



# Universal Literacy: An Initiative to Promote Reading Success by the End of Grade Two for New York City Students *An Introductory Overview*

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*Literacy & AIS  
OC IPL*

# Session Objectives

To provide an overview of the Universal Literacy, including

- **Goals of the Program**
- **Organization and Staffing**
- **Time Line of Rollout**
- **Focus and Content of Training**
  - **The Research Base**
  - **Early Reading Acquisition**
  - **Developmentally Appropriate Practice**
  - **Social-Emotional Development of Young Children**
- **Collaborative Relationships**
- **Advisors and Collaborators**
- **Q and A**



# Equity and Excellence Initiatives

The Framework for Great Schools asks us to collaborate with parents, educators, school communities, and external stakeholders to improve student achievement; however, the Framework does not outline specific processes to achieve this goal. Instead, it serves as the connective thread that unites the eight initiatives in Mayor de Blasio's Equity and Excellence Agenda.

- Universal Literacy
- Algebra for All
- AP for ALL
- Computer Science for All
- Middle School College Access for All
- High School College Access for All
- Single Shepherd
- District-Charter Partnerships

**As Chancellor Fariña said, “These are bold reforms that will improve students’ education and futures by starting early, supporting strong teachers and rigorous curriculum.”**

# Goals of the Universal Literacy Initiative

The **Universal Literacy** initiative strives to ensure that end-of-year grade 2 students read at grade-level benchmarks by 2026.

Reading coaches who have a broad knowledge of research-based early reading acquisition as well as a strong understanding of how it is supported in a comprehensive early literacy program will be placed in every elementary school to support teachers of the early grades in beginning reading acquisition.

A robust and ongoing syllabus of professional development will be provided to support these reading coaches in delivering high quality support in their schools.

# A Major Component of the Initiative: Intensive Training of Reading Coaches

- Reading coaches will be trained by central staff and expert consultants during a three-week summer institute and then twice per month during the school year
- The training model and instructional orientation will be a ‘five pillars plus writing’ model reliant on the best research in the field
- A course syllabus will be developed and delivered by central staff (‘5 Pillars plus writing emphasis’) with input and support from a group of experts in the field

# A Reading Coach for Every School

- Reading coaches apply and are vetted through a tiered process that includes interviews by central staff; placed in individual schools under the supervision of the relevant superintendent
- Intensive and ongoing training will be provided by central staff and experts in the field of reading
- Coaches will focus on grade 2 teachers and provide support to grades K and 1; Early Childhood Office to support Pre- K for an aligned seamless approach

# Organization of Universal Literacy Staff

Executive Director of Literacy and AIS, Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Learning, Division of Teaching and Learning



Director of Early Literacy



4 Senior Instructional Specialists for Early Literacy  
(4 additional specialists in subsequent years)

# Rollout in Three Cohorts

Implementation will roll out in three cohorts:

## **Year 1:**

four districts: 9, 10, 17, 32 (totaling 106 schools)

## **Year 2:**

an additional 14 districts

## **Year 3:**

the remaining 14 districts



# Classroom Libraries

- Funding will be provided to schools to supplement classroom libraries with additional books.
- Reading coaches will help teachers with conducting a needs assessment for each classroom library and support each school in selecting books to order.

# Intensive Reading Coach Training

- Three-week institute for Cohort 1 reading coaches to begin summer 2016
- Twice-monthly training for all reading coaches during the school year 2016-17
- Expert consultants from the field of reading research will inform the content of the training and participate in PD delivery
- Heavy emphasis on foundational skills within a **comprehensive literacy program** – reflective of both current research in early reading acquisition and CCLS

# Research Base: Five Pillars Approach *Plus* Writing

The National Reading Panel, a group of experts who produced *The Report of the National Reading Panel in 2000*, stressed a “5 Pillars” model as a framework for reading acquisition and instruction.

# 5 Pillars of Reading



Phonological Awareness | Phonics | Fluency | Vocabulary | Comprehension

# Assessment

- Reading coaches will be trained in using DIBELS and will be supporting teachers in using DIBELS to assess and monitor student progress.
- The Gates-MacGinitie will also be given as a pre- and post-assessment for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

# Stop and Jot



**Consider your own school as you think about the 5 Pillars of reading and use the “Checklist for Self-Audit – K-2 Classrooms” to help you assess the following:**

- Does your school provide instruction in all 5 pillars?
- Are there any pillars missing or are some not as strong as they should be?
- What are some ways you can address these gaps? What are some moves you can make to get these in place for the start of school in September?

# Additional Emphasis in the Initiative's PD and Practice

- Ensure developmentally appropriate practice
- Integrate social-emotional learning and development
- Include parent training and support

# Collaborations across NYCDOE

- **Collaborations with**

- FACE

- Special education stakeholders within central and D75

- Office of ELLs

- Office of Early Childhood

- Staff within the Department of Literacy and AIS



# Expert Group of Advisors

**The ULit initiative benefits from two levels of consultant-advisory literacy experts (compensated by honorarium). The first tier consultant-advisory group consists of:**

**Dr. Anita Archer**, author, practitioner, speaker; focus: broad knowledge of the research and very skilled in interpreting research to practice;

**Dr. Linnea Ehri**, CUNY Graduate Center, NY, researcher, author, beginning reading acquisition, National Reading Panel member, focus: phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, other pillars;

**Dr. Elfrieda Heibert**, Noted researcher in and author of numerous publications related to vocabulary and academic language;

**Dr. Marilyn Jager Adams**, researcher author of Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print, focus: all pillars, cognitive aspect, language development as it relates to reading, digital literacy in early childhood;

**Dr. Timothy Shanahan**, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago, former Director of Reading at Chicago Public Schools;

**Dr. Sharon Vaughn**, Chair, Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at The University of Texas at Austin, former editor-in-chief of Journal and Learning disabilities, AERA SIG distinguished researcher award, researcher and author;

**Dr. Joanna Williams**, Columbia University, (researcher who has been a main influence in Nell Duke's work), member of the National Reading Panel (comprehension), focus: researcher, author in early comprehension of nonfiction;

**Dr. Marianne Wolf**, Director of the Center for Reading and Language Research at Tufts, researcher, author (Proust and the Squid is just one of her well-known titles), focus: knowledge of typical development and reading acquisition and dyslexia.

**A second tier of experts participate, with central staff, in development and delivery of relevant professional development and professional learning experiences for reading coaches, administrators, families**

# Evaluation and Accountability

- **Internal system of evaluation**
  - RPSG
- **Pre and Post Measures**
  - Gates-MacGinitie (GMRT)
- **Benchmarks towards success**
  - DIBELS diagnostic and formative tools

# ULit Time Line

- **2015-2016:** Development of proposal, creation of budget needs and requests, presentations to varied internal and external partners and groups, development and posting of ULit positions
- **Spring 2016:** Hiring of director, central instructional specialists, reading coaches, convene advisory group, develop summer institute syllabus and materials
- **Summer 2016:** Three-week immersion institute for Cohort One reading coaches
- **Fall 2016:** Cohort One reading coaches begin work in schools
- **2016-2017:** Cohort One reading coaches attend semi-monthly professional learning sessions conducted by Central ULit staff; preparation & planning for Cohort Two schools
- **Summer 2017:** Three-week immersion institute for reading coaches in Cohort Two plus new Cohort One coaches; continue development of Cohort One
- **Fall 2017:** Cohort Two reading coaches begin work in schools
- **2017-2018:** Cohort One and Two reading coaches attend semi-monthly professional learning sessions conducted by Central ULit staff
- **Summer 2018:** Three-week immersion institute for reading coaches in Cohort Three plus new Cohort One and Two coaches
- **Fall 2018:** Cohort Three reading coaches begin work in schools
- **2018-2019:** Cohort One, Two and Three reading coaches attend semi-monthly professional learning sessions conducted by Central ULit staff

# Resources and References

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Adams, M.J. (1990). Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

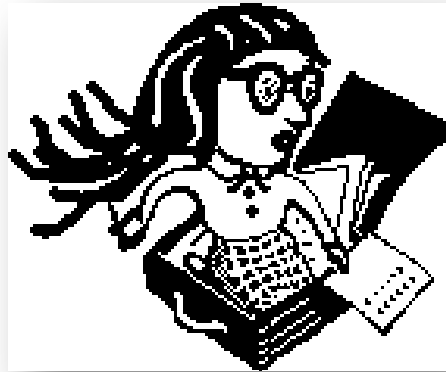
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# Q and A

Ask now or later.



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