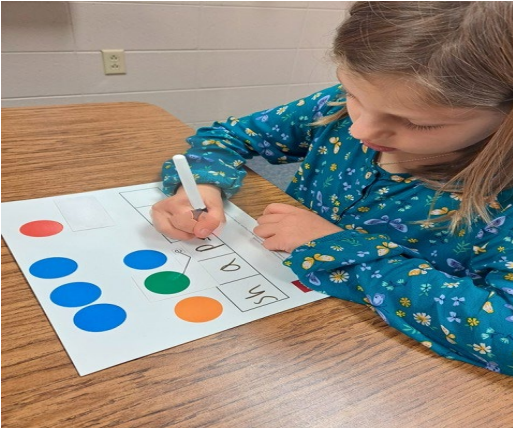


SCHOOL DISTRICT OF STURGEON BAY

ANCHORED IN EXCELLENCE

How We Teach Reading



The core purpose of the School District of Sturgeon Bay is to partner with families and the community to provide educational opportunities for the development of informed, knowledgeable citizens and successful life-long learners. Ensuring every student can read is an essential part of achieving our core purpose.

Sturgeon Bay Staff members are knowledgeable about the Science of Reading. What research says about how children learn to read, how to make sure every student learns to read, and what to do when a child encounters difficulty in learning to read has been the focus of professional development at the elementary levels over the last two years with disciplinary literacy becoming a focus at the secondary level.

When We Know Better, We Do Better!

Decades of research have concluded that reading doesn't occur naturally for children like the acquisition of language. Reading must be systematically taught through a process of linking sounds of speech to written symbols or letters. Guessing at words based on context clues does not aid in learning to read, but decoding words based on the letters and their sounds does.

Nationally, the reading scores of children have remained stagnant for over 40 years! Each year, national reading data shows that only about 35% of 4th graders are proficient readers.

The Way Forward...

Sturgeon Bay Schools are engaged in a professional development, curriculum, and assessment plan that is designed to transform the teaching of reading in all classrooms:

- **Professional Development** - All Sawyer and Sunrise teachers are gaining teacher knowledge through long-term professional learning that started in the fall of 2021.
- **Curriculum** - During the spring of 2022, the district adopted a core phonics curriculum aligned to the science of reading and has implemented the program in all prek-5 classrooms. The following year we adopted core literacy curriculum materials that are aligned to the science of reading for all K-5 classrooms and implemented in the fall of the 2023-2024 school year.
- **Assessment** - As a district we are developing a robust assessment system. The system includes appropriate screeners, diagnostic assessments, and processes that ensure teachers and students have access to the most efficient and effective data. This data is used to measure student progress and growth and to guide our reading instruction.

The Science of Reading

“The body of work referred to as “the science of reading” is not an ideology, a philosophy, a political agenda, a one-size-fits-all approach, a program of instruction, or a specific component of instruction. It is the emerging consensus from many related disciplines, based on literally thousands of studies, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, conducted across the world in many languages. These studies have revealed a great deal about how we learn to read, what goes wrong when students don't learn, and what kind of instruction is most likely to work the best for the most students.”

-Dr. Louisa Moats

To read more about the Science of Reading and why SBSD is retooling our reading instruction, [CLICK](#) on the article by Emily Hanford or listen to the podcast : [CLICK- Sold a Story](#).

How Can Parents Help Their Child Read?

[CLICK THE LINK](#) to learn about ways to support your children in learning to read.

SBSD Is Moving Toward...

If your family has been a part of Sturgeon Bay Schools for some time, you will likely notice changes in how we teach reading. Listed below are some points of research and important topics to clarify as we strive to ensure high levels of literacy for all students. [CLICK HERE](#) to read more about how our instruction is centered on the Science of Reading.

Comprehensive Core Literacy Instruction PK-5: Grades PK-2 will focus heavily on acquiring the foundational skills to crack the code of the alphabet and the associated speech sounds while simultaneously building rich background knowledge, vocabulary, and overall language skills to ensure comprehension. The same is true for grades 3-5 where the foundational skills will be built upon through further instruction that focuses on higher-level thinking skills. The adoption of a consistent core resource will ensure all students receive high quality reading instruction that is grounded in the science of reading.

Assessments: We have implemented a robust assessment system that includes beginning, middle, and end of year assessments that are designed to help us determine which students are struggling as early as possible. The system includes a universal screener for all students. We use screening data to determine which students should be diagnostically assessed. Diagnostic assessment is used to determine which foundational reading skills students are lacking so that we can systematically target those skills. Specifically, these skills are phonemic awareness (the ability to manipulate sounds), phonics (sound-symbol correspondence), and fluency (the ability to read with appropriate rate, phrasing, and prosody/intonation).

We no longer assign reading levels to students (such as A, M, or R) as in the past as these assessments do not meet the standards of alignment to science. Students will be assessed on early literacy indicators that predict later reading success. We are now using the Phonics Survey for Intervention, PELI, and Acadience; all of which measure specific foundational reading skills and allow teachers to target instruction that is specific to students' needs.

Early Intervention: If children struggle to acquire foundational reading skills, we immediately implement systematic interventions and monitor student progress. The best solution to the problem of reading failure is solid, comprehensive core instruction and early identification and intervention. Most reading difficulties can be overcome when identified through early screenings and addressed through systematic, explicit, cumulative instruction.

