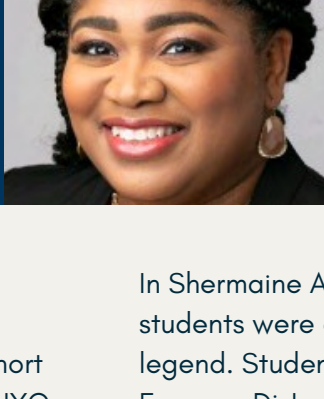


A Letter from Leadership:



DR. DANIKA RUX
Deputy Chancellor of
School Leadership



DR. MIATHERESA PATE
Chief Academic
Officer

Dear NYC Reads Community,

With June quickly approaching, we are just a few short weeks from completing our second school year of NYC Reads.

This year, we welcomed 479 schools and over 193,000 additional students into this effort, bringing high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) aligned to our [literacy shifts](#) to every K-5 student in New York City Public Schools.

We want to take a moment to extend our sincerest appreciation to each of you for the pivotal work you have done as educators and leaders in our system to ensure the success of this work.

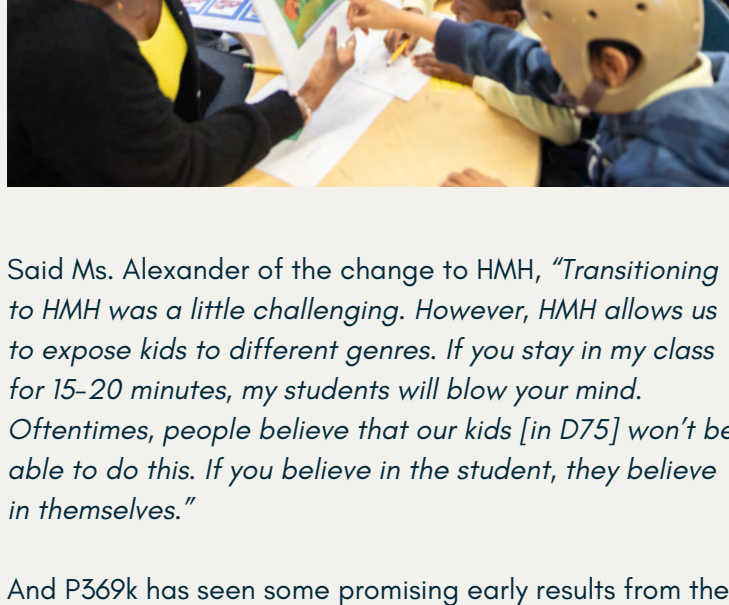
As former school and district leaders in NYC, we know the commitment required not only to learn a new curriculum, but to implement it effectively for each of the individual students in front of you, who each bring unique perspectives and diverse learning needs to the classroom. From day 1 of NYC Reads, we made a commitment to ensuring every student in every classroom, including our students requiring highly specialized instructional support, received access to grade-level content in literacy.

Recently, our colleagues had the opportunity to visit [P396K](#), a K-8, District 75 school in Brooklyn whose students are [SOARing to great heights](#) thanks to the hard work, dedication, persistence, and collaboration of the full school community where leaders, coaches, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families have each played a crucial role in the literacy success of their students as they have adopted HMH- Into Reading.

In Paula Benjamin's K-2, 12:1:1 literacy classroom, students watched a live race between the school's pet tortoise and hare to build character context and vocabulary, bringing the text, *The Tortoise and the Hare* to life before moving to stations where groups of students engaged with the text in different ways focused on appropriately challenging Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in comprehension, fluency, and IEP goals.



In Shermaine Alexander's 3-5 12:1:1 literacy classroom, students were deeply engaged in *Ten Suns*, a Chinese legend. Students were so immersed in the text in which Emperor Di Jun's ten son's ignored his warning that they must take turns warming the sky and were turned into crows, that some even wondered aloud if they might turn into crows should they disobey their parents, before brilliantly remembering that *Ten Suns* fell within the genre of a myth.



Said Ms. Alexander of the change to HMH, *"Transitioning to HMH was a little challenging. However, HMH allows us to expose kids to different genres. If you stay in my class for 15-20 minutes, my students will blow your mind. Oftentimes, people believe that our kids [in D75] won't be able to do this. If you believe in the student, they believe in themselves."*

And P369k has seen some promising early results from the shift in curriculum - from individual student level growth, to broader changes at the school level. Ms. Alexander shared that, *"my students did not like to write at all. I had to figure out a way. Everything is trial and error. First, I let students draw and then have them write. We built from making one sentence, then set a goal of 2 or 3, from there we got to a paragraph."* And, at the school level, *"we have seen more kids move to inclusion since moving to HMH - we had to open up a whole new inclusion class at one of our sites because we're moving students so fast,"* said Dr. McCoy, the school's principal, of the impact of the curricular change on students.

The positive impact of this change has been felt by caregivers as well. Said Patricia Oliver, the school's PA president, who previously worked as a paraprofessional at one of P396K's sites and now has a first grader who attends the school, *"Overall, I like HMH. My son comes home and says, 'Hey, mommy, I learned about this!'"*

Our visit to P396k continued to affirm the critical importance of the work each of you are doing every day to provide access to all of our students to grade-level content through NYC Reads. I am struck by something that my colleague, Deputy Chancellor of the Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning (DIAL) Christina Foti said at the end of the group's visit to P396k, *"We have the deepest respect and admiration for what you do...you are all incredible stewards of the community, devoted to your craft and the community at large,"* to which Sherrie Prescott, another K-2/12:1:1 teacher at the school responded, *"There is nothing we cannot do!"*

As we look ahead to the close of this school year and prepare to launch our third year of NYC Reads, [expanding this critical work](#) to 102 middle schools and nearly 26,000 additional students, I, we, believe, as Ms. Prescott stated, that there is nothing we cannot do. We couldn't be more excited to continue this work together to build brighter starts and bolder futures for our students.

Sincerely,
Dr. Danika Rux, Deputy Chancellor of School Leadership
Dr. Miatheresa Pate, Chief Academic Officer

Supporting Diverse Learners to Access Tier 1 Instruction Through Strategic Supports

The shared HQIM that is now in place as a result of NYC Reads is one of the best ways to ensure all students have access to high-quality, grade-level literacy learning (Lesaux et.al., 2016; Fisher et.al., 2021). We know that our high-quality curricula offer students, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities, the opportunity to systematically develop foundational reading and writing skills, engage with knowledge building content, and experience culturally relevant, diverse, complex texts and explicit instruction in research-based reading comprehension and writing practices. Our shared, research-based curricula also ensure a common language and understanding for all who support students (NYCPS, [Literacy Shift 6](#), Adoption of Research-Based, High-Quality Curricula).

To ensure we are able to provide all students with **equitable access** to our research-based HQIM, we have to be prepared to make evidence-based adaptations based on data to meet individual student needs.

There are multiple data sources that we can use to drive instructional adaptations. For our students with IEPs, we should reference the specially designed instruction (SDI) recommended in each student's IEP. For our ML/ELLs, we can identify language and literacy needs by analyzing student speaking, writing, and reading data, and considering their unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences. For students with other learning needs (e.g reading below grade level), we should reference screener data and curriculum embedded assessment data to support us in driving decisions around adaptations.

When we consider an adaptation, we should think about what aspect of literacy is presenting a challenge for the students in front of us - data will tell us which area of literacy we need to strengthen. Then, we can look to see if an adaptation is needed to the instruction we are providing. Here, we'll dig into two resources for how to support students with this data in mind.

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Learning

22 High Leverage Practices (HLPs) have been identified by researchers as evidence-based practices that support learning in inclusive settings. They are supportive for all students and can be used throughout all tiers of instruction, providing a preventative approach. You can find out more about each HLP at this website: <https://highleveragepractices.org>

While all HLPs are valuable, it is helpful to prioritize. Here, we'll look more closely at HLP 13: **Adapt Curriculum Tasks and Materials for Specific Learning Goals**. Adaptations are not intended to change the rigor or expectations of the curriculum or learning task but are meant to provide students with access to learning by eliminating barriers. Consider these practices when planning instruction for your students:

- [Make directions brief, sequential, and direct](#) by using vocabulary students know, simplifying sentence structure, or adding visual models.
- Use supplemental materials to support, not replace, HQIM. Examples could be trade books, video or audio clips, demonstrations, or illustrations that are used alongside or before (not in place of) reading challenging texts and support understanding of complex topics and create opportunities for engagement. Teachers should always begin by leveraging existing routines and practices found in their core tier 1 curricula prior to supplementing and should utilize our guidance on [building knowledge](#) to do so.
- Highlight relevant content to focus student attention on key concepts and reinforce learning.
- Use [guided notes](#) to provide opportunities for interaction and participation during teacher presentations.
- Use [graphic organizers](#) to teach relationships between concepts and for different purposes, building from simple to complex systems of representation.
- Use strategies to improve memory, i.e. teach a keyword or [use an acronym](#) to help internalize a routine or remember content.



The Keys to Advance Language and Literacy Development for Multilingual Learners

The [Keys to Advance Language and Literacy Development for Multilingual Learners](#) are an additional resource teachers can use to support multilingual learners (MLs) and English language learners (ELLs). It addresses the challenges and misconceptions that may hinder MLs/ELLs from receiving a high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive education. The guide outlines key actions and strategies for K-12 educators and stakeholders supporting instruction in English as a New Language (ENL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), or Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) programs, and provides asset-based approaches that can accelerate their language and literacy development.

Here, we'll hone in on Key #2: Engaging MLs/ELLs in grade-level content. Strategies teachers can prioritize during core content and integrated ENL instruction are outlined below. We encourage you to explore the linked resources as you consider how to best support your ML/ELLs to engage with their grade level HQIM.

- Engage all ML/ELLs in grade-level content with their English-proficient peers within a supportive environment.
- In a TBE/DLBE Program: Adapt scaffolds to support oral and written language comprehension and production across both program languages.
- [Connect to student home languages](#) and prior knowledge, and use home language strategically as a scaffold (rather than [translating](#) everything by default).
- [Explicitly teach and provide scaffolds](#) for use of the disciplinary language and skills required for successful engagement and interaction with lesson tasks. (See the link for sample scaffolded core curriculum units for ML/ELLs).
- Model and support consistent expectations, routines, and protocols across lessons for collaborative viewing, listening, reading, writing, and discussion.
- Have students frequently discuss topics with the entire class and in small groups and partnerships to help them practice using detailed reasoning and subject-specific language with a range of peers.
- Chunk, [amplify](#), and [engineer](#) core texts based on their [academic and linguistic demands](#) and student profiles, focusing on the most critical content.
- Provide important information in multiple, redundant, and reinforcing forms (e.g., visual, spoken, written) to enhance access and comprehension during lessons.
- Provide supplemental multimodal texts to build knowledge in home languages (e.g. [SORA](#), available through NYPS and NYPL, includes [collections](#) of digital texts in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and more).

We encourage teachers to explore the [High Leverage Practices \(HLPs\)](#) and [Keys to Advance Language and Literacy Development for Multilingual Learners](#) and consider how you might utilize them to support individual students in your classroom. For specific support in planning for how to implement these practices within your school's HQIM, reach out to your Job-Embedded Support Provider (JESP) at your school for guidance and collaboration.

Reflecting and Preparing to Close the School Year

Reflection is key to refining instruction and planning for next year. This year, we prioritized the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) to support [literacy shifts](#) with continued emphasis on explicit instruction, data-informed [small group instruction](#), and meeting the needs of diverse learners. As we begin wrapping up this year, we encourage you to engage in reflection around these key priority areas:

- **For school leaders:** What barriers to implementation have been identified by teachers from observations and feedback? How have they been resolved? To what extent have I defined the roles of my administrators and other instructional leaders in supporting HQIM implementation? What considerations exist for teacher summer PL?
- **For teachers:** How do I use key elements from lesson and unit materials to inform my planning? How does student work affect my planning and facilitation of a lesson? How do I plan to address the diverse needs of students, including students with IEPs and English language learners (ELLs/MLs)?
- **For both:** What are the biggest takeaways from this year's implementation that will shape our next steps?

Taking the time now to assess successes, challenges, and growth areas will set you and your school up for more seamless, impactful implementation next school year.

Resources for Continuing to Engage with Families: Coming up in June

Consider engaging families in a process to reflect on student reading progress and set goals for their learners based on progress. Families can help support their child over the summer utilizing the [Pre-Summer Reflections](#) within the [NYC Reads Family Partnership Toolkit](#).

*Translations available [here](#)

Helpful Resources

- [Literacy Block Guidance](#)
- [The Science of Reading Classroom](#)
- [K-5 Assessment Guidance](#)
- [Small Group Reading Instruction Guidance](#)

Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities:

- [PL registration portal link](#)
- Speak with your school or district about opportunities to participate in the new Science of Reading (SoR) Modules!
 - The NYC Reads Team has developed a suite of Science of Reading (SoR) Modules designed to provide comprehensive, evidence-based guidance for K-12 literacy instruction. Serving as a critical resource for supporting NYCPS educators in delivering high-quality instruction aligned to Science of Reading research and the strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope, the modules:
 - Provide a Comprehensive Framework for Literacy Instruction
 - Integrate NYCPS Core Curriculum Solutions, Tier One Instruction and High-Leverage SoR Practices
 - Support Literacy Leadership Development

The NYC Reads SOR modules will be facilitated in person by a member of your district team for school leaders and teachers. Each module includes pre-recorded videos and interactive activities.

We'd like to extend our thanks to the photography team at P396K for sharing these photos from our visit to their school.

