

# Schools for All Children

Summer 2004

## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Roy Romer, *Superintendent*

Maria Ott, *Senior Deputy Superintendent*  
Educational Services

Donnalyn Jaque-Antón, *Associate Superintendent*  
Division of Special Education

### The Los Angeles Unified School District's Position Paper Elementary Literacy — Special Education Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that students with disabilities participate in general education curriculum, assessment, and accountability measures. This is supported by the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001) known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which requires that we improve literacy outcomes for all students.

The Los Angeles Unified School District has adopted a research-based K–5 literacy series, Open Court Reading, to address literacy instruction. It forms the basis of the elementary literacy block for all students, including those with mild to moderate disabilities.

Special education is a service students receive to support access to the core curriculum and to promote integration with age appropriate peers. It does not constitute a specific setting or instructional environment. In a tiered approach, IEP teams would consider the level and type of support a student needs, where that support can be provided, and determine the amount of instruction needed outside of the general education classroom. A student could have a need for special education services for the majority of the day (typically a student who receives special education services through a special day class) yet receive those services in a variety of ways within the general and special education classroom. This student continues to be considered a student in the special day class program.

#### **PURPOSE**

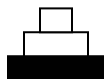
The purpose of this position paper is to clarify the position of the District in regard to the participation of students with mild to moderate disabilities in the District's literacy program.

#### **POSITION**

The District advocates a three-tiered approach to literacy instruction and intervention for students with mild to moderate disabilities that is aligned and linked to the California English/Language Arts grade/age level standards. A three-tiered approach allows instruction based on the age/grade level standards with the provision of increasing levels of intervention based on identified individual student need.

This approach to literacy instruction mirrors the District's position on early prevention and intervention. The District requires multiple levels of intervention for students prior to considering a student eligible under the category of specific learning disabled. This tiered approach allows for early intensive targeted intervention to provide academic support before a student begins to fail. If students do not respond to intensive intervention and are found eligible for special education services, the tiered approach to literacy provides for a blend of maximum interaction with grade level peers and provision of intensive instruction in the identified areas of need.

### **THREE-TIERED APPROACH TO INSTRUCTION**



#### **TIER 1: PRIMARY LEVEL INSTRUCTION**

##### *Instruction*

Tier 1 instruction consists of grade-level core literacy and ESL materials, *Open Court Reading*, and *Into English*. It takes place within the general education classroom. Students with disabilities actively participate in the grade-level program appropriate for their age. Scaffolds in instruction and accommodations as developed on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) are provided to support student learning. Scaffolds might include, but are not limited to:

- choral reading
- peer reading
- read aloud
- shared reading
- controlled task difficulty
- using visuals to illustrate vocabulary
- differentiated ESL instruction

Accommodations might include, but are not limited to:

- use of visual organizers
- books on tape
- reduced reading load

##### *Intervention*

Intervention at this level consists of the use of supplemental materials aligned with the core program. It takes place within the general education classroom during Independent Work Time (IWT) and ELD instruction. In the Open Court Reading series this might include of the use of:

- intervention Guides;
- preteach/Reteach;
- ESL supplements; or
- decodable books, etc.



## **TIER 2: SECOND LEVEL INSTRUCTION**

### *Instruction*

Tier 2 instruction consists of instruction in grade-level literacy and ELD materials, Open Court Reading and Into English. Support from supplemental materials targeted to the identified area of need is also provided. Progress monitoring is increased to consistently gauge student learning. Accommodations or modifications as developed in a student's IEP, may be needed to provide meaningful participation in the core curriculum.

Accommodations might include, but are not limited to:

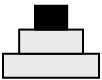
- use of visual organizers
- books on tape
- reduced reading load

### *Intervention*

Intervention at this level consists of the use of supplemental materials targeted to address the specific areas of weakness identified through ongoing progress monitoring. This level of intervention is intensive and explicit, and is provided above and beyond the reading block. Intervention is based on the identification of specific needs and the use of research-based intervention materials designed to address the identified needs of the student. It primarily takes place in the general education classroom but may be supported within a special education setting such as a learning center.

For example, a student may be identified as needing remediation in fluency. A baseline measurement would be taken, a targeted intervention would be provided, and ongoing progress monitoring would be used to determine growth. When the student meets the identified benchmark the intervention is completed. The student may move fluidly back to Tier 1 or a new intervention may be implemented.

Attachment B contains samples of targeted supplemental research-based interventions.



## **TIER 3: THIRD LEVEL INSTRUCTION**

### *Instruction*

Tier 3 instruction continues to focus on age/grade-level standards, but may use an alternate reading program and is based on the research-based instructional strategies unique to special education. Instruction is provided at the highest level of intensity, frequency, and duration, and is provided in an environment with a lower teacher-student ratio (learning center). Strategies used may include the use of:

- frequent progress monitoring of student learning;
- direct and explicit instruction;
- small group instruction;
- controlled task difficulty;
- intensive strategy instruction and application;
- explicit instruction in the building blocks of reading;

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Division of Special Education

- extended instructional time in literacy instruction; or
- ongoing systematic and corrective feedback.

The programs used for instruction may differ from the Open Court Reading Series. Comprehensive programs such as REACH by SRA, Breaking the Code or LANGUAGE! may be better suited for this group of students.

### *Intervention*

Intervention at this level is highly intensive, occurs in a smallest group setting, and is tied to the specific areas of need as identified by progress monitoring and individual assessments. It occurs to support, not replace the core curriculum. The intervention program/s used is intensive, explicit and systematic, and is designed to remediate specific areas of weakness in literacy.

Strong first instruction might be supported through the use of supplemental programs including but not limited to:

- Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS)
- Phonics for Reading
- Earobics
- Phonemic Awareness in Young Children

Attachment B contains samples of targeted supplemental research-based interventions.

### References

California Education Code 56030.5

Artiles, A. & Ortiz, A. (2002) *English language learners with special education needs: Identification, assessment, and instruction*. Center for Applied Linguistics, IL.

Deno, S. (2003). Developments in curriculum-based measurement. *The Journal of Special Education*, v. 37, no. 3, p. 184-192

Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., & Chard, D. (2000). The underlying message in LD intervention research: Findings from research syntheses. *Exceptional Children*, v. 67, no. 1.

Vaughn, S. & Linan-Thompson, S. (2003). What is special about special education for students with learning disabilities? *The Journal of Special Education* v. 37 no, 3, p. 140-147.

## **Tiered Approach to Special Education Literacy Instruction and Intervention for Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities**

### **Third Level Intervention**

- Intensive instruction targeted to specific student need
- Progress monitoring and adjustment of materials and instruction
- Smallest group setting

### **Second Level Intervention**

- Built on the foundation of the core program
- Provides intensive and explicit instruction
- Provided in smaller groups

### **Primary Level Intervention**

- Tied to the grade level curriculum
- Uses effective instructional practices
- Occurs within the literacy instructional block

#### Foundation

- Ongoing student progress monitoring and program evaluation are required components of the tiered approach to special education services.
- Instruction at each tier is more intense and explicit.
- Instructional group size is reduced as the need for intensity increases.
- Tiers are fluid. Students move back and forth based on progress monitoring and mastery of benchmarks.

**Evidence Based Reading Supplements (Second and Third Level Intervention)**

Program	Description	Focus	Age/grade	Publisher Information	Comments
Phonemic Awareness in Young Children	Concrete activities that stimulate the development of phonemic awareness	Phonemic Awareness	Pre K – 1st	Brookes Publishing (800) 638-3775	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short lessons designed to actively involve the learner</li> <li>• 26 week program</li> <li>• Developmental</li> </ul>
Rode to the Code	Eleven-week program for teaching phonemic awareness and letter sound correspondence.	Phonemic Awareness	K-1	Brookes Publishing (800) 638-3775	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44 15 to 20 minute scripted lessons.</li> <li>• Individual or small group</li> </ul>
Ladders to Literacy	Develops phonological awareness and early literacy skills through activities that can be incorporated into core programs	Phonemic Awareness	K or 1 <sup>st</sup> at risk	Brookes Publishing (800) 638-3775	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed for intervention</li> <li>• 10 to 20 min per day 4 – 5 days per week</li> </ul>
Phonological Awareness Training for Reading	Designed to increase the level of phonological awareness in young children.	Phonemic Awareness	K - 2	Pro Ed (800) 897-3202	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed for use with small groups</li> <li>• 20 – 25 min sessions</li> <li>• Uses direct instruction and games to teach</li> </ul>
Waterford Early Reading Program	Complete reading program from phonological awareness to phonics, vocabulary development and comprehension.	Phonemic Awareness Phonics Vocabulary development Comprehension	K-2	Scott Foresman Pearson Education (888) 977-7900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer based program</li> <li>• Expensive, yet on many sites already</li> </ul>
Soundabet	Uses songs, stories, and games to teach early reading skills.	Phonemic Awareness	K – 2	Soundabet <a href="mailto:dangurney@yahoo.com">dangurney@yahoo.com</a> (707) 824-1874	
Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS)	Systematic decodable text Program develops word recognition strategies.	Phonemic awareness Phonics Sight word	K-3	Scholastic (510) 533-0213	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also good for second language learners</li> </ul>
Explode the Code	Sequenced program provides experiences recognizing and combining sounds in order to read words.	Phonics	K – 4	Educational Publishing Service (800) 225-5750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short lessons designed to support core instruction.</li> <li>• Can be used during independent work time</li> </ul>

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Division of Special Education

Attachment B

Program	Description	Focus	Age/grade	Publisher Information	Comments
Read Naturally	A fluency building program that combines teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring to improve students oral reading fluency.	Fluency	2-5	<a href="mailto:READNAT@aol.com">READNAT@aol.com</a> (800) 788-4085	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for core programs</li> </ul>
Read Well		Phonics Letter sound Word patterns Vocabulary development	1 <sup>st</sup> and remedial 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sopris West (800) 547-6747	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38 units</li> <li>Small group or individual</li> </ul>
Earobics	Features six interactive games, each with as many as 114 levels of play that systematically teach phonological awareness, auditory processing and phonics.	Phonemic awareness auditory processing, phonics skills	K - 8	<a href="http://www.cogcon.com">www.cogcon.com</a> (888) 328-8199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplements current reading programs</li> <li>Computer based program</li> </ul>
Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing	Develops phonological awareness by helping children discover the articulatory positions and mouth movements associated with the different phonemes.	Phonemic awareness, sound blending	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Older if needed	Pro Ed (800) 897-3202	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training required</li> <li>Used with small sets of students who demonstrate unresponsiveness to primary and secondary levels of prevention</li> </ul>
Phonics for Reading	Systematic program for supporting instruction in phonics. Scripted lessons in methodology of Anita Archer	Phonics	1 <sup>st</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Curriculum Associates (800) 225-0248	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decoding program only</li> <li>Actively engages students in learning</li> <li>Teacher directed</li> </ul>
Sounds Abound	32 15 minute lessons that correlate with core series. Focus on consonant and vowel sounds	Phonics	Primary	LinguiSystem (800) 776-4332	
Benchmark Word Identification Program	Designed to help students become aware of patterns and consistencies in written language and apply a decoding process	Phonics Decoding	K – 12	Benchmark School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplemental program</li> <li>Small groups 15 to 60 min per day depending on age</li> <li>Multisensory approach</li> <li>Various programs for different ages.</li> </ul>

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Division of Special Education

Program	Description	Focus	Age/grade	Publisher Information	Comments
REWARDS	A twenty lesson scripted program that teaches a flexible strategy for decoding multisyllabic words	Decoding Fluency	4 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	Sopris West (800) 547-6747	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed for older struggling readers</li> </ul>
Sounds and Letters	Designed for older students with delays in phonemic awareness.	Phonemic Awareness Phonics	Upper grades	Sopris West (800) 547-6747	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A component to the LANGUAGE! Program.</li> <li>• Can be used as a stand-alone program</li> <li>• 18 unit series</li> </ul>
Visualizing and Verbalizing	Concept imagery program	Comprehension	K – 8	Gander Educational (800) 541-5523	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training needed to utilize program</li> </ul>
Seeing Stars	Symbol imagery program	Word recognition Symbol imagery Sight words	1-12	Gander Educational (800) 541-5523	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training needed to utilize program</li> </ul>
Soar to Success	Intervention program that teaches reciprocal teaching and use of graphic organizers to increase comprehension	Comprehension Vocabulary development	3 – 8	Houghton Mifflin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups (5-7)</li> <li>• Can be used with second language learners</li> </ul>

