

Slide #1

For the past forty years, research in reading has been done in America's classrooms by observing teachers and students. Information was gathered by asking students to perform reading tasks and assessing reading skills afterwards. Over the past ten years, the medical community has perfected many different brain imaging techniques that allow researchers to see what actually happens in the brain while reading. This breakthrough has given educators a much better understanding of how people learn to read.

Along with medical research, educators have isolated what needs to be learned in order to read. Being able to figure out sounds, letters and words (decoding), understanding what is read (comprehension) and knowing word meanings (vocabulary) are the major areas of reading instruction. Each area has many parts. For example, comprehension is made up of learning how to predict, summarize, connect, question, infer and image. Never before were teachers able to know exactly how to help students understand what they read. Now, we have the answers!

Medical and education research have joined forces to provide your children with the best possible practices for learning how to read proficiently.

Slide #2

Riverton School District has earned a reputation for being on the cutting edge of the newest and best innovations. The primary goal of today's schools to create active, involved thinkers ready and able to take on the world's challenges. Riverton is meeting these challenges. The dramatic changes being made by our teachers and your children reflect our shared desire to provide the best for the youth of Riverton.

Even our older students deserve the best in literacy education. We need to make certain ALL of our high school students know how to meet the reading demands of the 21st century which is why our efforts to improve reading education reach every grade level Pre K – 12.

Slide #3

Besides understanding **what** children need to learn in order to read, brain research has also provided great insight into **how** children learn to read. Two things are very clear; children need to be directly taught a skill or strategy over a longer period of time and the teacher needs to give students more and more opportunity to practice. To put it simply, learning to read is like learning to ride a bike. At first, the parent holds onto the bike and runs alongside the rider. This can take weeks. Then the parent lets go and watches as the rider wobbles away. It is not until the rider has many opportunities to practice will they become the next Lance Armstrong.

That is why reading instruction looks different for your child than it did for you. Your child will be learning decoding, comprehension and vocabulary skills and strategies **one by one**, over a longer period of time. For several weeks, teachers will give your child step by step directions (often with a graphic organizer demonstrating the steps) to teach them each part of the reading process. For example, your child may be learning how to predict, or summarize for a month or more. This guarantees that they will be able to understand what they read, even as the text becomes more difficult.

Slide #3

Riverton School District's initiative is to create lifelong readers. Each of your children is now being carefully monitored so that their precise literacy needs are evaluated on an ongoing basis and they are now given the exact reading instruction they require. As your children become older, less time will be necessary to become proficient. The teachers at Riverton are now able to guide your child carefully along the reading path until they have become strategic, intuitive readers.

Just as Lance Armstrong continues daily practice on varied and difficult biking trails, your children will receive support and coaching on a variety of complex and challenging texts ensuring they will be able to read strategically in every situation they encounter.

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Having lots of interesting things to read and the time and place to read them at home is the best way to help your child. Imagine eating the same food every day. That is what it would be like to read the same type of book all of the time. Magazines, graphic novels, and even comic books put a little spice into a reading diet. The public library is a great place to stock up.

Once your child has interesting things to read and a place to read, you can help by being interested and asking the type of questions that help your child understand what they read. Even older kids benefit from the right kind of questioning. Take a look at the next six slides. Each one of these is designed to give you the tools to help your child become a better reader.

Slide #12

Every day we learn more and more about the world around us. Think about what we now know about technology, medical advances and more. Reading instruction in schools is very different now as well. Your children are taught very specifically. They are tested regularly to make sure that they are learning what they need to be good readers. Teachers know exactly how and what to do to make sure your child reads as well as he or she can. Assignments will look different, testing will look different and grading will look different. All of these innovative adjustments to instruction offer your child the opportunity to excel as a reader.

Therefore, at Riverton School District, all classes are differentiating instruction. Your children will experience whole group, small group, and individualized independent practice. They are reading in many different types of text; from stories to articles to research papers. Remember, as an adult, we need to read and comprehend much more nonfiction text. Your child is learning those skills. Riverton is the community you chose to live in and raise your family, Riverton School District treats your children as part of their academic family, providing the best reading instruction available today.