

MANDATED K-5 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM NOTIFICATION

In accordance with [Section 164k\(e\) of the State School Aid Act](#), Lowell Area Schools is issuing this notice regarding our K–5 literacy curriculum, *Open Court Reading*.

The Tier 1 literacy resource currently used by Lowell Area Schools at K-5, McGraw Hill's *Open Court Reading*, is not currently included on the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Recommended Literacy Materials List. Under Section 164k(e), curricula not included on this list are not designated by MDE as “evidence-based or aligned to state standards” through the recommended list process, “which could negatively impact student academic outcomes”. Michigan law and MDE guidance ([MDE Memo](#)), does **not** require districts to select a curriculum from the MDE list. The list is not exhaustive and represents one method for demonstrating alignment.

As a district, we continue to utilize *Open Court Reading* because it was selected through a rigorous, multi-year review and specifically approved for funding through the State of Michigan Section 35j Professional Development, Curriculum and Supports Grant prior to the passage of these new laws. Further, *Open Court Reading* is research based and grounded in the Science of Reading ([click here](#) for more information regarding the research behind *Open Court*). Finally, our internal data indicates that *Open Court Reading*—which focuses on explicit phonics and is based on the Science of Reading—successfully meets the needs of our learners.

The district will continue to monitor literacy instruction, student data, and guidance from the MDE as part of its regular curriculum review cycle. Any future curriculum changes will be communicated to families. Our projected timeline for any necessary transition is:

2026-2027: Review evidence related to the effectiveness of *Open Court Reading* as implemented at LAS and continue to monitor the MDE approved list.

2027-2028: Evaluation of MDE-approved Tier 1 resources.

2028-2029: Potential piloting of MDE-approved Tier 1 resources, if necessary.

2029-2030: Recommendations provided to the Board of Education.

2030-2031: Full district-wide implementation of an MDE-approved Tier 1 literacy resource.

If you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact the Office of Teaching and Learning.