

Local Literacy Plan

District: Urban Academy

Last revised: July 2019

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

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-6. 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 324 students. Of these students nearly 100% are Free-Reduced Lunch status and around half of the students are LEP or English learners. Urban Academy has engaged with continuous improvement planning for years. The school always takes a look at a variety of student performance data to analyze what is working and what needs work. This year is no exception. From 2015-2018 the reading proficiency of all students increased from 33.03% to 41.35% which is a significant 25.21% improvement but we are not satisfied. The two biggest challenges we feel this data reflects, since so many of our students are English Language Learners, is increasing their language development and related reading comprehension, writing, and speaking skills and which we believe will help them perform better on the state tests. The other challenge the data suggests is that we need to challenge our proficient learners to exceed proficiency. We feel we can do this by providing more rigor and challenge for those students.

UA teachers also analyze 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. 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.

The Q Comp team also looked at teacher evaluation data. This resulted in converting to a competency-based system for teacher evaluation. We plan to take each of our instructional hallmarks (e.g. Gradual Release, ELL methods, Big 5, etc....) and dissect them into a specific set of competencies that will be the focus of professional development and evaluations over a 3-5 week period. During that time the instructional leader will observe teachers looking to see that each of the competencies is demonstrated and understood by the teacher. Competencies will be demonstrated by actual lessons and understanding will be assessed through discussions and quizzes. We anticipate that this system will allow us to more thoroughly focus on each major set of strategies and focus on supporting teachers that can be identified through the observations.

Assessment Plan

Assessments used and when administered:

- Students will be give bi-weekly assessments designed to evaluate the mastery of grade level reading standards.
- Students are assessed using the Fountas and Pinnell leveling system.
- Students identified to work with the MN Reading Corps will be given weekly assessments and graded on a grade level rubric to determine proficiency.
- The students in grade 3 will be assessed through the state norms using their MCA scores.
- The students will also be assessed through the NWEA MAP tests three times a year
- Diagnostics tests will also be given to check proficiency.

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 Fountas and Pinnell 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.

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

3. As students make progress, they are exited 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, weekly spelling tests, running records, 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 across all grade levels. Teachers use a Balanced Literacy instructional approach within the Readers and Writer's Workshop framework of instruction. Key elements of the framework include: Interactive Read Aloud, Modeled Shared Readings, Guided Reading, Phonics/Word Study, Rigorous Independent Reading, and Literature Circles.

Interventions:

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

Reading interventions are based on a variety of student data. Teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessment system to assess students reading level. Students need to be at level P 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. The students are assessed through MAP tests three times a year. Students are asked to complete a writing sample three a year, which they need to score 85% or higher to be proficient. 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 goals for students and collaborate to form strategies to help students that are not meeting grade level proficiency. 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. The school's Principal and teachers all share best practices. Collaboration includes all instructional staff including paraprofessionals, Title I, ESL and Special Education.

UA uses reading strategies and interventions identified by the National Reading Panel (direct vocabulary instruction, generating questions, and monitoring comprehension) and that are implemented within a Balanced Literacy instructional approach within the Readers and Writer's Workshop framework of instruction. Key elements of the framework include: interactive read aloud, modeled shared readings, guided reading, phonics/word study, rigorous independent reading, and literature circles.

Reading Corps staff tutors 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.

Our 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 will also use an ESL instructor to improve the reading skills of ELL students. The ESL instructor will provide small group English and reading instruction for the ELL students on a daily basis during the literacy block to provide additional instruction in reading.

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).”

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. Our 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 insure 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 Leader 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. We will send a notice home to parents that this plan is available on our website. We will also provide a notice that hard copies may be obtained from the front office, if needed.

Professional Development

UA staff receive high quality professional development in scientifically-based reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel (direct vocabulary instruction, generating questions, and monitoring comprehension) implemented within a Balanced Literacy instructional approach within the Readers and Writers Workshop framework of instruction. Key elements of the framework include: Interactive Read Aloud, Modeled Shared Readings, Guided Reading, Phonics/Word Study, Rigorous Independent Reading, and Literature Circles. 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 Balanced Literacy (e.g. word study/phonics, guided reading, read-alouds, modeled/shared reading, independent reading, and literature circles,) and how to develop goal oriented lessons in reading. The regular Professional Learning Community meetings and the follow up support from the principal provides job embedded professional development aimed at improving teacher understanding of the concepts students need to master. Other professional development sessions are organized by the curriculum consultant and the principal 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; also there are 7-8 additional all-staff professional development days during the school year.

Workshops address topics including: Interactive Read Aloud, Modeled Shared Readings, Guided Reading, Phonics/Word Study, Rigorous Independent Reading, and Literature Circles.

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 – 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 kids 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 Leader 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.

One change we are making next year is converting to a competency-based system for teacher evaluation. We plan to take each of our instructional hallmarks (e.g. Gradual Release, ELL methods, Big 5, etc....) and dissect them into a specific set of competencies that will be the focus of professional development and evaluations over a 3-5 week period. During that time the instructional leader will observe teachers looking to see that each of the competencies is demonstrated and understood by the teacher. Competencies will be demonstrated by actual lessons and understanding will be assessed through discussions and quizzes. We anticipate that this system will allow us to more thoroughly focus on each major set of strategies and focus on supporting teachers that can be identified through the observations.