



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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To: District 97 Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent of Schools

From: Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer
Dr. Tawanda Lawrence, Senior Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Re: Reading Units of Study Update

Date: April 9, 2019

Type of Report: Informational

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Board of Education on the progress of our district priority of strengthening K-5 literacy instruction through the implementation of Reading Units of Study. The information in this report is divided into the following sections:

- Timeline for D97 Reading Units of Study Implementation
- Reading Units of Study 2018-2019 Survey Results
- Reading Units of Study in Action
- Next Steps

Introduction:

The District 97 vision is to create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child. Reading Units of Study (RUoS), developed by the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) from Columbia University was created to assist teachers with planning and implementing well-designed lessons with personalized instruction according to student needs.

The implementation of Reading Units of Study in grades K-5 contributes to helping all of our students experience or achieve our four goals in the following ways:

- Known, nurtured, and celebrated LEARNER
 - *RUoS is personalized according to students' reading levels, development, and growth. RUoS provides opportunities for teachers to conference with students, meet with small groups, and to build relationships with students.*
- Empowered and passionate SCHOLAR
 - *RUoS values student choice and encouraging student voice. RUoS draws upon students' own experiences as writers in learning how an author makes decisions about writing. There is also a gradual release of responsibility, in which students learn to be independent and engaged in their learning process.*
- Confident and persistent ACHIEVER
 - *RUoS learning progressions and student rubrics help students to self-assess and receive feedback from their peers and their teacher so that students understand how to continue to grow and progress.*
- Creative CRITICAL THINKER & GLOBAL CITIZEN

- RUoS help our students become more confident and proficient readers, writers, and thinkers who are ready to contribute their community.

Data Reports for Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Schools

Equity: What are the differential experiences of children by achievement level and by household income? (Could be a slightly different set of categories, for example, single parents, households with and without internet access, etc.) What is being done to achieve equity or balance in other ways?

The reports below highlight the performance of school districts in New York State, New York City, Connecticut, and California that are affiliated with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project from 2016 to 2018. These reports reveal the ELA percentage proficiency as it relates to all students, students with disabilities, English Learners, ethnicity, and economic disadvantaged.

- [New York State and New York City Data Report for TCRWP Schools](#)
- [Connecticut Teachers College Affiliated Districts Outperform State on Smarter Balanced Assessments](#)
- [California CAASPP Results Highlight Strength of Teachers College Affiliated Schools](#)

Timeline for D97 Reading Units of Study Implementation:

2017-2018	2018-2019
Implement Reading Units of Study (Grades K-2)	Implement Reading Units of Study (Grades 3-5)
Purchase Classroom Libraries (Provided additional books to ensure classroom libraries are diverse and well-stocked for reading workshop)	Conduct Reading Workshop Professional Learning (Job-embedded coaching, workshops, and support)
Conduct Reading & Writing Workshop Professional Learning (Job-embedded coaching, workshops, and support)	

Reading Units of Study 2018-2019 Survey Results:

Communication with key stakeholders: What is being done/has been done to elicit include feedback/ideas from teachers, parents, older students, administrators, or other key stakeholders. What are the most common concerns and positive comments received and how are they being addressed?

K-5 ELA Survey Development

The teaching and learning department collaborated with the ELA Written Curriculum Committee to develop a K-5 ELA survey that was administered to D97 staff in November. All K-5 teachers were invited to participate in the survey which allowed them to reflect on the following areas as it relates to Reading Units of Study:

- Rate their level of experience with Reading Units of Study

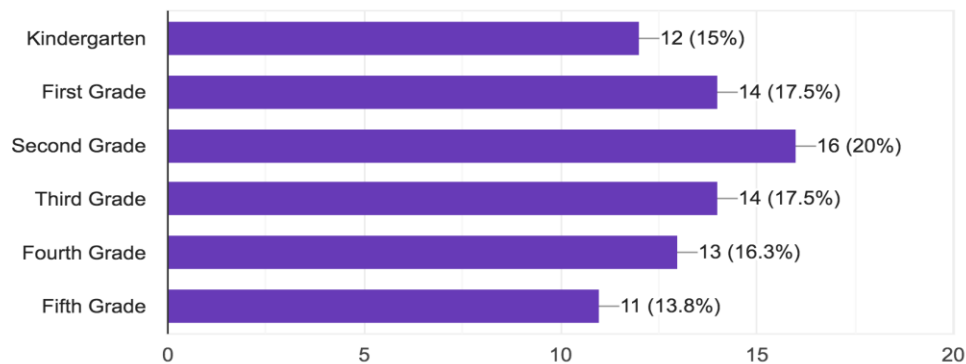
- Identify the number of Reading Units of Study units that had been taught during the school year
- Explain their use of If...Then... Curriculum Units
- Provide feedback on the pacing calendar
- Explain the strengths and opportunities for growth with implementing Reading Units of Study
- Provide feedback on the Classroom Libraries and other resources provided by D97 to support a balanced literacy program
- Share support needed to assist with the implementation of Reading Units of Study

K-5 ELA Survey Results

We received 80 responses from D97 teachers across all elementary schools. The survey data below reveal the percentage of grade level participation in the survey and the survey participants' level of experience with Reading Units of Study. The participation for grades K-5 ranged from 13.8% to 20%, with second grade having the highest participation. The teachers who participated in the survey rate their level of experience with Reading Units of Study as follows: 47.5% - beginner, 48.7% - intermediate, and 3.7% - experienced.

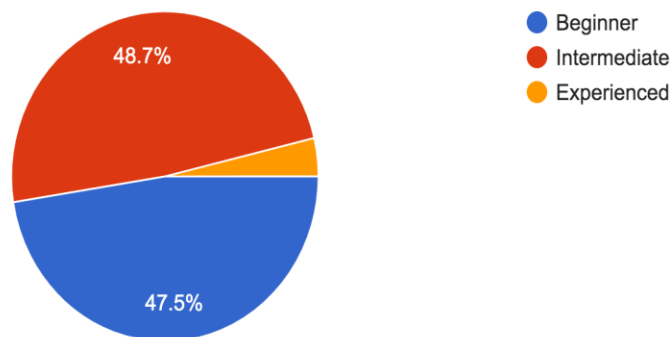
Grade (Required)

80 responses



How would you describe yourself as a Reading Units of Study teacher?

80 responses

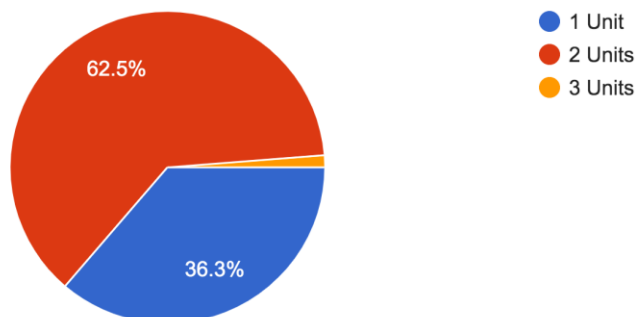


The current pacing calendar for Reading Units of Study indicate that two units should be taught each trimester to ensure all units are implemented by the end of the school year. The graph below

represents the number of units the survey participants implemented in November. The data reveals that within the first trimester, 62.5% of teachers implemented two units and 1.2% of teachers implemented three units. Although 36.3% of teachers implemented only one unit, it is important to keep in mind that almost half of the teachers who completed this survey are beginner teachers, which will greatly impact their pacing as this year is most likely their first experience with implementing Reading Units of Study. We have found that pacing of instruction becomes easier for teachers during their second year of implementation.

In order to assist with the pacing calendar moving forward, how many Reading Units of Study units have you taught this school year?

80 responses



Reading Units of Study Areas of Strength:

When asked to reflect on what is going well with Reading Units of Study implementation, many teachers highlighted the following areas:

- Mini lessons
- Building students' reading stamina through independent and partner reading time
- Student choice in book selection
- Support of Instructional Coaches
- Student engagement
- Book clubs
- Classroom Libraries
- Implementation is easier the second year as students are familiar with the format

Below are quotes from various teachers who participated in the survey.

- "It is great to have students that have now been using this program for the past two years. I have noticed an increase in their independent reading stamina. The mini-lessons are short and engaging."
- "Students self-selecting books, MULTICULTURAL libraries!, coaching, pre/assessments are helpful in creating small strategy groups and conferences."
- "The connection between the reading and writing units is beautiful! It is engaging and entertaining for my students."
- "My students are reading and they like that they have more choice with what they are reading during the day. It is better than when we had one basal text that everybody read together at the same time. There was no choice then."

- “I love that the students have time to read books at their level. Overall I like all the components and the structure of the lessons; mini-lesson, independent reading time, partner reading time and a time for sharing.”
- “I have been able to keep relatively close to the placing guide. My students are reading more. I know more about them as readers.”
- “This program builds great confidence in students. They believe they are readers.”

Reading Units of Study Areas of Opportunity for Growth:

When asked to share some of the challenges with implementing Reading Units of Study, several teachers indicated the following areas:

- Pacing and fitting in all components of the lesson
- Navigating the teacher’s manual
- Managing small groups and conferencing with students
- Utilizing Reading Units of Study to assess student understanding of the Illinois Learning Standards and reporting student progress to families through the Standards Based Report Card
- Providing phonics and grammar instruction
- Accessing a variety of leveled books above and below grade level bands

Reading Units of Study in Action:

We have provided a photo gallery of Reading Units of Study in action across the district and quotes from various D97 teachers.

Ad Leadership Meeting - Shared Observation of Workshop Teaching

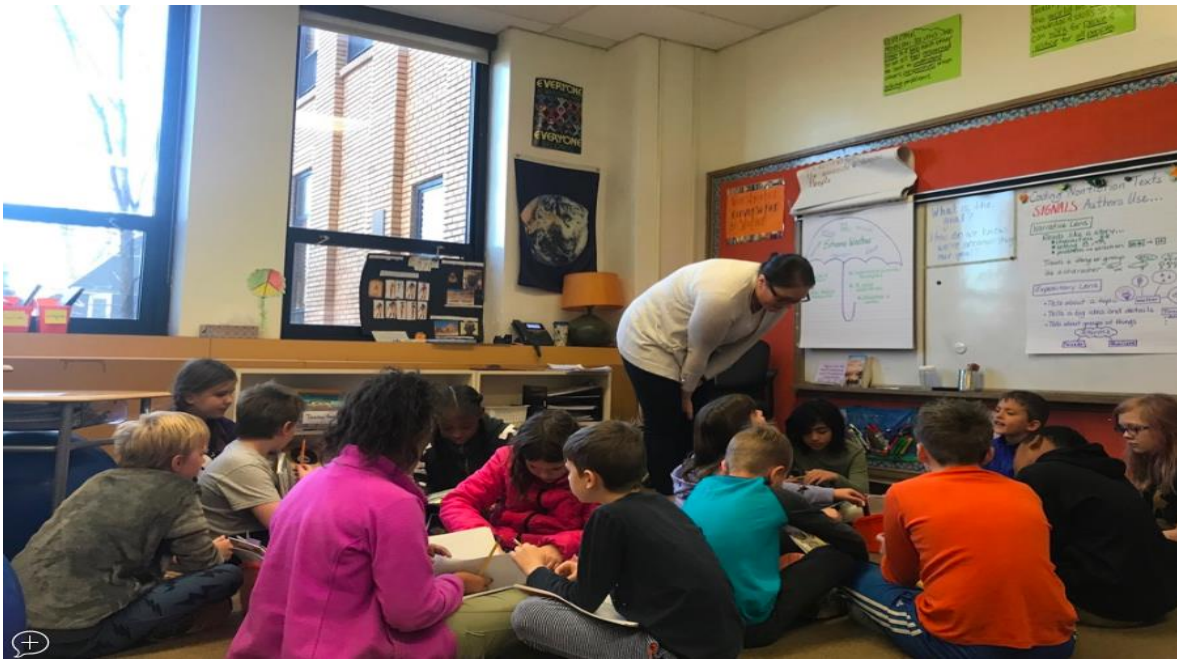
“The students seem to be getting into the structure of the workshop. Students are also enjoying texts, and thinking more critically about them.”



Mini Lesson

“This program builds great confidence in students. They believe they are readers.”





Small Group

“Reading work time is beneficial for students and gives the teacher time to work with small groups and have one to one conferences. Keeping the lessons short and concise.”



Conferencing

"My conferencing is getting better, so I am really starting to see the benefit of that."



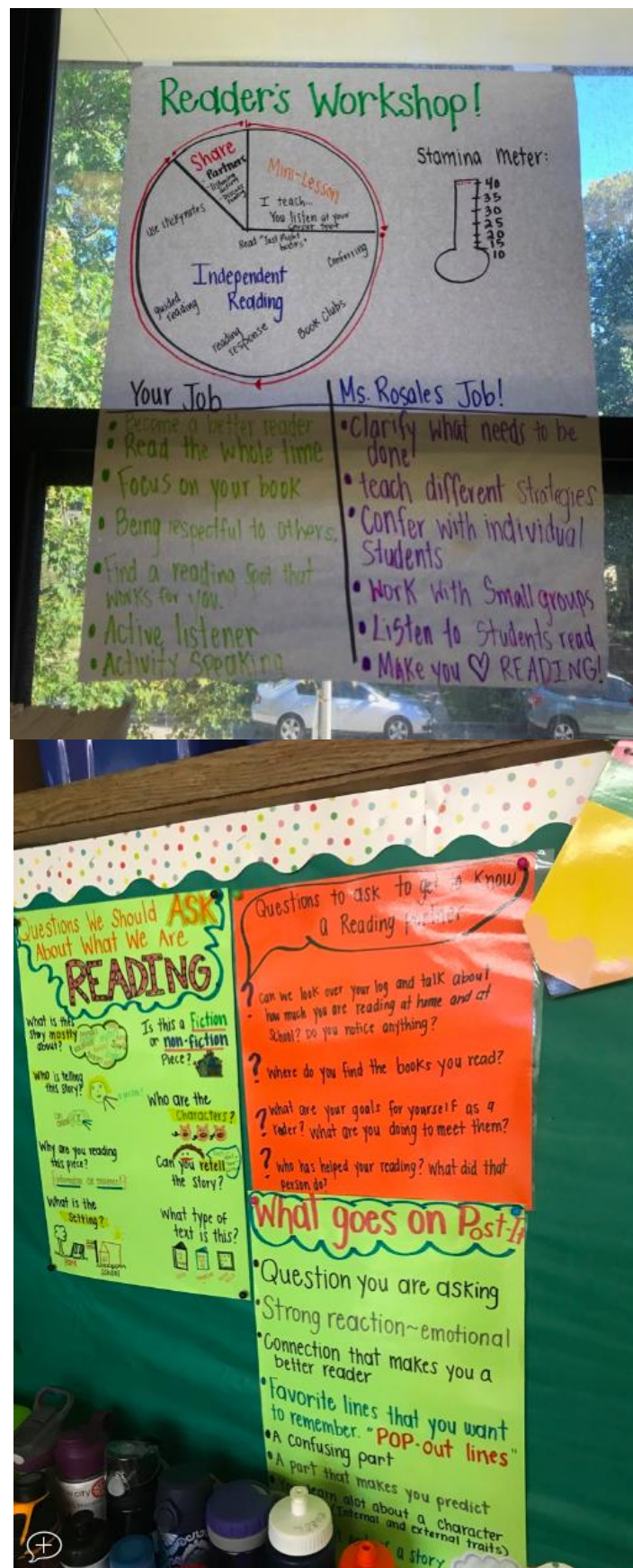
Partner Reading

"Students are reading authentically throughout the day."



Anchor Charts

"I love teaching strategies using anchor charts."



Classroom Library

"The leveled libraries are very useful. The student book bins are great!"

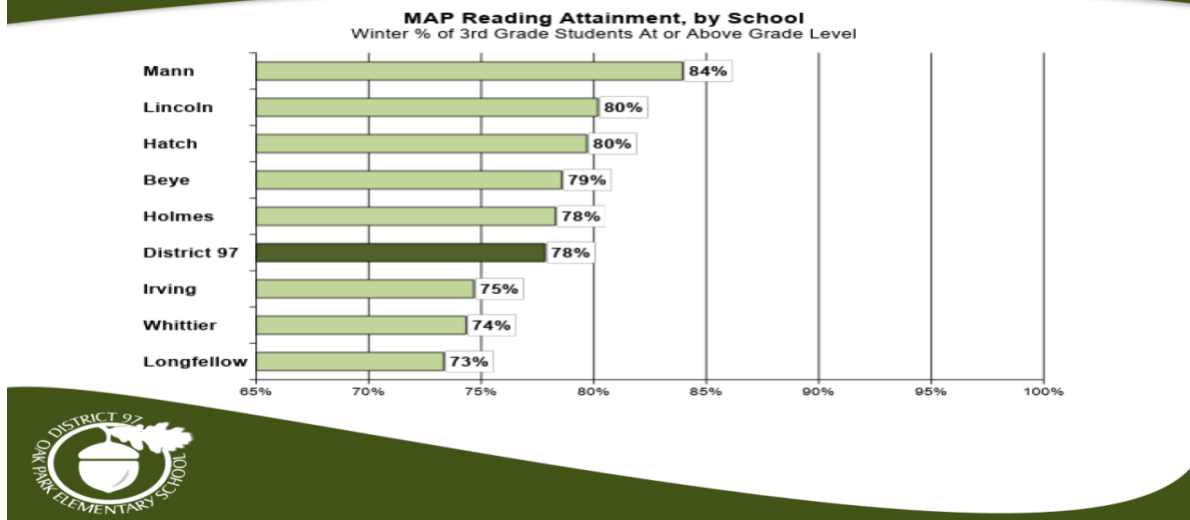


Next Steps:

Evaluation and ongoing improvement: What are the goals of this particular activity - how do we know if it is successful or not? What is the plan for measurement of how implementation is going? What "hard" data will be captured and what 'soft' data (impressions, opinions, etc.) will be incorporate? What information (not anecdotes) is available at this stage?

The desired SY19 outcome for D97 is that 75% of our students are reading at or above grade level by third grade. The data below represents the percentage of third grade students who are reading at or above grade level by school as measured by MAP winter benchmark. The data reveals that the D97 average for students reading at or below grade level is 78% with six schools at above the 75% target and two schools slightly below. We are excited about the progress our students are making in the area of reading and much of their growth can be attributed to receiving three consecutive years of Writing Units of Study and two consecutive years of Reading Units of Study.

% of 3rd Grade Students At or Above Grade Level, by School



Resource requirements: What resources are involved in this implementation/activity? This should include not just direct dollars, but class time, teacher prep/planning time, parental inputs, school facilities drawn from other purposes, etc. How do we reflect on how well they are being put to use, if greater efficiencies are required, or if more resources could profitably be devoted to the activity?

The goal for implementing Reading Units of Study is to help students develop a strong foundation at the primary and intermediate levels essential to strengthening students' literacy skills. Strengthening literacy instruction will remain a priority next year for grades K-5. We will measure the impact this program has on students' reading through common assessments, NWEA Map, and teacher surveys.

The teaching and learning department in collaboration with instructional coaches will continue to provide teachers support during their transition of implementing this new program. We will also ensure professional learning is aligned to the challenges teachers identified in the K-5 ELA survey, such as pacing, small group instruction, and conferencing with students. Additionally, we will survey principals and instructional coaches to determine if we should continue external coaching during the 2019-2020 school year.

The adoption of Phonics Units of Study (grades K-2) and Words Their Way (grades K-5) during the 2019-2020 school year will provide our students with stronger foundational skills in phonemic awareness and phonics. The Word Study Committee will also explore various programs and resources that provide support in grammar for grades 3-5.

Finally, the teaching and learning department is exploring ways to support teachers with utilizing Reading Units of Study to assess student understanding of the Illinois Learning Standards and develop formative and summative assessments to report student progress to families through the Standards Based Report Card.