Macon County Public Schools

Protocol for Using High Frequency Words

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between the Dolch and Fry sight words?

The **Dolch Word List** was created in the early 1900's and is made up of the first 220 basic sight words. Between 50-75% of all words used in school books, library books, newspapers, and magazines are in the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary of 220 words.

K12 Reader

The **Fry Word List** was created as an updated list based on the changes in language and is made up of 1000 of the most commonly used words in the English language. It is ordered by frequency so all of the Dolch words are embedded in this list. These words make up about 90% of all written language.

K12 Reader

High Frequency Words
According to information found on the reading-tutors.com website, "there are only 13 different words that make up 25% of the words we read, and there are 100 words that make up 50% of the words we read. These words are called **high frequency words**."

High frequency words (be they Dolch or Fry) are "service words" (pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and verbs) which cannot be learned through the use of pictures. Because they are used to hold thoughts together, these words must be recognized at a glance before a child can read with confidence.

K12 Reader

2. Why teach high frequency words?

There are several reasons why students should be explicitly taught high-frequency words. Among the reasons are:

a. Words such as "the", "of", "is", "to", and "are" do not follow commonly taught phonics rules and cannot be sounded out. The only way a child can recognize them is by sight.

b. If a child knows the most commonly used words by sight, there will be no need to stop and pause to figure words out. If students recognize the words by sight, saying the words becomes automatic, and the student becomes a faster and more fluent reader. When they are faster and more fluent, they comprehend more and their understanding of what is read increases.

c. **Many of the words do not carry much meaning alone, but they do affect the meaning of a sentence.**

Protocol for Using High Frequency Words

3. How frequently should high frequency words be taught?

High frequency words should be taught and monitored daily.

4. How can high frequency word lists be used in the classroom?

High frequency words may be used to address the benchmarks, to implement a word wall, to use in centers, to use on flashcards, etc.

5. Why assess high frequency words?

Always remember that assessment drives instruction. Because high frequency words are used to hold thoughts together and must be recognized at a glance before a child can read with confidence, they must be assessed to determine the student's level of recognition. Once individual needs are identified, the results may be used to drive the high frequency word and reading instruction/intervention for students based on their needs.

6. How must high-frequency words be taught?

High frequency words must be taught consistently and not in isolation as words and words alone. They must be taught whereby students can make connections and learn the words in a meaningful manner. Therefore, the teacher must teach using the following method:

Teacher:	Showing the word
Teacher:	Reading the word
Student:	Repeating the word
Teacher:	Spelling the word
	(Depending on grade level, students may do this.)
Student:	Repeating the word
Teacher and Student:	Spelling the word together
Teacher and Student:	Repeating the word together
Teacher:	Discussing the part of speech
Teacher:	Displaying and reading word in a phrase or sentence
Student:	Repeating phrase or sentence
Teacher:	Reading the word
Student:	Repeating the word

Point is, we must practice, practice, practice, and practice again. Teaching is no different from coaching, as students must practice until they have the "word play" down to score big in reading. Practice makes perfect!

Protocol for Using High Frequency Words

How Macon County Will Use High Frequency Words

Macon County will use high frequency words to:

- Identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties.
- Identify children who are "on track" for learning to read.
- Identify children who may need additional instructional support to meet reading goals.
- Monitor students while they receive additional, targeted instruction.
- Make a connection between the teaching of high frequency words and DIBELS progress monitoring.

Macon County will accomplish the above mentioned goals by taking the following steps:

1. Providing Teaching High Frequency Words training for administrators, reading coaches, intervention teachers, special educators, Camp Literacy for Kids Staff and grade level chair persons grades K-8. The school teams will be responsible for training at the school level.
2. Administering high frequency word testing in grades K-8 according to the High Frequency Word Testing Schedule. Classroom teachers will be responsible for testing students and recording individual scores and classroom summaries.
3. Teaching high frequency words as prescribed by the district and monitoring progress to determine individual student growth.
4. Conducting school-wide data meetings after each benchmark in order to discuss the results and determine the best possible means for teaching high frequency words. Discussions may include but not be limited to morning activity, reading, writing, and listening centers, flash cards, board games, etc.
5. Sending high frequency word lists and reports home to parents/guardians that explain the results and offer steps for parents to take at home.
6. Providing additional and tiered instructional support to students based on their individual needs.
7. Comparing DIBELS Next progress monitoring results before and after the teaching of high frequency words in relationship to DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency and the Daze.
8. Posting resources on the district's website that may be accessed by educators, parents, and other community members to include but not be limited to:

a. High Frequency Words Flash card templates for each grade level
b. High Frequency Words Power Point Presentations – Words Only for each grade level
c. High Frequency Words Power Point Presentations – Voice included for each grade level
d. High Frequency Words Assessments for each grade level
e. High Frequency Words Center Activities
    i. Listening
    ii. Writing
    iii. Reading (Individual Students)
    iv. Pair Reading
    v. (Kindergarten students may begin with alphabets, picture cards, etc. the first nine weeks and progress to using high frequency words by the second nine weeks.)
    vi. Other (Games)
f. High Frequency Words How-to-Teach Videos

9. Providing summer support to students in most need. Summer school programs will include teaching and/or reviewing high frequency words. Students will receive copies of the list and/or flash card sheets to have for home use.

Teaching High Frequency Words Training/Annual Review:

Prior to the start of each school year or during the professional development days/teacher workdays (depending on the Board approved calendar for each school year), administrators and teachers will be trained on teaching high frequency words.

Macon County's High Frequency Words Testing:

High frequency words testing will be administered within the administration window established and set at the district level. A separate Administration schedule will be provided to all schools and posted to the website prior to the beginning of the new school year.

The high frequency word list will be set up by nine week periods. Students will be expected to master each list by the end of each nine weeks.

If students master the current nine weeks lists prior to the end of that same nine weeks, it is imperative that students be taught and/or allowed to test on the next nine weeks list, and/or grade level (whichever is deemed appropriate). For example, when Maurice, a second grader, is pre-tested on the second grade – first nine weeks list, and he masters the list, his teacher will test him on the second grade – second nine weeks list, and so on. This process may continue until Maurice moves to the third grade – first nine weeks list or gets to a point where he needs assistance with the high frequency words. By doing this, we know that Maurice will be accelerated in this area and challenged at his current level of performance/grade equivalent rather than his current grade level.

Protocol for Using High Frequency Words

The district's schedule will be disseminated prior to the start of each school year but will be based on the following model:

Beginning of 1st Nine Weeks: Pre-Test	August of Each Year
Middle of 1st Nine Weeks: Benchmark	Mid-September of Each Year
End of 1st Nine Weeks: Post-Test	October of Each year
Beginning of 2ndNine Week: Pre-Test	October of Each Year
Middle of 2ndNine Week: Benchmark	Mid-November of Each Year
End of 2nd Nine Weeks: Post-Test	December of Each year
Beginning of 3rdNine Weeks: Pre-Test	January of Each Year
Middle of 3rdNine Weeks: Benchmark	Mid-February of Each Year
End of 3rd Nine Weeks: Post-Test	March of Each year
Beginning of 4th Nine Weeks: Pre-Test	March of Each Year
Middle of 4th Nine Weeks: Benchmark	Mid-April of Each Year
End of 4th Nine Weeks: Post-Test	May of Each year

Teaching High Frequency Words:

Teachers will:

1. Teach high frequency words as established and prescribed at the district level.

2. Set aside a minimum of 15 minutes of the reading block each day for "**Word Up**" to teach and/or review high frequency words.

3. Build time into daily lessons to work with small groups and individual students (based on their needs) to review/reteach high frequency words. This may be accomplished during Tier 2 reading instructional time.

4. Use centers effectively to reinforce high frequency words, as it is not enough to just say the words. Students will need to see, hear, say, write, play with the words and more in order to make meaningful and memorable connections with the words.

   High Frequency Word Centers will focus on the following <u>required</u> areas:

   a. Listening
      (Power Points and other High Frequency Word Presentations provide for practice.)
   b. Writing
      (Journal writing and other writing activities, sentence strips, phrases, etc. are helpful in determining which words to teach/reteach.)
   c. Reading (Individual students will read passages using high frequency words.)

d. Pair Reading (Students will work in pairs for practice.)
e. Games (Students may collaborate with peers as a means of reinforcing the high frequency words.)

While some students rotate in centers, others will work with the teacher in small group or as individuals. As teachers listen to students read orally, they will note which high frequency words the students cannot decode and which sight words students mispronounce (hence, high frequency word progress monitoring).

5. Create interactive and engaging Word Walls using the High Frequency Words.

6. Teach high frequency words using the following basic method:

Example:	The word is "of".
Teacher:	Show the word. **'This word is of."** **"What word?"**
Student:	of
Teacher:	**"Yes, of. Spell of. Get ready"**
Student:	o - f
Teacher:	**What word?**
Student:	of
Teacher:	**"Yes, of."**
Teacher:	Discuss word usage. (Of .....)
Teacher:	Display and read the word in a phrase or sentence. **"I have a piece of candy."** **Read the sentence. Get ready.**
Student:	I have a piece of candy.
Teacher:	Teacher points to the underlined word. **"What word?"**
Student:	of

Repeat the procedure for each word.

Reporting/Data Review/School Level Meeting:

The results should be discussed and used to make data-driven decisions, including but not limited to student placement in tiered instruction, Problem Solving Team referral, etc. The team should analyze data and review alongside DIBELS Next Results , especially DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency and Daze Passages. (It is anticipated that as the students' high frequency word identification and usage improves, their fluency in DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency and Daze Passages will improve as well.

Protocol for Using High Frequency Words

Reporting: Home

Grade level High Frequency Word Lists will be sent home at the beginning of each nine weeks. It is expected that all teachers will communicate the list to parents and/or the specific method by which the words will be taught (e.g. 5 words per week, entire list on a weekly basis, etc.).

Grade level High Frequency Word Lists results will be sent home to parents/guardians within two weeks of the High Frequency Word Testing administration. The purpose of sending the results in letter form is to explain to parents that students have participated in the assessment, the assessment results and what they mean, and the schools' next steps for instruction/ intervention.

District-Level Data Meetings:

School administrators and designees will be invited to discuss/ present school, grade level results, etc. During the meetings, teams will develop and/or discuss established plans of action and determine the need to adjust/adapt the high frequency words lists.

Progress Monitoring

Teachers will monitor progress to ensure they are making adequate progress. Teachers will progress monitor the students' knowledge of high frequency words on a weekly basis, so as to prepare students for the High Frequency Word Benchmark to be administered during the middle of each nine weeks.

Teachers will do the following, at a minimum:

Print out the word lists and make copies of the words for each child in the classroom.
Meet with each student individually and have each student read the word list. Highlight/Check the words students do not know, so as to have a quick and visual way of determining which words to teach/reteach.