

Literacy Plan

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Action: Demonstrate commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school.

The administration ensures lasting excellence in professional learning by continuing to analyze data and adjust professional learning accordingly (“The What”, p. 5). The administration will ensure effective instructional practices through TKES. Time and support for staff will continue to be provided by the administration to participate in job-embedded professional learning—weekly grade level meetings, vertical planning sessions, DOE differentiation training, SLDS , CCRPI, and AIMSweb training.

Best Practices to Implement:

- determine what research based instructional materials are needed to increase student achievement in literacy (“The What”, p. 5)
- develop a professional learning plan
- employ a literacy coach to provide professional learning and coaching
- plan, organize, implement and sustain a comprehensive literacy approach (“The What”, p. 5)
- conduct walk-throughs and observations to monitor the use of literacy strategies and effectiveness of professional development (The How”, p. 20)

B. Action: Organize a Literacy Leadership Team

In fall of 2013, Harmony Elementary developed a literacy committee composed of administration, grade level representatives, media specialist, learning support specialist and gifted coordinator (“The What, p 5). The Literacy Needs Assessment was given to all faculty members at HES and it indicated that not all of the staff has a common or comprehensive view of literacy. Responses to one question often contradicted other responses. Only 27% of Harmony’s staff believes the Literacy Team is fully operational. The literacy Team met to review data, assess instructional plans and interventions (“The Why, p. 156).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Identify additional community stakeholders to be members of the team--representatives from HES feeder plan to include a preschool and middle school representative, community leaders, business leaders, and parents
- The School Improvement Team (SIT) will revise the goals and actions of the School Improvement Plan based on student achievement in reading, language arts and writing. The SIT will also analyze data to determine professional learning needs at the school, grade and teacher level (“The Why”, p. 96). Additionally research-based strategies and resources (as set forth in “The Why”) will be identified (“The What”, p. 5)
- Use TKES and vertical planning checklists to determine strengths in literacy instruction and to identify areas in need of improvement (“The How”, p. 20).
- Provide teachers release time for professional learning (“The How”, p. 20)

C. Action: Maximize the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning.

The administration will continue to ensure 90-120 minute blocks of time are scheduled for literacy instruction in all grades (“The What”, p.5). Grade level teams meet weekly for collaborative planning to examine student work and progress, and additionally teachers meet monthly for vertical planning. Administration, LSS, gifted coordinator and teachers are working together to ensure that literacy instruction extends all content areas (“The Why, p. 67). The RTI committee, which includes a representative from each grade level, meets monthly to analyze school data, plan and share best practices (“The What, p. 6).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Implement a specific time built into the school schedule each day for intervention
- Provide professional development training in the implementation of literacy strategies within all content areas
- Set specific guidelines for including literacy across all content areas (“The What”, p. 6)
- Each grade level will submit weekly meeting minutes comprising literacy information

D. Action: Create a school culture in which teachers across the curriculum are responsible for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Faculty and staff have participated in targeted and sustained professional learning with respect to literacy strategies. Administration will continue to ensure that effective literacy instruction is provided across the content areas via walk-throughs and observations (“The What, p. 6).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Provide staff with professional learning for implementing literacy across the content areas (“The Why”, p. 141-142).
- Select teachers to serve as peer coaches for literacy instruction
- Require teachers to use the Literacy Instruction Checklist observation form as a guide when developing lesson plans
- Utilize walk-through/observation forms, e.g. literacy checklists, to ensure consistency in effective instructional practices that include disciplinary literacy across content areas

E. Action: Optimize literacy instruction across all content areas.

All staff at HES agrees that literacy must be integrated into all subjects; however, only 22% of the staff believes we are fully operational (The What, p. 6). CRCT scores show that 20% of students did not meet science standards and 19% of students did not meet social studies standards. This data strongly indicates the need for enhanced literacy instruction in all areas. All teachers teach vocabulary and writing as an integral part of every class. Teachers will continue to incorporate literacy text in all content areas. Administration will continue to monitor literacy instruction across the curriculum by means of formal and informal observations, walk-throughs and lesson plans. Teachers will continue to identify exemplary samples of student work to model for quality through the quarterly writing benchmark and the Red, Write and Blue Award.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Monitor lesson plans and instruction to ensure cross-curricular instruction
- Require all content area teachers to provide students with a variety of text to meet individual student needs
- Create a school-wide plan to integrate literacy in all subject areas
- Provide professional learning on Lexiles, differentiation, and research-based reading practices to enable appropriate selection of text complexity for individual student needs
- Provide professional learning on how to implement writing across the curriculum (“The How,” p. 25-27)

F. Action: Enlist the community at large to support schools and teachers in the development of college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Harmony Elementary will continue to promote literacy goals and accomplishments through social media, newsletters and the school website (“The What, p. 7). Winners of the Red, Write and Blue Award and those students who have outstanding ReadnQuiz Points will be acknowledged quarterly. The HES website and grade level newsletters will continue to contain Literacy websites and apps to assist parents in helping their students in regards to literacy. HES will hold an annual Writing Celebration each spring and have a local author present one of his books as well as tell how he became an author. In addition, exceptional student work will be displayed in all classrooms.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Add a literacy component to the school advisory council to increase shared vision for literacy in the school and community
- Increase student and staff activity in book clubs, Pickens County Reading Council, FERST Foundation, and identification of other organizations for improvement in literacy
- Utilize social media to promote and communicate literacy goals and accomplishments
- Collaborate with other schools to share ideas

Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction

A. Action: Ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum through the use of collaborative teams (See Leadership Sections I. D., E.)

According to the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment, only 11% of the staff scored themselves as fully operational. Grade level teams will continue to meet at regularly scheduled times for collaboration and examination of student data and work (“The What, p. 7). At grade level meetings and in Literacy Committee meetings, teachers will continue to identify gaps in learning using AIMSweb, pre- and post-tests and OAS benchmarks. After analyzing data, teachers will continue to plan and implement lessons that meet the literacy needs of students.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Establish expectations for a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum (“The Why,” p.

<p>140-141).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand teacher and student use of digital literacy resources• Provide professional learning via a literacy coach to ensure that staff receives necessary support in implementation of the literacy plan• Provide literacy strategies for all content to improve student achievement
<p>A. Action: Support teachers in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum.</p>
<p>Literacy teachers in K-5 will persist in using core programs that provide continuity and a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skill that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literacy and informational text. Obtaining those literacy skills should provide the student with the ability to transfer those skills in to the workplace or college (“The Why”, p. 48-49).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and implement a school-adopted writing rubric that is aligned with the CCGPS to set clear expectations and goals for performance• Provide professional development for incorporating writing into all subjects (“The What, “ p. 10).• Provide a schedule where the literacy coach models and provides feedback to teachers on the integration of literacy across all subject areas
<p>B. Action: Collaborate with supporting out-of-school agencies and organizations within the community.</p>
<p>Upon investigation, HES located many areas of community support—Pickens County Reading Council, FERST Foundation, DFACS, Sequoyah Regional (Public) Library, Department of Human Resources, and the court system. Harmony has already planned a Literacy/Writing Celebration night where a local author will talk about his book and students will also share their best work (“The How,” p. 27).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a list of organizations and government agencies that support students and families (“The What,” p. 7) (“The How,” p. 28)• Create a school webpage and a brochure providing opportunities for organizations to support literacy within the community• Foster relationships among preschools and middle schools in our feeder pattern
<p>Building Block 3. Ongoing formative and summative assessments</p>
<p>A. Action: Establish an infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.</p>

HES has many effective universal screening, progress monitoring and diagnostic tools in place that are provided by the Pickens County School District. These tools identify both advanced and struggling learners (“The What”, p. 8). The county office has also developed a calendar for assessments including specific guidelines and grade levels responsible for administering the assessments (“The What”, p. 8). The administration will ensure continued use of screenings, progress monitoring and curriculum-based assessments to influence instructional decisions. The faculty will continue to analyze student data in grade level meetings to develop and adjust instructional plans and identify students who would benefit from RTI.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Provide specific data analysis training for various types of assessments through the use of the Learning Support Specialist and Literacy Coach
- Provide professional learning to help assist teachers in teaching students how to examine their own data and set learning goals
- Investigate and purchase an on-line reading assessment that provides students with a Lexile Score and materials that are on topic and at the appropriate reading level
- Provide technology training to support teachers in collecting, analyzing and utilizing test results
- Provide professional learning to show teachers how to use assessment data to identify high achieving students

B. Action: Use universal screening and progress monitoring for formative assessment.

At Harmony Elementary, universal and formative assessments are used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. These assessments are administered regularly to identify high achieving and advanced learners as well as struggling learners (“The Why, p. 99). This allows students to benefit from enrichment and remediation when needed. The current summative assessment, the CRCT, follows state and local guidelines. Universal screening, progress monitoring, and curriculum-based assessments are used to make instructional decisions including RTI interventions (“The Why”, p. 99).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Provide assessment analysis and best practices training through the Director of Teaching and Learning, Learning Support Specialist, and Literacy Coach
- Provide professional learning and materials for interventions to be used with struggling students based on student assessments
- Provide professional learning and materials for the teaching of advanced students with the assistance of the gifted coordinator

C. Action: Use diagnostic assessments to analyze problems found in literacy screening.

Reading assessments are necessary to determine if students are making adequate progress and to plan instruction. All students will be screened, using OAS (3-5) and AIMSweb (K-5) at the beginning, middle and end of the year to determine the level of their literacy skills. Progress monitoring is scheduled based on the needs of students, but usually occurs weekly to bi-weekly for at-risk students. These assessments are used to assess students’ reading and comprehension abilities.

Research-based interventions are used to provide individualized instruction (“The What”, p. 9).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Train teachers on how to administer, analyze and utilize diagnostic data (“The Why,” p. 140-141)
- Provide monthly data reports to teachers to monitor the effectiveness of instruction/interventions

D. Action: Use summative data to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress.

The focus at HES is making continuous improvement in student achievement. Teachers will continue to analyze summative assessment data to drive instruction. Lesson plans will continue to include re-teaching and targeted areas of need as well as enrichment. Teachers will monitor individual student progress to ensure academic rigor for students at all levels. To ensure that time is devoted to review writing samples, the literacy team will carry out analysis of student writing each quarter through the use of the school-wide rubric to ensure accuracy in grading writing. The school improvement plan is revised based on summative data and the results are shared with all stakeholders (“The Why,” p. 96).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Identify school or grade level wide areas of domain weaknesses in reading, language arts and writing on the CRCT and Georgia Writing Assessment by looking at the percentage of students who do not meet criteria
- Identify students who are close to exceeding standards on the CRCT in reading and language arts and on the Georgia Writing Assessment
- Develop a plan to improve not only the percentage of students who do not meet, but also the percentage of those who exceed standards on the CRCT and Georgia Writing Assessment

Action 3.E.: Develop a clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning (See V. A.)

In order to improve learning and teaching, data analysis must be utilized to drive instruction (“The Why”, p. 96). Teachers have a plethora of data sources--OAS, CRCT, AIMSweb and SLDS--to use to individualize instruction so that all student needs are met. This information allows teachers to differentiate instruction to provide enrichment or remediation. Diagnostic, formative and summative data is reviewed regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and student progress or problems.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Provide professional development for teachers to analyze and use data to guide instruction for students at all levels
- Discuss student data in large and small group settings—faculty meetings, school improvement team meetings, and grade level meetings

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. Action: Provide direct, explicit literacy instruction for all students.

To provide direct and explicit literacy instruction for all students, a research-based core reading program is used school-wide. Sufficient time for literacy, 90 to 120 minutes each day, is provided for all students (“The Why”, p. 67). Literacy instruction also extends into all content areas (“The What”, p. 6). Student data is examined regularly to identify areas of weaknesses (“The What”, p. 9). Administration conducts regular walk-throughs and observations to evaluate literacy instruction (“The What”, p 10).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Release time to review the core reading programs that provide continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts.
- Teachers will continue to be trained on the newly adopted reading curriculum, writing program, and strategies such as differentiation provided by DOE representatives.
- Teachers in K-3 will provide differentiation to students in small group and whole group teaching that provides explicit instruction in word identification, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Administration will conduct classroom observations to gauge current practices in literacy instruction (“The How,” p. 20) and review lesson plans (“The How,” p. 26) to focus on literacy instruction.
- Professional learning on the tenets of explicit instruction: (“The How”, p. 40)
 - using data to drive instructional decisions and explicit teaching
 - selecting appropriate texts and strategies for instruction
 - telling students specific strategies to be learned and why
 - modeling how strategies are used
 - discussing when and where strategies are to be applied
 - differentiating instruction
 - using AIMSweb, CCRPI, SLDS, PD360, GALILEO

B. Action: Ensure that students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum.

The school-wide common writing plan is aligned with the CCGPS (“The What”, p. 10) and is articulated horizontally weekly and vertically monthly. All subject area teachers have participated in professional learning on best practices in cross-curricular writing. Technology is used for publishing writing pieces.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Release time for teachers to develop a coordinated plan for writing instruction across all subjects that will include: explicit instruction, guided practice, independent practice and technology (“The How”, p. 42)
- Require students to write in all subject areas. All subject-area teachers will be provided release time to work with a literacy coach on best practices in writing instruction.
- The literacy team will develop a plan that describes procedures in utilizing technology for

<p>sharing, production, publishing and communication across the curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The literacy team will develop or identify programs, protocol, and/or materials necessary to implement the plan at each level (“The How”, p.42)
<p>C. Action: Teachers work to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students advance through school.</p>
<p>Harmony Elementary School currently utilizes incentives in reading and writing. Recognition occurs school-wide and in individual classrooms. Teachers also integrate technology and differentiate reading and writing lessons to increase rigor, relevance and engagement (“The Why,” p. 59).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with opportunities to self-direct reading materials and topics for research with guidance from the literacy coach. A literacy resource room will be developed and maintained by the literacy coach to provide materials/texts that students can consider engaging.• Students will be provided increasing opportunities for collaborating with peers in the learning process• Teachers will provide students with a variety of texts appropriate for their reading level (“The Why,” p. 51-52).• Teachers will be provided release time for professional development and opportunities to develop:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Creative uses of materials and technology within the learning process to promote engagement and relevanceb. Strategies to engage the struggling learnerc. Strategies to engage the advanced learner
<p>Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students</p>
<p>A. Action: Use information developed from the school-based data teams to inform RTI process (see Section 3. E.)</p>
<p>A four-tiered Response to Intervention approach is used throughout Pickens County School System. Formative, summative and diagnostic assessments are used to identify and address student needs (“The Why”, p. 125). The components of this system are standards-based and differentiated instruction, as well as universal screening, progress monitoring and data analysis. Universal screeners assist teachers in identifying student needs and progress monitoring allows them to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions (“The Why”, p. 38). Protocols for identifying student needs and matching them to the appropriate interventions are in place. Interventions are monitored regularly and data is analyzed frequently to determine student progress (“The What”, p. 11).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop plans for literacy interventions in all content areas, with assistance from a literacy coach. HES currently has protocols for identifying students and matching them with necessary and appropriate intervention, yet there is still a need for literacy intervention.• Provide release time for professional learning so teachers may become proficient in

<p>analyzing data and its utilization for students in need of interventions (“The How,” p. 43).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide technology devices and teacher training for collection of data, enabling teachers to differentiate instruction.
<p>B. Action: Provide Tier I Instruction based upon the CCGPS in all grades to all students in all classrooms (See Sections 4. A & B)</p>
<p>Tier I instruction includes the core adopted reading program that contains leveled readers. Teachers supplement the basal reading series with novel studies throughout the year. Instruction is differentiated at this level. Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning to increase knowledge and use of best practices in literacy.</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing professional learning to strengthen and enhance core reading program (“The Why,” p. 37).• Weekly grade level collaborative planning focused on literacy instruction• Regular walk-throughs and observations focused on literacy instruction
<p>C. Action: Implement Tier 2 needs-based interventions for targeted students.</p>
<p>If students are not making progress in Tier I based on diagnostic, formative and summative data, they are provided additional literacy instruction. Tier 2 instruction is carried out in the classroom by teachers using a variety of research-based strategies. Tier 2 students receive part of their instruction in a smaller setting. Progress monitoring results are used to determine if students are making adequate progress and to modify interventions if needed (“The Why”, p. 133-134). Teachers participate in professional learning on data analysis, interventions, instructional strategies and differentiation instruction. Collaborative discussion is provided among grade levels on a weekly basis (“The What”, p. 12).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers will participate in professional learning to analyze and utilize data and differentiate instruction• Supply resources for teachers to ensure the curriculum is providing research-validated interventions designed to meet the individual student’s needs• Weekly grade level meetings to discuss student progress
<p>D. Action: In Tier 3, ensure that Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly.</p>
<p>Tier 3 instruction is for students who are not making progress in Tiers 1 and 2. This instruction takes place in the regular classroom, but part of the instruction is through small groups. Teachers meet weekly to discuss student progress and possible interventions. Multiple resources are available for teachers to provide Tier 3 interventions. Tier 3 students are monitored weekly and the data is used to plan appropriate interventions (“The Why”, p. 134).</p> <p>Best Practices to Implement:</p>

- Teachers will participate in professional learning to analyze and utilize data and differentiate instruction
- Supply resources for teachers to ensure the curriculum is providing research-validated interventions designed to meet the individual student's needs
- Weekly grade level RTI meeting to discuss student progress

E. Action: Implement Tier 4 specially-designed learning through specialized programs, methodologies or instruction based upon students' inability to access the CCGPS any other way.

All teachers that provide Tier 4 instruction are highly qualified. This instruction is delivered in an inclusion or resource room setting ("The Why", p. 91). In addition to the core reading program these students are provided supplemental instructional strategies designed to meet their individual needs ("The Why," p. 134). Students receive instruction based on their individualized Education Plan. They are progress monitored weekly. Harmony serves 106 students with disabilities and 50 gifted students. Currently HES provides special instruction for Tier 4 students in the following ways:

1. Least restrictive environment
2. Administrators are familiar with funding formulas
3. Highly qualified and experienced teachers support the delivery of instruction for students with significant needs
4. Special education teachers have many opportunities for professional development, and meet weekly to discuss best practices.
5. Scheduled collaborative planning times are arranged for the gifted coordinator and teachers
6. Pickens County gifted coordinators plan monthly to ensure a program of rigor and fidelity

Best Practices to Implement:

- Teachers will participate in ongoing professional learning to analyze and utilize data and differentiate instruction
- Weekly department meeting to collaborate, plan, discuss and access literacy instruction

Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning

A. Action: Ensure that pre-service education prepares new teachers for all the challenges of the classroom.

All new teachers are provided professional learning opportunities. These include new teacher orientation provided at the system level, as well as school-based training. Teachers are provided information on the school improvement plan, initiatives and grade level or department level protocol. New teachers are provided a mentor ("The What", p. 13).

Best Practices to Implement:

- Scheduled time for mentors and new teachers to meet monthly
- Administration will review progress and provide feedback, resources and support as needed ("The What", p. 13)

B. Action: Provide professional learning for in-service personnel.

At the beginning of each year a professional learning needs assessment is completed by all teachers. Based on the findings of this survey along with student achievement data, both county and school-based professional learning opportunities are planned. Based on student data and results from the Literacy Assessment, there is a need for enhanced literacy instruction across all content areas.

Best Practices to Implement:

- Provide training on how to interpret and utilize data, differentiation, and writing across the curriculum
- Provide training for paraprofessionals on literacy instruction
- Provide protected time for teachers to collaboratively analyze data, plan lessons, examine work and reflect ("The What," p. 13)
- Monitor teachers via walk-throughs and observations