

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: March 9, 2004

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **MIDDLE SCHOOL READING SCREENING PROCESS**

ORIGINATOR: Christine M. Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
RESOURCE PERSON(S): Gwendolyn R. Grant, Executive Director of Secondary Programs

INFORMATION

This report is an informational item to provide the Board of Education with an update as to the Reading Screening Process, which is currently taking place. Its intent is to provide middle schools across the county with a systematic method of determining which students will exit from reading in Grade 6 and which students will continue in reading 7 and or 8. This process was developed in concert with the Middle School Task Force.

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Attachment I – Position Statement on the Purpose of a Reading Screening Process

Position Statement on the Purpose of a Reading Screening Process



The Vision Statement of the Baltimore County Public Schools suggests “graduates will have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to reach their potential as responsible, productive citizens in a global economy and multicultural society.” If students are to achieve this goal, they need to be proficient readers. In the BCPS “Blueprint for Progress,” Indicator 1.1 states, “All diploma-bound students in grades 3-8 and 10 will meet or exceed Maryland School Assessment standards.” Reading is one of the standards measured. These standards require educators in the Baltimore County Public Schools to create effective, strategic, independent readers. In an effort to provide appropriate assistance to all students and to insure that the Standards established by the Voluntary State Curriculum and measured by MSA, some students needed direct reading instruction beyond grade 6.

The reading program in the Baltimore County Public Schools is based on the National Reading Panel’s belief that the reading program include five essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The inclusion of these five components combined with effective reading instruction delivery will result in students becoming effective, strategic, independent readers.

In order to help students to achieve the goals of becoming independent readers, they need to be afforded the opportunity to have appropriate reading instruction at every grade level from K-5 as well as in middle school. In order for students to meet standards established by NCLB, MSA, and VSC, the school system must have a process to identify which students need reading beyond grade 6. This identified process, entitled the Reading Screening Process, shall be used to determine which students need reading beyond grade 6.

The Reading Screening Process includes the examination of several key data points for each student entering and enrolled in middle school: MSA scores, standing on benchmark progress tests, a checklist of “Indicators of Reading Proficiency,” and performance in the grade 6 reading class. How students perform on these data points will determine if they are to exit reading instruction after grade 6 or continue in reading instruction in grades 7 and 8. This process carries forth the belief that students’ skills should be evaluated using multiple assessment measures.

Beyond the middle school, the need for reading instruction is assessed using the Reading Screening Process and is currently provided as a focused offering in summer school. In addition, reading in the content areas, which is begun as an important emphasis in middle school, continues into the high school program.

Middle School Task Force Plan for Implementation of the 2002-03 Recommendations

Recommendation II

Content Strands/Curricula

All Baltimore County Middle Schools will offer consistent and rigorous content strands/curricula aligned with COMAR, the Voluntary State Curriculum, Maryland State Learning Outcomes, the Maryland state standards and expectations, and the Baltimore County Essential Curriculum inclusive of the Reading Screening, Special Education, and Guidance Support Program Proposals.

Reading Screening Plan: Systematic plan to determine which students will exit reading after sixth grade.

Issues to be resolved for implementation:

Schools should determine the anticipated number of students they will have in seventh grade and eighth grade reading (and electives) based on the identified criteria in order to hire the appropriate number of reading (and elective) teachers. The criteria are entitled “Reading Referral Guidelines.” (See attached pages.)

Implementation Plan of Action:

Schools will receive in February the “Reading Referral Guidelines.” Prior to the student registration process for the next school year, administrators or their designees will use this process to do the following:

Grade 6 to Grade 7:

- ③ Complete an initial screening of students to determine which students scored “basic” on the Grade 5 MSA and scored “near” or “below” grade level on the January Reading Benchmark. These students will be scheduled for Grade 7 reading class.
- ③ Note that students for whom there is discrepant information (e.g., scored “basic” on the MSA but scored “on” grade level on the Reading Benchmark) will necessitate the Grade 6 reading teacher’s completion of the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist.”
- ③ Confirm the placement of students in their reading classes. In June, teachers will review the current Grade 6 MSA reading scores to see if the Grade 5 baseline scores for students have changed. For example, if a student’s score goes from “basic” to “proficient” and the student has received a “C” or better in reading class, then he/she may move to an elective in Grade 7.

Grade 7 to Grade 8:

- ③ Complete an initial screening of students to determine which students scored “basic” on the Grade 6 MSA and scored below “25” on the Grade 7 reading unit test. These students will be scheduled for Grade 8 reading class.
- ③ Note that students for whom there is discrepant information (e.g., scored “basic” on the MSA but scored above “25” on the Grade 7 reading unit test) will necessitate the Grade 7 reading teacher’s completion of the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist.”

- ③ Confirm the placement of students in their reading classes. In June, teachers will review the current Grade 7 MSA reading scores to see if the Grade 6 baseline scores for students have changed. For example, if a student's score goes from "basic" to "proficient" and the student has received a "C" or better in reading class, then he/she may move to an elective in Grade 8.

Grade 8 to Summer School before Grade 9:

- ③ Complete an initial screening of students to determine which students scored "basic" on the Grade 7 MSA and scored below "25" on the Grade 8 reading unit test. These students should be scheduled for a summer reading class.
- ③ Note that students for whom there is discrepant information (e.g., scored "basic" on the MSA but scored above "25" on the Grade 8 reading unit test) will necessitate the Grade 8 reading teacher's completion of the "Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist."
- ③ Confirm the placement of students in their reading classes. In June, teachers will review the current Grade 8 MSA reading scores to see if the Grade 7 baselines scores for students have changed. For example, if a student's score goes from "basic" to "proficient" and the student has received a "C" or better in reading class, he/she would not necessitate a summer reading class recommendation.

Continuing Review of Students Based on MSA Reading Scores

- ③ As schools monitor students' MSA scores, they should make certain that students continue to perform at a "proficient" level. If they do not perform at a "proficient" level, they should be reviewed using the Reading Screening Process to determine if reading class placement is again necessary.

Training for administrators and Reading Contacts in each middle school in how to use the Referral Guidelines will be provided in January during the time that administrators register students for the next school year.

Recommendations from the Middle School Task Force Committee:

- ③ **Send parents of students identified for reading 7 and 8 a copy of the "Indicators of Reading Proficiency" so that they might see what areas of improvement their children need to address in order to be proficient readers.**
- ③ **Create some means of relaying this information to explain to parents the plan to exit or continue students in reading 7 and 8.**
- ③ **Include some world language content activities in reading 7 and 8 so that students who are assigned to reading (and not world languages) do not feel stigmatized by their reading assignment.**

☐ Budget/Fiscal resources needed for implementation:

- The Office of English and Reading will provide professional development for reading teachers in grades 6, 7, and 8. The funds for this professional development are coming from the Title II grant. This professional development will occur for 4 days in June, 2004 after the school year ends. The funding amounts to approximately \$80,000.

- Staffing schools with a sufficient number of reading and elective teachers should NOT require extra resources. The Office of English and Reading will work with the Acting Director of Human Resources to assist in finding qualified reading teachers.
- The Office of English and Reading will seek funding to develop the curriculum that teachers use with students in Reading 7 and 8. The funding request for the 10 days for each workshop amounts to \$42,000.
- Schools need to purchase identified materials for use with the Grade 7 and 8 reading curriculum. The materials thus far designated for this program include nonfiction/expository kits from Teacher Created Materials that cost the schools \$400 each. Each school has purchased at least one kit, and some may need to purchase several more.

☐ Staffing resources needed for implementation:

No extra resources should be required for implementation. The middle school reading teachers are built into the overall staffing of the school. The role of the reading specialist is to help identify students for the program, diagnose their needs, prescribe and implement intervention programs and strategies to address their needs, assess student progress, and provide professional development to teachers. Principals may need to “exchange” reading teachers for world language teachers, and vice versa, depending on the number of students entering each program based on the attached Reading Screening Plan.

☐ Timeline for implementation:

The implementation for this Reading Screening Procedure should begin in the winter, 2004 at the time that administrators conduct their school registration for the following year. This Screening Process is intended for current sixth grade students moving to grade 7, current seventh grade students moving to grade 8, and current eighth grade students moving to grade 9. For students moving to grade 9, the current recommendation will be a voluntary summer school placement, since high schools do not currently have a reading course.



Grade 6 Referral Form
For
Grade 7: Reading

Student: _____
(Last Name) (First Name)

Recommending Teacher: _____

Recommended Placement: **Reading** **Related Arts course**
 Double period of Mathematics **World Languages** **Other**

Referral Criteria

Initial Screening:

Student scored at the “Basic” level on the grade 5 MSA. *yes* *no*

(Basic refers to any student who scored 404 or lower. Any student who scored between 404 – 414 is considered at risk for performing at “basic” in grade 6. The “Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” should be completed on students in this latter category.)

Second Screening:

Student scored “Near” or “Below” grade level on the January Benchmark assessment. *yes* *no*

If both of the above criteria apply to the student, student is automatically placed in reading.

Discrepancy Check:

If only one of the above criteria applies to the student, complete the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” and determine the following criterion:

Student received fewer than 70 points on the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist.” *yes* *no*

➤If the student scores below 70 points and has a “yes” checked in either the “initial screening or the second screening,” the student is placed in reading class.

Final Confirmation (6/04):

Please note any additional information necessary for determining placement.



Grade 7 Referral Form
For
Grade 8: Reading

Student: _____
(Last Name) (First Name)

Recommending Teacher: _____

Recommended Placement: Reading Related Arts course
 Double period of Mathematics World Languages Other

Referral Criteria

Initial Screening:

Student scored at the "Basic" level on the grade 6 MSA. *yes* *no*

Second Screening:

Student scored below 25 on the most recent "Unit Test." *yes* *no*

If both of the above criteria apply to the student, student is automatically placed in reading.

Discrepancy Check:

If only one of the above criteria applies to the student, complete the "Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist" and determine the following criterion:

Student received fewer than 70 points on the "Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist." *yes* *no*

➤ *If the student scores below 70 points and has a "yes" checked in either "the initial screening or the second screening," the student is placed in reading class.*

Final Confirmation (6/04):

Student scored above the "Basic" level on the grade 7 MSA. *yes* *no*

➤ *Students scoring above "Basic" level on the grade 7 MSA and receiving a "C" in a*

Please note any additional information necessary for determining placement.



Grade 8 Referral Form
For
Summer School/Grade 9: Reading

Student: _____
(Last Name) (First Name)

Recommending Teacher: _____

Recommended Placement: Reading Related Arts course
 Double period of Mathematics World Languages Other

Referral Criteria

Initial Screening:

Student scored at the “Basic” level on the grade 7 MSA. yes no

Second Screening:

Student scored below 25 on the most recent reading "Unit Test." yes no

If both of the above criteria apply to the student, student is automatically placed in reading.

Discrepancy Check:

Student received fewer than 70 points on the "Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist." yes no

If the student scores below 70 points and has a “yes” checked in either “the initial screening or the second screening,” the student is placed in summer reading class.

Final Confirmation:

Student scored above the “Basic” level on the grade 8 MSA.

Please note any additional information necessary for determining placement.

Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist for Grades 6-8

DIRECTIONS: Based on your knowledge of this student, rate him/her on each of the following criteria:

	3 Usually	2 Sometimes	1 Rarely
Phonics			
• Decodes single-syllable words			
• Decodes multi-syllable words			
• Uses syllabication (chunks words into parts)			
Sight Vocabulary			
• Identifies high-frequency words			
Fluency			
• Reads aloud with phrasing and expression			
• Reads words accurately while reading aloud			
• Reads at least 130 words per minute			
• Attends to punctuation when reading aloud			
Vocabulary			
• Recognizes and uses base words, prefixes, and suffixes to determine meaning			
• Uses context clues to determine meaning			
• Recognizes and uses grade level appropriate vocabulary in oral and written work			
• Recognizes antonyms and synonyms			
• Explains multiple meaning words			
Comprehension			
• Recalls specific information from a text			
• Makes inferences based on implied information from the text or a portion of the text			
• Connects text to other texts and own life			
• Surveys and previews the text independently			

	3 Usually	2 Sometimes	1 Rarely
• Sets a purpose for reading the text independently			
• Makes connections to the text from prior knowledge and experiences			
• Makes predictions and ask questions about the text			
• Uses a graphic organizer or another note-taking technique to record important ideas or information			
• Makes, confirms, or adjusts predictions			
• Draws conclusions and generalizations based on stated and/or implied information from the text and previous knowledge or experience			
• Identifies and explains the author's/text's purpose and intended audience			
• Explains how someone might use the text			
Column Totals			
Checklist Total			

Referral Guidelines for Reading – Student Record Sheet

Student Name _____

DIRECTIONS: Use as an optional data collection sheet for students identified for reading

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MSA 5: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 2. January Benchmark: Ⓒ Above/On Ⓒ Near Ⓒ Below grade level 3. “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” score: _____ (as needed) 4. MSA 6: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 5. End of Course Reading 6 Grade _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MSA 6: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 2. Grade 7 Reading Unit Tests: _____ 3. “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” score: _____ (as needed) 4. MSA 7: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 5. End of Course Reading 7 Grade _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MSA 7: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 2. Grade 8 Reading Unit Tests: _____ 3. “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” score: _____ (as needed) 4. MSA 8: Ⓒ Advanced Ⓒ Proficient Ⓒ Basic 5. End of Course Reading 8 Grade _____
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>Students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 5 MSA, and • Score “Near” or “Below” grade level on the January Benchmark test, and/or • Score below 70 points on the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” and • Did not receive a “C” in Reading 6 or • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 6 MSA <p>will be placed in Grade 7 Reading.</p>	<p>Students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 6 and • Score below 25 on the Grade 7 unit tests and/or • Score below 70 points on the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” and • Did not receive a “C” in Reading 7 or • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 7 MSA <p>will be placed in Grade 8 Reading.</p>	<p>Students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 7 and • Score below 25 on the Grade 8 unit tests and/or • Score below 70 points on the “Indicators of Reading Proficiency Screening Checklist” and • Did not receive a “C” in Reading 8 or • Score at the “Basic” level on the Grade 8 MSA <p>should be recommended for summer school and/or a reading placement in grade 9.</p>
<p>Students who exceed the above criteria may be placed in Related Arts Classes</p>	<p>Students who exceed the above criteria may be placed Related Arts Classes</p>	<p>Students who exceed the above criteria do not need reading assistance at this time.</p>