

## **BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS (LITERACY, NUMERACY, AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES)**

### **Background**

In recognizing the importance of literacy and numeracy skills as foundational for student academic achievement and life long success, and in recognizing the limitation to professional growth and student achievement that results from professionals working in isolation, the division has implemented the Building a Community of Learners literacy and numeracy program in grades K-9 and Professional Learning Communities in all of its schools.

Literacy is taught in all subjects and grades and is a focus of the renewed provincial curricula. The foundation for reading instruction is grounded in English Language Arts curricula. With diversity of reading abilities in each classroom, it is recognized that differentiated instruction is required for all students. This has been facilitated with the provision of book rooms comprised of a collection of leveled text in each school. All students are to be assessed using the formative assessment of a running record to determine their instructional zone of proximal development. As one component of balanced literacy, guided reading instruction is to be provided for all students at a frequency that varies with the grade and ability of students.

Numeracy instruction is focused on the provincial curriculum. Core resources have been provided for all schools. Instruction of content within a timeline and the provision of formative common assessments are designed to facilitate systematic team interventions when students do not learn rather than leaving it up to the discretionary effort of individual teachers.

All students vary in the amount of time it takes to learn. This makes it virtually impossible for all students to learn within a time frame when teachers are working alone. Some students will need additional instructional or intervention time beyond what an individual teacher can provide. Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) as developed by Richard Dufour are to be in place to support teachers when students do not learn and provide a forum for collegial dialogue.

## Definitions

Balanced Literacy – the practice of teaching all language strands through a variety of scaffolded supports (modelled, shared, guided and independent) until students are able to work with independence.

Formative Assessment –an ongoing assessment implemented for the purpose of informing instruction and to identify students and areas of learning that require further instruction or intervention.

Summative Assessment- an assessment implemented for measurement of students learning generally at the end of a unit or period of instruction.

Common Assessment- an instrument that is used with all students in a class, grade or division to provide a basis of comparison for professional dialogue and guidance of future decisions.

Differentiation- a process of teaching students with a variety of needs using a variety of adaptations, such as instruction, environment and assessment, while not changing the curriculum outcomes.

Learning Support Plans – are developed for students whose respective ability level require a significantly individualized learning plan based on curricular outcomes (numeracy) or targeted components of reading (literacy)

Qualitatively Different Program- a program of instruction whereby curriculum outcomes are changed, removed or added for behavioural or intellectual reasons.

Professional Learning Communities – the practice of staff working in integrated collaborative teams to engage in dialogue and collective inquiry on instructional practice, the development and results of common assessment by students, and plan / implement team interventions for students who have not learned.

Interdependent Teams - a process of collaboration between a classroom teacher, administrator, LNC and resource teacher to develop a Learning Support Plan for an individual student who has made no progress in Tier 2 intervention

Teacher Assistance Teams – a process of collaboration between an administrator, resource, LNC, and classroom teachers to make programming decisions for either additional intensive intervention, or consultation with Student Services for an individual student who has made no progress through the Learning Support Plan or Tier 2 intensive intervention.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)– the concept of Lev Vygotsky; the zone of student ability, ranging from what is capable independently to what is capable with teacher support. Student learning is maximized when instruction is provided within this zone.

Response to Intervention – a systemic tiered approach to meeting the needs of all students, focussing on instruction and interventions.

- Tier 1- Instructional Program (100% of students)
  - Tier 2- Intervention Program-Selective, and Intensive (~20% of students)
- Tier 3- Special Education Program- (~5% of students)

## Procedures

### 1. Tier 1 Instruction (Curriculum, Literacy and Numeracy)

- 1.1 Curriculum actualization must occur in all subjects and include emphasis on the cross curricular competency of developing literacies.
- 1.2 The adaptive dimension will be utilized where classes need adaptations in areas such as instruction and the learning environment. Students who require significant adaptations relative to their class will require a record of those adaptations be maintained.
- 1.3 Balanced literacy is implemented, focusing on the English Language Arts curricula and utilizing Major Integrated Resources in language instruction. Students in early years need explicit oral language (receptive and expressive) and phonemic awareness (auditory) / phonics (visual).
- 1.4 Guided reading is scheduled for instruction in all grades one to nine classrooms by inschool administrators. The primary responsibility for guided reading instruction rests with the classroom teacher. The Literacy Numeracy Catalyst teacher will provide support (coaching / modeling / team teaching) where the classroom teacher needs additional support to provide this instruction for all students.
- 1.5 All students are assessed with a common assessment to determine their reading level in grades 1-9. These levels are entered for each reporting period on the NLSLSD INFORM database.
- 1.6 Guided reading instruction is provided in small groups at a specific reading level using text that is also at their instructional reading level and appropriate to the age and interest of the students. Recommended frequency of instruction varies with student grade and ability.
- 1.7 Student instruction and assessments records are recorded as per the sample Reading Log and Running Record Summary (Form 222-1) and maintained in files.
- 1.8 Organization in classrooms with guided reading include postings of groups, record filings, collections of leveled books (browsing baskets), a location / table for small group instruction, and provision for independent work (centers, silent reading, seat work etc) for students not involved in small group guided reading instruction.
- 1.9 Readiness assessments such as the Brigance in Kindergarten and Emergent Literacy in grade 1 must be conducted. Response to the data is to be determined by the school staff or in the PLC meeting.
- 1.10 Numeracy instruction is curriculum focused using the major resource recommended by teachers and provided by the Board. The timeline for units to be taught is to be revisited each year.
- 1.11 The timeline for math instruction is designed to facilitate student transitions between schools. Within schools, the timeline facilitates professional dialogue opportunities in

regards to curriculum content, instructional strategies, assessment processes and the provision of systematic response of a team intervention.

- 1.12 Assessment of students is to be completed prior to the end of each reporting period of the timeline and entered on the NLSD INFORM database. For reporting periods that have more than one unit it will be at the discretion of the school if the assessments are completed at the end of each unit or both assessments are done at the end of the reporting period.

## **2. Tier 1 to Tier 2 Transition (Professional Learning Communities)**

- 2.1 The purpose of the PLC meeting, common math and literacy assessment, is for staff (Classroom teachers, LNC, Resource Teachers and/or Administrators) to engage in data based dialogue and collective inquiry on student engagement, instructional practice, and develop interventions for students who have not met learning outcomes.
- 2.2 Administrators are to create PLC structures by either entire school, division (multiple grades), or specific grade depending on the size of their school.
- 2.3 Administrators are to create an annual schedule for PLC meetings and timetable for Tier 2 intensive interventions by a Literacy Numeracy Catalyst Teacher (LNC) teacher and Resource Teacher for literacy and numeracy. Meetings should be scheduled within two weeks of the end of a reporting period.
- 2.4 In small schools it is recommended that PLC meetings include the superintendent and itinerant resource teacher on the team.
- 2.5 PLC's in grades K-9 are to use the PLC Meeting Form (222-2) or an acceptable equivalent that is approved by the Superintendent responsible for curriculum. Minutes and attachments are copied to all staff in the meeting, the literacy numeracy catalyst teacher, and the school administrator.
- 2.6 The outcome of the PLC meeting will be to identify the students who need intervention and to develop an intervention plan That includes support from staff including classroom teachers, LNC, RT, administrators etc.

## **3. Tier 2 Interventions (Selective, Intensive and Individualized Programs)**

- 3.1 The purpose of interventions is to provide additional and/or different instruction as per the PLC meeting and plan for students who have not met learning outcomes. A master schedule of intensive interventions must be made by the inschool administrator.
- 3.2 Consecutive or successive periods of intervention could last for up to six weeks which is as long as a reporting period, or earlier if students have made significant progress. Short assessments (including running records, ISNAT binder tests, or

- other instruments) or probes should be used to monitor and record progress throughout the intervention period.
- 3.3 **Selective interventions** are conducted by the classroom teachers. In numeracy this could mean re-teaching one or several outcomes to one or several students. Selective interventions in literacy means providing targeted instruction based on the analysis of errors found in the NLSD common reading assessment for students.
- 3.4 **Intensive interventions** are planned and delivered primarily by Literacy Numeracy Catalyst (LNC) Teachers and Resource Teachers. Interventions require frequent (up to 30min/day) and rigorous instruction targeted to the specific student learning needs. In literacy this would mean more frequent guided instruction and targeted instruction in prerequisite reading skills. In numeracy this could mean re-teaching skills or strategies of several outcomes to students.
- 3.5 Progress of students in any intervention can be defined as
- Significant Progress (Students return to Tier 1),
  - Slow Progress (student continue in Tier 2 intervention)
  - No Progress (Selective intervention student with no progress moves to intensive intervention. An intensive intervention with no progress must be followed up by a diagnostic assessment.)
- 3.6 The diagnostic assessment is to be completed by the LNC teacher or Resource Teacher for literacy and / or numeracy. The purpose of the diagnostic assessment is to provide data to inform the collaborative preparation of the Learning Support Plan by the Teachers involved in interventions (the Interdependent Team).

### **Individualized Programs**

- 3.7 In mathematics, the Learning Support Plan (Form 222-3) will have students in grades 4 to 9, working at curriculum content at his or her respective ability level as determined by the KeyMath 3 diagnostic assessment. The instruction and assessment will be provided by the interdependent team listed on the LSP. The recording of progress will be made on INFORM by the classroom teacher or the LNC teacher based on outcomes at the student's level of ability. An LSP in math can be considered a bridging, uncredited course for high school students.
- 3.8 In literacy, the Learning Support Plan (Form 222-4) will have students work on targeted instruction based on assessments such as the PPVT and/or TOLD diagnostic assessment. The Learning Support Plan will be implemented by the

classroom teacher with the support of the LNC teacher and the Resource Teacher as defined in the plan.

#### **4. Tier 2 to Tier 3 (academic)Transition (Teacher Assistance Teams)**

- 4.1 The LNC teacher in consultation with the resource teacher will organize a time and location for a Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) meeting. The purpose of Teacher Assistance Team meeting is for collaboration amongst the resource teacher, LNC, classroom teacher and administrator to make programming decisions for either additional intensive intervention, or consultation with Student Services.
- 4.2 The required documentation for the meeting is to include:
  - Record of adaptations that have been implemented by the teachers
  - A copy of the Learning Support Plan in numeracy and/or literacy.

Reference: Sections 85,108, 109, 188 Education Act