

2023-2024 Local Literacy Plan

Alexandria Public Schools (APS) serve approximately 4,234 students in grades PreK-12. Our district is comprised of six (6) elementary schools, each serving students grades K-5 in the attendance areas of Garfield, Carlos, Miltona, Lincoln, Voyager and Woodland. Discovery Middle School serves students in grades 6-8, and Alexandria Area High School currently serves students in grades 9-12. We have one Early Education Center that is housed within the Woodland Elementary Building. Approximately 326 licensed employees are employed by Alexandria Public School District.

The demographics for our school district are stable with 32.8% of our families qualifying for free and reduced priced lunch. 87.5% of the students are white, 4.6% are Hispanic or Latino, 4.1% two or more races, 1% are Asian, .8% are Black or African-American and .3% are American Indian. Three (3) of our six (6) elementary schools currently receive Title I funds.

I. Ensuring Reading Proficiency for Kindergarten through Grade 3 Students

Goal Statement: By the Spring each year the Alexandria Public Schools will increase from the previous year the percent of students reading at grade level as measured by the FAST Reading Assessment in grades K-1 and STAR reading assessment in grades 2-3.

Universal Expectations:

- All students will make progress in reading each year, with a minimum target of one year of growth for each child.
 - Administrators and teachers will ensure proficiency for all students through the continued implementation of standards-based instruction, structured literacy instructional practices and the use of ongoing assessment tools. (Science of Reading and Minnesota 2020 ELA Academic Standards)
 - Teachers will strive to ensure each child is supposed to reach his/her full potential and will maximize growth for each child.
 - Teachers will plan and deliver instruction from a personalized learning approach, providing instruction appropriate for the needs of *each* child according to his/her present level of performance.
 - Universal Screening tools will be utilized a minimum of three times per year, with more frequent measurements taken as needed for individual or small groups, and as designated for each grade level.
 - Achievement data based on the proficiency of students will be analyzed at the district and building level data retreats, as well as during Student Intervention Team (SIT) meetings as needed to determine subsequent intervention strategies.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

Alexandria Public Schools maintains a continuous improvement model and annually utilizes district and building level data retreats, goal setting, and action planning for each school.

This process is carried out by Building Leadership Team (BLT) members and district level instructional coaches to ensure shared responsibility and accountability for high achievement for all learners throughout the district.

- Evidence based interventions are implemented for students who are performing below grade level in reading with these students receiving additional instruction compared to their same age peers.

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- At each site, reading support is offered at various times throughout the day.
- Student Intervention Teams (SIT) determine appropriate interventions for each child according to individual needs.
- Well-trained teachers provide evidence based interventions that support the content standards and accelerate learning.
- High quality literacy rich environments foster positive classroom learning experiences at all ages and grade levels.
- Classroom literacy instruction includes 150 minutes of Language Arts in grades K-3.
- District and BLT members actively seek, select and cultivate personnel by using resources and ingenuity to attract highly qualified personnel. Leaders select staff based on their belief that all students can achieve.
 - Leadership assigns teachers to work with students based on a match between their competency, training and student needs.
 - Leadership provides rigorous job embedded professional development in best practice literacy instruction.
- Instructional leaders, district and school wide, promote the use of innovative practices that engage all learners in meaningful and relevant learning activities.
 - Leadership members have technical and practical knowledge of current best practices.
 - Integration of technologies is designed to meet students’ needs and make instruction accessible for all students across ability levels.
 - District and school wide leaders regularly analyze services provided and make informed decisions when practices and programs need to be changed or modified.

II. Assessing Students’ level of reading proficiency and communicating results with families of students in Early Education, Kindergarten through Grade 3

Goal Statement: Annual target goals are established at each grade level to track progress toward the overall goal of 100% proficiency by the end of third grade. Each grade level works toward an end-of-year goal, and uses a mid-year benchmark assessment for students in grades K-3 below grade level to guide decision-making.

A data collection and management system is in place for the purposes of screening, diagnosing and progress monitoring students in academics and behavior.

A research based universal screening assessment will be administered to each student in grades K-3. The following are the end of year targets for each grade level.

Grade Level	Grade level target score
Kindergarten	FAST - Year end targets
Grade 1	FAST - Year end targets
Grade 2	STAR 40th percentile
Grade 3	STAR 40th percentile

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Screening Assessments	Early Education			Kindergarten			Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	10/30 Fall	1/18 Winter	5/16 Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
FAST				X	X	X	X	X	X						
STAR Reading										X	X	X	X	X	X
MCA–III Reading															X

Progress Monitoring Assessments	Early Education			Kindergarten			Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	10/30 Fall	1/18 Winter	5/16 Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
FAST				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PRESS				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Universal Expectations:

- The reading proficiency level for all students is assessed, diagnosed and monitored through the use of common grade level assessments, district level assessments; curriculum based assessments, as well as the State level reading assessments.
- Assessment and screening practices are completed a minimum of three times per year with ongoing progress monitoring for students performing below target levels of proficiency.
- Target levels on the STAR assessment are based on the likelihood of students demonstrating proficiency on the state assessments.
- Student assessment results are communicated with parents/guardians at multiple reporting times throughout the year via scheduled conferences (twice a year) and report card distribution (two times a year).
- Assessment results inform instruction and drive decision making relating to appropriate interventions selected for each child.
- PRESS and FAST assessments are used to determine intervention.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

Regular and continuous use of data is used to inform, align, and improve instruction, grouping, and assessment practices as a part of the district, school, and classroom routines.

- Leadership promotes the use of assessment prior to instruction (formative assessment) as a means of effectively differentiating instruction for all students within the classroom.
- A current list of all assessments administered at all grade levels, at what times and for what purpose is available and consulted when district/school level decisions are made.
- Teachers, individually and by grade levels, regularly analyze student work/performance data to determine

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growth toward meeting learning goals.

- Universal screening and other assessment data is reviewed to determine the percentage of students currently proficient overall and within each sub-group, and a gap analysis has been completed.
- Staff communicates student-level data to students in ways that enable them to monitor their progress and promote development of personal achievement.
- PLCs meet weekly with a focus on student data.

III. **Accelerating Children’s Literacy Development: Involving and Communicating with Families**

Goal Statement: Alexandria Public Schools staff will effectively communicate with parents about their child’s current level of performance and ways to enhance their child’s literacy development.

Universal Expectations:

- Staff in Alexandria Public Schools (APS) notify and involve parents/families in the acceleration of their child’s literacy development in multiple ways:
 - Using report cards (two times a year) parents/families are informed of their child’s growth of the English Language Arts standards. This information is available via hard copy and electronically.
 - Through family-teacher conferences and on-going communication, parents are informed of the assessments and instructional practices used to accelerate their child’s reading achievement.
 - A variety of resources and tools are available for families, caregivers, and/or community members to support literacy practices at home.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

- Parents/caregivers are informed of ways they can support their child’s literacy development in and out of school.
- Student data is regularly communicated with parents/families to inform them of their child’s progress toward grade level reading goals.
- The Community Connections Committee has developed a community wide message on the importance of infant and toddler language development and its impact on later school success.
 - The committee works to strengthen coordination among schools, pre-kindergarten programs, early literacy programs, family literacy programs, and programs that provide services to students and/or families.
 - The school partners with community and faith based organizations to provide literacy opportunities for families during the school day and beyond.

IV. **High Quality Literacy Instructional and Intervention Supports**

Universal Expectations:

High quality literacy instruction is a complex process. Teaching reading and writing is multi-faceted and requires teachers to implement multiple scientifically based practices. Some of the essential components known to maximize student learning include:

- Shared reading/shared Writing
- Scaffolded independent leveled reading and writing to build stamina
- Conferencing/conferencing with individual students in reading and writing
- Small group differentiated instruction in reading and writing

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- Vocabulary development
- Phonics/word study
- Vertical progression of knowledge building unit topics and essential questions
- Fluency
- Interactive read alouds
- Active student engagement in purposeful reading and writing
- Sustained daily writing across the curriculum
- Students not meeting grade level proficiency are provided small group or individualized instruction based on their target areas of need.
- Phonological awareness lessons are targeted daily in K-1.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

Leadership has a strong, cohesive vision for all students to learn and grow.

- Curriculum is aligned and articulated horizontally and vertically within the school and district to provide a fluid transition from class-to-class in a grade level, from grade-to-grade, and from school-to-school.
- Grade level learning targets are aligned to the 2020 commissioner approved English Language Arts standards for all students.
- Leadership has a shared understanding and provides support for effective differentiated instructional strategies.
- A range of research-based instructional interventions for students at-risk of academic or behavioral needs are in place.

V. Professional Development in Reading Instruction

Universal Expectations:

- Elementary teachers are provided multiple opportunities to participate in and benefit from professional development related to the content area standards and scientifically based reading strategies.
- Professional development activities are focused on building teachers' capacity to identify, plan for, and meet the unique learning needs of students identified in building School Improvement Plans.
- Job embedded professional development occurs within PLCs, district and building staff development days, and district-wide grade level meetings to learn and further strengthen current knowledge of best practices in literacy instruction.
- Instructional coaches provide support within the instructional setting to assure the consistency in the delivery of scientifically based reading strategies.
- Implementation of universal expectations is supported through instructional literacy coaches for teachers.
- Professional development plans are determined based on district and building trends in student achievement and instructional practice, as indicated through assessment data, walkthroughs, and formal teacher evaluations.
- Coordination and communication between Early Education programming and public school programming provides for consistency as Preschool students transition into Kindergarten classrooms across the district.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

Grade level professional development activities are centered on student learning and development.

- Student support teams are focused on instruction and assessment as guided by each school's plan and

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individual student achievement data.

- Instructional coaches and administrative observations provide support within the instructional setting to assure the consistency in the delivery of scientifically based reading strategies.
- Plans at each school identify activities designed to increase family and community involvement.

Schools participate in annual data retreats where school teams: 1) analyze all of their school data, 2) determine if the goals from the previous year were met, and 3) determine the school goals for the next year and what professional development is necessary to reach those goals.

There is a culture of collaboration that supports school-wide efforts to drive cultural changes and develop district-wide accountability models that support literacy development in all students.

- Practices are in place to ensure that all necessary resources and support services are funded and implemented to guide planning and related instruction through the use of objective and relevant student assessment information.
 - Administrative professional learning communities and coaching to support continuous improvement of instructional practices and maintain common understanding of and fidelity to curricula.
 - There are appropriate supports for teachers to meet the needs of all students.
 - There are collaborative processes across age levels, grades, subjects, buildings and district administration in place to promote the development of competent use of data, literacy practices and instructional strategies.
 - Student Intervention Teams (SIT) includes teachers and coaches and meets regularly to address students' needs.
 - Ongoing training for administrators and teachers takes place in the effective collection, management, and use of data for planning, implementing, and monitoring instruction.
 - Professional development opportunities are built into the school schedule, with consistent opportunities to learn about evidence based practices.
 - Professional development needs are based on data that identifies necessary professional development and reflects the effectiveness of implementation of literacy practices.

VI. Consistent Implementation of Reading Curriculum and Instruction

Universal Expectations:

- Reading curricula at all grades is closely aligned to the 2020 commissioner approved English Language Arts standards as referenced in the district standards and grade level resources.
- There is a minimum required 150 minutes of Language Arts for all students in grades K-5.
- Teachers will implement, at a minimum, the following components of effective instruction using a Structured Literacy framework for core instruction.

These components include:

- Explicit reading and writing instruction that is diagnostic and responsive
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics/Word Analysis
- Differentiated small group instruction in reading and writing
- Differentiated independent reading and writing with individual conferencing
- Thinking Maps are implemented to improve writing skills.
- Materials are available in each school for teachers to review and use in planning differentiated instruction

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to accelerate learning for all students

- Teachers use professional library resources, available integrated technology, along with district grade level curriculum web pages, in planning their instruction and assessments to support meeting the diverse needs of our students.

Core Curriculum and Instructional Practices:

There is explicit communication of district expectations for high levels of achievement among all students as well as regular and systematic follow-up with focused conversations on what it will take each child to achieve at high levels.

- Teachers and administrators consistently discuss reading achievement.
- Structures and schedules are focused on literacy practices, providing meaningful instructional time.
- Appropriate time and resources are allocated for intervention and enrichment.
- Teachers and instructional leaders use data-driven decision-making and problem-solving processes at the school, classroom and individual student levels to make educational decisions.
 - Student-level classroom intervention procedures are based upon on-going collections of student-level data. (Problem solving analysis is completed to match the student's need with the appropriate intervention.)
 - Student support teams focus on individual student data, determine appropriate interventions and monitor the progress of each intervention on a regular basis.
 - Assessments regularly evaluate and review implementation of curricula and instructional practices by providing evidence that teachers' units and/or lesson plans show intentional planning to foster students' use of literacy and thinking skills.
- There are training and coaching opportunities to provide ongoing access to relevant evidence-based practice, as well as support the full implementation of the chosen evidence-based practices.
 - Staff receive training and coaching in effective instructional strategies.
 - Coaching is focused on increasing teacher and administrator capacity to positively impact student literacy development and proficiency for all students by using and collecting data.

Recognizing and Serving Students' Diverse Needs in Cross-Cultural Settings

Universal Expectations:

- Training and support is provided to ensure that all district elementary teachers can effectively recognize students' diverse needs.
- Leadership has a shared understanding and provides support for effective differentiated instructional strategies.
- Alignment of district practices reflects the coordination of Tier I and Tier II/III resources.
- Districtwide implementation of Thinking Maps to increase use of cognitive processes in a culturally responsive manner.

Standard Practices:

- Through the use of on-going assessment and teacher recommendation, students are moved to and from an intervention to a mainstream model of instruction as appropriate to their needs.
- Services are provided to students in addition to their classroom-based instruction whenever possible.
- Data driven decision-making processes are used to make personalized instructional decisions for each

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child, according to his/her unique needs.

VII. **Screen and Identify Students with Dyslexia and Convergence insufficiency**

Universal Expectations:

All students in Kindergarten and 1st grade will be screened using the FASTbridge Early Literacy Assessment. All students in 2nd-9th grade will be screened using the STAR assessment (Renaissance) to determine if they are reading below the 30th percentile.

If students are reading below the 30th percentile further assessment will be completed using FASTbridge and PRESS as diagnostic tools to further assess reading with the Early Reading (K-1) and CBM reading (Grades 2-5). The assessment will assist teams in identifying specific issues as they are related to Dyslexia.

Students identified with concerns in reading will be given diagnostic assessments to determine specific explicit and systemized intervention in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, or comprehension.

In addition, children in K-1 will be further analyzed to determine their early reading levels in the following areas: concepts of print, onset sounds, word blending, word segmenting, letter naming, letter sounds, decodable words, nonsense words, sight words, and sentence reading. This process is part of the Alexandria Public Schools multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) process.

Any student moving into the district will have the opportunity for assessment given STAR or FAST and further analysis as described above given the MTSS process within the district. In addition, students with continued need after receiving interventions at Tier I, II and III in the MTSS model will be referred to special education for intensive evaluation under state and federal regulations.

Standard Practices:

Alexandria Public School district has adopted multi-sensory approaches to reading, which include but are not limited to: Press, Orton-Gillingham, Barton Reading, Language Live, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, resources from the Florida Center for Reading and Reading for Success. In addition, the MTSS process includes frequent progress monitoring using FASTbridge at all academic levels to determine the impact of intervention or need for referral to special education to incorporate specialized instruction.

VIII. **Annual Assessment Reporting Process**

Annual assessment methods and data are posted for stakeholder review on the district website and submitted to the Commissioner of Education per state and federal requirements.