



# The ABCs of Reading Instruction in NYC

*Presented by:*

SARAH PART & MAGGIE MOROFF  
ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK

MARCH 4, 2025

# Today's Training





---

- Introduction
- How children learn to read & why some struggle to do so
- What's changed in NYC schools with NYC Reads
- Programs & supports for students struggling with reading in NYC
- Tips for parent-teacher conferences

# About Advocates for Children (AFC)

*AFC is an independent agency that protects the rights of all NYC students*

## OUR SERVICES:

-  Helpline: 866-427-6033 (Monday–Thursday, 10am–4pm)
-  Guides and resources: [www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)
-  Workshops and trainings
-  Free legal services to low-income families

# How children learn to read & why some struggle to do so

# All children CAN become proficient readers!

- Learning to read is NOT a natural or automatic process
- There is a mountain of scientific evidence about how best to teach kids how to read
- The type of instruction that works for students with dyslexia benefits all kids

# Reading is...

## **WORD RECOGNITION (DECODING)**

getting the words off the page (requires mastering the relationships between sounds and letters)



## **LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION**

understanding what the words mean (requires vocabulary and content knowledge)

# ● CAT ●

*Felis catus* in a bag

*Cat* in a bag



# The “five pillars” of effective reading instruction

Phonemic awareness

Phonics

Fluency

Vocabulary

Comprehension

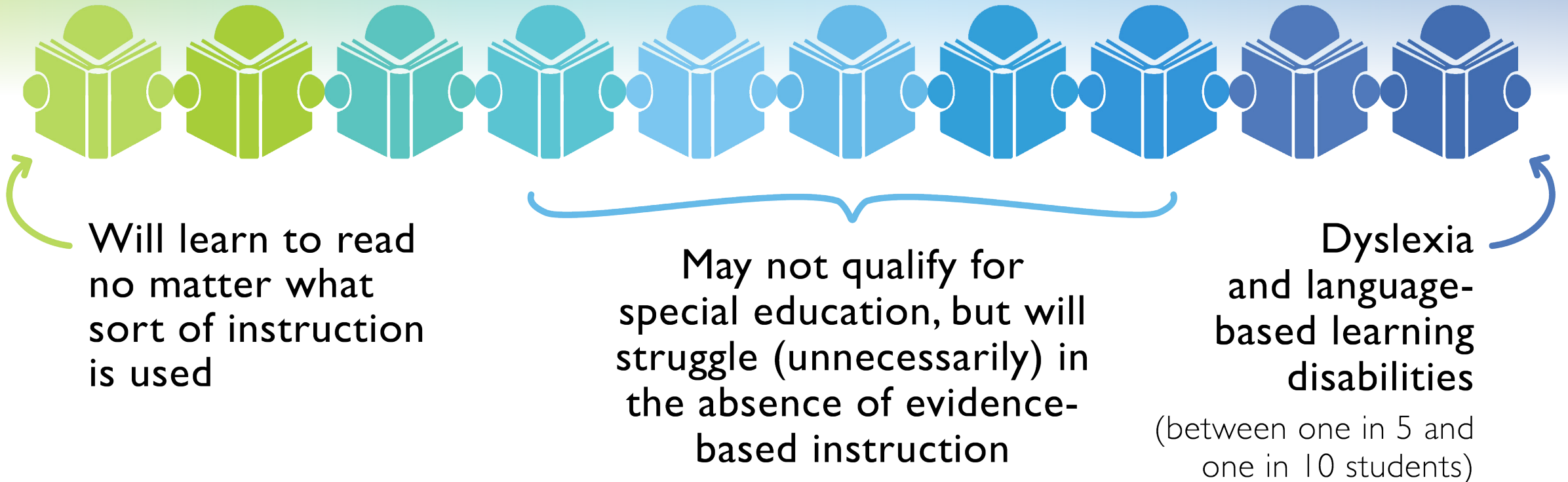
# STRUCTURED LITERACY

- ✓ explicit and systematic phonics: all letter-sound relationships are directly taught and instruction follows a planned sequence
- ✓ encourages students to “sound it out” when a word is unfamiliar
- ✓ good for everyone and *essential* for students with dyslexia

# BALANCED LITERACY

- ✗ some phonics instruction, but it’s usually not done systematically
- ✗ encourages guessing at unfamiliar words based on the context, the pictures, or the first letter
- ✗ kids who learn to read do so *in spite of* these practices, not *because of* them

# A continuum of reading difficulties



# Understanding dyslexia

- Difficulty with accurate and fluent word recognition
- Is neurobiological — a brain-based condition
- NOT a temporary delay in development or something a child outgrows
- NOT a visual problem
- Has nothing to do with intelligence!

# Students with dyslexia might...

- Struggle to learn nursery rhymes or tell if two words rhyme
- Have a lot of trouble learning the names and sounds of letters
- Read aloud slowly and awkwardly, with lots of stopping and starting and mispronunciations
- Frequently skip over words when reading or make wild guesses at words based on just the first letter
- Become frustrated or upset when asked to read or go to great lengths to avoid reading at all

# What's changed in NYC Public Schools with NYC Reads

# Reading curriculum

Each district has to pick one of three **English Language Arts (ELA) curricula** to use in grades K–5 in all elementary schools:

HMH Into Reading

EL Education

Wit & Wisdom

And for **foundational skills instruction** in grades K–2:

Wilson Foundations

Heggerty

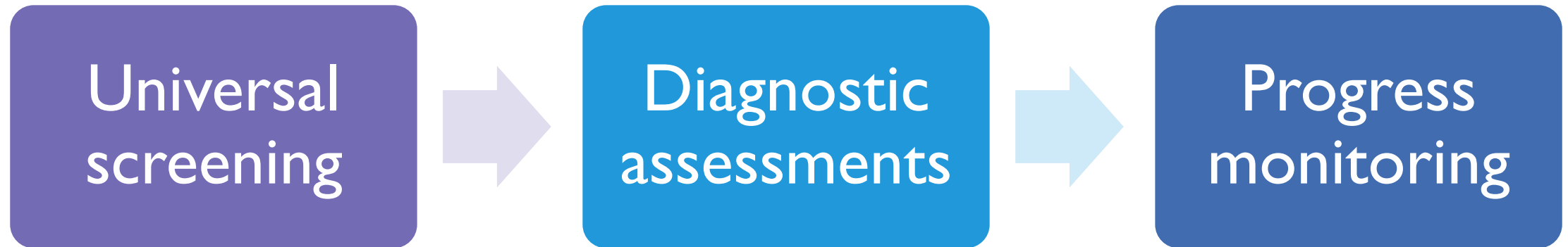
Really Great Reading

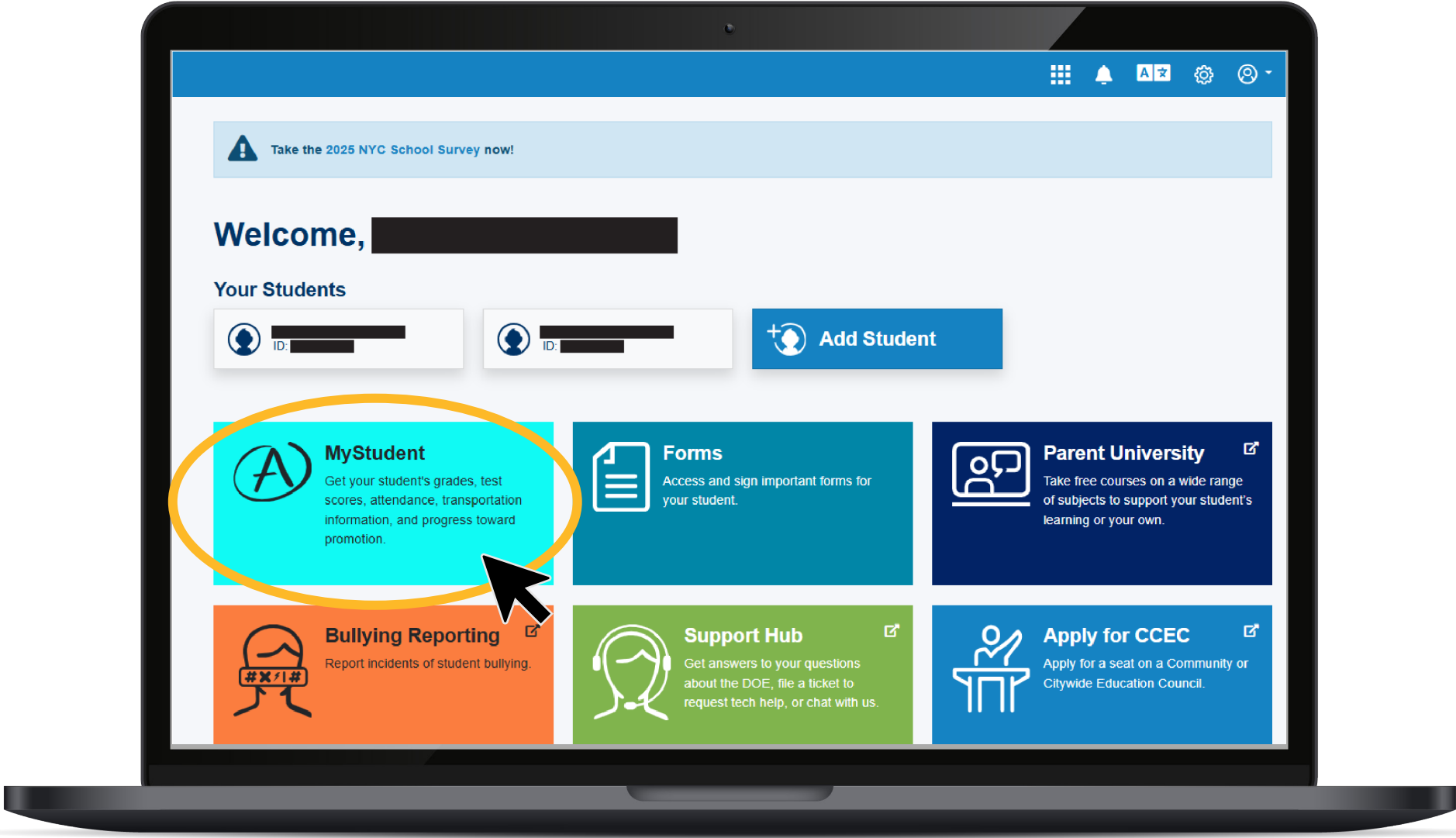
# Screening & assessment

Universal  
screening

- A reading “check-up” that happens three times a year
- Options include Acadience, MAP Growth, and i-Ready
- Results are available in your student’s NYCSA account

# Screening & assessment





Take the 2025 NYC School Survey now!

Welcome, [redacted]

Your Students

[Student Profile Card]

[Student Profile Card]

Add Student

MyStudent  
Get your student's grades, test scores, attendance, transportation information, and progress toward promotion.

Forms  
Access and sign important forms for your student.

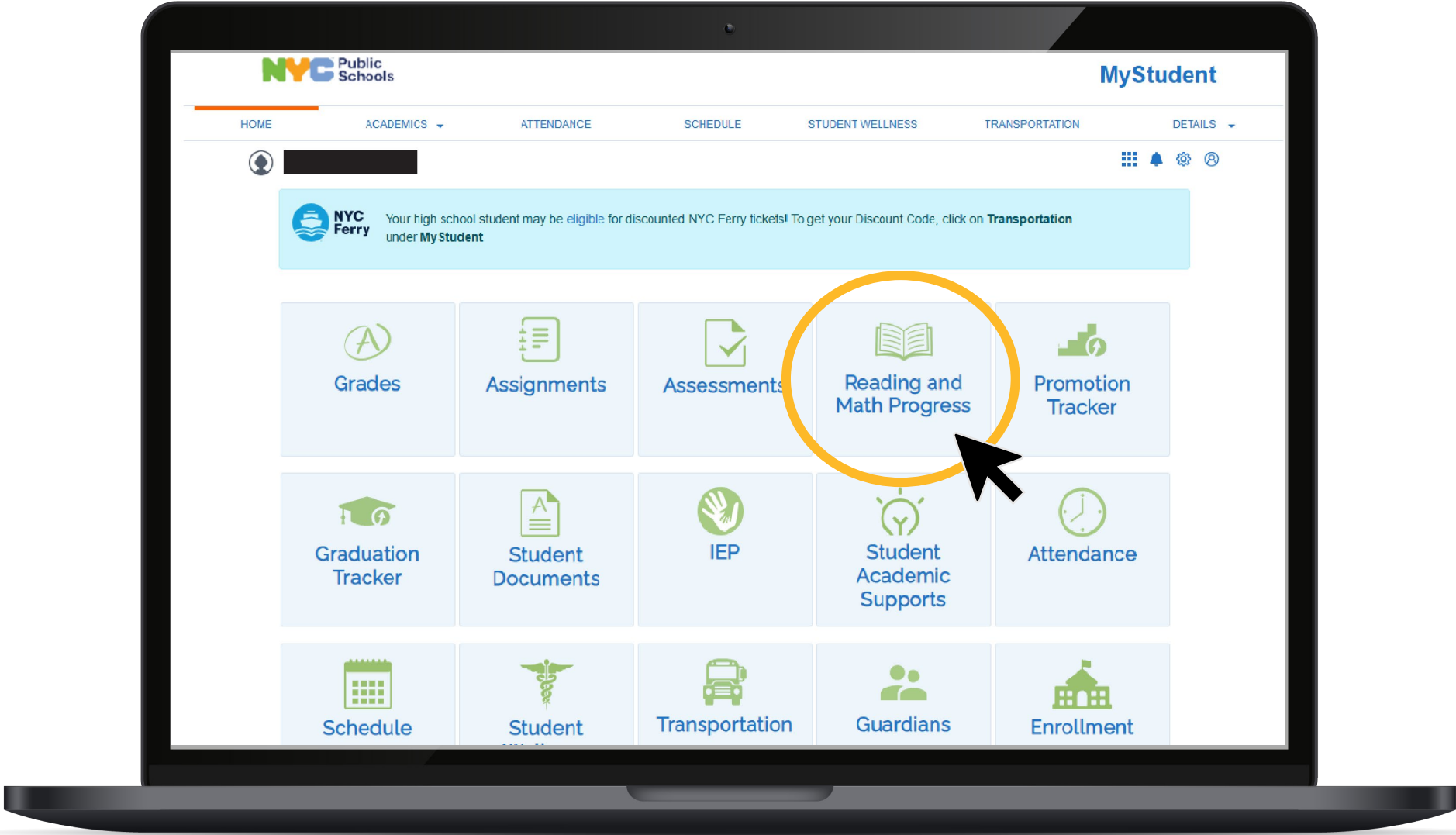
Parent University  
Take free courses on a wide range of subjects to support your student's learning or your own.

Bullying Reporting  
Report incidents of student bullying.

Support Hub  
Get answers to your questions about the DOE, file a ticket to request tech help, or chat with us.

Apply for CCEC  
Apply for a seat on a Community or Citywide Education Council.







## Reading and Math Progress

School Year  
2024-2025

The explanations listed on this page are meant to give family members a sense of their child's development in foundational reading and math skills. All of the assessments used have been designed to help teachers figure out what each child needs to learn next in order to improve. Talk to your child's teacher to learn more about what the student is doing and how you can best support. Information about reading and math progress from the beginning of the year will be available in the middle of November, progress for the middle of the year will be available in the middle of March, and progress for the end of the year will be available at the end of June.

### Grade 08

Assessment Name	Subject	Assessment Period	Scoring Explanation
MAP Growth	Algebra 1	Beginning of School Year	Your student is in need of support in order to be performing at grade-level. Please contact your student's teacher for assistance.
MAP Growth	Reading	Beginning of School Year	Your student is in need of support in order to be performing at grade-level. Please contact your student's teacher for assistance.

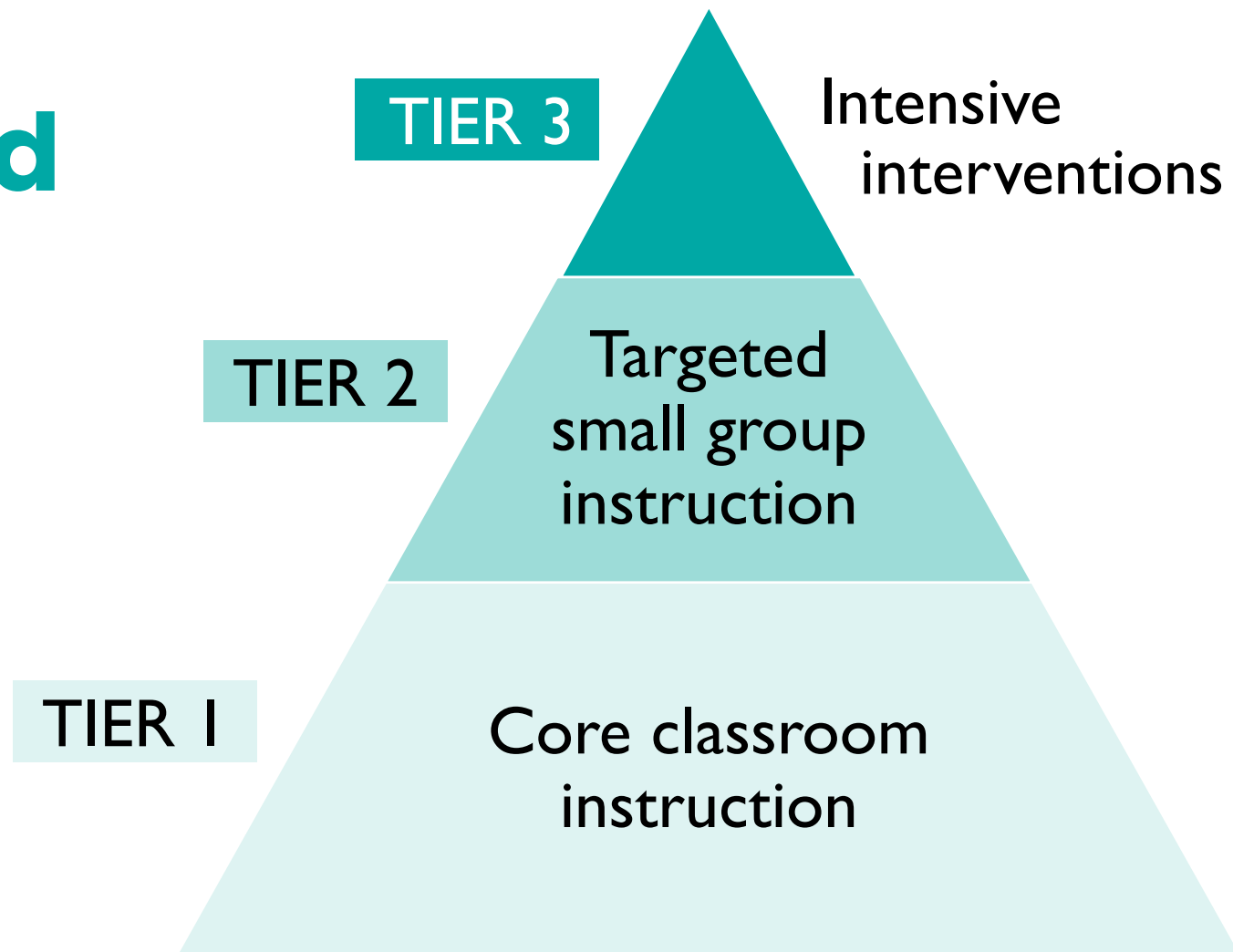
Data for assessments listed above are only available for school year 2021-22 and forward.

# Programs & supports for students struggling with reading in NYC

---

**INTERVENTION**

# Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)



# Reading intervention

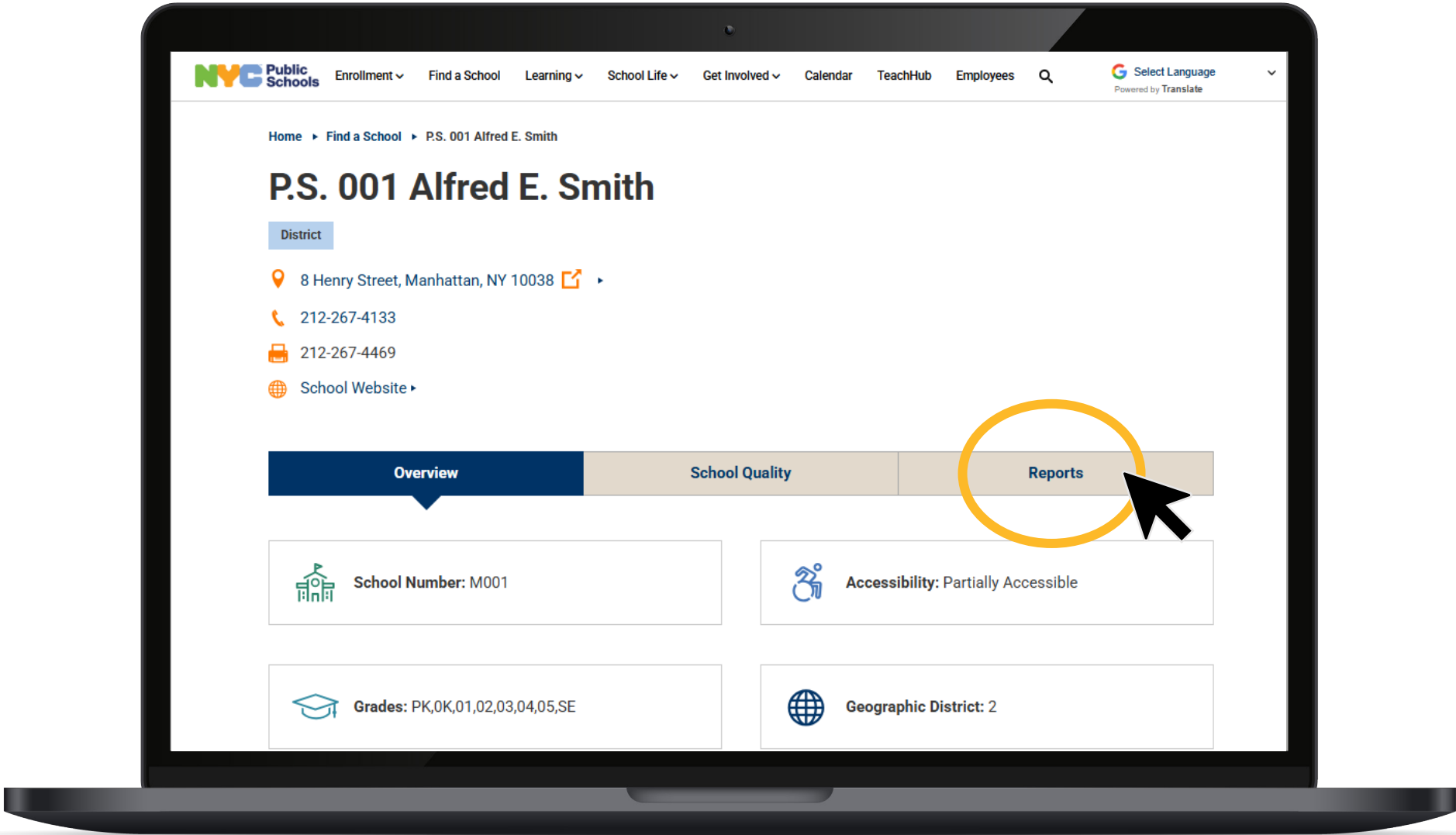
- Intervention tends to have the largest impact when provided at an early age, but it's *never* too late for a student to make progress!
- Is offered *in addition to* core instruction
- The school doesn't need your permission to provide intervention, but they **DO** have to tell you if they start or stop providing services
- Small-group intervention is **NOT** the same as special education

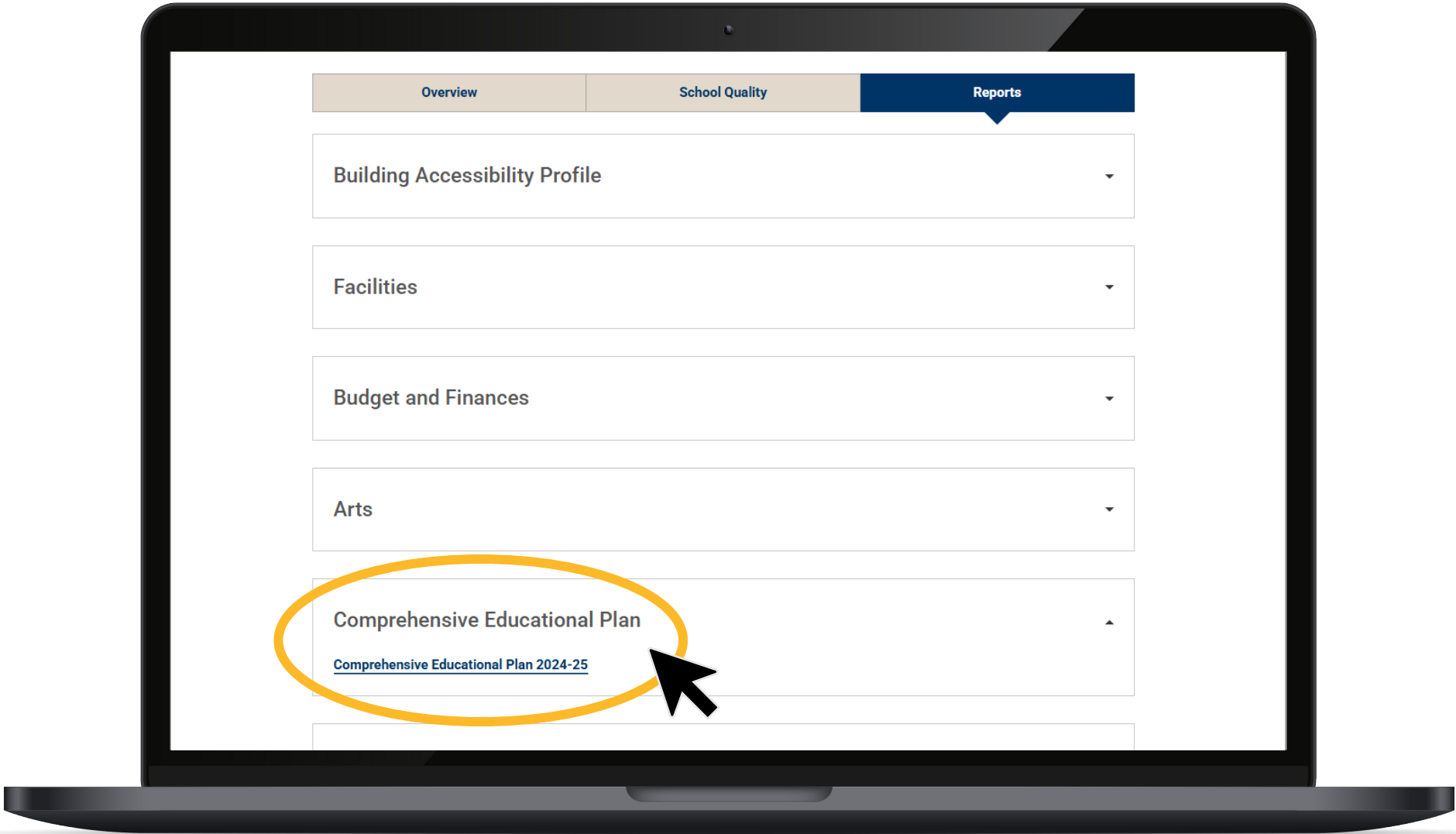
# Examples of tier 2 & 3 structured literacy programs used in NYC

PROGRAM NAME	GRADES
Sounds Sensible	K–2
S.P.I.R.E.	2–5
Phonics for Reading	3–12
REWARDS	4–12
Wilson Just Words	4–12
Wilson Reading System	2–12
STARI	6–9

# Tips for finding out what's available at your child's school

- Talk to your child's teacher, the principal, or another staff member you trust
- Check AFC's spreadsheet: <https://bit.ly/literacy2425>
- Find your school at [schoolsearch.schools.nyc](https://schoolsearch.schools.nyc) and look at the most recent Comprehensive Educational Plan





# Comprehensive Educational Plan Outline

## Table of Contents

### Main Sections (Customized Based on School Accountability Status):

- Section 1: Overview of Comprehensive Education Planning
- Section 2: School Information
- Section 3: CEP SLT/Stakeholder Signature Page
- Section 4: School Summary
- Section 5: Priority 1 - All students learn to read well
- Section 5: Priority 2 - All students are physically and emotionally safe
- Section 5: Priority 3 - All students have a high-quality academic experience
- Section 5: Priority 4 - All students graduate college and career ready and have a strong plan and pathway to economic security
- Section 5: Priority 5 - All districts and schools are more inclusive and responsive for parents and families, including having more families choose NYC Public Schools
- Section 5: Chronic Absenteeism
- Section 5: Quality Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Section 6: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Section 7: Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Parent Compact
- Submission Assurances
- Title I Program Information

# EXAMPLE 1

**Directions: Complete the chart and identify Tier 2 or 3 MTSS Academic supports:**

Any Tier 2/3 interventions should be in addition to the foundational work being done at Tier 1.

Academic Support Indicate Tier 2 or 3	Criteria for Determining Service	Program Type or Strategy	Service Delivery Model (Small group, one-to-one, tutoring, etc.)	When is Service Provided? (Before, during or after school)	Technology-Based Tool (Indicate Yes or No)
Tier 2	Acadience Reading Scores	Explicit phonics and phonemic awareness instruction via Heggerty for phonemic awareness, Foundations and REWARDS for phonics instruction and vocabulary and GEODES for fluency	Small group of 6-8 students in grades K-5	During literacy intervention block in the classroom	Yes
Tier 3	Pupil Personnel Team / School Implementation Team - Acadience Reading Scores	SPIRE/REWARDS- Intensive-Explicit Phonics multi-sensory Instruction	Small group of 6-8 students with AIS or IEP teacher	Pullout or Push in service	No

## EXAMPLE 2

**Directions: Complete the chart and identify Tier 2 or 3 MTSS Academic supports:**

Any Tier 2/3 interventions should be in addition to the foundational work being done at Tier 1.

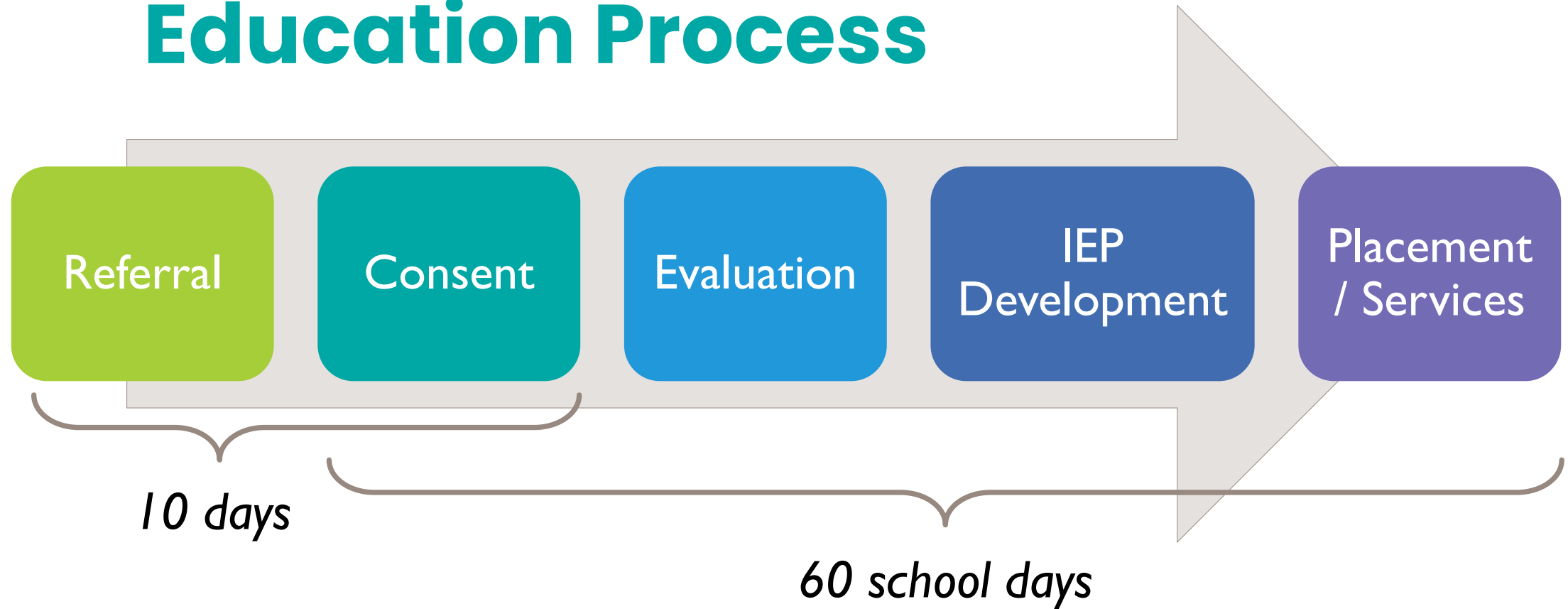
Academic Support Indicate Tier 2 or 3	Criteria for Determining Service	Program Type or Strategy	Service Delivery Model (Small group, one-to- one, tutoring, etc.)	When is Service Provided? (Before, during or after school)	Technology- Based Tool (Indicate Yes or No)
Reading - Tier 2,3	SPIRE Placement test	SPIRE, Phonics for Reading	Small groups of 2-4 students	During school and after school	No
Reading-Tier 2, 3	Phonics for Reading Placement Test	Phonics for Reading	Small groups of 2-4 students	During school and after school hours	No

# Programs & supports for students struggling with reading in NYC

---

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

# The Special Education Process



# What if you disagree with the school?

## INFORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Superintendent's Office

Office of Special Education  
(718) 935-2007 or  
[specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov)

## FORMAL DUE PROCESS

Mediation

Impartial hearing

State/federal complaint

# Dyslexia on the IEP

- Dyslexia isn't a special education *classification* — but you can include language about dyslexia on IEPs when appropriate (in fact, the New York State Education Department encourages it!)
- IEPs for students with dyslexia should describe the student's disability and specify appropriate services and instructional supports



# Assistive Technology

- Assistive technology (AT) is any device, or support for using that device, that helps an individual student with a disability learn
- Provides alternative ways of accessing material
- Does not teach new material

# Accommodations & Modifications

*Some students need accommodations or modifications to participate in the general curriculum.*

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

change the way the students approach the curriculum.

## **MODIFICATIONS**

change the material actually presented.

# Intensive Reading Education and Development (I READ) Early Literacy Program

- Specialized NYC Public Schools program for elementary school students with IEPs
- Reduced class size integrated co-teaching (ICT) model
- Only in 8 schools (one or two in each borough)
- Apply when your child is in pre-K or K



# South Bronx Literacy Academy (SBLA)

- A stand-alone public school in District 7
- Open to students with and without disabilities struggling with foundational literacy skills
- All classes are ICT classes

# Tips for parent-teacher conferences

# Questions to ask

- What should my child be able to do by the end of this year with respect to reading?
- Are they on track to do that?
- Can you give me more information about how my child did on the universal screener?
- Is my child receiving any extra help or interventions, beyond what everyone in the class gets?
- What can I do at home to help my child build strong literacy skills?

# If your child is receiving reading intervention...

- What intervention program are you using? How does it work?
- Why was that program chosen for my child?
- Who's providing the intervention?
- Where, when, and how often does my child get intervention?
- When should we see progress?
- How will you keep me updated on how things are going?
- What's the next step if this doesn't help?

# Thank you for coming!

AFC resources • [advocatesforchildren.org/literacy](https://advocatesforchildren.org/literacy)

Literacy supports by school • <https://bit.ly/literacy2425>

NYC Public Schools resources • [schools.nyc.gov/literacy](https://schools.nyc.gov/literacy)

Reading Rockets • [readingrockets.org](https://readingrockets.org)



**AFC'S HELPLINE**

**866-427-6033 • Monday–Thursday • 10am–4pm**