

## **Overview of the IDEAL Model (K-3)**

Similar to the LEADS model, **IDEAL** is research based, student centered, inclusive and interdisciplinary. It is focused on supporting primary students in reading and writing instruction while connecting these skills to the content areas through a strong focus on expository reading. While LEADS focuses on reading to learn, **IDEAL**, as the primary model, focuses on learning to read. The model incorporates three tiers of instruction. These three tiers of instruction include:

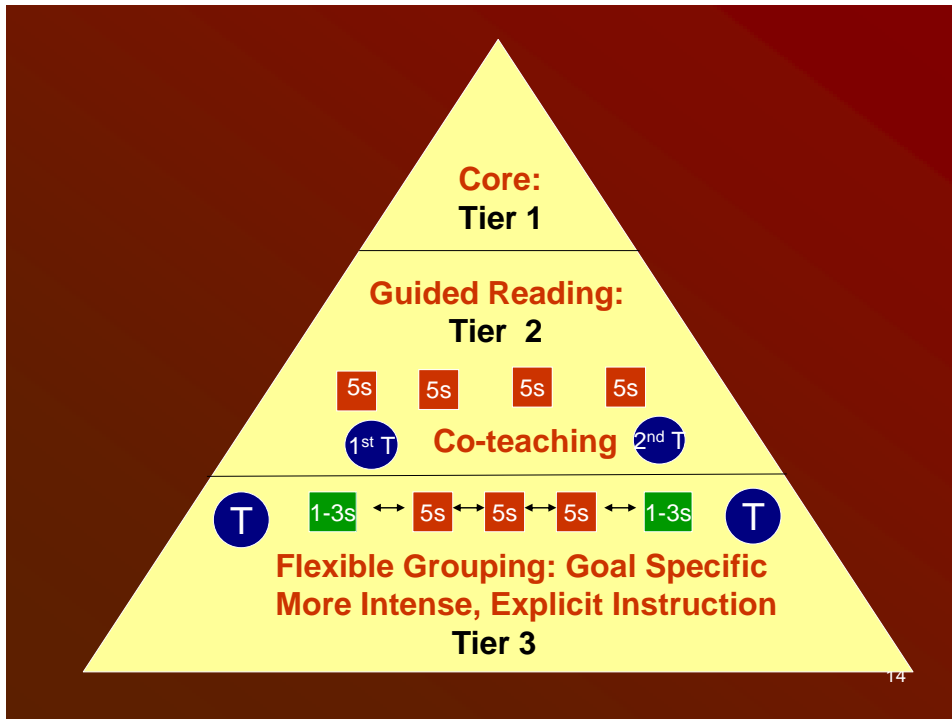
**Tier 1** – this component is to provide whole group instruction focused on developing higher order thinking skills. In New Jersey, these are the core curriculum content standards (NJCCCS). Instruction in Tier 1 also focuses on developing and expanding students' vocabulary as well as background knowledge around which themes/units of study are built. All reading materials used in Tier 1 are age appropriate, grade level or above the instructional level, and rigorous, thereby assuring all students are exposed to the core.

**Tier 2 (Guided Reading)** -- this component of the model allows for teachers to provide small group instruction focused on providing scaffolded support to students to help them develop and extend reading comprehension skills that are modeled in Tier 1. All reading materials used at this level are at the students' instructional level, allowing students with higher ability to further advance their skills and knowledge as early as Kindergarten. While students work with the teacher in small groups, their classmates are working independently in learning centers which further develop core reading components such as phonics, vocabulary, and or background knowledge. Writing, reader responses, and content connections are also a large part of this component.

In the fourth and fifth grades, students identified as Gifted and Talented will be supported during Tier 2 with advanced reading materials that will challenge their higher ability and will serve as the impetus for Project-Based Learning activities that will be further developed in the learning centers.

**Tier 3** – this component again allows for teachers to provide individual or small group instruction focused on interventions to support struggling readers. Instruction is to help those students who are below level in specific skills.

**During Tier 2 and Tier 3**, co-teachers are assigned to support the needs of students who are mildly behind and need Reading Specialists, Academic Assistance or In-Class Resource Services.



## Thematic Planning

The IDEAL model is built around thematic, cross-curricular units. The core reading materials, the comprehensive reading program, set the theme for the unit. In the case of Middletown Public Schools, this is the state approved McMillan-McGraw –Hill series, 2003. These core reading materials also form the base of Tier 1 instruction. Guided reading materials then mirror the core reading materials and are based around the theme. Finally, while the teacher is working with small groups of students providing Tier 2 and 3 instructions, students not receiving direct instruction from the teacher at that time engage in learning centers.

Primary students should engage in meaningful activities that foster growth in reading and core knowledge of content areas including social studies and science. (Hirsch, E.D. (2006) Reading non-fiction is critical for background knowledge, motivation, and meaningful writing.

## Phonics and Vocabulary

There is universal agreement that alphabetic principle is critical to early successful word reading (National Literacy Panel). However, students need to understand the words they read (William H. Rupley et. al 2003, Vocabulary instruction in a balanced reading program). Teachers must develop phonics skills in an environment of building vocabulary and comprehension. Phonics drills alone will lead to word readers who do not comprehend what they orally produce. *Phonics is essential, but insufficient.* The goal of reading is to comprehend what has been read.

## **Student Assessment/ Progress Monitoring and Intervention**

Teachers and administrators are guided to use assessment data to guide instruction. This includes the use of screening instruments and interpretation of results to identify students guided reading levels (Tier 2) and identifies possible areas for intervention in Tier 3. Also teachers are advised to record on-going assessments to map daily instruction, this includes running records as well as anecdotal records during guided reading.

Clearly as the data show, some students have not mastered essential reading skills. Not all students have developed the requisite decoding skills needed to read effectively, nor do all students have the vocabulary needed to help them make sense of the decoding process. It is critical that by the end of first grade, students master the essential skills of alphabetic principle. Research informs us that those who do not will experience more and more difficulty with reading each subsequent year. Additionally, the necessary background knowledge and skills may not be in place to facilitate the development of key reading and writing skills. Teachers must become aware of strategies needed to assure students develop these skill sets to the appropriate levels to enable them to become strong readers.

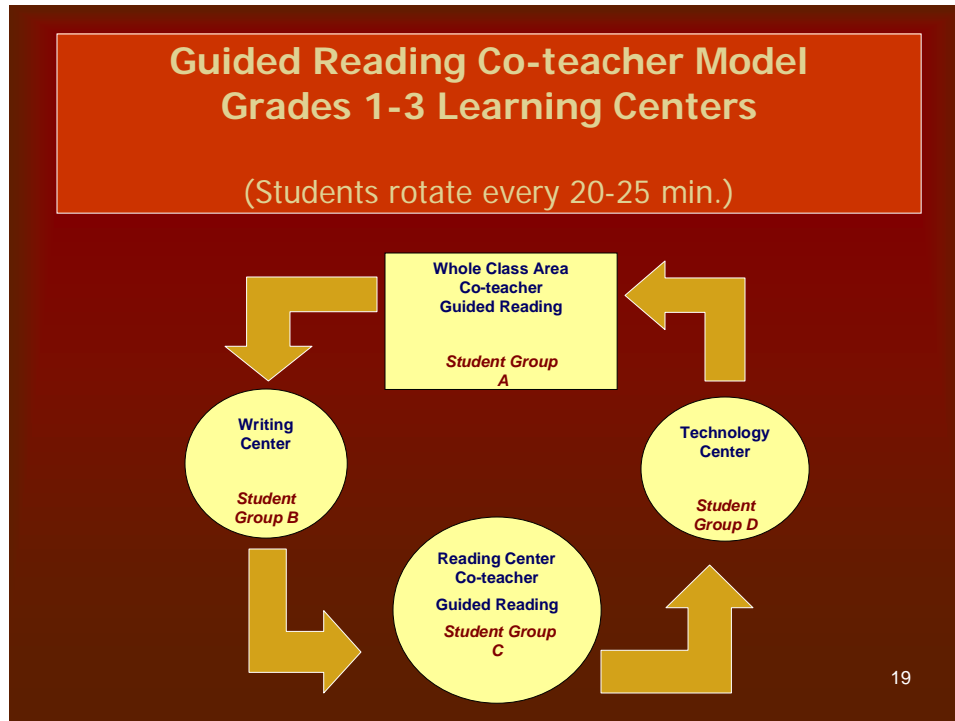
Middletown Public Schools has adopted the DRA2 as the district-wide formative, screening assessment. DRA2 assesses reading levels (Tier 2) as well as including a word analysis section for subskill instruction (Tier 3).

## **Guided Reading and Comprehension**

Guided reading is small group reading instruction that is focused at students' instructional level and designed to scaffold instruction, thereby moving students from their current reading level to the next higher level. (Fountas and Pinell) The initial level for guided reading is determined by the initial student screening assessment (DRA2) and then based on daily interaction in small groups. Teachers track student progress through anecdotal records and running records on the students. The key purpose of this instruction is to develop comprehension strategies. To plan the guided reading lesson, teachers must know students' reading level, the strategy they want to reinforce (the strategy should be modeled during Tier 1, through a read aloud and think aloud) and posing guiding questions to focus students attention and give them a purpose for reading.

Guided reading and small group instruction is the critical component that allows differentiation for all students, those who are accelerated in reading and language arts and struggling readers. Accelerated students must be given instructional level materials during small group instruction so as not to fall back to grade level whole group instruction. These are the advanced proficient students who need to read above grade level in a systematic and explicit instructional design. The availability and daily use of above grade level materials is essential.

Striving readers need the exact same attention in guided reading, appropriate materials and instruction. In addition, at the primary grades, there is a high probability that they also need intensive Tier 3 instruction in phonics, vocabulary development, and background knowledge.



### ***CORE PLUS MORE***

Students with disabilities should participate in literacy instruction within general education programs as their first placement option (Torgensen, Reading First, 2003), receiving necessary supports and services within these settings, including modifications to instruction, materials and/or assessments, as needed, to further their literacy development. A key benefit of participation within general education settings is the variety and richness of language and literacy experiences with nondisabled peers that is difficult to replicate within segregated settings.

Consequently, students with disabilities must have access to a variety of instructional and assessment strategies and adaptations within general and/or special education programs in order to benefit from IDEAL instruction and demonstrate progress in reading proficiency. Such strategies or adaptations may include, but not be limited to: adaptations to teaching strategies, classroom organization, instructional group size, frequency of small group instruction, instructional materials, equipment, modes of student responding or positive behavioral supports—provided by a general education teacher, special education teacher or trained paraeducator under the guidance of a certified teacher.

For students with disabilities who are not responsive to intensive instruction in IDEAL programs, even with the use of adaptations, consideration should be made to provide additional and/or alternative reading instruction. Instructional programs should also provide for an individual student's "other educational needs" resulting from his or her disability that influence the acquisition of reading proficiency, i.e., cognitive, language, emotional, social, sensory and health factors. Students with disabilities may require additional or alternative specialized instructional and assessment methods, strategies and materials responsive to individual needs and learning styles (e.g. multi-sensory structured language methods, sight based reading approaches; visual-auditory-kinesthetic approaches; computer assisted instruction; structured letter clustering methods, and Reading Recovery techniques such as text-leveling, reviewing familiar text, previewing new text, word analysis and comprehension strategies). Joint policy recommendations by the Offices of Literacy and the Office of Special Education Programs, NJDOE, *Guidance on the Provision of Literacy Services for Students with Disabilities*, 2005.

Students with disabilities must have access to good literature used by proficient readers even if these materials are above their instructional reading levels. Teachers should read these materials aloud to their students or these materials may be available on tape for students to use independently.

For emergent readers, sufficient copies of predictable books, books with controlled vocabulary, and decodable books in a range of reading levels must be available for small group guided reading activities, shared or independent reading.

In Middletown's Elementary Schedule beginning in the 08-09 School Year, Core Plus More will be delivered as a Pull-Out Support service in a resource room during a block of time in the schedule other than the 120-minute literacy block, such as a literacy extension period, a World Language/Library period, or a Science period. (Note: If Science is selected as one of the pull-out periods, students are provided with expository science material at their reading level in the resource room as part of the instruction.)

### **Process Writing & Short and Long Term Projects**

Students need to be able to write for a variety of purposes, so writing must be integrated across the model. Teachers model writing during Tier 1, conference with students during Tier 2. They assign short-term projects, preparatory to long-term assignments. The Lucy Caulkins Writing Workshop model is the core to the process in Middletown. Graphic organizers, etc. are tools that teachers can share with students to help them organize information and write on their topic. Teachers use Writing Workshop and conferencing with students to support the on-going development of their writing skills.

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