Columbia Heights Public Schools
Secondary Literacy Plan: Grades 6-12

Meets Requirements for:

WBWF: World's Best Workforce (Minn. Stat. § 120B.11)

ESSA/SRCL: Every Student Succeeds Act's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant (Public Law No. 114-95, § 1177)

Columbia Heights Public Schools is committed to ALL students achieving reading proficiency in Kindergarten through Grade 5 in order to lay a strong foundation for continued literacy development throughout the remainder of their formal educational process. Students who enter grades 6 through 12 without this strong foundation are provided with the necessary support to reach grade level proficiency. Columbia Heights Public Schools recognizes that all students need to continue to develop their ability to read and write during middle school years across content areas. Our goal is that every child is college and career ready upon graduation from high school with the skills and passion to be a lifelong reader. Building a strong foundation in reading at an early age is critical to realizing this goal.

Contents:

1. Data

Columbia Heights Public Schools (CHPS) recognizes the need to provide instruction to students targeted to their specific needs. In order to customize instruction to individual students, it is important that accurate data are reviewed on a regular basis to determine the level of incremental growth in proficiency students demonstrate in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The use of multiple assessments for screening proficiency level, diagnosing specific areas of need, and monitoring progress is an important part of the process. With these data, staff determine the steps needed for Columbia Heights students to reach their highest potential.

a. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Columbia Heights Public Schools is a small urban district with many needs. The district borders Minneapolis and has three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school with a total enrollment of 3,309. The racial and ethnic makeup of the district is 43% Hispanic students, 30% Black students, 16% White students, with a smaller number of students identifying as Asian, American Indian, Biracial and other. CHPS students and their families speak more than 30 languages in their homes. The free/reduced lunch rate, an indicator of poverty, in CHPS is presently 82%, which is 39% higher than the statewide average and higher than urban districts such as Minneapolis and St. Paul. All five schools qualify for Title I services due to such a high student poverty level. Additionally, CHPS has a homeless rate of about 2%, which is almost double the statewide average. Finally, the population of English Learner students in CHPS is more than four times greater than the statewide average (37% vs. 9%). While the district averages surpass the statewide average, each individual school also varies. For example, Valley View Elementary contains 57% Hispanic students, 84% free/reduced lunch rate and 55% of the students receive English language services.

Data has become part of weekly conversations by Columbia Heights Public Schools administrators and teachers. It is used to support instructional decisions, intervention plans, progress monitoring assessments, and discussions with families. Each year, time is dedicated for teachers, administrators, and the district supporting staff to collaborate and look at data. These conversations utilize the story behind the data to see what students are telling us through trends in standardized and diagnostic tests including the MCA-III, FastBridge screening data and ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.

Academically, CHPS has performed significantly below state averages in reading, math, and science. Last year alone (2022), CHPS had lower MCA-III proficiency rates compared to the state average in Reading (55% vs. 49%), in Math (15% vs. 42%), and in Science (17% vs. 41%).

According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), over 78% of Columbia Academy grade 8 students reported that they care about doing well in class and about 75% of them reported receiving mostly A's and B's during the 2021-22 school year. Roughly 55% of the students plan to attend a two-year or four-year educational program after graduating from high school. Outside of the school day, over 90% of these students reported never visiting a library outside of the school day during a typical week. A wide variety of data points suggest that students are willing and interested in learning and growing academically and at the same time they face many barriers as well.

b. Assessment Plan

Assessments are given to 6-8 students on a regular basis. These assessments include informal assessments and formal assessments. Below is a chart of the various assessments by type, frequency, and proficiency determination. Columbia Academy was able to provide a screener, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tool for staff to adjust instruction to support students. Some assessments also support identification of students needing intervention support as described in the Intervention section.

Type of Assessment	Purpose of Assessment	Assessment	Frequency	Proficiency Determination
Informal Assessments	Teachers use informal assessments to adjust instruction including flexible small groups and technology intervention support.	Language Arts teachers use pre- and post-assessments for each unit to monitor progress of Minnesota State Standards.	Weekly/Bi-Weekly	Proficiency determined by PLC work for unit assessments
Formal Assessments	Standardized testing used to show student growth throughout the year as compared to others in the state or others of a similar age. Standardized tests also give individual student Lexile ranges to support differentiated instruction.	6-12: ACCESS 2.0 test for English Learners 6-12: ALT ACCESS 6-8 & 10: MCA-III Literacy Test 6-8 & 10: MTAS	ACCESS, and MCA-III are given once a year in the Spring	Proficiency determined by exam
Screening Assessment	Used to identify students in need of interventions.	6-10 FastBridge (CBM)	3 times a year for every student	Proficiency benchmarks provided by FAST

Diagnostic Learning Assessment	Used to determine areas of weakness for students who are reading below grade level. Teachers use this data when choosing which intervention program or tool they will use with an individual student.	6-10 Fastbridge (aReading)	Dependent upon students' needs	Proficiency benchmarks provided by FAST
Progress Monitoring Assessment	Provides ongoing feedback on the level of growth being made by students. Data also provides essential information to teachers on how effective an intervention is for a given student and helps them to determine in a timely manner whether or not a different intervention is needed.	6-10 FAST	Ongoing throughout the year	Benchmarks for proficiency provided by FAST

c. Identification for Dyslexia

Columbia Heights uses data from the Oral Reading Fluency a to identify all students at risk. After identification, students are provided interventions in addition to core instruction. Teachers document results of students' responses to interventions to look for growth and level over time. Teams of teachers (usually including English Learner and Special Education teachers) evaluate progress to determine next steps which could include Child Study, 504 plan, or evaluating for a disability if students are not showing progress.

d. Identification for Convergence Insufficiency Disorder

Columbia Heights uses data from the Oral Reading Fluency and Letter Sound/Name to identify all students at risk. After identifying students they are provided interventions in addition to core instruction. Teachers document results of students' responses to interventions to look for growth and level over time. Teams of teachers (usually including English Learner and Special Education teachers) evaluate progress to determine next steps which could include Child Study, 504 plan, or evaluating for a disability if students are not showing progress.

2. Continuous Improvement

a. Teams and Meetings

Monitoring and improving literacy in Columbia Heights is done through the input and support of many stakeholders. All principals meet monthly with the Superintendent, Director of Technology, Director of Teaching and Learning, Executive Director of Student Services, Director of Community Education, Director of Special Education and district coordinators to discuss

continuous improvement. Columbia Academy's School Literacy Leadership Team meets bi-weekly to look at data and plan PD strategies for the staff. Other teams in the district that work toward continuous improvement include:

- World's Best Workforce Committee
- EL (English Learner) Leadership Team
- Teaching and Learning Leadership Committee
- Special Services Leadership Team
- School Board
- AVID Site Team
- K-12 AVID Vertical Team
- School site teams
- School Literacy Leadership Team

The aforementioned teams consist of district staff, school-level staff, parents and community members. The teams meet on a regular basis to discuss data and gather input on curriculum, inclusive curriculum/instruction, interventions, and school/home connection.

b. Strategic Action Planning

Columbia Heights Public School District has aligned district-wide required goals and plans such as the World's Best Workforce, Title, Achievement and Integration, American Indian Education Program, Strategic Plan, and AVID so the work of the district maintains a focus on academic achievement of all students. The current World's Best Workforce Goals are listed on the Columbia Heights website linked here: [Columbia Heights Public Schools World's Best Workforce.](#)

c. Action Planning
i. Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress

Assessing and evaluating student progress occurs in a variety of ways. The administration participates in monthly Lead and Learn meetings which consist of data-driven discussions and check-in meetings among all principals, district staff and the superintendent. The Columbia Academy AVID Site Team meets monthly to participate in professional development and to lead literacy instruction throughout the content areas in the school. Teacher teams participate in PLC data discussions to review pre-and post-assessment data and progress monitoring data disaggregated by student groups and also to discuss instructional strategies and interventions. The District Assessment Coordinator meets with administration and teacher teams to facilitate the dissemination of disaggregated data and to support the data analysis process. The district uses a secure online data warehouse where student data can be sorted and disaggregated. The warehouse is used by PreK – 12th grade staff.

ii. Process to Assess and Identify Student for Participation in Gifted and Talented Programs

Gifted services in Columbia Heights Public Schools exist to provide opportunities for academic challenge for high achieving and/or gifted learners. The identification process for gifted students

is based on reviewing achievement and ability assessment data points. It is not limited to one or two measures. The district follows a three-step identification process. First, a universal screener is given to all students in grade 2, along with any other students upon request. They are assessed using the nonverbal Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). After the scores are processed, students who receive a qualifying score in step one are then assessed using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Finally, a team of staff members review multiple performance and ability data points for each learner, which then informs the identification process.

iii. Early Admission to Kindergarten
Columbia Heights conducts early childhood screenings twice a month during each school year. Through the results of the screening and in collaboration with parents/ guardians, students have access to early admission to Kindergarten.

iv. Curriculum and Instruction
Columbia Heights staff receive annual professional development on effective instructional practices. The implementation of the instructional practices is monitored by school and district staff using formal and informal walkthrough rubrics, a feedback protocol is used to support the implementation.

The school board-approved curriculum implementation is evaluated by principals, lead teacher teams and the District Curriculum Coordinator. The four-step process includes: Study/ Preparation, Program Design, Implementation, and Refine/ Sustain. Throughout this process, implementation rubrics are used by district and school staff to monitor the curriculum implementation process and its alignment to standards.

v. Principal Evaluations
The principal evaluations take place on an annual basis. The criteria for principal evaluations are; instructional leadership, school performance, stakeholder survey, smart goals, leadership action and other measures.

vi. Teacher Evaluations
The evaluation of teachers' use of effective instructional practices and curriculum implementation is evaluated by a combination of Principals and Peer Reviewers using "Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching" Model. Teachers work with their designated Peer Reviewer to set individual growth and development goals. Peer Reviewers and Principals conduct walkthroughs and formal observations of teachers. Other components of the evaluation process include a teacher professional growth goal, two student learning goals, student survey data and shared goals.

vii. Equitable Distribution of Teachers and Strategies
The district administrative team in Columbia Heights Public Schools, including the Superintendent, Principals, Assistant Principals when applicable, the Director of Human Resources, Director of Student Services and Director of Teaching and Learning follow an annual

process to identify and discuss placement and evaluation of probationary and veteran teachers. Included in the process is a thorough discussion of evaluations based on the "Charlotte Danielson's Framework of Teaching" Model. During the discussions, the team identifies where additional support or professional development is needed. Probationary teachers who are not performing are not renewed. Tenured teachers are on a three-year cycle for evaluations; when identified as not performing, they are placed onto an improvement plan.

In addition to the annual staffing process, the district administrative team analyzes and discusses enrollment monthly. In the spring and fall of each year, the team discusses staff and student placement protocols in order to support students with special needs and language development. Low-income and minority student enrollment is equitably distributed among the three elementary schools based on the attendance areas. Columbia Heights has one middle school and one high school so all students at those grade levels attend the same school and have access to high-quality instruction.

viii.   Acceleration

Teachers who support students needing academic acceleration are provided opportunities to participate in professional development in these areas. At the elementary level, Columbia Heights has two multi-age accelerated classrooms, LEAP at Highland Elementary and LEAP at Valley View Elementary. In these classrooms, students identified as being a good fit for this environment have access to an accelerated curriculum and develop the skills needed to succeed in a fast-paced environment. The students are assessed using multiple measures, including FastBridge screeners in math and literacy, to measure proficiency and growth throughout the academic year. In other elementary classrooms outside of LEAP, students needing accelerated content may be clustered into flexible classrooms in which the teachers are able to differentiate instruction to provide enrichment and acceleration. At the secondary schools, all students have access to multiple levels of acceleration. This includes Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Anoka-Ramsey's Concurrent Enrollment Program, Century College Concurrent Enrollment Program, Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), and Honors courses.

ix.   Personalized Learning

Columbia Heights engages students through Personalized Learning which includes technology. Technology devices are used to create self-paced differentiated instruction to:
- individualize instruction
- use formative assessment to increase rigor
- increase student engagement through relevant, exciting learning
- provide equity by challenging and supporting all students with flexible tools and differentiated content
- increase rigor leading to college and career readiness for all students

The Personalized Learning Initiative spans elementary through high school grades and is supported by Technology Integration Specialists. The Integration Specialists provide professional development and in-class coaching and support. Columbia Heights has a professional collaborative culture. Staff collaborate in the following ways:

- <u>Co-teaching</u>: General education, Special education and English Learner identified students are supported in some classrooms through a co-teaching model.
- <u>Professional Learning Communities</u>: Teacher teams meet by department weekly to review student progress toward standard and share instructional practices.
- <u>Leadership teams</u>: Teachers meet in vertical teams (K-12) and in grade-level teams multiple times throughout the year. The leadership teams receive professional development and also inform instructional practices.

3. Interventions

Columbia Heights Public Schools implements a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for literacy. Using screening data, diagnostic data, and progress monitoring data teams of teachers are able to identify and support students' growth.

a. Identification

Each fall all students in grades 6-10 are given the FastBridge aReading literacy screener, which provides staff a resource for ensuring students are given targeted support based on the needs of each learner. Additionally, Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) screeners may also be used to better understand the needs of students. After the screener, classroom teachers, special education teachers, English Learner teachers, and administration meet to discuss each students' scores in addition to other student data.

Based on screening and class data, teachers determine which students need intervention support as well as students who are above the benchmark target. Teachers work with families to decide on a plan to support students using the Multi-Tiered System of Supports.

b. Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Teachers use the FastBridge assessment and summative assessments based on standards to determine which students need additional support at Tier 1, 2, or 3. These supports include:

Tier 1: Columbia Academy addresses literacy in all content areas. All students in grades 6-8 read and write every day in all classes. While more time is devoted to literacy-skills development in English Language Arts (ELA) classes, all teachers are trained in schoolwide approaches to building background knowledge, teaching vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills. Teachers also implement critical reading strategies for activating prior knowledge, focused rereading of text, and writing to learn through note-taking and summary. Columbia Academy received the Striving Reader's Comprehensive Literacy grant which has

allowed teachers to receive focused, embedded professional development on evidence-based practices.

Tier 2 and 3: When standardized reading test scores and classroom Tier 1 assessments indicate that a student is struggling to reach grade-level proficiency, additional instructional support is provided through Tier 2 and 3 Interventions. Students identified as needing Tier 2 interventions in grades 6-8 are provided with supports in every-other day 45-minute classes. Tier 2 and 3 interventions include a combination of intensive vocabulary instruction, repeated reading for fluency, and comprehension practice largely using grade-level texts from Science and ELA classes or through online resources. Students identified as needing Tier 3 interventions in grades 6 and 7 receive support through daily instruction from a licensed reading specialist who connects reading interventions to grade-level ELA curriculum.

Additional Support: In addition to the three levels of instruction described above, the District provides the following support for literacy development:

1. Academic Language support for EL students who are at Level 4: In addition to regular EL classes for students who are at Levels 1-3, Columbia Academy offers Academic Language support classes for EL students who are at Level 4 which complement their Tier 1 ELA classes with supportive vocabulary and writing development.
2. Summer School: The District invites below grade-level students to attend Summer School for additional instruction. Summer School is taught by teachers from our District and utilizes the same literacy curriculum and support system as the regular school year.
3. Sonday literacy support
4. ENCORE After School Program: The middle school has after-school opportunities for students for extension and remediation. Parents can choose to enroll their child in classes which provide additional literacy support.

4. Parent & Community Engagement

Improving literacy skills of students begins with collaboration between the students, teachers, and families. Through various school events including curriculum night, EL (English Learner) Family Night, and conferences, families learn and provide input on literacy strategies the schools are implementing. Families are supported with literacy activities students can do at home in English or in their native language.

Columbia Heights schools work hard to support families and our community using various tools and engagement strategies to enhance communication. Some of these include:
- College and Career Guides for each step of their journey Pre K - 12
- Communication apps such as Seesaw, Blackboard, and Remind
- Home Visits by staff
- Neighborhood walks

- PTA and PTO
- PAS (Partnerships for Academic Success) Nights focusing in on student data
- Books, Backpacks, and Breakfast (Families receive books and literacy activities to support students)

World's Best Workforce plays an important part creating our literacy goals, monitoring our progress, and providing input into resources and strategies. More about the role of the World's Best Workforce and District Advisory Committee are included in the Continuous Improvement section.

5. Communication Plan

Literacy Plans are created in collaboration with many stakeholders including teachers, administration, families, and community members. Goals are created and analyzed in partnership with these stakeholders.

a. *Reporting to Stakeholders*
Communicating results to the many stakeholders is a joint effort between the Teaching and Learning department and Communications department. Communication around literacy data and results, efforts to identify students including students with dyslexia or convergence insufficiency, and literacy action plans are shared by:
- Publishing WBWF on the district website including the Annual Report
- Sharing with each school at Curriculum Nights and/or School meetings
- Holding an annual World's Best Workforce meeting for the public
- Sharing with district committees including World's Best Workforce, leadership teams, administration teams

b. *Reporting to Parents/Guardians*
Supporting students to the fullest includes a partnership with families. Each fall, families are provided with fall literacy data, showing where learners currently are at in regards to grade-level understanding/skills. Information about services to support students' progress is also shared. Families are updated with student progress via conferences, access to ParentVUE, report cards, meetings, and/or home visits.

6. Professional Development

Columbia Heights Public Schools professional development plan is grounded in research, national standards and equips teachers to meet state re-licensure requirements and to work collaboratively to support implementation of instructional practices. The plan articulates the needs identified for staff and by staff to ensure processes and practices are implemented well.

The professional development plan is based on a comprehensive needs assessment and

aligned to the district, school, and individual goals grounded in "Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching" four domains: Planning and Preparation; Environment; Instruction; and Professional Responsibility. The framework aligns with the teacher evaluation program and supports all elements of effective instruction. The plan incorporates systems of provision and monitoring of fidelity tools to inform continuous improvement and future needs for professional development.

The World's Best Workforce comprehensive long-term strategic plan provides direction to professional learning to improve teaching and learning and includes education practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, technology, and a collaborative professional culture that develops and supports teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness.

Professional learning is provided in three ways: professional workshops, professional learning communities/collaborative grade-level teams/data teams, and individual coaching. This year's professional development reading goal met staff needs as identified through reading data to ensure the following:

- Secondary teachers are able to implement comprehensive, scientifically based reading and writing instruction.
- Middle School Language Arts teachers have sufficient training to provide instruction that meets students' developmental, linguistic, and literacy needs using intervention methods or programs selected by the district for identified students.
- Licensed teachers have regular opportunities to improve reading and writing instruction.
- Licensed teachers recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and can meet the oral language and linguistic needs of students who are English Learners by maximizing strengths in their native languages to cultivate English language development (including oral academic language) and build academic literacy.
- Licensed teachers are well trained in culturally responsive pedagogy that enables students to master content, develop skills to access content, and build relationships.

A distributed leadership model is used to provide professional learning in a collaborative setting allowing teacher leaders to facilitate the learning of their peers. Training and support are also provided to administrators to provide quality professional learning for capacity building. Peer Reviewers play a primary role in supporting educators with professional learning around individual goals as well.

Secondary teachers use critical reading strategies aligned to the Minnesota State Standards to provide a common language and routine for students to become independent readers and writers in order to access rigorous and non-fiction texts. The critical reading strategies focus on reading comprehension skills and engage students in reading *before, during* and *after* the text. Critical reading strategies allow students to use higher-level thinking and questioning in order to

comprehend rigorous text. Students make connections to background knowledge, draw inferences, and determine importance when using critical reading strategies.