
MEMORANDUM

TO: School Committee

FROM: Andrea Zayas, Chief Academic Officer
Christine Landry, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Academics and Professional Learning
Dr. Jason Sachs, Executive Director of Early Childhood Education

CC: Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent
Mary Dillman, Chief of Staff
Megan Costello, Senior Advisor

DATE: February 24, 2021

RE: Equitable Early (K2-2) Literacy Instruction

In 2021 the School Committee set goals and guardrails to drive student academic outcomes. During tonight's presentation, we will focus on the first goal:

Boston Public Schools (BPS) will create the conditions for students to arrive in grade 3 ready to thrive in school by ensuring that K-2 students meet or exceed grade level expectations in reading comprehension.

While specific markers of student progress have yet to be established, e.g. 10% increase in proficiency each year, the efforts laid out in this presentation will substantially move the dial.

The Department of Early Childhood, part of the Office of Academics and Professional Learning, created the [Focus on Early Learning](#) K0/K1 curriculum in 2014. The curriculum was designed to be child centered, interdisciplinary, and play-based. Each year the department has added a grade to the curriculum all early childhood grades (K0-2) are now represented. Since 2018, the Department, as part of the BPS Academic Division strategy regarding Equitable Literacy Instruction, has incorporated research on the science of reading to explicitly teach [Foundational Skills](#) by aligning our materials, improving accessibility and strengthening instruction. Advancing Equitable Literacy Instruction is a racial equity strategy aimed to radically improve literacy.

For the next five years the department/district will double its efforts to work with central office departments, school leaders and teachers to implement the Science of Reading approach to early literacy in all classrooms. Currently Focus is the early childhood curriculum in about 60% of the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms. In addition to the curriculum and related materials, schools will receive specific

coaching on reading and writing and the district will design strategies to work with struggling readers (tier 2).

Finally, we will continue to partner with our community based programs that serve Pre-k and out of school time and also our Fifth Quarter partners who provide the summer school literacy opportunities for students. BPS will use a combination of its own budget, federal, state, and private dollars to fund this work over the next five years.

Presenters (In addition to Andrea Zayas, Christine Landry, & Jason Sachs):

Brooke Childs - Early Childhood Program Developer, leading initiatives around literacy in K-2 as well as supporting the Transformation cohort

Jacqueline Elias - K1 Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher at the Blackstone, piloting Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum

Mayanna Suslavich - Transformation Coach at the Blackstone, attended English Language Arts and Literacy Academy in the summer with LETRs (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) and has been coaching foundational literacy at the Blackstone

Dwayne Nuñez - Early Childhood Program Developer, leading initiative around Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum in K0/K1 and coaching in transformation schools

Unicia Young - Early Childhood Program Developer, leading initiative around Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum in K0/K1 and coaching in transformation schools (*she is going to speak if Dwayne is not able to*)