August 31, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Worcester County Public School System (WCPS) is committed to identifying and addressing the needs of each student. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about tools and procedures we use to monitor and support each student’s literacy growth. Three times a year, all students in grades 1-8 participate in an assessment that provides teachers with valuable data about students’ development in reading, the iReady diagnostic assessment. The screening tool, DIBELS 8 is used with all of our kindergarten students three times per year. For students in grades 1-3, DIBELS 8 may also be administered if more information about a student’s reading progress is needed. In only 5-8 minutes per child, DIBELS 8 provides detailed information about students’ development of foundational reading skills and helps predict risk for future reading difficulties. The ongoing reading growth measure we use with all of our students in grades kindergarten through grade five is the American Reading Company Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA). This reading inventory helps to determine the placement of students’ independent reading skills and provides teachers and students with a personalized path for growth.

WCPS utilizes universal screening, diagnostic assessments, and documented student performance to predict students’ likelihood of meeting grade-level expectations in reading and determine needs for supplemental instruction and intervention. Screening and diagnostic data is reviewed by grade-level teams to drive decisions about instruction and ensure that all students are having their academic needs met.

Parents/Guardians of all WCPS students will be notified of their child’s reading achievement quarterly, in each report card. For our students in grades K-3, families will be notified by letter of their child’s diagnostic and/or screening results following the fall administration and review of data. If a child demonstrates any indicators of possible reading difficulty, the letter will include a description of any supplemental instruction and progress monitoring that will be provided. Outside of these formal communication measures, WCPS teachers of all grade levels are encouraged to communicate frequently with caregivers about students’ progress. We strive to forge strong partnerships with our families, and our schools’ staff welcome communication from parents/guardians as well.

Typical and atypical early reading behaviors are described in the graphic on the reverse side of this letter titled: “What are the Effects of Dyslexia: Signs of typical reading development and possible indicators of risk for dyslexia.” If a plain text version of the graphic is preferred, please contact me using the email or phone number below.

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s reading skills, please contact your child’s teacher. If you have questions about WCPS screening tools or procedures for monitoring student reading development, please contact Cassidy Hamborsky. More information about our reading assessments and about the Ready to Read Act (COMAR 13A.03.08) can also be found on our website, www.worcesterk12.org.

Sincerely,

Cassidy Hamborsky
Coordinator of Instruction for Reading Language Arts PK-12
cmhamborsky@worcesterk12.org | 410-632-5040
What Are the Effects of Dyslexia
Signs of typical reading development and possible indicators of risk for dyslexia.

Preschool Years
- Notice repeated sounds in oral language (e.g., Baa, Baa, Black Sheep)
- May start to pay attention to beginning or rhyming sounds in words
- Know the functions of print (e.g., know that different texts are used for different purposes, know that print has meaning)
- Know 10 alphabet letters, and the letters in their name
- Have trouble learning common nursery rhymes
- Not recognize rhyming patterns.
- Have difficulty learning and remembering the names of letters in the alphabet
- Use persistent “baby talk”

Kindergarten to 1st Grade
- Learn one-to-one letter sound correspondences
- Understand that speech sounds map on to printed letters to form words
- Learn to decode regular one-syllable words using their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences
- Begin to make sense of what they are reading
- Not associate letters with sounds
- Make reading errors that show no connection to the sounds of the letters on the page
- Not understand that words “come apart”
- Not be able to sound out simple words like map, cat, pan
- Complain about how hard reading is

2nd Grade and Beyond
- Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to sound out unknown words
- Use word parts to decode regular multisyllabic words
- Read accurately and fluently enough to concentrate on comprehension
- Often be very slow in acquiring reading skills
- Often guess at words
- Not be able to sound out words
- Confuse words that sound alike
- Avoid reading out loud
- Have poor spelling and messy handwriting

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