

Southside Family Charter School

Reading Well by Third Grade Literacy Plan

Introduction

Southside Family Charter School (SFCS) is committed to having every student reading well by third grade. Literacy development starts at an early age and is the basis for all academic success. Reading well by third grade ensures that a student has a solid foundation of literacy skills to develop increasingly advanced communication and to transfer learning across all subject areas. Instruction that provides the basis for all students to read well by their grade and beyond will help close the achievement gap and ensure that all students are ready for the demands of college and the workplace. SFCS will provide a quality literacy environment for all students to promote academic success.

SFCS recognizes the importance of the core components of effective literacy planning generally accepted by research and identified by the MN Department of Education: Instructional leadership, multi-tiered systems of support, quality assessment, effective professional development, and family and community partnerships. In addition, SFCS's unique pedagogy and programming includes the following distinguishing factors:

- **Community Involvement:** students have the support of our entire community—administrators, teaching and support staff, parents, students, local colleges, volunteers and interns—to create a quality literacy environment and to follow a literacy plan that will yield high achievement for every student.
- **Individualized Instruction:** a rigorous curriculum is taught to all students with as much time and expert instruction as needed for each student to meet or exceed expectations.
- **Engaging Subject Matter:** the social justice focus at SFCS promotes the use of innovative practices to engage all learners in meaningful and relevant learning activities.
- **Family Communication:** staff stability and low student turnover allow teachers to develop long-term working relationships with families and ensures parents are meaningfully engaged in their children's academic development.
- **Emotional and Behavioral Supports:** in order for students to be able to learn effectively, they must feel safe and supported. SFCS has implemented several programs to provide students and families with the tools they need to be successful in school.

Assessment and Parental Notification

Screening measures such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) will be used to identify students who are at risk in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students at or above

benchmark are considered at grade level and generally need only core instruction to achieve reading benchmarks.

Our K-3 reading team will administer DIBELS 3 times per year. We will have students do an initial reading screening during the fall to determine proper skill level placement of classes and to determine if a particular student needs extra support because they do not meet an established baseline. We will have students complete each assessment initially, then have them re-read the same passage a month later. In this way, the student, teacher and parents will be able see if progress is being made or if extra support is still needed. This assessment also gives useful information in regards to a student's comprehension or understanding of the written text. These measures will be combined with teacher observations and data to determine proficiency and to guide instruction.

SFCS will administer the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for Primary Grades once per year during the spring. We will use the data and make comparisons from the previous year. We will communicate results with each of our teaching and administrative staff as well as with parents.

SFCS conducts parent-teacher conferences at least 5 times per year to communicate to parents of students not meeting grade level proficiency. We also communicate our concerns during special meetings or anytime parents or teachers request a meeting.

Parental Involvement

Teachers of students in grades K-3 send home classroom expectations at the start of each school year. One of the recommendations is that students in 1st & 2nd grades read to their parents nightly. In Kindergarten, students are provided with worksheets to do at home with their parents to reinforce what they are learning during the school day. These strategies are an attempt to involve parents in their child's literacy development and reading skills. In addition, as a school, Southside offers three Parent-Teacher Conference sessions, with various times to accommodate family schedules. Teachers as well as administrative staff encourage parents to attend all three sessions, whenever possible, to encourage face-to-face communications between parents and teachers of all students across our grade spectrum.

Interventions

Students who are below grade level are supported through classroom guided reading, small group, and individual instruction. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff will progress monitor students using DIBELS or other measures.

Instructional supports can include:

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

Students who are significantly or persistently below grade level are supported by interventions and specific programming which often occurs outside of the classroom. Instruction and/or interventions are administered by a resource teacher with a frequency dictated by the student's need.

Professional Development

Teachers of K-3 students, the School Director, and the Executive Director will work to identify ongoing professional development needs related to scientifically-based reading instruction based on the belief that the best Professional Development occurs in the workplace, not in a workshop. With the assistance of the School Director and Executive Director, teachers will identify student needs then assess the capabilities of SFCS to meet those needs. As gaps in their classroom practice become apparent teachers will research, plan, test, assess and refine new strategies. This process may, or may not, include training provided from outside sources. When appropriate, external professional development opportunities will be offered to all teachers across the K-8 spectrum, although with regard to the Early Literacy Plan priority will be K-3 teachers.

Meeting Diverse Needs

In September, 2012, Southside Family Charter School adopted the Sheltered Instruction Model for delivering ELL services. All classroom teachers are participating in Professional Development and co-teaching activities, as well as receiving lesson planning assistance from our licensed ELL teacher. Full adoption of this model includes an observation protocol designed to insure all English language learners are acquiring appropriate grade level content area knowledge and skills, as well as meeting their individual language objectives.