

Carrington Elementary School
Schoolwide Title 2020-2021

Our Title 1 program continues to evolve, grow, and increase its effectiveness as we navigate through the MTSS process after two years (2017-2018, 2018-2019) of academic pathway training through the Southeast Education Cooperative with trainer, Wayne Calendar, as well as begin our first year as a Schoolwide Title school (2020-2021).

Our MTSS team consists of the school principal, strategists/Title 1 teachers, and four elementary classroom teachers. Because our reading/language arts standardized scores were lower (2016-17, 11% higher than state average) than our math standardized scores (2016-17, 16% higher than state average), and our concern with our fluency standardized rates as measured by our Dibels assessment, we decided to focus on our reading/language arts programming first. Our fluency scores were not meeting the desired success rate of having approximately 80% of students proficient with tier 1 instruction, as recommended by the MTSS model. Therefore, we evaluated the current reading/language arts teaching practices, processes, and resources. We decided to discontinue using the then current curriculum resource, StoryTown. Because of its lack of learning opportunities and resources for phonics instruction in the primary grades, phonics instruction was supplemented by the use of Saxon Phonics. Teachers struggled with the lack of continuity between the two programs. Teacher turnover and lack of training had resulted in the phonics program not being taught with fidelity. This was evident in the fluency concerns noted above. We also felt the StoryTown resource was outdated, and in addition were hoping to strengthen our writing instruction.

After researching various tier 1 reading/language arts resources, which included reviewing samples, reaching out to colleagues around the state and even out of state, participating in webinars and staff discussions, and staff surveys, we purchased the Open Court reading/language arts curriculum resource. At the same time, and with the training and advice from Wayne Calendar, the MTSS team chose intensive and strategic research-based curriculum resources as well: Phonics for Reading, Read Naturally, Corrective Reading, Soar to Success, and Reading Mastery.

In our second year (2018-2019) of MTSS training, we carried out the training we had received in year 1, and with continued training and support in year 2, we implanted the MTSS plan. Our strategist/Title 1 teachers began teaching our tier 3 intensive reading program, Reading Mastery.

Our Title 1 math support continued to serve students who were identified using NWEA Math standardized test scores and teacher input. They received pullout math instruction by supplementing the Saxon Math resource with certified Title 1 paraprofessional or teacher assistance.

In year three of MTSS (2019-2020) we began the transition to Title 1 Schoolwide instead of Targeted because we were essentially implementing that model through the MTSS process.

Being a Schoolwide Title 1 school in 2020-2021 has allowed any student to receive additional math supports on any given day or for any given skill regardless of their identification status. We are also able to offer more push in math support, rather than exclusively pull-out.

In addition, we have added a 30-minute research-based strategic math intervention, Connecting Math Concepts, to students who are identified during grade level planning meetings using NWEA Math data and teacher input. This intervention was the result of parents and teacher concerns over the years about the past Title math support only being a homework helper and not addressing actual skill deficits.

We continue to learn, grow, and improve through our MTSS/Title 1 experiences. This includes evolving in our progress monitoring, placement testing, and standardized benchmark testing just to name a few. For example, we are discontinuing the administration of the NWEA Reading assessment for kindergarten students because we feel our Dibels assessments gives us the information we need, freeing up this time for more useful learning opportunities.

The continued implementation of our MTSS is facilitated by ongoing MTSS team meetings, grade level planning meetings for each grade level a minimum of five times a year occurring after standardized benchmark testing, curriculum and instruction fidelity checks/observations, continued professional development, and self-assessments. Our grade level planning meetings improve on processes and documentation.

Additional MTSS training has included the state MTSS conferences which has been attended for multiple years by various teachers not limited to our MTSS team. At these conferences, teachers are able to choose from a variety of sessions to improve overall instruction, and our MTSS processes and system.

The MTSS team also attended a training which included a behavior/social/emotional session. From this session, the team designed a behavior/expectations flowchart which has aided our staff in behavior management and analysis, and has resulted in interventions to reduce unwanted behaviors. This includes location specific school wide behavior expectations and a school wide interpersonal conflict resolution process. We are currently expanding this MTSS area with the adoption of an SEL curriculum to be taught by our school counselor and supported by our classroom teachers. The district has also used Title IV, Part A, funds to provide our tier 3 behavior students with support from a licensed clinical counselor.

We value the process we have been able to partake in, and look forward to continuing to integrate MTSS and Title 1 in Title Schoolwide.