



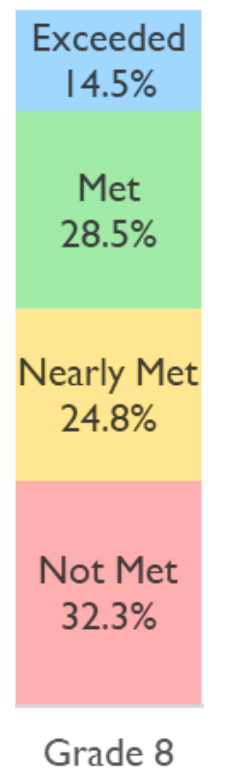
Sacramento County READS

Supporting Older Striving Readers Strategies for Success



As students move up the grades, skilled reading is necessary for school success in all content areas. Beyond school, reading proficiency is vital for success in work, life, and civic engagement. The grim statistic in Sacramento County reveals that only 43% of 8th grade students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. What that means is that 57% of adolescents in our county are not able to read complex text proficiently.

Early success in reading tends to lead to further skill development, while children who struggle early on often fall further behind. This widening gap occurs because proficient readers gain more opportunities to practice, while struggling readers miss out on these critical experiences.



What are common challenges for older striving readers?

Struggling readers often have decoding issues, in particular difficulty breaking down longer words. They often have slow or choppy reading that impacts their understanding and they struggle with grade-level text. The less they read, the more limited their vocabulary, which impacts understanding of content and leads to frustration, disengagement, and lack of motivation and confidence.

What can be done for older striving readers?



Students who are reading below grade level and need extra help to catch up with their classmates require targeted interventions that address both foundational skills and grade-level content. These interventions may include:

- Explicit and systematic phonics and word study instruction targeted to students' specific needs
- Explicit instruction and a routine for breaking down larger words
- Fluency practice to focus on improving accuracy, rate, and expression
- Vocabulary building in context and content-area subjects
- Active reading strategies like summarizing, questioning, and visualizing
- High-interest texts that are age-appropriate and aligned with student interests
- Small group or one-on-one interventions to personalize learning

What is the role of social-emotional support, family, and community?

- Acknowledge and address the frustration and disengagement many older struggling readers feel and incorporate praise and recognition of small successes to build confidence.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for students to take reading risks without fear of failure or embarrassment.
- Encourage families to engage with reading at home through discussions, family read-alouds, or shared reading of high-interest materials.
- Highlight community resources like libraries, after-school tutoring programs, or reading clubs that offer additional literacy support.

To learn more . . .

[Is the "Matthew Effect" Affecting Your Child's Desire to Read?](#)

[When Older Students Can't Read](#)