



2025 – 2026

Reading/Literacy Curriculum Study Report to School Board

April 6, 2026

Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student, Every Day.



MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MISSION & CORE VALUES

MISSION

Excellence, Equity, Empowerment. Every Student,
Every Day.

CORE VALUES

- Courage
- Student Centered
- Integrity
- Accountable
- Inclusive Practices



Strategic Directions: Focus of Our Improvement Efforts

- A. Improving our professional practices so that each learner achieves at high levels in an inclusive educational model that is relevant and flexible
- B. Enhancing our student support structures to meet academic, social, behavioral, and mental health needs
- C. Recruiting, developing, and retaining staff to ensure positive learning experiences for students
- D. Strengthening our parent/caregiver partnerships and connections
- E. Ensuring safe, efficient and effective operations

Why a New Curriculum?

- ✓ **Evidence-Based Alignment:** Ensure all materials align strictly with the Science of Reading and current literacy research. MN READ Act. & support new learning
- ✓ **Equity & Access:** Provide high-quality, rigorous texts accessible to all diverse learners in our district.
- ✓ **Standard Compliance:** Update resources to fully meet the rigorous demands of the 2020 Minnesota State ELA Standards.
- ✓ **Cohesive Instruction:** Create a unified instructional approach across all grade levels to support student growth.



Detailed Project Schedule

Phase	Dates	Key Activities
Prepare	Sept – Dec 2025	Initial review to select materials for deep evaluation.
Study	Dec. 2025–March 2026	Presentation from each Publisher & Evaluate each
Selection	March 2026	Final recommendation of the new curriculum.
Planning	March– Sept 2026	Detailed implementation planning.
Professional Development	Summer/Fall 2026	Initial Professional Development and follow up PD throughout school year
Implementation	Sept. 2026	Implementation of new curriculum in ALL K–5 Classrooms



Identified the Curriculum Candidates

**Option A:
Wit & Wisdom**

A Knowledge building curriculum aligned with the Science of Reading, that integrates literature, history, science, and the arts.

**Option B:
CKLA–Amplify**

Features two distinct strands: systematic skills(phonics) and knowledge domains for comprehension. Knowledge only

**Option C:
Benchmark
Advanced**

A comprehensive, standards-aligned program featuring leveled texts . Knowledge building only.

**Option D:
Arts & Letters**

A Knowledge building curriculum aligned with the Science of Reading, that integrates literature, history, science, and the arts.



Review Tools Used



Material Review Tools

Utilizing curriculum evaluation tools to ensure alignment with the scientific evidence base for reading instruction



MN State Standards

Cross-referencing all potential materials against the specific benchmarks and competencies required by Minnesota.



MDE Approved Resources

Leveraging the Minnesota Department of Education's vetted lists and rubrics for high-quality instructional materials.

Team Review Format

The team consisted of representatives from each grade level, special education and MLL as well as Mentor Coaches and administrators

- Teams used the agreed upon tools to rigorously review and score each vendor's materials (including online and consumable teacher and student materials)
- Developed additional questions for vendors
- Reviewed alignment with MN ELA Standards
- Reviewed district priorities
- Reviewed MDE completed rubrics
- Reviewed curriculum reviews from industry-standard tools
- Whole group discussion
- Considered vendor answers to questions
- Feedback from other users when available

Team Recommendation

The group agreed after careful deliberation and review of rubrics and district priorities that Arts & Letters from Great Minds is the best choice for our new ELA Curriculum



What's Next?

- Recommendation to the school board April 6
- Soft launch with select committee members
- Purchase materials
- Professional Development for teachers, admin & coaches
- Materials delivery
- Literacy Framework/Pacing Guide updates
- Box up and remove Benchmark Literacy materials
- Full implementation of Arts & Letters Curriculum in K-5 Classrooms
- Ongoing coaching and support during the school year

ELA Curriculum Review Committee

Thank you to our dedicated committee of staff who spent countless hours helping to review materials and reach a decision.

K: Molly Lout, Michelle Krahling

1: Makenzie Evans, Gina Vanselow

2: Melissa Larkin, Linnea Wilson

3: Michelle Marco, Angie Eccles

4: Betty Alders, Hannah Berdan

5: Kirsten Ertman, Abby Steffensmeier

MLL: Erin Krueger

Special Ed: Annie Sawatsky

Mentor Coaches: Brittany Ward, Kristin Krusemark, Katie Soine, Jen Kluntz, Mandi Carleton

Principals: Michelle Kruise, Ann Haggerty

Instructional Support: Bobbie Bastian



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