

Mexican American Student Services (MASS) Reading Improvement Plan for SY 2013-14

Background

On June 7, 2013, the Court conditionally approved the USP Budget noticed by the District and approved by the Governing Board on May 8, 2013. Approval of the budget included the following condition:

“The District shall assess the reading support element of Mexican American Student Services provision of the USP pursuant to research based criteria, and based on this assessment develop the MASS reading improvement plan to be implemented for the Fall term 2013-2014. USP §§ (V)(E)(2)(a)-(b).”

The District, in conjunction with the Parties and Special Master, developed the following timeline for completing (a) the assessment of the reading support element of MASS pursuant to research-based criteria, and (b) the development of the MASS reading improvement plan to be implemented for the Fall term 2013-14.

| ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MASS READING IMPROVEMENT PLAN | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | |
| District assesses the MASS reading improvement plan; develops a plan to be implemented for 2013-2014 | Party/Special Master Review Draft Plan sent to Board, Parties and Special Master in or around June 26; Party/SM comments due back by July 13 | District Revision | Superintendent and SLT approve Final Plan |
| May - June | June 26 to July 26 | July 29- Aug 26 | Aug 27 |

Generally, TUSD utilizes a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to provide academic supports to students. For K-8 students, TUSD’s primary reading intervention is “SuccessMaker,” an academic support that provides a digitally-driven reading learning experience focused on the needs of each individual student.

Specifically, the MASS Reading Improvement Plan (Plan) is aimed at providing reading supports for struggling students, and is aligned with and falls under TUSD’s general RTI Model¹. The Plan’s primary tool for providing additional Tier II reading support is “Achieve 3000,” a computer-based program that uses differentiated online instruction to improve students’ reading and writing, and prepare them for college and career success. Achieve 3000 aligns well with SuccessMaker, and adds additional components such as cultural relevance, college and career readiness, and the exclusive use of non-fiction texts. The Plan also provides for Tier III reading support using a variety of approaches specific to students’ individual needs.

¹ TUSD’s RTI model focuses on tiered instruction, meaning the instruction or intervention delivered to students varies on several dimensions that are related to the nature and severity of a student’s strengths and difficulties. The tiered model has three tiers: Tier I (core instruction), Tier II (group interventions), and Tier III (intensive interventions). All students in Tier I receive high-quality instruction, differentiated to meet their needs. Students are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support. In Tier II, students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. In Tier III, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students’ skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.

Recommendations

See below for detailed descriptions of each recommendation:

Recommendation 1:

Utilize Achieve 3000 in small group settings (Tier II)

Recommendation 2:

Provide strategic, individual reading supports to the most at-risk students (Tier III)

Recommendation 3:

Staff with experience in providing supports using Achieve 3000 will facilitate the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2.

Recommendation 4:

Continually research, monitor, and assess the Plan's effectiveness, and develop an improved Plan for SY 2014-15

Recommendation Details

Recommendation 1: Utilize Achieve 3000 in small group settings (Tier II)

Description:

For SY 2013-14, MASS Specialists will use Achieve 3000 as the primary Tier II support strategy to improve reading outcomes for Latino students. To the extent practicable, Specialists will provide direct reading supports during language arts / reading instruction, or indirectly using desktops or laptops with small groups. Specialists will work with Latino students who have been identified for these services.

Success Criteria:

Achieve 3000 includes a diagnostic and monitoring component. The goal of Recommendation I is to show steady improvement/progress for students working with Achieve 3000 as determined by: (a) the Achieve 3000 internal diagnostics, (b) benchmark assessments, reading, (c) and ultimately AIMS results, reading. Once students have increased their reading Lexile scores to meet equivalent recommended Lexile score to grade level reading, they will be discontinued from receiving this intervention strategy.

Recommendation 2: Provide reading supports to individual students (Tier III)

Description:

For SY 2013-14, the site Reading Team (consisting of a certificated MASS staff member - supported by 2-3 paraprofessionals - and, where they exist, the site's reading interventionist) will work with at-risk students using the existing strategies utilized at the site, but in an individualized and strategic manner. Students will be identified as "at-risk" after receiving initial support services under Achieve 3000 where it is clear that additional support is needed. The Reading Teams will use a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to address individualized student needs, focused primarily on providing out of class support before or after school.

Success Criteria:

The goal of Recommendation II is for the most at-risk students to be able to function in the class setting at an academically comparable level to their peers. Success will be measured by the growth and progression of the most at-risk students as evidence by: (a) the elimination for the need for Tier III support, (b) benchmark assessments, reading, (c) and ultimately AIMS results, reading. Once students have increased their reading Lexile scores to meet equivalent recommended Lexile score to grade level reading, they will be discontinued from receiving this intervention strategy.

Recommendation 3: The Director of Language Acquisition, Ignacio Ruiz, and the Director of African American Student Services Department, Jimmy Hart, will facilitate the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2.

Currently, the Language Acquisition Department uses Achieve 3000 for reading improvement for ELL and ELL reclassified students, and also supervises the implementation of individualized and strategic support for ELL students. Likewise, the Director of African American Student Services uses Achieve 3000 for reading improvement for African American students. The District will assign the current Directors of these departments to work with the MASS Director to implement recommendations 1 and 2, sharing their knowledge, skill, expertise, training, and best practices for implementation and monitoring.

Recommendation 4: Continue to research/monitor/assess to develop the Plan for SY 2014-15

In May 2014, data will be reviewed to evaluate the efficacy of recommendations 1 and 2 to determine how to modify and strengthen the MASS reading program for SY 2014-15. TUSD will take into consideration the intervention review and assessment, and the Drop-Out Prevention and Retention Plan, once developed.