



## **Excell Academy for Higher Learning Literacy Plan for Kindergarten through Grade 3**

**Developed by: Excell Academy for Higher Learning Early Literacy Team**

**Date: May 2012**

This literacy plan has been developed and written by a group of experienced teachers, literacy specialists and administration and its goal is to educate students and families to achieve higher literacy and success in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

Our plan is a message to administration, staff, families and students involved in our school outlining our goals and objectives surrounding literacy and reading achievement for all students.

This plan is geared to improve literacy and knowledge contained in our current literacy goals and objectives as well as work towards higher academic and literacy achievement.

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

The staff members at Excell Academy are committed to early reading instruction and achievement. We believe early literacy is the most important set of skills our students need to be successful. Being able to read fluently with high levels of comprehension will give students access to content as they progress through our school system and will help them become productive members of our community. Thus, our primary reading goal is for all students at Excell Academy to read at grade level or above by the end of third grade.

### **Statement(s) 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.**

Valid and reliable reading assessments are used to determine student progress toward meeting our reading goal. Our assessments are research based and use outcome based measures, progress monitoring, core curricula assessments, and statewide testing.

At Excell Academy, students in grades K-6 will be assessed three times per year (Fall, Winter and Spring) using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) to

determine if they are reading at grade level. DIBELS will also be used to monitor student growth. Students who are reading at grade level will be assessed every six weeks, students that are at a strategic level will be monitored monthly, and students in the high risk category will be assessed every two weeks. (See attached Benchmark goals).

In addition to DIBELS, students in grades 2-8 will be taking the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test in the Fall, Winter and Spring. This test has two literacy parts: Language Usage, and Reading. We will also use assessments from our Scott Foresman core curricula to obtain additional instructional information on our students. The end-of-year assessment for third through eighth grades will be the MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment).

Teachers will use this data to help find remedial instructional materials and teach based on the individual needs of the students. Students are continually reevaluated throughout the year and teachers adjust their instruction with flexible grouping to maximize growth towards proficiency.

The results of these assessments will be communicated to parents during our quarterly strategic intervention meetings as well daily access to PowerSchool, an online tool to share student progress and data which parents can access directly from Excell Academy's website.

**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.**

Our school, Excell Academy for Higher Learning will use Scott Foresman's Reading Street curriculum and Reading Mastery's Direct Instruction for a holistic Literacy curriculum. Teachers will also implement SIOP lesson plans to align content standards to their daily lesson plans. Students will be placed in flexible reading groups within their classrooms as well as with reading specialist based on their diagnostic assessment scores. Our reading specialist uses pullout groups to accelerate achievement of students in need of additional instruction.

Quarterly PEG (Parent Empowerment Gathering) meetings are geared toward parent understanding of data and existing support systems in place and available to students and families. Parents will be given information on tests administered to students as well as an explanation of data and findings of tests.

The following is a list of websites/tools families are educated on during PEG meetings:

**Study Island:**

“The Study Island Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments - Series II (MCA-II) and Series III (MCA-III) Preparation Program is specifically designed to help students master the content specified in the Minnesota Academic Standards. Study Island's focus on the Minnesota Academic Standards enables students to improve their performance in all skill areas tested on the MCA-II and MCA-III in grades 2 through 8 and high school. Study Island also offers Math and Reading Skills for Kindergarten and 1st Grade, Fine Arts, Health, and Technology for Elementary and Middle School, and High School Algebra II Skills Mastery products.”

<http://www.studyisland.com/>

**Lexia:**

“*Lexia Reading* is defining the future of reading education. The award-winning product is a technology-based system of differentiated practice, embedded assessment and targeted instruction, designed as an essential component of every reading curriculum. This scalable approach provides educators norm-referenced measures that predict performance and prescribe instructional intensity to improve reading achievement.”

<http://www.lexialearning.com/products/index.html>

**Leveled Readers:**

A-Z Readers, Reading Street differentiated readers, Direct Instruction leveled reading books that coincide with lessons from the curriculum are used in flexible reading groups within the classroom and in Title 1 reading groups.

**Word Lists:**

Lists include, but are not limited to, Dolch Lists, Sight Words, and First 100 words.

**Spelling Lists:**

Weekly spelling lists are given to students from the Scott Foreman Reading Street curriculum, students are taught correct spelling and definitions of the spelling lists. Students are tested weekly using these lists for correct spelling of each word.

Repeated Reading Passages:

Students read chorally, with partners, and independently throughout the day to increase fluency and comprehension.

**Explain for a public audience what interventions and instructional supports 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.**

Interventions that will be used for students not reading at or above grade level in grades Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are Small Group Direct Instruction, Title 1 pull-out services, Corrective Reading, flexible grouping within the classrooms, and differentiated instruction for students.

During Direct Instruction, students in Grades K-2, will take part in a reading program daily where they will be taught reading skills starting with Phonemic Awareness, in which they will get instruction solely on letter sounds. Students will then progress to learning Phonics, which will help them distinguish patterns, vowel sounds, blends, and digraphs. Students will be learning sight words during this time and move up to more complex vowel patterns and blends. Once students have worked on sight words and phonics, they will add fluency into their Direct Instruction. When students read using storybooks, they will be asked questions throughout the story to better their comprehension and vocabulary skills. Throughout this process students will be monitored and groups will be changed according to student needs until they reach grade level. Parents will be able to see the student’s progress on their report cards, and on their mid-quarter progress reports.

Corrective reading is Direct Instruction that moves faster and is geared for older grades. It focuses on phonics, and word recognition as well as story reading and comprehension. Students work in flexible groups and are able to test out as soon as they are reading at grade level. There are 3 different levels of Corrective Reading and students use the

materials that fit their individual needs. Level A is for students who are significantly below grade level. Level B is for students below grade level. Level C is for students slightly below grade level. Students take a series of tests that indicate which level is best suited for their needs. Parents will be able to see the student's progress on their report cards, and on their mid-quarter progress reports.

Title 1 groups will be pulled out of the classroom for small group remediation. These groups will work on reading strategies and skills that students need to master. These skills may include: decoding, phonics, comprehension, fluency or vocabulary building. Reading specialists will work with classroom teachers to supplement the skills that are being worked on during class time. Title 1 pull-out groups are flexible and can change throughout the year. Small groups are implemented to give students the individual attention they need make progress toward reading at grade level.

Flexible groups within classrooms target specific skills from the Minnesota State Reading and Language Standards. Students that are struggling with a skill after it has been taught are put into targeted skills groups to give students reinforcement of each standard for mastery. Parents will see an improvement in student's mastery of each skill through daily work sent home, report cards, mid-quarter progress reports, and view their grades using Power School.

Differentiated Instruction is an intervention based on individual student need. There are a wide range of students in each classroom, so teachers design their lessons, reading groups, and class work to meet each student's needs. Parents will see an improvement in student's mastery of each skill through daily work sent home, report cards, mid-quarter progress reports, and area able to view their grades using Power School.

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

The teachers at Excell Academy will participate in, and benefit from professional development on scientifically-based reading instruction. Teachers and specialists collaborate across grade levels, subjects, and disciplines weekly in Q Comp meetings. The meetings are designed to promote development of competent use of literacy practices and instructional strategies that are effective for the students most in need of additional support. There are monthly staff development days for professional development specific to reading instruction. Grade level teachers have weekly instructional meetings to discuss curriculum and grade level content development. At the start of the school of year, teachers are trained by professional instructors in reading and math on the material content and how to implement it effectively. Teachers are then able to deliver core instruction, instructional interventions, and the scientifically-based reading practices embedded within them. The lead teachers observe and help train teachers on instruction and curriculum through Q Comp. Excell Academy has professionals who come to the site and observe teacher instruction. Feedback is given to improve teacher instruction throughout the school year. The MAP and MCA test results are reviewed by the staff to lead instruction and professional development.

**Specifically describe how comprehensive scientifically based reading instruction consistent with section 122A.06, subdivision 4 is consistently implemented throughout elementary grades.**

Throughout the elementary school, Scott Foresman's Reading Street curriculum and Reading Mastery's Direct Instruction curriculum and support materials are used to create a model of comprehensive reading instruction. Spelling lists, sight words, repeated reading passages, and differentiated readers (A-Z Readers) are examples of support materials used. This curriculum and its support materials address the five pillars of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Along with the five pillars, this balanced literacy program also includes new literacy such as technology. Best practices in reading and writing instruction are employed throughout the elementary schools that are age and skill appropriate. These strategies are supported by programs that are aligned to the state standards. Supports such as Study Island and Lexia are designed to help students master reading standards using technology and address specific student needs.

Throughout the year there are formative assessments given to the students. These assessments are used to prepare staff development discussions. Summative assessments such as sight word gains from fall to spring, MCA test scores are compared yearly, and progress in Direct Instruction for grades kindergarten through third grade also dictate staff training. Staff development in reading has included: 1) Q-Comp weekly meetings focusing on the five pillars with research backed strategies to support each, 2) monthly half-day training in analyzing assessment data and how to make decisions based on the data, 3) other half-day trainings have included spelling inventories, vocabulary best practices and comprehension best practices. Coaching is available to staff from lead and mentor teachers through Q Comp and literacy specialists on staff.

**Explain how training and support will be provided so that all district elementary teachers can effectively recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and serve the oral language and linguistic needs of EL students.**

Training and support for teachers to identify diverse needs of students will be given at the beginning of the school year. For Direct Instruction and Corrective Reading, a specialist is brought in to teach the entire staff, teachers and paraprofessionals.

The Title 1 specialist discusses DIBELS data and how to interpret this to help guide teachers grouping for fluency.

Reading Street is a basal series that comes complete with leveled readers and differentiated vocabulary and worksheets to reinforce reading skills.

Responsive Classroom is implemented in our school. This program teaches students how to manage conflicts, build a classroom community and get along with one another.

Teachers will be trained at the beginning of the year on SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) lesson plans in math, reading, and writing, which use a common language to help increase the vocabulary knowledge of EL students.

**Post assessment methods and data that is submitted to Commissioner annually including objectives of assessment program, name of tests, grade levels of administration as part of local literacy plan on district webpage for all students in Kindergarten through Grade 3.**

The post assessment methods and data used are:

DIBELS Scores for grades K-6

Sight Words Gained from fall to spring grades K-1

Direct Instruction progress/Corrective Reading grades K-3

MAP scores grades 2-3

MCA scores grades 3-8

Spelling tests grades K-8