



***Reading Well by Third Grade***

**District 834 Implementation Plan**

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## Goals and Objectives

### *District Philosophy on Reading*

Literacy development is a critical component of instruction in Stillwater Area Public Schools. Every staff member is committed to building and sustaining a district-wide culture in which high-quality, research-based reading instruction for all students is our most important priority. This instruction is delivered in a comprehensive framework, embedding essential literacy skills alongside the 21st Century skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity, all with the goal of developing independent and lifelong literacy learners.

We believe:

- All students have a need for continuous, rigorous, and relevant literacy instruction shared by all subject areas.
- All students should receive the best instruction and support necessary to become highly-skilled listeners, speakers, readers, writers, viewers, and critical thinkers.
- All students should be supported at school and at home to develop a life-long love of reading and learning.
- Literacy instruction must be aligned with Minnesota English Language Arts Academic Standards.

### *District Reading Goal*

The goal of Stillwater Area Public Schools to have every student reading at grade level proficiency by the end of third grade.

Strategies to help reach this goal include the following:

- Professional development and implementation on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in kindergarten and first grade in Tier I and Tier II instruction.
- Professional development in the science of reading, four-part processing model for Tier I instruction, and instructional design for English language learners
- Research and internally audit our Tier III Intervention program
- Offer comprehensive reading intervention services for all identified K-2 learners

### *Defining Reading Proficiency*

As described in the 2020 Minnesota Academic Standards for English Language Arts K-12, Stillwater Area Public Schools aim to support and guide students in attaining the capacities of a literate individual.

Students who are literate and proficient:

- Demonstrate their understanding, value, and respect of other perspectives, identities, and cultures.

- Become self-directed learners who value expanding knowledge, skills and understanding through literacy.
- Possess effective learning and work behaviors.
- Build and communicate strong content knowledge.
- Become responsible digital citizens.

### *Objectives*

To ensure attainment of our goals, all parts of this plan will:

- Align with the *Mission and Beliefs of Stillwater Area Public Schools*.
- Align with the *Philosophy and Beliefs Statements* developed by the Literacy and Language Arts Curriculum Review Committee.
- Align with the 2020 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts (ELA)..
- Address the tasks in the Minnesota Department of Education Literacy Plan Development Rubric, using it as the foundation of the District 834 plan.
- Include all requirements as stipulated in MN Statute 120B.12, which articulates the following:
  - Determine a process to assess students' levels of reading proficiency, identifying those students who are not reading at grade level, including, but not limited to, identifying students who demonstrate tendencies of dyslexia. These students must be provided with alternative instruction.
  - Notify and involve parents/guardians when students demonstrate a need for intervention.
  - Describe the process for determining the proper reading intervention strategy for a student and the process for intensifying or modifying the reading strategy in order to obtain measureable reading progress.
  - Use evidence-based intervention methods to intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level. Progress monitor for intervention effectiveness.
  - Identify staff development needs.
  - Develop a local literacy plan that is reviewed and updated annually that addresses each of these bullets.

## Assessment Process

Assessment plays an important role in the Stillwater Area Public Schools' Literacy Plan and is a key component in our Multi-Tiered System of Support. In order to address requirements set in place by MN Statute 120B.12, Stillwater elementary schools implement several tiers of assessment (Figure I). These assessments facilitate:

- Determination of students' levels of proficiency, including identifying areas of academic need related to literacy
- Communication with and involvement of parents/guardians.
- Identification of students who demonstrate need for additional support, including those who demonstrate tendencies of dyslexia.
- Intervention with students who demonstrate reading difficulty.
- Identification of staff development needs.

### *Universal Screening Program*

Stillwater Area Public Schools' universal screening program (Table 1) serves many purposes. Its primary goal is to screen all elementary students to determine learning status, and in some cases, it is used to pinpoint the need for diagnostic assessment and possible placement in an intervention through the Multi-Tiered System of Support process. Information generated by universal screening also aids in communicating student progress and student needs to parents/guardians.

At the classroom level, teachers find the universal screening program beneficial, as it provides a starting point for gathering diagnostic information to help drive instruction, and it aids the formation of flexible grouping.

From the administrative perspective, data generated from the universal screening program allows us to track longitudinal growth, to anticipate future Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) performance, and to make national comparisons. These different modes of analyzing our universal screening data allow us to recognize what we are doing well in programming, curriculum, and instruction, and to focus on areas for growth.

Finally, universal screening provides us with information to keep our stakeholders (students, teachers, parents/guardians, administration, board, community) informed of student and overall school/district achievement status.

We use the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSGold) for 4-year-old preschool students. For our students in K-5, we use FastBridge Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), FastBridge *earlyReading*, and FastBridge Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT) *aReading*. FastBridge results include local through national norms, as well as growth percentile rank and risk status. Results are immediate, and reports are easily accessed and shared. See Table 1 for a more detailed look at our Universal Screening Protocol for Reading in grades K-5.

In grades kindergarten through grade 1, classroom teacher and interventionists screen all students' foundational reading skills using one-to-one FastBridge *earlyReading* screeners, which is comprised of

foundational skills subtests to help identify early reading difficulties. All students in grade 2 are assessed for oral reading fluency using FastBridge Reading CBM. Classroom teachers in grades 2-5 assess students using FastBridge *aReading* and *AUTOReading*, computer-adaptive assessments that assesses phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. The difficulty level adjusts based on the individual student's response, so questions may vary.

Teachers in grades 3-5 have access to FastBridge CBM reading passages if they would like to monitor oral reading fluency in addition to comprehension. However, all students in grades 3-5 indicating "some risk" or "high risk" on the *aReading* assessment will be screened three times each year with a CBM. All CBM results are examined for both fluency and accuracy in an effort to identify students who continue to struggle with foundational reading skills. Building interventionists will administer these assessments.

The Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) is administered during Ready Set Go conferences in grades 1-5, and in kindergarten as students grow into readers. The BAS is assessed at the end of the year as well. BAS results are also used to help teachers better understand a student's approach to solving words and to guide students to reading material that is appropriately challenging.

Additionally, Stillwater Area Public Schools adheres to Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) screening recommendations for identifying students with dyslexic tendencies. See [Table 2](#) for a crosswalk of MDE's recommended assessments as compared to Stillwater Area Public Schools Universal Screening Protocol.

In the area of convergence insufficiency (CI), MDE states, "vision screenings for school use are not available for diagnosing CI" and advises, "A comprehensive vision evaluation by a licensed eye care specialist who tests binocular (two-eyed) vision is the most effective means for detecting CI" (MDE CI Fact Sheet).



Table 1: Elementary Screening Program

	Fall			Winter			Spring			
	FastBridge <i>earlyReading</i>	FastBridge <i>aReading</i>	Other Inventories	FastBridge <i>earlyReading</i>	FastBridge <i>aReading</i>	Other Inventories	FastBridge <i>earlyReading</i>	FastBridge <i>aReading</i>	Other Inventories	MCA
PS			Teaching Strategies Gold: Letter Names, Letter Sounds  Local developmental inventory			Teaching Strategies Gold: Letter Names, Letter Sounds  Local developmental inventory			Teaching Strategies Gold: Letter Names, Letter Sounds  Local developmental inventory	
K	Print Concepts, Onset Sounds, Letter Names, Letter Sounds <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in home language Print Concepts, Onset Sounds, Letter Names (En)/Syllable Reading (Sp), Letter Sounds,		Benchmark Assessment System IRI (add in as students begin to read)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> ENIL as students become readers	Onset Sounds, Letter Sounds, Word Segment, Nonsense Words  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in target language Onset Sounds, Letter Sounds, Syllable Reading, Word Segmenting		Benchmark Assessment System IRI (add in as students begin to read)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> ENIL as students become readers	Letter Sounds, Word Segment, Nonsense Words, Sight Words  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in target language Letter Sounds, Syllable Reading, Word Segmenting, Sight words		Benchmark Assessment System Informal Reading Inventory (BAS IRI) All students K-5  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> ENIL K-5	
1	Word Segment, Nonsense Words, Sight Words, Sentence Reading  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in target language: Syllable Reading, Sight Words, Sentence Reading		Benchmark Assessment System Informal Reading Inventory (BAS IRI) All students 1-5  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> Estructura para la Evaluación del nivel independiente de lectura (ENIL) 1-5	Word Segment, Nonsense Words, Sight Words, CBM Reading (3 passages required for composite) <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in target language: Syllable Reading, Sight Words, CMB Reading		Benchmark Assessment System Informal Reading Inventory (BAS IRI) All students 1-5  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> Estructura para la Evaluación del nivel independiente de lectura (ENIL)	Word Segment, Nonsense Words, Sight Words, CBM Reading (3 passages required for composite) <i>Spanish Immersion</i> *administered in target language: Syllable Reading, Sight Words, CMB Reading			
2	CBM Reading (3 passages req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading *administered in target language	All students in grades 2 except Spanish Immersion		CBM Reading (3 passages req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading *administered in target language	All students grades 2-5		CBM Reading (3 passages req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading *administered in target language	All students grades 2-5		
3 - 4 - 5	CBM Reading for “some risk” and “high risk” students (1 passage req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading if needed *administered in target language	All students in grades 3-5, including Spanish Immersion		CBM Reading for “some risk” and “high risk” students (1 passage req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading if needed *administered in target language			CBM Reading for “some risk” and “high risk” students (1 passage req.)  <i>Spanish Immersion</i> CBM Reading if needed *administered in target language			All students in grades 3-5, including Spanish Immersion

*Table 2: Comparison of MDE Dyslexia Recommendations and Stillwater Schools' Screening Program*

	<b>Skill</b>	<b>MDE Recommendation</b>	<b>Stillwater Assessment Plan</b>
<b>Phonemic Awareness</b>	Initial Sound Fluency	K (F, W)	FastBridge K (F, W); Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
	Phoneme Blending	K (W, S)	Tier II FastBridge and PRESS as indicated by student need
	Word Segmentation	K (W, S) 1 (F, W)	FastBridge K (W, S); 1 (F, W, S) Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
<b>Decoding</b>	Letter-Sound Fluency	K (W, S)	FastBridge K (F, W, S); Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
	Nonsense Words	K (W, S) 1 (F, W, S) 2 (F)	FastBridge K (W, S); 1 (F, W, S); 2 Tier II FastBridge and PRESS as indicated by student need
	Oral Reading Fluency	1 (F, W, S) 3 (F, W, S)	FastBridge 1 (F, W, S); 2 (F, W, S); 3-5 (F, W, S <40th percentile); Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
<b>Encoding</b>	Spelling Inventory	1 (F, W, S) 3 (F, W, S)	Letterland Spelling Assessment grade 1 (4 times/year) Bear Spelling Inventory grades 2-5 (F, W, S)
<b>Orthographic Memory and Recall</b>	Rapid Automatic Naming	K (F, W)	Assessed as appropriate in Special Education
	Letter Name Fluency	K (F, W)	K (F); Tier II FastBridge and PRESS as indicated by student need
	Letter-Sound Fluency	K (W, S) 1 (F, W)	FastBridge K (F, W, S) Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
	Onset Sounds	K (W, S) 1 (F, W)	FastBridge K (F, W) Tier II PRESS as indicated by student need
	High Frequency Sight Words	K (S) 1 (F, W, S) 2 (F, W, S)	K (S); 1 (F, W, S)

## ***Diagnostic Assessment***

Diagnostic assessments are a way for teachers and interventionists to drill deeper into student reading needs and to tailor instruction to meet individual needs. In the list that follows, items are K-5 unless otherwise noted.

### Oral Language Development—

- Local developmental checklist for all 4-year-old preschool students
- Direct observation during conferring and classroom interaction
- Informal Reading Inventories and Running Record: retells and question responses

### Phonemic Awareness—

- Local developmental checklist for all 4-year-old preschool students
- FastBridge *earlyReading*: Onset Sounds, Word Rhyming , Word Segmenting, Phoneme Blending, Inventories
- Letterland assessments: Onset Sounds, Word Segmenting
- Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS): Quick Phonemic Awareness Assessment
- PAST Phonological Awareness Skills Test
- Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE): available to reading interventionists

### Phonics—

- TSGold for all 4-year-old preschool students
- FastBridge *earlyReading*: Letter Sounds, Nonsense Words, Word Blending, Inventories
- FastBridge CBM-Reading: accuracy analysis
- Letterland assessments: grapheme-phoneme correspondence, spelling
- PRESS: Decoding Assessment
- Bear Spelling Inventory
- Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE): available to reading interventionists
- Informal Reading Inventories, Conferring, Running Record: miscue analysis

### Fluency—

- FastBridge *earlyReading*: Foundational Skill Fluency
- FastBridge CBM-Reading: fluency analysis
- Running Records fluency checks
- Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE): available to reading interventionists
- Informal Reading Inventories, Conferring, Running Record: fluency checks

Vocabulary—

- Local developmental checklist for all 4-year-old preschool students
- FastBridge *aReading*; available for all students 2-5
- FastBridge AUTOREading: available for all students 2-5
- Informal Reading Inventories: comprehension responses
- Conferring and student annotations
- Units of Study: Performance Assessments grades 3-6

Comprehension—

- FastBridge *aReading* and *CBM-Reading Comp*; available for all students 2-5.
- Informal Reading Inventories and Running Record: retells and question responses
- Conferring and student annotations
- Units of Study: Performance Assessments grades 3-5

Critical Reading—

- Conferring and student annotations
- Units of Study: Performance Assessments grades 3-5
- Informal Reading Inventories

Dyslexic Tendencies

- See [Figure 2](#) for alignment between MDE’s recommendations for screening for dyslexic tendencies and Stillwater Schools’ screening plan. The dyslexia characteristics checklist used by interventionists and teachers with parents/guardians indicates tendencies of dyslexia.

Convergence Insufficiency

- As mentioned previously, in the area of convergence insufficiency (CI), MDE states, “vision screenings for school use are not available for diagnosing CI” and advises, “A comprehensive vision evaluation by a licensed eye care specialist who tests binocular (two-eyed) vision is the most effective means for detecting CI” (MDE CI Fact Sheet).
- A comprehensive vision evaluation by a licensed eye care specialist who tests binocular (two-eyed) vision is the most effective means for detecting CI. The district may choose to report, “District X does not include screening for convergence insufficiency disorder as part of its vision screening program. Parents with concerns about the condition should see their licensed eye care specialist for assessment and treatment.”
- Teachers will contact parents or guardians if noticing frequent eye fatigue, reading with one eye, or visible divergence of focal point when reading.

### ***Progress Monitoring***

Progress monitoring is used to measure increments of growth in a targeted skill and to determine response to interventions.

In K-5, once a student demonstrates through screening that there is need for any tier of intervention, the teacher or interventionist administers targeted instruction and progress monitors the student on a cycle that includes both skill-level progress monitoring and grade-level progress monitoring. The intent of skill-level progress monitoring is to determine improvement or lack of improvement on discrete skill instruction and to adjust or intensify interventions as necessary. The intent of grade-level progress monitoring is to monitor skill transfer to grade-level reading goals, and to monitor academic gap closure. K-1 students in Tier II interventions are progress monitored during weeks one and two of this cycle, using skill-level tools specific to their PRESS reading intervention placement. During week three of the progress monitoring cycle, students in Tier II interventions are progress monitored using FastBridge grade-level, normed, progress-monitoring probes. This cycle allows teachers to monitor progress on the targeted skill as well as progress toward the grade-level outcome.

In addition to required progress monitoring of Tier II students, K-1 teachers may use any of the twelve early literacy subtests available to them through FastBridge earlyReading, the PAST, or the MDE PA and Phonics Skills Checklist as a means for additional assessment or progress monitoring purposes.

Students in grade 2-6 who receive a Tier II reading intervention will also be progress monitored on a rotating three week schedule similar to that described for K-1 students. These grade 2-6 students are monitored both at skill level and at grade level. Depending on students' individual skill-levels and interventions, students may be progress monitored on FastBridge earlyReading subtests, or with the FastBridge Reading CBM assessment.

Students who receive a Tier III reading intervention will be progress monitored weekly using FastBridge grade-level, normed, progress-monitoring probes (earlyReading or Reading CBM). Reading interventionists also conduct a minimum of three informal reading inventories (IRI) per year using the Benchmark Assessment System. If a student indicates growth between assessments, additional IRIs are conducted as needed. Finally, the PAST and the MDE PA and Phonics Skills Checklist can be used to monitor the development of foundational reading skills.

### ***Formative Assessments***

At the preK level, teachers use [Teaching Strategies Gold](#) to formatively assess students in the areas of phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge. Local developmental checklists are used to assess other early literacy skills.

[Informal Reading Inventories](#) (IRI) are also used across the district as a means to individualize instruction and to monitor student growth. Teachers in grades K-5 (K when reading) are expected to complete at least one informal reading inventory in both the fall and the spring using the Benchmark Assessment System. This assessment is recommended during the course of the school year, too, and is used at the

teacher's discretion. Teachers use information from this assessment as a way to guide students to appropriate resources, and to analyze students' use of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and meaning making in order to individualize instruction, and to communicate strengths and needs to the following year's teacher.

In addition to IRIs, teachers in grades K-5 will use periodic formative assessment of foundational skills acquisition and word study instruction (Letterland K-1, Words Their Way 2-5), individual and small-group conferring (K-5), and pre-/post-performance assessments (Units of Study 3-5) to monitor students' acquisition of grade-level-appropriate skills. Information from these assessments will help teachers to address the individual student's needs.

Finally, teachers conduct other formative assessments as necessary in their classrooms. These assessments are shaped by individual teachers or teacher teams and are meant to address a classroom population's unique needs.

### ***Summative Assessments***

Common assessments are used across the district. All grades use grade-appropriate comprehension rubrics that are based on the English Language Arts standards to determine reading comprehension progress. Teachers in grades 3-5 also use performance assessments at the end of each unit to determine growth in unit concepts and progress toward grade-level standards.

In the area of foundational skills, K-1 teachers use common Letterland assessments, and teachers in grades 2-5 use periodic Words Their Way spell checks and spelling inventory growth to determine progress.

Common rubrics for evaluating speaking and writing are in progress.

## **Parent/Guardian Notification and Involvement**

### ***Communication of Assessment Data***

Universal screening results are shared at parent-teacher conferences, and Individual parents/guardians are officially notified of universal screening results when a student qualifies for a Tier III intervention. Parents/guardians of students who qualify for intervention are notified of the student's qualification for services, and of the student's completion of services by letter, and if needed, by phone or by an arranged conference.

Screening results for the general student population are communicated during fall parent-teacher conferences.

General classroom assessments are sent home periodically with students' Friday Folders and are shared at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences.

### ***Communication of Classroom Progress***

PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom teachers send home classroom updates. These updates range from weekly to monthly dissemination, depending on activities in the classroom. Updates generally include curricular focus, upcoming assignments and assessments, important classroom activities (i.e., class performances or field trips), and classroom volunteer opportunities.

PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring. Options are available during the day and during the evening so that parents/guardians can schedule at their convenience. Individual conferences outside of these days may be scheduled with individual teachers to accommodate families' schedules.

Additional contact with individual parents/guardians is made on an as-needed basis. Both positive and needs-based communications are encouraged.

### ***Communication of Intervention Progress***

Each Tier III reading interventionist has a home/school communication system in place. Communication folders are sent home with students, at a minimum, each week with homework and program updates. Interventionists also include periodic updates on progress monitoring and intervention progress (bi-annually), and are expected to make student-specific contact with each parent/guardian at least monthly. Interventionists also attend parent-teacher conferences when scheduling allows.

### ***Communication of School and District Opportunities for Involvement***

The Stillwater Area Public Schools' Communications and Marketing Department has several avenues in place to encourage parent/guardian and community communication. This department publishes a quarterly print newsletter, sends a weekly e-news email to stakeholders, and holds both online and in-person discussion forums. The Communications and Marketing Department maintains the district and

school websites, Facebook account, YouTube channel, and a Twitter account. The district updates also appear on the local cable television bulletin board. In addition, the district assembles advisory committees to provide input on a variety of topics ranging from curriculum to mental health.

Families enrolled in our school readiness preschool program choose from a variety of options for parent/guardian involvement throughout the school year. These options include seminars as well as structured family activities. These options include seminars as well as structured family activities. Communication at the building level takes place via school newsletters and school webpages. Each of our elementary schools, as well as our Early Childhood Family Center, sends out a weekly parent/guardian newsletter. Newsletters are sent out primarily via e-mail and include updates on building activities, and, when appropriate, building-level volunteer opportunities. Parents/guardians are automatically subscribed to the e-newsletters each year.

Volunteer opportunities are communicated via building newsletters or through building-specific Parent-Teacher Associations. Classroom opportunities for volunteering are communicated through the classroom newsletter or individual fliers sent home with students. At the district level, coordination takes place via Community Thread ([www.communitythreadmn.org](http://www.communitythreadmn.org)) to bring district and community volunteers together. Mandatory background checks are required for all volunteers though the system has been adjusted to allow parents/guardians an easier path to volunteering in their children's classrooms.

Finally, the District's Family and Community Engagement programming run through our Office of Equity and Integration works to:

1. Collaborate with parents to navigate and support us in responsively adapting our district's systems and structures
2. Support home learning environments
3. Develop skills for collaborating with school staff and develop staff skills to improve upon their outreach efforts
4. Provide parents with the necessary information for post-secondary planning

Current efforts include:

**NAPAC:** Native American Parent Advisory Committee: A committee with a core team of 20 parents, Elders and community members that meet monthly to support the needs of American Indian students and families in our district. NAPAC includes representatives from Dakota, Lakota, Ho Chunk, Ojibwe, Micmac, Mississippi Choctaw and Menominee Nations.

**Camino:** Pathways (Partnership in Achievement and Transition to Higher Learning) an on-going collaboration with our Hispanic families with a core group membership of 45 families that meet quarterly at the Family Means building in the Cimarron Mobile Home Community.

**Women's Engagement Group:** Incorporating the voices of our Muslim families in collaboration with the Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center (the Mosque in Afton) /Islamic Resource Group). More detailed information follows in the section "Communication of Opportunities to Support Child Development."



### ***Communication of Opportunities to Support Child Development***

Caminos (PATHways) (Partnership in Achievement and Transition to Higher Learning), run by our Office of Equity and Integration, offers a variety of topics relating to Preschool, Elementary, Middle and High School. These learning sessions address the specific needs of students at each of these four levels. Parents/guardians are recruited by building staff and are asked to commit to attending quarterly sessions that are 1.5-2.0 hours in length.

The preschool curriculum is designed to engage parents/guardians in a conversation about school readiness, and their role in preparing their child for kindergarten. The curriculum teaches parents/guardians strategies for fostering early literacy and math skills. The literacy skills it focuses on are: Vocabulary building, phonemic awareness (rhyming and alliteration), and print concepts. In addition, it stresses the importance of reading with children regularly at home. The elementary curriculum clarifies the language about academic standards, teaches parents/guardians about the importance of parent-teacher conferences, clarifies the coding on our report cards and reinforces the importance of open and honest communication with schools about student progress. In addition, it establishes a connection between academic achievement and positive discipline, self-esteem, and providing structures in the home (like a quiet space for homework, and early bed time, etc.) that allow students to maximize their own academic potential. The middle and high school curricula are geared toward college readiness. Specifically, parents/guardians learn about the role of the guidance counselor, they are taught about the concept of academic rigor, they are taught how to calculate a student's GPA, and they are coached about how to advocate for their student within the school building.

## **Intervention and Instructional Supports**

### ***Alignment of Core Instruction (Tier I)***

The District Literacy Committee conducted a curriculum review that culminated in the adoption of new curricula in March 2018. Due to the complexities of the changes and budget constraints, implementation has taken place over the course of several years. Elementary site improvement plans and instructional coaching will continue to focus on supporting and improving implementation.

2018-2019	PreK-5 Foundational skills; PreK-5 literacy
2019-2020	K-2 Writing
2020-2021	3-5 Writing
2021-2022	First year of full implementation PreK-5

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension instruction —the five pillars of literacy instruction—are currently in place and will be enhanced using a comprehensive literacy approach that incorporates differentiation, gradual release of responsibility, and a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).. Instructional Coaches will continue to deliver professional development in the classroom, at the building level, and district-wide in support of developing instructional skills in the five pillars of literacy.

Stillwater uses Letterland in PreK-2 and Words Their Way in grades 3-5 to provide students with a systematic, sequential, and multisensory approach to learning foundational reading and spelling skills.

In addition to Letterland, PreK teachers use Fountas & Pinnell’s Shared Reading materials to engage students in learning concepts of print and to develop thinking and talking about text. K-5 teachers use Heinmann’s Units of Study for Teaching Reading, which provides students with ample opportunities for accountable talk during the literacy block, and will spiral critical thinking skills within and across grade levels.

Stillwater’s literacy curriculum is aligned with both the 2010 version and the 2020 draft version of the Minnesota State Standards through units within and across grades.

### ***Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)***

The district utilizes a comprehensive system of Learning Supports that incorporates a multi-tiered system of support protocol. Through this system, our buildings look at academic interventions alongside social, emotional, and behavioral needs and concerns. School social workers and school psychologists loop into Professional Learning Community meetings on a monthly basis to identify, discuss and track students who are not performing at grade level. The teams will then take this multi-tiered systems approach to implement individual student response-to-intervention plans.

Academic interventions are determined after the universal screening process in the fall and winter. Once the universal screening process is completed, grade-level PLCs meet to evaluate data and to plan necessary diagnostics, and to schedule targeted interventions.

Tier I class-wide interventions or Tier II small-group interventions using PRESS, FastBridge, or Letterland reading interventions are planned and administered by the individual teacher or grade-level teams. For students performing below benchmark, Tier II interventions are targeted to the student's area of greatest need.

Students demonstrating intensive need, typically those performing below the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally, will be scheduled for pull-out, intensive intervention with a trained reading interventionist (Tier III). These students will work with an interventionist 4-5 days per week in groups of 3-5 students in their area of greatest need.

Our goal is to maintain a system where students are effectively monitored both in the classroom and in intervention for improvement or for additional intervention as needed.

The Stillwater Schools MTSS System also includes programming for gifted students. All students in third grade will have the opportunity to take the Cognitive Abilities Test. Parents/guardians and/or teachers can also request testing for any student who is new to our district and who did not have the opportunity to test in 3rd grade. The assessment is administered online by trained classroom teachers, and results are available within 48 hours. Students who have CogAT composite scores of 96% Age Percentile Score (9th Stanine) or better, accompanied by high achievement scores in reading and math, are invited to our GATE school, which is a school for the highly gifted within the district. Students who have CogAT subtest scores of 89% Age Percentile Score (8th Stanine) or better, accompanied by high achievement scores in reading and math, will be considered for a cluster placement within their regular classroom. These students are clustered with peers of similar intellectual ability, and are given more opportunities to go deeper within a concept or topic and are regularly given more challenging material as the teacher feels is appropriate.

To deepen our MTSS system, Stillwater Area High School, Lake Elmo Elementary, and Afton-Lakeland Elementary have been implementing the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) program, a strengths-based whole school model that provides schools with a comprehensive approach to meeting academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of all students. Program evaluation and resource allocation in combination with our participation in MDE's COMPASS cohort will determine next steps for MTSS development and BARR expansion.

### ***Intervention Opportunities (Tiers I, II, and III)***

Elementary principals and staff are committed to scheduling intervention opportunities outside of core instructional times. The goal is to support all teachers within the classroom setting and to support services with differentiation training to allow for best practice intervention and enrichment opportunities.

**Tier I:** The district offers on-going professional development in both foundational skill development and in the critical thinking skills expected when reading. During class, teachers are able to individualize instruction through flexible grouping determined by student need, through small group or one-to-one instruction, and through student self-selection of ‘just-right books’ and/or accessible decodable texts. In addition to a focus on an environment rich with literature and critical thinking, elementary literacy instruction includes dedicated time each day for the development of foundational literacy skills.

Classes that demonstrate significant need in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension will receive a class-wide intervention using PRESS targeted, class-wide intervention activities. PRESS interventions are delivered by the classroom teacher and also address foundational literacy skills.

**Tier II:** Five of our elementary buildings have applied for a Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) tutor. These MRC tutors will serve as Tier II interventionists in grades K-3 to provide students with additional guided practice in reading, outside of classroom reading instructional time. Students who are slightly below grade level will meet with MRC tutors daily for approximately twenty minutes to develop foundational literacy skills.

In addition to whole-group instruction in the classroom, teachers provide targeted, Tier II small-group interventions using an analysis of screening and diagnostic data, and PRESS, FastBridge, and Letterland targeted intervention activities. These interventions are skill-driven and are targeted to a student’s area of greatest need.

**Tier III:** Tier III reading intervention is supported by the ADSIS grant at each of our elementary buildings in a program called Read with Me (RWM). Additionally, Title I and local funding provide for additional Tier III reading intervention. Title I funding is generally split between reading and math intervention and has decreased significantly with the improvement of the economy over the past few years. In each funding case, students in Tier III reading intervention receive 30 minutes of instruction with groups of three to five students in addition to the student’s classroom literacy instruction.

All reading interventionists use Letterland Intervention, when indicated, to reinforce and reteach foundational skills taught in the classroom. Letterland is named specifically in the National Reading Panel Report as a phonics curriculum that meets the expectations for foundational skills instruction.

In addition to Letterland, elementary reading interventionists are trained in level one of the multi-sensory Orton-Gillingham method of early reading instruction, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), or have a MN reading license. Our hope is to continue training our Tier III interventionists in best practices.

### ***Using Data to Determine Intervention***

Each building relies on data from FastBridge *earlyReading*, FastBridge *aReading* and *AUTOReading*, and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments to determine a student’s need for intervention. Additional diagnostic assessments such as the PAST or the Bear Spelling inventory are also used to help guide data

analysis. Once students are screened, teachers review data using the PRESS data protocol to determine the appropriate level and type of intervention.

Students are placed in the tiers of intervention based on screening, diagnostic, and historical data, as well as teacher input during data team meetings. Tier I classroom interventions are administered when 50% or more of the classroom indicate need for particular skill instruction. Tier II small-group, classroom interventions are generally administered by a classroom teacher to students between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. Tier III interventions generally consist of the most at-risk students, usually those below the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile. Because each school has unique needs, these cut points are approximate.

## Professional Development on Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction

### *Alignment and Collaboration with Statutory Requirements*

Minnesota Statute 122A.06, subdivision 4 defines comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction as follows:

(a) "Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction" includes a program or collection of instructional practices that is based on valid, replicable evidence showing that when these programs or practices are used, students can be expected to achieve, at a minimum, satisfactory reading progress. The program or collection of practices must include, at a minimum, effective, balanced instruction in all five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction also includes and integrates instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating, and communicating the student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text, write, and apply higher level thinking skills. For English learners developing literacy skills, districts are encouraged to use strategies that teach reading and writing in the students' native language and English at the same time.

(b) "Fluency" is the ability of students to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.

(c) "Phonemic awareness" is the ability of students to notice, think about, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken syllables and words.

(d) "Phonics" is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken words. Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds and how to apply this knowledge in reading and spelling.

(e) "Reading comprehension" is an active process that requires intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader. Comprehension skills are taught explicitly by demonstrating, explaining, modeling, and implementing specific cognitive strategies to help beginning readers derive meaning through intentional, problem-solving thinking processes.

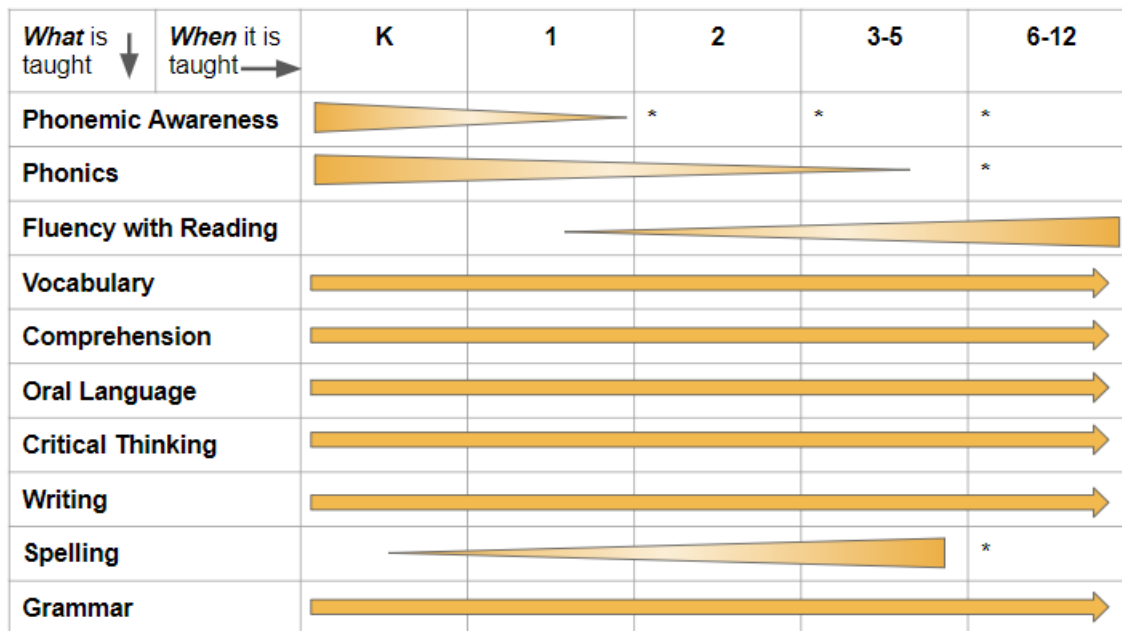
(f) "Vocabulary development" is the process of teaching vocabulary both directly and indirectly, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items. Learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology enhance the acquiring of vocabulary.

(g) Nothing in this subdivision limits the authority of a school district to select a school's reading program or curriculum.

Stillwater teachers have always instructed, and will continue to instruct, in the five pillars of literacy—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—as required by Minnesota Statute 122A.06, the Minnesota English Language Arts State Standards (2010 and 2020), and the National Reading Panel Report (2000).

In addition to these five key areas, teachers explicitly teach related literacy skills, including oral language, critical thinking, writing (composition, process, and revision), spelling, and grammar. Figure 1 shows how these skills are introduced or faded across grade levels in Stillwater’s programming.

*Figure 1: Literacy Skill Introduction and Fading*



\*Phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling progression may occur in later grades with children who have language delays or other disabilities.

Students’ exposure to rich print resources during read-alouds, independent reading, and content area instruction familiarizes students with a wide array of concept vocabulary and oral language structures. This language development is practiced during both content instruction and literacy instruction. When combined with strong decoding instruction, these language comprehension skills will result in reading comprehension.

Rather than using one packaged curriculum, Stillwater teachers use a variety of curricula to ensure they are meeting the expectations of state statute, state standards, and research in the field of reading.

This Tier I curricula includes:

- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness: K – 1
- Letterland: PreK – Grade 2
  - Phonemic awareness, phonics, decodable text, early spelling, printing
- Words Their Way: Grades 3 – 5
  - Developmentally sequenced word study for encoding, decoding, (including decodable text), and word part analysis

- Fountas & Pinnell Classroom: PreK
  - Shared reading, concepts of print, oral language development
- Units of Study for Teaching Reading: grades K – 5
  - Critical thinking, oral and written language development, knowledge building
- Units of Study for Teaching Writing: grades K – 5
  - Critical thinking, writing process, oral and written language development, knowledge sharing

In addition to Tier I curriculum, teachers will continue to use PRESS as a Tier II intervention. PRESS, developed and researched by the Minnesota Center for Reading Research (MCRR) at the University of Minnesota, focuses on five pillars of a quality reading program: quality core instruction, data-based decision making, tiered interventions, and professional learning communities. The program addresses four of the “Big 5” areas in reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Interventions are targeted to a student’s earliest literacy need and are taught and progress monitored in a structured, systematic, and sequential process to ensure skill development.

All literacy teachers in grades K-5 have been trained in PRESS. New teachers receive initial training from MCRR. More information about PRESS can be found at <https://presscommunity.org/>

In the area of diversity, Stillwater Area Public Schools’ Achievement and Integration Plan has a three pronged approach: long-term systemic change, solution focused, and research and best practices. These three characteristics are implemented through a district team that works with outside specialists from the field of Intercultural Development. The program’s foundation is interdisciplinary, drawing from the fields of Education, Intercultural Communication, Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology.

While drawing best practices from many fields, the program always has its focus on all students developing their full potential, having equal access to achievement, and preparing them to be successful global citizens. While the program recognizes that this process is developmental for both students and staff, it also works to provide immediate application in participants’ lives. This focus on immediate application leads the district team to make a conscious effort to model what they propose to others. From a structural and systemic lens, district Instructional Coaches have gone through an intensive two year Intercultural Coaching professional development process focusing on culturally inclusive teaching strategies during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. During the 2019-2020 school year, they supported educators participating in our Growing in Intercultural Awareness year-long professional learning cohorts through a classroom observation feedback loop process. Our district philosophy is that true professional learning should move teachers from knowledge to application and must contain the following six components:

1. Adopt a developmental approach
2. Be frequent and sustained
3. Involve a coaching component
4. Contain an action research component



5. Be data informed
6. Be supported by adult learning theory and brain research

### ***District-Wide Professional Development Alignment***

The district calendar provides seven professional development days during the school year. Learning and Innovation staff will work with instructional coaches and the district professional development committee to create a detailed plan to support the maintenance of existing skills and to deepen understanding and practice. Professional development will be aligned with the literacy implementation plan, building site improvement plans, and the mentorship program. The plan will align district-wide professional development days and on-going professional development in buildings.

### ***Job-Embedded Professional Development***

The Stillwater Schools' MTSS team will continue developing a clear plan for Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PRESS reading intervention data analysis will help to drive PLC discussions. PLC teams will examine student performance and data to determine their own professional development needs, learning from each other where possible, and reaching out to Instructional Coaches and the Department of Learning and Innovation for greater professional development needs.

Instructional Coaches are in place in our elementary buildings. Instructional Coaches typically work with teachers in a ten-week cycle, intensively coaching up to six teachers during one cycle. Coaching needs are determined through self-observation and self-evaluation (video) and through needs emerging on our Five Dimensions Teacher Evaluation Rubric. Instructional Coaches can play many roles during this intensive process, including but not limited to modeling instruction, collaborative teaching, collaborative planning, [Cognitive Coaching](#) discussions, and classroom support for peer observation.

In addition to intensive coaching, Instructional Coaches work with principals and with the Department of Teaching and Learning to provide district-wide and in-building PD to support curriculum implementation and skill development. Under the Teacher Development and Evaluation Plan, teachers also participate in peer observation and discussion, providing an additional layer of professional development.

### ***Use of Student and Teacher Performance Data to Inform Professional Development***

The district will use teacher evaluation data to design professional development. Stillwater's "growth-oriented" teacher evaluation system called, 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, was created by the Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Washington. The St. Croix Education Association voted to adopt this evaluation system in May 2014, allowing full implementation.

Under this evaluation system, a teacher's individual goals, PLC goals, building goals, and student performance data are aligned, allowing building administrators, as well as the Department of Learning and Innovation, to plan professional development at multiple levels. Additionally, teachers who are

involved in an intensive coaching cycle will use the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning as a pre- and post-coaching tool. This will allow teachers to align their coaching goals to the professional evaluation system. The TDEP coordinator in the Department of Learning and Innovation will help to bridge the connection between TDEP data and district professional development needs.

## Curriculum and Instruction

### *Horizontal and Vertical Curriculum Alignment*

Prior District Literacy Committee work provided teachers with curriculum, materials, and assessments aligned to the 2010, and now the 2020 Minnesota ELA standards, providing clear horizontal and vertical alignment. Work with the Fountas and Pinnell PreK-8 Literacy Continuum continues to help us to fine-tune our understanding of what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. LETRS professional development will help teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the science of reading.

Having clearly articulated curriculum maps in place at each grade level ensures equity of instruction for students across the district and allows for teachers to work collaboratively in building-level and cross-district PLCs. Stillwater will continue refining curriculum alignment while allowing space within expectations for teachers to respond to individual student needs.

### *Curriculum Resources*

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness: K – 1

Letterland: PreK – Grade 2

- Phonemic awareness, phonics, decodable text, early spelling, printing for K-1

Words Their Way: Grades 3 – 5

- Developmentally sequenced word study for encoding, decoding, (including decodable text), and word part analysis

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom: PreK

- Shared reading, concepts of print, oral language development

Units of Study for Teaching Reading: grades K – 5

- Critical thinking, oral and written language development, knowledge building

Units of Study for Teaching Writing: grades K – 5

- Critical thinking, writing process, oral and written language development, knowledge sharing

Stillwater Schools support students' self-selection of books as a means to improve engagement in literacy activities and to generate a lifelong love of reading. In order to support this belief, the district has purchased high-interest, leveled trade books to support classroom libraries.

Finally, Teaching and Learning continues to support [Study Island](#) for our elementary schools to help support personalized learning. This online learning program is a standards-based, customizable program that is available for all students grades K-5.

### *Alignment and Collaboration with Statutory Requirements*

District curriculum maps and instructional resources align with Minnesota's 2010 and 2020 Literacy Standards, which incorporate the 'Big 5' (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), as well as oral language development and critical thinking.

## Student Support System for EL Learners

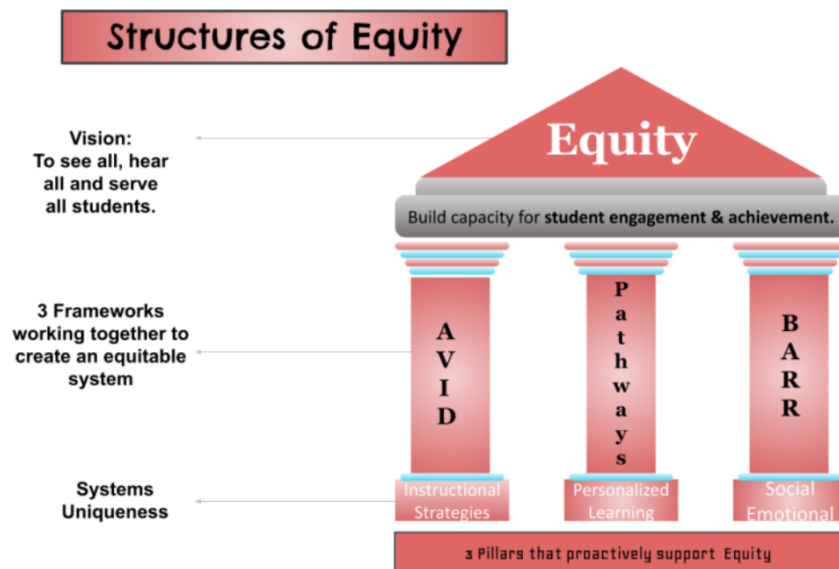
### *Professional Development for teachers of English Learners*

Our Student Support Services Department provides specialized support for the English Learners Instructional Department. District English Learner teachers meet for one day each month to coordinate curriculum, instruction, resources, and services. Principals support the unique needs of the EL department at a building level.

The EL Department utilizes the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) professional development model and assesses English Proficiency Levels using WIDA (World-class Instructional Design & Assessment). All students are assessed immediately after enrollment to ensure proper student placement within their grade level, WIDA standards, and EL courses. The plan of service delivered to each student depends upon grade level as well as their proficiency level (Entering, Beginning, Developing, Expanding, or Bridging). Instructional support time related to number of days per week and number of instructional minutes also varies.

### *Professional Development for General Education teachers*

Our Office of Equity & Integration (OEI) has developed and implemented a job embedded Professional Development framework over the last several years. It began with Inter-cultural Coaches supporting teaching staff within buildings to develop cultural awareness and increased cultural sensitivity through incorporating culturally responsive teaching techniques and lesson plans into their pedagogy as part of Universal Design. In addition to supporting classroom teachers' development of intercultural teaching practices, they continue to work towards developing an integrated approach between Culturally Inclusive Teaching practices, Responsive Classroom practices, and classroom literacy practices. Finally, Stillwater Area High School has created an Educational Equity Framework that integrates evidence-based instructional strategies, personalized learning and a comprehensive social-emotional learning process through their AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), BARR (Building Assets Reducing Risks) and Pathways Programming.



## Communication System for Annual Reporting

### *Systems Accountability*

On an annual basis our school district submits a Systems Accountability Report to MDE. This report details our academic and student performance data which includes all data related to Language Arts instruction and programming. The Stillwater Area Public Schools Board of Education as well as community stakeholders review the data and it is published on our website.