



21 Reading and Writing Interventions for Your MTSS

Introduction

A strong MTSS empowers educators to use research and evidence-based practices, including the Science of Reading, to meet the life skills, behavioral, and academic needs of all students. The Science of Reading is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but a consensus from various disciplines, focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. It's especially crucial in the context of the 2022 and 2023 [NAEP reports](#), which showed declines in literacy scores among elementary and middle school students.

Having access to high-quality ELA interventions that align with Science of Reading is a critical component for learning recovery. But finding high-quality reading and writing interventions that fit the needs of students and educators can be challenging and time-consuming.

In this toolkit, you'll find 21 strategies in the central areas of ELA support: academic mindset and metacognition, fluency and comprehension, writing and vocabulary, and early literacy—all informed by the Science of Reading. Each guide provides information about the strategy, use in MTSS tiers and developmental stages, and detailed implementation instructions.

How to use these guides:

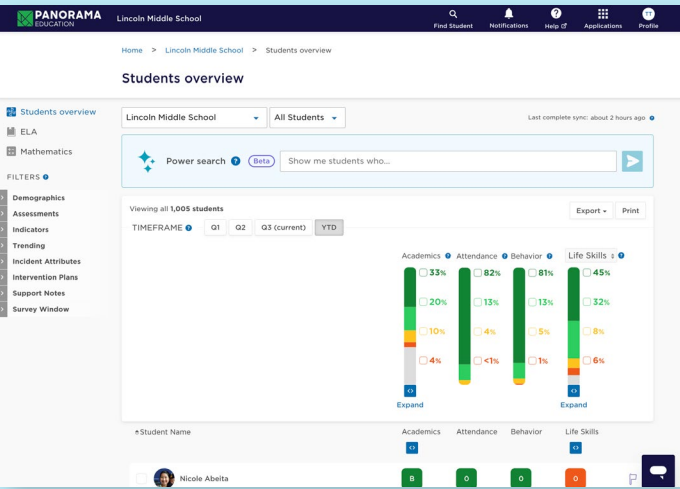
- **District Leaders:** Incorporate these strategies into your district-wide intervention menu. You can also share these resources with your school teams and consider ways to consistently implement interventions districtwide.
- **School Leaders:** Bring these strategies to PLCs, staff meetings, or MTSS and Student Support team meetings to share with staff and support students at every tier.
- **Classroom Teachers and Support Staff:** Try these activities in class, small group, or individual settings to support the academic growth of every student

Meet Panorama Student Success

Student Success is the leading K-12 platform for turning insights into effective student supports. With unified data and intervention planning tools, Student Success makes it easy to understand student needs and deliver support to drive academic outcomes.

Educators use Student Success to create and track MTSS interventions, set goals, and select progress monitoring methods. And with Panorama Playbook, schools and districts move from understanding data to taking action. With Playbook, districts can explore nearly 900 strategies for academic, behavior, and well-being support.

The interventions in this toolkit have been selected from Playbook. These evidence-based strategies provide educators with the tools and resources needed to plan, track, and implement effective interventions—supporting holistic student success within an MTSS framework.



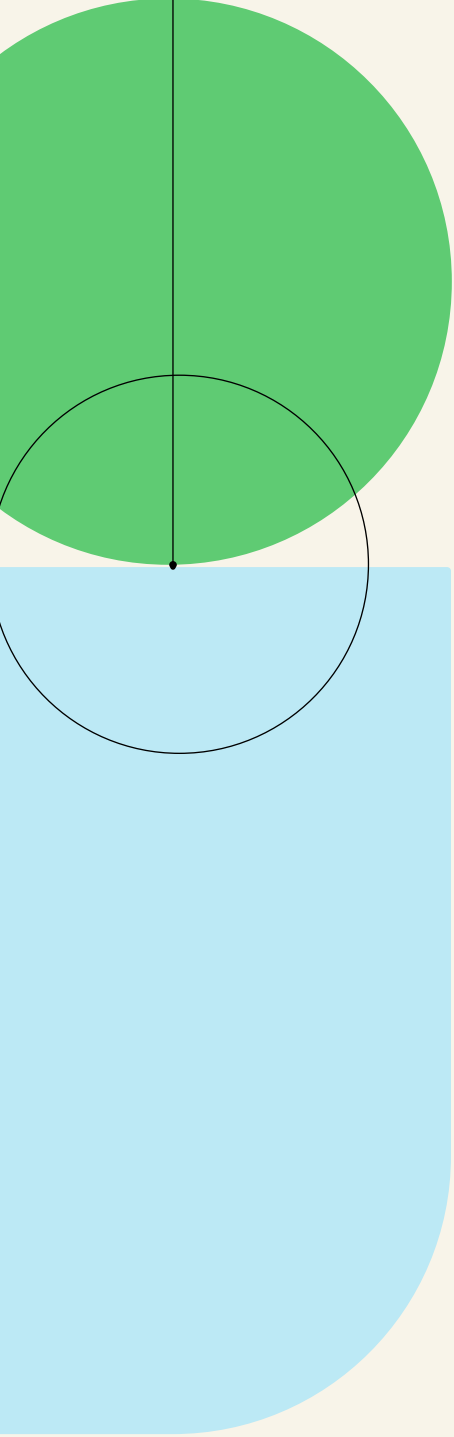
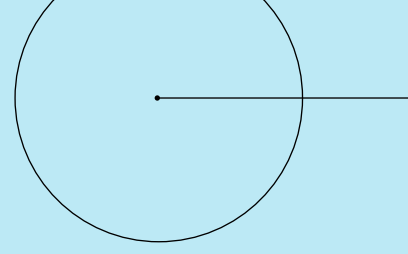


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Academic Mindset & Metacognition

1. MCII (Mental Contrasting with Implementation Intentions)

Focus Area: Growth Mindset, Self-Management **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This self-regulation strategy is focused on helping students overcome academic challenges.

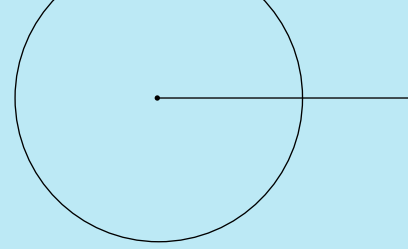
Preparation:

Gather materials: paper, writing utensils

Instructions:

1. Prompt students to write down an academic concern or challenge on a piece of paper.
 - *Example: I'm worried about my upcoming math test.*
2. Ask students to reflect on this concern and brainstorm possible outcomes. Instruct them to write down the best possible outcomes.
 - *Example: I get an A on my test and feel proud.*
3. Have students think through potential obstacles to achieving success. They can write these on the paper.
 - *Example: The night before my test, I start to watch TV instead of studying.*
4. Instruct students to write an if/then-when statement. This will both help them through the cues that may lead to the obstacle as well as provide a goal-directed response to overcome it.
 - *Example: If I feel like watching TV, then I will breathe deeply and shift back to studying.*

Academic Mindset & Metacognition



2. PDSA Cycles

Focus Area: Rigorous Expectations, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1, Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This four-step process prompts students and teachers to work together to build student ownership and improve academic outcomes.

A plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle is a four-step process during which teachers and students:

- Co-create a PLAN for academic improvement;
- Implement (DO) the plan;
- STUDY if the plan's actions were successful, and;
- ACT to create long-term improvements based on the results of the plan.

Incorporating PDSA Cycles:

PLAN

- Use data and student input to understand potential areas of improvement.
 - *For example: in reviewing a recent writing assignment, the class finds that only 63% of students were proficient – showing lots of opportunity for student growth and for the class to work together in a PDSA cycle.*
- Lead students through a discussion about the data and reflect on what plans they might put into place to improve. Work with them to agree on a plan.
 - *For example: we will re-submit this assignment in 10 days; our teacher will lead us through daily warm-ups reviewing key writing skills; we will adhere to a minimum word count for our essay.*

DO

- Put the co-created plan into action using a specific timeline and other methods of tracking progress/data.
- Have students re-submit the assignment or retake the assessment, if applicable.

Academic Mindset & Metacognition

2. PDSA Cycles

Focus Area: Rigorous Expectations, Engagement **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1, Tier 2

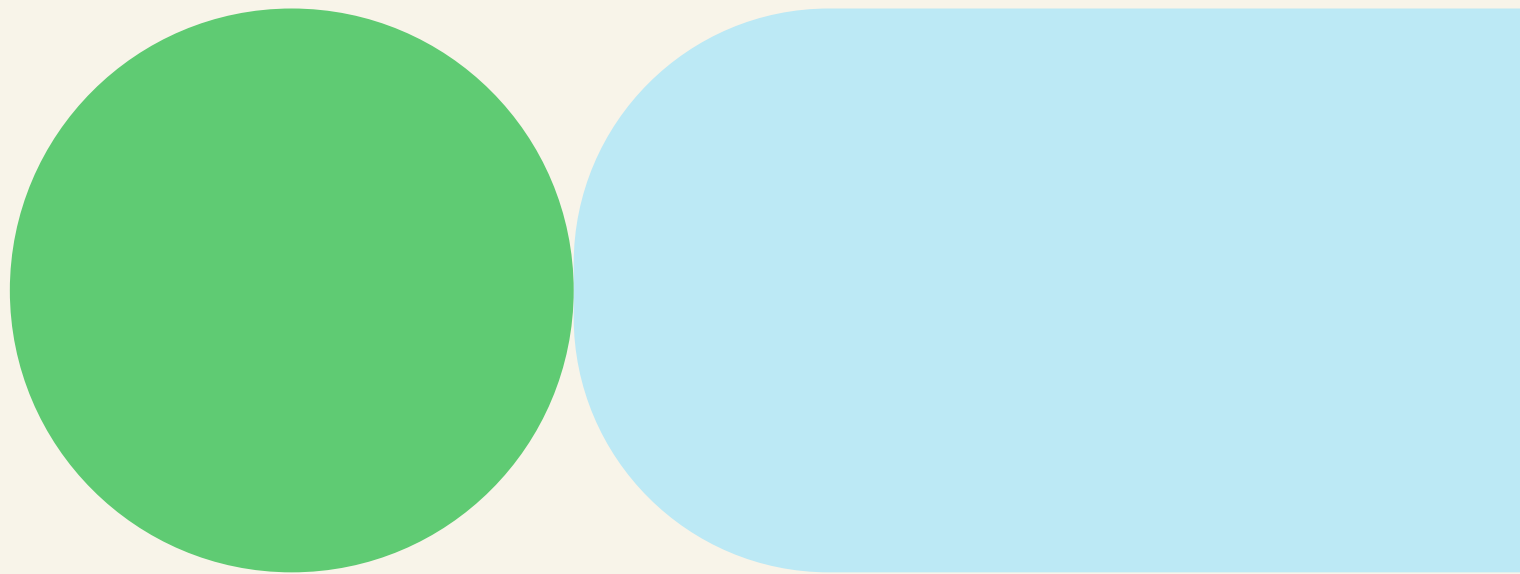
Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

STUDY

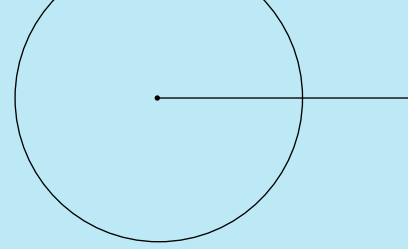
- Come back together as a class and review the results of the plan and its implementation.
- Discuss: did the plan work to create the improvements we hoped for? How do we know? What went well? What didn't go so well?

ACT

- After reflecting on the results of the improvement plan, shift to discussing how to apply learnings from the PDSA cycle into your classroom in the long-term.



Academic Mindset & Metacognition



3. Exam Wrapper

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

An exam wrapper is a tool that helps students examine their readiness when it comes to test-taking, identify specific strategies to improve their readiness, and examine how effective those strategies are so that adjustments can be made for future exams.

Instructions:

1. Introduce this lesson to students by sharing that they will be learning about a new test-prep tool – exam wrappers – while practicing key metacognitive skills (planning and evaluation, in particular).
 - Say: “Metacognition is the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate your learning processes.”
2. Share the pre-exam questions with students. Explain that these are questions to reflect on while they are preparing for an exam.
 - The content with which I am **MOST** comfortable is: _____.
 - The content about which I am still confused is: _____.
 - If I were taking the exam right now, I would expect to get... [GRADE].
 - What is my study plan between now and exam time?
3. Group students into pairs or small teams and ask them to respond to these questions with each other. They can either discuss an upcoming exam or role-play for an imaginary one.
4. Bring the full group back together to debrief. What themes came up?
 - Underscore how our inputs (what we do to prepare for something) can help to influence the outcome.

Academic Mindset & Metacognition

3. Exam Wrapper

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tier(s):** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

5. Brainstorm a list of specific preparation steps or techniques that students can take to prepare for an exam. Examples include:
 - Create review sheets by looking at my notes
 - Meet with a study group or partner
 - Make flashcards
 - Ask someone to quiz me
 - Teach vocabulary terms to someone else
 - Create mnemonics
 - Create a study timeline with my teacher
6. Finally, share the below evaluation questions with students. These are prompts that they can use after an exam to review questions on which they did not receive full points.
 - *For each question on which you did not receive full points, identify the reason why:*
 - *Misremembered (I confused the facts)*
 - *Unprepared (I didn't study/practice that concept or skill enough)*
 - *Misunderstood (it never "clicked" for me)*
 - *Misread (I didn't follow directions)*
 - *After reviewing those questions, set an intention for the next exam.*
 - *Three specific things that I WILL DO to get ready for my next exam are...*

Fluency & Comprehension

4. Story Comparing

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tiers 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

About This Strategy:

The activity engages students in comparing and contrasting the narrative structures of two different texts. Students will identify and discuss story elements, allowing them to understand how different authors build stories, deepening comprehension skills.

Preparation:

Select Texts: Choose two narrative texts that are age-appropriate and have similar themes, characters, or settings but different plot development.

- *Student Sheets:* Prepare graphic organizers that include spaces for the title, author, and specific story elements like characters, setting, problem, solution, etc., along with areas for marking similarities and differences. [Click here to download a copy of our templates.](#)
- *Prepare Discussion Prompts:* Write questions or prompts that guide students in discussing story elements.

Instructions:

1. **Place Texts at the Center:** Arrange the selected texts at the center of the table or reading area, and provide each student with a student sheet. Students select one of the two texts and read it. They then write the story title and author of the text on the graphic organizer in the designated areas.
2. **Discuss Story Elements:** As a group or in pairs, students discuss the story elements of each story, using prepared questions or prompts. They decide which elements are unique to each story and which are the same. Students record their findings under the corresponding story title or shared area on the student sheet.

Fluency & Comprehension

4. Story Comparing

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tiers 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

3. **Continue Discussion:** Repeat steps 2-4 with the second text, continuing until all story elements are discussed and recorded.
4. **Teacher Evaluation:** The teacher reviews the student sheets, evaluating understanding and offering feedback. This could include a class discussion to summarize findings.

Fluency & Comprehension

5. 4A's Text Protocol

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This activity encourages students to both listen deeply to others' opinions about a text as well as share their own thoughts.

Preparation:

- Select an age-appropriate text for the group to read.
- Materials: highlighter, pen/pencil, sticky notes

Instructions:

1. Share the text with the group and ask participants to read it silently.
2. Prompt students to highlight the text and write notes in the margin or on sticky notes to answer these four questions:
 - What *assumptions* does the author of the text hold?
 - What do you *agree* with in the text?
 - What do you want to *argue* with the text?
 - What parts of the text do you want to *aspire* to (or act upon)?
3. Split the class into groups of four. Explain that individuals in each group will be taking turns sharing some of their notes.
 - Detail that each round will be four minutes long; groups should identify a timekeeper (who will still participate).
4. The first round begins with a volunteer taking one minute to share an assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if included) as evidence. The volunteer will briefly talk about why they selected this passage.
 - Other participants should be actively listening but not responding. If they would like to comment on something, they can jot it down and do so later on.
 - After one minute, switch to the next person in the group, who will have one minute to do the same.

Fluency & Comprehension

5. 4A's Text Protocol

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Middle School, High School

5. Rotate so that each member of the group shares their assumption and rationale for selection.
6. Repeat, starting with a new student to share another "A" from the text (e.g., agree, argue, aspire).
7. After a group has finished moving through each "A", open up the discussion for students to share thoughts and takeaways that they heard while listening.
8. Finish by debriefing the activity with the full class. What important points came out of each group's discussion? How did you feel while using this protocol?

Fluency & Comprehension

6. Reading Conferences

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Through one-on-one conferences, teachers can provide individual support to each student to deepen comprehension and interest in reading. This strategy is provided by Panorama's curriculum partners at [Digital Promise](#).

Instructions:

Teachers can confer with their students as part of reading workshops or during independent reading time. During the conference teachers can listen to students read aloud for fluency and accuracy, ask students questions to deepen comprehension, delve deeper into concepts or strategies they are practicing, and review their reading lists and make suggestions. Reading conferences can also be opportunities for teachers to conduct formative assessment and provide extra support to address each student's specific needs.

[Example: Use This Strategy In Your Classroom](#)

Watch how this fourth grade teacher conducts one-on-one conferences while students read independently. Students read books at their level independently, while she confers with individual students asking them questions, providing feedback, and practicing comprehension strategies to improve their genre knowledge.

Fluency & Comprehension

7. 3H Strategy

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2, Tier 3

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

3H is a mnemonic learning strategy that students can use to remember how to answer different types of comprehension questions. It involves the three types of question-answer relationships: here, hidden, and in my head.

Preparation:

- Select reading passages
- Download the [3H poster](#)

Instructions:

1. Explain why students should learn this strategy. Using the 3H poster, explain each type of question.
 - “Here” refers to answers that are found in the text directly “on the lines.” These answers are typically found in one place.
 - “Hidden” refers to answers that are found “between the lines.” These answers can be found by joining together information that is found in different places in the text.
 - “In My Head” refers to answers that are found “beyond the lines.” These answers come from background knowledge or may involve opinions or what a reader thinks.
2. Give an example of each type of question from a current movie or fairy tale students are familiar with or use relevant examples from the school’s culture.

Fluency & Comprehension

7. 3H Strategy

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2, Tier 3

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary,

3. Model the strategy: After explaining the strategy, proceed with modeling. Use a think aloud strategy, and voice out the thought process behind each stage.
 - Instruct the students to write “Here,” “Hidden,” or “In My Head” next to each comprehension question. Repeat this activity with different passages and different comprehension questions. This may need to occur over the course of several days based on the needs of the students.
4. Guided practice: Guide students in performing the strategy in small groups or in pairs. If students need additional support, they can orally recite the description of the three H’s or use notecards with a description written on them. Monitor student progress.
 - During this time, scaffold the learning and support students who need assistance in using the strategy. They can also model the think aloud strategy (when in pairs) to strengthen comprehension and learning of the steps involved.
5. Independent practice: After guided practice, students should only use the strategy independently, once they have shown they have mastered the strategy.
 - Students can also be given the opportunity to reflect on the strategy.

Fluency & Comprehension

8. The Word Identification Strategy

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This intervention focuses on teaching elementary-aged students the Word Identification Strategy, allowing them to decode and identify unknown words by analyzing prefixes, suffixes, stems, and syllabication rules.

Preparation:

- **Materials:** Word cards with prefixes, suffixes, and stems; reading texts with a variety of unfamiliar words; whiteboards and markers.
- Pre-select examples of words that demonstrate the Word Identification Strategy. Familiarize yourself with the three syllabication rules that will be taught.

Instructions:

Components of the Word Identification Strategy

- **Identifying Prefixes, Suffixes, and Stems:** The strategy starts with breaking down the word into its parts - prefixes, suffixes, and the stem (or root). Understanding these components helps students get to the meaning of the word and how it's pronounced.
- **Applying Syllabication Rules:** There are three short syllabication rules within this strategy that guide students in breaking down a word into syllables. Syllabication aids in pronunciation, making it easier to read the word.
- **Guessing the Meaning of the Word:** Based on the identified components and their understanding of the context, students are encouraged to guess the meaning of the word.

Fluency & Comprehension

8. The Word Identification Strategy

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

Introduction to Prefixes, Suffixes, and Stems (10 min):

- Introduce students to common prefixes, suffixes, and stems using word cards.
- Provide examples and engage students in recognizing these elements in sample words.

Group Discussion on Syllabication Rules (15 min):

- Explain the three basic syllabication rules.
- Break students into small groups to practice applying these rules to words from their reading materials.

Guided Practice with Word Identification Strategy (20 min):

- Model the strategy with examples, breaking down words into their components.
- Engage students in guided practice using words from their reading texts.
- Allow students to work in pairs to further practice and reinforce the strategy.

Fluency & Comprehension

9. Story Detective

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2, Tier 3

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

Students play the role of “story detective” while reading a story, making predictions about what will happen through a series of clues.

Preparation:

- Select a storybook or short story to use for this intervention. This should be a story that the student is NOT familiar with.
- Write a list of clues that correspond to key moments from the story. Structure the list so that general information is provided early-on, leading to subsequent clues that reveal new details. For example:
 - *The dogs arrived at the shelter.*
 - *Most dogs had brown fur; a few had yellow fur.*
 - *But one dog looked a little bit different.*
 - *The dogs rushed to chase a tennis ball that was rolling down the hill.*
- Write a final clue that reveals the conclusion of the story.

Instructions:

1. Introduce this to students by explaining that they will be the “story detective” and asked to make predictions about what happens in a story based on clues.
2. Read the initial clue from the list.
3. Ask the student to respond by making a prediction or comment about the story, using the clue and prior knowledge as reasoning.

Fluency & Comprehension

9. Story Detective

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2, Tier 3

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School

4. Respond by affirming or redirecting the student's prediction.
5. Read the second clue and repeat. Continue to read clues, ask for predictions, recognize important details, and make connections to prior experiences (or other stories) before revealing the final clue.

Writing & Vocabulary

10. Collaborative Interval Training

Focus Area: Rigorous Expectations, Engagement, Comprehension, Writing

MTSS Tiers: Tier 1 **Developmental Stage:** Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This ELA strategy encourages rich classroom discussion while fostering deeper learning for students.

Preparation:

- *Materials:* paper or journal, writing utensil
- Brainstorm a set of questions (or tasks) for students to answer (or complete) in groups. See below for examples.

Instructions:

1. Assign students to answer a question or complete a task in the group.
 - Share that each member of the group should have time to speak and propose that teams use the [three-before-me](#) technique to ensure this.
2. Ask students to repeat the conversation again and include academic language.
3. Prompt students to repeat the conversation for a third time. This time, ask students to engage with a few of the following prompts:
 - What might happen if you combined ... and ...?
 - Do you agree that ...? Why or why not?
 - What evidence can you present for/against ...?
 - How does ... contrast with ...?
 - Explain your response with examples.
 - Why is ... significant? Explain your reasoning.
 - What is the point or big idea of ...?
4. Shift from group discussion into writing. Provide students with time to connect their conversations to their writing. Question prompts include the following:
 - How will you incorporate this learning into your writing?
 - What is similar and different in how we talk from our writing?
5. End by asking students how this work might transfer within and across contexts.

Writing & Vocabulary

11. Story Mapping

Focus Area: Comprehension, Writing **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Story Mapping is a strategy where students create a graphic organizer to visualize the elements and structure of a story. It helps students understand the text on a structural level, which builds literary analysis and writing skills. It is applicable as an individual or group exercise, and is equally effective as a learning strategy, as well as an assessment tool.

Preparation:

- Prepare a blank story map for each student. To make a copy for elementary students, click [here](#). To make a copy for secondary students, click [here](#).
- In order to use the story map, students must be familiar with the elements of a story: character, plot, setting, and theme.
- The terminology for various story elements may be scaffolded, or adapted for younger grades, such as:
 - Character, Setting, Actions, Problem, Solution
 - Character, Setting, Events, Ideas
 - Who, Where, What happens, Why

Instructions:

1. Remind students of the elements of a story.
2. Provide students with a blank story map template to fill in.
3. Model the construction of a story map graphic organizer for a commonly-known story.
4. As students read a new story, have them stop periodically to fill in parts of the story map.
5. Give students time to compare their story maps and make necessary changes as they read.

Writing & Vocabulary

12. LINC'S Vocabulary Strategy

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

The LINC'S Vocabulary Strategy intervention aims to improve students' vocabulary comprehension and retention through memory-enhancement techniques, including visual imagery, associations with prior knowledge, and key-word mnemonic devices.

Preparation:

- *Materials:* markers, index cards, a selection of vocabulary words, projector or visual aids for instruction.
- Familiarize yourself with the LINC'S strategy, create examples of how the strategy can be applied to vocabulary words, and prepare a list of vocabulary for students to practice.

Instructions:

LINC'S is a mnemonic strategy that helps students remember complex information through associations, imagery, and mnemonic devices. It can be particularly useful for learning new vocabulary in any language.

The LINC'S strategy consists of creating a connection between a new word and something already familiar. Here's a step-by-step explanation:

1. **List the Term:** Begin with the vocabulary word that needs to be learned.
2. **Imagery:** Create an image that represents the word. This should be something that can help students visualize the word in their minds.
3. **Note a Reminding Word:** Choose a word (the reminding word) that sounds like the vocabulary word. This should be a word or phrase that is familiar to the students.
4. **Create a Story:** Develop a story or sentence that connects the reminding word with the imagery and the meaning of the vocabulary word. This should create a vivid and engaging association.

Writing & Vocabulary

12. LINC'S Vocabulary Strategy

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

5. Create a LINC'S Study Card: The study card will contain the vocabulary word, the reminding word, the imagery, and the story. Students can use these cards to review the vocabulary and reinforce their understanding. (See below for an example from the University of Kansas).
6. Study and Review: Encourage students to study their cards and practice with peers. Regular review reinforces the connections and helps with long-term retention.

1 Term tirade	4 LINC story The tire screamed as it went around the corner.	5 LINCing picture 	2 Definition <u>Screaming or yelling</u>
3 Reminding word tire			

Example

- Imagine you want to teach the word benevolent. You might:
- List the Term: Benevolent
- Imagery: Picture a loving grandma.
- Note a Reminding Word: Ben's elephant (sounds like benevolent)
- Create a Story: Ben's elephant is as kind and loving as a grandma, always taking care of others.
- Create a LINC'S Study Card: Include all the above on the card.

By utilizing these steps, you're not just giving students the definition of the word; you're providing them with tools to remember and understand it. LINC'S can be a fun and engaging way to deepen vocabulary understanding and make learning more enjoyable.

Writing & Vocabulary

12. LINC'S Vocabulary Strategy

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

Introduction to LINC'S (10 min):

- Explain the concept of the LINC'S strategy.
- Share the importance of vocabulary retention and how LINC'S can aid in learning new words.
- Show examples of LINC'S study cards on index cards.

Group Discussion (15 min):

- Divide students into groups.
- Provide each group with a list of vocabulary words.
- Have students discuss and brainstorm how they could use the LINC'S strategy with the provided words.

Creating LINC'S Study Cards (20 min):

- Demonstrate how to create a LINC'S study card using one vocabulary word.
- Distribute study cards and markers to students.
- Allow students to create their own LINC'S study cards using the vocabulary words.

Practice and Review (15 min):

- Encourage students to pair up and quiz each other using the study cards they've created.
- Reconvene as a whole class to discuss what worked well, what was challenging, and how students feel about the strategy.

Writing & Vocabulary

13. Keyword Mnemonics

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Fluency **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1, Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

This intervention introduces mnemonic keywords to students to help them connect novel vocabulary words to learners' prior knowledge by using a visual depicting the definition to the new word.

Preparation:

- Educators can research pre-created keyword mnemonics or create their own to use with students.

Instructions:

1. Link the new word with a familiar word (the “keyword”).
2. Create a visual for the student that showcases the keyword interacting with the main attributes of the new term.
3. Share a sentence with the student that describes the visual in a way that explicitly links the keyword and the definition of the new word.
4. Discuss with students how to both connect the new word with the key word as well as visualize the picture.
5. Ask the student to repeat the sentence that describes the definition of the new word.
6. Example Scenario: Parallel

Parallel Lines (Pair of Elves)

Lines that are the same distance apart and will never intersect

The Pair of Elves are the same distance apart and will never intersect.

The Pair of Elves are on Parallel Lines

In this hypothetical, an educator is working with a student to discuss the definition of a new vocabulary term: parallel.

Writing & Vocabulary

13. Keyword Mnemonics

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Fluency **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1, Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

1. Link the new term to the keyword.
 - “One easy way to remember what ‘parallel’ means is to think about a ‘pair of elves.’”
2. Create a visual that showcases the keyword and new term interacting.
 - “This picture shows two elves walking on lines that are the same distance apart. They will never cross each other.”
3. Share a sentence with the student that describes the visual in a way that explicitly links the keyword and the definition of the new word.
 - “This pair of elves will never intersect with each other; they stay the same distance apart. The pair of elves are on parallel lines.”
4. Discuss with students how to both connect the new word with the keyword as well as visualize the picture.
 - “When you think of what parallel means, remember to imagine a pair of elves walking on two straight lines that will never cross.”

Writing & Vocabulary

14. Four-Square

Focus Area: Writing **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

The four-square method is a strategy used to help students at all writing levels plan and organize their writing within a simple graphic organizer.

Preparation:

- Identify a writing prompt for the independent practice of the strategy.
- Provide blank sheets of paper to students if they will be making their own four-square organizer. Alternatively, print and distribute a premade four-square [template](#) to students.
- Prepare an example four-square organizer to share with students as a model.

Instructions:

1. Inform students of the writing prompt. Engage in a class discussion regarding the topic to activate prior knowledge.
2. Introduce the Four-Square graphic organizer, showing students the model you prepared. Explain that they will use a Four-Square organizer to plan and organize their writing.
3. Instruct students to fold a sheet of paper in half twice, once horizontally and once vertically. Then have them unfold the paper and draw a box in the center that overlaps all four squares.
4. Tell students to think about how they will answer the writing prompt in one paragraph. Then have them write the topic sentence of the paragraph in the center box.
5. Instruct students to write supporting details in the outer squares.
6. Discuss how students might use the completed Four-Square organizer to complete the writing assignment as a class. If time allows, have students take these steps.

Early Literacy

15. Reading PALS

Focus Area: Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1, Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

When students explain to others, they deepen their understanding and gain confidence in their learning. This strategy is provided by Panorama's curriculum partners at [Digital Promise](#).

Instructions:

With Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), students provide and receive immediate feedback from their peers, which can increase their reading fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension.

[Example: Use This Strategy In Your Classroom \(High School\)](#)

Watch how this ninth grade teacher uses reciprocal teaching with the roles of summarizer, questioner, clarifier, and predictor in her language arts classroom. By offering example questions, students are able to autonomously read and discuss in their small groups, deepening their comprehension and social and relationship skills.

[Example: Use This Strategy In Your Classroom \(Upper Elementary School\)](#)

Watch two upper elementary school students practice part of a prediction relay. By stopping halfway through the page, students have the opportunity to make predictions, check the accuracy of their predictions, and switch roles. Using this structure requires both students to maintain their attention and practice Inhibition & self-regulation while listening.

Early Literacy

16. Phoneme Pathfinders

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

About This Strategy:

In this engaging activity, students will use a card game to explore and match medial phonemes, fostering their phonological awareness and recognition of sounds within words.

Preparation:

- *Materials:* Phoneme matching cards with corresponding images (e.g., cat, bat, mat), card holders or mats for placing the cards, a timer, and printed instructions for the game.
- Prepare the matching cards beforehand, making sure to include multiple examples of each medial phoneme. Set up the playing area with mats or cardholders.

Instructions:

Introduction (5 min):

- Explain the importance of phonemes in words and introduce medial phonemes.
- Demonstrate how to play the game by showing the matching process using one set of cards.

Playing the Game (25 min):

1. Place medial phoneme picture cards face down in a stack at the center.
2. Students select five cards each off the top of the stack and check their cards for pairs of pictures that have the same medial sound.
3. Taking turns, students read matches and state the medial sound. For example, “I have heart and barn. The medial sound is /ar/.” Place the matched pairs down on the table.
4. Select one card from the deck. Look at the cards in their hands to try to make a match.

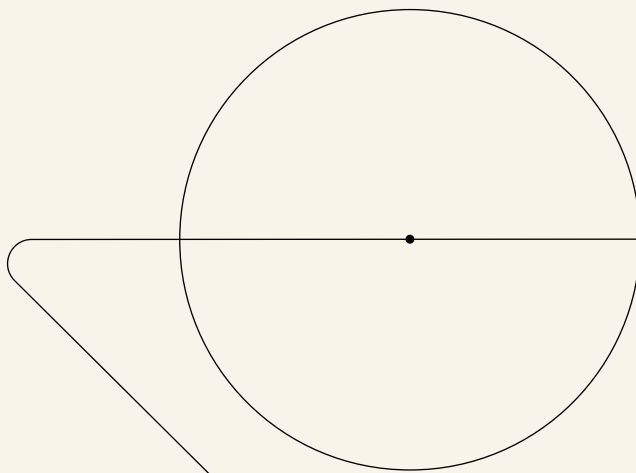
Early Literacy

16. Phoneme Pathfinders

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

5. If a match is made, say the names and the medial sounds of the pictures and place with other matched cards on the table.
6. If no match is made, the next student takes a turn.
7. Continue until all pairs are made.
8. Students provide feedback to one another on the correct identification of medial sounds and the understanding of the game's rules.



Early Literacy

17. Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping: Building Word Connections

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary

About This Strategy:

This activity is designed to help students develop their phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondence skills.

Preparation:

- Prepare a set of word cards with pictures or sentences depicting the meaning of each word (e.g., cat - picture of a cat, The cat is sleeping).
- Create a set of phoneme manipulatives (e.g., colorful tokens, cubes, or chips) for each student or pair of students.
- Ensure each student has access to writing materials, such as pencils and paper or whiteboards and markers.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the concept of phoneme-grapheme mapping to the students. Explain that they will be exploring the relationship between sounds and letters in words.
2. Display a word card (e.g., cat) and say the word aloud while showing the associated picture or sentence. Encourage students to repeat the word and understand its meaning.
3. Model how to segment the sounds in the word using phoneme manipulatives. For example, using three tokens, represent the sounds in cat as /c/ - /a/ - /t/.
4. Have the whole class practice segmenting sounds for a few words together to reinforce the concept.

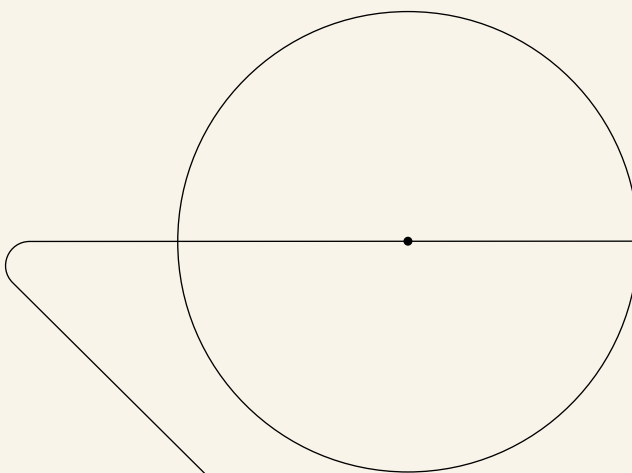
Early Literacy

17. Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping: Building Word Connections

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary

5. Guide the students to use their manipulatives to map the phonemes to the corresponding graphemes. For cat, they would place the tokens representing /c/, /a/, and /t/ under the letters 'c,' 'a,' and 't,' respectively. Encourage students to discuss their choices with their peers and justify their selections.
6. Once students are comfortable with the phoneme-grapheme mapping, instruct them to write the letters that represent each sound. For cat, they would write 'c,' 'a,' and 't' on their papers.
7. (Ask students to blend the sounds together using the mapped letters and read the word fluently: cat.
8. Have the students take turns reading words from their cards and share their reading successes with the class.



Early Literacy

18. Word Boxes

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1, Tier 2

Developmental Stage: Upper Elementary, Middle School

About This Strategy:

The Word Boxes intervention helps students segment the sounds in words and match letters to those sounds, ultimately assisting them to spell a word.

Preparation:

- *Materials:* tokens, dry erase marker and eraser
- [Click here to download a sample word boxes practice worksheet.](#)

Instructions:

1. Introduce this to students by explaining that they will be using a new tool to help with sounding out words: a word box.
2. Place the worksheet in front of the student and direct them to the first word box. Put one token underneath each individual square in the word box.
3. Model the activity for the student by verbally presenting a target word while sliding a token into each box as each sound of the word is articulated.
 - Once each sound has been articulated and tokens have been moved into all of the boxes, blend all of the sounds together to make the word (while sliding your finger across the boxes as the word is said).
4. Prompt the student to repeat this process for the same target word.

Early Literacy

19. Chunking

Focus Area: Phonemic Awareness, Fluency **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School

About This Strategy:

Chunking involves breaking texts down into more manageable pieces to help learners focus their Attention while reading and to comprehend text more effectively. This strategy is provided by Panorama's curriculum partners at [Digital Promise](#).

Preparation:

- Gather materials: paper, writing utensils

Instructions:

Chunking techniques can be used with traditional and digital texts, and instructors can arrange and group different parts of the texts to help readers process each chunk of text individually. Chunking can be particularly effective for supporting multilingual learners and for struggling readers, including those with dyslexia.

[Example: Use This Strategy In Your Classroom](#)

Watch as this classroom teacher uses multiple strategies to chunk and segment words to support early literacy. Chunking can be done in digital and traditional paper contexts and supports early phonics instruction, particularly for students with dyslexia, who may benefit from isolating segmented sounds.

Teachers can facilitate chunking in many ways depending on the lesson and the needs of the individual learners. For emergent readers and writers, breaking down longer words into syllables and chunks based on phonetic representation can help them build alphabet knowledge and strengthen decoding skills. Simplifying sentences into smaller chunks can aid comprehension overall, but can also help young learners to understand the components of a sentence for use in their own writing.

Early Literacy

20. Crazy Professor Reading Game

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

About This Strategy:

This interactive early literacy activity involves expressive reading, body language, collaborative learning, and role-playing to engage students in understanding and remembering the text.

Preparation:

- Select age-appropriate and engaging texts, divided into portions suitable for individual reading.
- Create a list of questions related to the text for the “Crazy Professor” stage.
- Arrange seating for partner work.
- Provide props (if needed) for students to use during the “Crazy Professor” stage.

Instructions:

Stage 1: Expressive Reading Aloud

- Students individually read aloud from their portion of the text, reading with as much verbal expression as possible.
- Encourage them to focus on tone, pitch, and pace to convey the meaning.

Stage 2: Add Drama with Gestures

- Students reread their section with the same amount of verbal expression as Stage 1, adding dramatic hand gestures as they read.
- Prompt them to use body language to help represent the content.

Early Literacy

20. Crazy Professor Reading Game

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

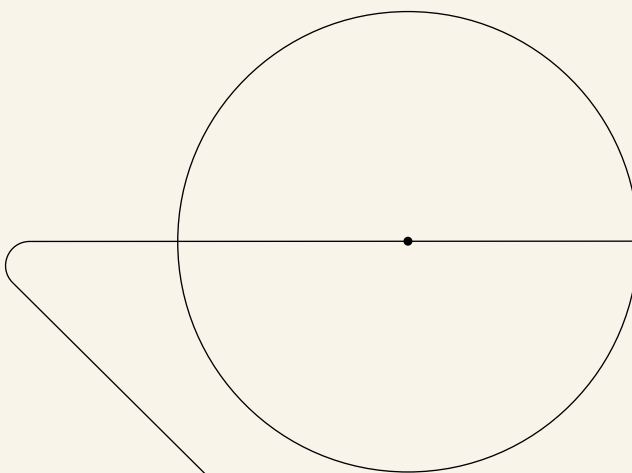
Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

Stage 3: Teach Your Neighbor

- Pair students with someone who had a different reading.
- They take turns describing their reading, summarizing the main points, characters, or events.

Stage 4: Crazy Professor and Eager Student Role-Play

- Student pairs then play “crazy professor” and “eager student.”
- The “professor” gives a hyped-up overview of the text and asks the “student” questions about the text.
- Encourage playful and exaggerated expressions for a fun learning experience.



Early Literacy

21. FORI (Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction)

Focus Area: Comprehension **MTSS Tiers:** Tier 1

Developmental Stage: Lower Elementary

About This Strategy:

This activity involves a guided reading process in which students progressively engage with the same text over the course of a week, building fluency and comprehension skills through repetitive and interactive reading experiences.

Preparation:

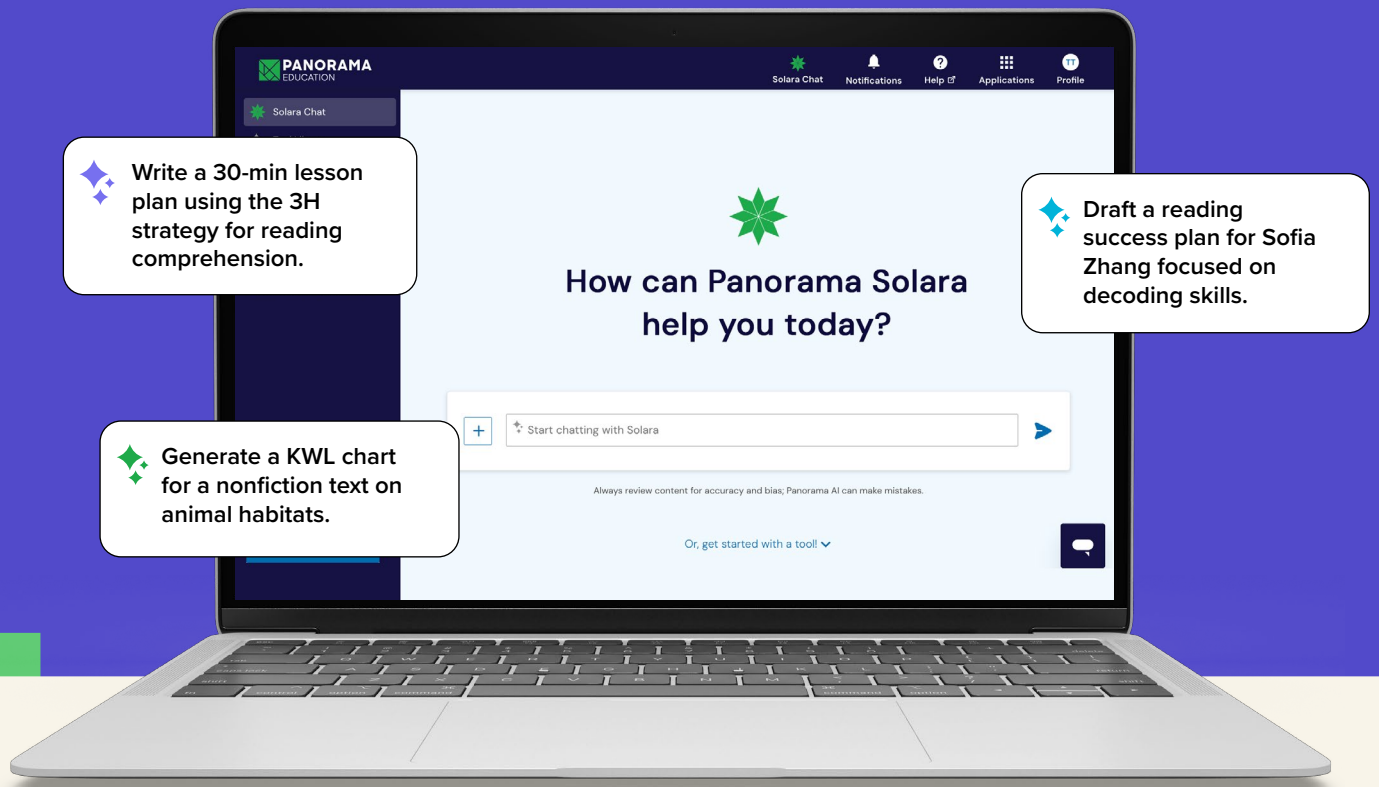
- **Select a Text:** Choose a suitable text that aligns with the students' reading level and class curriculum. A short story or poem with rich vocabulary and engaging content is recommended.
- **Prepare Reading Materials:** Ensure that each student has a copy of the text, either in book or handout form.
- **Extension Activities:** Prepare supplementary activities and materials for students to work on at home.

Instructions:

1. **Teacher Reads Aloud in Class**
 - Start by reading the text aloud to the class while students follow along in their books. Encourage students to pay attention to pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
2. **Students Echo Read**
 - Students then repeat after the teacher, reading the text aloud. This step provides an opportunity to reinforce proper pronunciation and rhythm.
3. **Students Choral Read**
 - The class reads the text together in unison. This collaborative experience helps to build confidence and reinforces learning.
4. **Students Partner Read**
 - Pair up students and have them take turns reading the text aloud to each other. Encourage them to listen to their partner and provide supportive feedback.

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– Sarah Jay, Executive Director of Equitable MTSS, Boston Public Schools (MA)

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