



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

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

--District Mission Statement

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

### Statement of Goals

"A school district must adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of grade three. A local literacy plan must include a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and identify and meet staff development needs. The district must post its literacy plan on the official school district website."

MN State Legislature Statute 120b.12

### Objectives

- 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 Goal

- The percentage of BHM students enrolled Oct. 1 in grade 3 who earn an achievement level of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standards will increase from 64.1% in 2017 to 68.1% in 2018 on all reading accountability tests (MCA and MTAS).

### Definition of Proficiency

Proficiency is defined by local school districts. Proficiency levels are monitored and adjusted through a yearly review cycle. Reading proficiency is reflected by looking at multiple measures. The chart below illustrates the scores that are annually reported to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Students should be at or above the listed levels. This is only one factor that classroom teachers use to determine student proficiency. Classroom teachers have access to a variety of literacy assessments to help them understand the whole reading profile of a student.

Grade Level	Assessment	Proficiency Level (end of year)
Kindergarten	Nonsense Word Fluency	26 Correct Letter Sounds/Minute
First Grade	Oral Reading Fluency	33 Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)
Second Grade	Oral Reading Fluency	72 Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM)
Third Grade	Oral Reading Fluency	Meets or Exceeds on MCAs

### District's K-5 Literacy Curriculum

District #877 has a balanced approach to literacy with classroom teachers providing core instruction for all students. Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose chooses its core literacy program for grades K-5 to align with MN State Standards and the the program is structured on scientifically based reading and writing instructional practices. A quality literacy curriculum incorporates reading and writing daily for a variety of purposes. Programs are also selected based on the recommendations of the National Reading Panel. The panel identified 5 pillars of literacy.

The five pillars are:

1. **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.)
2. **Phonics/Word Study:** A way of teaching word recognition that is based on the relationship between letters and the sounds the letters represent. Word Study looks at combinations of letters that represent certain sounds.
3. **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.
4. **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary is about understanding the meaning of words. This could be in reading or in oral language. Students will typically be able to understand more words orally than in print. It's important to help students learn new meaning for words to improve their comprehension.
5. **Comprehension:** Comprehension is understanding what it is read. This is the most complex component. It includes not just recalling details but inferring the author's meaning by reading between the lines.

For more information please go to the [Elementary Literacy Overview on the district youtube channel](#).

Another important area for students to develop is oral language. Oral Language helps develop

vocabulary, sentence structure, and communication. Some ways that teacher help develop this is through turn and talks and classroom discussion.

Curriculum is reviewed on a 10 year cycle. This cycle may or may not align to revisions in state standards. The cycle is designed to allow the various curriculum areas time to reflect, evaluate, research, and make adjustments to curriculum. Curriculum includes the standards, assessments, district created lessons and units, and any purchased programs used to meet the needs of the district. Part of the review process is to ensure that there is vertical and horizontal alignment across the district to ensure students are being prepared for the next grade level.

### **Assessments**

The district uses a variety of assessments to evaluate student performance and progress towards 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 performs 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 Identification - Letter Sound Fluency - Nonsense Word Fluency	- Nonsense Word Fluency - Oral Reading Fluency	- Oral Reading Fluency - NWEA MAP	- Oral Reading Fluency - NWEA MAP	- Oral Reading Fluency - NWEA MAP	- Oral Reading Fluency - NWEA MAP

### **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.

For students needing extra support, teachers work together to provide small group or individual time. This is what's commonly referred to as an intervention. 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.

Students' progress is monitored on a consistent basis. Depending on the level of intervention this might be every other week, monthly, or weekly. The data collected from this monitoring is graphed so a teacher can determine if the student is progressing at a desired rate. The desired rate is different based on the needs of the student.

In an RtI (Response to Instruction) model, parents are informed at various parts of the process. Each building has different requirements based on how they structure their RtI Model. Some schools have a Federal program called Title I. In this program, parents are notified before the child receives an intervention by a teacher in the Title I program. Please see the section on Parent Notification for more details.

See [BHM RtI Brochure Link](#) for more information.

### **Additional Requirements of Read Well Legislation**

Dyslexia and Convergence Insufficiency screening became a requirement during a 2016 revision of MN State Statute 120B.12 by the State Legislature. The statute states, "The district also must annually report a summary of the district efforts to screen and identify students with dyslexia or convergence insufficiency disorder to the commissioner by July 1." Below is the procedure that will occur in the elementary schools.

### **Dyslexia Screening**

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is characterized by an unexpected difficulty in reading, which can include but is not limited to trouble with word recognition, poor spelling, and decoding issues. It is a common learning disability. The district screens all students for potential reading issues through its Response to Intervention (RtI) Process. Students who need more help are given a variety of supports. Teachers identify the needs of each student needing an intervention. After 2-4 unsuccessful interventions, students might be referred for special education services. Special Education staff review the referral to determine a need for further testing. This could include testing to determine if the child has a Specific Learning Disability under Minnesota state criteria. Parents can also choose to pay for their own outside assessment to determine if dyslexia is a concern. Parents seeking more information can read *Navigating the School System When a Child is Struggling with Reading or Dyslexia* on the [Minnesota Department of Education's website](#).

### Convergence Insufficiency Screening

Convergence Insufficiency is a vision disorder that is characterized by the lack of the eyes to maintain focus or continue to focus as objects are moved closer to the eyes. This vision disorder is not a part of the district's school-wide vision checks. It is included as a vision check that may be conducted by the district's certified nurse upon request. Referrals for this screening may come from teachers when they are noticing concerns. The nurse will then do a quick screen to see if convergence insufficiency disorder may be a possibility. If there is a potential concern, the district nurse will contact parents to explain what was done and that parents can consult an eye doctor for further testing or information.

### Parent Notification

Parents, teachers, and schools are partners in ensuring all students are reading well by grade 3. 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. Report cards are another form of communication. They are sent home at the end of January and the end of the school year. Parents of students who are performing below grade level will often receive notification that their child was recommended for a program sponsored by Community Education called Targeted Services Remedial Reading. This is a free program for recommended students. Parents may also receive a district brochure on RtI services that are available in each building. (See section on RtI for more information)

### Professional Development

The district provides ongoing training to staff in effective reading practices. This includes how to meet the diverse needs of all learners. These trainings can vary from year to year based on the needs of the staff and curriculum implementation. Teacher Instruction Coaches are also available to help staff refine not only their literacy practice, but a variety of instructional strategies.

All teachers receive training in how to use the program that the district chose as part of its core curriculum. The training includes how to conduct guided reading in small groups, instruct phonics, support vocabulary development, and use comprehension strategies for all elementary grade levels. 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 K-5 Literacy Team to provide staff with additional support on effective strategies. On-going staff development is provided as needed on site staff development days. There are also after school classes taught by highly qualified staff.

Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) are continually working on improving their practices through a cycle of identifying an area of concern by reviewing student data, creating a plan of

action based on research, and then evaluating the results of their plan. Through this process teams of teachers are working on their own professional development. The training for this process is offered to all new teachers on an annual basis after the initial district wide training in 2015-2016.

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) 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.

The district is looking at ways to continue training teacher at each building to include culturally responsive instruction, to improve the collaborative effort between EL and Literacy Team to educate all staff, and has started a resource library of books on various cultures and diversity topics.

### **Summary**

The district uses data from various assessments and surveys to make decisions to support teachers and students. A variety of teacher groups in the district use data to make curricular changes to support students in learning the standards and to become proficient leaders. Classroom teachers use individual student data to adapt their instructional strategies and resources to meet the needs of their students. Classroom teachers also provide feedback back to the district so there is a continuous cycle of improvement in the district.

### **Communication About District Progress**

District 877 communicates overall district reading proficiency through its World's Best Workforce Report. The most recent report can be found on the district website under the [Teaching and Learning Department](#).