THREE RIVERS MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT 4266-07

LOCAL LITERACY PLAN

2025-2026 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 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. Further, the Montessori approach embeds the Science of Reading and its core philosophy.

TRM has adopted the following objectives to meet literacy goals:
- TRM's utilizes UFLi as one of our curriculums (recommended by MDE) for reading and writing is aligned with the MN K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts
- TRM uses Fastbridge as a formative and summative assessment 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 Teachers will engage in professional learning communities, focused on lesson planning, student engagement, and academic achievement.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The literacy program at Three Rivers Montessori School approaches reading and writing systematically and across the curriculum as a whole. Curriculum frameworks are in place for teaching reading and writing across the day that provide guidance for implementing the State standards. 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 phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension and written expression to develop literacy skills for all students.

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness and phonics are both essential components of early literacy education, but they serve different purposes:

- Phonemic Awareness: This refers to the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. It is an auditory skill that does not involve written letters.

- Phonics: This involves the relationship between sounds (phonemes) and their corresponding letters (graphemes) in written language. Phonics teaches how to map sounds to letters, enabling reading and writing.

    Key Differences:
- Phonemic awareness focuses on sound identification and manipulation, while phonics emphasizes the connection between sounds and their written representations.

- Instruction in phonemic awareness typically begins earlier than phonics, although both can overlap in teaching.

    Both skills are crucial for developing reading proficiency in children.

Using UFLI as a consistent resource, 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 and UFLI 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

Teaching vocabulary in the elementary classroom is essential for developing strong reading and writing skills.Effective strategies and activities to help students build a robust vocabulary are integrated throughout the day. Some include using vocabulary words in their writing, interactive games, contextual learning, collaborative learning, read-alouds, storytime songs and poetry.

UFLI being the foundation, 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. Teachers use visual aids in the classroom across all subject areas to enhance learning. One common example is matching pictures with their corresponding labels. This strategy helps develop students' vocabulary, allowing them to better comprehend what they read 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. Interactive reading and writing across the curriculum maximize student engagement and support fluency. Small group reading instruction focuses on fluency and comprehension. All small group instruction is based on formative and FastBridge assessment.

Fluency develops as a result of many opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success. Therefore, TRM students practice rereading aloud texts that are reasonably easy for them, that is, texts containing mostly words that they know or can decode easily. In other words, the texts should be at the students' independent reading level.

A text is at students' independent reading level if they can read it with about 95% accuracy. If the text is more difficult, students will focus on word recognition and will not have an opportunity to develop fluency.

The text students practice rereading orally are relatively short, probably 50-200 words, depending on the age of the students. A variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction, and poetry are used. Poetry is especially well suited to fluency practice because poems for children are often short and they contain rhythm, rhyme, and meaning, making practice easy, fun, and rewarding.

As students enter lower elementary 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.

As students enter upper elementary grades, the work becomes more complex. They begin matching historical information to timelines and often create their own by summarizing and writing information gathered from 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.

Comprehension strategies are conscious plans — sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. Strategies that have research-based evidence for improving text comprehension are implemented with all students. Some include monitoring comprehension, metacognition, graphic and semantic organizers, summarizing, and answering questions.

MTSS

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework that provides academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support for all students. It uses data-driven decision-making and tiered interventions to ensure every student receives the level of support they need to succeed.

Equity and Student Impact

At TRM, our shared commitment is to ensure that every student receives accurate identification and timely, high-quality support. Thoughtful and well-paced implementation allows us to maintain consistency, ensure staff are fully prepared, and interpret screening data effectively—ultimately helping us provide the most impactful interventions for our students.

Careful attention is especially important for students with known disabilities and Multilingual Learners, who benefit greatly from appropriately tailored support and minimal testing burdens. Additionally, establishing clear guidelines for determining which students should be screened helps promote equity and strengthens our ability to use data in ways that truly support all learners.

Professional Learning Communities

Three Rivers Montessori support weekly teacher led professional learning communities. PLCs provide an environment that encourages professional development, collaboration and innovation among teachers. Research suggests positive school reform occurs when teachers participate in authentic PLCs, with improved student achievement as a by-product PLCs focus in schools from teaching to learning. Teachers work collaboratively to improve instruction. Intervention rather than remediation, helps students who are having difficulty learning.

ASSESSMENT

Fastbridge

TRM utilizes Fastbridge testing to check every student's performance during the school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Kindergartners and 1st graders take the Early Reading K-1 and Early Math K-1 formative assessment; 2nd through 6th graders take the Fast Reading and Fast Math 2-5 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 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.

MCAs

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)

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR TESTING SCHEDULE

FASTBRIDGE	MCAs
Fall Progress Monitoring: Reading (K-6) September 15th – September 26th Math (K-6) September 15th – September 26th **Winter Progress Monitoring:** Reading (K-6) January 20th – January 30th Math (K-6) January 22nd – January 30th **Spring Progress Monitoring**: Reading (K-6) May 4th – May 15th Math (K-6) May 4th – May 15th	Spring: Starts 04/13/25

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:

- Guided practice 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
- Small group intervention based on formative and FastBridge data
- FASTBridge progress monitoring to track the effectiveness of lessons or interventions
- MTSS interventions and progress monitoring

Should a child need additional support in addition to those listed above, the general education teacher may reach out to the school's MTSS team. The MTSS team, the General Education Teacher and School Director are involved in communication with the child's parents in regard to the child's progress.

MTSS Child Study Team

The Three Rivers Montessori MTSS Child StudyTeam'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 Study Team consists of the child's general education teacher, lead special education teacher(s), The Special Education representative, the Literacy Lead, the MTSS team, 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 Study Team will be evaluating the child's needs.
3. The Child Study Team will set a meeting to discuss the specific concerns identified by the general education teacher and Literacy Lead. 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 Study 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
- 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 MTSS team, Literacy Lead, and the Executive Director are trained in a systematic approach to phonological instruction. The Montessori curriculum includes a multisensory approach to phonemic awareness.

Implementing Minnesota's dyslexia screening law for grades K–6 involves adhering to the requirements set forth in the Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act. This legislation mandates systematic screening to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, and to provide timely, evidence-based interventions.

Key Requirements for Grades K–3

1. **Universal Screening Schedule**: All students in kindergarten through third grade, including multilingual learners and those receiving special education services, must be screened three times annually:

   ○ Fall: Within the first six weeks of the school year

- ○ Winter: By February 15

- ○ Spring: Within the last six weeks of the school year

2. **Approved Screening Tools**: Districts are required to use literacy screening tools approved by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) that assess foundational reading skills and characteristics of dyslexia. Approved tools include:

   - ○ **FastBridge** (earlyReading for K–1 and CBMReading for grades 1–3

3. **Data Reporting**: TRM will submit data on student performance in foundational reading skills to MDE by June 15 each year as part of the Local Literacy Plan submission.

Considerations for Grade 4

While the primary focus of the READ Act is on grades K–3, students in grade 4 who do not demonstrate mastery of foundational reading skills must also be screened for characteristics of dyslexia using an MDE-approved screening tool. These students should continue to receive evidence-based instruction and progress monitoring until they achieve grade-level proficiency.

Implementation Steps To effectively implement the dyslexia screening requirements:

- **Select Appropriate Screening Tools**: Choose from MDE-approved tools that align with our district's needs and ensure they cover all required components.

- **Staff Training**: TRM will provide professional development to ensure educators are proficient in administering screenings and interpreting results.

- **Develop a Screening Schedule**: TRM has established a timeline that aligns with the mandated screening windows.

- **Communicate with Stakeholders**: TRM will inform parents, guardians, and staff about the screening process, its purpose, and how results will be used to support student learning.

- **Monitor and Adjust**: TRM will regularly review screening data to identify trends, adjust instruction, and provide targeted interventions as needed.

Changes to Dyslexia Screening in Grades K–3 for the 2025–26 School Year

Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, our school will implement several updates to our dyslexia screening process in alignment with Minnesota's READ Act requirements and guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). These changes are designed to ensure more consistent, equitable, and early identification of students who may be at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

1. Continued Use of FastBridge (Approved Screening Tool)

We will continue to use **FastBridge earlyReading and CBMReading** as our primary screening tools. These assessments are approved by the MDE and meet the state's criteria for identifying foundational reading skills and characteristics of dyslexia.

2. Three Annual Screening Windows

To meet state requirements, all students in grades K–3 will be screened three times each year:

- **Fall**: Within the first six weeks of school

- **Winter**: By February 15

- **Spring**: Within the last six weeks of school

3. Screening for All Students

All K–3 students, including multilingual learners and those receiving special education services, will participate in universal screening. This ensures a more inclusive and equitable approach to early identification.

4. Expanded Focus on Dyslexia Characteristics

Although FastBridge already captures several markers related to dyslexia risk (such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency), staff will receive additional training to help interpret the data through a dyslexia-informed lens. Where needed, follow-up diagnostic assessments will be used to clarify risk and guide instruction.

5. Data-Informed Instructional Planning

Screening results will be used to:

- Place students into appropriate **Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions**

- Inform differentiated **Tier 1 instruction**

- Monitor student progress over time and adjust supports as needed

6. Family Communication

We will strengthen communication with families regarding screening results, what they mean, and how we are supporting each student's reading development.

These changes reflect our commitment to using data to identify and support students early—so all learners have the tools they need to become confident readers.

SCREENING FOR CONVERGENCE INSUFFICIENCY

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. Interventions are provided and students are monitored for academic growth.

Grades K-3 Screeners & Grades 4-12 Screeners

Indicate in the chart below the assessment(s) used for universal and dyslexia screening for grades K-3 students, what skills are assessed with the screener, and how often the screener data is collected. For 4-6 grade students who do not demonstrate mastery of foundational reading skills, indicate in the chart below the assessment(s) used for universal and dyslexia screening, what skills are assessed with the screener, and how often the screener data is collected.

Targeted Grades	Name of Assessment	Assessment Publisher	Time Frame Assessment is Given	Purpose of Assessment
K-1	earlyReading	FastBridge	Fall, winter & spring	To assess the child's Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Fluency
1-6	CBMReading	FastBridge	Fall, winter & spring	To assess the child' Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition, Fluency
2-6	aReading	FastBridge	Fall, winter & spring	To assess the child's Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension

Student Summary Level and Dyslexia Screening Data 2024-25 School Year

For districts currently using one of the three approved screeners, if able, please include benchmark data in this submission. For those transitioning to an approved screener, you will submit data in June 2025.

Summary Data Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

For grades kindergarten through grade three, indicate the number of students:

- universally screened: 87 students
- students at or above benchmark in the fall and spring: 35 (Fall), 49 (Spring)
- students screened for dyslexia: 87
- students identified with characteristics of dyslexia: 1 (K-1) 7 (2-3)

Students Grades 4-6 Not Reading at Grade Level

For grades 4-6, indicate the number of students screened, the number of students not reading at grade level, and the number of students identified with characteristics of dyslexia.

- universally screened: 29 students
- students not reading at grade level: 21
- students identified with characteristics of dyslexia: 13

Core Reading Instruction and Curricula Grades K-5

Please indicate the curricula used for core reading instruction at each grade level. Include a description of how the curricula is used and the model of delivery.

Grade	Implemented Curriculum	Curricula Type	Instructional Delivery Minutes Per Day
Kindergarten	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30
Grade 1	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30
Grade 2	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30
Grade 3	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30

Grade 4	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30
Grade 5	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30
Grade 6	UFLI Foundations, K–2, 2022 (Highly Aligned)	Foundational	30

Professional Development Plan

Three Rivers Montessori has trained all teaching staff via CAREIALL in the beginning of August of 2024. TRM uses formative and diagnostic assessment data via Fastbridge to assure continuous improvement. Supplements to the Montessori scope and sequence will be provided on an as needed basis.

Provide the number of educators who have met the Minnesota READ Act professional development requirements through previous training, those who are currently in training, and those who still need training: 9 total staff have completed the READ Act training.

Action Planning for Continuous Improvement

Three Rivers Montessori has made great strides in developing their MTSS programming to ensure smooth transitions for students who need intensified support throughout their educational journey. We can strengthen our approach by establishing an in-house literacy leadership team that represents all areas of instructional support, from administration to teaching staff and support staff. This team will review the MTSS handbook and update it yearly. They will also be responsible for researching supplements to the Montessori scope and sequence to ensure we are casting a wide net and supporting each and every student that comes through our door in their reading progression.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TRM allows for over 12 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 effective reading instruction and 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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