



TO: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer *R. Desmond*
DATE: December 23, 2022
RE: *Mathematic and Literacy Interventions*

The following report is in response to the motion:

[By Jacqueline Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a report on what each elementary school offers students re: programming, interventions, and supports to address learning loss in literacy and math due to the pandemic.

In order to address the literacy learning needs of elementary students, Lowell Public School's (LPS) Office of Teaching and Learning has taken several steps since the start of the pandemic in March of 2020. These include purchasing and implementing explicit and evidence-based phonics curriculum materials for students in grades K-2 (Foundations, Letterland, or TC Phonics Units of Study) for all elementary schools. Also, an influx of decodable texts was purchased for every elementary school to support students reading both decodable texts and authentic texts each day to practice the skills learned in their phonics instruction.

Additionally, phonemic awareness teaching tools and videos from Heggerty, were purchased for all students K-5. At the K-2 level, these tools serve as part of the core literacy block. However, additional intervention materials were purchased to support phonemic awareness needs of students in grades 3-5. It was noted, based on data, that this was a greater area of need for students post pandemic in grades 3-5.

Beyond the core units of study, the Office of Teaching and Learning has provided professional development on the workshop instructional model where differentiation is provided throughout the independent portion of the lesson. All Kindergarten teachers, and half of grade 1 teachers, attended professional development last year for 36 hours to better understand how to teach reading. This professional development was offered again this school year to the remaining half of grade 1 teachers and all grade 2 teachers. As a result, all teachers K-2, will be better able to meet the individual literacy needs of their students. A more in depth professional development was offered to special educators and literacy specialists as well. LETRS professional development has 2 cohorts now focused on supporting the different needs of our readers. This program provides 48 hours of in-person professional development over 2 years and 160 hours of additional online coursework.

instruction videos for interventions. In some instances, elementary students need different resources, so students also have access to Rave-O, Read Naturally, Wilson, Orton Gillingham, or structured literacy lessons in small group interventions. The use of these programs vary depending on students' data, as well as the ability of the staff to offer these specialized opportunities. Interventions are encouraged to be used as a double dose of instruction and support to accelerate student achievement. This is not in place of core instruction, these are considered tier II and III supports for students in need of additional assistance.

In mathematics, the focus continues to be on providing strong tier I instruction using Eureka Math lessons to accelerate student learning. In order to provide instruction that meets the needs all students, those lessons are structured using the workshop model similar to our literacy lessons. This structure allows time and opportunity for teachers to address individual learning needs and provide greater differentiation during mathematic instruction. Tier II supports/interventions are then provided in an additional 30 minute time period during the day. During this mathematics intervention programming, students continue to have access to iReady, Zearn, ST math, and small group targeted skills instruction. Small group targeted instruction is often supported by math tutors, paraprofessionals and teachers.

In addition, LPS's Office of Teaching and Learning provides after school and summer school programming at all elementary schools. These programs are additional supports for elementary schools have been expanded due to the pandemic to support accelerating student learning. The Lowell Public Schools also provided summer school programming to more than 4,000 students in the summer of 2022 through 40 distinct programs. The majority of summer learning programs operated from July 5-29th ; however, there were some programs that ran through August 12th.

After school and summer school programming highlights for elementary schools included:

- Strong focus on alignment of curriculum standards/common core within summer school content.
- Engaging and enriching curriculum to stem summer learning loss and post-pandemic academic recovery for at-risk students.
- Expanded use of community partners such as Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust/Drumlin Farm, Lowell Parks and Recreation, Lowell Taekwondo, SNL Sports and Green Dragons
- Manageable class sizes with all classes enrolling 15 students or fewer to allow for targeted instruction.
- Summer field trips provided weekly for students in elementary schools
- All students were provided with breakfast and lunch daily.
- Transportation to and from school was provided (for students living 1/2 mile or greater from school site).
- Partnered with the Lowell Recreation Department to provide a free extended day program (12-2:30pm) for working families that operated through August 12th.

Furthermore, for the 22-23 school year, LPS eliminated four early release days from the school calendar to extend time on learning.

** I would like to thank Melissa Newell, ELA Curriculum Coordinator, and Jeffrey Gwiazda, Math Curriculum Coordinator, and Carolyn Rocheleau, After School and Summer School Coordinator, for information provided in this report.