METHACTON LITERACY PLAN

2024-25 to 2027-28

Presented: March 18, 2025

Purpose

Where we are now

Where we plan to go

How we plan to get there
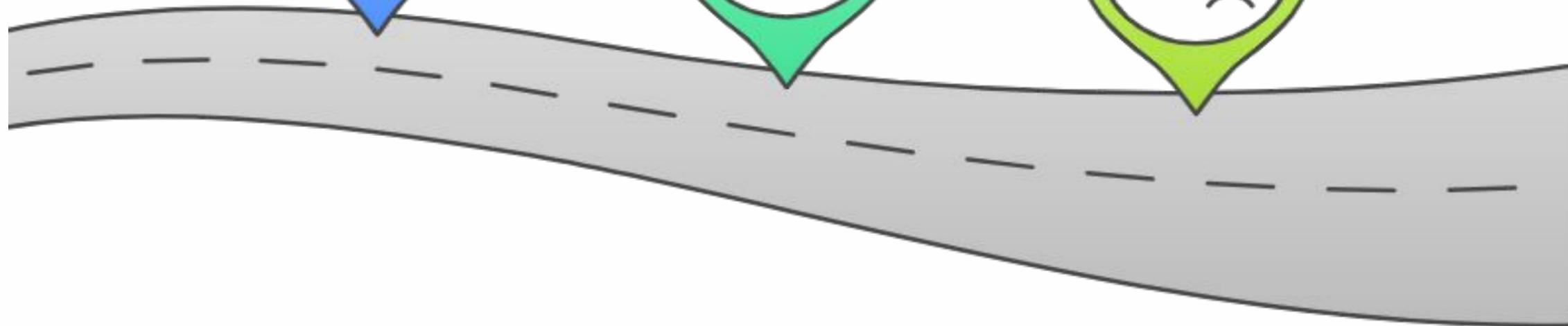
Teacher Training for Structured Literacy

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) began to require colleges and universities to include training in structured literacy in their teacher preparation programs on August 1, 2024**

- **Most teacher training programs focused on balanced literacy or whole language prior to this mandate**

- **As a result, most, if not all, of our current teachers' training on structured literacy came from professional learning sessions within our school district or training the sought on their own**

Structured Literacy | Balanced Literacy

Explicit & Systematic Instruction
Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary & comprehension

Implicit & Holistic Approach
Literacy taught through exposure to literature & without a systematic phonics sequence

Decoding First Approach
Students taught to decode new words before relying on meaning-making strategies

Meaning-based Strategies
Use of context clues, pictures, and guessing strategies to identify new words

Direct Phonics Instruction
Systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction to develop skills for all

Phonics Taught in Context
Phonics introduced organically as students demonstrate a need

Decodable Texts to More Complex
Ensures mastery of foundational reading skills before adding complexity

Guided Reading & Leveled Texts
Provides instruction for current reading level with little understanding of foundational mastery

Supports ALL Learners
Based on research from Science of Reading and lays a solid foundation—especially for struggling readers

Lacks Support for ALL Learners Without explicit instruction, struggling readers are left to uncrack the code on their own

"The difference is simple: Balanced Literacy is based on a *philosophy* about how children learn to read, while Structured Literacy is based on the *scientific evidence* of how children learn to read.

-Carolina Orton-Gillingham, 2019
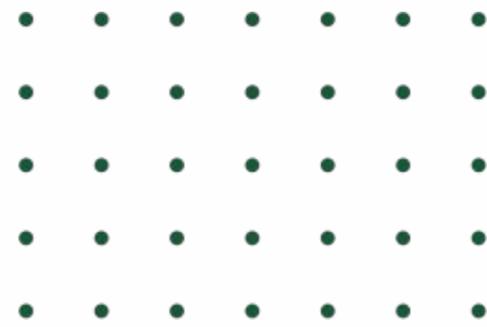
Terminology

Universal (Core) Instruction- Refers to scheduled English Language Arts (ELA), English, Reading time that all students get each day.

Intervention- Refers to instruction given in addition to core instruction that is targeted to boost students understanding of a specific skill or concept. These can be given in small group instruction within the core course or at an additional time in the day.

Assessments- Refers to the tests used to determine students' skill levels and what form of enrichment or intervention they may need. These may be benchmarks, screeners, or diagnostics.

Benchmark Assessment-Compares students against standardized norms/expectations
Universal Screener Assessment- Identifies a student as on target or in need of intervention; brief
Diagnostic Assessment-Identifies the specific skills in which a student is strong or displays a need

Methacton's Resources

Universal (Core) Instruction

- K-6 *Wonders*
- 7-8 Proposed Adoption *My Perspectives*

Interventions

- Additional instruction with core resource components
- SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, & Sight Words)
- READ 180

Assessments:

- **Benchmark Assessment**-Grade 3-HS Linkit Benchmark
- **Universal Screener Assessment**- K-6 Amplify DIBELS-8 (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)
- **Diagnostic Assessments**- K-6 Developmental Spelling Inventory (DSI); K-8 iReady Reading Diagnostic

Schools Cubed — Science of Reading | Systems | Structures — The Power of Three

Keys to Literacy

- Based in Colorado
- Methacton connected with Schools Cubed through our Senator Muth grant
- Conducted the literacy audits at all K-6 buildings in fall 2023
- Works with school leaders
- Helps schools develop systems and structures to guide literacy instruction, assessment practice and data driven intervention
- Coaches principals in how to provide instructions feedback to teachers regarding structured literacy
- Guides this work through the Lab Schools

- Based in Massachusetts
- Methacton connected with Keys through PA IDA (Pennsylvania chapter of the International Dyslexia Association) and Schools Cubed
- Recently acquired Schools Cubed
- Works with teachers
- Provides professional development on all components of structured literacy
- Provides coaching for implementation of learned components
- Provides opportunities for district staff to become certified as coaches and trainers for various skills
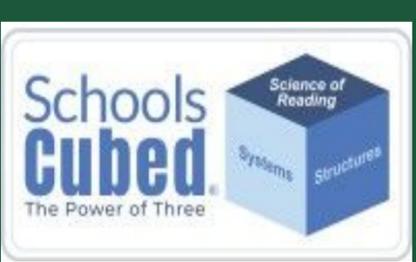
Universal (Core) Instruction:
- Some schools were offering enough time for literacy.
- Some schools had sufficient time for both whole group and small group instruction.
- Materials were available for good literacy instruction.

Assessments:
- All schools knew what students were struggling readers.
- Some schools were progress monitoring some students.

Interventions:
- There was time for small group instruction in some schools.
- A variety of intervention materials were being used.

Data-based Decision Making:
- Generally, teachers knew how students were doing regarding benchmark data.

Professional Development:
- School leadership had a good understanding of literacy practices.
- School leadership knew which teachers needed the most support in teaching practices.

Collaboration
- Generally, teachers came together to look at benchmark data.
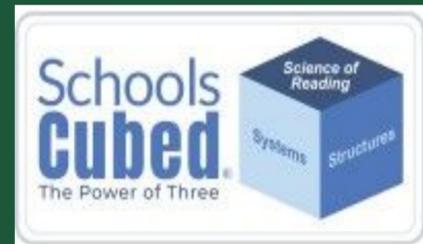
Items Addressed in 2024-25
Based on Audit Recommendations & Curriculum Leadership

Universal (Core) Instruction:
- Adopted common schedule at K-4 level, providing consistency
- Implemented guided collaborative planning sessions K-12
- Heggerty (K-2) & University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) (K-4)

Assessments:
- Adopted Amplify DIBELS-8 as Universal Screener for all students K-6

Interventions:
- Adopted SIPPS for students Grades K-12

Data-based Decision Making:
- Data analysis is more thorough and focused on root cause K-12

Collaboration
- Data meetings now incorporate decisions related to core instruction K-12
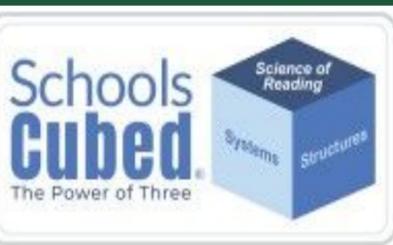
Universal (Core) Instruction:

- The district has a core program, *Wonders*, that supports the Science of Reading practices. Teachers were not using the core program in such a way as to align with those practices. Many teachers were not using it at all.

- We recommend using a consistent lesson plan template that clearly lays out a good, structured literacy framework. This lesson plan template should be used in conjunction with *Wonders* so that teachers understand the critical components found within the program.
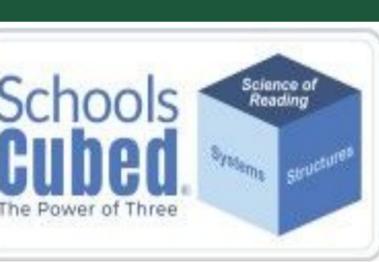
Professional Development:

- Moving from a balanced literacy approach to a structured literacy approach is dependent on professional development for teachers and leadership.

- Teachers and leaders must have a clear understanding and vision for what the literacy initiative looks like, how it will affect classroom instruction, the proper usage of materials and the most effective instructional strategies to use. This cannot be achieved without high-quality professional development.

- We recommend that principals as well as district leaders know how to put into place the systems and structures that support teachers and students throughout the initiative. School leaders must know what good literacy instruction looks like.

Proposed Actions

- Creation of Lab Schools with Schools Cubed
  - Coaching principals on implementing structured literacy practices
- Delivery of Keys to Literacy Professional Learning
  - *Keys to Beginning Reading*
  - *Keys to Vocabulary*
- Training of Coaches and Facilitators for Keys to Literacy

What is a Lab School?

A lab school is a model site where educators—principals, specialists, coaches, and teachers—learn together through observation and collaboration. Effective practices are then taken back to the other schools to improve instruction system-wide.
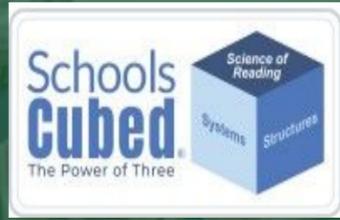
METHACTON LAB SCHOOLS

Schools Identified

ELEMENTARY

Eagleville

SECONDARY

Arcola
Intermediate

Staff Involved

- All Principals

- All Reading
  Specialists

- All Intervention
  Specialists

- All Coaches

District Impact

- Systems & structures will be implemented at all K-8 schools for assessment, data, and intervention practices

- Elevate professional dialogue around literacy with staff and administration

- Increased ability for school leaders to identify and give feedback on effective Structured Literacy practices

"Although there are many areas of great growth in literacy at our school, the greatest growth has been in me as the **instructional leader.** Working with our Schools Cubed consultant has provided me with **intensive**, **personalized experience** in looking at **individual classroom practices and school literacy data.**"

-Jodie Rees, Principal of *Schools Cubed* Lab School
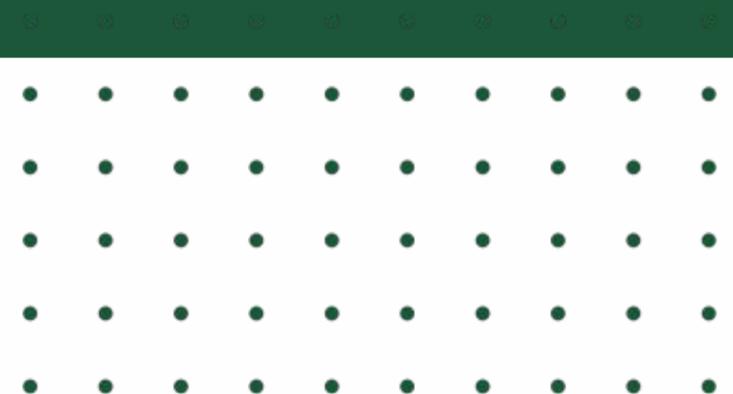
KEYS TO BEGINNING READING

K-4

WHAT?

- Training for 40 staff members on inservice days

- Practical instructional strategies to integrate with any reading program

WHO?

- All classroom teachers at Eagleville

- A grade-level representative from each level at Arrowhead, Woodland and Worcester

- K-4 Principals

- Instructional coaches

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

- Instructional practices tightly aligned to Structured Literacy practices as seen through observations

- Increases in student achievement data

- Reduction in referrals for Special Education

Keys to Literacy

KEYS TO VOCABULARY

Grade 5 - HS

Keys to Literacy

WHAT?

- Training for 40 staff members on inservice days

- Practical instructional strategies to integrate with any content area program

- Coaching to support implementation in the classroom

WHO?

- Teachers of ELA, Reading, English, Social Studies in grades 5-HS

- Skyview, Arcola & MHS Administrators

- Instructional coaches

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

- Instructional practices tightly aligned to Structured Literacy practices as seen through observations

- Increases in student achievement data

- Reduction in referrals for Special Education

- Creation of 2 Lab Schools-Eagleville and Arcola

- Schools Cubed leadership training for systems of instruction, assessment and intervention (Principals, Reading Specialists, Intervention specialists and coaches) (7, 2-day visits at each Lab School)

- Training for 80 staff on selected structured literacy practices (Beginning Reading/Vocabulary)

- Materials to support the implementation of learned practices

- Job embedded coaching for teachers in grades 5-8 to support implementation of new learning (4 rounds of coaching, 2-days each)

- Certification for 4 staff as coaches and 2 staff as trainers in Keys to Vocabulary

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

2024-25 – no additional cost

- Literacy Audit – Arcola

2025-26 - $142,200

- Lab Schools (2) – Eagleville and Arcola
- *Keys to Early Reading K-4* Training
- *Keys to Vocabulary 5-HS* Training
- Implementation Coaching & Facilitator Training
- Materials and Resources

2026-27 - $135,280

- Lab Schools (2) – Eagleville and Arcola
- Keys to Literacy K-4 (Topic TBD)
- Keys to Literacy 5-HS (Topic TBD)
- Implementation Coaching & Facilitator Training

2027-28 - $135,280

- Lab Schools (2) – Eagleville and Arcola
- Keys to Literacy K-4 (Topic TBD)
- Keys to Literacy 5-HS (Topic TBD)
- Implementation Coaching & Facilitator Training