## Project Summary

Extensive research has shown that students not reading at grade level by the end of elementary school and entering middle school reading below grade level will struggle to meet grade level expectations on state academic assessments. At the elementary school level, reading is taught as an independent subject, but as children transition into middle school, reading is involved in all content areas. Reading strategies should be implemented schoolwide in middle school, integrated across the curriculum to enhance student literacy. The Institute of Education Science (IES) has published guidance documents to aid LEAs in offering research-based, effective academic interventions for struggling readers. The reading interventions below were highlighted in the IES intervention guide and in the research of the Middle School Matters Initiative from the George W. Bush Institute. Middle school reading programs and interventions support TEA Strategic Priority #2—Build A Foundation in Reading and Math.

### LEA Financial Commitment (start-up and annual costs)

Costs for staffing, instructional materials, and professional development are expected as start-up and annual costs.

* When possible, TEA staff has estimated costs by major expenditure categories used in the ESSA Consolidated Application and the Expenditure Reporting (ER) System. Costs, such as locally-determined salaries, benefits, and wages, could not be estimated.

### Project Description

Despite extensive research arguing for the importance of middle school for establishing the academic trajectory of students, a greater number of reading interventions target primary and elementary levels, and the expanding body of best practices research on reading interventions for the middle grades are not available to schools and teachers.

IES and Middle School Matters from the Bush Institute established nine principles for research-based reading instruction and intervention in middle school, summarized here:

1. Establish schoolwide practices for enhancing reading comprehension across the curriculum. Instructional practices for content area teacher to integrate and enhance reading comprehension into core content include:

2. Identifying key words for learning, teach at least two words per class every day, and review one word from earlier instruction. Use vocabulary maps that give student-friendly definitions of key words, show pictures of words, offer related words, and give examples of how words can be used. Use concept maps to show the relationship between words Teach key words students can use in oral arguments for a debate or structured discussions.

A. Instruct students to ask and answer questions while they read to monitor comprehension and learning.
B. Use graphic organizations to teach students the relationships between ideas and words.

C. Teacher word-meaning strategies within content area classes. Give explicit instruction of important words and teach word-learning strategies.

3. Activate and build appropriate background knowledge for understanding text context. Instruct students on using texts to support answers.

4. Teach students to use reading comprehension strategies while reading complex texts. Help students generate questions while reading for comprehension and generate main ideas at regular intervals while reading a text. Practice identifying the key “who” or “what” that is the focus of paragraphs or sections. Practice identifying the most important information in passages. Help students' effort to succinctly state the “who” or “what” and most important information in a text.

5. Give intensive reading interventions to students with reading problems. Find students who are two or more grade levels behind in reading and give daily reading interventions.

6. Guide students during text-related oral and written activities that support the interpretation, analysis, and summarization of text. Foster student small-group discussions and enhance understanding through teacher-guided conversations. Instruction students on how to summarize texts.

7. Maximize opportunities for students to read and connect to a range of texts. Offer an advanced, pre-reading organizer of the key ideas and words to better prepare students to read. Read for a specified amount of time and then offer a prompt for student responses. Have student take part in partner reading.

8. Organize students into collaborate groups for reading tasks. Implement strategic reading practices within these groups or implement team-based learning to clarify, apply, and extend students' understanding of text and content.

9. Stop using practices that are NOT associated with improved outcomes for students.

Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

The goals and student achievement objectives for middle school reading programs and reading interventions for students not reading at grade level during middle school is to ensure all students are reading at or above grade level by the end of eighth grade and are well-prepared for advanced academic reading required of students in high school.

Expected Outcomes

The list below offers a sample of expected outcomes formatted as SMART goals (the percentage of____will increase from X% to Y% by Z.)

• The percentage of students who meet STAAR Progress Measure in Reading on the state exams will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
• The percentage of students who exceed STAAR Progress Measure in Reading on state exams will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
• The percentage of students who meet or exceed the STAAR Progress Measure in Reading on the state exams will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
• The percentage of students who did not meet standard or exceed STAAR Progress Measure in Reading on the state exams will decrease from X% to Y% by Z.

Training or Support TEA Offers

TEA offers more literacy resources for Texas schools and teacher online at the Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) resource page. Educators can access the Texas State Literacy Plan Online Course, access other resources and join the TLI mailing list online.

TEA supports Project Share online resources for teachers and classrooms. Project share allows educators to search for English Language Arts & Reading materials by grade level.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) English Language Arts and Reading website offers information about curriculum, assessment, rules, and more for anyone who wants to offer high-quality English language arts and reading programs.

Program Duration, Timeline, Significant Milestones

Implementation would include the following activities:

• Scheduled planning time to review schoolwide literacy models and select a school literacy across the curriculum model to implement.
• Scheduled pre-implementation professional development for all instructional staff and school instructional leaders.
• Scheduled time for schoolwide planning and data-analysis to identify students not reading at grade level and develop a series of reading interventions to address specific student need.
• Ongoing coaching for teachers related to effective implementation of literacy across the curriculum.
• Regularly scheduled planning time to review and reinforce teaching reading comprehension in all content areas.

Staffing Requirements for LEAs

LEAs may consider supporting a literacy coach or reading intervention specialist for schools implementing schoolwide literacy initiatives.

Additional General Information, LEA, Charter, or Other Organizations Need

See Resources below.

Resources

• Middle School Matters Initiative from George W. Bush Institute
• The Middle School Matters Filed Guide: Research-Based Principals, Practices, and Tools
• Middle School Matters Instructional Tool Kit for Teachers
• Lessons Learned from the Middle School Matters Initiative from the George W. Bush Institute
• Putting Middle Grades Students on the Graduation Path, A Policy and Practice Brief by Robert Balfanz from the Every Graduates Center and Talent Develop Middle Grades Program and National Middle School Association
• Recognizing Education's Middle School Syndrome from Homeroom, the Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education
• What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report: Accelerated Middle Schools
• Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices IES Practice Guide
• Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide—Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School
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