

## **#877 Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District's Local Literacy Plan**

*This Literacy Plan is designed to provide an overview of how our dedicated teachers work to provide students with appropriate, research-based instruction.*

### District Mission Statement

*Making a difference by preparing all students for a successful future in a changing world.*

### Core Value

All students can learn, though at different rates and in different ways.

### Literacy Plan Goal

- Inform all stakeholders of the district's efforts to ensure quality instruction at all instructional levels for K-3 students.
- Students will be reading well by third grade or before.
- Students who are exceeding grade level standards will receive instruction that continues to progress their learning.
- Students who have not met standards will receive support to reach standards.

### District's K-5 Literacy Curriculum

District #877 uses Literacy by Design as a core literacy program for grades K-5. The basis of the District's core literacy curriculum is founded on scientifically research-based reading and writing instruction. Literacy by Design uses the research from the National Reading Panel that found literacy instruction should include Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. These five areas are part of a balanced literacy program.

The cornerstone of Literacy by Design is the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, which is supported by brain research. Gradual Release of Responsibility is where the teacher scaffolds instruction so students will be successful independently in reading and writing.

**Phonemic Awareness/Phonics/Word Study:** Literacy by Design follows a researched based sequence on phonics acquisition. In Kindergarten through second grade, instruction includes alphabet knowledge, sound-symbol patterns, and systematic and explicit phonics. In third through fifth grade, the focus is on word study.

**Fluency:** Fluency is an important link to comprehension. Fluency can be defined as smooth, expressive, accurate reading at an appropriate rate. As a result of being a fluent reader, a student can focus on comprehension rather than word identification. Students need to hear good models of fluent reading and they need time to practice at an appropriate level for them. Literacy by Design includes instruction in fluency every day. Students are also supported in their fluency development through small group instruction.

**Vocabulary:** Robert Marzano's meta analysis of vocabulary research is the basis for our elementary vocabulary instruction. It consists of six steps: Explain, Restate, Show, Discuss, Reflect and Refine, and Apply in Learning Games. These 6 steps are further described in his book *Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement*. Through these six steps, the Literacy By Design curriculum explicitly teaches vocabulary everyday and provides opportunities for multiple exposures and practice.

**Comprehension:** Based on the research of Linda Hoyt, the core curriculum focuses on 8 comprehension strategies. These strategies are consistent throughout K-5 instruction. Each year the level of complexity increases as students review the strategies. Comprehension graphic organizers are used for students to reflect and record, through writing, their own thinking about the story.

*The 8 comprehension strategies include:*

- Making Connections
- Determining Importance
- Visualizing
- Questioning
- Inferring
- Synthesizing
- Fix-Up strategies
- Monitor Understanding.

Comprehension instruction occurs during whole class instruction and small group instruction. In small group guided reading instruction, students use instructional leveled reading material to practice comprehension strategies. Small group guided reading instruction is supported by a wide variety of researchers, including Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas. Small group instruction is part of the Gradual Release of Responsibility as this is where guided practice occurs.

**Writing:** Literacy by Design’s writing component is authored by Sharon Hill. Students learn the writing process as they create various types of writing based on the Minnesota State Standards. Writing Traits are introduced in Kindergarten and further developed through 5th grade. Writing instruction is also integrated throughout the student’s day.

**Assessments**

The district uses a variety of assessments to assess student performance and progress toward becoming a proficient reader. Teachers use informal daily measures such as listening to students read and examining daily work. This helps the teacher provide more individualized instruction for the student. Teachers also make use of more formal measures to provide an end of the term or unit grade. The district actively screens students to identify possible areas of reading difficulties. Screeners are only one tool that may identify students who are struggling. Based on how a student does on a screener, other assessments will be used to see if the student could benefit from additional support. Below is a table that shows the screeners that are performed at each grade level.

	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Universal Screeners	Letter Name Fluency Letter Sound Fluency	Nonsense Word Fluency Oral Reading Fluency	Oral Reading Fluency	Oral Reading Fluency	Oral Reading Fluency	Oral Reading Fluency

### **Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports**

A system of support called Response to Intervention (RtI) has been in place in the district since 2006. Each year this system is revised by a dedicated group of staff based on the current research. This system uses various screening tools to identify students who may be in need of extra support. Through the use of screening tools and classroom data, students are placed in an appropriate level of support. For many students, the core curriculum is meeting their educational needs. Some students may receive additional small group instruction from a teacher or an Educational Support Professional to either enhance or to help students meet proficiency on MN State Standards. This is accomplished through tiered instruction with classroom teachers. Still others may need more intensive support through more direct teaching with a highly qualified, licensed teacher. Special Education is one specialized program for students who need more tailored support instruction. Another program, Quest, services highly gifted students (top two to three percent in class) in grades 2-8. See attached Title I Qualifications to see a document that shows when a student may need additional academic support.

Intervention strategies are based on the specific needs of the students. These strategies are decided upon after screeners have taken place and teachers may do further diagnostic testing to see the skill area that students need support. Some examples of strategies include paired reading for fluency development, Words Their Way for phonemic awareness and phonics, and Intervention by Design for students who need comprehension.

### **Parent Notification**

Parents are notified at conferences (Fall and Winter) and/or by the end of that grade level if their child is not on track to read well by 3rd grade. Parents, teachers, and schools are partners in ensuring all students are reading well by grade 3. See attached RtI Parent Brochure for additional information on RtI. This brochure may be handed out at conference time if a student needs additional academic support.

### **Professional Development**

The district provides ongoing training to staff in effective reading practices. This includes how to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

All teachers receive training in how to use the program that the district chose as part of its core curriculum, Literacy by Design. The training includes how to conduct small group guided reading, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies for all grade levels K-3. Kindergarten and first grade teachers receive training in phonemic awareness. New staff receives a minimum of a half day of training. Additional support is available from fellow co-workers and Teaching and Learning Department staff. Curriculum maps are available for teachers to guide their instruction. A Core Expectation Chart has been created by the District Literacy Team to provide staff with additional support. On-going staff development is provided as needed by individual buildings. There are also after school classes taught by staff trainers.

Culturally Responsive Instruction Professional Development is evolving every year. The district currently provides the following as options for teachers.

- 1) SEED Training: (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) This Project helps educators to make their classrooms more inclusive for all students of all backgrounds.
- 2) Absent Narratives: is a humanities-based approach that recognizes that each individual and community has a unique narrative and a unique contribution to make.

- 3) Small groups for teachers: article and book studies and implementation
- 4) Diversity education is encouraged by the use of guest speakers at the classroom level

English Learners (EL) staff works collaboratively with classroom teachers and Title I staff to provide a range of services to students. EL teachers use the program On Their Way to English that aligns with the district's literacy program, Literacy by Design. This may be a support piece or a full replacement for the literacy program depending on the need of the student. EL teachers will be using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards.

In the future, the district is looking at training teacher leaders at each building to work on culturally responsive instruction, improve the collaborative effort between EL and Literacy Team to educate all staff, and starting a resource library of books on various cultures and diversity topics.

### **District 877 Definitions**

*Balanced Literacy:* A comprehensive approach to teaching that balances instructional delivery methods and includes components necessary for students to master written and oral language. These components include: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

*Core:* primary instruction for all students, where standard outcomes are delivered and students demonstrate understanding of a wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for literacy development.

*Curriculum:* instructional materials and practices used to deliver content

*Culturally Responsive:* a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

*Gradual Release of Responsibility:* a research-based model of instruction where the teacher guides and supports the students to independence in reading and writing. The components include: modeled, shared, interactive, small group, and independent.

*Instructional Reading Level:* According to Literacy by Design, this is where students can accurately read between 90% and 94% of the text.(p. T69) This may be different from other reading experts.

*Intervention:* an academic intervention is a strategy used to teach a new skill, build fluency in a skill, or encourage a child to apply an existing skill to new situations or settings. (Wright, 2009)

*Learner:* someone who acquires new skills, knowledge, disposition, or information through goal oriented instruction.

*Literacy:* The ability to read, write, speak, listen, view, visually represent, and think in order to communicate and contribute to society.

*Phonemic Awareness:* The ability to hear and produce the separate sounds in a word and to blend separate sounds into words. (If you can do it with your eyes closed, it's phonemic awareness.)

*Phonics:* A way of teaching word recognition that is based on the relationship between letters and the sounds the letters represent.

*Scientifically-Based Research:* research that has adhered to the scientific method and has been published in peer-reviewed journals

*Screening:* A brief procedure designed as a first step in identifying children who may be at high risk for delayed development or academic failure and in need of further diagnosis of