



North Metro Flex Academy

Local Literacy Plan

Reading Well by Third Grade

2021-2022

Our Mission:

Our mission is to prepare a diverse community of elementary and middle school students to be successful in high school, college and in their chosen vocation through a flexible, individualized learning experience that develops analytical, compassionate, disciplined and self-directed learners.

Our Vision:

North Metro Flex Academy's vision is to be a high-performing and innovative school that produces students capable of exemplary levels of higher order thinking and achievement, as well as students prepared for high school and any postsecondary opportunity they pursue. Our students have access to exceptional curriculum, tools, and teaching to maximize their success in life.

Our History:

North Metro Flex Academy opened in the fall of 2016 with 170 students in attendance. The school started out enrolling students in grades K-4, and has grown to include eight grade in 2020-21. Our school is very diverse, including a rich blend of students from different cultures, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds. Our staff reflected the makeup of our student population, and included members of the Latino, East African, African American, Caucasian, and Asian communities.

Overview of North Metro Flex Academy's 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 Grade". 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 North Metro Flex Academy plans to address each of these requirements for our students in Kindergarten through Third grade.

North Metro Flex Academy Local Literacy Plan Goals

1. Identify all students not performing at grade level and intervene in a timely manner to ensure reading success.
2. Form a support team for students including homeroom teacher, intervention support, and families.
3. Ensure that all students, including those who exceed benchmarks in the fall, are challenged to reach their projected growth target by spring.

How Will NMFA Know If Our Students Are Reading Well By Third Grade?

Reading proficiency will be defined as students who score at or above grade level benchmarks and who perform at grade level in the classroom. Reading proficiency will be assessed for ALL students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 by multiple measures of assessment, data driven decision-making, and a multi-tiered system of support and commitment to improve literacy skills.

Students who are not reading at grade level will receive research-based interventions and their progress will be monitored until proficiency is attained. Interventions will happen in addition to core reading instruction. Core curriculum is aligned to the Minnesota English Language Arts Standards. Curriculum maps are updated annually.

What Kind of Assessments Will Be Used and When?

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress

All students are assessed in the fall, winter, and spring using the NWEA/MAP test to measure growth and progress throughout the school year. This assessment is adaptive, which means that it adjusts based on how well a student performs on the test to determine their current level. The adaptability allows the test to pinpoint skill gaps that may have occurred in the instruction of previous years, rather than simply attending to the standards of the students' current grade level.

EL Progress Monitoring and WIDA ACCESS Administration

Upon enrollment in the EL program, students identified as English Learners (EL) will be progress monitored by the EL teacher working with the classroom teachers to track student progress throughout the year. The EL teacher will provide direct instruction on all aspects of the English language as needed, including reading, writing, listening and speaking, both in the classroom and in small groups outside of the classroom. Once a year, all EL students will take the WIDA ACCESS, which will provide a form of progress data to help with the re-enrollment or exiting of the EL students in the upcoming year.

How Will Parents be Informed That Their Child is Not Reading Proficiently?

All parents will be notified of universal screening results within two weeks of the school-wide completion of the MAP test in the fall, winter, and spring. Typically, these reports are discussed as time permits during conferences, including goal setting and identifying ways the family can help their student progress at home. Teachers also connect with families in a variety of ways to communicate progress and concerns in the classroom, in addition to report cards.

Students flagged for needing further intervention outside of regular classroom instruction will receive a letter detailing the perceived need and an action plan, which they are welcome to actively participate in creating. Parents can expect an update at mid-quarter in addition to report cards and universal screening communication.

Parents of students who are identified through classroom measures as needing extra help will be notified via phone or letter prior to the student being referred to Child Find. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in helping to identify strategies that might be effective with their child.

NMFA will host a parent informational night at least once per year focused on parent education and involvement in their students' literacy development.

What Instructional Supports and Interventions Will Be Used?

If a student is identified as not reading at or above grade level, and/or not meeting some or all benchmarks during the previous school year, they will automatically qualify for support. The foundations of reading will be met through our core curriculum. Teachers will foster students' understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and other basic conventions. In addition, a necessary and important component of an effective reading program is that it is structured to develop proficient readers with the capacity to think critically, read fluently, and comprehend texts across a range of text structures.

Intervention programs assist students who are struggling with literacy. Based on the results of screening, diagnostic assessments and teacher recommendation, students will receive a multi-tiered level of support that includes research-based interventions. These interventions target skill deficits in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Core, High-Quality Classroom Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions

Within core instruction, all students receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction provided by highly qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened three times per year to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Students identified as being “at risk” through universal screenings and/or results on state- or district-wide assessments receive supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. The length of time for this step can vary, but it generally should not exceed 8 weeks. During that time, student progress is closely monitored using a validated screening system such as curriculum-based measurement. At the end of this period, students showing significant progress are returned to the regular classroom program. Students not showing adequate progress are moved to strategic (extra) intervention (Tier 2).

Title I Intervention (Tier 2)

Students not making adequate progress in core instruction and classroom intervention are provided with increasingly intensive intervention, through Title I services, matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention. These services and interventions are provided in small-group settings in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. In the early grades (kindergarten through 3rd grade), interventions are usually in the areas of reading and math. A longer period of time may be required for this tier, based on student growth. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

Intensive Intervention (Tier 3) & Comprehensive Evaluation

At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students’ skill deficits. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The data collected during core intervention, strategic intervention, and intensive intervention are included and used to make the eligibility decision.

What if I Suspect That my Child has a Reading Disorder?

Dyslexia

NMFA teachers are trained to watch for indicators of dyslexia and will communicate concerns with parents and the Child Find team. Parents then have the option to seek additional medical screening through their family doctor or outside resources if they wish to follow up on the school’s concern.

All students who are not reading at grade level before the end of kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 must be screened for characteristics of dyslexia.

*Note: Dyslexia screening also required in grades 3+ “Unless a different reason for the reading

difficulty has been identified.”

MDE has an FAQ pamphlet available addressing reading problems or dyslexia in schools that is available by following this link: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/sped/>

Convergence Insufficiency Disorder

Convergence Insufficiency is a vision disorder. Convergence is the inward turning of the eyes, one aspect of accommodation, which is the ability to focus accurately at near such as when reading. A person with convergence insufficiency has a remote near point of convergence or difficulty sustaining convergence which results in visual discomfort. Difficulties in accommodation neither interferes with students’ ability to learn to read nor their reading proficiency. However, it can affect their ability to concentrate on print for prolonged periods of time (Handler et al, 2011). Convergence insufficiency is not identified by typical school vision screening. If a child states that he or she gets headaches or eye strain while reading for extended periods, this information can be shared with a parent(s) for possible further screening by the family’s eye health professional. A student with convergence insufficiency alone would not be served by a teacher of blind/visually impaired. Handler, S.M., Fierston, W.M., et al. (2011). Joint technical report—Learning disabilities, dyslexia, and vision. *Pediatrics* 127(3), e818-e856. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2010-3670 (taken from MDE’s Reading Well by Third Grade publication)

NMFA teachers are aware of indicators, including headaches, after extended periods of reading that might be underlying a more serious problem such as Convergence Insufficiency Disorder. Teachers will contact parents to relay their concerns for follow up at the family’s discretion with a family physician or ophthalmologist.

What Opportunities do Teachers Have for Professional Development?

Professional development training will be provided to all NMFA academy teachers in required curriculum components, such as Journeys and IXL. North Metro Flex Academy began working with Regional Centers of Excellence to improve instructional efficacy beginning in November of 2018. Teachers will also engage in Professional Learning Communities to evaluate data and make collaborative decisions regarding instruction based on the data. Common planning time across grade levels has been built into the schedule to allow for analysis of student work and brainstorming innovative instructional strategies. Classroom teachers will also work in conjunction with the EL teacher to provide EL students with access to the classroom curriculum.

Teachers who attend off-site professional development training will bring their knowledge back to the group to share and further innovate as a school.

Where Can I Find NMFA’s Annual Report Detailing Reading Progress?

NMFA communicates overall district reading proficiency through its World’s Best Workforce and Annual Report. The most recent report can be found on the district website:

<https://www.nmfamn.org/>

