

## St. Croix Preparatory Academy

### Reading Well by the End of Third Grade: Local Literacy Plan



Literacy Plan Developers  
Joann Karetov, Lower School Principal  
Emily Croaston, Reading Specialist

Reviewed by the SCPA Lower School Faculty: June 7, 2021  
Presented to the School Board: June 22, 2021  
Approved by the School Board: June 29, 2021

## Overview of St. Croix Preparatory Academy Local Literacy Plan

MN Statute 120B.12 states that a school district must adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of grade 3. This legislation is commonly referred to as “Reading Well by Third Grade”. The literacy plan “must include a process to assess students’ level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and identify and meet staff development needs.”

The purpose of this document is to outline how St. Croix Preparatory Academy plans to address each of these requirements for our students in kindergarten through third grade.

### Belief Statement from Minnesota Department of Education

Reading well by third grade is one of many developmental milestones in a child’s educational experience. Literacy development starts at an early age and is the basis for all academic success. Reading well by grade three ensures that a student has a solid foundation of literacy skills to continue to expand their understanding of what they read, make meaning, and transfer that learning across all subject areas. Instruction that provides the basis for all students to read well by third grade and beyond will help close the achievement gap and ensure that all students are ready for the demands of college and the workplace. From cradle to career, a sustained effort to create quality literacy environments in all of our schools and programs from birth through grade 12 promotes academic success. – Minnesota Department of Education

### St. Croix Preparatory Academy Local Literacy Plan Goals

1. All students who are not reading at grade level will be supported in order to close the achievement gap and attain grade level reading benchmarks.
2. All students who are exceeding reading grade level benchmarks will be supported and challenged in order to make projected growth.
3. All stakeholders will be informed about the instructional efforts to ensure that all our students will be reading well by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### How Will SCPA Know If Our Students are Reading Well by Third Grade?

Reading proficiency will be defined as students who score at or above established SCPA benchmarks and who perform at grade level in the classroom. Reading proficiency will be ensured for ALL students in Kindergarten through grade 3 by multiple measures of assessment, data driven decision-making, and a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to support and improve literacy skills. Students who are not reading at grade level will receive research-based interventions, and their progress will be monitored until proficiency is attained. Interventions will supplement and supplant core reading instruction.

Core curriculum is aligned to the Minnesota English Language Arts Standards. On a yearly basis, the SCPA core curriculum is aligned vertically and horizontally.

### What Kind of Assessments will be Used and When?

Elementary students at St. Croix Preparatory Academy are assessed in their reading skills utilizing the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) reading assessment. STEP is an assessment tool created by the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. The assessment evaluates key elements of literacy development for students from kindergarten through third grade including phonemic awareness, letter/word knowledge, reading accuracy and use of reading strategies, fluency and reading rate, as well as literal and inferential comprehension.

The levels of the STEP reading assessment start at the Pre-Reading STEP and go up to STEP 12. It is the goal that all students will achieve STEP 12 by the end of third grade. The table below shows the quarterly STEP level benchmarks.

	End of Qtr. 1	End of Qtr. 2	End of Qtr. 3	End of Qtr. 4
	STEP	STEP	STEP	STEP
K	Pre-Reading	1	2	3
1	3	4	5	6
2	6	7	8	9
3	9	10	11	12

Students are assessed using STEP at least four times per year. Students read a leveled book with increasing difficulty at each STEP level. The teacher takes notes of reading behaviors and records the student's reading accuracy and fluency. After reading the book, the test administrator has a comprehension conversation with the child about the book. There are additional components of the STEP assessment that target specific reading skills aligned with the leveled texts. The table below summarizes the scores needed for students to meet grade level benchmarks in each component of the quarterly STEP assessments.

Grade Level	First Quarter Benchmarks	Second Quarter Benchmarks	Third Quarter Benchmarks	End of Year Benchmarks
Kindergarten	Name Assessment: 3/5	Name Assessment: 4/5	Letter-Name Identification: 50/54	Letter-Sound Identification: 24/26
	Letter-Sound Identification: 0/26	Letter-Sound Identification: 8/26	Letter-Sound Identification: 18/26	Phonemic Awareness: 8/10
	Phonemic Awareness: 6/10	Phonemic Awareness: 6/10	Phonemic Awareness: 4/10	Reading Accuracy: 90/100
	Concepts of Print: 5/12	Concepts of Print: 10/13	Reading Accuracy: 88/100	Comprehension: 4/5
		Reading Record: 5/5	Comprehension: 4/5	Developmental Spelling: 18/30
First		Developmental Spelling: 5/30	Developmental Spelling: 12/30	
	Letter-Sound Identification: 24/26	Reading Accuracy: 90/100	Reading Accuracy: 92/100	Reading Accuracy: 93/100
	Phonemic Awareness: 8/10	Reading Rate: 12 wpm	Reading Rate: 25 wpm	Reading Rate: 55 wpm
	Reading Accuracy: 90/100	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4
	Comprehension: 4/5	Comprehension: 5/6	Comprehension: 5/6	Oral Reading Comprehension: 3/4
Second	Developmental Spelling: 18/30	Developmental Spelling: 16/30	Developmental Spelling: 24/30	Silent Reading Comprehension: 3/4
	Reading Accuracy: 93/100	Reading Accuracy: 93/100	Reading Accuracy: 93/100	Reading Accuracy: 93/100
	Reading Rate: 55 wpm	Reading Rate: 55 wpm	Reading Rate: 75 wpm	Reading Rate: 75 wpm
	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4
	Oral Reading Comprehension: 3/4	Oral Reading Comprehension: 3/4	Retell: 3/4	Retell: 3/4
Third	Silent Reading Comprehension: 3/4	Silent Reading Comprehension: 3/4	Comprehension: 6/8	Written Comprehension: 2/3
				Oral Comprehension: 4/5
	Reading Accuracy: 93/100	Reading Accuracy: 94/100	Reading Accuracy: 94/100	Reading Accuracy: 95/100
	Reading Rate: 75 wpm	Reading Rate: 75 wpm	Reading Rate: 95 wpm	Reading Rate: 110 wpm
	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4	Fluency: 3/4
	Retell: 3/4	Retell: 3/4	Retell: 3/4	Retell: 3/4
	Written Comprehension: 2/3	Written Comprehension: 2/3	Written Comprehension: 2/3	Written Comprehension: 2/3
	Oral Comprehension: 4/5	Oral Comprehension: 4/5	Oral Comprehension: 4/5	Oral Comprehension: 4/5

SCPA students are assessed at the end of each quarter. This information is used to identify students who need extra help in reaching grade level expectations. Students are assessed diagnostically in order to match their needs with instructional practices. Additionally, students who are receiving extra help, or targeted assistance, are progress-monitored regularly. Progress monitoring data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and to adjust instruction as needed to maximize growth towards grade level expectations.

Our primary assessment is STEP, but students are also considered for targeted services if they fall below the target score on any of the screening assessments. These students will be considered for small-group Tier II interventions provided by an Educational Assistant and/or the Reading Specialist. Data used to determine whether they receive services includes, but is not limited to the STEP assessment, MCA (grade 3), Imagine It! benchmarks, fluency benchmarks, RIGGS phonogram and orthography tests, and classroom observational data. Students are considered meeting grade level expectations if they maintain at or above grade level benchmarks on assessments. Students who qualify for special education services will receive their targeted interventions through their IEPs.

SCPA will assess all students who were previously below benchmark each September, within the first 3 weeks of school. New students to SCPA will be assessed before or during their first week of school.

If a student is below benchmarks, the teacher brings the information to the Child Study team meetings. At that time, teachers discuss prior interventions, and the teacher and team run through a series of indicators to review if the child may need vision, hearing, and/or dyslexia screenings, has a learning disability and/or medical concerns, etc. The team introduces additional interventions and sets a date to review the use of the new interventions. If upon return to the Child Study team meeting it is determined that the interventions are not supporting the student in making progress, additional interventions are suggested and another review date is set, or a parent meeting is scheduled.

### How Will Parents Be Informed That Their Child is not Reading Proficiently?

Communication with families is an ongoing process. It starts with Back to School/Open House and continues throughout the year through two (2) teacher conferences and ongoing phone calls and meetings. Each year in elementary school, parents are provided information that shows the reading growth of their child.

The parents of students not reading proficiently will also be sent a formal notification and will explain entrance/exit criteria and support services. Parents will receive an additional progress report from the reading specialist at the end of each quarter that the student receives additional services. On the progress report, student data and supplemental guides/resources for parents will be attached.

If the Child Study team has discussed a student, and interventions have not supported the targeted growth, parents are invited to meet and discuss their child's progress, indicators of potential concerns (i.e. vision/hearing/dyslexia screening results, focusing issues, etc.), and any diagnoses the parents may provide that they have received by a medical doctor. SCPA will screen for dyslexia and report to parents a comprehensive checklist for any student who is showing reading deficiencies and is not meeting local benchmarks. Parents may choose to further seek dyslexia diagnosis with their child's physician. SCPA does not include screening

for convergence insufficiency disorder as part of its vision screening program. Parents with concerns about the condition should see their licensed eye care specialist for assessment and treatment. Parents have the option to have their student assessed at the school for additional special education support services.

Progress in reading grades and performance can be viewed electronically in the student information software. Grades are reported four times per year and indicate individual student performance and whether students are reading at grade level.

During fall and spring conferences and ongoing communication with parents, SCPA will provide parent information in regard to utilizing literacy strategies to accelerate their child's literacy development in areas where a skill deficit has been identified. Additionally, parents receive information at least three (3) times per year regarding ways they may support their child at home in attaining the next reading level.

Each summer, a letter will be sent to families of children in grades K-3 who are not meeting grade level expectations / benchmarks. The letter will include results from the most recent assessment window and parent resources for continued literacy support.

Sample Parent Notification Letter

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear family of \_\_\_\_\_ (grade \_\_\_\_),

Literacy development starts at an early age and is the basis for all academic success. Reading is a critical skill upon which all other learning is built. At SCPA we use multiple assessments: STEP, Imagine It! (grades K-3), MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, grade 3) to track each student's reading development.

You are receiving this letter to let you know that your child did not meet the end of year reading benchmark, as indicated by their STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress), fluency, and/or MCA test.

Grade:	MN and/or SCPA Benchmark:	Present Level:	Did Not Achieve:
STEP Level (K-3)			
Fluency Score (K-3)			
MCA Preliminary Score (3)			

During the school year, your child has received some or all of the following support: small group instruction with the Reading Specialist, small group instruction with the classroom Educational Assistant, and/or individualized reading instruction by the classroom teacher.

Research has shown that children who practice their reading during the summer are less likely to lose the reading skills that they have worked hard to develop. A good summer routine should include reading each day with your child. Enclosed you will find resources and activities that you and your child can do together to prevent summer reading loss.

It is our goal, in accordance with MN Statute 120B.12 and our Reading Well by Third Grade local literacy plan, that your child has a successful foundation in reading. We wish to partner with you to ensure their success.

Sincerely,



Joann Karetov  
Lower School Principal  
651-395-5920

### What Instructional Supports and Interventions Will Be Used?

If a student is identified as not reading at or above grade level, and/or not meeting some or all benchmarks during the previous school year, they will automatically qualify for support.

The foundations of reading will be met through the core curriculum. Teachers will foster students' understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, phonemic awareness, fluency, and other basic conventions. In addition, a necessary and important component of an effective reading program is that it is structured to develop proficient readers with the capacity to think critically, read fluently, and comprehend texts across a range of text structures.

Intervention programs assist students who are struggling with literacy. Based on the results of screening and diagnostic assessments and teacher recommendation, students will receive a multi-tiered level of support that includes research-based interventions. These interventions target skill deficits in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Tiers of Literacy Support include:

Tier 1: Core Support The core curriculum includes a phonics-based program based on Orton-Gillingham called RIGGS (K-3), SRA Imagine IT! (K-3), Core Knowledge Sequence, and differentiated instruction and guided reading (K-3).

All students receive core instruction in Tier 1. Students who are at or above benchmark and are making sufficient academic growth will have their needs met through instruction in the core curriculum and guided reading. Students performing below grade level will receive additional services through Tier 2 and /or Tier 3 support.

Tier 2: Extra Support Students who are below grade level are supported through small groups and/or individual instruction during What I Need (WIN) time. Additional support is provided during a pre-determined and scheduled block. To gauge the effectiveness of specific interventions, staff will monitor student progress using the STEP assessment, benchmark assessments on comprehension and fluency, and other formative assessments. Once a student is boosted to grade level benchmarks, he/she will be placed on a "monitor" status and the amount of extra support in Tier 2 may stay the same, be reduced or terminated. Teachers will continue to monitor progress to ensure that mastery is maintained.

Instructional supports can include but are not limited to: Research based interventions for the targeted skill, additional time to reinforce classroom skills with trained Educational Assistant and/or Reading Specialist, and/or grade retention.

Tier 3: Intense Support Students who are significantly below grade level in reading may be evaluated and may qualify for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to address their reading needs. Recommendations for assessment go through an extensive child study process and review.



### What Supports Are in Place for English Learners?

Our SCPA English Learners (EL) teacher offers content based EL instructional programs, which promote students' English language proficiency and build academic content knowledge by integrating subject areas with language acquisition strategies. English Learners acquire English through participation in age-appropriate instruction aligned to district content standards as well as English Language proficiency standards. The primary objective of teaching language through content is to make the curriculum available to students at all levels of English proficiency.

At the K-3 level, the EL teacher collaborates with the general education teacher to support the language acquisition strategies. Linguistic, graphic, visual, kinesthetic, interactive, and emotional supports are provided to make content standards and SCPA curriculum/expectations accessible for English Learners at all levels of proficiency. The EL teacher pulls students out during an established block of intervention time to support students in acquisition strategies that support the core curriculum.

### What Opportunities Do Teachers Have for Professional Development?

Professional development is data-driven, ongoing, and inclusive of all teachers. It is delivered in a variety of formats and aligned with school goals.

For a five (5) day training during the summer of 2018, all elementary general and special education teachers received training in the RIGGS program, which is a comprehensive reading program based on Orton-Gillingham research, which emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, orthography, grammar, writing, and comprehension. All new teachers will receive a training to support this program.

There are 12 professional development days scheduled for the 2021-22 school year. New teachers receive an additional 5 days of development each summer, in addition to ongoing one-hour monthly meetings. SCPA utilizes formal and informal evaluations to identify teacher-training needs. In addition, teachers will meet for grade-level/specialty area Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings for weekly one-hour meetings. Much of this time will be devoted to reviewing data, setting goals, discussing instructional effectiveness, writing common assessments, and reviewing curriculum standards.

Additionally, time will be given for grade level teams to meet at least once per month with the principal to review student progress-monitoring data, interventions being used, and make adjustments in addressing individual student needs. Weekly Child Study meetings are also available for teachers to bring an individual student for review by the principal, reading and math specialists, and special education team to address if additional interventions/observations are available.

Annually, teachers are given development regarding indicators of dyslexia, eye convergence insufficiency disorder, mental health, and other learning/medical disabilities that may impact students learning.

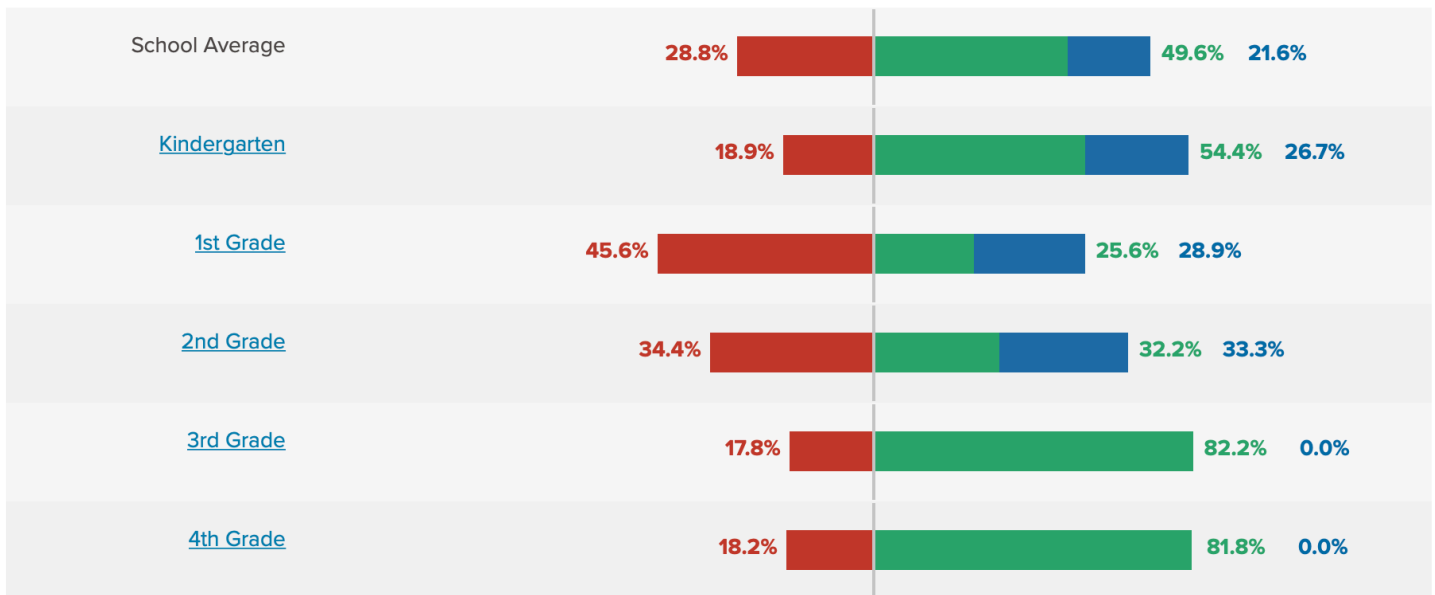


## How Are SCPA Students Currently Performing?

- Percentage of K-3 students at or above STEP benchmark goal.

End of 2018-2019

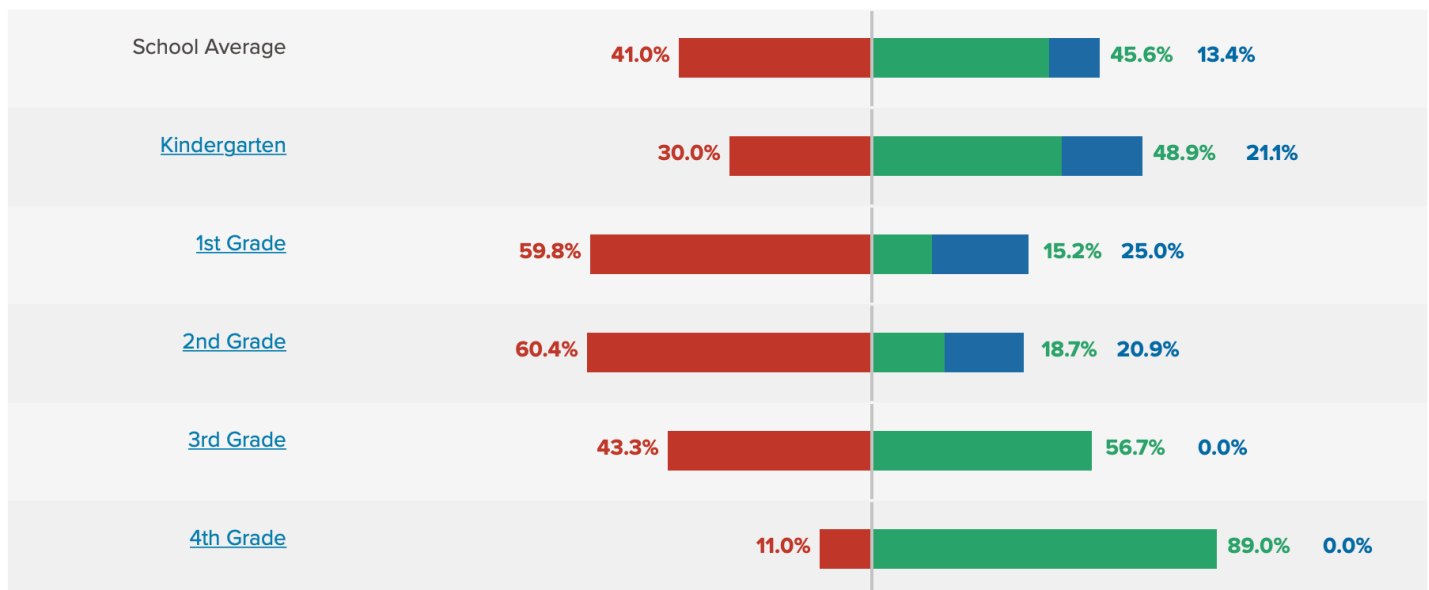
Legend ■ Below Target ■ On Target ■ Above Target



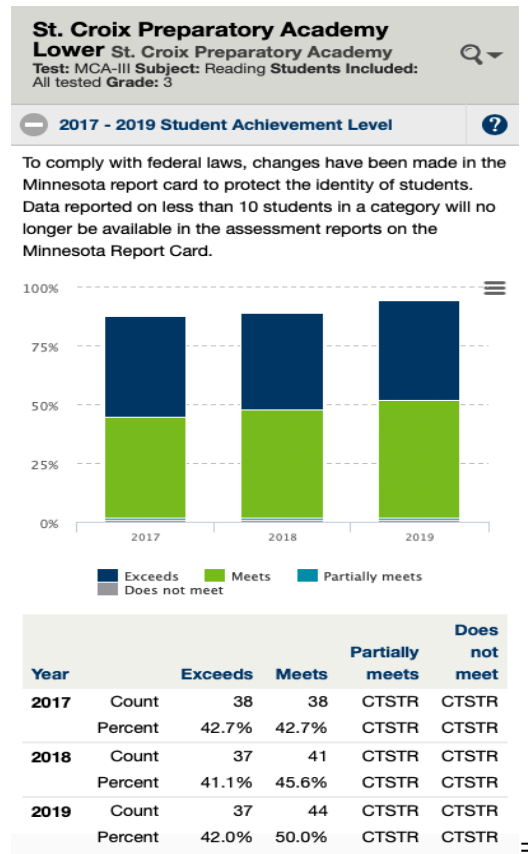
- There is no end of 2019-2020 data due to the COVID-19 pandemic and mandatory school closures.

End of 2020-2021

Legend ■ Below Target ■ On Target ■ Above Target



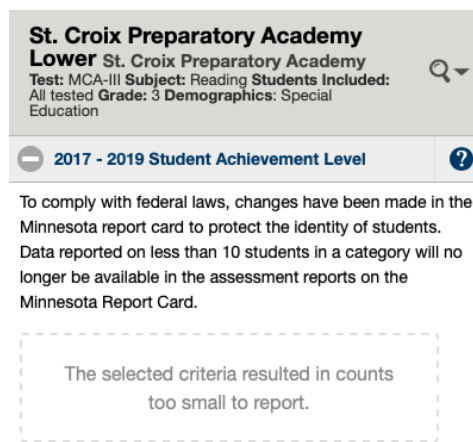
3. Percentage of Grade 3 students at or above reading proficiency on MCA\*.



4. Percentage of Grade 3 FRP and/or students of color who are at or above reading proficiency on MCA 2019.

The selected criteria resulted in counts too small to report.

5. Percentage of Grade 3 Special Education students Meeting or Exceeding Reading Standards on MCA.



\*there are no 2020 scores to enter due to the COVID-19 school closures. Above are the collective scores from 2017, 2018, and 2019 required by MDE.

Please Note:

- Students were below normal benchmarks at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year due to the mandatory school closures from March – June, 2020. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, the students participated in hybrid, distance learning, and in-person learning models. Because of the various learning models and school closures for over a year, scores may not appear as high as in previous years due to limited in-person instruction and interventions.
- Although our internal STEP scores may have been lower, when compared to the statewide average, students in St. Croix Preparatory Academy Lower School consistently outperform the state averages in Reading on the MCAs (and the 2021 preliminary scores appear to have been similar to previous years).