



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

**Developed by: Excell Early Literacy Team**

**Date: June 2016 (Updated)**

This literacy plan has been developed and written by a group of experienced teachers, literacy specialists and administration and is geared to educate students and families to achieve higher literacy goals 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 FAST suite of assessments (Fastbridge.org) to determine

if they are reading at grade level. FAST will also be used to monitor student growth. In addition to this, all students take standards based common assessments that assess student mastery of both foundational skills and comprehension. 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 Benchmark goals below). In addition to FAST, students in grades 6-8 will be taking the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test in the Fall, Winter and Spring. We will also use assessments from National Geographic REACH core curriculum to obtain additional instructional information on our students. The end-of-year assessment for third through eighth grades is the MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment).

Teachers will use the 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 are adjusting their instruction with flexible grouping to maximize growth towards proficiency.

The results of these assessments will be communicated to parents during our quarterly strategic interventions meetings as well as 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 National Geographic's Reach curriculum, a holistic Literacy curriculum. Teachers will also implement standards based lesson plans to align content standards to their daily lesson plans. Students will be placed flexible reading groups within their classrooms as well as with reading specialist based on their diagnostic assessment scores. Reading specialist uses pullout groups to accelerate achievement of students in need of additional instruction. We are entering our second year of implementing a Balanced Literacy framework for reading instruction and will be adding key elements of that framework to our practice.

Quarterly family nights are meant to engage families and provide opportunities for teachers to connect with parents. Parent understanding of data and existing support systems is 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.

Teachers also communicate Learning Objectives and Success Criteria to parents via newsletters, success cards and other tools designed to inform parents about what students are working on specifically.

The following is a list of websites/tools that families are able to use at home.

#### **Moby Max**

Moby Max is a standards based software that allows for students to have personalized learning, provides powerful formative assessment and progress monitoring tools and allows teachers to differentiate effectively.

<http://www.mobymax.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.

**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, PRESS Interventions (Pathway to Reading Excellence in School Sites), Title 1 pull-out services, Corrective Reading, flexible grouping within the classrooms, and differentiated instruction for students.

During Direct Instruction and in receiving PRESS Interventions, 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 also be progressing to 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 whole process students will be monitored and groups will be changed according to students needs. When a student progresses and reaches grade level they will no longer work on Direct Instruction. Parents will be able to see the students' 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 up to grade level. There are 3 different levels of Corrective Reading and students use the materials that fit their individual needs best. 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 students' 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. We aim to keep the group sizes small (1-6 students) in order to give students the individual attention they need make progress toward reading at grade level.

Flexible grouping within classrooms are groups that target specific skills from the Minnesota State Reading and Language Standards. Students have specific skills for each grade to master. For students who are struggling with a skill after it has been taught, are put into targeted skills groups to give students reinforcement in 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 gear their lessons, groups, and 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 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 grades, 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 all staff development days for teachers 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. The teachers then are 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 that come to the site and observe and give feedback on teacher instruction through out 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.**

In 2016-2017, Excell Academy will be in its third year of rolling out a Balanced Literacy framework for Language Arts instruction. This research based framework for structuring reading instruction allows for a gradual release of responsibility.

Throughout the elementary school, National Geographic's REACH 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 Moby Max 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 to drive staff development focus such as grade level standards based common assessments (given weekly), FAST three times a year, MAP for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade three times a year, and spelling tests. Summative assessments such as sight word gains from beginning of the year to the end, MCA comparisons between years and yearly 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 in the form of lead teachers and mentors 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.**

Our Academic Language Development (ALD) teachers, along with classroom teachers have developed an English Language Arts matrix designed to support classroom teachers so that they can give academic language support in content classes. While the ALD team provides direct academic language instruction during What I Need (W.I.N. Time), classroom teachers provide support in the class. In addition to this, the National Geographic REACH curriculum has many language supports and also has a separate

aligned curriculum for language instruction that aligns to the English Language Arts content that students are receiving in class. PD for the ELA matrix includes a full day of training in the fall, one half day training during the school year, an entire PLC cycle along with ongoing coaching from lead teachers and the ALD team.

Training and support for teachers to identify diverse needs of students will be given at the beginning of the school year teacher training. For Direct Instruction, PRESS and Corrective Reading, a specialist who completes training is brought in to train relevant staff that need training. Additionally, the Title 1 specialist spends a ½ day at the beginning of the school year to discuss FAST data and how to interpret this to help guide grouping for foundational skills and fluency.

Our curriculum uses leveled readers and differentiated vocabulary and skills worksheet to reinforce skills groups. Teachers are trained in how to read and interpret all test data.

**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:

FAST Scores

Sight Words Gained from beginning to end of year

Yearly progress in Direct Instruction, K-3

Grade 1-3 MAP scores

MCA scores posted on website

Spelling tests posted on PowerSchool