



J. Sterling Morton High School District 201

Board of Education Green Sheet

Board Meeting Date:

Agenda Location: (check one)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Staff Travel | ☐ Student Travel | ☒ Contracts |
| ☐ Bids or Quotes | ☐ Bid Results | ☐ Donations/Grants |
| ☐ Disposal of District Property | ☐ Other: Click to enter text | |

Submitted by: Megan Delaney

A. EDUCATIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Administration recommends the adoption of Newsela as the district's core reading practice and disciplinary literacy platform for all four D201 sites (East, West, Freshman Center, and Alternative). Newsela provides a large library of leveled nonfiction texts, primary source documents, and writing practice spanning every content area, with materials aligned to D201 courses of study so that literacy instruction can be embedded directly into ELA, social studies, science, and other coursework.

Newsela integrates with Formative, the district's common assessment platform, allowing teachers to pair grade-level texts and questioning with the formative assessment routines already in place, supporting consistent, aligned literacy checks across classrooms.

Independent research supports the platform's impact on reading outcomes:

- A WestEd randomized-controlled efficacy study found that grade students using Newsela at the recommended levels (reading two or more informational texts with coordinating activities and assessments) saw more than double the reading comprehension growth of peers, with students using it daily showing more than triple the growth.
- A Tier II ESSA-aligned study conducted with Racine Unified School District found that students using Newsela Social Studies weekly gained the equivalent of nearly an additional year of social studies achievement compared to non-users, with consistent effects across race, gender, and language status.
- A correlational study conducted with Joliet Township High School District 204 found that students scoring 75% or higher on Newsela quizzes were about twice as likely to meet grade-level PSAT/SAT Reading and Writing benchmarks as lower-scoring peers.

B. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOAL STATEMENT

This adoption directly supports the district's action plan priorities around disciplinary literacy and numeracy across all content areas to improve ACT proficiency by 10%. Newsela gives every department a shared set of instructional level, standards-aligned texts and skills assessments to embed literacy practice into Tier 1 instruction, supporting SMART goals tied to STAR, ACT/Pre-ACT, and ACCESS growth targets, and reinforcing the data-driven instructional practices built into the district's Professional Learning Team (PLT) cycle and Instructional Support Meetings.

C. STATUTE, BOARD POLICY OR RULE STATEMENT

5:190 & 6:10

D. FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

COST: \$100,500

SOURCE: Title 1 Grant

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS (check all that apply)

☐ ACCOUNTABILITY

☒ ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

☐ ENSURE PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY ARE ACTIVE PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS

☐ PROVIDE SAFE AND WELL-MAINTAINED SCHOOLS TO ENHANCE LEARNING

☐ RUN AN EFFICIENT BUSINESS OPERATION

F. IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN

Newsela Learning Suite will be licensed for all 9-11 grade students and staff at J. Sterling Morton East, West, Freshman Center, and Alternative schools for the 2026-27 school year (07/01/26 - 06/30/27). Implementation will include:

- Staff onboarding and professional learning through two in-person and one virtual Newsela training session, coordinated through the district's PLT and Instructional Support Meeting structures.
- Integration with Formative to align grade-level texts, questioning, and Skills Assessments with existing common assessment routines.
- Embedding disciplinary literacy and numeracy practices across ELA, social studies, science, and other content areas using Newsela's leveled texts and primary source materials.
- Progress monitoring through the Newsela teacher dashboard, tracking usage dosage, quiz and writing prompt completion, and Skills Assessment performance.
- Correlating Newsela usage and performance data with STAR, ACT/Pre-ACT, and ACCESS results to evaluate impact on literacy growth over the license period.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

Administration recommends Board approval of the Newsela Order Form (No. Q-191897) in the amount of \$100,500.00 for the 2026-27 school year, pending confirmation of grant funding source.