

# Middle School Literacy Curriculum Recommendation



June 20, 2024

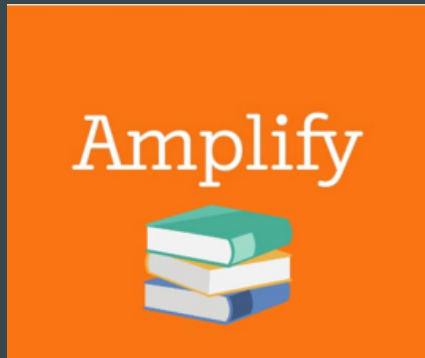
# Instructional Vision for Literacy in RPS - Working Draft

In Reading Public Schools, all our classrooms are literacy classrooms, where students see themselves as readers and writers across genres and content areas. In our classrooms, educators deliver effective, evidence-based literacy instruction that is accessible and equitable for all students. Educators develop students' word recognition and language comprehension to foster skilled readers and critical thinkers who:


- communicate ideas and theories about text through reading, writing, speaking, and listening,
- build knowledge to extend understanding and perspective related to themselves, others, and the world around them,
- utilize their literacy skills to be high level thinkers, debaters, and analyzers, and
- engage in authentic tasks and dialogue that demonstrate the ability to analyze and reason, defend a thesis, and expand on others' ideas in connection with real world problems and situations.

# MS LLT Recommendation to Central Office

Creation of a common and aligned RPS Middle School Scope and Sequence, pairing Amplify ELA's 100 lesson pathway with district-developed units and lessons to ensure access to high-quality instructional materials and equitable ELA learning experiences for all students.



# From Ed Reports



**2019 Amplify ELA**

PUBLISHER: Amplify | SUBJECT: ELA | GRADES: 6-8 | REPORT RELEASE: 6/4/2020

FORMAT: Core: Comprehensive

ALIGNMENT (GATEWAY 1 & 2): **Meets**

USABILITY (GATEWAY 3): **Meets**

KEY AREAS OF INTEREST: Foundational Skills (NC), Building Knowledge (96/96)

QUICK GLANCE: Grade Level Alignment

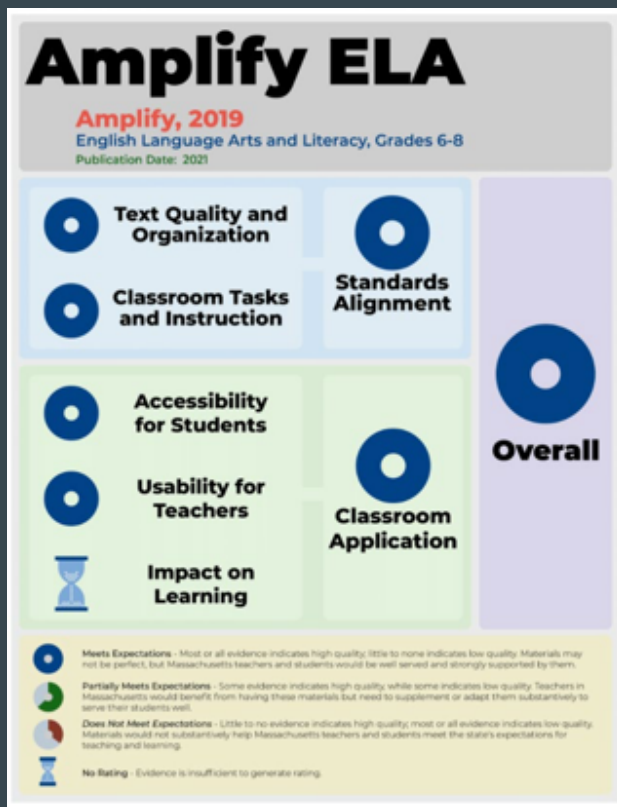
[View Full Report →](#)

**Quick Glance at grade level ratings**

	6+	7+	8+
GATEWAY 1 <b>Text Quality</b>	36/36	36/36	36/36
GATEWAY 2 <b>Building Knowledge</b>	32/32	32/32	32/32
GATEWAY 3 <b>Usability</b>	34/34	34/34	34/34

CLOSE

# From CURATE Reports

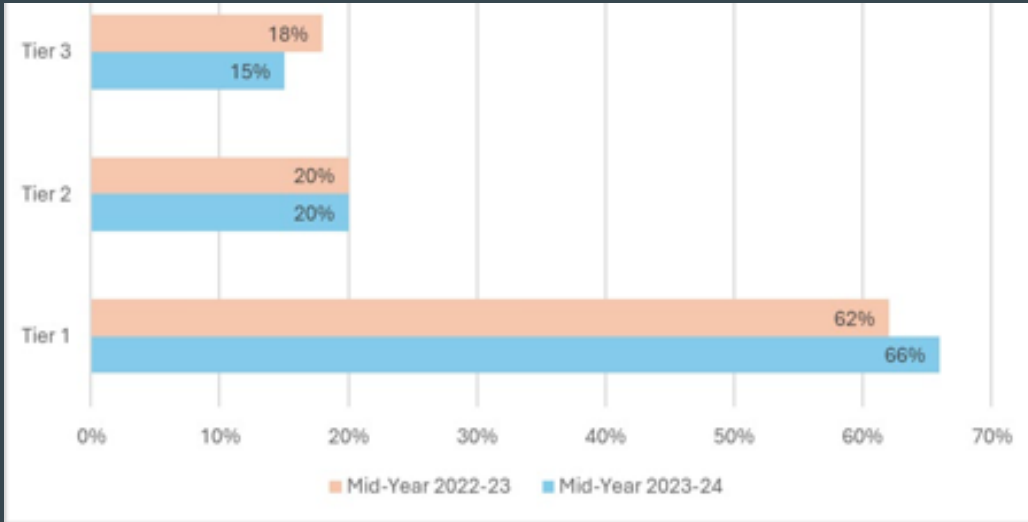


# Curriculum Review Process

# Middle School Assessment Data in Reading/ELA

As shown below, on common and standardized assessments in reading/ELA, approx. 40% of grades 6-8 students are not meeting grade level benchmarks. A curriculum review was initiated in fall 2022 to evaluate the need for a high-quality curricular resource, evidence-based instructional practices and strong assessment routines.

## i-Ready Reading Data for 2022-23 and 203-24



**Tier 1:** On or above grade level; **Tier 2:** One grade level below; **Tier 3:** Two or more grade levels below

## % Proficient - ELA MCAS by Year

2021	2022	2023
62%	64%	62%

# Curriculum Review Process

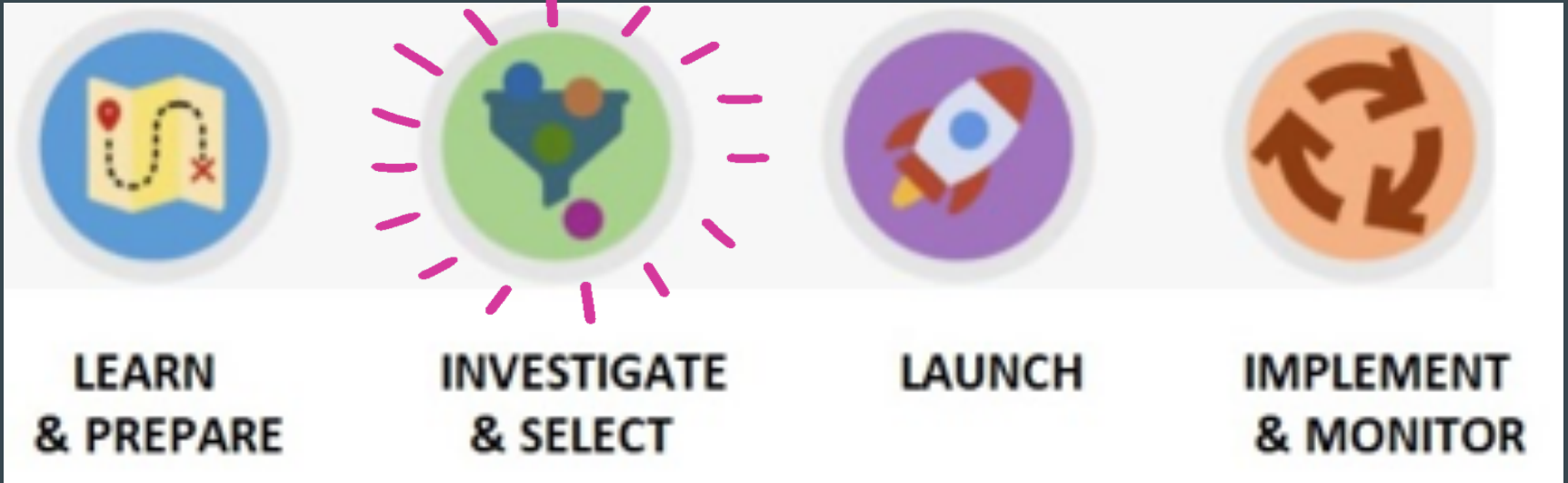
## MS Literacy

2022-23

2023-24

Fall 2024

2024 and beyond





# Middle School Literacy Leadership Team was Formed in Fall 2022

## Goals of the LLT

- Strengthen and improve student achievement and growth in the English Language Arts.
- Ensure all middle school students receive high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction
- Build an effective team that supports adult learning for both the team and the larger middle school adult community
- Grow the team's ability as teacher leaders

# Members of the Middle School Literacy Leadership Team

Amy Bettencourt

Michael Maday

Andrew Spinali

Molly Steevens

Carolyn Caffrey

Suzanne Carroll

Donna Martinson

Tammy Jones

Erin Burchill

Paul Simpson

Jessica Lozzi

Pauline Tsoutsis

Julianne Mitrano

Rochelle Rubino

# Year 1 (2022-2023) Learn and Prepare

- In year 1, the LLT reviewed and analyzed the current status of MS literacy instruction in the following areas: literacy materials; instructional practices; assessment practices; and alignment of standards both vertically and horizontally.
- Additionally, the LLT reviewed and analyzed the criteria for high-quality (HQ), evidence-based curriculum.

# Year 1 (2022-2023) - Learn and Prepare

To guide selection, the LLT used the RPS identified needs and the characteristics of H instruction to establish the following needs or “must-haves” for literacy curriculum:

- A scope and sequence that is horizontally and vertically aligned that contains clear outcomes reflective of the full rigor of grade-level standards
- Unit and lesson plans that leverage high quality texts paired with high quality tasks and reflect current research on strong literacy instruction
- Texts/materials/resources that build knowledge and vocabulary across topics and content areas for students
- Common assessments that allow for monitoring student learning and support teacher collaboration
- Common instructional practices and routines for how we support all learners

# Year 2 (2023-2024) Investigate and Select

In Year 2, the LLT used a backwards planning model to investigate and select literacy curriculum.

Goal for June 2024: Decide on the right path to improve cohesion for middle school literacy and improve outcomes for students in ELA.

This could be:

1. Adoption of a comprehensive literacy curriculum
2. Team created scope and sequence with aligned materials
3. Combination of the two

# Investigating a Team created scope and sequence with aligned materials

This school year, one task of the LLT was to investigate a team created scope and sequence with aligned materials.

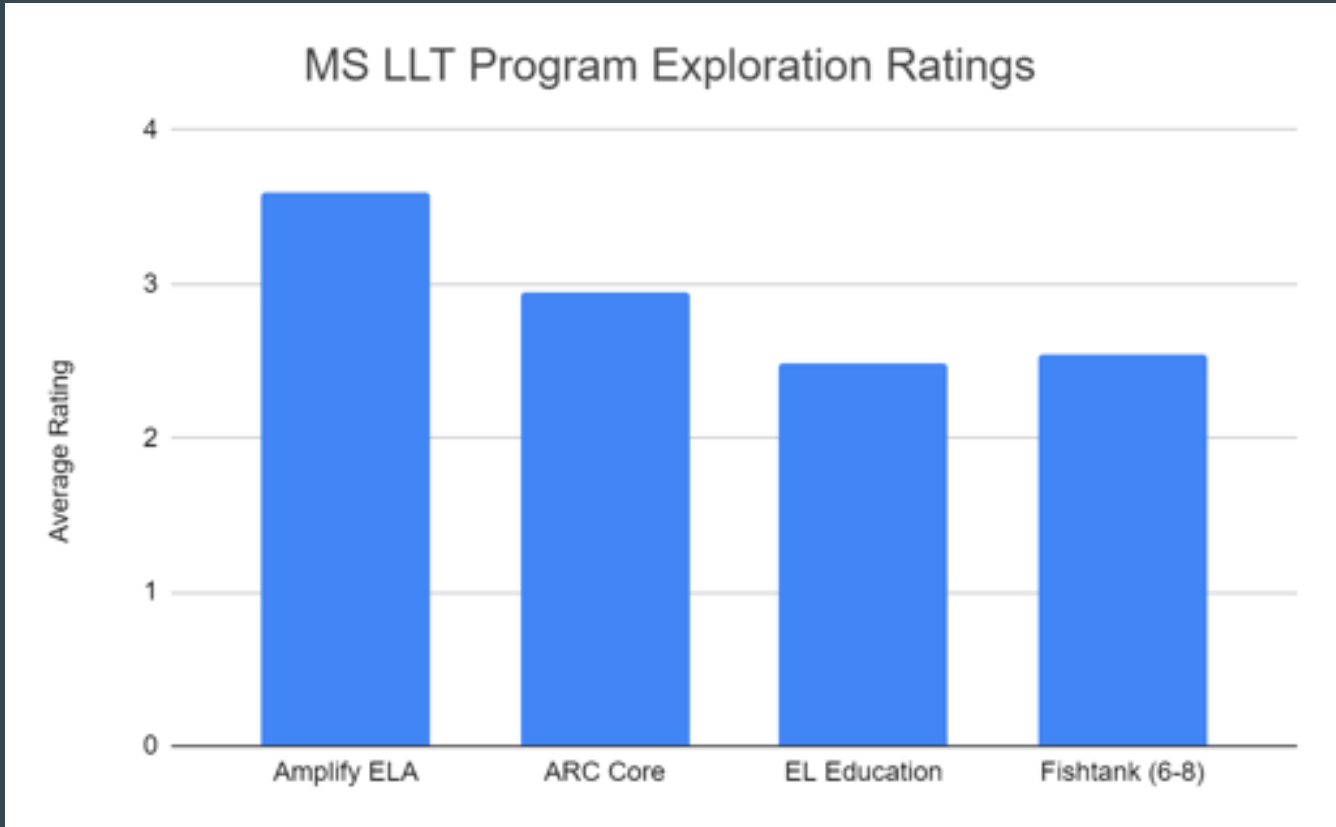
To better understand and document the required elements of a middle school literacy scope and sequence the entire LLT participated in 25 hours of professional learning in adolescent literacy via The Hill for Literacy: Adolescent Professional Learning Series.

Additionally, the LLT utilized the “must haves” to think about the how and when of creating a district scope and sequence.

# Investigating the Adoption of a Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum

The LLT also investigated the option of the adoption of a comprehensive literacy curriculum at the middle school level.

- An initial group of programs were identified for exploration based on EdReports and CURATE Ratings
  - Amplify
  - ARC Core
  - EL Education
  - Fishtank
- For this initial review, the LLT met with publishers and reviewed print and/or digital materials. After each program exploration activity, members of the LLT rated the program in the following areas:
  - Text Quality
  - Tasks and Questions (including alignment with standards)
  - Assessment/Classroom Instruction (including knowledge-building; writing instruction; language development)
  - Support for all Learners
  - Accessibility/Useability for Teachers



Summary Data from LLT Initial Review



# Investigating the Adoption of a Comprehensive Literacy Curriculum

Based on LLT feedback and ratings, only one program was selected for the pilot stage of program exploration - Amplify ELA.

The pilot of Amplify ELA began in April 2024. All middle school ELA teachers were given the opportunity to pilot. Teachers from both Coolidge and Parker piloted (total of 12 teachers). The pilot included:

- A two-hour initial training with Amplify ELA and two one-hour optional check ins
- Access to all teacher materials digitally
- Print and digital student access to all materials
- Teachers selected one unit (of their choosing) to pilot; a few piloted two units
- Data was collected via the Program Exploration Tool and teacher and student surveys

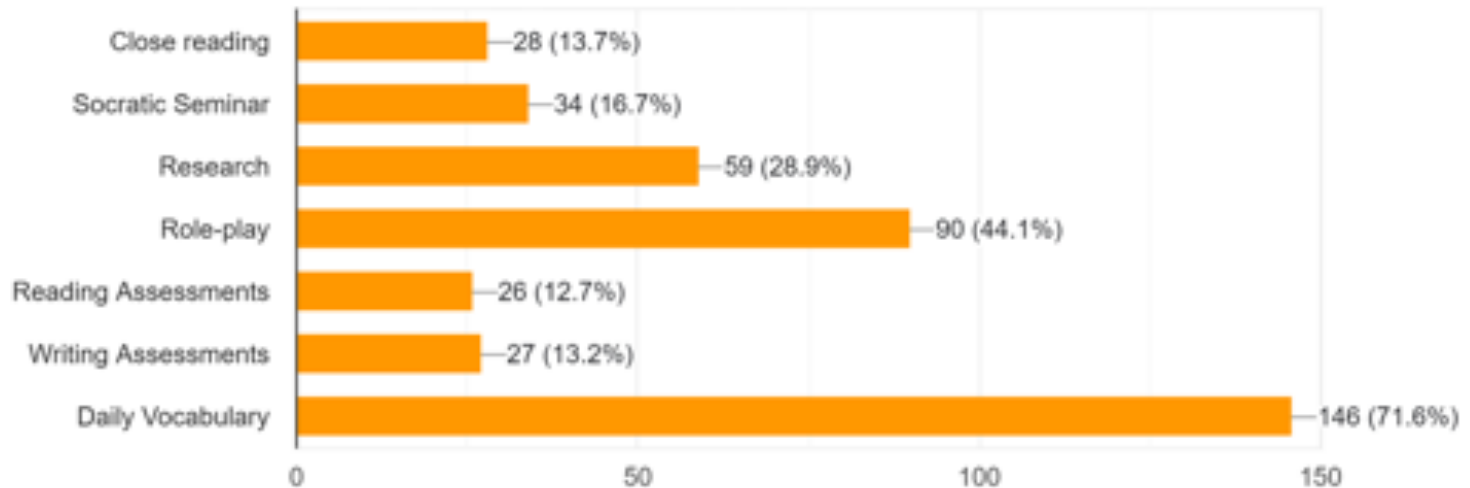
# Student Response to Pilot

- Students reported enjoying the vocabulary app that is part of the daily lesson.
- Classrooms that used both the digital and print materials received more positive responses than full digital pilots.
- Shifting to a new instructional platform and format presented challenges. However, these challenges will help inform our fall implementation.
- Teachers reported student engagement in topics was high.

# Student Response to Pilot

Thinking about the learning tasks/activities in the unit, what did you find MOST engaging? Select all that apply:

204 responses



# LLT's Recommendation to Central Office

- 100 Lesson Pathway from Amplify ELA5 Units
- District-developed units and lessons - Interspersed over school year

## Example of Potential Scope and Sequence

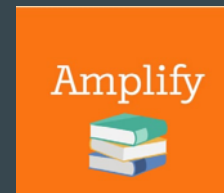
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Amplify Unit A	Amplify Unit B	District-developed Units	Amplify Unit C	District-developed Units	Amplify Unit D	Amplify Unit E	District-developed Units		

# Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars

1. A focus on middle grade engagement
2. Text at the center
3. High expectations and strong supports
4. Active, multimodal, and collaborative learning
5. Timely feedback and ongoing assessment

\*from [Amplify ELA: The research behind the program](#)\*

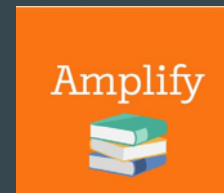
# Why Amplify ELA?



RPS Must Have	Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars
A scope and sequence that is horizontally and vertically aligned that contains clear outcomes reflective of the full rigor of grade-level standards	High expectations and strong supports

Pilot and Program Review Feedback from MS Teachers
<p>“The tasks are embedded with differentiation, and the differentiation can occur for both advanced &amp; lower students. Sentence starters are available for those who need it and the tasks are adjusted, but the key content &amp; expectations are consistent.”</p> <p>“I liked how the scope and sequence was mapped out but also allows for flexibility.”</p>

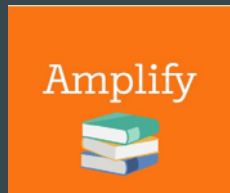
# Why Amplify ELA?



RPS Must Have	Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars
Unit and lesson plans that leverage high quality texts paired with high quality tasks and reflect current research on strong literacy instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text at the center</li><li>• Active, multimodal, and collaborative learning</li></ul>

Pilot and Program Review Feedback from MS Teachers
<p>“The current unit includes a variety of text types: articles, excerpts, letters, images (studying art) which align to the standards.”</p> <p>“At first glance the topics per grade seemed dull but the more she discussed diving into multiple sections of units or entire units of study, it seemed far more interesting and engaging.”</p>

# Why Amplify ELA?

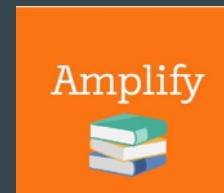


RPS Must Have	Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars
<p>Texts/materials/resources that build knowledge and vocabulary across topics and content areas for students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A focus on middle grade engagement</li><li>● Text at the center</li></ul>

Pilot and Program Review Feedback from MS Teachers
<p>“I loved the balance of short stories, informational text, graphic novel, novel, and multimedia presentations of material. There were multiple cultures represented, and I loved the range in genres.”</p> <p>“I have enjoyed the texts that we have worked with and have found the supplemental discussion videos helpful for the kids.”</p> <p>“The Frida and Diego Collection has primary sources (artwork, excerpts from Rivera's autobiography, letters written by Kahlo) and secondary sources (news articles, accounts from friends).”</p>



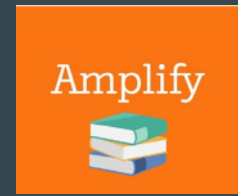
# Why Amplify ELA?



RPS Must Have	Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars
Common assessments that allow for monitoring student learning and support teacher collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Timely feedback and ongoing assessment</li><li>● High expectations and strong supports</li></ul>

Pilot and Program Review Feedback from MS Teachers
<p>“There seems to be support for teachers to use the program. The teachers can have immediate information. There is a variety of presentation information available from scripted for beginning teachers to flexibility for teachers that are veterans.”</p> <p>“I love how it offers immediate feedback for students. I also like how it automatically collects data and provides opportunities for students and teachers to see their progress.”</p>

# Why Amplify ELA?



RPS Must Have	Amplify ELA Research-Based Pillars
Common instructional practices and routines for how we support all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Active, multimodal, and collaborative learning</li><li>● A focus on middle grade engagement</li></ul>

Pilot and Program Review Feedback from MS Teachers
<p>“Loved the game component to the vocabulary and the fact that it was contextually based.”</p> <p>“I love that all of the texts and assessments have audio components to accompany them and the subject matter is varied and diverse.”</p> <p>“All of the scaffolding, multiple levels for assignments with many different supports. Including lower level, challenge level, and MLL.”</p>

# Areas of Amplify ELA for Further Review or Monitoring During Launch and Implementation

- Digital vs. Print Text- Monitoring for screen time
- Lesson Pacing with our MS ELA blocks
- Establishing practice around Amplify ELA assessments

# District-Developed Units

- District-developed units allow us to leverage existing instruction that has proven successful for students and to allow for teacher expertise to inform the scope and sequence
- In year 1, teachers will work with their grade level teams to select and adjust existing units for the district-developed units
- In year 2, the ELA department will review and create common district-developed units which will be interspersed with the Amplify ELA Units

## Example of Potential Scope and Sequence

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Amplify Unit A		Amplify Unit B		District-developed Units	Amplify Unit C	District-developed Units	Amplify Unit D	Amplify Unit E	District-developed Units

# Costs for Amplify ELA

\$142,764.47 for materials including:

- 5 years of digital access to students and staff
- 5 years of consumable materials for students
- Print version of teacher guides for all general education and special education teachers

The funds are coming from two places:

- FY24 High-quality Instructional Materials Purchase Grant (FC 165) - \$71,381
- FY24 Operating Budget - \$71,383.47

# Recommended Adoption

Creation of a common and aligned RPS Middle School Scope and Sequence, pairing Amplify ELA's 100 lesson pathway with district-developed units and lessons to ensure access to high-quality instructional materials and equitable ELA learning experiences for all students.

