Lexington Public Schools

K-5 Literacy Curriculum Overview for Families

October 21, 2026

Tonight's Agenda

Sara Calleja
K-5 ELA & Literacy Department Head

Kate Jones
K-5 Literacy Specialist, Bridge Elementary School

Anne Garcia-Meitin
K-5 Literacy Specialist, Maria Hastings Elementary School

Thank you to School Committee member, Sarah Carter, for joining us for the Q&A!

- Overview of K-5 ELA & Literacy Instruction in Lexington Public Schools
- Introduction to Arts & Letters
- Universal Literacy Screening
- Supporting Our Students at Home

Overview of K-5 ELA & Literacy Instruction 2026-2027



Literacy Instruction 2026-2027

Kindergarten - Grade 3

30 minutes	fundations® Wilson Language Basics
60 minutes	Arts & letters
45 minutes	**Lex Flex Literacy Block** fundations® Wilson Language Basics · Heggerty Phonemic Awareness · GEODES · Arts & letters

Grades 4 - 5

15 minutes	**Spelling / Morphology**
60 minutes	Arts & letters
60 minutes	**Lex Flex Literacy Block** Arts & letters • Small Groups • Book Clubs • Fluency, Vocabulary • Independent Reading/ Writing

How do our programs address the 5 Pillars of Reading?

(National Reading Panel, 2000)

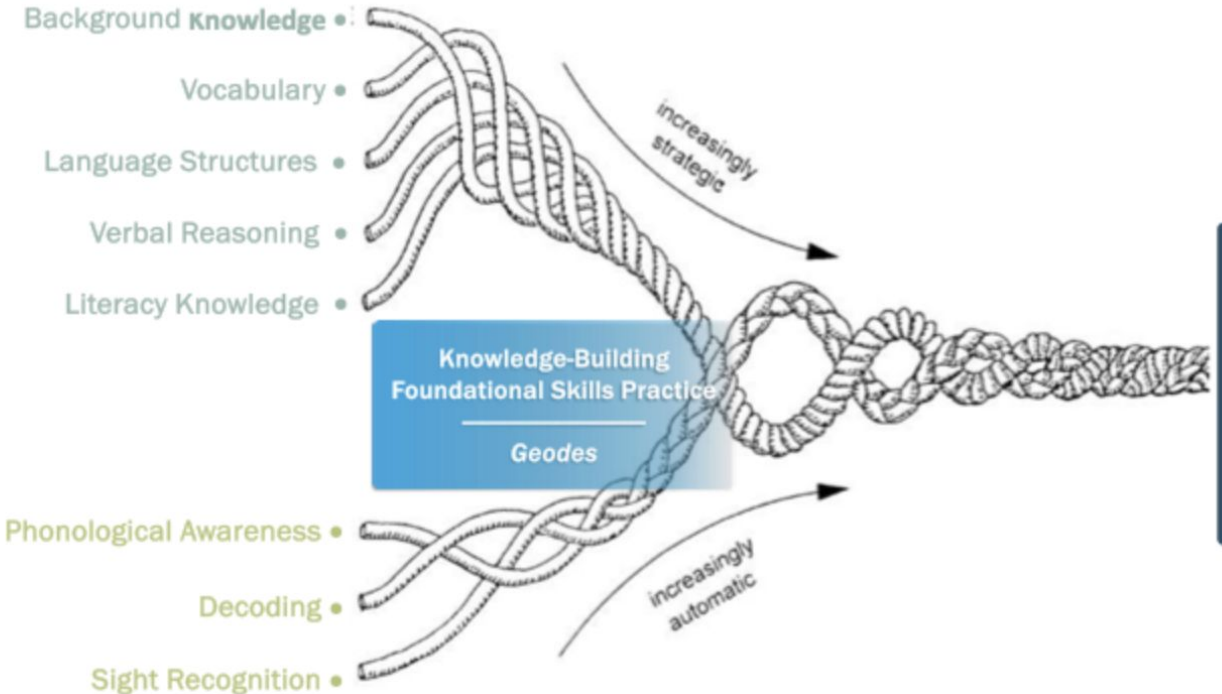
The Five Pillars of Reading Instruction (NRP 2000)	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension
	Heggerty Fundations	Fundations Geodes	Fundations Geodes Arts & Letters	Arts & Letters	Arts & Letters

A successful literacy approach requires the seamless and dedicated pairing of a Foundational Skills program with a Comprehensive ELA program. Our curriculum ensures that we are providing explicit instruction for *all* five pillars.

Scarborough's Rope | Teaching Each Strand

Language Comprehension

Arts & Letters



SKILLED READING

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition

Foundational Skills

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K-3 Foundational Skills Instruction

Our commitment to providing explicit, systematic foundational skills instruction is unwavering.

Arts & Letters and *Geodes* pair particularly well with *Fundations* and *Heggerty,* which remain firmly intact within our instructional approach.

For more information on our approach to teaching foundational literacy skills, click here for a video from Sara Calleja, K-5 ELA & Literacy Department Head, and here for the presentation slides.

Heggerty
Phonemic Awareness



GEODES®

Introduction to Lexington's Newly Adopted

K-5 English Language Arts Curriculum

Arts & letters®

K-5 Arts & Letters

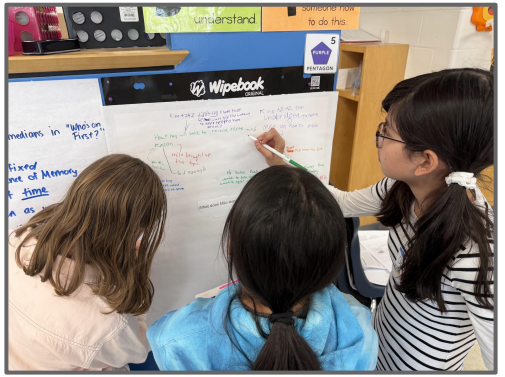
Arts & Letters **students build knowledge of the world and develop reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills.**









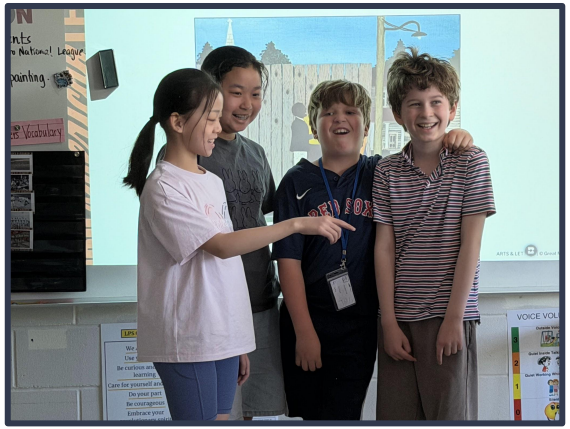


For more information from the curriculum designers, click here:
Great Minds' Curriculum Overview for Families











Arts &letters™

LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Scope & Sequence of Units

Arts & Letters Knowledge Building, Levels K–8

▲ Humanities (Literature and the Arts)
● History and Social Studies
■ Science
✚ Integrated Humanities and History/Social Studies
⬢ Integrated History/Social Studies and Science
★ Integrated Humanities and Science

Level	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
K	■ ***The Five Senses*** How do people use their senses to experience the world?	● ***Once Upon a Farm*** What happens on a farm?	● ***America, Then and Now*** How has innovation changed life in America over time?	● ***The Continents*** What makes the world fascinating?
1	▲ ***A World of Books*** Why are books important?	■ ***Creature Features*** What do people learn by studying animals?	■ ***Wind Power*** How is the wind powerful?	▲ ***World Tales*** How are stories similar around the world?
2	■ ***A Season of Change*** How does seasonal change affect nature and people?	● ***The American West*** How has life in the American West changed over time?	● ***Civil Rights Advocates*** How did civil rights advocates respond to injustice?	■ ***Good Eating*** How does food nourish us?
3	■ ***The Sea*** How do people explore the sea?	■ ***Outer Space*** How do people learn about space?	✚ ***A New Home*** How do stories help us understand immigrants' experiences?	▲ ***Artists Make Art*** What is art?
4	★ ***A Great Heart*** What does having a great heart mean?	▲ ***Myths and Enduring Stories*** What do people learn from myths and stories?	● ***The American Revolution*** How does the pursuit of freedom inspire people's actions?	● ***Let's Play Ball*** How can individuals contribute to a collective legacy?
5	● ***Handed Down*** How do communities sustain their culture?	■ ***Extreme Settings*** How does an extreme setting affect a person?	▲ ***Wordplay*** How and why do writers play with words?	▲ ***Windy City Poetry*** What is the value of poetry?

Kindergarten



Module 1

The Five Senses

How do people use their senses to experience the world?

Introduction to Writing



Module 2

Once Upon a Farm

What happens on a farm?

Narrative Writing



Module 3

America Then and Now

How has innovation changed life in America over time?

Informative Writing



Module 4

The Continents

What makes the world fascinating?

Opinion Writing

Grade 1









Module 1

The World of Books

Why are books important?

Narrative Writing

Module 2

Creature Features

What do people learn from studying animals?

Informative Writing / research

Module 3

Wind Power

How is the wind powerful?

Opinion Writing / research

Module 4

World Tales

How are stories similar around the world?

Narrative, Informative & Opinion Writing

Grade 2



Module 1

A Season of Change

How does seasonal change affect nature and people?

Narrative Writing



Module 2

The American West

How has life in the American West changed over time?

Informative Writing / research



Module 3

Civil Rights Advocates

How do civil rights advocates respond to injustice?

Informative Writing / research



Module 4

Good Eating

How does food nourish us?

Opinion Writing

Grade 3

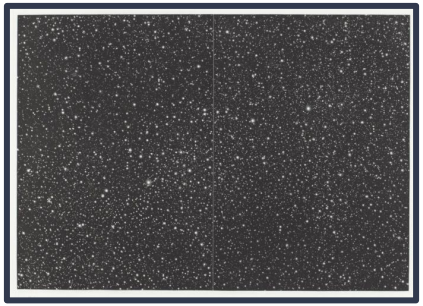


Module 1

The Sea

How do people explore the sea?

Informative Writing

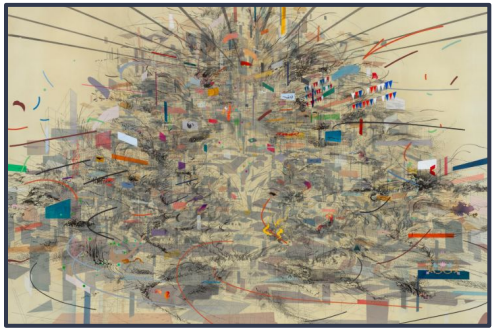


Module 2

Outer Space

How do people learn about space?

Opinion Writing



Module 3

A New Home

How do stories help us understand immigrant experiences?

Narrative Writing



Module 4

Artist Make Art

What is art?

Informative Writing / research

Grade 4

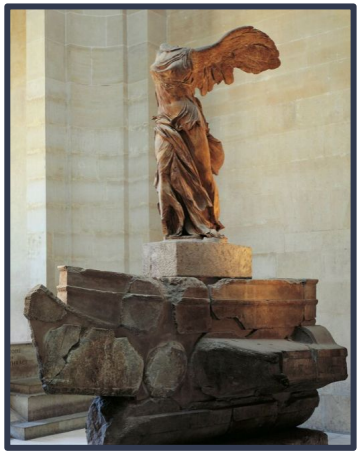


Module 1

A Great Heart

What does having a great heart mean?

Informative Writing



Module 2

Myths and Enduring Stories

What do people learn from myths and stories?

Narrative Writing



Module 3

The American Revolution

How does the pursuit of freedom inspire people's actions?

Opinion Writing



Module 4

Let's Play Ball

How do individuals contribute to a collective legacy?

Narrative, Informative & Opinion Writing / research

Grade Five



Module 1

Handed Down

How do communities sustain their culture?

Informative Writing



Module 2

Extreme Settings

How does an extreme setting affect a person?

Opinion Writing

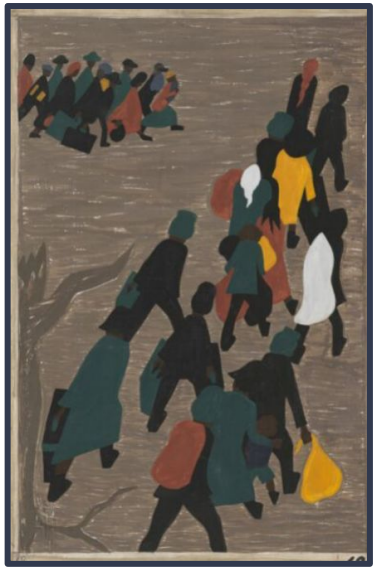


Module 3

Wordplay

How and why do writers play with words?

Narrative Writing



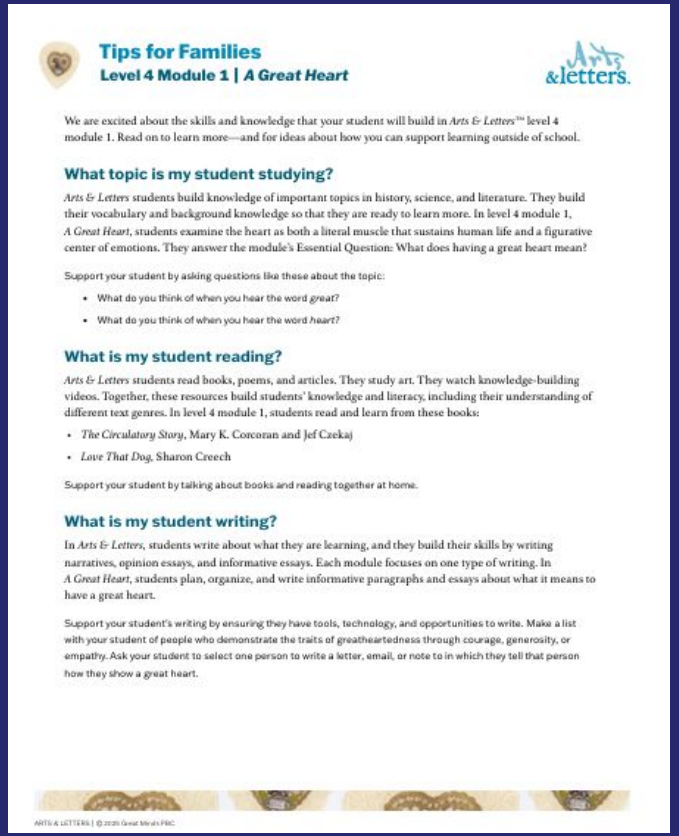
Module 4

Windy City Poetry

What is the value of poetry?

Narrative, Informative & Opinion Writing / research

Arts & Letters Family Tip Sheets



Tips for Families
Level 4 Module 1 | *A Great Heart*

Arts & letters.

We are excited about the skills and knowledge that your student will build in *Arts & Letters*™ level 4 module 1. Read on to learn more—and for ideas about how you can support learning outside of school.

What topic is my student studying?

Arts & Letters students build knowledge of important topics in history, science, and literature. They build their vocabulary and background knowledge so that they are ready to learn more. In level 4 module 1, *A Great Heart*, students examine the heart as both a literal muscle that sustains human life and a figurative center of emotions. They answer the module's Essential Question: What does having a great heart mean?

Support your student by asking questions like these about the topic:

- What do you think of when you hear the word *great*?
- What do you think of when you hear the word *heart*?

What is my student reading?

Arts & Letters students read books, poems, and articles. They study art. They watch knowledge-building videos. Together, these resources build students' knowledge and literacy, including their understanding of different text genres. In level 4 module 1, students read and learn from these books:

- *The Circulatory Story*, Mary K. Corcoran and Jef Czekaj
- *Love That Dog*, Sharon Creech

Support your student by talking about books and reading together at home.

What is my student writing?

In *Arts & Letters*, students write about what they are learning, and they build their skills by writing narratives, opinion essays, and informative essays. Each module focuses on one type of writing. In *A Great Heart*, students plan, organize, and write informative paragraphs and essays about what it means to have a great heart.

Support your student's writing by ensuring they have tools, technology, and opportunities to write. Make a list with your student of people who demonstrate the traits of greatheartedness through courage, generosity, or empathy. Ask your student to select one person to write a letter, email, or note to in which they tell that person how they show a great heart.

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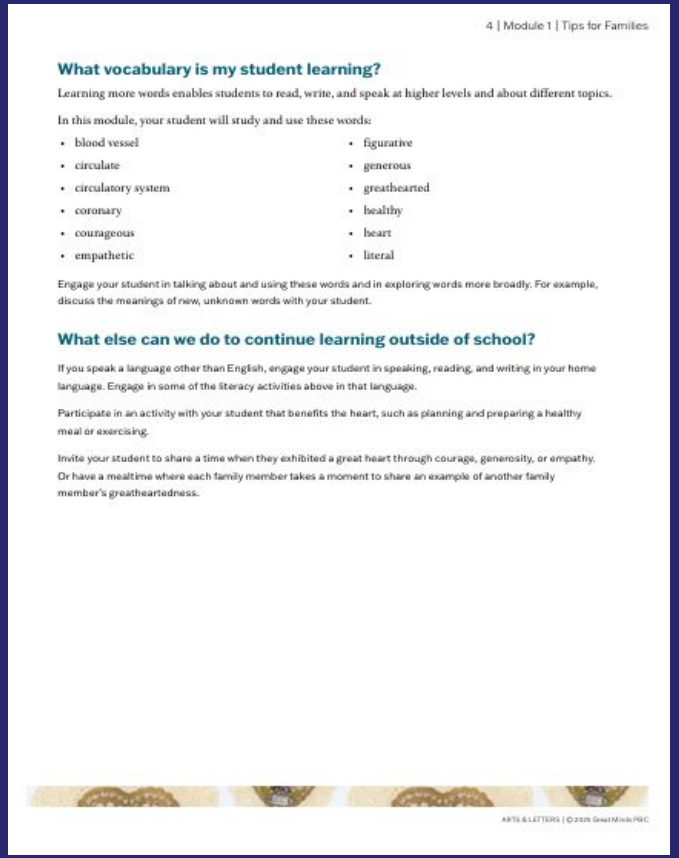
Module Tip Sheets*

for every module

topic overviews
text lists
writing connections
vocabulary,
helpful hints for home

*Available in 15 languages



What vocabulary is my student learning?

Learning more words enables students to read, write, and speak at higher levels and about different topics.

In this module, your student will study and use these words:

- blood vessel
- circulate
- circulatory system
- coronary
- courageous
- empathetic
- figurative
- generous
- greathearted
- healthy
- heart
- literal

Engage your student in talking about and using these words and in exploring words more broadly. For example, discuss the meanings of new, unknown words with your student.

What else can we do to continue learning outside of school?

If you speak a language other than English, engage your student in speaking, reading, and writing in your home language. Engage in some of the literacy activities above in that language.

Participate in an activity with your student that benefits the heart, such as planning and preparing a healthy meal or exercising.

Invite your student to share a time when they exhibited a great heart through courage, generosity, or empathy. Or have a mealtime where each family member takes a moment to share an example of another family member's greatheartedness.

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Whole-Group, 60-Minute Lesson Structure

Similar to Illustrative Math

Launch

- Set the purpose for the lesson
- Activate prior knowledge

Learn

- The heart of the lesson
- Students listen, read, respond, write, observe and/or engage with text daily

Land

- Reflect on new knowledge of the world & English Language Arts (ELA)

K-5 Lex Flex Literacy Block

Daily, Differentiated Instruction and Practice in Comprehensive Literacy

Core Components of Lex Flex

- Targeted, Small-Group Instruction with Classroom Teacher
- Independent Reading, Phonics/ Word Work, & Writing
- Partner Routines, e.g. Fluency
- Book Clubs (Gr4-5)



Integrated Support Systems

- Literacy Intervention, Special Education Services, and Multilingual Learner Services
- Prologue (*Arts & Letters* Preview Lessons as Needed)

Introducing Geodes for Grades K-3
Aligned to Fundations and Arts & Letters

Geodes are designed to be highly readable for beginning readers without sacrificing the rich content and vocabulary that students are learning in *Arts & Letters*.

Crafted as "Readables," these books allow students to apply phonics and decoding skills while building knowledge on important topics.

GEODES®



Independent Evaluations of LPS K-5 Literacy Programs

Arts & letters®

- EdReports (2026)
- The Reading League (2026)



- EdReports (2026)
- The Reading League (2026)

Universal Literacy Screening



mCLASS with DIBELS 8

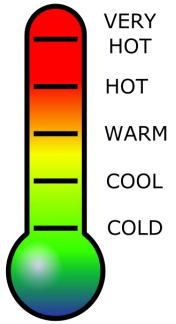
Lexington's Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessment

Since 2023, Lexington has been using the mCLASS with DIBELS® 8th Edition.

This screener is based on the latest research for identifying and supporting all developing readers.

This screener is fully approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Purpose of Universal Screening



IS a "Temperature Check"



IS NOT a Diagnosis

Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessments	
• DO identify a student's risk for poor reading outcomes • DO help to quickly differentiate between students that need intervention or additional assessment and those that do not (International Dyslexia Association)	• DO NOT diagnose dyslexia • DO NOT identify a disability • DO NOT act as a substitute for a formal evaluation as part of the eligibility process for special education

Timeline of Universal Screening

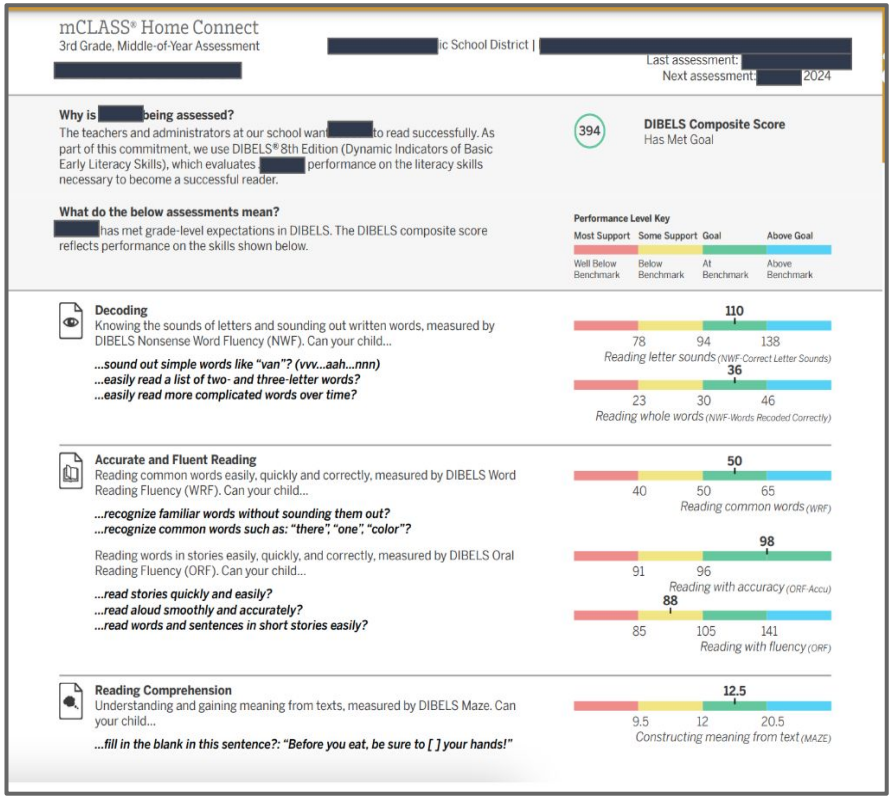
September	Fall Benchmark: All Students
October - December	Progress Monitoring: Students Receiving Intervention
January	Winter Benchmark: All Students
February - April	Progress Monitoring: Students Receiving Intervention
May	Spring Benchmark: All Students

Skills measured by grade

Here's a quick look at the skills DIBELS 8th Edition covers in each grade.

Skill	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4–6
Letter naming	✓	✓			
Phonemic awareness	✓	✓			
Letter sounds & decoding	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Word reading	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fluency		✓	✓	✓	✓
Comprehension			✓	✓	✓

Home Connect Reports are Posted on Aspen



mCLASS® Home Connect
3rd Grade, Middle-of-Year Assessment
[redacted] ic School District | [redacted]
[redacted]
Last assessment: [redacted]
Next assessment: [redacted] 2024

Why is [redacted] being assessed?
The teachers and administrators at our school want [redacted] to read successfully. As part of this commitment, we use DIBELS® 8th Edition (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), which evaluates [redacted] performance on the literacy skills necessary to become a successful reader.

What do the below assessments mean?
[redacted] has met grade-level expectations in DIBELS. The DIBELS composite score reflects performance on the skills shown below.

394 **DIBELS Composite Score**
Has Met Goal

Performance Level Key
Most Support (Well Below Benchmark) | Some Support (Below Benchmark) | Goal (At Benchmark) | Above Goal (Above Benchmark)

Decoding
Knowing the sounds of letters and sounding out written words, measured by DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Can your child...

...sound out simple words like "van"? (vvv...aah...nnn)
...easily read a list of two- and three-letter words?
...easily read more complicated words over time?

110
78 | 94 | 138
Reading letter sounds (NWF-Correct Letter Sounds)

36
23 | 30 | 46
Reading whole words (NWF-Words Recoded Correctly)

Accurate and Fluent Reading
Reading common words easily, quickly and correctly, measured by DIBELS Word Reading Fluency (WRF). Can your child...

...recognize familiar words without sounding them out?
...recognize common words such as: "there", "one", "color"?

50
40 | 50 | 65
Reading common words (WRF)

Reading words in stories easily, quickly, and correctly, measured by DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). Can your child...

...read stories quickly and easily?
...read aloud smoothly and accurately?
...read words and sentences in short stories easily?

98
91 | 96
Reading with accuracy (ORF-Accu)

88
85 | 105 | 141
Reading with fluency (ORF)

Reading Comprehension
Understanding and gaining meaning from texts, measured by DIBELS Maze. Can your child...

...fill in the blank in this sentence?: "Before you eat, be sure to [ ] your hands!"

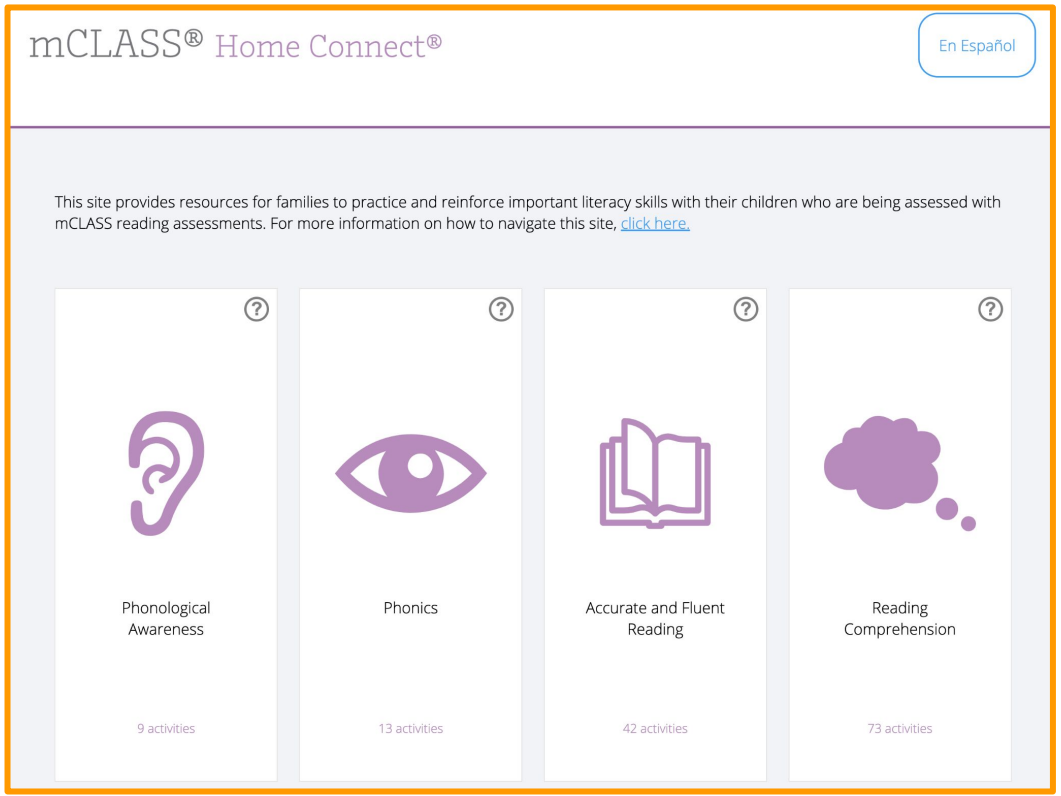
12.5
9.5 | 12 | 20.5
Constructing meaning from text (MAZE)

Directions for locating your student's mCLASS Home Connect Report on Aspen:

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home



mCLASS Home Connect Family Site



Supporting Your Student's Literacy Learning at Home

- **Read together.** Reading aloud to your child helps to develop oral language and listening comprehension. Reading together also helps to promote vocabulary development, which supports reading comprehension.
  - Talk about the book's ideas, words and illustrations.
  - Have your child follow along as you read aloud. Invite your child to reread some favorite parts back to you.

- **Talk together.** Try to ask open-ended questions to encourage your child to share what he/she is learning in school. Show curiosity when they share new and interesting facts or knowledge.
  - Tell me about something you read or listened to today in school.
  - Tell me about something you wrote today in school.
  - Tell me about something you talked about today.
  - Tell me about a word you heard or talked about today.

Surface-Level Questions to Ask About a Story	Possible Responses
What is this part mostly about?	This part is mostly about ___.
What is happening?	In the beginning/middle/end ___.
Who is involved in what's happening?	The character(s) is/are ___.
When and where is it happening?	The story takes place ___.

Deeper-Level Questions to Ask About a Story	Possible Responses
What do you think about ____?	I think ___.
Why do you think ____ happened?	I think ___ because ___.
Why did the author ____?	The author ___ because ___.
What do you think might happen next?	I think ___ will happen next

Questions to Ask During Reading

Students will be familiar with these from their classroom instruction!

- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?
- What is happening in this part?
- What does a closer look at _____ reveal?
- What is the central idea in this story?
- What did you learn from this book?

Surface-Level Questions to Ask About a Topic or Informational Text	Possible Responses
What did this text tell us about ___?	This text was about ___.
What do you already know about ___?	I already know ___ about ___.
What do you wonder about ___?	I wonder about ___ and ___.
Why does ___ happen? How do we know?	I think this happens because ___.

Deeper-Level Questions to Ask About a Topic or Informational Text	Possible Responses
What if ___?	I think ___ because ___.
What is most interesting about this text? Why?	_____ is most interesting because _____.
What did you learn from the text?	From this part of the text, "_____," I learned _____.

Libraries and Book Lists



[Arts & Letters Book Lists at Cary Library, Lexington]

[Lee and Lows]

[Children's Book Council Favorites Award]

[Lexington Elementary Library Resources]

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



Q&A

Thank you for joining us tonight! Our panel will take questions from the Q&A.