

# READING LITERACY PILOT PROGRAM

Sioux Falls School District

## Professional Development Guide & Teacher Handbook

*For Facilitators and Participating 4th Grade Teachers*

Fall Semester 2026 | One-Day Professional Development Session  
Sioux Falls School District | Curriculum and Instruction Department

### How to Use This Document

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This combined guide serves two audiences. Facilitators will use it to plan and deliver the Professional Development day. Teachers will keep it as a working reference throughout the Spring semester pilot.

#### FOR FACILITATORS

- Section 1: Facilitator Guide — PD Day agenda, timing, and session notes
- Section 2: The Research Foundation — background to teach and discuss
- All Teacher Handbook sections serve as your content resource

#### FOR TEACHERS

- Section 3: The Reading Sequence — all 15 books, tiers, and rationale
- Section 4: Daily Classroom Practice — your guide for the two-hour block
- Section 5: Tracking and Reporting — observation logs, surveys, data

**A Note on the Pilot Coordinator** This program is designed with a hired Pilot Coordinator in mind — someone who will oversee implementation across all 4th grade classrooms at the pilot school, support teachers throughout the Spring semester, facilitate the PD day, and lead the data analysis that will inform any district-wide expansion. References to the ‘Coordinator’ throughout this document refer to that role. The cost of this position is addressed in the proposal’s budget section as a separate line item from the book acquisition costs.

## SECTION ONE

*Facilitator Guide Planning and Running the Professional Development Day*

### Section 1: Facilitator Guide

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#### Overview

The Professional Development day for the Reading Literacy Pilot is designed to fit within one scheduled PD day — no additional teacher compensation required. The session has four goals:

- Teachers understand the research behind the program well enough to explain it to parents and colleagues.
- Teachers are comfortable with the book sequence and the rationale for each tier.

- Teachers know exactly what their two-hour daily block should look like and feel confident making it their own.
- Teachers have their materials, their observation log, and the Pilot Coordinator's contact information before they leave the room.

### What this is not

This PD is not a scripted curriculum training. Teachers are professionals. The goal is to give them a clear framework and get out of their way. The Krashen research is simple, the sequence is intuitive, and the daily structure is flexible by design.

### Facilitator Preparation Checklist

Complete the following before the PD day:

- Confirm the session room, projector, and seating arrangement (tables preferred over rows).
- Print one copy of this Teacher Handbook for every participating teacher.
- Bring physical copies of 5–8 books from the sequence — teachers should be able to hold them.
- Prepare a one-page handout listing the book sequence (this is Section 3 of this document).
- Distribute the Teacher Handbook to participants before the session if possible, so they can arrive having reviewed it.
- Confirm the Spring semester start date and the standardized assessment window so you can fill in the timeline during the session.
- Know the SORA login process — teachers will ask.

### PD Day Agenda

Total time: approximately 5.5 hours (adjust to your scheduled PD block). All breaks are included in the timing below.

TIME	DURATION	SESSION
8:00 AM	30 min	Welcome, Introductions, and Program Overview
8:30 AM	45 min	Session 1: The Research — Why Volume Reading Works
9:15 AM	15 min	Break
9:30 AM	60 min	Session 2: The Book Sequence — Walking Through the Tiers
10:30 AM	60 min	Session 3: Daily Classroom Practice — Building Your Two-Hour Block
11:30 AM	30 min	Lunch Break
12:00 PM	30 min	Session 4: Tracking, Observation Logs, and Reporting
12:30 PM	30 min	Session 5: SORA, Materials Access, and Logistics
1:00 PM	30 min	Q&A, Open Discussion, and Next Steps
1:30 PM	—	Dismissal — Materials distributed

## Session-by-Session Facilitator Notes

### Welcome and Program Overview (30 min)

Open by thanking teachers for their time and framing the purpose directly: this is a pilot, not a mandate. Every choice in its design — the Spring launch, the single school, the voluntary teacher participation — is deliberate. The goal is to find out whether this works, measure it honestly, and let the data speak.

- Introduce yourself and the Pilot Coordinator role. Explain what support you will provide during the semester.
- Briefly explain the proposal structure: one school, all 4th grade classrooms, Spring semester, 15 books, two hours per day.
- Set expectations for the day: by the end of this session, every teacher will have their handbook, their observation log, and a clear mental picture of what Monday looks like.

### Facilitator Tone

The tone for the day should be collegial and honest. You are not selling this program to a skeptical audience. Teachers were asked to participate voluntarily. Acknowledge that two hours per day is a real commitment and that their professionalism in managing it is what will make the pilot credible.

### Session 1: The Research — Why Volume Reading Works (45 min)

This session gives teachers the conceptual foundation they need to explain the program to parents, students, and colleagues. Keep it concise and practical — this is not a graduate seminar.

Key teaching points (see Section 2 for full detail):

- Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis:<sup>1</sup> students acquire language most effectively when they encounter text that is slightly above their current level — the 'i+1' principle. Not frustrating, not boring. Just challenging enough to pull them forward.
- Volume matters. Students who read widely and frequently develop vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skill without direct instruction in those subskills.<sup>2</sup> Reading itself is the curriculum.
- The sequence does the heavy lifting. Teachers do not need to teach the vocabulary in each book. The sequencing ensures that students are always in the i+1 zone.

Discussion prompt (10 min): Ask teachers: 'What do you notice about your strongest readers? How much do they read outside of assigned work?' Let the conversation surface the intuition that the research confirms.

### ***If teachers ask about phonics and structured literacy***

Acknowledge the debate honestly. Krashen's approach is a comprehension and fluency model, not a decoding model. For students with significant decoding deficits, additional structured intervention may be needed alongside this program. This pilot is not a replacement for decoding support — it is a volume-reading supplement that benefits all students once decoding is in place.

## Session 2: The Book Sequence — Walking Through the Tiers (60 min)

Distribute physical copies of several books from the sequence. Let teachers hold them, flip through them, and talk about them. This is the most important session for building teacher buy-in — the books need to feel real, not like entries on a spreadsheet.

Walk through each tier:

- **Start Here:** High engagement, low vocabulary demand. The goal is immediate success. Every student should feel capable on day one.
- **Building Confidence:** Short chapters, humor, action. Students practice sustained attention across a full book for the first time.
- **Grade Level:** Full prose paragraphs, richer character development. This is where the core of the semester lives — six books at this tier.
- **Stretching:** *Charlotte's Web* and *The BFG*. Richer language and narrative structure. By this point, students are ready.
- **Challenge Read:** *Little House in the Big Woods*. Unfamiliar historical voice and setting. Appropriate for the stamina students have built.

### Key message for teachers:

The sequence is not rigid. If a class is flying through a book and engagement is high, you can move forward. If a book is generating more struggle than growth, the Coordinator is your resource. The tier structure exists to guide — not to constrain.

Discussion prompt (15 min): 'Is there a book on this list you are particularly excited to read with your class? Is there one you have questions about?' Surface the enthusiasm and address the concerns before teachers leave the room.

## Session 3: Daily Classroom Practice — Building the Two-Hour Block (60 min)

This is the most practical session. By the end of it, every teacher should be able to describe exactly what their classroom will look like on the first day of the Spring semester.

Walk through the three primary formats (detailed in Section 4 of the Teacher Handbook):

- **Teacher-led read-aloud:**<sup>3</sup> The teacher reads aloud while students follow along. Strong for vocabulary exposure and comprehension modeling. Best for lower-tier books and for the early weeks of the semester.
- **Independent silent reading:** Students read at their own pace. Best for building stamina. Works well in the middle and later stages of the semester, as students develop confidence.
- **Combination:** Teacher reads a portion aloud, then students read independently. The most flexible format and the one most teachers naturally gravitate toward.

### Important framing:

Teachers are not expected to run discussion groups, assign comprehension worksheets, or formally assess students on each book. The two hours is reading time. The Pilot Coordinator will handle the formal data collection. Teachers contribute weekly observation logs (five minutes of writing per week) and that is the full extent of the administrative burden.

Practice activity (20 min): Have teachers sketch their own two-hour block on paper — where in the day does it fit? How does it split? What does the transition into and out of reading time look like? Share in pairs, then debrief briefly as a group.

#### **Session 4: Tracking, Observation Logs, and Reporting (30 min)**

Keep this session short and reassuring. The data collection ask on teachers is minimal by design.

- Weekly observation log: five to ten minutes of writing per week. Template provided (Section 5). No right or wrong answers — the goal is honest notes on engagement, stamina, and anything surprising.
- Informal reading level assessments at three points: start, midpoint, and end of semester. The Coordinator administers these — not the teacher.
- Student self-reported confidence survey: administered by the Coordinator at start and end. Simple, age-appropriate, takes ten minutes of class time.
- Standardized assessment: already scheduled by the district. No additional work for teachers.

#### **What the Coordinator Handles**

The Pilot Coordinator owns the data collection process. Teachers contribute observation logs. Everything else — reading level assessments, student surveys, standardized assessment coordination, and the final pilot report — is the Coordinator's responsibility. Teachers should leave today knowing they are not being asked to become researchers.

#### **Session 5: SORA, Materials Access, and Logistics (30 min)**

Walk through the SORA platform together, with a projector if available. Confirm the following:

- Every student has a SORA login. If any students do not, the Coordinator resolves this before the Spring semester starts.
- The book sequence has been audited against SORA holdings. Teachers know which books are available digitally and which will be available as physical classroom sets.
- Physical books are stored in the building library and rotated by the librarian as each class completes a title.
- Teachers know who to contact if a student's SORA access is broken, a book is unavailable, or a physical set is missing a copy.

End the session by distributing all materials: Teacher Handbook, observation log template, Coordinator contact information, and the Spring semester start date.

#### **Q&A, Open Discussion, and Next Steps (30 min)**

Reserve this time for genuine open discussion. The most important questions often surface here. Common topics:

- 'What do we do with students who are significantly below the Start Here level?' — Acknowledge the question honestly. These students benefit most from the program but may need additional support. The Coordinator will check in specifically on these students.
- 'What if a book generates parent concern?' — Refer to the Policy IJK materials review process. All books have been through it. Teachers are not alone in responding to parent questions.
- 'What if my class finishes all 15 books before the semester ends?' — This would be a remarkable result. Have the Coordinator on call for this scenario and prepare a short supplementary list.

- ‘What counts as reading time? Can students listen to SORA read-alouds?’ — Yes. Audio support is a legitimate reading scaffold<sup>4</sup>, particularly for struggling readers. The research supports it.

Close by stating the next touchpoint — typically a Coordinator check-in at the end of the first week of the Spring semester. Remind teachers that their observation logs are the most important thing they can give the pilot, and that the Coordinator is available by phone or email throughout.

## SECTION TWO

*The Research Foundation What the Evidence Says and How to Talk About It*

### Section 2: The Research Foundation

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This section gives both facilitators and teachers the conceptual background for the program. You do not need to be a reading researcher to teach this material — the core ideas are accessible, well-supported, and immediately intuitive to anyone who has watched a child fall in love with books.

#### Stephen Krashen and the Input Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen is a linguist and education researcher whose work on language acquisition has shaped reading instruction for decades. His central insight — developed through the Input Hypothesis<sup>1</sup> — is straightforward:

**The Input Hypothesis** We acquire language — including reading comprehension and vocabulary — most effectively when we are exposed to text that is slightly beyond our current level of competence. Not so easy that it offers no challenge. Not so hard that it produces frustration. This zone of productive challenge is called ‘i+1’ — where ‘i’ is the student’s current level and ‘+1’ is the next step of growth.

The practical implication is significant: students do not need to be directly taught every vocabulary word they encounter.<sup>5</sup> When a student reads a book where the overall context is comprehensible and only some words are unfamiliar, they acquire those words through exposure — the same way proficient adult readers have always acquired vocabulary.

Krashen’s research also established the power of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR)<sup>2</sup> — sustained reading of self-selected or sequenced texts, without comprehension tests or vocabulary assignments. Students who read widely and consistently outperform their peers on every standardized measure of language arts: vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing mechanics, and grammar. Not because they studied those skills in isolation, but because they read.

#### Why Volume Matters

The research on reading volume is consistent and spans multiple decades.<sup>6</sup> Students who read more — not more instructed reading, but more actual reading — develop stronger language skills across the board.

- Vocabulary is primarily acquired through reading, not direct instruction.<sup>5</sup> A student who reads widely encounters words in meaningful context thousands of times per year.
- Reading comprehension improves with reading practice, in the same way that physical endurance improves with physical exercise. There is no substitute for volume.<sup>6</sup>
- Students who identify as readers — who think of reading as something they do, not something that is done to them — consistently outperform non-readers.<sup>7</sup>

Two hours per school day of dedicated reading time, sustained across a full Spring semester, is a meaningful intervention. It is not a magic cure. But it is a significant and well-supported investment in the foundational skill that underlies every other academic discipline.

### Why Sequencing Matters

The 15-book sequence in this pilot is not an arbitrary list. It is built on the i+1 principle: each tier introduces incrementally more complex vocabulary, sentence structure, and narrative form. The first two books in the sequence (*Grand Canyon* and *The Quickest Kid in Clarksville*) are deliberately accessible — students who are reading significantly below grade level can succeed with these books from day one.

By the time the class reaches *Charlotte's Web* and *The BFG* — books with genuinely rich literary language — students have built the stamina and vocabulary base to handle them. The Challenge Read at the end of the sequence (*Little House in the Big Woods*) asks students to navigate an unfamiliar historical voice and setting. That is a real stretch — and it is achievable because of everything that came before it.

### Talking with Parents

Parents occasionally ask why their children are not doing more traditional reading comprehension work — worksheets, vocabulary lists, quizzes. Here is how to explain the program's approach:

#### Suggested Language for Parent Conversations

- 'Your child is reading fifteen books this semester — more than most students read in an entire year. The research is very clear that volume reading is the most powerful thing we can do to improve reading skill.'
- 'We are not skipping comprehension — we are building it through the act of reading. Every book in the sequence is chosen to be appropriately challenging so your child is learning throughout, not just completing an assignment.'
- 'At the end of the semester, we will have standardized assessment data to show exactly how students progressed. We believe the numbers will speak for themselves.'

## SECTION THREE

*The Book Sequence Grade 4 Pilot — 15 Titles, Spring Semester*

### Section 3: The Grade 4 Reading Sequence

The following 15 titles are sequenced from most accessible to most advanced, spanning five reading tiers. The sequence is designed to begin where every student — including those

reading significantly below grade level — can experience early success, then build systematically toward rich literary texts by the end of the semester.

### A Note on Adaptation

This list is the starting framework submitted with the proposal. During the Fall semester preparation period, the district librarian, curriculum coordinator, and participating teachers will review and adapt it through the district's standard materials selection process (Policy IJK) before the Spring launch. If any title is substituted during that process, note the change in the space below the table.

TIER	DESCRIPTION
<b>Start Here</b>	Short, accessible texts. High engagement, low vocabulary demand. Build early confidence and momentum.
<b>Building Confidence</b>	Short chapters, humor, and action-driven plots. Requires sustained attention across a full book.
<b>Grade Level</b>	Solid 3rd–4th grade chapter books. Full prose paragraphs, richer character development.
<b>Stretching</b>	Richer, more layered language and narrative structure. Elevated vocabulary expands student capability.
<b>Challenge Read</b>	Higher interpretive demand. Unfamiliar cultural context or complex narrative voice.

#	Title	Author	Tier
1	Grand Canyon	Jason Chin	Start Here
2	The Quickest Kid in Clarksville	Pat Zietlow Miller	Start Here
3	Captain Underpants and the Talking Toilets	Dav Pilkey	Building Confidence
4	The Best of Iggy	Annie Barrows	Building Confidence
5	Mr. Popper's Penguins	Richard Atwater	Building Confidence
6	Fortunately, the Milk	Neil Gaiman	Building Confidence
7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw	Jeff Kinney	Grade Level
8	Clementine	Sara Pennypacker	Grade Level
9	Stuart Little	E.B. White	Grade Level
10	Because of the Rabbit	Cynthia Lord	Grade Level
11	Crenshaw	Katherine Applegate	Grade Level
12	Stone Fox	John Reynolds Gardiner	Grade Level
13	Charlotte's Web	E.B. White	Stretching
14	The BFG	Roald Dahl	Stretching

15	Little House in the Big Woods	Laura Ingalls Wilder	Challenge Read
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## Pacing Guidance

The 15-book sequence across one Spring semester (approximately 18–20 school weeks) averages roughly 1–1.5 books per week at the Start Here and Building Confidence tiers, and 1.5–2 weeks per book at the Grade Level and above tiers.

These are averages, not targets. A class that takes three weeks on *Charlotte's Web* because the conversations are rich is doing exactly the right thing.

Contact the Pilot Coordinator if your class is consistently finishing books faster or slower than anticipated.

Space for notes on title substitutions: \_\_\_\_\_

# SECTION FOUR

*Daily Classroom Practice Your Guide to the Two-Hour Reading Block*

## Section 4: Daily Classroom Practice

The two-hour reading block is the core of the pilot. Everything else — the research, the sequence, the data collection — exists to support what happens in your classroom during those two hours. This section is your practical guide.

### Scheduling the Two-Hour Block

The specific placement of the two-hour block in your daily schedule is determined collaboratively with your principal. A few considerations worth raising in that conversation:

- Morning placement tends to produce stronger reading engagement — students are fresher, and sustained reading benefits from alert minds.
- If your schedule requires splitting the block, a 60/60 split (reading in two one-hour segments) is preferable to a 90/30 split. Shorter segments are harder for students to settle into.
- The block can include transitions such as moving from read-aloud to independent reading. These transitions are part of reading time, not separate from it.

### Flexibility Within the Block

There is no single required format for the two-hour block. The research supports teacher-led read-aloud, independent reading, and combinations of both. The choice is yours, and it can change book to book or week to week based on what your class needs.

## The Three Primary Formats

### Format A: Teacher-Led Read-Aloud

The teacher reads aloud while students follow along in their books or on SORA. Research consistently shows that teacher read-alouds improve comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency by allowing students to hear modeled, expressive reading — especially valuable when some students are still building decoding fluency.<sup>3</sup> This format is particularly effective for:

- The Start Here and Building Confidence tiers, when some students may still be building decoding fluency.
- The opening weeks of the semester, when reading stamina is being established.
- Books with especially rich language (Charlotte’s Web, The BFG) where hearing the text read expressively adds significant value.

Read-aloud at a measured pace — not rushed. Pause occasionally for a brief natural reaction (‘What do you think happens next?’) but do not turn the read-aloud into a formal comprehension check.

### Format B: Independent Silent Reading

Students read silently at their own pace while the teacher reads or circulates quietly. This format builds individual reading stamina and is most effective:

- After the first two to three weeks, once students have established a reading rhythm.
- For students who are reading above the class level and benefit from moving ahead.
- On days when you want to observe individual student engagement and pacing without interrupting the group.

Silent reading works best when the room is genuinely quiet. Establish this expectation clearly from the first day.

### Format C: Combination (Recommended Default)

Teacher reads aloud for the first 30–45 minutes, then students continue independently. This is the format most teachers naturally develop during the pilot, and it has several advantages:

- All students start from the same point in the text each day, reducing confusion about where they are.
- Read-aloud models fluent, expressive reading for students who are still developing that skill.
- The transition to independent reading gives students agency and builds stamina incrementally.

## The First Day

Your first day of the pilot sets the tone for the semester. A few suggestions:

- Introduce the program briefly, then begin reading immediately. Do not spend the first day discussing the program — spend it reading.
- Read aloud for the full two hours on Day 1. Students are still settling in, and hearing your voice reading a great book is the best possible introduction.
- At the end of the first day, ask one question: ‘What are you curious about?’ Note their answers. This is the beginning of the observation data.

## Suggested Introduction for Students

### A Note to Teachers

The script below is a guide — a starting point, not a script to read word for word. Every teacher has their own voice and their own relationship with their class. Reword everything in whatever way sounds like you. The only elements worth preserving are the ‘no worksheet, no test grade’ framing and the immediate pivot to opening the first book.

**Suggested introduction — in your own voice:** “I want to tell you about something different we are going to do this semester. Every day, for two hours, we are going to read together. Not reading for a test. Not reading to fill out a worksheet. Just reading — because reading great books is one of the most valuable things a person can do, and you deserve time to actually do it. We are going to read fifteen books this semester. Some of them will feel easy at first — and that is on purpose, because starting easy means you build speed and confidence before things get harder. Some of them will stretch you. By the end of the semester, you will have read books that most kids your age have never read. Here is what I want you to know: there are no wrong reactions to these books. If a book makes you laugh, that is the right reaction. If a book makes you sad, that is the right reaction. If a book confuses you and you want to talk about it, come find me. Your one job during reading time is to read. That is it. No performance, no grade on each book, just you and the story. Some days I will read to you. Some days you will read on your own. Either way, this time belongs to you. Let’s start.”

**Why end there:** *The abrupt close is intentional. Opening the first book immediately — no further explanation, no questions taken — signals that reading time is real, protected, and already underway. That transition sets the tone for the entire semester.*

## Managing Different Reading Levels

Your class will contain students reading at a range of levels. The sequence is designed with this in mind — the Start Here books are genuinely accessible to students reading below grade level, while still being engaging for students reading above it. A few practical strategies:

- SORA’s text-to-speech feature allows struggling readers to listen while following the text visually. This is a legitimate accommodation and is supported by the research.<sup>4</sup>
- Do not pull students out of reading time for other interventions during the pilot period. If a student receives decoding support or other reading intervention, work with the specialist to schedule those sessions outside the two-hour block.
- If a student is reading so far below grade level that even the Start Here books are inaccessible, contact the Pilot Coordinator. This student may need a parallel accommodation.
- If a student finishes each book well ahead of the class, encourage them to reread — rereading at a slightly easier level reinforces fluency — or to begin annotating their own copies with notes and reactions.

## What Not to Do

### Avoid These Common Pitfalls

- Do not assign comprehension questions or vocabulary lists for each book. The value of the program depends on reading being pleasurable and low-stakes during this time.
- Do not use reading time for other instructional content. Two hours of reading means two hours of reading.
- Do not feel pressure to discuss every book extensively. Brief, natural reactions are welcome. Formal Socratic seminars are for other times.
- Do not abandon a book mid-sequence if some students are struggling. The struggle is productive. The Coordinator is your resource if it becomes genuinely counterproductive.

## SECTION FIVE

### *Tracking & Reporting Observation Logs, Assessments, and Data*

## Section 5: Tracking and Reporting

The pilot produces data at three levels: your weekly observation logs, the Coordinator’s informal reading level assessments, and the district’s standardized Spring assessment. Your contribution to the data is the observation log — and it is the most valuable piece of qualitative data the pilot generates.

### Weekly Observation Log

Once per week, take five to ten minutes to complete a brief observation log. The log is not a formal report — it is honest notes from a professional who is watching students read every day. The Coordinator collects logs monthly.

### Weekly Observation Log — Template

FIELD	YOUR NOTES
Date	
Current book and tier	
Overall engagement this week (1–5)	<i>1 = low, 5 = high</i>
Stamina observations	<i>Are students settling in quickly? Is attention wandering?</i>
Notable student reactions	<i>Excitement, confusion, questions, spontaneous comments</i>
Any students of concern	<i>Struggling to access the text, disengaged, or asking for help</i>
Any students performing above expectations	<i>Moving ahead, asking deeper questions, reading beyond the assigned book</i>
Format used this week	<i>Read-aloud, independent, combination</i>
Anything you want the Coordinator to know	

## Submitting Your Observation Log

Logs are collected by the Pilot Coordinator on a monthly basis. The Coordinator will confirm the preferred submission method before the Spring semester begins. Options typically include:

- Email to the Coordinator directly (PDF or photo of a completed handwritten log).
- Drop a printed copy in the Coordinator's building mailbox by the last Friday of each month.
- Entry into a shared digital form if the Coordinator establishes one — watch for instructions before the semester starts.

If a week passes and you have not completed a log, write a brief note anyway — even two or three sentences is valuable data. Partial logs are far more useful than missing ones.

## Reading Level Assessments

The Pilot Coordinator administers informal reading level assessments at three points during the semester: the first week, the midpoint, and the final week before the standardized assessment. These assessments are brief (10–15 minutes per student) and do not require any preparation from the classroom teacher.

The Coordinator will schedule these sessions with you in advance and will pull students individually or in small groups without disrupting the reading block.

## Student Confidence Survey

A brief student self-report survey is administered at the beginning and end of the semester. The survey asks students simple questions about how they feel about reading — not what they know, but how they feel. The Coordinator administers this survey and handles all tabulation.

The survey takes approximately ten minutes of class time and can be administered during the reading block.

## Standardized Assessment

The 4th grade standardized reading assessment is already scheduled as part of the district's regular assessment calendar. No additional work is required from teachers. The Coordinator will compile pilot school results and compare them against the prior-year baseline and the district average for the same year. This comparison is the primary measure of the pilot's success.

## What Happens with Your Data

All observation logs, reading level assessments, and student survey responses are compiled by the Pilot Coordinator into a final pilot report. The report goes to the Superintendent and is available to the Board of Education. Individual student data is anonymized. Teacher observation notes are attributed only to the pilot school, not to individual classrooms, unless a teacher chooses to be identified.

The goal of the data is simple: to find out whether this approach works, measure it honestly, and give the Board the evidence it needs to decide whether to expand the program. Your observation logs are part of that story.

## Pilot Coordinator Contact Information

<b>Pilot Coordinator:</b>	_____
<b>Email:</b>	_____
<b>Phone:</b>	_____
<b>Building office ext.:</b>	_____
<b>Preferred check-in schedule:</b>	_____

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## Footnotes

1. Krashen, Stephen D., *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (Longman, 1985). Krashen introduced the  $i+1$  principle as part of his Monitor Model in the late 1970s and 1980s, arguing that learners acquire language through comprehensible input just beyond their current competence level. See also: Krashen, "We Acquire Vocabulary and Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for the Input Hypothesis," *Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440–464 (1989).
2. Krashen, Stephen D., *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*, 2nd ed. (Libraries Unlimited, 2004). Krashen synthesizes decades of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) studies demonstrating that in-school free reading produces measurable gains in reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing mechanics, spelling, and grammar without direct instruction in those subskills. Reviewed in: *Teacher's Discovery*, "The Power of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) in Language Acquisition" (Feb. 2026), [teachersdiscovery.com](https://www.teachersdiscovery.com). See also: Krashen, "Free Voluntary Reading: New Research, Applications, and Controversies" (Singapore PAC Conference, 2003), [sdkrashen.com](https://www.sdkrashen.com).
3. Institute for Educational Initiatives, Notre Dame, "The Power of Read Alouds" ([iei.nd.edu](https://iei.nd.edu)): "Research has shown that read alouds improve comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2008), vocabulary (Massaro, 2017), and fluency (Trelease, 2001). Read alouds allow the teacher to model expert, fluent reading of the text. This liberates the students from having to do the work of decoding and allows them to focus on comprehension, acquisition of new vocabulary, phonemic awareness, etc." See also: Arkansas State University, "Benefits of Reading Out Loud to Students," [degree.astate.edu](https://degree.astate.edu); and PMC/Frontiers, "The Effects of Reading Fluency Interventions on the Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension Performance of Elementary Students with Learning Disabilities" (2016), [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5097019](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5097019), finding that "modeling of fluent reading improved comprehension."
4. Edutopia, "How Audiobooks Help Emerging Readers and Inspire a Love of Books" (May 2023), [edutopia.org](https://edutopia.org). Reading Partners, "Listen and Learn: How Audiobooks Can Support Literacy Development" (Nov. 2024), [readingpartners.org](https://readingpartners.org): "Research suggests that audiobooks can aid in the development of some key literacy skills, especially in students who dislike reading, have trouble sitting still, or have ADHD, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities." See also: ECC Cornerstone, "Learning Through Listening: Exploring the Legitimacy of Audiobooks in Education" (May 2025), which cites research that audiobooks "enable students with print disabilities like dyslexia to read at their intellectual level" (Redford, Educational Leadership). Academic support: Hui (2024), "Scaffolding Comprehension with Reading While Listening," *Modern Language Journal*, [doi.org/10.1111/modl.12905](https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12905) — participants comprehended better in read-while-listening conditions than listening-only conditions.
5. Incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading is a well-established finding. Nation, I.S.P. (1982, 1990) documented that vocabulary learning occurs through contextual inference during reading. Krashen (1989) argued that "large quantities of light, 'low risk' reading will result in vocabulary growth and overall language competence." For review of the research base: Kweon & Kim (2008), "Beyond Raw Frequency: Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in Extensive Reading," *Reading in a Foreign Language*, University of Hawaii, [hawaii.edu](https://www.hawaii.edu). See also: ScienceDirect, "Incidental Vocabulary Learning: A Scientometric Review" (2024), demonstrating the large and growing body of evidence for reading-based vocabulary acquisition.
6. Anderson, Richard C., Wilson, P.T., & Fielding, L.G. (1988). "Growth in Reading and How Children Spend Their Time Outside of School." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 285–303. This landmark study found that the amount of time students spent in independent reading was "the best predictor of reading achievement and also the best

predictor of the amount of gain in reading achievement made by students between second and fifth grade." Cited in Scholastic, "Volume, Stamina, and Avid, Independent Reading," [teacher.scholastic.com](http://teacher.scholastic.com). See also: Cunningham, A.E., & Stanovich, K.E. (1991), "Tracking the Unique Effects of Print Exposure in Children," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, finding that print exposure (volume reading) was a significant predictor of reading growth from grades 3–5.

7. Sullivan, Alice (UCL), cited in Daily Galaxy (April 2026): "The link between reading for pleasure and better vocabularies suggests that if young people are encouraged to discover a love for books, it could alter the course of their lives, regardless of their background." The UCL longitudinal study found that daily teen readers recognize substantially more words than non-readers, with family wealth and parental education unable to fully close that gap. Source: [dailygalaxy.com/2026/04/children-reading-habit-brain-structure-cognitive-skills](http://dailygalaxy.com/2026/04/children-reading-habit-brain-structure-cognitive-skills). See also Krashen (2004), *The Power of Reading*, citing Kim's study showing that summer reading gains persisted and were statistically controlled for gender, poverty, ethnicity, attitude/motivation, and disability status.

### **Reading Literacy Pilot Program**

Sioux Falls School District | Curriculum and Instruction Department

*Proposed by Stuart Willett | April 2026*