

## Sojourner Truth Academy Literacy Plan

Created: June 1, 2012

Updated: June 20, 2023

Literacy Plan Review Timeline: This plan will be reviewed annually. As new staff is hired, the plan will be included in their pre-service training.

### Executive Summary

Sojourner Truth's Local Literacy Plan details our efforts to ensure each scholar is reading at or above grade level by third grade. The plan meets the requirements of Minnesota Statute 120B.12. This plan is ongoing and will be updated yearly.

Sojourner Truth Academy is an elementary and middle school in North Minneapolis, serving scholars in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The school offers a rigorous, standards based instructional program.

**Mission:** The mission of the school is to prepare children for the future by building confidence and a strong sense of self-worth through small classrooms and an open, safe, family-like environment. Sojourner Truth Academy (STA) supports families by embracing change when necessary for the good of the children and serving as a bridge to the community. Staff at Sojourner Truth Academy is dedicated to and held accountable for providing a learning experience that is culturally relevant, challenging, and fun.

**Vision:** Sojourner Truth Academy is passionate about helping children achieve academic and social success in a community of high expectations where each child is valued.

Unlocking the door to literacy for all scholars is perhaps the most important task we face as educators. Reading and writing are the cornerstones of all academic and most professional success in our society. If scholars do not learn to read and write, they inevitably fail in school; the consequences of that failure are lifelong and far-reaching for both our children and our community.

Current federal and state legislation as well as statewide testing data indicate that we must focus even more instructional attention on the critical area of literacy. In the 21-22 school year we completed a comprehensive needs assessment and a strategic process with an external consultant. Through this work we have identified 3 strategic priorities and a 5 year plan to meet the needs of our scholars. Our 5-year Intended Impact Statement is: "By 2027, Sojourner Truth Academy will prepare and support its scholars -- opening doors to success in high school, college, and the future -- by providing rigorous academics that result in grade-level attainment and by fostering integrity, a growth mindset, and compassion in all its scholars."

Our 3 strategic priorities are as follows:

- 1) Create an academic vision and support for strong instructional practice
- 2) Increase effective use of data to drive scholar success
- 3) Develop and implement a talent strategy that builds an effective team and joyful culture

Within the first priority we will capture scholar growth and achievement utilizing MCA, NWEA MAP, ACCESS and internal assessment. We will be creating an early literacy goal from this data for the 23/24 school year. A new reading curriculum was adopted, McGraw Hill - Wonders and will be implemented across all grade levels this year.

Our focus on literacy is critical if we are to accomplish our vision to have all scholars achieve academic success in a community of high expectations, prepared with the knowledge and skills they will need to become leaders in our community.

### **Goals and Objectives**

In 2012, The Minnesota State Legislature enacted statute 120B.12. The statute states that: "A school district must adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of grade three. A local literacy plan must include a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and identify and meet staff development needs. The district must post it's literacy plan on the official school district website."

It is the goal of Sojourner Truth Academy that all scholars will be reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Our ongoing commitment to excellence is grounded in:

- Comprehensive, ongoing assessment of each scholar
- The 2010 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts
- Classroom curriculum and materials that are research-based for effectiveness
- Research-based teaching and learning protocols
- 5 year strategic plan that addresses reading goals
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that focus on literacy data
- Work of the Literacy Instructional Specialist in collaboration with the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Instructional Leadership Team to develop a comprehensive literacy plan.

At Sojourner Truth Academy, we base our definition of “proficiency” on the Minnesota Language Arts Standards benchmarks at each grade level. We use multiple data points including: classroom assessment, teacher observation and anecdotal notes, running records, MAP, and MCA to define proficiency. The table below further defines how we define “proficient” in reading for grades K-3:

Grade	Assessment	Proficiency
K	MAP	RIT Score of 136 or higher
1	MAP	RIT Score of 156 or higher
2	MAP	RIT Score of 172 or higher
3	MAP	RIT Score of 186 or higher
	MCA	Meets or Exceeds

## Assessment

To assess students’ level of reading proficiency in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will be given assessments that will help determine their literacy strengths and needs. Assessments are administered in whole-class, small groups, and individual settings throughout the year by the scholars’ classroom teachers, Associate Educators (Interventionists), MAP (K-3), ACCESS and MCA (3) as well as classroom-based and teacher-designed measures.

**Screening and Diagnostic**—We will use MAP testing (K-3) in the fall, winter and spring. This data assists in determining instructional reading levels, flexible grouping, and whole group, small group and individual interventions as needed.

#### MAP

- Areas assessed:
  - o Literature
  - o Informational Text
  - o Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Assessment instruments used: Computer based scoring
- Administered: Three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Administered by: Classroom teachers

At the completion of each testing cycle, classroom teachers conduct an analysis of their students' results. They create an action plan to guide their literacy instruction and literacy interventions. The plan includes grouping, skills to reinforce and introduce, strategies to model and teach, and interventions for students below grade level. The plan also includes assessments teachers will use to monitor progress.

Assessment data will be available for parents with their student's progress reports and report card, as well as at conferences two times per year.

#### **Core Curriculum and Instruction**

The end goal of any curriculum must be to provide all scholars with the essential skills and knowledge to enable them to meet high academic standards. Sojourner Truth Academy has a balanced approach to literacy with comprehensive, scientifically based reading instructional practices to assess and support all scholars' reading progress depending on their needs. The curriculum provides a clear alignment of essential skills and knowledge, instruction, and assessment measures. The development and implementation of the curriculum reflects current research and best practices. It is organized around six research-based components: print awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics/decoding, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension.

1. **Print Awareness:** Defined as "knowing how books work." It involves knowing that print carries meaning and serves many purposes. It involves knowledge of print concepts: front-to-back, top-to-bottom, left-to-right, letter (upper and lower case), word, paragraph and page.
2. **Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to hear and think about the individual sounds (phonemes) the letters represent in words and understanding letters represent certain sounds.
3. **Phonics/Decoding:** The ability to match letters and spelling patterns with sounds to identify words.
4. **Fluency:** is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression. Phonemic awareness and phonics have become automatic.

5. Vocabulary Development: Scholars' ability to understand what they read relies to a great extent through the expansion of vocabulary. It is impossible to learn without knowing and understanding the words that relate to that topic.
6. Comprehension: The ability to read text and extract meaning. Research suggests that good readers are strategic. They monitor their understanding, and, when a problem occurs, they take steps to fix it. Scholars learn how to activate prior knowledge, create mental images, predict and question, retell and summarize, draw inferences, and determine important information.

There is a strong reciprocal relationship between reading and writing. Learning to read well influences writing as well. Research suggests that good writers pass through stages when they compose text. These stages include: prewriting, drafting, revising, and publishing. Teachers are encouraged to provide this experience by facilitating writers' workshops in their classroom. Elementary scholars have the opportunity to develop writing skills in opinion, informative/explanatory and narrative writing.

Kindergarten classrooms are kept small with no more than 20 students in each classroom. There are two full-time paraprofessionals that support classroom instruction. The paraprofessionals are trained to work with students one on one or in small groups to advance their literacy skills.

In Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, time is designated for 90 minutes of ELA instruction (whole group, small group and independent work) and 25 minutes of intervention.

#### **Parent Notification and Involvement**

Parents will receive MAP scores 3 times per year at the completion of each testing window.

Scholar progress and assessment data will be made available to parent/guardians through Parent/Teacher conferences (2 times per year) and with their student's progress reports and report cards (2 times per year).

A literacy focused night is dedicated to families to explore curriculum support at home and the joy of reading.

#### **Intervention and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

Sojourner Truth Academy has a multi-tiered structure of support to meet the expectations outlined in the local literacy plan.

### Core Instruction

All classrooms in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will execute a 90-minute literacy block. Literacy Block – This will consist of whole group instruction (modeling, guided practice), small group instruction (small groups, partner work), and independent practice (students working individually to complete the work from the daily objective/whole group lesson and/or on work tailored to their individual goals).

Classroom teachers will introduce students to a variety of authors, illustrators and types of texts to entice them to become readers. They will also teach students the reading skills that are frequently utilized and teach systematically and explicitly how to become good readers and writers.

During small group interventions, students will rotate through stations. They will be led by the classroom teacher and support staff, focused on phonics, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction and the other on interventions as needed. There are also stations with various authentic reading tasks to be completed when not working with a teacher. Scholars will also complete individualized, computer-based learning plans through Khan Kids and/or Khan Academy. Instructional components including steps, guiding questions, and videos are included on these platforms to assist students in their learning.

Interventions Sojourner Truth Academy's Multi-Tiered System of Support to meet the needs of ALL learners is as follows:

- Tier 1: All students in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are grouped by instructional levels and specific needs for differentiated literacy instruction. These groupings are flexible based on progress monitoring.
- Tier 2: Classroom Teacher will provide interventions on targeted skills, determined by the MAP Learning Continuum. ~~and/or FastBridge—Early Learning Suite~~. The teacher will use supplemental materials that support the skills that the students are missing.
- Tier 3: An ADSIS Interventionist will provide Tier 3 instruction to qualifying students.

### Professional Development

### Alignment and Collaboration

To meet the goals outlined in the Literacy Plan, the school has established common planning time for grade level teaching teams, which allows teachers to plan and share instructional strategies.



All licensed teachers at Sojourner Truth Academy participate in weekly professional development meetings that focus on analyzing data, unpacking benchmarks, planning using best practice literacy instruction and strategies. These meetings are conducted during teachers' regular work hours. The Instructional Leadership Team and Multi-Tiered System of Support Teams use assessment data to prioritize and select professional development objectives. The Instructional Leadership Team will research proven strategies and field-test the strategies in their classrooms before introducing the strategies to all classroom teachers. The Director of Teaching and Learning and the Literacy Instructional Specialist may model the use of the strategy at the professional development meetings, present and/or display student work, and discuss the results of implementation. Classroom teachers then create a plan to implement the strategies in their classrooms. The Director of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Specialists, and Lead teachers observe classroom implementations and provide feedback to individual teachers. Classroom teachers bring back student work and results to discuss at the next professional development meeting.

At the beginning of each school year, before students arrive, all staff will participate in required training. These trainings will be, but are not limited to: needs of diverse learners and growth mindset, structures and techniques of literacy instruction, anecdotal notes, and instructional interventions as well as equity in instruction. The Instructional Leadership Team will conduct weekly observations and provide feedback and coaching as needed. The ILT will also conduct two formal observations of each classroom teacher at STA. They will use the The New Teacher Project (TNT) Core Teaching rubric as a tool to assess each teacher's instruction. The ILT will meet weekly to discuss findings from informal observations to help plan professional development activities based on instructional techniques. The Director of Teaching and Learning will also meet regularly with the individuals on the ILT to determine goals, instructional strategies, and assess progress to mastery.

### **Curriculum and Instruction System**

#### **Standards Alignment**

- At the beginning of each school year all teachers will review, and revise as needed curriculum maps for both literacy and math. The curriculum map must include alignment between the curriculum and the 2010 ELA Academic Standards with standards cited and when the content will be taught and mastered by students. Classroom teachers in grades Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will collaborate to ensure that they are aware of the literacy goals for students at each grade level.

#### **Curriculum Resources**

- During the 21-22 and 22-23 school years, several ELA curriculum pilots were completed to determine which curriculum STA would adopt for Grades K-5 beginning in 23-24. After the piloting process and extensive committee work, STA selected Wonders 2023 (McGraw

Hill) for implementation in GrK-5. The Wonders program was revised for 2023 to contain more comprehensive phonics components. We will utilize the core Wonders curriculum, WonderWorks (up to 2.5 grade levels below for intervention), Wonders Newcomer and EL components, and vocabulary materials.

Additionally, each classroom has a 500-book library which contains many culturally-relevant texts and diverse, rich books to further students' independent reading.

### **Student Support System for ELL Learners**

When a Sojourner Truth Academy scholar's primary language is not English, the scholar is administered a language proficiency test to determine English Learner (EL) identification. We utilize WIDA's W-APT. As a valid and reliable test, they assess social, instructional, and academic English proficiency in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening. ESL teachers use the WIDA English language proficiency test to determine each scholar's English Language Development (ELD) levels. The WIDA tests are aligned to the WIDA ELD standards that were adopted by Minnesota in June 2011. Sojourner Truth Academy also uses the WIDA ACCESS to inform the level of primary and English language acquisition for each EL scholar.

#### **Training and Support**

Sojourner Truth Academy has a licensed ESL teacher that provides multiple training sessions for staff each year on how to meet the needs of the diverse learners in our building. Some of the topics have included making homework and test modifications, Sheltered Instruction, and strategies and techniques that make learning more meaningful for diverse learners. The ESL teacher also meets once a month with grade level teams to make sure that needs are being met for the diverse learners in the classrooms. This is also a time when classroom teachers can ask for any help they may need with accommodations.

### **Communication System for Annual Reporting**

Sojourner Truth Academy's Local Literacy Plan, attachments, quarterly data, and resources can be found on the district's website at [www.sojournertruthacademy.org](http://www.sojournertruthacademy.org)