



ST. MICHAEL - ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS
EXCELLENCE IS OUR TRADITION

St. Michael-Albertville Local Literacy Plan

Excellence Is Our Tradition

“Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, view, visually represent, and think in order to communicate and contribute to society.” – International Literacy Association

District 885

Last revised 9/4/2019

Developed by: Shari Ledahl, Curriculum Coordinator; Yvette Herian, Karla Wheeler, Mary Spaulding, Amy Ziedler, Reading Specialists

STMA Schools Mission Statement

The mission of District 885 is to provide a safe educational environment where students are encouraged to develop lifelong learning skills which nurture positive attitudes and self-worth.

This will be accomplished when all graduates function as:

- Self-directed Learners who set goals and who develop and manage a process for achieving these goals
- Purposeful Thinkers who think critically and creatively and who use inquiry and problem-solving skills
- Effective Communicators who read, write and speak English fluently, who work well independently and in groups and who use the tools of technology to access, process, and communicate information
- Responsible Citizens who show respect for themselves and others



STMA Schools Vision Statement

STMA will be the pride of our community, with continued top rankings in academics, arts, activities, athletics, and resource management.

Literacy Plan Purpose Statement

The STMA Local Literacy Plan provides an overview of how STMA staff will continually work to improve the academic achievement of all students by identifying needs, implementing research-based interventions through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), engaging in on-going study and self-reflection to improve the shared practice of teaching, and involving parents in a joint partnership to actively respond to the needs of our children.

STMA Schools has developed a Local Literacy Plan to ensure all students are reading well by no later than the end of third grade. If a student does not read at or above grade level by the end of grade three, the district will continue to provide reading interventions through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) until the student reads at grade level.

Use of Data

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

STMA staff work on establishing the knowledge base and routines necessary for making the use and review of data from common formative and summative assessments standard practice in determining if students are reading at grade level proficiency. The comprehensive needs assessment process is supported by the Data Driven Dialogue (DDD) collaborative inquiry method. The approach features the development of Data Coaches, school and district leaders who guide data teams through a process of 1) building a foundation; 2) identifying a student learning problem; 3) verifying causes of student learning problems; 4) generating and monitoring solutions; and 4) achieving results. Through training and on-the-job practice, Data Coaches learned how to lead a process of collaborative inquiry with school-based data teams and to influence the culture of the schools to be one in which data are used continuously, collaboratively and effectively to determine which students are reading at grade level and which



students need continued, research-based intervention programming to assist in supporting their reading needs for reading proficiency at grade level.

Assessment Plan

A Comprehensive Process Used to Determine Student Progress and Growth toward College and Career Readiness Standards

General Overview

STMA uses a number of measures to assess and evaluate student progress toward local, state, and national standards and college and career readiness standards. The purpose of the layered assessment system is to screen, progress monitor, determine curriculum effectiveness, personalize student instruction, evaluate program effectiveness, gauge instructional strategy effectiveness, determine student program placement, diagnose learning difficulties, determine state/federal accountability, and inform students and parents of student progress.

Standardized Assessments

Standardized assessments such as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment-III (MCA-III), Pre-ACT assessment, and ACT assessments, are administered yearly. The MCA-III assessments are administered to students in reading (grades 3-8, 10), mathematics (grades 3-8, 11) and science (grades 5, 8 & 10) in the spring. The Pre-ACT is administered in reading, math, english, and science to students in grade 10, and the ACT is administered to students in grades 11-12. Data from these assessments are used to determine if students are on-track to develop the skills necessary to succeed in entry-level college courses by the time they leave high school.

Curriculum Based Assessments

Curriculum-based measures are used to screen students and to monitor student progress. STMA uses standardized measures including the Formative Assessments for Teachers (FAST), and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) to identify students who are at risk in the areas of math and reading. These measures are combined with teacher observations and classroom data to determine student instructional needs and are also used to assess individual student responsiveness to instruction. FAST assessments are administered to students in grades K-4 in the fall, winter, and spring. NWEA assessments are administered to students in grades 5-9 in the winter in reading and math. Students are progress monitored throughout the year if they are not at benchmark.

Curriculum-based assessments (i.e. common summative and formative assessments) are administered to assess students' growth toward local, state, and national standards in



grades K-12. They are aligned to the standards and data is used to make instructional decisions. Likewise, data is used to determine whether students have acquired the knowledge and skills to be on-track to meet grade level student achievement benchmarks.

Diagnostic assessments results inform instructional planning in order to meet students' individual needs. Assessments may vary and are administered on an as needed basis.

STMA Benchmarking

Benchmarking assessments assess students' individual reading level. Benchmarking occurs at least two times per year in grades K-4 to determine each student's reading instructional level. Information is used for guided reading instruction in order to "match" students to developmentally appropriate reading material and appropriate instruction.

While data from multiple assessments are used by teachers and administrators, specific measures have been identified and benchmarks from these measures set to determine if students are meeting state, national and college and career readiness standards. Students are deemed "at benchmark" if they score at or above STMA's set benchmarks (see below). "At benchmark" is determined using the *Formative Assessments for Teachers* (FAST) for grades K-2, the *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment* (MCA-III) for grades 3-11 in reading and math, and in grades 5, 8, and 10 in science. ACT identified benchmark scores for English, mathematics, reading and science are used for students in grades 10 (Pre-ACT) and 11 thru 12 (ACT).

Students who score at or above grade level student achievement benchmarks are categorized as tier one. These students achieve the grade level benchmark via core instruction. Core curriculum is aligned to the MN academic standards in science, social studies, math, language arts, and the arts via a comprehensive, multi-year process.

Students who score below grade level student achievement benchmarks are categorized as tier two. Tier two students receive research-based interventions via best practice strategies by staff who are trained to adjust instruction based on the individual needs of the student. Interventions supplement not supplant core instruction. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff progress monitors students until proficiency is attained.

Students who score significantly below grade level student achievement benchmarks are categorized as tier three. Tier three students are supported by interventions and specific programming which often occurs outside of the classroom. Instruction and/or interventions are administered by trained staff multiple times per week. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff progress monitor students.



Data Analysis

Data analysis occurs regularly at the individual teacher level as well as at the building and district levels. Test data is analyzed by professional learning communities (PLCs), site staff development teams, the district staff development committee, administrative team, district curriculum committees, and problem solving teams. The district's Director of Testing and Assessment coordinates the analysis of data using a comprehensive process that utilizes a robust student data warehouse (built by TIES) providing easy access of student data to teachers, principals, and district administrators. Data is disaggregated by student group to determine the gaps in achievement.

Action Planning for Continuous Improvement

Core Instruction and Intervention Services: STMA staff are committed to ensuring reading success for all students. Reading and ELA curriculum is researched-based and aligned to Minnesota state standards. Reading instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. Close reading is an additional focus in reading and ELA classrooms. Guided whole group reading instruction and differentiated small group reading instruction is practiced in all reading and ELA classrooms. Staff participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) analyzing student reading assessment data to guide instructional practices and ensure student reading success.

Interventional and instruction supports are offered at every academic level. STMA employs a multi-tiered level of support (MTSS) that includes researched-based interventions. At Tier 1, all students receive high quality reading instruction in whole and small group settings. Equitable access to standards is ensured at all levels. At Tier 2, students not making adequate reading progress in the core curriculum are provided with increased instruction to meet their needs. At Tier 3, students are provided with intensive support at an individual student level.

Staff Development: Each building has a Site Staff Development Committee responsible for developing SMART goals to guide their building's efforts toward increasing student achievement. Committee members, comprised of teacher leaders and the building principal,



analyze disaggregated student achievement results and growth data for all grade levels and student sub-groups served, in order to set yearly student achievement goals. In addition, the committee assists in planning, organizing and carrying out staff development plans necessary for curriculum, instruction or programming modifications for students not meeting grade level expectations.

Curriculum Development & Improvement: STMA employs a comprehensive system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all district curriculum and instruction. The primary goal of STMA's curriculum review process is to develop a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A guaranteed and viable curriculum is one in which the agreed upon essential content and skills are covered within adequate instructional time. The cyclic review involves teacher collaboration, parent/community member input, reflective inquiry, and decision making based on best practices, current research, district data, and state/federal mandates. Much of the work which has occurred during the curriculum review process now takes place during weekly PLC meetings. PLCS harness teachers' collective ability to help students learn by examining data, engaging in ongoing job-embedded professional development, and making modifications to the curriculum in response to student needs. The process results in a living document describing content, skills, and assessments both horizontally within a grade level and/or content area and vertically across grade levels. STMA recognizes that a guaranteed and viable curriculum has a strong correlation to student achievement (Marzano, 2003).

Evidence-based Interventions

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

Tiers of Support include:



- Tier 1: Core Support

All students receive core instruction in Tier 1. Students who are *at or above benchmark* and are making sufficient academic growth will have their needs met through instruction in the core curriculum and guided reading. Students performing below or significantly above grade level will receive additional services in Tier 2 and/or Tier 3.

The core curriculum includes:

- ❖ Guiding Readers and Kinder Phonics: kindergarten
- ❖ Benchmark Literacy: grades 1-4
- ❖ Differentiated Instruction & Guided Reading: grades K-4
- ❖ Balanced Literacy: grades K-4
- ❖ Great Books, various novels, Literature text: grades 5-12

- Tier 2: Extra Support

Students who are below grade level are supported through classroom guided reading, small group, and individual instruction. Additional support is provided during a scheduled block, or *response* time. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff progress monitor students using Fastbridge Learning Assessment, PRESS, or other measures.

If students score above their 'aim line' three to five consecutive times with at least one data point above the next benchmark goal, the intervention may be discontinued. However, teachers will continue to monitor progress to ensure that mastery is maintained.

Instructional supports can include:

- ❖ Researched based interventions for the targeted skill
- ❖ Additional time to reinforce classroom skills



- ❖ Minnesota Reading Corps tutoring
- ❖ Reading Response instruction
- Tier 3: Intensive Support

Students who are significantly below grade level are supported by interventions and specific programming which often occurs outside of the classroom. Instruction and/or interventions are administered by trained staff three to five times per week. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff will progress monitor students using Fastbridge Learning Assessment or other measures. If students score above their 'aim line' three to five consecutive times with at least one data point above the next benchmark goal, interventions may be discontinued. However, teachers will continue to monitor progress to ensure that mastery is maintained and the student is reading at grade level.

Intervention programming may include:

- ❖ Reading Response in grades K-4: a pull-out literacy program for at-risk students that may include small group or one-on-one instruction and/or interventions
- ❖ Special Education in grades K-4: instruction and interventions targeted to students' individual needs as indicated by an Individual Education Plan (IEP), must meet state qualification guidelines
- ❖ Targeted Services in grades K-4: a before or after school literacy program for at-risk students
- ❖ Reading Summer Camp in grades K-4: sessions will focus on literacy skills
- ❖ Reading Intervention Programming in grades 5-12: Students not reading at grade level will continue to receive intervention programming in grades 5-12. Programming components include extra reading supports and interventions in Responsive Hour classes in grades 5-8. Reading intervention programming is continued for students in grade 9-12 not reading at grade level. The reading interventionist at the high school will work with teachers to provide reading intervention support in addition to regular English Language Arts courses.



District 885's English Language Learners (ELL) Department offers content-based ELL instructional programs which promote students' English language proficiency and build academic content knowledge by integrating subject areas with language acquisition strategies. English Learners (ELs) acquire English through participation in age-appropriate instruction aligned to district content standards as well as English language proficiency standards. The primary objective of teaching language through content is to make the curriculum available to students at all levels of English proficiency.

At the K- 12 level, trained general education teachers (EL cluster teachers), ELL licensed teachers, and EL support staff collaborate to teach language through content using district curriculum, supported by programming, in addition to EL second language acquisition strategies. Linguistic, graphic, visual, kinesthetic, interactive, and emotional supports are provided to make content standards and curriculum accessible for ELs at all levels of proficiency.

EL students who are reading below grade level may receive reading interventions and response services.

Parent and Community Engagement

Communication Plan

Reporting to Stakeholders

STMA's curriculum and assessment advisory committee is called the District Advisory Committee (DAC). The DAC is composed of community members, teacher leaders, district administrators, a student, and a member of the support staff who work together to ensure STMA children are college and career ready. The primary purpose of the committee is to be informed of practices and programs influencing teaching and learning throughout the district. These include the curriculum review process, district and site student achievement goals, measures, and results, professional development plans, reports on federally funded programming, overviews of state and federal mandates, and other related items. The DAC advises and provides recommendations to the school board regarding means to improve programming for all students.



Reporting to Parents

- Teachers will communicate screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring results for all students during fall and winter conferences.
- Parents will be invited to a literacy session. The literacy session will provide parents with information and strategies to accelerate their child's literacy development in areas where a skill deficit has been identified.
- Grades are reported three times per year and will indicate the areas of need and whether students are reading at grade level.
- Parents are notified when students participate in pull-out literacy support in grades K-12.

Professional Development

Professional development is data-driven, ongoing, and inclusive of all teachers. It is delivered in a variety of formats and aligned with school and/or district goals.

- There are eight professional development days per school year for teachers. Professional development focuses on district-wide initiatives and building level needs.
- Teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) weekly to reflect and collaborate on student progress and needs, review data, and align instruction to academic standards and learner outcomes.
- Professional Book Study groups are offered to all district staff to increase knowledge in the literacy domain.
- Professional development for alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment occurs on a ten year cycle. The Curriculum review process supports the review of curricular content, common assessments, course offerings, and resource selection on a ten year cycle. Each content area is on the cycle for one year. In years two through ten, the district's curriculum review process is integrated with the work of PLCs. In year five, content areas have the option of participating in an interim curriculum review year to update curriculum, resources, and common formative and summative assessments.



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- Administrators use formal and informal evaluations to identify training needs.
- Staff development committees review student data to determine professional development goals.
- Q Comp – Quality Compensation. All STMA K-12 Teachers or others that are on the teacher contract (special education, TOSAs, counselors, nurses, etc.), and Early Childhood participate in Q comp. This program meets the requirement of the Minnesota Teacher Evaluation Law. Besides participating in a Professional Learning Community, teachers are observed and coached by trained peers three times a year. Teachers work together as a school team, as a PLC group, and as individuals to grow and improve as educators.