

Albert Lea Area Schools

K-3 Literacy Plan

2021-2022

I. Statement of goals or objectives defining how reading proficiency will be ensured for ALL students at each grade level Kindergarten through Grade 3.

The students in Kindergarten through third grade in the Albert Lea Area Schools develop as readers and reach their highest potential by receiving a solid foundation in reading through the Minnesota State Language Arts Standards. Our goal in Albert Lea Area Schools is to provide all students with the skills they need to excel in all content areas and to instill a love of reading. Regular opportunities for independent reading give students' choice in their reading selection and helps build stamina. Following a district-wide consistent scope and sequence ensures continuity for students moving from school to school.

This language arts curriculum is Benchmark Literacy. Assessments will drive instruction, empowering experienced teachers and guiding beginning teachers. Classroom Leveled Book Libraries are significant in this process. A first grade teacher, for example, has 900 instructional leveled books in his/her classroom. These leveled books are informational and fiction text with a science and social studies emphasis that align with those grade level standards. The text features developmentally enable students to practice and apply strategies they are learning daily. Whole group mini lessons focus on modeling and teaching literacy strategies and skills. Writing curriculum is also implemented with grade specific genre units based on the Minnesota Common Core Standards. Explicit mini lessons follow a model – guide format. Writing conferences will support differentiated strategies to support all learners. Phonics instruction is systematically taught in Kindergarten and First grade. Second grade transitions from phonics and word patterns to the process of student's language and its components. Third grade focuses on word study using a systematic, explicit approach.

We are meeting the individual needs of all students by using the Readers Workshop model and flexible grouping where appropriate, and by providing focused intervention to students not at grade level. Albert Lea Area Schools is using FASTbridge Assessments developed by the University of Minnesota in grades Kindergarten through Seventh grade to screen students for placement in reading interventions.

We will ensure that all students are proficient readers by implementing a tiered instructional framework. As part of this framework, all students will receive high-quality core instruction and students with Tier 2 needs will receive additional support from the classroom teacher, an EL teacher, Title I teacher or a special education teacher.

II. Statement of process to assess students' level of reading proficiency including assessments used, when administered, how proficiency is determined, and when and how results are communicated with parents of students in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

Screening Tools:

Albert Lea Area Schools will use FASTbridge assessments for screening in Kindergarten through Seventh grade three times a year. In Kindergarten and First grade, high frequency words are assessed three times a year, along with letter names and letter sounds, rhyming, and segmenting. Guided Reading levels will also be used to determine students needing additional reading support. This information is shared with parents regularly throughout the year and at parent teacher conferences three times a year.

Running records are administered weekly for all students in Tier I who are considered below grade level targets.

FAST Benchmark Standards for Adaptive Reading and eReading			
Grade	Fall Target	Winter Target	Spring Target
K	32	53	66
1 st	33	55	69
2 nd	470	481	489
3 rd	488	498	504
4 th	504	508	514
5 th	510	518	523
6 th	517	524	528
7 th	521	526	532

Diagnostic Tools:

The Diagnostic Tools used as needed are the Benchmark Literacy Phonics Assessments. This assessment identifies the area of proficiency starting at letter names and letter sounds, then CVC words, and continues through the development stages. Through this diagnostic test, it exhibits where the student's deficits are, and then interventions are planned accordingly.

Another tool used as needed is the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. This tests receptive vocabulary and provides a quick estimate of verbal ability and scholastic aptitude.

The Really Great Reading Diagnostic Decoding Assessments determine which students are struggling with decoding, what types of words they are struggling with, and what is the source of the underlying condition. The Kindergarten Foundational Skills Survey is a one-on-one assessment of pre-decoding and early decoding skills, including: functional vocabulary, phonological/phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, decoding, and high frequency word reading. The data collected helps determine whether foundational reading skills are being established at an appropriate pace, can pinpoint specific gaps in knowledge and plan appropriate, targeted instruction. The 1st Grade Foundational Skills Surveys include: simple and complex single-syllable words (including short vowels, digraphs, blends, closed syllables, and various long vowel spellings), decodable two-syllable words, selected sight words, and optional assessments for sight words, letter sounds knowledge, and letter names knowledge. The diagnostic decoding surveys used with 2nd grade and up assess a student's ability to read: simple and complex single-syllable words (including short vowels, digraphs, blends, and closed syllables in real and nonsense words, as well as, selected sight words. The Advanced version assesses the student's ability to

read: complex single-syllable words (with short, long, r-controlled, and variant vowels and complex consonant constructions like trigraphs and 3-sound blends in real and nonsense words), as well as, decodable two- and three-syllable words.

The Development Reading Assessment determines the student's independent (or instructional) level with an evaluation of three components of reading: reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. This is used when a more complete reading diagnosis is needed because the quick screen from Benchmark Literacy's Oral Reading Records does not diagnose.

Progress Monitoring:

FAST Progress Monitoring is used in Kindergarten through Seventh grade for students not proficient on the screener. Informal running records are done weekly or bi-monthly during guided reading instruction. Students who are receiving supplemental services such as Title I will receive additional instructional reading time, not in place of the classroom guided reading instruction. These students need to make more than one year's growth to effectively close the gap by third grade. Our goal is to focus on where the gaps are, analyze the data, and address by determining the issues. This could mean more intervention time is needed for students or more teaching professional development and support.

III. Specific information on how elementary schools within the district will notify and involve parents to accelerate literacy development for their children in each grade Kindergarten through Grade 3

Parents are informed of their child's reading and math progress through report cards, conferences, and other communication, which may include emails, phone calls, blogs, wikis, and newsletters.

The district has the expectation that all children read every night. Each fall, schools have Open Houses that share curriculum and expectations for the year. National Data is shared so parents have an understanding of the grade level expectations and standards.

Title I provides family events for parent education and student involvement at the events. Albert Lea Area Schools is a Schoolwide Title I Program for Grades K-5. Most parent events are held in the elementary buildings, others are held at the Albert Lea Public Library, and some have been held at the Karen Church in Albert Lea with the use of Karen interpreters.

Classroom teachers send home the leveled books used in a guided reading group with their students. This is a practice that Title I teachers also do with students. Parents commented on how much they appreciate that their child brings home a book that they can read. Too often library books are too difficult, and parents say they struggle with knowing if their child should be able to read it or not. By sending home a book that was already used during instruction at school, the rereading piece done at home provides more effective reading time in the home. Dr. Richard Allington, National Reading Researcher, has stressed the importance of having students read volumes and volumes for significant reading growth.

Classroom teachers also send home reading passages used along with the Really Great Reading Phonics program. These passages contain words with vowel patterns, digraphs, closed/open syllables etc. that students are currently learning about in the classroom. Again, this practice of re-reading at home helps parents know what their child's abilities are in comparison to grade level expectations, as well as, gives students an opportunity for more effective reading time in their home.

Albert Lea Area Schools continues finding more avenues to get books in the hands of kids that they can keep in their home. Based on research on families in poverty only having .5 books in their house, we need to address this as a district and community. Hopefully by continuing collaboration with the Public Library, Community Resources, and Grants we will successfully keep reaching this goal of getting more books in homes.

Kindergarten teachers host Family Math and Literacy Nights. These nights provide education to parents on what they can do at home with their children to help them with reading and math. Activities also include make and take resources for them to use at home.

The District Success Coaches, the interpreters for the schools, also host parent meetings to address ideas for parents on how to support their student at home with reading and math. These interpreters also make regular calls home with updates for our families with information from the classroom teachers.

Interested parents are volunteering in their child's school.

IV. Explain for a public audience what interventions will be available to students not reading at or above grade level in grades Kindergarten through Grade 3 and how these interventions will be based on learner data, how services will be provided, and how parents will be informed of student progress

All elementary schools have a Problem Solving Team. These teams work in conjunction with the classroom teacher to plan interventions based on the students' learning deficits. Teams are made up of the Principal, primary classroom teacher, secondary classroom teacher, Title I and/or ADSIS teacher, Social Worker, and Special Education teacher. These teams have identified evidence based research and help provide direction to a classroom teacher.

Tier One (all students):

The core reading program in our district is a 120-minute block of time that is based on a Balanced Literacy approach to reading. Teachers provide whole group, small group differentiated instruction, independent reading, phonics/word study and writing with all students. Some sites use a flexible grouping model to help meet the individual needs of students for their small group instruction. Others have a focus model group based on a particular skill or standard. Through assessment and observation, students are identified for additional reading support.

Tier 2 Intervention (4-6 students):

- Reading Corps Tutors meet daily with K-3 students that are just below grade level expectations.
- EL, Title I, Special Education teachers work with 3-5 students at a time and do pull-out and/or push-in, grouping students by need with the intent that it will be a quick in and out intervention.
- Reading Corps volunteers do repeated reading with students who have been identified as needing additional support.

Tier 3 (1-4 students):

- EL and Special Education teachers provide one-on-one or very small group targeted intervention based on need.

See Appendix for:

- List of Tiered Interventions
- Intervention Placement Criteria K-5

V. Describe how elementary teachers will participate in, and benefit from professional development on scientifically-based reading instruction.

A literacy trainer was brought in the district in September 2019 to support teams of teachers through data discussions, etc. She also provided training for all new PreK-5 teachers on phonics and decoding instruction regarding how to support all students. Instructional coaches provide balanced literacy instructional support throughout the year. Differentiated professional development occurs through instructional coaches training and principal support.

- Representatives from every building are on the English Language Arts Committee to ensure feedback, and needs are addressed in each building. This committee meets regularly to plan, address and resolve all projects or needs.
- Many teachers have completed Responsive Classroom training and have implemented it which affects academics.
- Principals received training on phonics and Benchmark Literacy for literacy instruction observations. Principals will continue to receive more literacy training for walk throughs in 2021-22.
- Instructional coaches will be in each building with the expectation that formal coaching is happening regularly in the classrooms. The domains of observation include learning environment, standards and objectives, questioning, and feedback.
- Staff meetings will continue to address the reading instructional needs of that building.
- Our Technology Specialists will update staff and share information on reading and writing, and how to effectively integrate technology into the instruction.
- Weekly PLCs will have time to share evidence-based practices by bringing students' artifacts to compare and discuss.

Contact for any questions regarding the K-3 Literacy Plan for Albert Lea Area Schools

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Hawthorne Elementary – John Mahal, Principal, 507-379-4961

Lakeview Elementary – Nick Sofio, Principal 507-379-5021

Sibley Elementary – Nicky Severtson, Principal, 379-5081

District Office – Julie Eaton, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning, 507-379-4816

Appendix

List of Tiered Reading Interventions

Diagnostic Tools	Instructional Strategies		
	Tier 1 classroom teacher	Tier 2 (push-in/pull out)	Tier 3
Benchmark Literacy Phonics Assessment	Benchmark Literacy Phonics/Word Work	AmeriCorps – Reading Corp Tutors and Volunteers	Avenues (EL)
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	Repeated Oral Assisted Reading	Read Naturally Fluency and Comprehension	Repeated Oral Assisted Reading
Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency	Guided Reading using running records	Repeated Oral Assisted Reading	Explode the Code
Developmental Reading Assessment	Incremental Rehearsal	Guided Reading using running records	Steck Vaughn Reading Comprehension
Qualitative Reading Inventory	Reading Comprehension Strategies	Incremental Rehearsal	Nonfiction leveled reading
Really Great Reading – 2-5 Diagnostic Decoding Survey	Reading Metacognitive Strategies	Pencil Tap	Visual Phonics
	Visual Phonics - Kindergarten	Benchmark Literacy Phonics/Word Work Interventions	Burnes and Roe Reading Assessments
	Really Great Reading K- Foundational Skills Survey 1 – Foundational Skills Survey		Direct Reading Instruction Program
			Phoenix Learning Resources - New Practice Readers