

## **FAQs About the Literacy Framework and Curriculum?**

*Has DPS adopted the Reading First Literacy Curriculum?*

Durham Public Schools has not adopted the Reading First curriculum as our enhanced Literacy Framework.

In 2006, Durham Public Schools adopted the core reading program, entitled Scott Foresman *Reading Street*. The similarity between the names Reading First and *Reading Street* may have led to some confusion.

*Will my child have exposure to authentic literature through the Reading Street materials?*

Yes! Reading Street provides all teachers with big books, trade books, and novels that align with each grade levels' curriculum. In addition, the *Reading Street* adoption includes student anthologies, filled with authentic literature including selections such as *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, and *The Stranger*. These anthologies provide students with opportunities to interact with authentic literature, while applying learned skills and strategies. Key language is embedded within the anthology that allows the students the opportunity to learn new vocabulary in context, a documented best practice. With the use of *Reading Street* materials, all students will have equitable access to authentic literature.

*Is the Reading Street literacy curriculum a test-prep program designed to teach to standardized tests such as the EOG?*

Unlike other programs available today, *Reading Street* is a comprehensive literacy program, not test prep. We believe that through good first teaching, we will develop strong readers who will find success inside and outside the classroom.

Part of the reality in education today is that under federal law, students in third, fourth, and fifth grade are required to take End of Grade tests to assess children's reading proficiency. Although we must help students prepare to take this test, our primary job as educators is to help our students become literate, productive members of our society.

*In these hard economic times, has DPS spent millions of dollars on a new reading program?*

Every five years, the state of North Carolina mandates each school district assess available curriculums and programs as part of a state-wide literacy adoption. The state provides funding to support this process. The *Reading Street* curriculum was purchased by DPS in 2006 as part of this state-wide adoption. Teachers, administrators, and parents were invited to listen to presentations of various literacy programs. These teams came to consensus that *Reading Street* was the best educational fit for the teachers and students in Durham Public Schools. The *Reading Street* adoption provides equity of materials across schools.

*Is Reading Street a scripted program?*

Reading Street is not a scripted program. Although *Reading Street* provides daily, weekly, and long range plans, teachers have flexibility to use their expertise on how to deliver the vocabulary, mini-lesson, guided reading, and word work components. All teachers are provided with the appropriate *Reading Street* materials for their grade level(s) to support this lesson delivery.

*My school has an awesome bookroom with leveled readers that were purchased by the school and PTA. I've heard that teachers will not be able to use these books anymore, is this true?*

Absolutely not! All of our schools have extensive leveled reader collections, novel collections, and media centers full of quality text. Within the literacy block there are multiple opportunities for students to interact with these books:

- Intervention/Acceleration (30 minutes daily)
- Independent Reading (20-30 minutes daily)
- Centers (60 minutes daily)

All of these components provide a chance for teachers and students to select authentic literature from a variety of sources. The vast variety of resources within each school allows all teachers to select books that target key skills and strategies, vocabulary, and are on each child's level.

*I heard that members of Central Office would be making unscheduled visits to classrooms to ensure teachers are teaching the curriculum.*

In 2007, DPS initiated the Central Office Support Model. School based "Learning Walks" are part of this model. A Learning Walk allows schools and administrators to collaborate regarding student achievement.

*With this new curriculum, what is the role for instructional assistants?*

As in the past, instructional assistants have a key role in the success of all children. They are able to help supervise and provide support during independent work and centers, while teachers are pulling small groups of children. They are also able to work one-one with students or in small groups to target instruction for each child's needs. Each teacher will provide direction, lessons, and guidance to their teacher assistant on how best to serve the students in the classroom.