

Minnesota Math and Science Academy

Local K-3 Literacy Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of developing a Literacy Framework is to articulate the district's approach to curriculum, instruction, assessment, materials/resources, and organization which will enable all students to develop the literacy skills needed to be college, career, and life ready. Having a consistent approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment is paramount to student achievement in a school system and has been supported by a plethora of research (Marzano, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Childress, Doyle, & Thomas, 2009). It is emphasized by Lucy Calkins, using Writing Workshop as way of example:

Belief Statement from Minnesota Department of Education

Reading well by third grade is one of many developmental milestones in a child's educational experience. Literacy development starts at an early age and is the basis for all academic success. Reading well by grade three ensures that a student has a solid foundation of literacy skills to continue to expand their understanding of what they read, make meaning, and transfer that learning across all subject areas. Instruction that provides the basis for all students to read well by third grade and beyond will help close the achievement gap and ensure that all students are ready for the demands of college and the workplace. From cradle to career, a sustained effort to create quality literacy environments in all of our schools and programs from birth through grade 12 promotes academic success. – MDE, 20

Overview of the Minnesota Math and Science Academy Local Literacy Plan

MN Statute 120B.12 states that a school district must adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of grade 3. This legislation is commonly referred to as "Reading Well by Third". The literacy plan "must include a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and identify and meet staff development needs." The purpose of this document is to outline how the Minnesota Math and Science Academy plans to address each of these requirements for our students in kindergarten through third grade.

Statement of goals

Minnesota Math and Science Academy students will achieve proficiency in reading by the end of third grade through the implementation of rigorous literacy standards; an aligned instructional system; data-driven, high-quality teaching; and a commitment to best practices in literacy instruction.

MMSA students will experience a comprehensive early literacy education so that they may effectively access the curriculum in all content areas and develop individualized goals for success.

Objectives

Objective #1: Students will receive high quality instruction based on the Minnesota State English Language Arts standards within the 90-minute MMSA Literacy Block which includes whole group, small group, and individual instruction as determined by student need.

Objective #2: Students will receive high-quality instruction focused on the six research-based guiding principles of our MMSA Literacy Model.

1. Effective whole group instruction incorporating a range of strategies
2. Instructional plan that follows the district scope and sequence based on Minnesota English Language Arts Academic Standards
3. Instruction in the five reading components and writing throughout each school week
4. Progress monitoring for all students frequently
5. Small group teaching at students' instructional reading level
6. Students may receive additional small group instruction to accelerate learning from the classroom, ESL, Reading, or Special Education teachers, or Title I/Project Success staff based on student need

Objective#3: Student achievement data will be monitored and used to make instructional decisions.

Definition of Proficiency

Student grade level proficiency is determined according to a triangulation of assessment tools. They include:

- **Screening** – Screening is a point in time measure that determines whether the student is on target for meeting specific benchmarks. Efficient measures of overall reading ability and critical skills are known to be strong indicators that predict student performance. Administered to all students as a baseline, these assessments help to identify students who do not meet or who exceed grade level expectations. Results can be used as a starting point for instruction or to indicate a need for further evaluation.
- **Diagnostic** – Diagnostic assessment is a more in-depth tool for planning more effective instruction and interventions. Diagnostic assessments should be given when there is a clear expectation that they will offer new or more reliable information about a child's academic or behavioral needs that can be used to help plan more powerful instruction or interventions. They are used for making instructional decisions to respond to student needs.
- **Progress Monitoring** – Progress Monitoring is a scientifically-based practice to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention as demonstrated by student growth. Minnesota Math and Science Academy uses progress monitoring to determine instructional effectiveness in meeting the needs of students. The use of progress monitoring in this form results in more efficient and appropriately targeted instructional techniques and goals, which together, move all students to faster attainment of important state standards of achievement. The goal of progress monitoring is to improve the effectiveness of instruction for each student.
- **On-track** shall mean that students are reading at grade level for the previous academic year by September 30. On-track in September means students are at grade level in reading for the previous academic year because students have not received sufficient instruction and exposure to current grade-level content by September.
- **Not on-track** shall mean any student who is not reading at grade level by September 30 based on the previous end of year standards and expectations.

Process to Assess Students Level of Proficiency

Student proficiency is determined by district/school criteria. Assessment is conducted through multiple tools and proficiency determined through a triangulation of results. Assessment is done with the classroom teacher. Any student falling below the reading criteria will receive additional interventions in order to achieve grade level proficiency.

NWEA MAP: The NWEA assessment shall be the MDE Screening Measure or an alternative assessment chosen from a list of approved diagnostic assessments issued by the Minnesota Department of Education (“MDE”). The School shall designate the assessment to be used each year.

The previous year’s screening measure addresses the end of year expectations of the previous year’s standards; the current grade-level short screener addresses end-of-year expectations of the current grade level and determines whether students are already performing at current grade level. If the School chooses to administer both the previous year’s screening measure and current grade-level short screener measure, the School should take the higher of the two to determine *on-track* status.

STAR ASSESSMENT: STAR assessments provide the most valid, reliable data in the least amount of testing time—usually 20-25 minutes or less, whereas the NWEA is longer and can only be administered 2-3 times yearly. The STAR provides the teacher with a diagnostic report and suggestions to focus on what matters most—individualizing instruction to accelerate learning for “at risk” students.

The STAR Assessments will be administered monthly or as often as the teacher feels necessary.

Communication Plan

Communication of results occurs through parent-teacher conferences held twice a year, through progress reports prepared three times per year and on an on-going basis determined by student need. Documents given to parents to communicate results include NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (2 times per year) results along with Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment results (1 time per year).

Parents of students identified for additional support in order to achieve grade-level reading proficiency will be notified by the child's classroom teacher and a written plan will be shared with parents. Parent literacy events may be held in order to provide home-school connections and help parents support literacy at home.

Student entrance and exit criteria regarding specific programs for additional support are determined by district criteria and listed on the Title I/Project Success compact (signed parent agreement)

Core Instruction

Instruction is based on the Minnesota State English Language Arts (ELA) Academic Standards and is centered on the five components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and writing. The Minnesota Math and Science Academy's 90 minute Literacy Block specifically describes a 30 minute whole-group instruction period. This instruction is followed by a 30 minute block called Targeted Instruction. During this time students receive small group instruction and time to practice reading and skills independently. The final 30 minutes of the literacy block emphasize acceleration of skills for those students who demonstrate need while other students working on writing and other meaningful literacy activities.

Intervention and Supports

When a student is identified for intervention through the school's eligibility criteria, an intervention plan will be implemented with the outcomes documented and monitored. Those interventions may include but are not limited to:

- Additional instruction from a qualified teacher to address specific needs
- Scientifically-based intervention software with teacher monitoring and support
- Scientifically-based intervention instructional systems delivered by a qualified teacher

Interventions will vary in frequency, intensity, and duration in order to best meet students' needs. Information regarding interventions will be shared with parents by a certified teacher at conferences and/or progress reporting periods. This information may also be shared in an agreed upon plan if needed more frequently.

Professional Development on Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction

Teachers participate in a variety of professional development opportunities based on student data and need, and aligned with district and site goals. Professional development includes opportunities to collaborate with team members, district-wide collaboration meetings, attendance at professional conferences, and working with site reading specialists and other trained experts. Professional development has a wide ranging impact on teachers and students. Teachers benefit from a greater understanding of best practices and develop the skills to respond to students' needs. Highly trained and qualified teachers increase students' academic achievement.

Staff trained included classroom, special education, ESL, and reading teachers. This professional development centered on research-based best practices in literacy instruction. Topics addressed included core, small group, and individualized instruction; developing effective independent practice; progress monitoring; effective interventions; and writing. Follow-up professional development takes place at individual elementary buildings throughout the year. Teachers are provided some time during district staff development days to collaborate and discuss effective practices to develop consistency between teachers

throughout the district. The district Language Arts CIC continues to monitor and refine the literacy block implementation and assess professional development needs.

Student Support System for English Language (EL) Learners

MMSA has a goal to eliminate the racially predictable gap in student achievement. A district focus is to build the capacity of staff to address the diverse needs of all learners, including English Learners. MMSA creates professional development experiences for staff to address the diverse needs of English Learners through three formats: Sheltered Instruction, Leadership Training and the use of evidenced based practices in their teaching. Sheltered Instruction is a methodology to support language development and proficiency in all classroom settings. The ELD teachers are engaged in leadership training and program review to examine their practice as well as develop skills to be school leaders in the education of diverse students. Disaggregated data is monitored and used to plan effective instruction for English Learners.

Communication System for Annual Reporting

The Principal or authorized designee shall be responsible for complying with all information gathering requirements related to the Read Well by Grade 3. The Principal or designee shall report to MDE and the Board on the implementation and compliance with this plan annually. In addition, the Principal or designee shall keep necessary records to identify which students are *on-track* and *not on-track* and the types of interventions provided.