



DATE: April 14, 2021
TO: Sumner-Bonney Lake School District Board of Directors
FROM: Beth Dykman, Executive Director Elementary
RE: Early Learning Report

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Directors regarding Early Learning in the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District.

Relation to Board Policy:

- Policy 2000 - Student Learning Goals
- Policy 2005 - School Improvement Plans
- Policy 2020 - Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials
- Policy 2090 - Program Evaluation
- Policy 2108 - Remediation Programs

Background Information:

Early learning in the SBLSD incorporates the systems and services for children and families from birth to 3rd grade. For the purpose of this report we will focus on Preschool and Kindergarten.

In the Fall of 2019, the district purchased a comprehensive curriculum (Connect4Learning) for use in its preschool programs which allowed for increased collaboration among district preschool and kindergarten staff. Comprehensive curriculum training was provided for staff along with ongoing opportunities for collaboration throughout most of the school year. However, we were unable to complete an entire cycle of curriculum implementation due to closure of our preschool program in March 2020 and the resulting move to a remote learning platform.

In our Kindergarten classrooms a new phonemic awareness program has been implemented in order to improve our Tier 2 resources for literacy. Further, through our work with Anita Archer, an esteemed education consultant, we focused on explicit instruction and literacy instruction and began more diligently looking at our role in implementing purposeful foundational literacy programs in our primary grades, specifically phonological awareness (PA). With this knowledge, we began to build background knowledge by implementing book studies and professional development centered around PA, the most reliable predictor of reading readiness.

Most recently with the emphasis on E2SSB 6162 and the implementation of Dyslexia screening for the 2021-2022 school year, our work with PA has become even more important. Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). It occurs in 1 out of 5 children and can be supported through a multisensory approach that focuses on working memory and orthographic processing. When early intervention is applied, the differences between



non-dyslexic and dyslexic brains are less distinct. This proves the importance of early intervention and creating neural pathways to rewire the brain to process written language more effectively.

Budget:

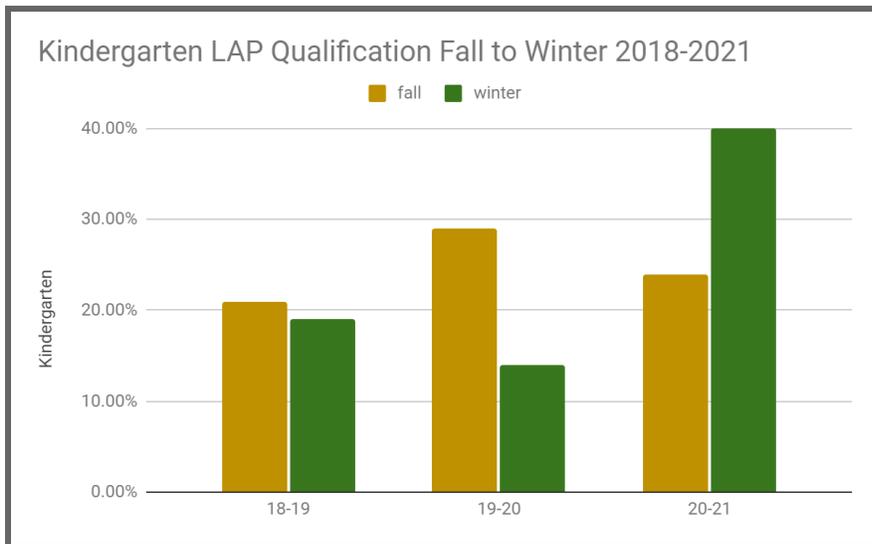
Kindergarten Transition Support - \$15,000 (ongoing in budget)

READY! For Kindergarten Parent Engagement - \$30,000 (ongoing in budget)

Dyslexia Screener Cost - \$2,500 (new next year to budget)

Impacts to Student Performance:

It is important to analyze the potential impacts to student learning due to school closure and remote learning this past year. In analyzing Fall data, our incoming kindergarten students started the school year with similar abilities in letter naming and letter sounds. However, the lack of in-person instruction has severely impacted our youngest learners. The following table shows that in 2018-2019 we saw a decrease in Winter Kindergarten LAP qualified students. We believe this is due to our initial professional development on the topic of phonological awareness. In 2019-2020 we set the expectation for explicitly teaching Phonological awareness in Kindergarten and within LAP small groups. This resulted in more effective sound-to-letter knowledge and a greatly reduced LAP qualification rate in the winter of 2020. This year's Kindergarten class has seen the biggest struggle with sound-to-letter knowledge with an uncharacteristic 16% rise in Kindergarten LAP qualification fall to winter.



Phonological learning is entirely oral and the multisensory, orthographic mapping component necessary to relate sounds to letters and words is best served through hands-on, visual instruction followed by heavy repetition. The visual stimuli of modeling how the mouth forms sounds and the auditory awareness of hearing if students are correctly pronouncing sounds through facial coverings is another impact on early learning. We are working to address these



obstacles through intense small group remediation, in-class differentiation, and the use of appropriate PPE.

Equity:

All early learning classrooms have access to the core Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum. Kindergarten and First Grade have access to the supplemental Heggerty curriculum to support phonological awareness. Additionally, our LAP coordinators administer specific diagnostic tests to determine which students have gaps and may need more explicit support. Currently, some students are battling to succeed despite technology competence, attendance, behavior, adult support, and other barriers. Staff has been working with students to meet their needs with small groups, family internet cafes, differentiated asynchronous work, and additional zoom lessons on asynchronous days. On in-person days, students are receiving their core instruction as well as additional adult tutoring or small groups based on need.

Benefiting Parties:

Staff, students, and families have benefitted from having increased communication throughout distance and hybrid learning. The increase in communication has given parents an opportunity to better understand objectives and the scope of learning. It has benefitted teachers by giving them a deeper understanding of student backgrounds and abilities as they communicate with parents. Students have benefitted from seeing their families and teachers as a team working together for the student's benefit.

What is working well?:

- Professional development for both teachers and paraeducators in phonological awareness (both importance and how to instruct)
- Return to in-person learning: our students are engaged and showing quick responses to focused instruction
- Implementation of Heggerty curriculum in core instruction
- LAP teachers utilizing Heggerty in their remediation groups during WIN time
- Training for teachers and paraeducators in PA importance and instruction
- Ongoing data analysis with LAP teacher to ensure that students are placed in appropriate WIN groups based on need
- Inclusion of paraeducators in all ELA curriculum training

Opportunities for improvement:

- Increase Phonological awareness by implementing Heggerty instruction to 2nd-grade core instruction
- Explicitly training our teachers and paraeducators on the dyslexia screener
- Providing all staff with an understanding of dyslexia and the need to intentionally focus on phonological awareness in our earliest years of instruction

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- District-wide PLC centered around the conversation of reading readiness and the most effective instructional moves validated through a deeper understanding of the Science of Reading.
- Increasing our efficiency of making data-based decisions to guide instruction
- Intentionally providing Tier 2 curriculum support in the area of phonological awareness through purchase of a research based program 95%