

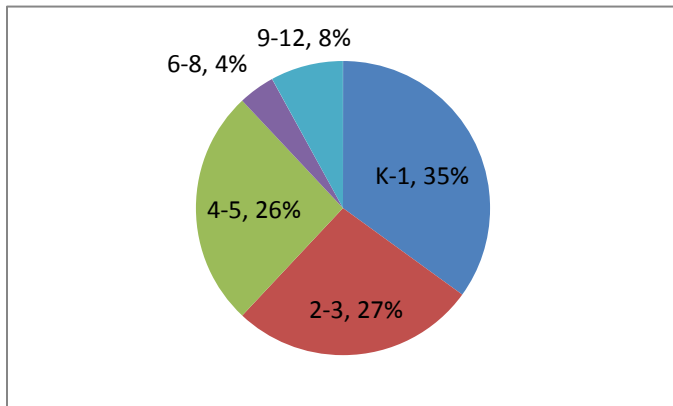
Astro Blast

Week of October 3 - 7



Welcome to the first week of October! We have a lot to look forward to in October including the continuation of our professional learning communities, the completion of our first progress report period, and parent conferences. With our Fall MAP data in, we also see Lexile levels for our students. The grade level indicates the equivalent reading level for our students.

Grade	% of Students
K-1	35%
2-3	27%
4-5	26%
6-8	4%
9-12	8%



Many of you signed up for the literacy component of our learning communities, which suggests that as a school we are beginning to address the issue. I am really motivated by the direction we are moving in, which is to take action by working as a school in all areas to improve our students' Lexile levels through fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary practice. Here are some fundamental strategies that we can start putting in place as a school.



20 Most Common Prefixes

Every week we will introduce to the students one of the 20 most common prefixes. Every teacher in every period should discuss words with these prefixes throughout the week. For those interested in more about prefixes, click [here](#).



Word Walls

All of our subject areas have words that students need to be reminded of and to practice. Word walls provide support for students in using the correct vocabulary and a reminder to teachers to focus on vocabulary and words. [Here](#) is some more information about word walls.



Check Writing for Grammar

Even though the majority of us are not English teachers, to emphasize the importance of spelling and grammar to our students, we should mark their writing for accuracy and expect well-formed sentences appropriate for their skill level. Click [here](#) for a review on grammar or [here](#) for common mistakes.



Give Students Time to Write

Often we rush students to get through the content and not giving students the time they need to write, review, rewrite and fix errors. As our ELA teachers will tell us, writing is a process and slowing down is a part of this process. [Here](#) are some detailed suggestions.

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Encourage All Students to Respond

Typically we ask students to raise their hands to answer questions. However, choral response is a great way for students to practice unfamiliar words such as vocabulary words, especially in content area classes. Click [here](#) for a great 2 minute video showing how to help older students to respond.

These strategies are just beginnings, and as a school, we have been looking into a number of comprehensive programs. The district is working with a program called Adolescent Solutions. Adolescent Solutions gives us a comprehensive bank of strategies to use. We can use these strategies for our different levels of learners. We will be learning more about Adolescent Solutions in the weeks and years to come. The following are individual programs that we have been looking at to target groups of students.

REWARDS targets students at a 3rd grade reading level and up. This program for struggling middle school readers focuses on increasing fluency, vocabulary, comprehension in content-area classes, and writing ability. You can find more information about REWARDS [here](#).

System 44 is designed to support Special Education students and is engaging for students with audiovisual needs. Its Portal to parents is also available in Spanish to help

parents to become involved in their children's literacy journeys. For more about System 44, click [here](#).

Phonics for Reading is a program with three levels and uses explicit instruction to teach phonics skills target towards the 1st through 3rd grade levels. While the content is for the primary grades, the content, pictures, and activities are appropriate for older students. [This](#) link leads you to an informative PowerPoint about the program.

While we will continue using Accelerated Reader as an option for our Language Arts teachers and other programs such as newsela.com and Britannica (school.eb.com, username –sausd, password – library) provide the same texts at different Lexile levels, we need to act purposefully to give our students the support they need to be successful, especially in reading. We are also looking into [myON](#) to bring more books to our students and to engage them in reading.

Every day I see that our staff and students are making progress to achieve personal, academic and career goals. Thank you for your work inside and outside of the classrooms, and thank you for everything you do for our students.