



# Universal Academy Charter School

*For Brighter Future*

## Universal academy Charter\_School

### Literacy Plan

**2014-15**

**Mission:** Universal Academy will provide success for all students with high quality learning, empowerment and support from a caring and nurturing staff.

Literacy Plan

1745 University Ave. West. St. Paul, MN 55104

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## **Universal Academy Charter School Literacy Plan for Grades K-5**

### **Universal Academy's Literacy Goals:**

- Structure and implement a literacy program that supports and ensures reading proficiency at every grade level.
- Ensure all students will be at or above proficiency on comprehensive exams and weekly quizzes; all will make their growth goals on the NWEA; and eighty-eight percent will be proficient on the MCA-III.
- Create and implement reading interventions for students performing below grade-level.

### **Instructional Leadership:**

Universal's literacy team will include the following members:

- Director
- Lead Teacher/ instructional coach
- Special Education Teacher
- Title 1 Teacher
- ELL Teacher
- General Education Teachers (one per grade level 3-5 and two for grades K-2)

The literacy team will meet monthly to:

- Align 2010 MN ELA Standards, Core Knowledge standards, NWEA benchmarks and Wonders curriculum.
- Create alignment documents to provide teachers with tools to efficiently plan lessons, instructional strategies, and assessments that are consistent across grade levels in terms of rigor and format.
- Horizontally and vertically align curriculum across grade levels.
- Provide teachers with the support and resources needed to meet the needs of all students.
- Collaboratively make decisions regarding interventions for students performing below proficiency.
- Research and plan literacy focused staff development.

## Aligned Curriculum and Instruction:

Universal's reading curriculum and instruction is standards based with a balanced literacy approach. We have aligned our curriculum both horizontally and vertically to maximize use of high quality instructional time. Our goal for aligning our curriculum is to increase communication across grades and to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for the next grade level.

### Curriculum

We have aligned key components of our curriculum in a way that reinforces our balanced literacy approach. All components are aligned directly to the 2010 MN ELA Standards and Core Knowledge standards. In the 2014-15, the school adopted the complete Wonders Curriculum as a planning and instructional backbone in a standards based environment. The Wonders Language Arts curriculum is supplemented by a full guided reading library and the Direct Instruction program. Teacher training on the Wonders curriculum and Direct Instruction ensures full implementation over the course of the school year.

### Instruction

Core instruction that incorporates all the components of a balanced literacy approach is received by all students across all grade levels. Teachers will employ best practices in teaching when delivering instruction: modeling, guided practice and independent practice. The gradual release model is used to deliver literacy instruction across all content areas.

#### Direct Instruction

- Direct Instruction is a phonics intensive reading instruction program that allows purposeful differentiation to meet the needs of k-2 students.
- One hour a day is devoted to utilizing Direct Instruction to build literacy foundations k-2 students.
- Student progress is closely monitored by weekly checkouts and mastery tests given every 20 lessons.

#### Guided Reading

- Small group reading instruction specifically focused on student needs to accelerate learning.
- Students are put in groups of 4-5 students based on reading level and skill-based needs.
- Those students not in reading group are engaged in quality independent or small group literacy tasks.
- Groups will meet for 15-20 minutes daily and will include the following components:
  - Robust vocabulary instruction
  - A fiction/non-fiction text at the specified level of each group
  - Independent/whole group activity aligned to Minnesota state standards
  - Independent task to illustrate student comprehension

## Assessment:

To ensure that all students are performing at or above grade level, assessments have been put in place to monitor each student's progress and identify those students who are performing below grade level.

### Comprehensive Exams / Weekly Quizzes

Comprehensive exams are created for each of the four terms in the school year. The exams contain all material that will be taught that term and are directly aligned to Minnesota state standards and Core Knowledge skills. The last term exam of the year will be comprehensive and will assess all reading standards required for that grade. To be proficient, students must score at or above 80%. Our goal is to have all students at or above proficiency on every comprehensive exam. These exams are graded and put into a tracker to more closely analyze individual and whole class data. The week after these exams are administered is called "reteach week" and is devoted to re-teaching those skills below proficiency, either at the student or class level. For more information on this method, please see Bambrick-Santoyo's *Driven by Data* (2010).

To ensure proficiency on these exams and monitor student's progress, weekly quizzes are administered. These quizzes are directly aligned to the comprehensive exams and are a smaller scale version more focused on selected state standards. The data from these quizzes is tracked and discussed weekly at communities of practice meetings. Students who are not proficient are discussed in depth and a plan is made for re-teaching and more individualized support. Students who are consistently performing below proficiency will be the focus of a child study meeting to maximize supports for that student.

### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment-III (MCA-III)

All students in grade three will take the MCA-III reading assessment in the spring using the online testing tool provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Universal Academy's goal is to have meet and exceed of our third through fifth grade students at or above proficiency on this assessment.

### NWEA

Students are assessed three times a year using the NWEA measure of academic progress. Their proficiency is measured by the norms provided by NWEA. This data is used to differentiate instruction and monitor students' progress throughout the year. Our goal is for all students to grow on 100% for students entering UA who are above grade level a year; and 150% for students entering UA, who are below grade level, as measured by the NWEA, in one school year.

### Direct Instruction

The Direct Instruction reading program consists of regular checkouts and mastery tests to monitor student's progress to ensure correct placement for differentiated phonics learning. Checkouts are administered every five lessons and mastery lessons every twenty lessons to measure and ensure progress in accuracy and fluency. Students who are not meeting 80% on these assessments will receive

strategic small group instruction. Students are closely monitored and assessed in this program to ensure proper placement and instruction at their level.

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

The first assessment component of the WIDA is the W-APT. This test is used as baseline data to place students into the EL program. The W-APT is administered at the beginning of the school year to kindergarten through fifth grade whose home language questionnaire (HLQ) indicates a language other than English is used in the home. Students arriving mid-year whose HLQ is non-English are also assessed.

The second component of the WIDA assessment program is the ACCESS, a statewide measure administered annually in February through March. Statewide, the ACCESS scores in conjunction with MCA-III and growth scores determine whether the school meets Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). ACCESS scores determine level of need for EL services, identifying deficits in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students who score between one and five will receive daily EL support. Those students that score a six will be exited from specific EL services.

### **Multi-tiered Systems of Support**

Through our data-driven approach and consistent assessment and analysis of data, we are able to consistently monitor students' progress. With accurate and timely data we are able to identify those students struggling with the material and immediately implement supports in the general classroom to meet student needs.

Students not reading at or above grade level and consistently performing below 80% on comprehensive exams and quizzes will be brought to a child study meeting. These meetings are held bi-weekly to discuss those students that are performing below grade level in reading. During the meeting a team consisting of the principal, Lead teacher and specialists come together to create interventions and put processes in place to support and monitor student's progress. Time will also be allotted to review previous child study meetings and the effectiveness of those interventions.

### Title I

Students that are performing below 80% on comprehensive exams and quizzes will receive additional support from the Title I teacher. Extra support will be in addition to core classroom instruction and will not take students out of the classroom during core subject instruction. Title I lessons are intensely focused and individually tailored to meet each student's needs.

### ELL

After administering the W-APT, students scoring between one and five will receive additional support from the ELL teacher. These services will be in addition to core instruction and will not interfere with student's core subject instruction. The ELL teacher will meet with students daily to provide focused

support to meet student's needs. The service model is a combination of collaborative services (push-in), depending on the students' linguistic needs.

### **Job-Embedded Professional Development:**

Professional development that is data-driven and literacy focused is an integral part of successfully implementing our literacy plan. Professional development opportunities will come in many forms and be offered throughout the year.

### **Communities of Practice**

Communities of practice meetings are data-driven and student focused. They are conducted weekly for one hour as a grade level and are facilitated by the principal or lead teacher. During these meetings ample time is spent analyzing data from weekly quizzes to inform classroom instruction. Students consistently scoring below 80% on these quizzes are discussed more in depth and interventions are generated to accelerate their learning.

### **Coaching**

Coaching is intended to provide teachers with immediate feedback to increase their effectiveness as instructors. In order to successfully provide meaningful feedback, informal observations will be conducted weekly for all teachers. Observations will be brief, yet focused on one or two most important areas of growth. Frequent observations will provide teachers with regular and consistent feedback to improve instruction and drive student learning. Informal observations will be conducted by the principal, lead teacher, and the DI coordinator weekly for all teachers.

### **Staff Development**

The two weeks prior to the start of school will be dedicated to professional development focused on data-driven instruction and best practices in literacy. Teachers will also receive an intensive training on how to effectively teach Wonders and Direct Instruction to all learners at all reading levels in the program.

Data days are scheduled after each of the terms in the school year. These data days will be utilized for data analysis of comprehensive exams, editing sessions to review upcoming formal assessments and scheduled professional development to best meet the needs of students.

### **Family and Community Partnerships:**

Parent communication and involvement is very important at Universal Academy Charter School. Monthly parent meetings are held to increase parent involvement, enrich communication and provide a platform for students to display their hard work. At these meetings, parents are encouraged to meet with classroom teachers to discuss their child's progress.

In addition to parent meetings, progress reports and report cards are sent home in the fall and again in the spring to inform parents of their child's progress. Three honor roll will held at the end of every quarter in order to encourage and recognize students' hard work. Three conferences are also held throughout the year to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to sit down and talk more extensively about their child's literacy progress and overall education.