



DEFINING EXCELLENCE

Board Meeting Date: May 13, 2024

Title: Middle School English Language Arts Curriculum Adoption Recommendation

Type: Action

Presenter(s): Bethany VanOsdel, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning; and Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning

Description: This report is intended to inform the Edina School Board on the recommendation for implementation of the StudySync program in the middle school English Language Arts courses. In addition to defining the ELA curriculum review process, this report also includes information about the new Minnesota English Language Arts Standards in conjunction with the MN READ Act legislation approved by the Department of Education.

The priorities in this report directly align to the goals established in the Secondary Comprehensive Literacy Plan approved by the school board in June of 2023.

Recommendation: This report is intended to secure approval for the purchase of the curriculum program titled StudySync.

Desired Outcomes from the Board: Approve the purchase of the curriculum program Study Sync for English Language Arts in Middle School.

Attachments:

1. [Comprehensive Literacy Plan - 6-12](#)
2. [8.14.23 ELA Course Guiding Change Document](#)
3. [Design Team Role Description](#)
4. [StudySync Science of Reading](#)
5. [EdReports Study Sync](#)
6. [Culturally Proficient School Systems Curriculum and Instruction Continuum](#)
7. [2020 English Language Arts Standards](#)
8. [Quote for Purchase](#)

Background Information

In June of 2023 the Secondary Comprehensive Literacy Plan was approved by the Edina School Board. This plan outlined the priorities and commitments for ensuring that all learners have equitable access to evidence-based instruction, building language and literacy knowledge, as well as the skills and strategies to competently engage in relevant learning opportunities that foster success. A key part of this commitment is to ensure that the staff and students have the necessary tools to accomplish this critical goal.

The process for identifying the appropriate tools for teaching English Language Arts and Reading in the middle schools began in 2021. Since then, there have been critical updates from the MN Department of Education to further inform the work. The information in the preceding paragraphs will further define these updates.

Minnesota Department of Education Overview

The Minnesota Department of Education has released two critical updates to English Language Arts programming in the past few years:

- **2020 MN State ELA Standards**

The Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards are the statewide expectations for student learning in K-12 public schools. School districts are required to put state standards into place so all students have access to high-quality content and instruction. The 2020 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts were adopted in 2023 and are scheduled for full implementation in the 2025-26 school year.

- **MN READ ACT Background Information:**

Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as the READ Act, was passed and signed into law by Governor Tim Walz on May 24, 2023. The goal of this legislation is to have every Minnesota child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals.

A district or charter school must use evidence-based curriculum and intervention materials at each grade level that are designed to ensure student mastery of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Starting July 1, 2023, when a district or charter school purchases a new literacy curriculum, or literacy intervention or supplementary materials, the curriculum or materials must be evidence-based as defined in Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 120B.1118.

Standards, Curriculum, and Instructional Outlines

All students deserve equitable access to rigorous core content through the use of the Minnesota State Standards, comprehensive and viable curriculum, and evidence based literacy instruction. Literacy is a priority for all educators at every level, shown by committing to:

- **Standards and Curriculum** - Rigorous core content begins with standards as common expectations to guide instruction, assessment, and outcomes. The Minnesota Reading and ELA Standards outline clear goals for reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and

exchanging ideas. Curriculum review is an ongoing process to ensure high quality, research and evidence based resources that

- support effective instruction, alignment, and application of the standards;
- provide strategies for differentiated instruction based on students' needs;
- are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive; and
- build background knowledge and understanding of key learning concepts.

Curriculum Review Process

In Edina, a core belief we share is “Professional Excellence.” This means that, *“We believe our educators and staff are essential to student success. We value and support them in advancing strategic and innovative initiatives grounded in best practices.”* One way we live out this value is by including stakeholders in the review, design and implementation of district programming. This will be done through the use of “district design teams.” A design team is a group of representatives who serve to guide and inform district decisions.

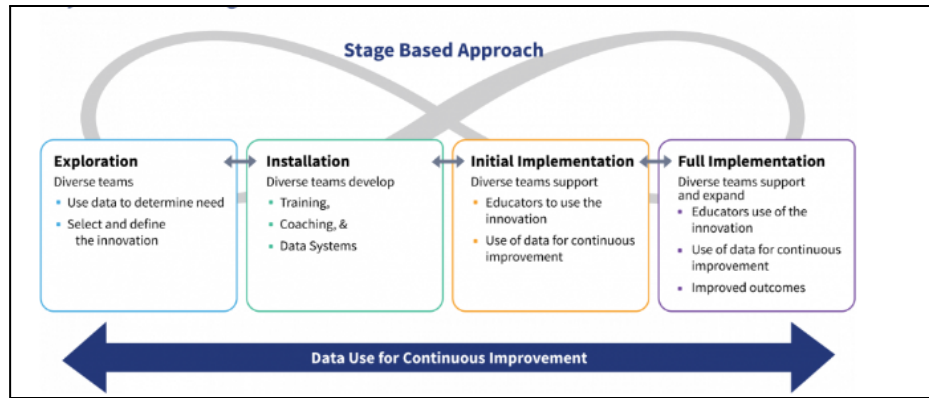
The following staff members have been integral in the review and recommendation that resulted from the curriculum review process:

Design Team Representatives	Valley View Middle School	South View Middle School
6th	Emily Olsen	
7th	Jane Andrews	Eli Mickelson
8th	Margaret Smith	Ana Jankowski
EL	Kathryn Gimse	
Special Education		Erin Deakyne
Media Specialist		Bob Diehl

The Design Team has used a proven process following Implementation Science to build upon current best practices in Edina and to consider opportunities for improvement. The team drafted a plan that recommends program updates and instructional/course enhancements as they align to the new standards, the MN READ Act and the Secondary Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Timeline, Goals and Milestones

The Comprehensive Literacy Plan is being implemented through a Stage Based Approach as it is defined by Implementation Science. In the stage approach, there are 4 main stages that outline the journey to the goal of full implementation. There is not a defined amount of time spent in each stage. The goal is to complete the steps in each stage. The progress of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan is outlined below:



	Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define current reality • Unpack standards • Research best practices • Select and define the practice/program 	Installation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program/practice has been identified and defined • Professional Development and coaching are used to prepare for the implementation • Resources are purchased • Data systems are prepared 	Initial Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators begin using the program/practice • Data is collected around both implementation and student outcomes • Adjustments and alignments 	Full Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 50% of educators are using the program/practice as intended • Student outcome data is showing improved outcomes
6-12	X 2023-2024 <i>ELA General Education Curriculum</i> <i>Reading Intervention Curriculum</i>		X 2023-2024 <i>FASTBridge Screening</i> <i>FASTBridge Interventions</i> <i>FASTBridge Progress Monitoring</i>	

Curriculum Review Team Goals:

- 2021-2022:
 - Unpack class/course structure and content, review current and enduring research and analyze data to get a full picture of the current reality.
- June 2022:
 - Unpack new ELA standards
- 2022-2023:
 - Review materials/instructional enhancements for recommendation. If possible, the recommendation will be submitted in time for 2023-2024 course catalog approval. **(This was adjusted to 2024-2025)**
- 2023-2024: early installation of changes **(This was adjusted to 2024-2025)**

Curriculum Review Process:

The team used an internal process to combine district priorities with current and enduring research to create a rubric to use for reviewing programs. The research topics were:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Culturally Proficient School Systems
- The Science of Reading at the Secondary Level
- Evidence-based Best Practices in Secondary Literacy
- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Through an affinity process, the team generated priorities for programming:

Alignment	Curriculum is aligned with standards--horizontally and vertically. Common summatives and teacher consistency are important.
Authenticity	Reading and writing tasks are meaningful and relevant to students because they grow abiding skills and address enduring human questions.
Relevant Reading	Students are developing as readers and broadening their reading horizons. Access to a wide variety of diverse texts. Students have access to both informational and fictional works.
Language Fundamentals	There is clear alignment in BOTH vocabulary and grammar instruction across grade levels.
Relevant Writing	Students are provided choices in authentic writing tasks that meet them where they are. They learn to use a writing process to hone their skills each time they engage in a writing task. There is common language used across grade levels to identify components of the writing process.
Equitable Responsiveness	Materials should include enrichment and support pathways that are built-in and accessible for each and every student. Materials offer formative feedback tools for timely intervention and enrichment. Materials reflect all groups of school demographics and the wider community--mirror and window.
Workload balance	All work is able to be completed during the school day/contracted time. This includes PD, planning, preparation, collaboration, delivery of lessons, assessment, reflection, and feedback to students.

After a thorough review of 5 programs using the rubric, the team recommended a deeper review of StudySync. The deeper review included:

- a dialogue with teachers using the program in a neighboring district,
- a visit to a district using the program to see it in use,
- and a 4-8 week pilot of the program this winter.

Summary of Results:

A survey was used to measure the program after the pilot. The items on the survey aligned to the rubric:

- ❖ Please rate your experience with StudySync overall: 100% favorable
- ❖ How would you rate the ease of use of materials for teachers? 87.5% favorable
- ❖ How would you rate the ease of use for students? 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the level of alignment StudySync provides: 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the Authenticity of Study Sync: 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the relevant reading provided in Study Sync: 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the options for language fundamentals instruction: 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the relevant writing experiences provided in Study Sync: 100% favorable
- ❖ Rate the equitable responsiveness provided in Studysync: 86% favorable

Recommendation:

The team unanimously recommended the adoption and implementation of StudySync as the Tier 1 curriculum for 6-8 ELA courses. The program will be used in 6th Grade Reading, Enriched and Standard ELA courses. The implementation plan will be further designed with the team on May 14th.

The implementation of StudySync will occur in 2024-2025 with a rigorous professional development and coaching plan to serve as the foundation of the implementation.

Budget:

The purchase of StudySync 5 year subscription will cost a total of \$285,899.78. The direct quote from McGraw Hill is included in the attachments listed on the cover page. In working with McGraw Hill and the Edina Public Schools business office, we will be dividing the payment into two payments. The first payment of \$142,949.89 will be paid in May of 2024 and the remaining balance of \$142,949.89 will be paid in May of 2025. The Teaching and Learning allocated budget was created to account for ELA purchases across our entire PreK-12 system over the next three years. No additional money is or will be needed for this purchase.