



Date: May 24, 2022

To: School Board

From: Dr. Cheryl Proctor, Deputy Superintendent Instruction & School Communities
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Subject: K-5 Language Arts Instructional Materials Adoption

BACKGROUND

In 2016 we adopted Units of Study for Reading & Writing and it was rolled out over multiple years. This curriculum is based on the workshop model, where students work at individual reading levels, applying reading skills learned in mini lessons. We also adopted Words Their Way to teach Foundational Skills. At the time, we believed that these paired resources would change the outcomes for our students. We were mistaken. We realized we were not *explicitly* teaching Phonemic Awareness or Phonics. The first shift we made was in 2017 to adopt Heggerty to teach Phonemic Awareness. This curriculum is now delivered in Kinder, 1st and the first 15 weeks of 2nd grade. The next shift we made was to adopt K-2 Foundations in 2020 to teach Phonics. Rolling out this curriculum during a pandemic has been a challenge, yet we are thrilled with the results of these two resources. One third of Kinder - 2nd grade teachers, who report using Heggerty & Foundations with integrity, feel highly confident using the resources and are seeing a positive impact on their students.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

Best practices in language arts instruction means that there are standards-aligned, high-quality instructional materials that can give educators within a school and across a school system a common foundation to organize the work they're undertaking at the classroom level and collaborate to develop together—bringing equity to the district—a shared experience creating a floor, but not a ceiling, around the teaching and learning that happens in our classrooms. We will stop teaching students below their grade level expecting that they will magically catch up to their peers and start learning how to *scaffold* them up to their grade level. Scaffolds are built into this curriculum to both support student learning, but also to be educative to teachers as they learn how to lift students up to the grade level text rather than drop down to a below grade level text or activity.

Opportunities for student engagement need to build on student curiosity so they are encouraged to think, wonder, and participate as they learn to read and write. For learning to engage students, it needs to be relevant and authentic, culturally responsive, build on their cultural and linguistic strengths, and be meaningful to their lives. Students are actively developing, testing and refining their thinking. In Language Arts, best practices also means that every student has the materials they need to collaborate in engaging text and activities.

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

Our teachers need centrally provided K-5 instructional materials which are vertically and horizontally articulated to support all students based on the science of reading. All K-5 teachers are then able to focus on instruction and differentiation rather than spend time searching for instructional materials from various books and websites. Common language arts instructional materials enable district-wide shared focus on implementing and sustaining culturally relevant teaching practices through ongoing

professional development and using student work to reflect on effectiveness of instructional practices and equitable assessment practices for all students. Additionally, district-wide K-5 high quality language arts curriculum provides a baseline to ensure all students have access to rigorous, coherent, culturally relevant instructional materials. This reduces the detrimental effects of learning interruptions for students having to navigate housing or other insecurity, as a common scope and sequence and instructional materials will support familiarity with the district-wide language arts program. Students will spend less time figuring out how to engage with the instructional materials during these types of transitions. No purchased set of instructional materials will ever provide the full range of supports that are needed for daily classroom instruction and differentiation. Current research tells us that it is the pedagogical practices and moves that teachers make that can have the greatest impact on student success (Hattie, 2012). A common K-5 high quality language arts instructional resource allows for professional development with a strong focus on shifting instruction such that we see better outcomes for all students, especially those persistently underserved. Only implementation of research-based best practices will support the closing of the perpetual achievement gap we continue to see in PPS.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Great Minds: Wit & Wisdom Instructional Materials will be paid for through the 2020 School Bond, while the non-bond compensable professional services contract, with Great Minds, will be paid for through general funds. (Attachment A)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The decision to fully adopt Great Minds for K-5 classrooms was a highly involved process including a cross-district K-5 Language Arts Advisors of Instructional Resources (AIR) Committee and a field test of K-5 Language Arts instructional resources. A deep analysis of the instructional resources was completed to evaluate instructional resource alignment with K-5 Language Arts Common Core State standards, our PPS RESJ lens, and our Graduate Portrait. A brief description of the K-5 Language Arts AIR process and the Field Test are below.

- K-5 Language Arts AIR Committee - the committee held eight online meetings between November 29, 2021 and April 27, 2022. These meetings were 1.5-2 hours in length and committee members learned about our district's vision, mission, strategic plan, instructional materials evaluation, consensus process and six highly-rated curricula based on EdReport.org and ODE curriculum evaluations. Committee members also spent 28 hours learning and researching to ensure they were knowledgeable to make the best decision for our students. Using all the knowledge they had gained, the AIR Committee narrowed choices down to 3 vendor programs. The committee selected Benchmark, EL and Great Minds for the field test.
- K-5 Language Arts Field Test - The Field test occurred from January 31, 2022 to April 15, 2022. All field test teachers are able to use the materials through the end of the school year to minimize the disruption to student learning.
 - Student Data Collection: Students' data was collected through work samples, formative assessments and a student feedback survey.
 - Family and Community Data Collection: Families and the community were offered an opportunity to review the field test materials, ask questions of the vendors, and hear presentations from the vendors. Families, community members, non-field test teachers, building and district administrators, and support staff were emailed via district communication about the opportunity.
 - In-person Review - (March 16, 2022) Materials were available in the BESC foyer from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. People who reviewed the materials were invited to complete a paper or electronic survey. Vendors were available from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. to answer any questions. From 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. vendors provided 20 minute presentations about their materials in the boardroom.
 - Virtual Review - (March 17, 2022) Videos of vendor presentations were made available via PPS YouTube. All stakeholders were invited to complete an

electronic survey. The electronic survey was available on the adoption website until the end of March, 2022.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION

The timeline for implementation begins with the purchase of the Great Minds instructional materials. As part of the purchase, teachers will have full digital access to all K-5 Language Arts digital resources. The PPS K-5 Language Arts department and representatives from ESL, SPED, Dyslexia, and Interventions will be trained on the materials by the vendor before the end of the school year. The PPS K-5 Language Arts department will then revise our current the scope and sequence to align with Great Mind's scope and sequences for each grade level to align with the horizontal and vertical articulation of priority standards, create an assessment calendar and build a website for teachers at each grade level in collaboration with all K-5 content departments. Over the summer, K-5 classroom teachers, ESL teachers, special education teachers, instructional specialists, and mentors will be able to attend 1.75 days of professional development focused on the Great Minds instructional pedagogy and materials in June and August. During the summer, building administrators and other district level support staff will also receive 6 hours of professional development on leading this new K-5 Language Arts program. Both Administrator and Teacher summer professional development will include understanding our new PPS Instructional Framework and reimagined plan for Teacher Professional learning. All teacher materials will be available online starting at Summer Institute in June. The physical teacher and student materials will be ready to use by the end of August 2022.

This will be followed by a three year professional development (PD) plan with the vendor that will provide sessions over three years for teachers, administrators, families, and community members to engage in professional learning experiences around Great Minds instructional materials and best practices. Part of the goal of this three year PD timeline is to build a teacher cadre of experts that will facilitate district PD in the future and support school-based Professional Learning Communities focused on using student work to inform instructional decisions to improve student outcomes in Language Arts. The PPS Language Arts department will continue to monitor student performance through the SBAC assessment, MAP growth assessments, common formative assessments, teacher and student feedback through surveys and focus groups, and classroom walkthroughs focused on student reading and writing learning.

BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS

Our recommendation is to approve this purchase. Purchasing the Great Minds Comprehensive Program that consists of K-5 Wit & Wisdom and K-2 Geodes instructional materials means that we will be able to move very quickly in meeting our school board goals. If not approved, K-5 Language Arts will continue with the current model which means we would continue to support various resources that are not aligned to the current standards and best practices based on the science of reading. If we were to restart any part of the instructional materials adoption cycle, this would take another 6 - 18 months to complete.

Please note that K-5 Wit & Wisdom, and K-2 Geodes are integrated with Wilson FUNdations K-2 (foundational skills curriculum), which has already been purchased. We are in the process of procuring 3rd grade Wilson FUNdations, which will complete the FUNdations/Wit & Wisdom/Geodes integrated materials. We are not asking for approval for Wilson FUNdations 3rd Grade at this time as procurement has not been complete, but wanted to note that this is part of the comprehensive approach to K-5 language arts.

CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS

A strong and comprehensive K-5 instructional materials supports:

Board Goal #1- To close achievement gaps, we must accelerate growth for our underserved students of color, moving from 44% of our underserved students of color meeting growth to 60% meeting or

exceeding growth expectations (as measured by Measures of Academic Progress) by the spring of 2022.

Board Goal #3 - By the spring of 2022, Portland Public Schools 8th grade students will move from 44% meeting proficiency in both English Language Arts and Mathematics (2018-2019 baseline) to 51% meeting proficiency in both subjects as measured by Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and Board

Goal #4 - By the spring of 2022, Portland Public Schools graduates, who are underserved students of color, will move from 50.3% (current 2018-2019 baseline) to 56% successfully completing one or more of the post-secondary indicators.

If we have a Transformative Curriculum and Pedagogy (Educational System Shift) then we can support all teachers to be Knowledgeable and Committed Lifelong Learners, Inclusive and Responsive to Diverse learners, and are Self-aware and Reflective (Educator Essentials) which will result in students becoming Inquisitive Critical Thinkers with Deep Core Knowledge and Inclusive and Collaborative Problem Solvers (Graduate Portrait).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve purchase of K-5 Language Arts Comprehensive Great Minds Program that is composed of two components: K-5 Wit & Wisdom and K-2 Geodes for all K-5 classroom, ESL and SPED teachers. Approve a three year professional development plan that uses a gradual release of responsibility model as we grow our capacity within PPS.

As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.

_____ (Initials)

References

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Contracts for Great Minds Instructional Materials and Great Minds Professional Services