

## **Local Literacy Plan**

### **District: Urban Academy**

**2023-2024**

Developed by: Urban Academy Q Comp Team, Harold Lang, Instructional Coach

### **Purpose Statement**

Our mission is to work in partnership with Urban parents to provide an opportunity for every child to meet or exceed their individual potential in basic academic and life skills by utilizing research-proven methods in a safe, structured, and respectful community. Urban Academy provides a quality education for urban students in grades K-8. We believe that education plays a critical role in developing creative and responsible human beings. Children have an innate ability to learn. When nurtured and taught in an environment that respects their unique culture, abilities, resiliency, and effort, they awaken the desire to learn. Ready and willing to be taught, children grow and flourish as creative citizens, able to make their own distinctive contribution to society.

### **Use of Data**

#### **Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)**

Our Q Comp Leadership team regularly reviews achievement data at aggregate and disaggregated levels. During the process of reviewing and analyzing data, student groups in need of focused resources emerged as African American students and English Language Learners.

Urban Academy's student population is roughly 300 students. Of these students nearly 100% are Free-Reduced Lunch status and around 70% of the students are LEP or English learners. Urban Academy has engaged with continuous improvement planning for years. The school always looks at a variety of student performance data to analyze what is working and what needs work. Available data for this needs assessment include the Acadience Reading (Voyager Sopris Learning) screener.

District Student Data by Assessment and Grade (K-3)

Grade	Student Below Grade Level	Students At or Above Grade Level	Percent Proficient	Percent Meeting Targeted Growth Expectation
K	21	11	34%	21%
1	19	6	24%	25%
2	13	7	35%	53%
3	20	14	41%	61%

0 students were identified as having characteristics of dyslexia.

UA have also examined other formative assessment data and have concluded that two inhibitors to students attaining grade level proficiency in the earlier grades is the lack of fundamental reading skills by some students (phonics and phonemic awareness). This is not uncommon for EL students. In addition, learning loss during the pandemic was likely significant for many students. The other challenge the data suggests is that UA needs to challenge our proficient learners to exceed proficiency. We feel we can do this by providing more focus on phonics and phonemic awareness at those grade levels.

This data analysis demonstrates that a majority of UA students are struggling to achieve grade level proficiency. To address this, UA is committed to refocus on key elements of instruction that should have the most impact on helping students both catch up and accelerate. The foundations of quality reading instruction are present and when implemented within a data driven approach, students that are not proficient can be targeted with interventions to help them achieve. It is clear that UA students must first achieve proficiency in what the Minnesota Academic Standards categorizes as Foundational Skills:

“Foundational Skills Benchmarks - The Foundational Skills Benchmarks are not an end in and of themselves; rather, they are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to fluently read and comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines.”

UA teachers have always analyzed student MCA results, MAP results, and Fountas and Pinnell results from the previous year and to identify key concepts and skills that students need to master to become grade level proficient. But to assess more advanced grade level standards, Foundational Skills must be acquired by the students. Then they identify assessments that measure mastery of those benchmarks and identify curriculum resources that will help students understand the concepts and develop the skills that lead to mastery. Staff then “backwards plan” to benchmark assessments to determine mastery of standards. They develop weekly SOAR plans to make sure lesson plans are focused on the Standards. SOAR stands for – Standards, Objectives, Assessments, and Respond. The SOAR Plans consist of a 2-week unit plans that include the content and language objectives for each lesson, the assessment to be administered at the end of the unit, the results of the assessments at the end of the unit, and analysis and troubleshooting of how to support students based on results.

UA also learned from the teacher evaluation data that it is important to continue to emphasize student activity and engagement. UA plans to modify the teacher observation rubric to focus more on student output rather than teacher input. PLCs will continue to be an opportunity to share strategies for increasing student engagement and outcomes; and to monitor progress regularly.

The Leadership Team and Instructional Coach guided the teachers in a significant review of reading curriculum. Gaps were identified and new resources were acquired for the 2021-2022 school year. This includes a new set of Guided Reading Books from Scholastic and additional classroom library books that represent more diversity and cultural relevance.

In addition, The Urban Academy Reading Team was put together by Dr. Mongsher Ly. The team is made up of four teachers. The purpose of this team was to evaluate Urban Academy's current Literacy program (K-8) and use that evaluation to determine how to align and structure the program to meet the needs of all students. One recommendation was to implement a new literacy block structure, as follows:

### **Literacy Block Structure**

Based on the recommendations of The Urban Academy Reading Team, the following elements are to be included in the **K-5 Structured Literacy Block**:

- direct explicit instruction on the foundational skills of reading and spelling
- build knowledge, critical thinking skills, and vocabulary through the use of core texts
- regular review of previously taught concepts
- opportunities to apply reading and writing activities at the word and text level
- Reading and discussing a broad range of high-quality texts and topics (including rich literature) to build oral language, knowledge, vocabulary and reading comprehension
- Oral reading fluency routines
- Handwriting and typing instruction
- Sentence-level writing instruction, including grammar and punctuation
- Process (planning and revising) writing instruction
- Genre writing instruction
- Time to compose

### **Breakdown of Literacy Block:**

#### **K-3 Literacy Block**

20 min- Whole class phonemic awareness

40 min- Phonics lesson

30 min- Interactive read aloud/comprehension strategies

40 min- Centers

- 10 min small group
- 10 min EL or decodables
- 10 Sentence Building/Mechanics
- 10 min handwriting-(explicit instruction first)
- 10 min- Sight words

#### 4-5 Literacy Block

15-30 mins- Mini lesson

(daily objective, mentor text, and spelling lesson for whole group)

1 hour- Rotation- small group/readworks/IXL/Free read/ Myon/ Word Work

15 mins-pre guided reading groups/4 groups daily

30 mins- Writing/hand writing

#### 6-8 Literacy Block

15 min- Grammar/Vocabulary

30 min- Novel Study

15 min-writing

#### **What curriculum will be utilized?**

- K-2- Phonemic Awareness- Heggerty (2022)
- Phonics- From Phonics to Reading (2022) and UFLI (new in 2023)
- Comprehension- Fishtank ELA (2023)
- Writing- The Writing Revolution
- 3-5 Phonics- From Phonics to Reading (grade 3)
- Morphology- Morpheme Magic (4-5th)
- Comprehension- Fishtank ELA (2023)
- Writing- The Writing Revolution (2023)

The Reading Team, along with the Middle School Language Arts teachers, is also working on the breakdown of the **6-8** Structured Language Arts Class. Here are those recommendations:

- Due to the range of readers in Middle school, data on The Five Pillars of Reading still need to be looked at; however, it will be handled differently from K-5.

- There will be much less focus on Phonemic Awareness and Phonics. If needed, materials from the lower grades will be used. Ms. Earle will advise teachers and she will also pull some students for one-on-one intensive interventions.
- Language Arts teachers' primary focus will be on building specific literacy skills from the standards. In addition, there will be an expectation of reading across the curriculum. All teachers will be expected to focus on: a different theme each trimester; essential questions; building fluency; building vocabulary; and improving comprehension.
- Language Arts teachers will study a different novel each trimester and connect different texts to it; along with connecting to the theme and other subjects.
- Language Arts teachers will build vocabulary through:
  - Word lists (vocabulary/ spelling) including looking at roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
  - Content word lists.
  - Context Clues.
- Strategies for Comprehension and Meaning:
  - Activating prior knowledge.
  - Predicting.
  - Visualizing.
  - Identifying/Searching and selecting.
  - Inferring.
  - Questioning.
  - Monitoring/Clarifying.
  - Connecting.
  - Evaluating.
- Materials and methods used:
  - Small Groups.
  - The Big Five- Graphic organizers.
  - Accountable Word Bubbles.
  - DOK Levels of Questioning.
  - Novels
  - Guided Reading Books
  - Newsela
  - Readworks
  - MyOn
  - Content Area Text
  - A to Z reading
  - 6-8 Comprehension- Fishtank ELA (2023)
  - Writing- The Writing Revolution

## **Assessment Plan**

### **Assessments used and when they are administered:**

- Students will be given bi-weekly assessments designed to evaluate student progress in phonics/phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
- Students will be assessed regularly in oral reading fluency within guided reading groups.
- Students are assessed using the Acadience system three times per year.
- Students identified to work with the MN Reading Corps will be given weekly assessments and graded on a grade level rubric to determine proficiency.
- Informal classroom reading assessments.
- The students will also be assessed through the NWEA MAP tests three times a year
- Diagnostics tests will also be given as needed.

### **How proficiency is determined:**

#### **1. Students are screened:**

- All students are given the NWEA MAP assessment and RIT score levels that help identify students to receive more remediation and support.
- All K-3 students are assessed using the Acadience Benchmarking system. Each level corresponds to a grade level and a month within that grade level. We know what grade level they are at and so can either recommend them for individual work with Paraprofessionals targeting specific skills, Title One services, or Child Find.
- All students will be assessed on oral reading fluency until they reach grade level fluency.

#### **2. Students are flagged and prioritized to receive more remediation and support; and placed in appropriate programs.**

#### **3. As students make progress, they are removed from the special support programs.**

- Entrance and exit criteria for Title 1 are based on a combination of MAP, MCA, and classroom-based assessments. Teacher recommendation is also used. Classroom based assessments include bi-weekly Big 5 reading assessments, oral reading fluency assessments, weekly spelling tests, benchmark assessments, and running records.
- Entrance and exit for MN Reading Corps is determined based on Reading Corps criteria. It most often includes exiting students who are students who are almost at grade level.
- Entrance and exit for Special Education is determined by Special Education assessments, as well as parent and teacher recommendation.

## **Action Planning for Continuous Improvement**

### **Evidence-based Interventions**

UA delivers scientifically based reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (NRP) across all grade levels. In essence, the NRP recommends explicitly teaching students to hear the sounds within words (phonemic awareness), to decode (phonics), to read text aloud accurately, with appropriate speed, and with expression (fluency), to know the meanings of words (vocabulary), and to use reading strategies when reading text to understand it better (reading comprehension).

#### **What curriculum is used for interventions?**

- UFLI Tier 2 Interventions
- Wilson Language tier 3

#### **6-8 Intervention/Enrichment Block**

15 min- Word Study

30 min- Fluency

15 min-Writing

#### **Interventions:**

- Special Education
- Title 1
- MN Reading Corps
- RTI
- ESL
- Parent Collaboration
- Reading Coach

Reading interventions are based on a variety of student data. Teachers use the Acadience reading level assessment system to assess students reading level. Students need to be at level 330 - 404 to be at grade level by end of the Grade 3. UA also uses internally developed or selected benchmark assessments directly aligned with Minnesota standards on a bi-weekly basis to determine grade level proficiency in reading. Students are given weekly oral reading fluency assessments. The students are assessed through MAP tests three times a year. The MN Reading Corps members give weekly assessments to students who qualify for the MRC program. Diagnostics tests are also given to check proficiency. The observation survey will be given to

students below a reading level I. The students are assessed with the DSI spelling assessment and grouped according to their assessment score.

Bi-weekly benchmark assessment results are analyzed on a bi-weekly basis at PLC meetings where teachers develop targeted interventions to help students that are not meeting grade level proficiency in phonics/phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers use this formative data to identify students who are not meeting a specific benchmark and collaboratively plan for remediation as well as identify those students who meet the grade level benchmark and need enrichment. UA's instructional coach and teachers all share best practices. Collaboration includes all instructional staff including paraprofessionals, Title I, ESL and Special Education.

UA also uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework that is used to improve outcomes for all students. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, "RTI helps to ensure the provision of high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to the needs of students requiring additional academic and behavioral supports. After the initial screening of all students, changes in instruction or goals can be made according to the level of student need. Student progress is monitored frequently, and instruction is then differentiated and modified, as necessary (adapted from NASDSE, 2005)."

Reading Corps staff tutor students one-on-one using research based specific interventions. This provides K-3 students additional practice to improve deficient skills such as letter sound and nonsense word fluency correspondence, phoneme blending, phoneme segmenting, word blending, repeated reading with comprehension, and oral reading fluency. This strategy is most effective for those students who are closest to achieving grade level reading standards and will improve their performance in a timely manner.

The UA Title I program also has a specific focus on reading literacy. The Title I teacher works with one-on-one or small group of students focusing on increasing the students' reading skills.

UA's ELL teachers support the reading skills of ELL students. The ELL instructors provide small group English and reading instruction for the ELL students either directly or within a co-teaching model.

### **Parent and Community Engagement**

Urban Academy believes in a strong partnership with the student's home and community in which they reside. Every student is to be understood holistically, by understanding the student's academic abilities, social and personal life, which impacts their academics and behavior. UA's



Family Specialist is a resource to the parents by providing them resources that they need so that they can support their children at home.

### **Communication Plan**

The parents are notified through goal sheets at conferences two times a year. If parents cannot attend conferences, phone calls are made to make sure they are informed of their child's score. Phone logs are kept to ensure parents are being notified of their child's progress throughout the year.

### **Reporting to Stakeholders**

Urban Academy publishes an annual report and World's Best Workforce Summary Report that is published on the school's website. UA also has an annual meeting for the community where data and plans are shared. The Instructional Coach provides quarterly reports to the board sharing reading and other data on student performance.

### **Reporting to Parents/Guardians**

A letter is sent home each year with the MCA score listed on the paper. MAP test scores and reading levels are included on report cards. UA will send a notice home to parents that this plan is available on our website. UA will also provide a notice that hard copies may be obtained from the front office, if needed.

### **Professional Development**

UA staff participate in professional development in scientifically based reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel implemented within a Science of Reading instructional framework. It theorizes that proficient reading comprehension is the product of word recognition skills and language comprehension skills. Based on Scarborough's research, these 2 skills are broken down into smaller subsets. Word recognition includes phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition. Reading comprehension encompasses background and vocabulary knowledge, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge. As a child reads, these components are interwoven and the child learns to become a skilled and fluent reader.

Teachers are provided training in how to develop and analyze formative assessments, how to understand Minnesota State Standards and grade level proficiency benchmarks, how to track

student progress, how to implement key components of Science of Reading, and how to develop goal-oriented lessons in reading. Additionally, the literacy coach will be providing additional support to its teachers through regular observations, modeling, and coaching around phonics, writing, and language comprehension. Furthermore, multiple staff members have participated in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training.

The regular Professional Learning Community meetings and the follow up support from the instructional leaders provides job embedded professional development aimed at improving teacher understanding of the concepts that students need to master. Other professional development sessions are organized by the curriculum consultant and the instructional leaders in such areas as best practices in teaching, literacy, classroom management, etc. and these sessions are provided throughout the school year.

To ensure staff are actively engaged in improving their skills, each teacher has a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that clearly articulates skills they are working on. The PDP is organized around the teacher evaluation plan rubric; the principal will work with teachers to identify appropriate goals that are directly tied to the rubric areas.

There is one week of training in August for all instructional staff; there are also 7-8 additional all-staff professional development days during the school year.

Teachers are trained on collecting, processing and analyzing student data (e.g. MAP/Dcartes data, data from benchmark assessments) and using it to address individualized learning goals.

UA pays for other off-site workshops (including getting a sub) if staff can justify the workshop. The form to apply for such will include pre-approved areas of focus, e.g. classroom management, assessment, data-driven decision-making, literacy, math, and fit with Professional Development Plan. Off-site workshops are approved only if part of a teacher's PDP and if the training provided is expected to demonstrate a direct impact on UA's student achievement goals.

PLC meetings are held on Monday for 60 minutes. The PLC's sole purpose is for teachers to collaborate on essential outcomes and skills, particularly in reading; and identify how to help students who are behind. Grade-level teams of teachers, with their assigned paraprofessionals, analyze MAP data, and data from curriculum-based measures, and determine what instructional strategies are utilized to help students who lack key skills or concepts.

Grade-level team meetings are held weekly, including paraprofessionals and specialists as well as classroom teachers, and monitored by the principal. At these meetings staff analyze assessment data to identify interventions and inform differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all students.

The Instructional Coach acts as the main trainer with consultants from outside brought in as needed.

UA utilizes an ESL instructor to train and support teachers to effectively meet the needs of ELL students. The ESL instructor works with and advises classroom teachers about how to adapt lessons to better serve English Language Learners students.