



Twin Cities International Schools
277 12th Avenue North
Minneapolis MN 55401-1026
612.821.6470 (phone)
612.821.6477 (fax)

District #4078
Twin Cities International Schools

Local Literacy Plan
Spring 2023

To ensure reading proficiency by the end of Grade 3, in accordance with MN State Statute 120B.12 – Read Well By Third Grade.

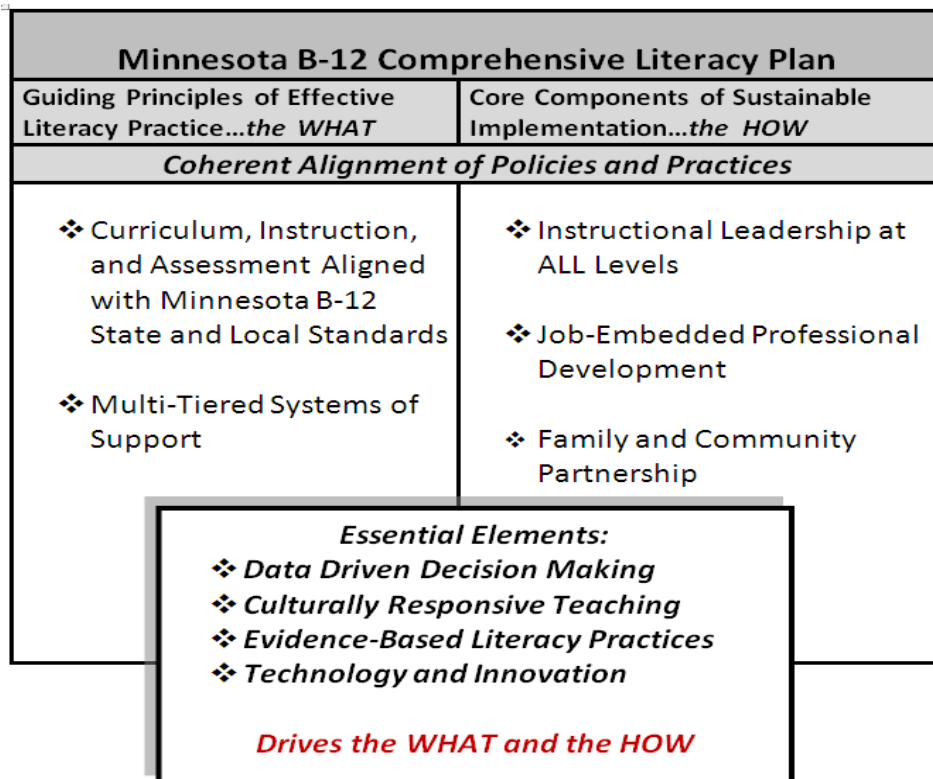
Reading Well by Third Grade Local Literacy Plan 2021

I. Introduction

Reading is the cornerstone of all learning. In each subject area, the ability to read and comprehend written material is of the highest importance. Supporting the development of capable readers at every level is our goal as educators, parents, and as a community.

Twin Cities International Schools (TCIS) is a public charter school that seeks to provide a rigorous education in a culturally sensitive environment. Serving students in grades K through 8th, TCIS has approximately 1000 students from around the Twin Cities metropolitan area. TCIS serves a large population of students from East African backgrounds, being 99% black, with an 75% English Learner (EL) population. TCIS also has a Free & Reduced Meal population of 95%.

The local literacy plan for Twin Cities International Schools (TCIS) (#4078) is a comprehensive plan that outlines the five essential elements of creating and maintaining a developmentally appropriate framework for all learners to reach their fullest potential. These elements are complemented by four foundational principles synonymous with coordinated change at the systems, organizational, programmatic, and practice level. This plan is developed in response to legislation adopted by the State of MN in 2010 consistent with section 122A.06 subdivision 4.



TCIS begins creating the foundational basis for a strong reading program through its hiring and training practices of staff. Interviews involve a team of staff members and very specific questions regarding teaching methods, philosophy of education and beliefs regarding students and learning. We focus on continuous staff development with coaching and implementation work throughout the year. Another aspect of TCIS programming is that we believe in a push-in model of inclusion to the greatest extent possible for students needing special education services or English language services. Our teachers are often dual-licensed in ESL and Elementary Education and/or trained in EL best practices.

II. Goals and Objectives

It is the goal of Twin Cities International Schools and its stakeholders that all students are reading at grade level by the end of Grade 3. The school sets multiple objectives in this area, measuring both growth and proficiency, using a multiple measures approach. Currently, TCIS uses the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment for reading in grades K-8 and the Oral Reading Fluency MAP assessment for reading in grades K-4. We use ESGI skill assessments to measure Kindergarten Readiness skills. TCIS also uses the ReadyGen curriculum for placement of students at their level of reading within the program framework. In addition, TCIS uses the DOLCH high frequency word lists for all students in Gr. K-4. Students are assessed using all three reading assessments at three benchmarks throughout the year, Fall, Winter, and Spring. Students must be proficient on the MAP assessment as well as one of the other two assessments, according to the benchmark scale of that particular assessment for TCIS to consider that student “Proficient” in the area of reading.

Students in grades 3 - 8 are also assessed once a year using the State MCA-III reading assessment. Students (gr. 3 - 8) who are in need of special services, as indicated by an Individual Education Plan (IEP), are assessed in literacy using the state approved MTAS assessment. English Learner (EL) students (gr. K-8) are also assessed in reading for English Proficiency using the State adopted ACCESS test.

In between assessment benchmarks, students are frequently monitored and assessed using common formative assessments, designed by teachers, to assess student understanding of state grade-level standards. This data is analyzed frequently to ensure appropriate instruction and interventions are being utilized for each student, which will be discussed in further detail, later in this plan.

Current practices of literacy include instruction on the five pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. TCIS has a two-tiered approach to reading instruction. First, students receive instructional level reading instruction for 90 minutes per day. These groupings are flexible and adjust to meet the needs of the students. This allows students to be successful at reading and learn skills and strategies at their ability level. Second, students receive grade-level reading instruction in a cross-content approach utilizing Math, Science, and Social Studies texts to practice reading skills and strategies along with grade-level content and literacy standards. In addition, students may receive an additional 30 minutes of

intervention work with specific literacy standards based on data collected by common formative assessments, explained in further detail later in the plan.

TCIS implemented a full PLC process including identifying essential standards and an instructional alignment process based on the work of Larry Ainsworth and Lisa Carter as well as Richard and Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Robert Marzano. We added literacy components across all curricular areas focusing on content literacy as well as training teachers in SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Method for best practices in English Language instruction.

III. Core Instruction

TCIS uses the ReadyGen reading curriculum for Grades K-5 which is rooted in scientifically researched practices. ReadyGen is an integrated and well-balanced approach to reading and writing instruction for Grades K-5 classrooms. Authentic texts with modeling and teacher-directed activities drive learning and motivate readers. Students read authentic literary and informational texts. Instruction focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in response to authentic texts. Middle school students use the Wit & Wisdom curriculum which is a novel based program integrated with writing and language arts.

IV. Assessment

At the beginning of the school year, teachers (gr. 1-4) analyze student data from the previous Spring to determine where student strengths and weaknesses fall in terms of literacy. Teachers look at growth data from the previous years as well. This data comes from the three sources listed above in section II; MAP data, MCA data and ORF scores. Students new to the school are given a shorter version of the MAP assessment to use as a screening tool. Kindergarten students participate in a series of common formative assessments to determine literacy knowledge through ESGI. New EL students to the school, as well as Kindergarten EL students are also given a screening assessment to determine literacy knowledge in English Language proficiency. In addition, students are assessed using Common Formative Assessments specifically targeting state standards. This information is entered into a database that is then manipulated to better analyze the data in terms of standards, trends, and growth. Assessment data is also entered into a data warehouse solution, Viewpoint for staff use in determining trends and growth over time for individual students, classrooms, teachers, and the school.

The following is a list of the assessments and how TCIS uses the results:

MAP Reading Assessment:

A computerized, adaptive test, MAP is given to students three times a year to measure proficiency based on either the National Placement Scale or the MN Predictor Scale. MAP tests are formative in their usage and based on nationally-normed statistics. They provide information

on the instructional level of the student rather than mastery. These assessments are given in the Fall, Winter and Spring, are untimed, and provide growth targets for students as well as proficiency scales.

This assessment provides immediate feedback to the student and the teacher in the form of a RIT (Rausch Unit) score. The scoring data is consistent from season to season and can be used to measure growth and analyze historical data and trends. In addition to the overall score, information is provided to the teacher in each goal performance area or strand. This information is linked to an instructional tool called DesCartes: A Continuum of Learning which allows educators to translate a MAP score into skills and concepts for learning. The reading test also provides a student's Lexile Score, which measures text difficulty created by MetaMetrics, Inc. (*Adopted from NWEA, Basic Overview, 2006*)

TCIS uses these results to monitor student progress on grade-level targets and to set goals for improvement with students. These results are analyzed deeper using the DesCartes Framework to assist teachers in developing a path of learning for individual students. Scores (proficiency and growth) are shared with parents at conferences twice a year.

NWEA Oral Reading Fluency Assessment:

MAP ORF enables teachers to efficiently measure oral reading fluency with an online, adaptive benchmark and progress monitoring assessment. In addition to fluency, the test measures foundational skills and literal comprehension. Streamlined universal screening identifies students at risk of reading difficulty, including those with characteristics of dyslexia.

Adaptive screening: The adaptive benchmark test meets readers at their level: pre-reading, early reading, or fluent reading. Pre-readers are tested on foundational skills, while more advanced readers receive reading passages and comprehension questions.

Progress monitoring: Brief assessments utilize automated speech-scoring technology for more frequent measures for students at risk of reading difficulties. This includes older students who may still be working on essential literacy skills.

Dolch Assessment

Students are given lists of Dolch words to master based on their grade level and reading ability. The Dolch word list is a list of frequently used English words compiled by Edward William Dolch, a major proponent of the "whole word method" beginning reading instruction. The list was first published in a journal article in 1936 and then published in his book *Problems in Reading* in 1948.

Common Formative Assessments:

TCIS teachers use Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) aligned to the State Grade-Level standards and common instructional pacing or instructional cycles. Common Formative

Assessments are “Not standardized tests, but rather teacher-created, teacher-owned assessments that are collaboratively scored and that provide immediate feedback to students and teachers.”

Douglas Reeves, Founder The Leadership and Learning Center

CFAs are assessments *for* learning administered to all students in grade level or course several times during semester, trimester, or year. Items are collaboratively designed by participating teachers. Items represent essential standards only.

Items are designed to match the level of rigor indicated in the targeted essential Standards. A blend of item types, including selected response (multiple choice, true/false, matching) and constructed-response (short or extended) are included on the assessments. Student results are analyzed in grade-level or course-specific Data Teams to guide instructional planning and delivery.

Adapted from: L. Ainsworth and D. Viegut, Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect Standards-based Instruction and Assessment, Corwin Press (2006)

TCIS teachers meet 2-3 times per week in Professional Learning Teams or Communities (PLCs) to create, analyze, and plan instruction surrounding the CFAs and State Standards. These results are shared with parents on a Pre-Test/Post-Test Data sheet at the end of each instructional cycle, as well as on the student report card, and at conferences. Teachers share academic data with students on a regular basis. Students track pre-test and post-test scores in subject folders as well as monitor and graph their progress monitoring of checks for understanding and their target goal for each standard or assessment. Teachers have created independent work folders for each student based on the data for specific learning targets. Students self-monitor their need for practice on certain skills using the data in their subject folders and use work in the folder as additional practice opportunities for learning targets. These goals and progress sheets are also shared with families as the end of each instructional cycle.

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the State of MN required schools to share its efforts to screen and identify students with Dyslexia or Convergence Insufficiency Disorders. Dyslexia is defined by an unexpected difficulty in learning to read. Said another way, dyslexia is a paradox—the same person who struggles to read quickly often has very high intelligence. Science and experience have shown that "dyslexics think differently. They are intuitive and excel at problem solving, seeing the big picture, and simplifying" (S.Shaywitz, *Overcoming Dyslexia*, 2003, p. 366).

MAP Reading Fluency offers effective dyslexia screening for students in kindergarten through third grade, identifying students with increased likelihood of ongoing reading difficulties for further evaluation and intervention. A diagnosis of dyslexia can only be made by a qualified clinician (e.g., a school psychologist).

The MAP Reading Fluency Dyslexia Screener measures the skills with which students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties are likely to struggle.

| SKILL AREA | DESCRIPTION | MAP READING FLUENCY DYSLEXIA SCREENER MEASURES |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Phonological and phonemic awareness | The ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language. Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness and refers to the specific ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhyme completion • Counting syllables • Initial sound matching • Onset-rime blending • Blending phonemes • Phoneme counting • Phoneme addition/deletion • Phoneme substitution |
| Sound symbol recognition | The ability to match the letters of written language to the sounds of spoken language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sound fluency |
| Alphabet knowledge | The ability to name letters and distinguish letter shapes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter knowledge |
| Decoding | The process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching a letter or a group of letters to their sounds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word families: initial letter • Decoding: CVC • Decoding: single syllable • Sentence reading fluency |
| Encoding | The process of translating phonological information (sounds) into symbols (a letter or group of letters). Encoding is commonly referred to as spelling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building words: one letter • Building words: CVC • Building words: single syllable |
| Rapid naming | The ability to quickly retrieve and encode phonological information into spoken words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid naming (objects) |
| Vocabulary | Knowledge of word meanings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture vocabulary |
| Language comprehension | The ability to understand spoken language, measured by matching pictures to spoken sentences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening comprehension |

Convergence Insufficiency Disorder is defined as a vision disorder or the inward turning of the eyes, one aspect of accommodation, which is the ability to focus accurately at near such as when reading. (MDE FAQs 2017) Since Convergence Insufficiency Disorder is a medical diagnosis, TIES teachers share concerns with parents who can then pursue the evaluation with their doctors.

V. Intervention

An Academic Educational Assistant team works with identified students based on data to provide pull-out interventions for literacy skills. The Academic Educational Assistants implement these interventions with students daily, in a one-on-one setting. These interventions were derived from published experimental research including Great Leaps, Orton- Gillingham, & UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute) in which effective instructional practices in reading were presented. Interventions include:

1. Phoneme Blending:
Objective: Students increase skill in phoneme blending (Snider, 1995).
2. Phoneme Segmenting:
Objective: Students increase skill in phoneme segmenting (Snider, 1995).
3. Letter Sound Correspondence:
Objective: Students increase fluent identification of letter sounds.
4. Word Blending:
Objective: Students increase skill in blending letter sounds to make simple words.
5. Duet Reading:

Objective: Students increase reading fluency and expression via delayed modeling for word reading (Blevins, 2001; Dowhower, 1991; Mathes, Simmons, & Davis, 1992; Weinstein & Cooke, 1992).

6. Repeated Reading with Comprehension Questions:

Objective: Students increase fluent passage reading via multiple text readings, while guided by comprehension questions.

7. Stop Go:

Objective: Students increase reading fluency by paying particular attention to punctuation and phrasing.

8. Newscaster:

Objective: Students increase fluency and prosody via adult modeling (Armbruster et al., 2001; Stahl, 2004).

9. Pencil Tap:

Objective: Students increase reading fluency through corrective feedback.

10. Great Leaps:

Objective: Students increase fluency in phonemic awareness, letter names and sounds, decoding, site word and phrase recognition, and connected text reading

Intervention programs are blended into the school day, allowing for 30 minutes of specific learning target intervention for students not meeting the target, as well as for students at grade level and enrichment intervention for students working above grade level. Students attend a “Masterminds” class four days a week. Identification for these sessions come from teachers analyzing Assessment data from the instructional cycle to determine which students need additional work on specific targets or enrichment work. These groups are formed using the research-based concept of Response to Intervention (RtI), following a tiered support system. Teachers are selected for specific skills based on data of current and past student growth and achievement for those standards. Students are re-assessed at the end of the Masterminds session to determine progress on the learning target. In addition to this intervention block, students may receive other interventions within the classroom, such as paraprofessional support, small group work/instruction, and modified assignments, etc... Most of the interventions from the above list, including Masterminds, are considered a “Tier-2” intervention and do not require students to move onto the Student Study Team or “Tier-3” intervention.

If it is determined by the teacher that a student is not making sufficient progress utilizing the tier-2 interventions, the teacher brings the student’s data to their Professional Learning team composed of the grade level teachers, data coordinator, reading coach and often an administrator. The team works to analyze the data and design two to three more specific interventions which will increase in focus and in time. Once data is collected over a 4-6 week time period on those interventions, the team reconvenes to analyze the new data. If progress is shown, then the interventions will continue. However, if there is little or no progress, then the student is referred to the Child Study Team (CST). The SST consists of the teacher, the special education teacher, an administrator, and two additional teachers. Once the data is analyzed by the SST then a

determination for a special education referral is made. If the team finds the student is a candidate for special education then the parent is contacted and brought in for a meeting regarding special education due process.

Interventions are created by teachers using the State Standards as a guide. Other resources used by teachers to develop interventions are Des Cartes: A Framework for Learning from NWEA, Raz-Kids Comprehension program, ReadWorks, Reading Eggs, Reading A-Z website, Read Naturally, Lexia Learning, & Savvy Reader through SFA, Leveled Language Literacy (LLI) from Fountas & Pinnell, Junior Great Books, Above and Below Grade level content readers, and additional resources created by teachers. Many of the above mentioned programs are web-based programs that students can access from home as well as practice integrated technology skills with their literacy work.

VI. Parent Notification & Involvement

TCIS prides itself on its highly engaged parent community. Conferences in both Fall and Spring boast an annual attendance rate of over 90%. Parents and teachers look at student academic data and set goals for improvement whether the student is working to achieve grade-level proficiency or enrich their academic knowledge. Student report cards are aligned to MN Standards and students are scored on a Rubric specific to each standard or learning target. Each student report card acts as a continuous Individual Learning Plan and is created by the teacher, parent, and student. In addition to the report card, parents receive a historical graph of their child's MAP test scores which includes grade level expectations, student score and growth. Parents are encouraged to stop into classes throughout the day to see the learning environment and instruction in their child(ren) class.

In addition to individual parent conferences, TCIS holds various parent events throughout the school year to further educate parents about testing programs and processes, academic expectations and/or curriculum, data results from State and Local testing and an annual meeting for Board elections and the "State of the School" information. Parents of 4th grade students, who did not pass the MCA Reading test in Grade 3 are asked to attend an individual meeting which includes the student, administrator and community liaison. At this meeting, goals for the MAP reading assessment are set for the Fall administration and a goal for the MCA Reading test is also set. Strategies are developed with the group to assist the student in achieving reading proficiency by the end of 4th Grade.

The school has completed its own alignment study between the MAP assessment and the MCA reading and found the alignment to be between 0.75 and 0.80. Our calculations agree with those of NWEA, that the MAP is highly correlated with the MCA and thus in good alignment with the standards based MCA tests. This information allows us to confidently use the MAP assessment data to predict how well a student should perform on the MCA Reading test. This information is shared with parents at conferences and on the report card. Based on this information as well as

teacher recommendations, students in grades K-4 are also invited to attend the after school program and/or summer school program .

Resources for parents and students are found on our website under the parent and student tabs as well as through work with our community liaisons, employed full-time with the school. After School and Homework Tutoring programs take place at the school each evening, staffed by employees, both teachers and paraprofessionals, parents are encouraged to attend with their children and learn the methods of instruction used with their students.

VII. Professional Development

Staff at TCIS work in Professional Learning Teams or Communities (PLCs). These teams are composed mainly of the staff at a particular grade level. The Data Coordinator, Instructional Coach, and school Administration work collaboratively with all teams. Occasionally, PLCs are re-grouped to form cross-grade level teams to work on various tasks. Teams meet twice a week for an hour after school to create and analyze common formative assessments and data and plan for instruction. The data meetings (held once a week) are facilitated by the Data Coordinator who guides staff through a process for data analysis of CFAs and other data. The Data Coordinator provides detailed information regarding growth and proficiency in terms of students and instruction. Teams also meet once a week during their 45 minute prep time to analyze data and discuss any students in need of additional interventions and support.

At the start of the school year, the staff meet in both grade level PLCs and cross-grade level PLCs to complete planning calendars and curriculum maps for the year. Staff articulate standards in student friendly language called learning targets and align them horizontally into cycles for instruction throughout the year. Standards are then aligned vertically to provide scaffolded instruction by grade and aligned to ensure essential learnings are instructed prior to state assessment timeframes. These standards are aligned across the grade levels to the best of their ability to allow for all support staff to be working on similar targets/standards for each grade they support. These alignments are reviewed by trimester and adjusted for better alignment or more in-depth instruction at certain grades based on pre & post test data of the specific targets. Included in this alignment are the support services of special education and English Language, since TCIS focuses on a strong push-in model of service.

In conjunction with the planning for instruction, workshops or seminars are provided to teach and review methods of instruction and classroom management such as Sheltered Instruction (SIOP), Success for All reading programs, Differentiated Instruction, and Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks (ENVoY). Since the majority of our students are English Learners, we gear all professional development to addressing language acquisition needs. Instructional coaches were added this year to assist both new teachers and returning staff. Teachers participate in peer coaching and observations throughout the year with their instructional coaches and colleagues. Instructional coaches provide time throughout the day so staff may observe and learn from each other. Paraprofessionals are also invited to attend these trainings as well as being trained in many of the intervention programs listed above in section V.

Staff members at TCIS participate in an extensive review process each year. During the first week of the observation cycle, staff are asked to turn in four complete lesson plans detailing their plan for reading, math, masterminds and either science or social studies. These plans are review by the Director of Curriculum. The teacher is observed by the school Director and Director of Curriculum. During the second week of the cycle, the teacher participates in a Conversation Meeting with the observers to debrief the observations, lesson plans, class data, and discuss guiding questions based upon *Marzano's New Art & Science of Teaching*. Following the meeting, the observation team discusses the lesson plans, observations and conversation meeting and places the teacher on the rubric designed by TCIS and Marzano. The teacher then meets with one of the Administrators to review the rubric placement and develop an improvement plan. For the next 2-3 months the teacher works on implementing the improvement plan with the support of their instructional coach. Approximately 2-3 months after the rubric meeting, the teacher meets again with the team to discuss how the improvement plan is working and next steps. We encourage each teacher to select one area to improve upon, even if they received a rating of proficient or distinguished. In addition to the observation component, teachers set student growth goals based on baseline data and are measured against those goals in accordance with the State Teacher Evaluation law.

VIII. Summary

At the end of each school year a Comprehensive Needs Assessment is done to assist with planning for the next school year. The Director, Director of Curriculum, Data Coordinator, and Instructional Coach meet in late May at the completion of testing to review academic progress and prepare for a school-wide data retreat held in June. Academic Data is collected through the use of our Data Warehouse Solution – Viewpoint along with Student Plans which houses all Individual Learning Plans and our local Access Database. The Teachers and Educational Assistants participate in the Data Retreat and provide analysis, conclusions, Impacts on the Curriculum and Hypothesis of Practice based on proficiency, growth and trend data. Anecdotal notes are taken during this process and documented to be compiled over the summer and reviewed in the Fall for the start of the next school year. In addition, information gathered during this process regarding curriculum, programming, and staffing is used to plan staff development, materials, scheduling, and budgeting for the upcoming school year.

The following chart is a summary of the assessments used, how often they are given, where the data is stored, & the proficiency scale/score used:

| Assessment | Who Takes | How Often | Data Stored | Proficiency Score/Scale – End of Year |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| MCA Reading | 3 -8 Grade | Annually | Viewpoint | 3 – 350 4 – 450 |
| Map Reading | K-8 | 3x per year – Fall, Winter & Spring (K- Spring Only) | Viewpoint | K – 155 1 – 175 2- 186 3- 196 4- 203 |
| MAP Oral Reading Fluency | 1-4 | 3x per year - | Viewpoint & Database | K-7 attempted 1–14 attempted 2 - 100 wpm 3- 112 wpm |
| CFAs | K-4 | Bi/Tri-weekly | Database | Avg. Rubric Scoring of 3 at Grade Level – 80% |

TCIS is confident in its programming to provide students with solid literacy instruction so that all students are Reading Well by 3rd Grade. TIES has in place a variety of interventions and strategies to utilize when and if core instruction does not seem to be effective. Data suggests that TCIS students, continuously enrolled, are making significant gains in closing the achievement gap and being able to Read Well by 3rd Grade.