

Draft Resolution – Science of Reading

Whereas, MCSD is a critical public good serving a diverse community of over 11,000 elementary and middle school students from various cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds; and

Whereas, our Board of Education and school community recognizes the fundamental human right of literacy success for every individual in the 21st century, transcending geographical, ethnic, linguistic, and dialectical barriers, and;

Whereas, our commitment to our children extends to being at the forefront of educational knowledge, engaging in rigorous dialogues with elevated expectations, and embracing the learning process through both successes and setbacks in pursuit of expertise, and;

Whereas, the Science of Reading represents a comprehensive, interdisciplinary collection of research, spanning five decades and involving numerous studies in various languages worldwide, providing substantial evidence on the development of proficient reading and writing skills, the challenges faced by some individuals in acquiring these skills, and the most effective strategies for teaching and assessing reading skills to enhance student outcomes, and;

Whereas, educators with a deep understanding of the interplay between spoken language, written language, and comprehension are crucial for implementing reading instruction and assessment that foster automatic word recognition and in-depth text comprehension, and;

Whereas, evidence-based practices in The Science of Reading include explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic teaching of decoding and spelling, and reading of connected texts to build accuracy, fluency, and comprehension, and;

Whereas, a Structured Literacy approach informed by the Science of Reading has been proven effective at increasing literacy attainment for *all* students; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Merced City School Board of Education:

(1) Commits to the systematic implementation of the Science of Reading based practices, aiming for significant integration in curriculum and instruction by the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year;

(2) Acknowledges the complexities inherent in this educational shift and commits to seeking guidance from interdisciplinary experts in literacy, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and education to ensure a well-informed and effective transition;

- (3)** Requires educators and leaders to seize opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Science of Reading, to critically evaluate their teaching methods, and to question reading instruction approaches that do not align with scientific evidence, and;
- (4)** Calls upon the established literacy committee, to collaborate with teachers, site/district administrators, parents, students, and community representatives, to develop and oversee a comprehensive plan for integrating Science of Reading principles across the district's schools;
- (5)** Recognizes the need for budgetary considerations to secure the training and curriculum materials necessary to enable a structured literacy approach that is knowledge-building in nature and supported by vocabulary-rich classrooms.
- (6)** Prioritizes the continuance and development of professional development programs aligned with the Science of Reading and encourages educators to pioneer these practices in their classrooms to foster a culture of evidence-based literacy instruction;
- (7)** Advocates for the creation and adoption of innovative assessment methods that align with the Science of Reading, ensuring these assessments effectively measure student reading skills and comprehension;
- (8)** Commits to the ongoing evaluation of Science of Reading initiatives, employing key performance indicators and regular reviews to ensure continuous improvement, effectiveness, and alignment with the latest educational research;
- (9)** Urges the District team to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to educate and inform educators, students, parents, and community members about the Science of Reading, its benefits, and the goals of the district's literacy initiatives;
- (10)** Recognizes the importance of inclusivity in educational practices and commits to ensuring that the literacy initiatives are accessible and equitable for all students, regardless of their linguistic, cultural, or socio-economic backgrounds;
- (11)** Encourages collaboration and shared learning among schools within the district and other districts, promoting the exchange of best practices and experiences in implementing the Science of Reading.