

literacy plan

2018-
2019



ACHIEVE LANGUAGE ACADEMY

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Achieve Language Academy

School Literacy Plan 2018-19

MN Statute 120B.12 states that a school 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 Grade". The literacy plan "must include a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students in grades K-8th, who are not reading at or above grade level and identify and meet staff development needs." New additions to this Statute also require that all schools are able to provide a means for identifying and working with students exhibiting symptoms of dyslexia and convergence insufficiency. The purpose of this document is to outline how Achieve Language Academy plans to address each of these requirements for our students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Belief Statement from Minnesota Department of Education

Basic reading proficiency is one of many developmental milestones in a child's educational experience. Minnesota has identified the end of grade 3 as an expectation for proficient beginning reading for all students. Providing quality curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions is the foundation for developing comprehensive systems of support for all learners.

Reading to Learn. There is a saying commonly heard in discussions of early reading that says that students are learning to read in grades K-3 then instruction shifts to reading to learn in grades 4 and beyond. However, this view is unproductive as a stance for literacy instruction. Third grade proficiency does not represent the end of learning to read, as increasingly complex texts demand continued instruction in the skills and strategies necessary to gain adequate reading proficiency for later post-secondary or "college and career" success.

Likewise, students are far behind if it is not until grades 3 or 4 that they begin to learn and apply skills and strategies to comprehend from a variety of texts. Even as attention is placed on early reading to ensure all students acquire the foundations necessary for early reading success, it is important that reading instruction is comprehensive and provides modeling and practice at the word, sentence, and idea levels in all grades. Reading is not just knowing and combining letters, sounds, and words, it is a process of making meaning from text.

Last legislative session, new language was added to the Reading Well by Third Grade law that introduced three new district requirements:

- Districts must identify students in grade 3 or higher who demonstrate a reading difficulty to a classroom teacher.
- Districts must provide information to parents about the student's progress in addition to information about reading-related services currently being provided.
- Districts must continue to provide intervention to students not reading at or above grade level by the end of grade 3 until the student reads at grade level.
- Screen and identify dyslexia using screening tools such as those recommended by the department's dyslexia and literacy specialist as well as convergence insufficiency disorder
- A student identified under this subdivision must be provided with alternate instruction under Section 125A.,56.subdivision 1.

Introduction and history of Achieve Literacy Programming

- Achieve Language Academy is a Minnesota charter school located on the east side of St. Paul. Achieve is a community of learners in grades pre--kindergarten through 8th grade. Achieve opened in the fall of 1996. Achieve is built on the beliefs that good schools transform communities; that community is created by shared values and common goals; that all children can learn and achieve; and that education is essential to a fulfilling life. Our mission is to facilitate dual language proficiency and the appreciation of diverse cultures for all learners.
- In 2001, Achieve staff began using a balanced literacy approach in its classrooms based on the Four Block Framework developed by Patricia M. Cunningham and Dorothy P. Hall. Balanced literacy is not merely a philosophy but rather a cohesive approach to teaching literacy.
- Such instruction stresses the love of language, gaining meaning from print, and instruction of phonics in context. The balanced literacy approach to reading instruction incorporates many reading strategies in order to meet the varying needs of all students. Some of the components of the approach include phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, reading aloud to children, independent reading, guided reading, shared reading and literacy centers for independent practice.
- Balanced literacy cultivates the skills of reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening for all students.
- Balanced literacy is a comprehensive reading framework. It allows the teacher to meet each child where he is and move him forward in the manner and time best suited to the individual.

Overview by Years

2006-20-07 Achieve reviewed the literacy program and introduced a new reading initiative in the fall of

2007-20-08 based on the Fountas and Pinnell framework (another research based balanced literacy approach). Both approaches focus on guided reading, working with words, self-selected reading and writing. The balanced literacy framework continued to be used throughout the classrooms, with the focus of strengthening the language arts curriculum and the integration of literacy in all content areas. Additionally, a core group of instructional strategies was introduced throughout the grade levels.

2010-2011: Teachers receive ongoing training in the Common Core state standards across all grade levels. Non-fiction writing is integrated in all content areas with dedicated time of 30 minutes per day given to non-fiction writing.

2011-2012: Classrooms began using learning targets and content area objectives for all areas of learning. Students receive these in the form of "I can" statements based on the Common Core standards.

2013-2014: Teachers in grades K-3 were trained in Reading Horizons, a systematic approach to phonics and spelling. Phonics being a key element in reading fluently and comprehending has improved our program. Reading Horizons is also incorporated in all Tier II reading lessons for students who are in grades K-3.

2014-2017: Writing was updated with Calkins Guided Writing curriculum for all grades. This curriculum is used for language arts and nonfiction writing times throughout the building. The Calkins curriculum teaches the writers' workshop model with units of study in opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing. The rubrics and assessment materials are our present step in looking at defining writing needs.

- The Core Phonics Assessment Survey has also been integrated in new ways to assess students in English and Spanish. This assessment targets 12 basic areas of phonics growth. All students entering Tier II reading receive this assessment, as well as the Developmental Reading Assessment.

- Teachers were trained in Tier I interventions, Reciprocal Teaching with a focus on using academic vocabulary, and engaging students in academic conversations. SIOP training was revisited at all levels. SIOP has been an ongoing focus.

Training in the use of formative and informative data has been in place through each year of the above processes. Teachers create pacing guides and review data in order to define learning for individual learners.

Achieve Leadership in Literacy Committee (ALL)

Name	Title
Mary Apuli	Director
Marlene Sorenson	Reading Specialist/Coordinator
Kris Sanders	Data and Curriculum Coordinator
Casey Seeling	Kindergarten teacher
Ariel Larpenteur	Special Education
Elizabeth Brandt	Third grade teacher
Julene Flink	Seventh/eighth grade language arts
Kristen Coonan	Fifth grade language arts/soc. studies
Mary Wagers	ELL, academic support teacher
Kathy Oelze	Social Worker

As of January 2017, the following strengths, challenges, goals and objectives have been identified.

The ALL committee looked at strengths and challenges that had been identified as a part of the ongoing school improvement process.

Strengths:

- Standards based approach
- Researched based framework
- Nonfiction writing component (in all content areas)
- Focus on individual student growth
- Data is used to interpret individual student growth
- RtI programming for level 2 and 3 students.
- School wide teaching strategies established and reviewed.

Opportunities for change/growth

- Students reading at home
- Consideration of a reading curriculum for all grade levels.
- Continuation of tighter vertical alignment of curriculum and instructional strategies

Overarching goal

By 2021, all students in 3rd grade will be reading at proficiency for their grade level as defined by the Achieve matrix.

2016-17 Objectives:

- review the current language arts programming.
- improve/enhance Tier I interventions to better align RTI
- continue aligning literacy strategies and practices across all classrooms
- maintain research based strategies and continue training for new teachers
- ensure that all content area staff know the balanced literacy framework and use these literacy strategies in their classrooms

2018-19 Goals:

Curriculum team will have alternative reading materials in place during the process of determining a reading curriculum by 2019-20.

Provide all language arts teachers with a better understanding of the stages of reading development through staff development.

Encourage teacher growth in the areas of writing and non-fiction writing (on-going).

Prepare teachers to understand common signs of dyslexia and convergence insufficiency.

Train available staff to work with students in grades 5-8 who do not have grade level reading proficiency. Additional staffing may be a consideration.

Current program:

Achieve uses a balanced literacy language arts framework, which includes the following for all classroom learners: each component is scientifically research based.

- Guided reading groups, based on student reading level, meet 3--5 times per week
- Students who are below grade level proficiency meet with the teacher each day
- Shared reading and writing focused on promoting oral language development, as well as improved reading and writing fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development
- Integrated phonics instruction, based on individual student need.
- Calkins Guided Writing curriculum serves as our writing framework
- Reading Horizons Discovery phonics program – spelling developed within this framework. Research shows this program to be effective in working with students with Dyslexia. It is incorporated in the daily class schedule for grades K-3 and Tier II Reading Intervention groups.
- Non-fiction writing, 30 minutes per day throughout the building, in addition to the language arts block of 90 minutes
- Common strategies include SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, Reciprocal Teaching, opportunities for student centered academic discussion.

All teachers, and particularly new teachers, work with a mentor and/or literacy coach to ensure that strategies and the framework are consistently implemented. Achieve K--3 Language Arts classrooms function around a 90 to 120-minute reading block. Classroom teachers are members of a professional learning community that meets once every month. This provides an opportunity for ongoing training in current language arts techniques, as well as, time to analyze data and plan for the needs of all learners.

The students in grades 1--3 who do meet grade level expectations are placed in flexible groups closest to their ability.

Process for assessing students' level of reading proficiency

In order to ensure that the current reading program is being consistently implemented, data will be analyzed each spring using Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) scores. *MDE states that if 80% of the students are at or above grade level on any of the nationally normed assessments, curriculum is being taught with fidelity.* When the data was analyzed at Achieve for the 2017-18 school year, the percentage of students passing the MAP assessment was 45.3% in all tested grades, indicating that the core standards are being taught through the curriculum but there is still a gap in student achievement. The DRA data was higher, in the 87% range for grades 1--3. The Achieve student population has a large percentage of English language learners (ELs') and a high percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch. In researching reading proficiency levels for Achieve, we looked at the second language acquisition research, national and state standards, and the practical experience of our teachers. Each proficiency level reflects stages of second language development as well as acquisition of academic language.

Matrix of Reading Proficiency Levels for grades K--3

Excerpt from the NWEA Normative Data guide 2015 (current)

	Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	141.0	13.54	151.3	12.73	158.1	12.85
1	160.7	13.08	171.5	13.54	177.5	14.54
2	174.7	15.52	184.2	14.98	188.7	15.21
3	188.3	15.85	195.6	15.14	198.6	15.10
4	198.2	15.53	203.6	14.96	205.9	14.92
5	205.7	15.13	209.8	14.65	211.8	14.72
6	211.0	14.94	214.2	14.53	215.8	14.66
7	214.4	15.31	216.9	14.98	218.2	15.14
8	217.2	15.72	219.1	15.37	220.1	15.73
9	220.2	15.68	221.3	15.54	221.9	16.21
10	220.4	16.85	221.0	16.70	221.2	17.48

11	222.6	16.75	222.7	16.53	222.3	17.68
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Assessments

At Achieve, elementary students are screened three times per year using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), (fall, winter, and spring.) The MAP Assessment is given two times per year, fall and spring. This information is used to identify students who need extra help in reaching grade level expectations. Students are assessed diagnostically in order to match their needs with instructional practices. Additionally, students who are receiving extra help, or Response to Intervention (RtI), are progress monitored at least every two weeks. Progress monitoring data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and to adjust instruction as needed to maximize growth towards grade level expectations. Students are considered for RtI if they fall below the target score on any of the screening assessments. Data used to determine whether they receive services includes the screening data and classroom observational data. Students are not considered meeting grade level expectations if they are scoring below the 50th percentile in any of the assessment tools. These students will be considered for small group Tier II reading interventions provided by RtI teaching staff in addition to regular classroom instruction already being provided. Ideally, these targeted students would receive even more intense one-on-one interventions if the schedule and staffing permitted. Students who qualify for special education services will receive their targeted interventions through their IEPs. The results will be reviewed by the grade level team and the reading specialist to determine what if any interventions might be appropriate.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students will be assessed using the NWEA/ MAP. Also given is a Kindergarten Literacy Assessment (which includes an inventory of the phonemic awareness skills needed to begin reading.) These are common skills as outlined by the Report of the National Reading Panel. Areas assessed include: rhyming words, isolating initial and ending consonants, blending onset and rimes, blending separately spoken phonemes, counting individual sounds, manipulating rhyme and onset, repeating a phrase of words, pre-primer and primer Dolch sight words, and letter and letter sound recognition. **Students who are 90% proficient will be ready for first grade.** Students significantly below grade level on the below chart will be identified and provided specific Tier 1 and Tier II interventions.

Grades 1--3

Students will be assessed using the NWEA/ MAP two times per year, fall and spring. Also used is the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), which determines each student's independent (or instructional) level with an evaluation of three components of reading: reading accuracy, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. **Students who are 90% proficient will be ready for the next grade.** Based on the DRA scores, students falling within an intervention range as shown below (grades 1--3), will receive small group reading intervention (RtI) 25 minutes per day, four to five times per week.

ASSESSMENT DATA USE MATRIX 2016-2017

Literacy	Grade	Universal Screening	Diagnosis	Monitoring Instruction Tier 1	Monitoring Intervention Tiers 2
	K	MANDATORY: MAP: two times per year Kindergarten Literacy Assessment: DRA in spring	Upper and Lower Case Letter Recognition Letter Name Recognition	Continuation of diagnostic assessment	MANDATORY: Core Phonics Assessment

	1	MANDATORY: NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) 2 times per year Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) 3 times per year	MANDATORY: Reading A-Z Comprehension Passages 2 X per month	Continuation of diagnostic assessment	MANDATORY: Core Phonics Assessment Phonemic Awareness Assessment as needed Reading Horizons Unit Assessments
	2	MANDATORY: NWEA 2 times per year. DRA 3 X per year	MANDATORY: Reading A-Z Comprehension Passages 2X per month	Continuation of diagnostic assessment	MANDATORY: Core Phonics Assessment as needed Phonemic Awareness Assessment as needed Reading Horizons Unit assessments
	3	MANDATORY: NWEA 2 X per year. DRA (3X per year)	MANDATORY: Reading A-Z Comprehension Passages 2 X per month.	Continuation of diagnostic assessment	MANDATORY: Core Vocabulary as needed Reading Horizons Units as needed Comprehension Assessments bimonthly
	4-8	MANDATORY QRI- 4 for students indicated by NWEA (12 months below grade level)	MANDATORY: Reading A-Z Comprehension Passages 2 X per month.		Core Vocabulary as needed Comprehension Assessments 1 X per month.

*developed by Achieve Language Academy

Interventions and instructional supports

Each student testing below grade level will also receive the CORE Phonics Assessment in the fall and spring based on the specific grade level skills that should be acquired. Students with deficits in skill areas will receive interventions within their classrooms in Tier 1. Those falling six months below in first grade, and one year below grade level in second and third grade, will additionally receive small group intervention through Response to Intervention RtI, Tier II. Classroom teachers and RtI teachers align instruction to the Common Core Standards within a balanced literacy framework. Universal testing of the Developmental Reading Assessment takes place three times per year, September, January and May. All parents will be notified of DRA and MAP scores via their first conference/report card in October.

Tier II of RtI, group sizes are 1-5 students. Groups are organized with similar levels of reading development in the areas of decoding, fluency and comprehension. Achieve uses the Reading Horizon's Systematic Discovery Phonics. Within the Tier II framework, a variety of techniques and curricular resources are used based on the need of the learners, with some of these including Orton-Gillingham and Reading Recovery.

Additionally, Achieve has qualified for Reading Corps grants from 2014 to 2018. During the 2014-15, 2015-16, 2017-18 school year, Reading Corps tutors worked with students who were slightly below grade

level. The Reading Corps framework requires one-on-one tutors in most intervention situations. The assessments are provided by Reading Corps and are administered using their specifications. During the 2017-18 year, Achieve was part of a federal study, which provided us with two full time tutors. Reading Corps tutors allowed us to reach many kindergarten through grade three students. In addition, about ten percent of Tier II students were seen by Reading Corps and RtI Tier II.

Parents of students in RtI Tier II Intervention groups will receive a report at all conferences during the year. Ongoing growth data will be shared with parents throughout the year, as it is available. This will be sent home via the classroom teacher.

Family and Community Partnerships

Parents are the foundation on which student success is built. We encourage parents to advocate for their children and support their learning outside of school. During the school year family events are held to help parents gain the necessary skills needed to help their children at home. Parents will be notified of their student's reading level and ways in which they can help their student/s at home. Classroom teachers send homework daily/weekly based on student ability level. Literacy information will be available to parents at each K--4 family night event throughout the year. Parents are notified that, each week on Friday, students may buy discount books for their home library. Literacy packets encouraging parent involvement will go home to all parents at the first conference, before school begins. Teachers will make phone calls to parents, as needed, alerting them about student literacy needs. A monthly Achieve newsletter includes parent strategies for developing literacy skills. Grade level teams will provide reading events incorporating strategies that families can do together at home.

Professional development and data to support PD

One of the major cornerstones of Achieve is the focus on professional development of all staff. All teachers are a part of a professional learning community (PLC). These teams have a common preparation period each day and meet at least once a week to discuss student achievement, review student data and modify instruction in order to better meet student needs. On a rotation basis, the teams meet for a half-day on Mondays. These days are devoted to reviewing data, setting goals, discussing instructional effectiveness, writing common assessments, focusing on curriculum standards, and teaming with other academic support teachers (special education, English Language Learner support staff).

Based on the results of our benchmark assessments, staff development opportunities are designed and planned to address any areas of concern and weakness.

SUMMARY

Literacy development is important during all stages of learning, but particularly during the primary years. Because of the importance of being equipped to read for meaning by third grade, systematic approaches to instruction, intervention, and assessment are areas of ongoing priority focus at Achieve. Providing teachers and other staff with ongoing research based training, that will give them the resources to meet the needs of a diverse EL population, is also a precedence. Next year greater emphasis will be placed on understanding and screening for students showing signs of Dyslexia. While Convergence Deficiency is not something that schools will screen for, a greater understanding of this vision disorder is needed. In an effort to improve reading instruction, the curriculum committee is looking at ways to improve upon the Language Arts curriculum.