



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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

FROM: Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer
Dr. Helen Wei, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

RE: **K-5 Word Study Committee Update**

DATE: September 12, 2017

Type of Report: Informational

Purpose of the Report: The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Education with an update on the work of the K-5 Word Study Committee.

Introduction

The District 97 vision is to **create a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child.** The work of the K-5 Word Study Committee addresses our district goals of every student being a:

- Known, nurtured, and celebrated LEARNER
- Empowered and passionate SCHOLAR
- Confident and persistent ACHIEVER
- Creative CRITICAL THINKER & GLOBAL CITIZEN

Word Study is explicit and systematic learning on a continuum of foundational literacy skills (including early literacy skills, phonological awareness, phonics, high frequency words, and vocabulary), so that all students will become efficient word solvers, readers, and writers. In order for students to develop a balanced and efficient reading process, they must be able to *read the print* as well as *make meaning* from the print. (Burkins and Yaris, *Who's Doing the Work? How to Say Less So Readers Can Do More*, 2016). Word Study is explicit instruction on how to read the print and apply these skills and strategies within the context of authentic texts to help them make meaning.

Lucy Calkins recommends to teachers that “you balance your instruction so that some of the work with words occurs in isolation and much of it occurs within the context of reading and writing.” (Calkins, *A Guide to the Reading Workshop, Primary Grades*, 2015, p. 122). She goes on to write, “While there are opportunities in reading workshop to provide explicit instruction on letters and words, the units of study are written with the assumption that children will have word study instruction and practice during a twenty-minute-a-day word study time, which is separate from reading workshop time” (p. 124). In order to teach students word study skills outside of reading workshop, we need to provide teachers with common materials that are consistent across the district.

K-5 Word Study Committee Accomplishments

The K-5 Word Study Committee began meeting last spring with the purpose of reviewing word study materials for grades K-5, in order to make recommendations to the district office and the Board of Education on the adoption of word study materials. Along with the adoption of *Writing Units of Study (WUOS)* and *Reading Units of Study (RUOS)*, providing teachers with Word Study materials is an important part of building our balanced literacy program for all elementary students and teachers.

All eight elementary schools are represented on the committee, which is composed of:

- 2 Special Education Teachers
- 3 Kindergarten Teachers
- 2 First Grade Teachers
- 2 Second Grade Teachers
- 1 Third Grade Teacher
- 1 Fourth Grade Teacher

- 2 Fifth Grade Teachers
- 3 Instructional Coaches
- 2 Language Arts Specialists

This past spring and summer, the K-5 Word Study Committee met and accomplished the following:

1. Defined Word Study and created the Word Study Continuum (see Appendix A)
2. Developed a Word Study Pilot and Adoption Timeline (see Appendix B)
3. Developed and shared K-5 Word Study expectations for the district
4. Created a Word Study Curricular Review Tool with criteria for the curricular review (see Appendix C)
5. Reviewed six word study resources:
 - Words Their Way
 - Fountas & Pinnell Phonics and Word Study Lessons
 - Foundations (Wilson Reading)
 - Mondo Bookshop Phonics
 - SPELL-Links
 - Wordly Wise
6. Selected three resources to pilot during the 2017-2018 school year:
 - Words Their Way
 - Mondo Bookshop Phonics
 - Foundations (Wilson Reading)

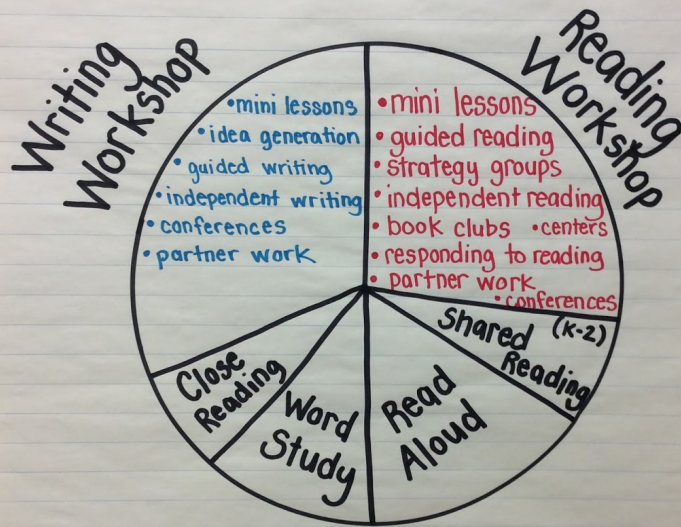
The K-5 Word Study Committee members are piloting at least one of these three selected resources for at least 4-6 weeks in their classrooms and with their students. In order to prepare for the pilots, we offered professional learning opportunities on these resources for the teachers piloting, prior to the school year in August.

The K-5 Word Study Committee will meet in November to check in on the progress of their pilots, and then again in January to make selections and recommendations to the Board of Education. The committee will also develop a proposed professional learning plan and timeline around the roll-out of our word study resources.

Conclusion

Word Study is an important component of a balanced literacy framework, helping District 97 students to become confident, efficient, and able readers, by teaching them skills and strategies that can be applied across contexts and genres of text. The K-5 Word Study Committee is dedicated to supporting our district's students and teachers in continuing to build our balanced literacy program so that our students are not only able to read and make meaning of what they read, but are also empowered to use reading and writing in purposeful, joyful, and meaningful ways.

Balanced Literacy



Appendix A



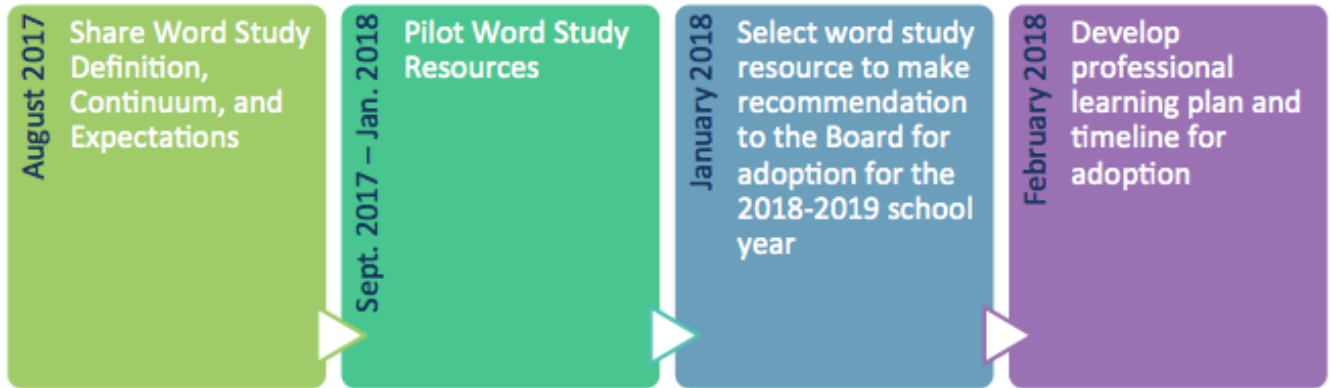
D97 Word Study Continuum

Word Study is explicit and systematic learning on a continuum of foundational literacy skills so that all students will become efficient word solvers, readers, and writers.

Early literacy concepts	Phonological awareness (word parts)	Phonics	High-frequency words
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directionality (reading left to right, top to bottom, front) • Parts of a book (Front,back spine) • Voice-to-print matching (one-to-one word correspondence) • Paying attention to spaces between words • Words have meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic awareness (individual sounds) • Oral Blending • Oral Segmenting • Rhyming • Onset-rime • Syllables • Compound Words • Deletion and substitution of sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alphabetic Principle • Letter-sound Relationships (phoneme-grapheme correspondence) • Spelling Patterns • Word Structure • Syllable division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most-commonly used words • Number of words and complexity increases by grade level • High-frequency Word Lists from Teachers College • "Snap words" in relation to Reading Units of Study
Vocabulary development that builds linguistic and conceptual knowledge			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept words focused on vocabulary (e.g. week, month, year, color names, numbers) • Compound words • Word families • Acronyms • Palindromes • Greek and Latin roots • Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) • Homophones and homographs • Synonyms and antonyms 			

Appendix B

K-5 Word Study Committee Adoption Timeline



Appendix C



D97 Word Study Review Tool

Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet/ Insufficient Evidence
Connects with WUOS/RUOS; natural flow		
Aligns with our definition of word study and our components		
Provides opportunities for differentiation to meet each student's needs		
Offers explicit support and teaching moves; teacher-friendly		
Provides reteaching opportunities		
Is time-efficient		
Provides research-based strategies		
Supports ELL and Spanish Immersion students		
Address grade-level CCSS foundational skills (concepts of print, letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, word awareness, vocabulary development, syntax, and reading fluency) in a transparent progression in each grade level		
Includes a variety of student reading materials and activities that allows systematic, regular, and frequent practice of foundational skills		
Provides clear, well-structured diagnostic assessment protocols and materials for all foundational skills to guide instruction and intervention		
Guide students to read with purpose and understanding and to make frequent connections between acquisition of foundational skills and making meaning from reading		
Provides opportunities for students to engage in a range and volume of reading to achieve reading fluency of grade-level text as required by the Foundational Skills Standards		