



LAKE BLUFF SCHOOLS DISTRICT 65

Excellence in Education, Enthusiasm for Life, Every Student, Every Day.

TO: Dr. Lisa Leali and Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Jackie Tivador, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Impact

DATE: April 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Adoption of Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) for Grades K-4

Recommendation

The Lake Bluff Administrative Team recommends the adoption of Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) by Amplify as the core English Language Arts instructional resource for grades K–4, beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

Background

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a high-quality, comprehensive literacy experience for all students, the district has engaged in a multi-year process to evaluate and strengthen our literacy instructional practices and resources.

The district has historically utilized Units of Study from Teachers College (Reading adopted in 2015; Phonics adopted in 2019). While this workshop-model approach included many strong instructional elements, it required significant supplementation to address foundational skills, knowledge-building, and intervention needs. Over time, implementation across grade levels became less cohesive, resulting in inconsistencies in alignment and delivery.

Over the past three years, District 65 educators have engaged in extensive Guaranteed, Viable, and Transparent Curriculum (GVTC) work. This process included:

- Deep analysis and unpacking of Common Core Standards
- Identification of priority standards and vertical alignment across grade levels
- Examination of instructional gaps and redundancies
- Development of a shared understanding of high-quality literacy instruction

Through this work, teams strengthened their knowledge of:

- Science of Reading research and instructional implications
- Structured literacy practices
- Knowledge-building and vocabulary development
- Writing progression and expectations

This internal capacity-building allowed the district to clearly define the criteria for a high-quality instructional resource aligned to student needs.

During the 2025–2026 school year, the district implemented a third-grade pilot of CKLA. This included:

- Full-year classroom implementation
- Ongoing teacher feedback and reflection
- Monitoring of student engagement and performance

- Evaluation of alignment across reading, writing, and knowledge-building

Recommendation Rationale

CKLA provides:

- A research-aligned, comprehensive literacy framework grounded in the Science of Reading
- Explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction
- Content-rich, knowledge-building units that integrate reading and writing
- Strong alignment with district curriculum work and instructional priorities
- A coherent and vertically aligned K–4 literacy experience

As with the pilot, the district will not pursue strict fidelity to the program; rather, we will maintain instructional integrity while allowing educators to integrate CKLA within our broader instructional framework, continuing to emphasize a Guaranteed, Viable, and Transparent Curriculum aligned to state standards. Teachers will continue to supplement additional writing instruction and opportunities for independent and choice reading to ensure a well-rounded literacy experience.

Implementation Plan

Pending Board approval, the district will:

- Adopt CKLA for grades K–4 beginning in the 2026–2027 school year
- Provide professional learning and planning time for teachers, beginning this spring
- Continue curriculum alignment work to ensure integration with district standards and priorities
- Utilize ongoing feedback and data to refine implementation

This adoption plan reflects our continued investment in equipping our educators with high-quality resources while maintaining flexibility to meet the unique needs of our students.

Financial Impact

The initial cost for implementing CKLA across grades K–4 includes:

- Print and digital materials
- Teacher resources
- Platform access and licensing

The cost for the initial purchase of the CKLA program for grades K-4 will not exceed \$70,000. Costs will vary by grade level and will be presented as part of the district's curriculum budget. This is the initial implementation cost for the 2026-2027 school year, and will be followed by ongoing annual licensing and consumable fees.

Conclusion

This recommendation reflects a thoughtful, multi-year process grounded in research, professional learning, and careful evaluation of instructional resources. The adoption of CKLA represents a strategic investment in a coherent, aligned, and research-based literacy experience for all students.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

In partnership,

/s/ Jackie Tivador

Jackie Tivador

Director of Teaching, Learning, and Impact