

HOW WE TEACH READING AT MCGRAW ELEMENTARY

2021-2022 School Year



*At McGraw Elementary, an IB World School, we believe that "Children have the basic human right to read...Children have the right to supportive reading environments with knowledgeable literacy partners."
(International Literacy Association)*

*In an effort to ensure ALL McGraw students are readers, we are deeply committed to providing **Structured Literacy** supported by the **Science of Reading** so that every child can be a successful reader.*

WHAT DO WE TEACH ALL STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING TO READ?

Learning to read requires continued development in the **five major components of research-aligned literacy instruction** which include: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies.

Phonemic Awareness - The ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds in words is critical for learning to read. This sound awareness facilitates growth in printed word recognition. The Heggerty Phonemic Awareness program is part of our phonemic awareness instruction in grades Pre K-2 and beyond.

Phonics - Explicit and systematic phonics instruction follows our order of skills progressing from simple to complex: basic sound-spelling patterns, digraphs, blends, vowel teams, and then introductions to the syllable types.

Fluency - Fluency is NOT just reading fast or the number of words read per minute. Fluency is accurately reading words at an appropriate speed while being aware of punctuation, phrasing, and expression (voice of the reader).

Vocabulary and Background Knowledge - A language rich environment is crucial. It builds background knowledge, expands vocabulary, and develops higher-order and critical thinking skills for reading independently.

Comprehension - Comprehension is the ability to understand and communicate about what has been read or heard. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of all reading!

Our "Why"

A student's experiences, cultural background, socioeconomic status, or environment will not be the deciding factor of the educational opportunities the student will be afforded. Each child who enters our doors will have an equal chance at literacy success through the use of evidenced-aligned practices rooted in the Science of Reading. The ability to read helps our students access endless knowledge to better understand and engage in the world around them.

HOW DO WE TEACH READING TO ALL STUDENTS?

At McGraw we teach reading through explicit and systematic instruction. This includes consistent practice in the following:

Decodable Readers: These are books or passages that include mostly words that can be decoded, or sounded out, according to the skills previously taught. The more opportunities a student has to practice previously learned phonics patterns, the more fluently and automatically our students will read. Once a child has the skills in place to accurately decode a text, then all text becomes “decodable” text. Students should avoid guessing or using pictures for a clue. All students are assessed with a survey of phonics skills and spelling patterns to help us determine the amount of practice needed. Some students are advanced decoders and pick up on sound-spelling patterns quickly.

Reading at Home: It is important to read to and with your child using both decodables and other rich literature. When your child is reading (aloud), encourage them to sound out words instead of guessing or using picture clues. It is also beneficial for students to listen to stories read by you or an audio book. This builds higher level vocabulary, listening comprehension, and encourages the love of reading.

Red Words: These are words that don't follow the “rules”, but words that students need to learn by heart. Each grade level has a list of appropriate grade level words that ‘break’ previously/currently learned phonics rules. These words occur often in reading and writing. We practice how to read and spell these words through a multisensory approach.

Assessment: To advance skill progression, we continually monitor and target instruction based on the needs of all students. By taking a scientific approach to teaching reading, we are taking steps to prevent reading difficulties. If we see any signs your child may be struggling with the foundational or language skills of reading, we will immediately implement interventions and monitor their progress. The best solution to the problem of reading failure is early identification and intervention.

Spelling and Phonics: Because our emphasis is on phonics, a traditional spelling list will not come home. Research shows little benefit of memorizing a set of words for testing on Fridays. We do not see this memorization transfer into student's daily writing. Instead, we want students to understand the phonics rules and apply them to spelling in their daily work.

Morphology: Morphology is the study of words and word parts. Prefixes, suffixes and base words are the smallest meaningful units of words. We introduce the concept of morphemes in kindergarten which allows students an understanding of word parts as they begin deeper study of morphology in the upper elementary grades. Morphemes are important for phonics in both reading and spelling, as well as in vocabulary and comprehension.

The Simple View of Reading



(Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990)

We are learning a great deal about how the brain develops as students learn to read and what instructional practices are most effective for ALL children. We are committed to providing Structured Literacy supported by the Science of Reading so that every child can be a successful reader. We need parents as our partners and we look forward to working with you.