



A Note from Mr. Williams, Executive Director

On Tuesday, October 29th, our Authorizer (Pillsbury United Communities) visited STRIDE Academy to conduct an annual review of the school. Ahead of the meeting, we were asked to share some of the things our staff is doing to meet the needs of the STRIDE students. As we went through the list of initiatives it was impressive. We thought it would be important to share those things that STRIDE does to help close the achievement gap.

Rock n' Read

At Stride Academy, teachers are learning how to harness the power of active music-making to dramatically raise reading and academic achievement. Through the 12 hour (three 4-hour sessions) Rock 'n' Read Course, teachers are learning highly interactive, evidence-based strategies that use singing and singing games within their existing curriculum to improve reading and academic achievement. These strategies also aid in developing social-emotional skills in students, enhancing classroom community, and creating a more joyful and cooperative learning environment for both teachers and students.

STRIDES for Learning:

STRIDE Academy offers a support program for students that have observed specific reading, spelling or writing differences. The program, "STRIDES for Reading" aims to give STRIDE students the skills to be successful lifelong learners.

Initial Screening: In addition to classroom observations, classroom teachers use paper pencil tasks, file reviews, and teacher-developed assessments to determine who may qualify for further dyslexia screening. The dyslexia specialist will also conduct an informal assessment of reading skills for the child to determine if further intervention is appropriate.

EL Strategies

Teachers are provided with professional development on a number of interactive activities to incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening into their content area classes, and embed them within their daily lessons. These activities support language objectives, which are essential for meaningful learning.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Research-based behavioral and academic instructional strategies for all students. PBIS helps teachers help all students and students with disabilities to prevent academic and/or social failures. Our PBIS plan has helped our teachers shift from discipline strategies that are punitive to more proactive intervention plans.

Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

This is a school-wide approach to student support. It involves universal screening for all students early in each school year. Grade level teachers, our social worker, psychologist, principal, and other specialists within the building are on the MTSS team. The team meets twice monthly (more if needed). During the meetings, the team reviews and assesses students who are referred to MTSS, and plans interventions that are implemented at the classroom level and then monitored for success (or lack thereof).

Guided Reading

STRIDE Teachers work with small groups of students who demonstrate similar reading behaviors and can read similar levels of texts. The text is easy enough for students to read with a teachers support, but at the same time, more challenging on their own. The students are generally able to read the text with some fluency. Our teachers are given professional development to help them choose selections that best help students expand their strategies.

Go Math

STRIDE is in its first year of a new math curriculum. We selected Houghton Mifflin's "Go Math" because of its alignment with the Minnesota Math Standards and the tools within the curriculum that help teachers do a more in depth job of meeting our student's needs according to what they understand in order to improve their conceptual understanding, fluency, and application.

I Read

Computer based reading program for primary (K-2) students. The adaptive computer based technology adjusts instruction to meet students where they are and gives specific instruction and guided practice to build mastery in the areas that need development.

PLC's

As part of the school's Q-Comp plan, teachers meet each week in Professional Learning Communities to discuss the implementation and reflection of strategies used by teachers in their classroom. The goal is for increased student achievement and overall school improvement. The PLC's reflective process allows both the teacher and the PLC team to grow. STRIDE's PLC goals align with our shared mission and vision for learning.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

STRIDE'S SEL program provides school-wide pathways for students to get a deeper understanding of themselves, their peers, and those who care for them. Teachers increase ownership - and responsibility for - the health and well being of their students. Building this capacity is the goal of the program.

See Saw

Seesaw is a student-driven digital portfolio. Seesaw empowers students of any age to create, reflect, collaborate, and share what they have done in a classroom with their family. It allows for family members to use the Seesaw app to keep up to date with their child's learning, and easily communicate between school and home.

Differentiation

The instructional design STRIDE Academy is focused on providing differentiated instruction. STRIDE Academy implements differentiated math and reading instruction starting in kindergarten and continuing through 7th grade. These classrooms allow for both accelerated learning and scaffolded instruction to meet the needs of all learners. STRIDE differentiates instruction in math and reading. Parents are informed of this before they enter STRIDE Academy.

Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) Testing and MAP Goal Setting

Teachers have been trained to analyze MAP data in reading and math and conduct goal setting conferences with each student and parent. These conferences help the student and the families understand areas in which the student can improve his/her skills.

Homework/Policy Change:

Because many of our parents do not speak English and cannot provide assistance for some of their child's assignments, the school has limited the practice of assigning regular homework. STRIDE leadership believes strongly that the students are better served when independent practice and guided practice on concepts or skills are given within the school day.

Grading Changes:

K - 2 has moved to a standards based report card. Grades 4-7 are defining their practices of grading to be more reflective of actual student learning and mastery.

Fast ForWord

This is an online adaptable reading program for students who can benefit from a computerized reading intervention to make fast, permanent changes to a child's brain - which will make reading easier and learning (in all subjects) more attainable.

We are proud of the work our staff does with every student at STRIDE Academy. We are thankful for the support, you the parents, provide everyday. And we know STRIDE Academy is a strong, vibrant learning community!