

Date: February 7, 2013

From: Neil Guthrie, Ed.S, Wichita Public Schools

To: Honorable Senator Abrams and Members of the Senate Ed. Committee

The International Dyslexia Association (2008) points out that it is possible to identify potential reading problems in young children even before the problems turn into reading failure. The process of finding students who are at-risk for reading difficulty is part of the Wichita Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Consequently, our schools trained in the MTSS framework have the tools to adequately screen and identify students with reading difficulties, specifically to target a student's reading fluency and accuracy, which are characteristics of dyslexia. Estimates of the prevalence figure of students who struggle to read range from 4 to 20 percent of the general population.

### **Wichita MTSS - Multi-Tier System of Supports**

**Prevention** – In addition to stimulating oral/expressive language, language comprehension and print awareness, preschool and kindergarten teachers need to systematically and explicitly teach phoneme awareness, phonics, syntax, semantics and so forth as part of any reading program.

**Screening** – Systemic and systematic screening for reading concerns of all school-age students at least 3x per year. This universal screening will allow for intervention at the earliest indication of need.

**Supportive Professional Development** – Teachers need to be provided instruction on the structure of language and the influence it has on the teaching of reading. Our professional development involves *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)* by Louisa Moats

**Intensive** – For students with severe reading problems, reading specialist and special education personnel need to pinpoint students' specific areas of weakness and use language and reading based strategies and structured methods to target student's individual needs.

**High Quality Instruction/Intervention** – All students should be provided with systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading. For any student needing additional support, intervention should be targeted at specific skills and utilize a scientifically supported intervention approach, and be matched in intensity to the presenting concern.

**Data-Based Decision Making** – Building level teams, including parents, should use data collected on student progress over time to frequently review the adequacy of progress. When progress is insufficient to accelerate a child's learning and reduce the risk level, the teams will engage in appropriate problem-solving and redirect the student's plan of action.

## **Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling by Louisa Moats**

*LETRS is a set of professional development modules that provide the deep foundational knowledge necessary to understand how students learn to read, write and spell – and why some students struggle.*

### **LETRS is designed so that participants will understand:**

- How children learn to read and why some children have difficulty with this aspect of literacy;
- What must be taught during reading and spelling lessons and how to teach most effectively;
- Why all components of reading instruction are necessary and how they are related;
- How to interpret individual differences in student achievement; and
- How to explain the form and structure of English.

## **USD259 Five Year Plan for LETRS**

### **Train 7 Modules to the following Participants:**

*Elementary Classroom K-5 and Resource Teachers = 1120*

*Elementary SPED and ESOL Teachers = 225*

*Coaches, SLPs, Psychs = 225*

<i>Number of Participants</i>	<i>Cost of 1 Module</i>	<i>Total Cost of 7 Modules</i>
<i>1570</i>	<i>\$207,240</i>	<i>\$1,450,680</i>

**LETRS sessions are limited to 40 participants according to the agreement with Cambium Learning Sopris. Each module is presented in a one-day presentation by a local district trainer who has met the LETRS trainer certification guidelines.**

*(Trainings thus far have included: K-2, SPED, and ESOL Teachers, SLPs, Psychologists, Coaches, Secondary ELA, SPED and ESOL Teachers)*

**LETRS Trainings 2011-Present = 2421 participants in Modules 1-3**

**LETRS Trainings 2013 Spring/Summer = 1360 participants in Modules 1-3**  
*(estimated attendance)*