
Massachusetts District Literacy Action Plan

Pittsfield Public Schools

Pittsfield, MA

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Executive Summary

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Section 1: Connection Between the District Literacy Action Plan and Other District Improvement Plans

Pittsfield Public Schools' District Improvement Plan has five domains. The first domain of the plan is literacy. The specific goals of the plan include systemic use of data, standards-based curriculum and a district-wide tiered system of literacy instruction and interventions. These goals are linked to the literacy plan goals and action steps. The specific activities of the district literacy plan are also linked to the district improvement plan. Both plans include the development of universal screening and benchmarks, a tiered instructional model and professional development to support each level of literacy development.

Section 2: Why a District Literacy Plan is Needed in Our District

1. Meeting the district promise of 100% of the students showing measurable academic growth each year.
2. Consistently achieving Adequate Yearly Progress as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.
3. Prepare students for college and beyond, creating responsible citizens through literacy.
4. Having the plan demonstrates the importance of literacy in the City of Pittsfield.
 - a. District needs a uniform approach to literacy instruction for all students.
 - b. Measure of achievement. Need plan to know where the district is going, roadmap.
 - c. Having a plan allows a common language around literacy.
5. Literacy is the key to unlocking knowledge across all domains and all grade levels.

Section 3: Literacy Vision Statement

Pittsfield Public Schools Vision of Literacy for Learning

Pittsfield Public Schools ensures that all administrators and staff implement proactive, preventive measures to guarantee that all students achieve proficiency in reading and writing to promote academic success. Administration will continue to secure ongoing financial and procedural supports for the full implementation of the district literacy plan. Teachers demonstrate through instructional practices that every student can learn. Teachers and educational support staff integrate literacy instruction and data driven interventions across the curriculum.

Section 4: District Literacy Improvement Goals

Overall Goal: The goal is that 100% of the students will show individual growth toward established district benchmarks in reading and writing skills. By spring 2012, 80% of students will be proficient in reading as measured by grade 3 and grade 10 MCAS. In addition, 80% of students in grade 7 will average a 2 or above in ELA open-response on MCAS.

Every district and school administrator as well as every staff member will embrace and implement the District Literacy Plan.

Section 5: Action Plan Maps

In this section of the Plan you will see each literacy goal statement followed by a goal action map. Each map describes how implementation of the Plan will take place for each specific literacy goal that the Plan is designed to address in the next year.

Goal Action Map

Goal 1
Statement

Establish universal screening, formative assessment, and benchmark frameworks for all grades.

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3	Action Step 4
→ Action Step	District Literacy Team will develop written literacy assessment procedures that outline the systematic use of reading and writing assessments pre K-12. The procedures will include a list of district-approved assessments for screening, diagnosing, progress monitoring as well as locally developed district assessments	District and schools will implement the literacy assessment plan referred to in action step one.	Through written procedure the district will expect staff will use data to drive decision-making regarding student instruction, intervention and placement. In addition, it is expected that staff will use data analysis for reflection on instructional practice.	In order to meet individual student literacy needs, all pre-K to 5 staff, all level reading specialists and special educators will use diagnostic testing to identify the sub-skill(s) deficit correlated to students meeting grade level benchmarks, proportional increases indirect instructional time, teaching to the sub-skill deficit and re-assessing to be sure that the students are actually making appropriate gains.
1. Timeline	Procedures and list of assessments to be presented by the 10/2010 curriculum subcommittee meeting of the school committee.	Ongoing through the 2010-2011 school year for elementary and expanded for all levels in 2011-2012.	By spring 2012	School year 2010-2011
2. Lead Person(s)	District Literacy Team and Deputy Superintendent	Reading Coordinator, Deputy Superintendent and Literacy Team as well as leadership teams in buildings lead by principals and literacy coaches.	Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent	Reading Coordinator, principals, coaches
3. Resources Needed	Time for District Literacy Team to meet and prepare list and procedures. Resources to purchase assessments for all schools.	Cost of assessment materials.	Format and procedures for timely collection, analysis and dissemination of data	Assessments and Intervention materials to be determined

4. Specifics of Implementation	District Literacy Team will identify appropriate domains to be measured. Literacy coaches and the district reading coordinator will provide this professional development during the 2010-2011 school year.	Professional development will be provided annually to support the implementation with integrity. Principals will allocate time for collaborative professional development activities that support implementation with fidelity.	Common planning time for staff to analyze data and interpretation will be allocated. Procedure will be created for middle and high school reading placement.	Professional development for school leaders and staff
5. Measure of Success	The completion of the plan and ready to implement in the fall.	Implementation of K-12 assessment procedures.	Procedural use of data across all grade levels. Use of data to drive instruction across the district, documentation of intervention. Evidence through classroom observations.	90% of students meeting grade level benchmarks as determined by assessments used in district.
6. Check in/review date	June 2011	Spring 2011	January 2012	Spring 2011

Goal Action Map

Goal 2 Statement *The district curriculum documents/course descriptions will include a scope and sequence for literacy development along with identified benchmarks that align with state standards. Content area reading and writing instruction and vocabulary development will be a strong focus in all classes.*

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3	Action Step 4
→ Action Step	Professional development will be designed and provided for instructional leadership teams on content area reading for comprehension and demonstration of knowledge through writing.	The district will establish and introduce the consistent use of a specific comprehension strategy guide appropriate by grade level and across content area (K-8, HS).	Administrators will provide school based scheduling that ensures all students have access to rigorous course content and strong integrated literacy support. This support will include appropriate intervention based on data.	The district will adopt the Six Trait writing to support the writing process in all content areas. The Six Traits include ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and convention. The writing process includes pre-write, first draft, revision and self/peer edit, conference, final copy and publish.
1. Timeline	August 2010	September 2010 –June 2011	Spring 2011 schedule changes in place	Middle school adoption for fall of 2011. Elementary and High School adoption for the fall of 2012.
2. Lead Person(s)	District Reading Coordinator and literacy coaches and Reid Middle School literacy team, CRISS trained staff	District Literacy Planning Team with representative grade levels and content area members	Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent	Deputy Superintendent, ELA consultant, and principals
3. Resources Needed	Stipends for staff, materials for participants, time for staff collaboration	Stipends for staff, materials for participants, time for staff collaboration	Collaborative time to review scheduling options	Funds for materials and professional development
4. Specifics of Implementation	Using professional learning communities model for the practice of networking and sharing best practice in the district	Year one, developing the guide with introducing the guide in the fall of 2011	Continued implementation of the RTI model at the elementary schools and planning for the RTI model at the secondary level will occur during the 2010-2011 school year.	Plan for the middle school implementation to be provided by June 1, 2010 and for elementary and high school implementation by December 1, 2012.
5. Measure of Success	Walk-through feedback indicates observation of literacy practice in classrooms, MCAS scores.	Completed guide	School schedules that meet the needs of all students.	Improved scores on writing prompts in district and MCAS open-response
6. Check in/review date	Plan to report out quarterly.	Quarterly 2011-2012	Spring of 2012	June 2011

Goal Action Map

Goal 3 Statement *Increase family and community awareness, involvement, and participation at all grade levels in the district literacy initiative.*

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3
→ Action Step	Create a public relations campaign promoting literacy in the community.	Survey parents/guardians, students and community members to assess level of participation in literacy activities. Pre and post literacy initiative survey will be used.	Provide more opportunities for parents/guardians and other community members to be involved and engaged in the literacy initiative. (extra-curricula reading/summer reading programs, etc.)
1. Timeline	September 2010 – March 2011	Surveys completed by June 2011	September 2010 – June 2011
2. Lead Person(s)	Principals Curriculum Coordinators/ Department. Chairs Deputy Superintendent Community and Cultural Affairs Partners	Principals Curriculum Coordinators/ Department. Chairs Deputy Superintendent Parents/Guardians and Community Partners	Principals Curriculum Coordinators/ Department. Chairs Deputy Superintendent Parents/Guardians Community Partners
3. Resources Needed	Literacy links on District Website PTO sponsored events Advertisements in Pittsfield newspapers	Personnel to develop survey and to monitor data collection and analysis	Berkshire Athenaeum All school faculty Parents/Guardians Business community Chamber of Commerce Senior center School events included on city community calendar School link on city website
4. Specifics of Implementation	Public service information (PCTV) Connect Ed. Create common literacy motto District website School Committee presentations Pittsfield newspapers School publications School councils	Develop survey Survey community Survey Monkey Paper copies (parents/guardians, staff members, etc.) Analyze results and create Action plan with data (Sept. 2011) Share results with Community	Literacy nights Volunteers for guided reading and book clubs (trained by literacy personnel) Community reading day Reading incentive Book swaps Parent/guardian/child book groups Library book clubs Create an informational brochure on literacy programs

5. Measure of Success	Development of the motto and launch of the campaign	50% of community returns surveys (both electronic and paper copies) Feedback (exit survey)	Increased participation by families and community members in literacy events (number survey responses, sign-in sheets at Curriculum Nights, Open Houses, etc.) Greater attendance at school committee meetings (head count) Completion of student nightly reading logs Increase in website "hits" Completion of summer reading incentive programs Increase participation in reading incentive programs Increase of parent or community member volunteers
6. Check in/review date	October 2010 January 2011 March 2011	March 17, 2011	October 2010 January 2011 March 2011 June 2011

Section 6: Plan for Assessing and Reporting District Progress

Pittsfield Public Schools will use the MCAS as well as district-identified measures to assess the progress of the district literacy plan. The school district will examine the data from these measures and report the findings to all stakeholders. These results will reflect the successful implementation of the stated district literacy goals and action steps.

Section 7: District Expectations and Supports for Schools

Pittsfield Public School students effectively apply literacy strategies to understand content and monitor their learning while engaging in independent and choice reading/writing in all content areas. Through their instructional practice, Pittsfield Public School staff demonstrates that all students can learn. Every school has a building based literacy team as well as a certified reading specialist/coach. Teachers and the literacy team review and analyze student assessment data; collaborate on implementation of effective instructional techniques across classrooms and grade-levels; adopt common rubrics to assess student response to instruction; and teach students to apply literacy strategies to understand content across the curriculum. Pittsfield Public Schools promotes a positive learning environment that includes scheduling and differentiated instruction that prioritizes student needs and is evidenced by an attentive, motivated, engaged and confident student and faculty. School administrators maintain procedures that prioritize literacy across the curriculum, align professional development and allocate resources to implement the District Literacy Plan. Specifics of these expectations and supports can be referenced in the appropriate sections of the district literacy plan's goals and action steps that are part of this document.

Section 8: District Literacy Team Membership, Development Process, and Plan for Monitoring Implementation

The district literacy planning team met twice monthly from February through June to complete this plan. The Literacy Office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and PMG provided guidance in writing the action plan for Pittsfield Public Schools. The plan will be submitted to the superintendent and the school committee for approval and will be presented to staff as outlined in the action planning steps. Committees for each of the goals are in the process of being organized and will meet monthly starting in September to complete the action steps. The committee as a whole will also meet monthly to report out findings and progress of each of the goal committees.

District Literacy Team Membership

Name	Title/Role	School (if school based)	Email
Lynda Bianchi	Principal	Williams Elementary	lbianchi@pittsfield.net
Melissa Brites	Special Education Middle School	Reid Middle School	lbrites@pittsfield.net
Susetta Doucette	Early Childhood Coordinator		sdoucette@pittsfield.net
Virginia Guglielmo	ELL Coordinator		vguglielmo@pittsfield.net
Phyllis Hakeem	Reading Specialist/Coach	Crosby Elementary School	phakeem@pittsfield.net
Anne Marie Hines	Reading Specialist/Coach	Conte Elementary	ahines@pittsfield.net
Kathleen Latham	District Reading/T1		klatham@pittsfield.net
Barbara Malkas	Deputy Superintendent		bmalkas@pittsfield.net
Jane McEvoy	English High School	Pittsfield High School	jmcevoy@pittsfield.net
Michele Rousseau	Reading Specialist Middle School	Herberg Middle School	mrousseau@pittsfield.net

Name	Title/Role	School (if school based)	Email
Kathy Voltoline	English Middle School	Reid Middle School	kvoltoline@pittsfield.net
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APPENDICES

Term

APPENDICES

Glossary of Terms

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Area of Need	If a student is not performing at or near grade level in a key component of reading, then that area becomes the student's area of need. For example, specific areas of need in reading include fluency, comprehension, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and phonics.
Assessment Framework	A system of assessments that work together to provide information about student progress, student needs, student response to intervention, and overall program effectiveness.
Benchmark	Established cutoff score or minimal level of expected performance on a given test for a specified grade level. Also refers to a test score or score range which provides a description of student knowledge expected at specific grades, ages, or development levels. Sometimes called interim assessment.
Comprehension	The construction of meaning for the reader.
Core Reading Instruction	Classroom whole group and differentiated small group instruction in the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Core reading instruction occurs in both separate reading classes/reading block, as well as during content area classes. It includes explicit instruction and independent reading and writing of informational and literary text.
Data	<p><i>Qualitative Data:</i> Qualitative data consist of verbal or graphic descriptions of behavior and experience resulting from processes of observation, interpretation and analysis. It is often comprehensive, holistic, and expansive.</p> <p><i>Quantitative Data:</i> Quantitative data consist of information represented in the form of numbers that can be analyzed by means of descriptive or inferential statistics. It is often precise and narrow data.</p>
Diagnostic Assessments	These assessments help educators specifically pinpoint areas of strengths and weaknesses to better understand why a student has scored badly on an interim or outcomes assessment. This type of assessment helps teachers to know what gaps in student learning needs to be addressed.
Differentiated Instruction	Instruction that is not "whole group" but uses instructional strategies, grouping practices, teaching methods, varied assignments, and varied materials chosen based on student skill levels, interest levels, instructional needs, and learning preferences.
District Literacy Team	Team that has wide representation from across the district and works on district wide efforts to improve literacy, generally a district literacy team develops and monitors implementation of the District Literacy Action Plan.
English Language Learners	Students who come to English-speaking schools with different degrees of literacy in their own language, which effects the acquisition of literacy skills in English. (ELLs)
Explicit Instruction	Instruction guided by the teacher, who uses various strategies to help students understand what they are reading.

Fidelity of Implementation	Implementation of an intervention, program, or curriculum according to research findings and/or developers' specifications (frequency and length of sessions, methods, materials used, etc.).
Flexible Grouping	When students are grouped and regrouped according to specific goals, activities, and individual needs.
Fluency	The speed of reading and the ability to pause at the right places to understand the meaning of the text accurately.
Formative Assessments	Measures of student performance collected primarily for the purpose of providing information that can be used to improve instruction, monitor progress, or inform instructional decision making.
Goal	The goal is the achievement target for the student. It should be measurable and have a quantitative target or level of achievement. For example, the goal may be to increase the student's reading comprehension to grade level by a particular date.
Group Plan Vs. Individual Plan	Within the context of RtI, the group plan is a document that identifies group members as well as the interventions provided to the group and may include other details (e.g., schedule, progress monitoring data). It is generally less specific than an individual RtI plan, which will include frequency, duration, and group, as well as each student's current performance and target goal, and how the student's performance will be monitored (including frequency). Group plans are common at Tier 1 or 2, while an individual plan is used typically at Tier 2 or 3.
Independent Learners	Learners who are able to use cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies independently as needed to strengthen and deepen literacy and learning.
Individual Leadership/ Literacy Team	Team that is representative of the school community and that works on school-wide efforts to improve literacy.
Intervention	An intervention describes the targeted or focused instruction to be provided to enable a student to achieve his or her goal. Intervention examples may include an educational strategy, a purchased reading intervention program, and/or student work with a reading specialist who will utilize a variety of research-based strategies.
Literacy	Literacy is the ability to experience and apply reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking strategies in order to learn across all content areas, to demonstrate and communicate learning, and to transfer that learning to new situations.
Progress Monitoring	In a tiered system of instruction, it is necessary to monitor if students are responding appropriately to intervention and targeted support. If students make adequate progress in response to an intervention and bring achievement in line with grade-level norms, then they may be ready to move into a lower tier of support. If students are not making appropriate progress, then the intervention needs to be changed in terms of content, approach, intensity, etc. in the area of K-3 reading, progress monitoring for phonemic awareness and decoding and fluency can be done frequently to get a "read" on progress. In the upper grades, progress monitoring for comprehension, language development, or writing may be done at least three times a year and sometimes as frequently as every 4-6 weeks as appropriate to the issue at hand.

Reading Specialist	Teacher who works in intervention classes with students.
Research-Based Instruction	Curriculum and educational interventions that have been proven to be effective for students based on research.
Response to Intervention (RtI)	RtI, or response to intervention, is an educational approach in which high quality instruction is provided to address an identified area of need for students, goals or targets are set, and the students' response to instruction is measured using frequent progress monitoring to inform any need for changes in instruction.
Rubric	An explicit summary of the criteria for assessing a particular piece of student work or the level of implementation of a program which includes the levels of potential achievement for each criterion.
Standards-Based Curriculum	A curriculum that is "standards-based" indicates specific criteria that delineates what students are expected to learn and be able to perform and usually includes both content standards and performance standards.
Summative Assessments	Evaluation of student performance conducted primarily for purposes of external accountability in order to determine the extent to which a program or activity has achieved its intended outcomes at the end of a year or unit of study. Used for district accountability for NCLB and sometimes for screening in grades 4-12; criterion referenced and standards-based. Example: MCAS
Systematic Data Collection	Planning a time frame for, and following through with, appropriate assessments in order to monitor student progress.
Tiered System of Instruction and Interventions	A data-driven early detection, prevention, and support system that guides the allocation of school and district resources with the aim of providing high quality core educational experiences for all students and targeted interventions to struggling students who experience learning or behavioral challenges.
Vision Statement	A statement that describes the ideal learning environment the school is striving to achieve (i.e., the image of the ideal in written form). A vision should articulate a realistic, credible future for the school that is attractive to all parties involved. The vision statement describes how the future will look if the organization achieves its ultimate goals.