

**What is Walk to Read?**

Walk to Read (WTR) is a district-wide program for grades 1-5 designed to improve all students' reading ability. WTR provides an opportunity for students to spend focused instructional reading time with a group of peers who are reading at the same level. Extra learning assistants and teachers are added to these WTR groups to reduce the ratio of students to teachers. Struggling students are placed in the smallest groups possible to provide a high level of support in order to accelerate their growth.

**Why do WTR instead of in-class ability groupings or special sessions for students who need extra assistance?**

Classroom environments with 20-30 students can be challenging for teachers when trying to differentiate reading instruction in addition to providing teacher assistance to those who need it most. In WTR, groups of students are all at the same reading ability level and the instructor can teach specifically to their needs. Students with a high need for support are able to work in smaller groups during the same allotted reading time instead of being "pulled out" of the classroom for extra reading support and missing other classroom instruction.

**When does walk to read happen and how long is it?**

Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday students "walk" to visit their designated WTR instructor for a 40 minute session.

**How do teachers decide which group my student will be in?**

Students are assessed every 12 weeks on their reading progress and regrouped for instructional focus (phonics, decoding, fluency, comprehension.) First grade students are assessed at the beginning of the year using a placement test for a program called SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words). This score along with other performance assessments are used to determine group placement. Students in grades 2-5 are assessed using their SRI (Student Reading Inventory) score along with teacher input. Teacher grade level teams meet at the end of each trimester to review student progress and to reassess groupings.

**Does my student stay with the same WTR group and teacher throughout the year?**

All WTR groups are flexible. Students may change WTR groups and teachers if their reading ability improves over the 12 week period or when the WTR instructor feels the student is progressing enough to move to a more challenging reading level. In some cases a WTR teacher may decide to keep a student in his/her group because they have developed a good instructional relationship with the student.

**My student is in a group with an instructional aid instead of a classroom teacher. How are these aids trained to lead WTR groups?**

Many of the instructional aids at Westlake have been working in classrooms for extended periods of time and are highly qualified. Most instructional aides are placed in 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade WTR groups in order to keep student to instructor ratios small. These aids are trained to use a specific reading program such as SIPPS, Read Naturally, or Lexia curriculum that is followed by all teachers in the grade level. This curriculum is scripted and clear about introducing concepts and

skills in a step-by-step process. Additionally, instructional aids check in regularly with other classroom teachers and are assisted by the WTR coordinator.

**How many WTR groups are there for each grade level?**

The number of WTR groups per grade level varies with the largest number in the early grades and the smallest number in the upper grades. Reading instruction throughout the grade levels also differs with more focused skill acquisition (phonics, decoding, fluency, comprehension) in the early grades to more thematic and conceptual content in the upper grade levels.

**How do I find out which WTR group my student is in?**

Your student should receive a notification in their Monday folder that indicates who your child's WTR teacher is for each session. If you have further questions about the WTR curriculum or about how best to support your student's reading, contact your child's classroom teacher.