Center on Instruction found an overall effect size of .95. This means that students who received intervention outscored the comparison groups by almost one standard deviation (Scammaca et al., 2007).

This meta-analysis had nine key findings related to struggling secondary readers. Among those findings are the following (Scammaca et al., 2007):

1. Adolescence is not too late to intervene, and older students who participate in interventions can benefit.
2. Older students with reading difficulties benefit from interventions focused both at the word level and at the text level.
3. Teaching comprehension strategies to older students with reading difficulties is associated with an overall effect equivalent to a gain of about one standard deviation.
4. Older students with reading difficulties benefit from improved knowledge of word meanings and concepts.
5. Interventions provided by both researchers and teachers are associated with positive effects.
6. Older students with learning disabilities benefit from reading intervention, when it is appropriately focused.

Professional Development

Most teachers who teach secondary students do not see themselves as “reading teachers.” They are comfortable teaching their content area but may need further support to incorporate reading strategies during content-area (core) instruction. They must also understand the literacy demands of their particular content area. Teaching foundational skills to students who need interventions is often an area where they will need more intensive professional development. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) offers professional development that is grounded in the science of reading and aligns with the explicit, systematic instruction MTSS recommends. LETRS PD modules are available from certified trainers throughout the state. There are several modules, but not all are necessary for secondary teachers. For more information and a list of trainers, please go to www.ksdetasn.org and find the link for LETRS on the left of the screen. In addition, Kansas MTSS trainers can provide more information on how to get additional training and support on adolescent literacy and specific research-based strategies.
References


College Press.


Kieffer, Michael J., & Lesaux, Nonie K. (2007). Breaking down Words to Build Meaning:
Morphology, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension in the Urban Classroom. *Reading Teacher*, 61(2), 134-144.


KSDE. (2005). Kansas Early Learning Standards. Topeka, KS.


## Appendix A: Critical Skills for Universal Screener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Grade Levels</th>
<th>Skills Measured</th>
<th>Example Sub-tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>Language and vocabulary, letter names and sounds, first sounds, rhyme and alliteration</td>
<td>Early reading composite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1</td>
<td>Automaticity in letter name Identification and/or segmenting Phonemes</td>
<td>Letter naming fluency (LNF) First sound fluency onset sounds Phoneme segmentation Word segmenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proficiency and automaticity in the Alphabetic Principle</td>
<td>Nonsense word fluency (NWF) Nonsense words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Reading connected text accurately and fluently</td>
<td>Oral reading fluency (ORF) CBMreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Reading connected text accurately and fluently</td>
<td>Oral reading fluency (ORF) CBMreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic comprehension</td>
<td>Re-tell—Comprehension Questions aReading Maze/Daze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Reading connected text accurately and fluently</td>
<td>CBMreading Oral reading fluency (ORF)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Reading Diagnostic Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Assessment (listed in alphabetical order)</th>
<th>Grade Level Assessed</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Phonological</th>
<th>Phonics</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Reading Inventory (CRI) 2007 Edition</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)</td>
<td>K-12+</td>
<td>Norm Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Decoding Surveys</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Reading Assessment – 2 (DRA-2)</td>
<td>K-3</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR)</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation, 2001 Edition (GRADE)</td>
<td>Pre-K-12+</td>
<td>Norm Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT IV)</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Norm Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 4th Edition (PPVT)</td>
<td>Pre-K-12+</td>
<td>Norm Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST)</td>
<td>K+</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test of Word Recognition Efficiency (TOWRE)</td>
<td>K-12+</td>
<td>Norm Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Reading Inventory- 4 (QRI-4)</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick Phonics Screener (QPS)</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>Criterion Referenced</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
Appendix C: Differentiation Activity

Grade Level group: 8th Grade

Strategy or Activity: To demonstrate understanding of what ozone is and why it is important.

Level of Complexity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of complexity</th>
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</table>

**Adapt Activity**: Debate the issue of whether there is an ozone problem to which humans contribute.

**Original Activity**: Write a position paper on the degree to which human activity may or may not negatively impact the ozone cycle.

**Adapt Activity**: Conduct a survey of peer awareness and understanding about the ozone.

**Adapt Activity**: Write a public service television or radio announcement for citizens of New Zealand.