

Final Report
of the
Maryland Committee
for Reviewing
Core Reading Programs



Updated Edition
August 2008

Maryland State Board of Education

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Martin O'Malley, Governor

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I

Final Report: Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

**Updated Edition
August 2008**

Final Report:

Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

I. General Introduction

Background

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, together with the Superintendents of Maryland's twenty-four local educational agencies (LEA's) have declared interest in identifying instructional materials promote reading achievement. The Maryland Reading First Initiative (MRFI) convened a statewide panel in 2003 called the Maryland Committee for Selecting Core Reading Programs. This committee established the Approved List of Core Reading Programs. (See: www.msde.state.md.us, Maryland Reading First).

The Office of Reading First committed to review periodically core reading programs and list the programs that met our criteria on our website. We also committed to involve all local school systems in identifying the Updated Maryland Approved List of Core Reading Programs.

We enlisted the expert assistance of the Eastern Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (ERRFTAC) to ensure that Maryland's selection process meets federal expectations. Central to this process was the identification of representatives from local school systems to serve on the Core Reading Program Review Committee. Prior to their intense deliberations, all members of the Committee received training in the implementation of *The Consumer's Guide to Selecting Core Reading Programs*.

The outcome of the Committee's work is a Final Report that evidence of sufficient instructional quality among four (4) core reading programs reviewed by the Committee. All core reading programs that were submitted were reviewed. Maryland's approved application for funding under Reading First specifies that every Reading First school, kindergarten through third grade, must implement a core reading program from this list that is based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR). However, the Final Report is expected to provide guidance to all of Maryland LEA's and schools in the selection of instructional materials for beginning reading.

Scientifically based reading research (SBRR) is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment.
- Involves rigorous data analysis that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the conclusions drawn.
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across multiple measurements and observations.

- Has been accepted by a peer reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

A core reading program is the primary instructional tool that a teacher uses to teach children to learn to read and ensure that they meet or exceed grade level standards. Five essential components of effective reading instruction are present, and explicit and systematic instruction must be provided in these five areas:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary Development
- Reading fluency, including oral reading skills
- Reading comprehension strategies

Core reading programs address the needs of the majority of students. Strong core programs provide a prioritized sequence and schedule of objectives, explicit strategies, and provide support for students' initial learning and transfer of knowledge and skills to other contexts. The systematic and explicit instruction of phonemic awareness and phonics is a critical feature of a core reading program. A protected, uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction of at least 90 minutes per day is ensured.

Process

Preparation

In June, 2008, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), through its procurement process, solicited a Request for Qualifying Providers (RFQ) for qualified providers to provide core reading program materials, K-3, that meet federal criteria for having a scientific base of research in reading. Providers had to submit published kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade instructional materials the providers identify as a core reading program for analysis by a statewide committee using A Consumer's Guide for Selecting Core Reading Programs. Only providers who meet the requirements for all four (K-3) grade levels will be approved. Providers who meet these requirements will be included in the Fall 2008 updated list of Maryland-Approved Core Reading Programs. Providers whose reading programs are on the current list of Approved Core Reading Programs, and have been updated, but have not changed more than 50%, may have their updated version listed on the list of Maryland Approved Core Reading Programs provided that they submit a letter documenting the changes in the core program.

At the same time, Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools issued an invitation to all twenty-four Maryland LEA Superintendents to identify a representative and an alternate to participate on the Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs. Both the representatives and alternates were required to participate in a full day of training by the Eastern Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (ERRFTAC), on July 14, 2008.

A pre-proposal conference with vendors was conducted on June 27, 2008. Proposals and materials from the vendors were delivered to MSDE by July 14, 2008. Proposals were pre-screened by MSDE staff to determine compliance with technical qualities and procurement requirements.

Also, ERRFTAC staff was in frequent communication with the Office of Reading First to plan how to use the *Consumer's Guide for Evaluating a Core Reading Program* (Simmons & Kame'enui, 2005) in order to achieve the goal of reviewing core reading programs and establishing a 2008 Updated List of Maryland Approved Core Reading Programs.

Responding to the issue of RFQ#R00R920003, the following four core programs were submitted for the Maryland Review Committee's work:

- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, *Storytown 2009*
- Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, *Treasures 2009*
- Mondo, *Bookshop*
- Pearson, *Scott Foresman Reading Street 2008*

Committee Meetings

Between July 14 and July 18, 2008, the Committee met five times. At each meeting, participants signed in, completed Non-Disclosure Forms, and followed the day's agenda.

On July 14, 2009, designated LEA representatives and alternates received a full day of training by the Eastern Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (ERRTAC). Participants reviewed SBRR and received guidance in how to utilize *A Consumer's Guide to Analyzing a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis*, April, 2005.

From July 15 through July 18, 2008, the Committee met four times, devoting each day to analyzing the core reading programs listed above. At each meeting, participants had for their reference the complete array of vendor program materials and copies of the following: the RFQ; vendor technical proposals; and, copies of the Voluntary State Curriculum. When teams sought clarification, the staff from ERRFTAC was available to assist them. At the conclusion of the review, each grade level team submitted a summary of a core program's strengths and weaknesses that reflected consensus agreements reached by the group.

Final Report: Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

Organization of the Report

The Report is organized as follows:

- I. General Introduction
- II. Updated List of Approved Core Reading Programs
- III. Reviews of Individual Comprehensive Programs
 - Overall Summary
 - Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality
- IV. Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

How the Report Should Be Used

The Final Report is intended to guide Maryland users in selecting an appropriate SBRR core reading program for use in their schools or school system. The programs described meet the requirements for SBRR: kindergarten through grade 3 program that is focused on the 5 components of reading. Core reading programs are to be implemented with fidelity to directions and guidelines specified in the Teacher's Editions. Implementing a core reading program with fidelity does not permit layering, i.e., substituting instructional elements or materials that are not part of the program.

The Committee, in providing summative input for the Final Report, emphasized that schools and school systems must exercise vigilance when selecting core reading programs. The instructional context in which an SBRR program will be used is an important consideration in choosing a program that meets both the academic needs and the characteristics of students and staff.

II

Updated List Of Approved Core Reading Programs

August 2008

Final Report: Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

Updated List of Approved Core Reading Programs August 2008

Alphabetical listing of Core Reading Programs approved for use in Reading First Schools:

- **Harcourt, Trophies 2003**
- **Houghton Mifflin, Houghton Mifflin Reading 2008**
- **Houghton Mifflin, The Nation's Choice 2003**
- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Storytown 2009**
- **Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, Macmillan McGraw-Hill Reading 2003**
- **Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, Treasures 2009**
- **Mondo, Bookshop**
- **Pearson, Scott Foresman Reading Street 2008**
- **Scott Foresman, Scott Foresman Reading 2004**
- **SRA, Open Court Reading 2002**
- **SRA, Open Court Reading Imagine It! 2008**
- **SRA/McGraw-Hill, Reading Mastery Plus 2002**
- **SRA/McGraw-Hill, Reading Mastery Signature Edition 2008, Reading/Literature Strands**
- **Success For All Foundation, Success For All**

III

Reviews of Individual Comprehensive Reading Programs

Core Program Review Committee Reports

Summary Statements Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Program: Storytown 2009

Summary:

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt School Publishers' Storytown, 2009 is a reading program that is based on scientifically based research and includes instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction integrated into an instructional design that includes the following:

- instructional strategies
- instructional sequences
- practice opportunities
- student and resource materials for a diverse population

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality:

Kindergarten

- Instructional routines throughout
- Routine cards for teachers
- Sequence of introduction for PA, phonics, high frequency words for skills, letters, and words
- Reading components included daily with several activities which are teacher directed
- Transfer and application of instruction through use of context
- Explicit instruction throughout – lots of modeling
- Higher level vocabulary present
- Concept words present
- Vocabulary in student-friendly language
- Vocabulary taught in multiple contexts to give depth of understanding
- Higher order thinking skills activities provided

First Grade

- Storytime sequences the skills in a developmentally appropriate manner. It allows for a multitude of ways to practice and reinforce skills taught explicitly.
- Students are given a multitude of opportunities to read and reread sentences from a wide variety of text (i.e. decodable, anthology, leveled readers, social studies connection.)

- Tier 2 words are connected to “Read Alouds” and anthology stories. The daily vocabulary lessons reinforce the skills learned provide real connection and application to what has been taught.

Second Grade

- Clear, consistent phonics/spelling instruction
- Clear consistent sight word, vocabulary instruction
- Consistent structure of lessons makes it predictable and easy to follow. Same directions, same routines.
- Inclusion of high-frequency words in short connected text selection is beneficial
- Each lesson has “side bar” to help teacher monitor progress with phonics instruction. It gives “If.../Then...” suggestions to help students having problems with that particular skill

Third Grade

- Teacher’s Edition includes a skill trace in a “side bar”. It shows where the skill was introduced, retaught in small groups, reviewed in student selections, tested, and maintained in the next theme. Skills are introduced, taught, reviewed, tested, and followed up across 2 themes.
 - Consistent routines throughout develop a deep understanding of vocabulary. Multiple days within the week provide explicit instruction and engage students in activities that relate to previous knowledge.
 - Background information and links to prior knowledge are reinforced through vocabulary instruction as well as in the comprehension instruction.
-

Publisher: Macmillan /McGraw-Hill Program: Treasures 2009

Summary:

The MacMillan-McGraw series *Treasures 2009* is a scientifically research based comprehensive reading program.. The materials include a wide variety of reading selections, transparencies on daily language practice, vocabulary strategies, fluency, and comprehension, graphic organizers, teacher resource book, ELL practice, a wide variety of assessments, a home-school connection, and a Read Aloud anthology. There are multiple resources for student practice. There is differentiation for ELL, below, on and above level instruction and practice in each lesson.

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality:

Kindergarten

- Skills are imbedded into phonics, handwriting, and leveled readers to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice and apply.
- Additional resources provide routines, instructional support for differentiation, use of technology and additional practice for students.
- Skills are introduced sequentially from easier to more difficult.

First Grade

- Connections between PA skills, phonic skills and handwriting are embedded in the program.
- Progresses through skills systematically.
- Introduces and reviews vocabulary consistently. Limits the number of words introduced at a time and relates them to several texts so child can demonstrate understanding by the end of 2 weeks.
- Variety of texts – songs, poems, plays, narrative and expository readings
- Opportunities to build and assess fluency.
- Explicit instruction using ELL resources

Second Grade

- Sounds are introduced each week, then are practiced on a daily basis in various ways

Third Grade

- Spelling instruction reinforces word analysis skill lesson
- Decodable passages reinforce word analysis skill
- Weekly lessons with transparencies
- Leveled passages for fluency practice
- Small group extension of whole group
- Fluency solutions

- Repeated reading and teacher modeling
 - Instructional routine: define/example/ask
 - Variety of contexts
 - Small group extension of whole group lesson
 - Leveled readers (Approaching Level, On Level, Beyond Level)
-

Publisher: Mondo

Program: Bookshop

Summary:

Bookshop by Mondo Publishing is a reading program based on the five essential components of reading. The program includes a 60 minute block of reading and a 60 minute block of writing. Resources include Phonics Teacher's Guides for K and 1, Teacher's Guides for all grade levels K-3, Lesson Plans/Binders for Oral Language, Shared Reading, and Guided Instructional Reading, assessment for all grade levels, an oral language program guide for all levels, a Phonics Partner Practice Book for grades K,1, InfoPairs Program/Teacher's Guide for grades 1-3, and a shared reading transparency binder for grade 3. ELL support is provided.

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality:

Kindergarten

- The use of words throughout decoding lessons addresses the needs of on level student.
- Multiple meanings of unknown words are identified several times
- Prior knowledge is activated when discussing concepts

First Grade

- Irregular words are repeated in subsequent lessons for reinforcement
- Fluency building strategies are taught
- Fluency assessments are provided
- Prior knowledge is activated before reading

Second Grade

- Prior knowledge is activated
- Previewing text occurs as every story is introduced
- Student interaction is encouraged through questioning
- Scripted lessons format for teachers
- Opportunities are provided to make and adjust predictions as text is read

Third Grade

- References and practices a 6 step "Sound, Read, and Check" strategy
- Scope and sequence includes fluency portion/practice consistently
- Teacher's Guide includes vocabulary activities
- Reading lessons includes activating prior knowledge/building background

Publisher: Pearson Program: Scott Foresman Reading Street 2008

Summary:

Scott Foresman Reading Street 2008 is a comprehensive reading program for Kindergarten through grade 3. The program is based on scientifically based reading research and encompasses the following:

- five big ideas in reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary
- literature that includes a variety of genres
- assessments for different purposes
- supplemental materials for differentiation
- resources for ELL instruction.

The program is designed for a ninety to one hundred and twenty minute reading block per day.

Evidence of Sufficient Instructional Quality:

Kindergarten

- Phonological and phonemic awareness systemically taught and increases in difficulty
- Follows scope and sequence for phonological & phonemic awareness
- Introduces high utility letters and sequences letters so it minimizes confusion
- Introduces short vowels so that students can begin to segment and blend
- Progresses from simple to more complex tasks
- Irregular Words introduced and used in ways that enhance learning
- Pre-teaches irregular words found in text
- Multiple exposures to vocabulary
- Tier two words included
- Listening comprehension focuses on specific story elements
- A variety of genres are provided
- Opportunities for students to retell at end of a story

First Grade

- Provides adequate amount of time for teaching new skills and reviewing old skills
- Progresses from simple to more complex tasks
- Provides teacher models, guided and independent practice
- Allows multiple opportunities for students to review and practice skills
- Ample practice is provided for irregular words instruction
- Fluency practice and monitoring is provided
- Ample words are taught to develop vocabulary skills
- Provides resources for students to apply comprehension skills
- Teacher think alouds are provided

Second Grade

- Weekly routines are established
- Spirals skills using a three week window
- Uses multiple resources including graphic organizers, workbook pages, and connected text to support skills instruction
- A variety of types of texts used in instruction: fiction, non fiction, poetry, rhymes, songs, drama, realistic fiction, folktales, fairytales, etc.
- A variety of text is used to connect and apply skills across multiple contexts (Read aloud, weekly passage, content connections text, leveled text, decodable book, interactive writing, ELL text and posters, readers theater, and phonics/high frequency word connection text)
- Uses content vocabulary, concept vocabulary, and spelling to support word study
- Provides a comprehensive weekly plan to teach writing, grammar, spelling, and phonics through the use of integrated text

Third Grade

- Weekly routines are established
 - Spirals skills using a three week window
 - Uses multiple resources including graphic organizers, workbook pages, and connected text to support skills instruction
 - A variety of types of texts used in instruction: fiction, non fiction, poetry, rhymes, songs, drama, realistic fiction, folktales, fairytales, etc.
 - Uses content vocabulary, concept vocabulary, and spelling to support word study
 - Provides a comprehensive weekly plan to teach writing, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and phonics through the use of integrated text
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IV

Maryland Committee for Reviewing Core Reading Programs

Maryland Committee for Selecting Core Reading Programs

Local School System

Allegheny County

Anne Arundel County

Baltimore City

Baltimore County

Carroll County

Cecil County

Charles County

Dorchester County

Harford county

Howard County

Montgomery County

Prince Georges County

St. Mary's County

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