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## **THREE RIVERS MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT 4266-07**

### **READ WELL BY THIRD GRADE LITERACY PLAN**

#### **2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR**

#### **LOCAL LITERACY PLAN OVERVIEW**

Three Rivers Montessori (TRM) has developed a local literacy plan to ensure students are reading well by third grade. TRM provides early learning experiences, including multisensory experiences, phonemic awareness and a systematic approach to language instruction to ensure academic success which leads to college readiness. The literacy plan meets the requirement of MN State Statute 120B.12 which states that all districts must have a local literacy plan.

#### **This plan includes:**

- How the district will identify students who are not reading at grade level in all grades and those in grade 3 or higher that demonstrate reading difficulties to their teacher
- The process by which the district will assess reading proficiency
- The interventions and approach the district will take to accelerate growth so all children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade
- Parent communication surrounding assessment results as well as strategies that can be used at home
- Staff Development and training that allows licensed teachers to develop and maximize skills

#### **LITERACY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Three Rivers Montessori's mission is to *empower students to reach their full potential through authentic Montessori learning*. Language development is at the heart of the Montessori environment. The Montessori classroom is rich in a variety of experiences such as games that focus on letter sounds, stories, songs and materials that appeal to the senses. TRM provides these experiences to all students so they are reading well by third grade.

TRM has adopted the following objectives to meet literacy goals:

- TRM's curriculum for reading and writing is aligned with the MN K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts
- TRM uses summative assessment and formative assessments to assess grade level achievement to the state standards
- Teachers utilize a lesson planning and record keeping tool for teachers to determine the progression of lessons in the Montessori curriculum and to track progress/mastery of skills

#### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**



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The literacy program at Three Rivers Montessori School approaches reading and writing systematically and across the curriculum as a whole. The Montessori curriculum views literacy as a way to connect across cultures, as a means for expressing oneself and as a way to explore individual interests.

TRM focuses on phonics, grammar, vocabulary and word study, fluency and written expression to develop literacy skills for all students.

### **Phonics and Phonemic Awareness**

Beginning in Kindergarten children at TRM learn to identify letter sounds by using the sandpaper letters. Children trace the sound with their finger while isolating the sound and saying it out loud. Then they move to the movable alphabet and games that highlight beginning, middle and end sounds.

Montessori language lessons are presented systematically. When children have mastered consonant vowel consonant (CVC words) teachers begin focusing on consonant blends. The movable alphabet assists with the study words that contain consonant blends.

In the Montessori elementary classroom children also begin reading books that focus on their mastered sounds. Books are read aloud to teachers to ensure any skills that do not translate across materials/books can be re-taught.

### **Vocabulary and Word Study**

A developed and extensive vocabulary allows children to better understand others and the world they live in. In the Montessori classroom children experience conversations with adults and peers as well as an environment full of literature and nomenclature. Nomenclature, the matching of pictures with their corresponding labels, is present across all subject areas. This developed vocabulary allows students to better comprehend what they are reading as they become more familiar with a wide range of words.

### **Fluency, Comprehension and Written Expression**

Reading fluency is achieved through repeated practice. In a Montessori environment students practice reading aloud frequently and across subjects. At a young age children start with matching labels to pictures and objects as they learn to classify. Children label the environment and are encouraged to make these labels by sounding out words phonetically.

As students enter the E1 classroom (2nd-3rd grade) they have opportunities to read aloud in small groups, to teachers and to teacher's assistants. This builds confidence and allows for repetition. Students are encouraged to read aloud in small group lessons with the teacher. These opportunities are built into lessons that include informational text that matches photographs in the subjects of science, geography, biology and botany.



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The work gets more complex as students enter the E2 classroom, grades 4-6, where the children match historical information to timelines, often creating their own timelines by summarizing and writing information found in encyclopedias and other factual texts. Students study poetry and recite to their peers from memory, while being encouraged to write and present their own ideas. They organize their reports with outlines and key words.

### **Fountas and Pinnell**

Fountas and Pinnell is an intensive Leveled Literacy Intervention System. The system is utilized in small groups or with individual children who are experiencing challenges with reading and writing. TRM teachers begin using Fountas and Pinnell as early as Kindergarten to assist students in reading well by third grade. All licensed teachers at TRM are trained in how to properly use Fountas and Pinnell as reading instruction.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Fastbridge**

TRM utilizes FastBridge to check every student's performance during the school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Kindergartners and 1st graders take the earlyReading and earlyMath formative assessment; 2nd through 6th graders take the aReading assessment. This helps staff identify which individual students are meeting the academic standards per the child's grade level (on track) and also identifies those children who may need supplemental interventions and instructional support to meet academic goals.

Progress monitoring may also be used as an additional resource within FastBridge to set goals for learning growth. By utilizing progress monitoring, teachers can quickly and frequently assess the academic performance of each student, get a clear measure of improvement and determine the effectiveness of the instruction.

### **Executive Functioning**

TRM utilizes tests of executive functioning for all students as a means of assessing the whole child. This is an ongoing evaluation, but at a minimum will be conducted in the fall and spring of each school year.

Tests for executive functioning measure skills such as attention, inhibitory control, working memory and organization and planning. TRM believes the assessment of these skills leads to a better understanding of how the child functions in the classroom and helps determine what additional support may be needed to lead to further academic success.

### **MCA's**



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The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) is a state-wide test utilized by each public/charter school to measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards. 3rd-6th Graders at TRM will take Reading and Math; 5th graders will also take Science. The MCAs are taken in the spring each school year.

The administration of this assessment meets federal and state legislative requirements. It is possible for students who receive special education services, and who meet eligibility requirements, to take an alternative assessment instead - the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

### **2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR TESTING SCHEDULE**

<b>FASTBRIDGE</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING</b>	<b>MCAs</b>
Fall: Started 09/12/2022 Winter: Started 01/09/23 Spring: Started 04/17/23	Fall: Started 09/26/2022 Spring: Started 4/10/23	Spring: Started 04/17/23

### **INTERVENTIONS**

Students at Three Rivers Montessori, who are identified through the assessment processes or from observations by the classroom teacher, as not reading at grade level receive support in addition to the individualized learning plans provided by teachers. Often general education teachers in a Montessori environment are able to modify lessons to meet the needs of each child. However, if a child is identified as needing additional support beyond the Montessori materials, there are a variety of ways this is provided at TRM. These supports may include:

- Remedial work provided by the general education teacher
- Additional one-on-one time with the general education teacher
- Increased time to practice reading with a classroom teacher or assistant teacher
- FASTBridge progress monitoring to track the effectiveness of lessons or interventions

Should a child need additional support in addition to those listed above, the general education teacher may reach out to the school's Montessori Curriculum Coordinator. This individual is skilled and trained in administering the school's assessments as well as identifying Montessori materials and/or lessons that will assist the child work toward reading at grade level. The Montessori Curriculum Coordinator, the General Education Teacher and School Director are involved in communication with the child's parents in regard to the child's progress.



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## **CHILD FIND TEAM**

The Three Rivers Montessori Child Find Team's purpose is to identify those children who are not meeting their expected growth rate according to the school's assessment data and/or the general education teacher's observations. The TRM Child Find Team consists of the child's general education teacher, lead special education teacher(s), The Special Education Coordinator, the Montessori Curriculum Coordinator and the School Director.

The process for addressing concerns regarding a student's academic progress or social/emotional/behavior needs is as follows:

1. The child is referred to the team by a teacher or a family member of the child.
2. The child's parents or guardians are contacted to inform them the Child Find Team will be evaluating the child's needs.
3. The Child Find Team will set a meeting to discuss the specific concerns identified by the general education teacher and Montessori Curriculum Coordinator. These individuals will have work samples and/or data as a reference for how the child performs in relation to his or her peers.
4. At the meeting the team will discuss possible interventions and choose at least one intervention for implementation and data collection. The special education teacher(s) will assist the general education teacher with data collection options.
5. In order to determine the child's baseline data, two data points will be recorded within a one week time frame.
6. The 4-8 week intervention process is started with a minimum of 8 data points.
7. When the intervention process is complete the Child Find Team meets again to review.
  - a. If the intervention worked, the general education will use the intervention until no longer needed
  - b. If the intervention did not work, the team chooses a different intervention and repeats steps 4 and 5.
8. When this intervention period is complete, the team meets again to review results. Either the intervention was successful and the teacher will continue or the intervention was not successful and a special education evaluation is discussed.
  - a. If a special education evaluation is discussed the Special Education Team will contact the parents and inform them of the additional steps in the evaluation process.

## **SCREENING FOR DYSLEXIA**

The International Dyslexia Association describes dyslexia as "difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities." TRM screens all elementary students for indicators in compliance with Minnesota Statute 120B.12. These screenings are designed to assist in the identification of students that may benefit from academic interventions or additional evaluations.

### **Screening Process:**

- Early identification screening is conducted via FASTBridge assessments.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1: The earlyReading assessment is done every fall, winter and spring; This assessment measures phonemic awareness, decoding, memory and recall



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- Grades Two through Six: The Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment is done on an as needed basis
- Note: Screening does not diagnose dyslexia but is the first step in identifying students who require more explicit instruction in reading
- TRM students that show some risk and high risk on FASTBridge assessments may benefit from learning interventions or additional evaluations

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Communication:**

TRM parents and/or guardians are notified of assessment results from screenings at parent/teacher conferences or as soon as possible if additional screenings or assessments are needed.

**Staff Expertise:**

All Lead Teachers, TRM's Montessori Curriculum Coordinator, and the Executive Director are trained in a systematic approach to phonological instruction. The Montessori curriculum includes a multisensory approach to phonemic awareness. Skills are practiced until mastery occurs through repetition.

**Progress Monitoring through FASTBridge:**

TRM monitors student growth weekly for students who are receiving additional support until the child reaches proficiency level. If the student is not making progress with the intervention, a different intervention is put in place.

**Student Support Team:**

TRM does not formally diagnose dyslexia, however the school monitors student performance and screens for reading concerns. If a child has a dyslexia diagnosis from an outside source, parents or guardians should make the classroom teacher aware as the additional information can help with student support needed in the classroom.

The classroom teacher will bring information regarding the diagnosis to the school's Child Find Team. The team will evaluate how the diagnosis is affecting the student's performance in the area of reading to determine if additional supports are needed. The student's general education teacher will notify parents if any additional services are needed.

**SCREENING FOR CONVERGENCE INSUFFICIENCY**



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Convergence insufficiency (CI) is a common vision disorder. Individuals that experience CI can have that a variety of symptoms, including:

- Eyestrain
- Headaches
- Blurred Vision
- Double Vision
- Sleepiness
- Trouble concentrating
- Print that moves while the individual is reading
- Loss of comprehension after short periods of reading
- Performing “close” activities

An individual who has convergence insufficiency may exhibit these behaviors when doing “close” work - reading text, working at the computer or desk, while playing handheld video games or crafting.

- Complaining of headaches
- Showing lack of concentration
- Squinting or rubbing of the eyes
- Closing one eye
- Words jumping on the page
- Difficulty with recall when reading
- Motion sickness while performing “close” tasks
- Vertigo

CI is not directly related to learning to decode and spell, however it can greatly affect a student’s ability to sustain effort during reading tasks.

A licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist is trained to diagnose CI. An orthoptist can provide vision therapy.

Proper testing for CI is not included in school eye screenings. Therefore, although TRM does monitor for symptoms of CI, the school does not include screening for convergence insufficiency disorder as part of its vision screening program. Parents with concerns about CI are asked to see their licensed eye care specialist for assessment and treatment.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Upon enrollment at Three Rivers Montessori, families are provided an enrollment packet which includes a data form upon which families are asked to provide the student’s primary language. If another language is indicated other than English, the Director, Classroom General Education Teacher and the child’s family meet to determine additional support the child may need. Should needs be identified after the child starts school, staff would also meet to determine the supports.



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TRM does have a small number of English Language Learners and provided an out of field permission for a classroom teacher to provide the needed EL supports for those students.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

TRM allows for over 20 professional development days throughout the school year. Professional development needs are met based on multiple sources of feedback. Among the options for professional development are opportunities for staff to attend seminars or online presentations that focus on reading instruction with the Montessori curriculum.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT**

Teachers communicate with parents formally at least twice a year at parent teacher conferences. Progress Reports are provided at this time, as well as a final report card at the end of the school year. Work samples are provided as Conferences are a time when the need for interventions may be discussed and/or ways the parent can support the child's reading at home which may include technology resources.

### **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Three Rivers Montessori is fortunate to have the community and stakeholder support necessary to provide learning experiences so students are reading well by third grade. This document is reviewed at least annually by the school's administration. The plan is also submitted by the Minnesota Department of Education website annually to the Commissioner of Education. Stakeholders or the public may view the Literacy Plan on the TRM website.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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