

Policy 6142.91: Reading/Language Arts Instruction

The Governing Board recognizes that reading and other language arts constitute the basic foundation for learning in other areas of study. The Governing Board desires to offer a comprehensive, balanced reading/language arts program that ensures all students have the skills necessary to read fluently and for meaning, and develops students' appreciation for literature. The program shall integrate reading, and oral and written language arts activities in order to build effective communication skills, including listening, speaking, and composition.

For each grade level, the Governing Board shall adopt instructional materials that meet or exceed the Common Core State Standards in the following strands:

1. Reading: Foundational skills, text complexity and analysis, and the growth of comprehension
2. Writing: Text types, responding to reading, production and distribution of writings, and research
3. Speaking and listening: Oral language development, comprehension, flexible communication, and collaboration
4. Language: Conventions, effective use, knowledge of language, and vocabulary

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district's program offers sufficient access to standards-aligned textbooks and other instructional materials. The program shall provide instructional materials of varying levels of difficulty, including fiction and nonfiction works, so that students are continually reading at an appropriate level. In addition, technology should be available to support all areas of literacy.

Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties

The Governing Board shall adopt, at a public meeting, one or more screening instruments to assess students in grades kindergarten-2 for risk of reading difficulties. The screening instrument(s) adopted by the Governing Board shall provide assessments for both English-speaking and non-English speaking students, in languages reflecting the primary languages of students in the district, to the extent assessments in those languages are available. (Education Code 53008)

The district shall annually assess each student in grades kindergarten-2 for risk of reading difficulties. In determining when during the school year to screen students, the district shall

consider whether students have received sufficient instruction in foundational reading skills to support a valid assessment. The district may provide additional student screenings or diagnostic evaluations, as appropriate. (Education Code 53008)

If a student enrolls for the first time in grades kindergarten-2 after the screening instrument(s) has been administered, the district shall assess the student within 45 calendar days of enrollment, unless either: (Education Code 53008)

1. The student's parent/guardian opts out of the screening in writing
2. The student's parent/guardian provides documentation or the district has documentation that the student has had a similar screening in their prior school for their current grade and the parent/guardian was made aware of the results

Students who do not speak sufficient English to be screened with an English-language instrument shall be screened in their primary language if a screening instrument in their primary language is available. If a screening instrument is not available in at least one language in which a student is proficient, the student shall be screened in accordance with Education Code 53008.

When a student acquires sufficient English language knowledge and fluency to be able to be assessed using the district's screening instrument, or if a screening instrument in their primary language becomes available, the district shall assess that student using the appropriate screening instrument. (Education Code 53008)

A student may be exempted from the screening for risk of reading difficulties if the parent/guardian provides prior written consent and the student meets any of the following criteria: (Education Code 53008)

1. Has a current identification or diagnosis of a reading difficulty, reading disorder, or other disability
2. Is eligible for special education and related services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or a plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
3. Is in the process of being assessed for eligibility for special education and related services pursuant to IDEA or a plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the student is being evaluated with diagnostic assessments that make screening for risk of reading difficulties redundant

The district shall, no later than 15 calendar days before administration of the screening instrument(s), provide parents/guardians of students eligible for screening for risk of reading difficulties with information about the screening, including the date(s) of the screening and instructions for how parents/guardians can opt out of their child's screening. (Education Code 53008)

Staffing and Professional Development

Teachers are expected to use a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate the needs of beginning readers and the varying abilities of more advanced readers. The program shall provide ongoing diagnosis of students' skills and, as needed, may provide supplementary instruction during the school day and/or outside the regular school session to assist students who are experiencing difficulty learning to read.

The Superintendent or designee shall make available professional development opportunities that are designed to provide instructional staff with knowledge about how students develop language skills, the ability to analyze students' literacy levels, and mastery of a variety of instructional strategies and materials.

Employees administering screening instruments for risk of reading difficulties shall be appropriately trained to administer the instrument. (Education Code 53008)

Program Evaluation

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Governing Board with data from state and district reading assessments and program evaluations at least annually to enable the Governing Board to monitor program effectiveness.