

Learning to Read...Reading to Learn



ISD 4001 Bluffview Montessori School Local Literacy Plan

2020-2021

Bluffview Montessori School Local Literacy Plan

Bluffview Montessori School is committed to ensuring reading proficiency for all students at each level, kindergarten through third grade. A multitude of research is available to show the correlation between student reading proficiency at third grade and high school graduation rates. It is also well documented that students who read well by third grade perform consistently better in school than those students who are not proficient readers by third grade. We recognize the importance and significance of early literacy and practices for all students. Bluffview has procedures in place to screen and monitor progress, as well as a strategic plan to implement quality instruction to ensure reading proficiency for all attending students.

This vision is supported by our practice of maintaining teacher-student ratios of 1:13 or less in our kindergarten through third grade learning environments. The Montessori curriculum utilizes strategies that engage students in the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Emphasis is placed on literature at all levels and each classroom has its own library in addition to our school library. We encourage students to read and build their personal libraries at home by scheduling book fairs three times a year. To further foster reading enjoyment we designate February as a month long celebration of reading, featuring a read-a-thon and personal reading challenge.

At Bluffview Montessori School, we believe that literacy skills are vital and have a direct impact on the quality of our students' lives. Our goal is that all students read at grade level by third grade and curriculum and interventions are in place to help us achieve that goal.

Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature has adopted statutes which require schools to adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of third grade. Minnesota Statute 120B.12 requires that all students are provided with comprehensive scientifically based reading instruction as outlined in a local literacy plan.

Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction includes strategies to develop skills in the following areas:

1. Phonemic awareness: ability to notice, think about and manipulate individual sounds in spoken syllables and words.
2. Phonics: 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.
3. Fluency: the ability to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression
4. Vocabulary development: process of teaching vocabulary both directly and indirectly, with repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items.
5. Comprehension: 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.

The Bluffview Read Well by Grade 3 Local Literacy Plan provides information on the following:

- A description of the processes the school uses to ensure proficiency by grade 3, including assessments and data collection
- Methods used to assess student levels of reading proficiency
- How our school notifies parents about reading proficiency or need for intervention and parental involvement opportunities
- The system of interventions utilized at Bluffview
- A description of professional development opportunities specific to literacy
- Information on Dyslexia and Convergence Insufficiency.

This plan was written for the 2020-2021 school year and is updated annually.

Assessment Plan

Bluffview Montessori School uses a variety of data to assess reading proficiency. Utilizing these assessments, we are able to identify students who are not reading at grade level and use data to create individualized plans to meet the needs of our students.

Universal literacy screening takes place three times a year to identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties. Criterion-referenced target scores have been established for each measure at each administration that reflect the expected grade level performance.

Assessments are used for a variety of purposes:

1. to screen students for reading problems, including FastBridge early reading and CBM reading for dyslexia specifically,
2. to systematically monitor progress over time,
3. to determine students' level of reading proficiency and whether they have met grade-level reading goals,
4. to determine or diagnose potential sources of reading difficulty for students not making adequate progress despite the use of intense intervention,
5. and to provide useful data to grade/level teams for planning and instruction.

Assessments

Grade	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
September	FastBridge- Early Reading Composite (Concepts of Print, Onset Sounds, Letter naming and Letter sounds)	FastBridge- Early Reading (Word Segmenting, Nonsense words, Sight Words Sentence Reading)	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) Fastbridge- aReading	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) FastBridge- aReading
January	FastBridge- Early Reading Composite (Onset Sounds, Letter Sounds, Word Segmenting, Nonsense words)	FastBridge -Early Reading (Word Segmenting, Nonsense words, Sight Words, CBM Reading)	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) FastBridge- aReading	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) FastBridge- aReading
May	FastBridge- Early Reading Composite (Letter Sounds, Word Segmenting, Nonsense Words, Sight Words)	FastBridge -Early Reading (Word Segmenting, Nonsense words, Sight Words, CBM Reading)	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) FastBridge- aReading	FastBridge- Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading (CBM) FastBridge- aReading
How are results shared	Conferences Letters of services invitation	Conferences Letters of services invitation	Conferences Letters of services invitation	Conferences Letters of services invitation

As part of the Child Find process, classroom teachers, interventionists, special education teachers and administration meet twice a year to review results from screening assessments and place/review placements of students into tiers of intervention (RTI) as needed and appropriate. The RTI team meets monthly to discuss interventions strategies, effectiveness, and student progress. Where data isn't clear, additional diagnostic assessments may be administered.

Dyslexia

MN State Statute 125A.01, subd 2 has defined dyslexia as the following:

"Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Students who have a dyslexia diagnosis must meet the state and federal eligibility criteria in order to qualify for special education services.

MDE states that there are 3 types of dyslexia identification:

1. Diagnosis of dyslexia provided by a clinical practitioner (medical diagnosis)
2. Characteristics of dyslexia identified through screening and additional diagnostic assessment process (local literacy plan assessments)
3. Student identification with a disability (special education comprehensive evaluation)

Bluffview uses FastBridge as it's universal screener which is administered each fall, winter and spring. The Early Reading composite and CBM reading assessment are identified as accepted universal screening tools to aid in the identification of students with dyslexia. They are included in the assessment grid on the previous page. Students flagged as being at risk will be evaluated by his/her RTI team and placed in the appropriate Tier according to student need.

The Indicator of "Family History" will be addressed through a family questionnaire on our intake forms. If there is an indication of a history of dyslexia, a parent interview may be requested to seek more information, including but not limited to, a child specific suspicion, evaluation or diagnosis of dyslexia and/or more detailed information on the family history regarding reading/dyslexia.

Classroom teachers will be responsible for maintaining a collection of student spelling efforts, and analyzing them as part of any discussions about students that have been flagged as potentially struggling with dyslexia. The teachers will also maintain an observation log of any students that they suspect may be struggling with dyslexia. Admin will continue to train the staff on signs and symptoms of dyslexia using readily available tools like *Dyslexia in the Classroom-What Every Teacher Needs to Know* published by the International Dyslexia Association.

Convergence Insufficiency (CI)

District efforts:

Professional Development will include awareness and symptoms of CI. In an effort to detect CI, the staff intentionally observes students engaged in close work and reading. Students may show signs of and/or complain of eyestrain; headaches; blurred or double vision; inability to concentrate or sustain attention; frequent loss of place; squinting, rubbing, closing or covering an eye; trouble remembering what was read; words appearing to move, jump, swim or float; problems with motion sickness and/or vertigo following time spent on close work (i.e., reading, computer work, desk work, playing handheld video games, or doing crafts). Staff would then conduct a student and parent interview to determine reading/visual problems and to explore the cause of the observed/reported symptoms.

Educational Implications:

A child's education team may include a general education teacher, parent, child, or RTI team which has options for continuing to support a child within the education environment.

Examples include:

Providing interventions that are focused on academic skills instruction to support the student in acquiring skills that were missed due to limitation with coordinating vision.

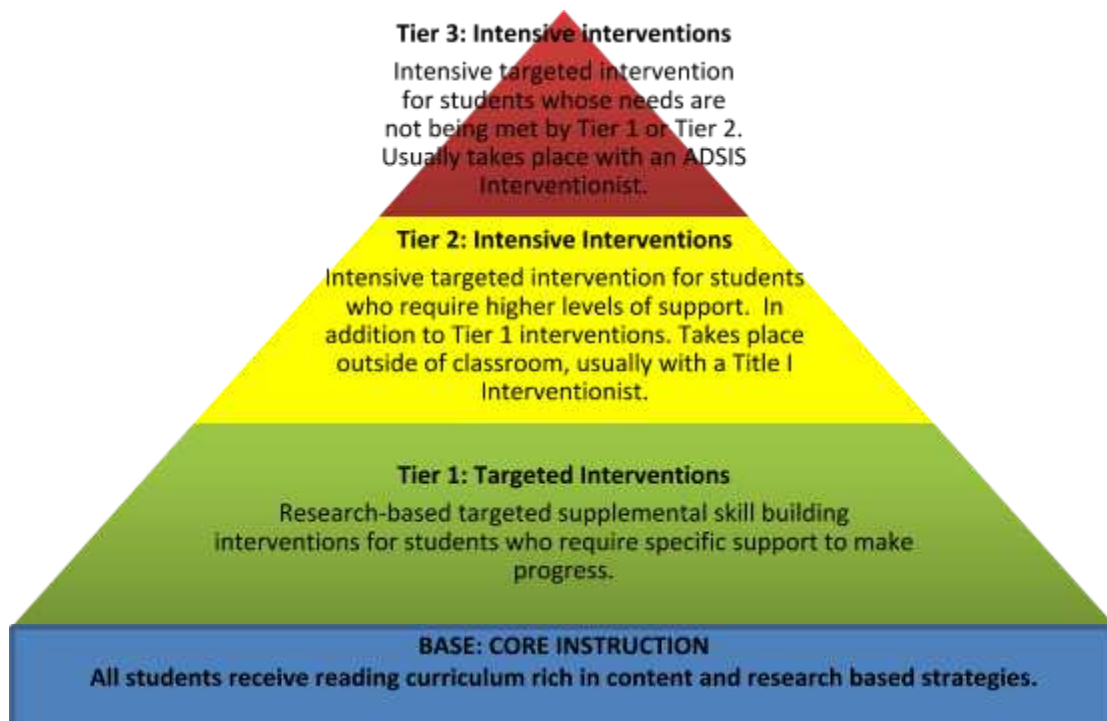
Conducting an evaluation for a 504 plan for classroom accommodations to address limitations with stamina and fatigue that become barriers to accessing the general curriculum. Examples may include but are not limited to materials with higher contrast, double spacing, or use of alternate formats.

Conducting a comprehensive evaluation, including a review of all existing information, to determine the presence of disability and need for special education as defined under IDEA.

Response to Intervention Framework

Literacy Interventions are provided to any kindergarten through third grade students identified through screening as at-risk for reading difficulties. Intervention is provided in the area(s) of identified need with the goal of accelerating student growth to reach grade level by the end of year.

Bluffview Montessori School has a well established and effective Response to Intervention (RTI) program in place which provides a framework of tiered levels of instructional support to accelerate student learning. It includes identifying students as early as Kindergarten and using early interventions with research-based materials, providing additional academic supports that will enable them to be successful in the general education environment.



Core Instruction

Bluffview's core classroom instruction utilizes Montessori as a framework and Minnesota state standards guide reading instruction. All the essential components of reading are presented in a Montessori reading program: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Reading serves as a common element for the entire curriculum and is interwoven throughout all areas, making reading a primary focus of learner activities. The depth and breadth, in addition to the individualized nature of instruction, ensures that the needs of children are met. Students are active participants in the learning process and are intrinsically motivated to achieve higher levels of reading; they read because they want to, not because they have to.

Multi-aged learning environments facilitate differentiated instruction and multiple resources are available for kindergarten through third grade students in the 5 areas of reading. Instruction is provided in varied formats: to the whole group, in small reading groups, and on an individual basis. Many forms of read aloud and silent reading happen on a daily basis. Our core curriculum provides balanced literacy instruction and we have aligned our curriculum to Minnesota Language Arts standards to enable a smooth transition between levels.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD), approved and funded by the United States Department of Education, names Montessori as a research-based program which is supported by reliable research and effective practices. The Montessori Public School Consortium includes reading research statistics. In reference to the Montessori reading program and gifted students, they state, "The methods used in Montessori reading programs are highly effective with both learning-disabled and gifted learners; the reason for their effectiveness, however, is that the environments have been designed to ensure success for all children."

Tier 1

Tier 1 represents the entry level of interventions. All students in K-3 are assessed in the fall using the Fastbridge reading assessment. Students in kindergarten who score in the lowest 20th %ile will be targeted by classroom teachers and receive a minimum of twenty minutes of direct reading instruction above and beyond their regular reading lessons each day. Additional instruction is given in identified areas of need (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency , vocabulary, comprehension) using Montessori philosophy and materials.

Any student in grades 1-3 whose scores on the Fastbridge assessments are below the 40th percentile will be placed in Tier 1 of the RTI model. In addition to core reading lessons, these students will receive a minimum of twenty minutes of additional small group instruction daily by their classroom teacher in the classroom. The classroom interventions utilize *Project Read*, a research-driven language arts curriculum that meets the National Reading Panel's five essential components of effective reading instruction. Other research-based reading curricula may also be used to address areas of identified need. These students will be assessed weekly using Fastbridge probes.

Tier Two

Tier two is designed to meet the needs of students between the 25th and 40th percentile according to FastBridge Screening Assessment results. Students in Tier two Reading Interventions will receive direct instruction individually or in small groups with a Title I Reading Interventionist three times per week for twenty minutes totaling a minimum of 60 minutes per week. Tier two interventions take place outside the classroom in an area of the school designated specifically for interventions. Interventions are planned during times where they do not conflict with core lessons and specialist classes.

Tier Three

Tier three is designed to meet the needs of students below the 25th percentile according to FastBridge Screening Assessment results. Students in Tier three Reading Interventions will receive direct instruction in small groups or individually with a Reading Interventionist (ADSIS Grant) for a minimum of 100 minutes per week. Tier three interventions also take place

outside the classroom in an area of the school designated specifically for interventions and are planned during times where they do not conflict with core lessons and specialist classes.

Intervention Resources

FastBridge offers a wealth of intervention resources, and have them broken down into Phonemic Awareness, Phonological Awareness, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. This warehouse of intervention strategies provides numerous options for teachers. Other research based programs Bluffview has that intervention teachers may choose from includes: SPIRE, PRESS, SRA Corrective Reading, eSolution, Phonics for Reading, ROAR, PALS, CARS, STARS, Sonday, Leveled Literacy Interventions, and Readworks. We are always actively seeking more intervention resources.

The intervention staff has been researching the effectiveness of these interventions by reviewing them on sites like the *What Works Clearinghouse*, *The National Center of Intensive Intervention*, *Best Evidence Encyclopedia*, and *Intervention Central* in an effort to ensure that our Interventions are strong. Additionally, as part of our MTSS work through Hiawatha Valley Education District, all the member schools created a list of the Interventions that they are using as a resource for the group.

One goal that the Intervention staff is currently engaged in is reviewing the pros and cons of the creation of a Standard Treatment Protocol vs using a Problem solving approach. Currently we use a Problem solving approach, where a team meets and discusses student needs. The Intervention teacher has a warehouse of interventions to select from based on the needs of the students. The flexibility of this approach allows for teachers to meet students where they are as opposed to a predetermined regiment. This may potentially increase reading skills more rapidly. The Standard Treatment method is one that we are currently reviewing and debating.

Parent Notification and Involvement

Bluffview Montessori School uses a variety of ways to notify and involve parents. Teachers provide information to parents regarding student reading progress at conferences in the fall and the spring. The majority of Bluffview parents attend conferences, however if a parent is not able to attend, teachers make every attempt to meet at another time or communicate by phone or email. Parents are provided with written progress reports at the end of each semester.

At least once per year, parents are provided with the results from screening assessments. For parents with students at risk for difficulty, we provide additional information including a description of areas where individual students struggle, as well as support offered at school and suggestions for home.

Our goal of accelerating literacy development for all students requires consistent communication between parents and school. Parents with students in interventions receive regular progress updates from teachers and interventionists and are available for conferencing by phone, email or in person upon request.

Bluffview supports parent partnerships and invites engagement in many ways. Opportunities for parents to partner in their child's education specific to literacy development include:

- February focus on literacy- "I love to read month" features guest readers, read-a-thon, personal reading challenge, and other activities to motivate readers
- An additional learning pod for first grade students to build literacy skills
- Title I parent and family events and compact
- Title I/ADSIS parent information night
- Parent education evenings focused on literacy
- School communications including reading assessment information explained for better understanding by parents
- Annual author visit to the school
- Summer learning ideas for home
- Strategies to support reading growth at least 3 times per year
- Librarian hosts 3 book fairs annually, and 1 guest author visit
- Partner with Rotary Club to deliver dictionaries to each third grade student as well as an annual reading event to the K and pre-K students that includes gifting them each with a book
- Weekly school newsletters, which include a monthly letter from the Tier 3 Reading Interventionist
- Attend Young Writers Conference at Winona State University
- Host Winona State student teachers focused on literacy education-they work with the students that are on the cusp of meeting RTI needs
- Classroom newsletters
- School and teacher websites
- Facebook page
- All school listserv

Staff Development

Bluffview strives to continually improve teacher knowledge and skills in high quality literacy instruction. Staff development is provided in the five components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension during monthly staff meetings, weekly team meetings and early release days. Professional development on improving reading instruction is regular and ongoing at Bluffview.

Our staff continues to focus on understanding ways to utilize data in an ongoing manner to impact classroom literacy instruction. Teacher training sessions are scheduled each fall to review achievement results from the previous year and set goals for the upcoming school year. This includes training on the use of FastBridge and EduClimber.

Professional development on recognizing the diverse needs of students in cross-cultural settings is being addressed through a customized series of Cultural Competency training. We have less than 2% English language learners at the school. However, we do believe that culturally responsive instruction is important and will identify resources for staff to recognize and respond to students with oral language and linguistic needs as we move forward.

The following are areas of identified need at Bluffview:

All teachers

- Recognizing the diverse needs of students in cross-cultural settings
- Integration of the 5 primary components of reading instruction
 - Vocabulary and comprehension strategy instruction specifically
- Intervention methods selected for use with students-Fastbridge Intervention lists
- Understanding and utilizing data to inform instruction
- Examining data and effectively disseminating that information to families
- Continued professional development on the signs and symptoms of dyslexia

Intervention teachers

- Benchmark assessments
- Use of assessments for diagnostics
- How to read diagnostic data and share with parents and teachers
- Record keeping
- Comprehensive strategy instruction, OG training
- Fastbridge, EduClimber training

Paraprofessionals

- Fastbridge training on progress monitoring tools
- Education on Autism Spectrum Disorder

Parents

- How to implement a basic plan to read with children
- Leveled readers and other reading resources including access to those on-line
- Promoting community resources for parenting like ECFE
- Parent education evenings/literacy night

In order to inform stakeholders of district assessments and data, Bluffview Montessori School will:

- Post assessment methods and data that is submitted to Commissioner annually including the objectives of assessment program, names of assessments, and grade levels of administration as part of our local literacy plan for students in Kindergarten through third grade
- The public report will be titled *ISD 4001 Bluffview Montessori School Literacy Plan*. It will be displayed on the school's website and will contain all required elements consistent with MN statute 120B.12.
- Provide a link to the MN Report Card on the MDE website
- Provide assessment information through the school's website including
 - Objectives for assessments
 - Names and grade levels of all assessments administered
- Present the literacy plan annually for school board review
- Engagement through the District Advisory Committee required by the World's Best Workforce Plan