

To: Board of Education
From: Denise Harwood
Re: Grades K-6 ELA Resource Adoption
Date: May 21, 2025

Members of the Board of Education,

In the 2024–2025 school year, SSD initiated a comprehensive review of its English Language Arts (ELA) resources. This was driven by our curriculum adoption cycle, teacher feedback, and student performance data. Notably, ELA had not undergone a full review in over 15 years.

Teachers consistently reported the need to create or find their own materials, resulting in inconsistent instruction and challenges with curriculum equity and alignment. To address this, the district launched a collaborative review process in summer 2024, grounded in the Science of Reading and current literacy research. Monthly meetings supported professional learning and the evaluation of high-quality instructional frameworks.

Although SSD continues to maintain high overall ELA scores in comparison to neighboring districts, we feel like we still have areas of growth which led us to closely examine the quality and consistency of Tier 1 instruction: the daily core instruction provided to all students.

Through a partnership with the University of Missouri, educators gained access to expert guidance and resources. The review team found that our existing balanced literacy approach was not meeting the full range of student needs. While Pathways to Reading supported phonics in grades K-2, it lacked comprehensive coverage across all grade levels.

The team identified key elements of effective literacy instruction (K–12) and used these to evaluate three research-based programs: Wonders, i-Ready, and CKLA Amplify. Based on teacher feedback and alignment with best practices, CKLA Amplify (K–5) and Amplify ELA (6) are the recommended programs.

CKLA Amplify is a content-rich, Science of Reading–aligned curriculum that builds literacy through knowledge across subjects. It is endorsed by leading organizations such as The Reading League and the Knowledge Matters Campaign, and is on Missouri’s approved instructional materials list. Amplify ELA supports deep engagement with texts and develops critical thinking, collaboration, and writing skills in middle school students.

These programs align with SSD’s long-term literacy plan by ensuring consistency, instructional equity, and improved outcomes. Most importantly, they equip our teachers with the tools needed to deliver high-quality, effective instruction to every student.

Respectfully,
Denise Harwood
Executive Director PK-6