

# BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**To:** Members of the Bedford School Committee  
**From:** Cliff Chuang, Superintendent  
Tricia Clifford, Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent  
**Date:** November 27, 2023  
**Subject:** Update on Literacy Plan

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The Bedford Public Schools Literacy Plan was created in the spring of 2020 by a devoted team of educators in grades K-12. The plan addressed five specific goals, these goals included: Goal 1: Vision/Leadership/Communication, Goal 2: Assessment, Goal 3: Intervention Process, Goal 4: Core Curriculum and Instruction, and Goal 5: Professional Development/Coaching.

In June of 2023, the BPS Literacy Plan and the progress to date was shared with the Bedford School Committee. During that presentation, many of the goals and action steps were updated as completed. There was one goal specifically that had outstanding action steps to be completed, Goal 4.

### **Goal 4: Core Curriculum and Instruction**

Action Step 1: Consistency in core, Tier I literacy instruction will be created at all grade levels.

Action Step 2: Core, Tier I literacy instruction will be differentiated at all grade levels.

Action Step 5: A clear scope and sequence for reading and writing in the content areas will be created, using a common template for curriculum mapping.

In addition, you heard public comment from parents and community members at your October 24 2023 meeting expressing concerns regarding the district's current approach to literacy which reflected other feedback that has also been shared by other stakeholders, including teachers, over the past few years.

In order to address the action steps under this goal which are not completed and to respond to feedback an administrative leadership team including Tricia Clifford Ed. D., (Assistant Superintendent), Marianne Vines (Director of Special Education), Rob Ackerman (Lane Principal), Beth Benoit (Davis Principal), and Andrea Salipante (Curriculum Coordinator for ELA K-5) met to determine next steps. After meetings with potential consultants to review what they could offer Bedford and several meetings of the administrative leadership team, the district has contracted with HILL for Literacy (HILL) to address the outstanding action steps outlined above.

HILL for Literacy was founded in 2001 by a distinguished and nationally recognized faculty of experts in the field of literacy, as the Hanson Initiative for Language and Literacy within the Communication Sciences and Disorders graduate program at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. Their evidence-based approach to teaching reading and writing translates research to practice and supports educators in broadening their repertoire of skills, so they can teach all students including those who are at-risk for reading failure. Since then, HILL has expanded its model beyond the K-5 realm to successfully include Pre-K through middle and high school. HILL is also a partner with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) [Mass Literacy](#) program. HILL is neither a program nor a curriculum; rather it is expertly tailored inservice education which can be implemented within a district to fit a particular literacy profile. The HILL supports school leaders in organizing and enriching existing literacy structures.

In collaboration with HILL, the district will focus on the following objectives for the remainder of this school year:

1. To create a District Literacy Leadership Team (DLLT) to conduct a core literacy program review leading to the selection of new literacy curriculum, and
2. To provide teachers and administrators with a 10-module Science of Reading course provided by HILL and [endorsed by MA DESE](#).

### **1. DLLT core literacy program review**

The DLLT will undertake a core program review this school year. This team will work with the consultants from HILL to review evidence-based reading programs, with a target start date for implementation in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year.

[EdReports](#) and DESE's [CURATE](#) project will be used to guide the DLLT in their core review of potential programs. The core review will narrow this down to a few programs to conduct in-depth reviews in the early spring of 2024. **To be clear, this means that the district will be transitioning away from the Units of Study for Reading and Writing (Lucy Calkins) program by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.**

We are currently inviting representatives to participate in the DLLT. The membership of the DLLT will include:

- Assistant Superintendent
- Curriculum Coordinator for ELA K-5
- Director Special Education
- Director of English Learner Education
- Bedford Education Association (BEA) representatives
- Principals from Lane and Davis
- Instructional/Literacy Coaches from each school
- Teacher representatives from each school
- Parent representatives from each school
- HILL Facilitators

The DLLT will be formed within the next month and begin meetings in early January. They will continue to meet throughout the remainder of the school year. Faculty members will receive two in-service credits for their participation in this committee.

The core program review that the DLLT will implement this year is a comprehensive process that includes reviewing and selecting high-quality instructional materials. The objective of the review process is to capitalize on the unique knowledge base of all participants, secure “buy-in” and ownership by staff and stakeholders, and to select a high-quality instructional program that will meet the essential instructional needs of students.

### **2. Science of Reading Training**

Administrators and teachers will participate in a science of reading course. Administrators will participate in a virtual course which will entail participating in ten, 2.5-hour facilitated, synchronous modules, which include the following topics:

- Module 1: The Brain and Reading
- Module 2: The Brain and Reading assessments and Oral Language and Literacy
- Module 3: Features of Effective Instruction: What, Why, How
- Module 4: The power of Phonemic Awareness
- Module 5: Word Blending: A Hierarchy of Skills

Module 6: The Role of Automaticity  
Module 7: Text Reading: What (with Whom), and When and How  
Module 8: Growing Vocabularies  
Module 9: Building comprehension  
Module 10: Pulling It All Together: Literacy Leadership

The teachers will participate in ten asynchronous self-paced modules. They will be provided with administrative Wednesday meeting time, professional development time (March), and compensated summer work time to complete the modules, which include the following topics:

Module 1: The Brain and Reading  
Module 2: Oral Language and Literacy  
Module 3: Features of Effective Instruction: What, Why, How  
Module 4: The Power of Phonemic Awareness  
Module 5: Word Blending: A Hierarchy of Skills  
Module 6: The Role of Automaticity  
Module 7: Text Reading: What (with Whom), When, and How  
Module 8: Growing Vocabularies  
Module 9: Building Comprehension  
Module 10: Putting It All Together

The core program review and the science of reading courses as outlined above are exciting and important endeavors which will improve the literacy skills of our students.

Please feel free to contact either of us with any questions.

**Reference Documents:**

- [Science of Reading for Administrators Course Overview](#)
- [Science of Reading for Teachers Course Overview](#)
- [Video: Overview of Hill for Literacy Professional development for Science of Reading](#)