Standards for Success in Literacy
The Vision for Our Graduates

In a time of rapidly developing information and communication technology, graduates in Pembina Trails School Division will be able to:

- read and interpret multiple and changing oral, visual, print, digital and multi-modal text forms
- locate, access and synthesize information from multiple sources, including real-time communication
- think critically, questioning, responding and problem-solving for deep understanding
- compose and create oral, visual, print, digital and multi-modal text, competently and effectively, for a range of audiences and purposes
- engage in inquiry and use metacognitive processes to reflect on learning
- communicate and collaborate effectively and creatively
- contribute to society as ethical and critical producers and consumers of information

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Pembina Trails School Division Standards for Success in Literacy is to engage our community in a shared commitment to literacy learning to ensure success for all learners. The goal of the K-12 Standard of Literacy is to strengthen student achievement through the articulation of shared beliefs, understandings, effective practices and the clarification of the roles and responsibilities for literacy learning.

Definition of Literacy

Literacy is the development of a continuum of skills, knowledge and attitudes that prepare all learners in a changing world community. It begins with the fundamental acquisition of skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, representing and responding. It becomes the ability to understand, think, apply, and communicate effectively in all subject and program areas in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes.

Adapted from Paterson & Rolheiser, 13 Parameters: A Literacy Leadership Toolkit
We believe:

- All students can be successful literacy learners.
- We are all literacy learners and all teachers are teachers of literacy.
- Technology influences today’s learners, who must be able to read, analyze, question, critique and express themselves knowledgeably and creatively, all within multiple, dynamic and changing literacy environments.
- First languages and early experiences are the foundation for literacy development. It is important to honour and celebrate the unique, culturally and linguistically diverse experiences of our community.
- High expectations, coupled with early, ongoing, and targeted intervention are essential to ensure all learners achieve success.
- High quality, ongoing, professional learning opportunities and dialogue are essential to support teachers in implementing effective literacy instruction.
- Teachers need to be able to articulate what they do and the research behind why they teach the way they do.
- Effective instruction, designed to build hope and confidence, includes clear success criteria, ongoing assessment for learning and high quality, descriptive feedback.
- Learners are most engaged and successful when they use metacognitive processes, including setting personal learning goals and understanding how they learn.

Adapted from Paterson & Rolheiser, *13 Parameters: A Literacy Leadership Toolkit*

“Literacy is inseparable from opportunity, and opportunity is inseparable from freedom. The freedom promised by literacy is both freedom from - from ignorance, oppression, poverty - and freedom to - to do new things, to make choices, to learn.”

- Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO
Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees and Senior Administration Team:

- Ensure we have a statement of shared beliefs and understandings related to literacy development and that it is communicated to all stakeholders.
- Establish an expectation for highly effective literacy instruction in all schools.
- Provide staffing for early, ongoing and targeted intervention across the grades.
- Provide the financial support necessary to ensure high quality, relevant, professional learning opportunities are available to all teachers.
- Review and evaluate whether schools have equitable budgets to meet existing needs to provide engaging, diverse texts at a variety of levels in school and classroom libraries and learning environments rich in information and communication technology.
- Assess and celebrate divisional achievement and collaboratively develop a divisional action plan.
- Ensure the divisional literacy database is purposeful and contains useful and necessary data collected consistently across all schools.

Program Consultants:

- Ensure high quality professional learning for teachers.
- Provide yearly opportunities for new teachers to be trained to administer divisional benchmark assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell, the Observation Survey, and in French Immersion, GB+ and BEF Évaluation de la lecture.
- Highlight and support implementation of research based practices which lead to strong, 21st century literacy learning.
- Support teachers in the implementation of new and emerging forms of information and communication technology and the development of digital citizenship.
- Lead action research - particularly on emerging approaches to closing achievement gaps.
- Establish divisional support networks for teachers in similar roles – e.g. RR teachers, coaches, teacher librarians.
- Establish benchmark reading achievement and writing rubrics and exemplars at each grade level K-8.
- Use school and divisional level data to support shared responsibility and select appropriate professional learning opportunities.

“It is not surface beliefs that matter, but commitment, staying the course, and detailed know-how that comes from learning by doing and reflecting on practice.”

- Sharratt & Fullan, Accomplishing District-wide Reform
Student Services and EAL Consultants:

- Support high quality professional learning for resource teachers related to the Standards for Student Services, Student Specific Planning and inclusive educational practices.
- Provide high quality professional learning experiences for all educators to support understanding and working effectively in the area of literacy development with English as an additional language students and families.
- Ensure that the Pembina Trails Continuum of Assessment is followed when a student experiences learning challenges related to literacy.
- Assist resource teachers and classroom teachers in developing student specific outcomes, based on current assessment and the student learning profile, which set achievable literacy targets and maximize inclusion in the classroom.
- Recognize that all students benefit from literacy instruction and that, for some students, literacy instruction may involve a focus on functional literacy skills.
- Facilitate the use of inclusive educational practices and a broad range of instructional supports to provide all students with the opportunity to meaningfully engage in literacy development (e.g. assistive technology).

“The new literacies are profoundly shaping the ways in which we view and use language... Our children will encounter wide and as yet unthought of varieties of information and communication technologies. Critical literacies and analytical skills are requirements [to be] literate.”

- Booth, Re-envisioning the Literacy Lives of Students
School Leaders (Principals, Vice-principals)

Leadership:

- Create a school culture where literacy is valued and celebrated.
- Work with staff to establish shared beliefs and understanding.
- Lead the literacy learning by participating in, encouraging and celebrating professional literacy learning dialogue and by modelling the use of learning strategies.
- Designate a school-based literacy leader or coach.
- Ensure school plans include literacy learning goals and strategies and that these incorporate the use of information and communication technology.
- Collect, track and discuss school literacy data to inform school goals for literacy learning and to encourage teachers to use the data to inform practice.
- Acknowledge, respect and support linguistic diversity and the acquisition of additional languages.
- Develop school-based initiatives to encourage family involvement and to communicate information regarding literacy development; for example, on digital literacies in an information evening or on social media.

Budgeting and Scheduling:

- Allocate budgets to support literacy goals, and explore creative ways to support a literacy leader.
- Ensure availability of a wide variety of engaging, inclusive texts reflective of the cultures of all students in classrooms and school libraries.
- Ensure engaging, levelled texts are available for guided reading instruction, Reading is Thinking courses, and intervention programs (literacy labs, classroom libraries, etc.).
- Schedule extended blocks of time to focus on deep literacy learning.

Professional Development:

- By collaborating in high quality professional learning experiences and professional dialogue, ensure that all teachers have a comprehensive understanding of literacy development and assessment as it pertains to early, middle and senior levels.
- Through professional learning opportunities, ensure that all teachers have an understanding of research-based practice, as well as effective strategies for supporting critical literacy development and the applications of these in specific subject areas.
- Support teachers as they set professional learning goals to enhance instructional practice.
- Initiate classroom visits in support of literacy learning.
Collaboration:

• Ensure literacy teams of leaders/coaches, classroom/subject area teachers, resource teachers, school administrators, program leaders, teacher librarians and intervention teachers collaborate and take action to support and enhance school literacy goals.
• Schedule opportunities for collaborative grade-level/subject meetings focused on examining student work; for example, related to writing exemplars or assessment rubrics.
• Create opportunities for all teachers to collaboratively work with support staff (including case managers) to develop and implement literacy interventions.
• Support specific, targeted, literacy intervention such as Reading Recovery™, ensuring consistent, daily delivery of programs without interruptions and the scheduling of intervention in addition to, not instead of, classroom literacy instruction.

Questions for Critical Thinking

1. What do you think about this?
2. How does it connect to your personal experience?
3. What perspectives do you think the author/creator holds? What is your evidence?
4. What other perspectives/data might there be?
5. Why did the author/creator develop this text? What was the purpose? Who was the audience?
6. What issues or problems does it raise?
7. How will you respond?
Early Years Classroom Teachers:

- Work collaboratively with literacy leaders, resource teachers, teacher librarians and other support team members to strengthen instructional practice and student achievement.
- Work to consolidate alphabet knowledge, concepts about print and beginning sight vocabulary in the language of instruction by the end of kindergarten through authentic writing and play-based learning experiences.
- Engage students in authentic reading and writing, speaking and listening, viewing and representing experiences providing inquiry-based opportunities for deep and flexible learning across curricula.
- Implement the gradual release of responsibility model using a framework of modelled, shared, guided and independent experiences to move readers and writers to independence.
- Ensure regular guided reading/direct small group instruction in instructional text, with a targeted strategy focus, is implemented in the classroom.
- Teach and provide practice in using a variety of learning strategies for reading, interpreting and composing multiple forms of narrative and informational text.
- Support the development of critical thinking, challenging students to question, interpret and respond to texts representative of diverse perspectives, including those of indigenous peoples.
- Use specific strategies to support the development of oral language and vocabulary.
- Schedule extended periods of engaged reading across the curriculum in continuous text at independent reading levels, ensuring all students have texts at the appropriate levels.
- Plan to accelerate struggling readers and close the achievement gap, by increasing the amount of silent reading time at independent reading levels and by providing effective reading instruction in instructional text.
- During Strong Beginnings, use the Fountas and Pinnell assessment system to obtain formative assessment information to guide instruction. Record the benchmark instructional reading level in a literacy database in September and June. In addition, in French Immersion, complete and document formative assessment of lecture, beginning in mid-grade two, using BEF tools and GB+.
- Track and assess the reading and writing progress of students regularly through running records and student conferences.
- Model and use strategies to develop student self-reflection and goal-setting and engage students in their own literacy learning.
- Provide opportunities for learners to network, share and celebrate literacy accomplishments.
- Appreciate, understand, plan and support the development of literacy with English as an additional language learners.
- In French language programs, support oral language development by providing a rich linguistic environment maximizing students’ exposure to and use of the French language.
• Ensure consistency of strategy use across learning environments; for example, between Reading Recovery™ and the classroom, and from grade to grade.
• Collaborate with the Reading Recovery™ teacher, observing lesson(s), administering the Observation Survey to discontinue students and scheduling lessons in addition to, not instead of, classroom literacy blocks. In French Immersion, collaborate with the IL2 teacher to support early intervention.
• Ensure that all adults working in the classroom are trained to model effective reading and writing strategies with students.
• Focus professional discussions and common planning times on student achievement using student work samples and problem-solving processes.

5 Effective Strategies for Problem-Solving Words

1. Look at the picture and/or think about what makes sense.
2. Re-read and try the first sound.
3. Look for a part you know.
4. Make a link to a word you know (cat–catch; bed–sled).
5. Read on and come back.
Middle and Senior Years Classroom Teachers:

- Work collaboratively with literacy leaders, resource teachers, teacher librarians and other support team members to strengthen instructional practice and student achievement.
- Engage students in authentic reading and writing, speaking and listening, viewing and representing experiences providing opportunities for deep and flexible learning across curricula.
- Implement the gradual release of responsibility model to develop deeper levels of thinking - using modelled, shared and guided experiences before independent work is expected.
- Provide explicit instruction on how to read, write, speak and communicate ideas in a specific discipline recognizing many curricular areas have their own language, vocabulary and text structures.
- Teach and provide practice in using a variety of learning strategies for reading, interpreting and composing multiple forms of narrative and informational text.
- Support the development of critical thinking, challenging students to question, interpret and respond to informational and narrative texts representative of inclusive communities and diverse perspectives, including those of our indigenous peoples.
- Use effective strategies to build discipline-specific vocabulary to strengthen comprehension and enhance communication.
- Engage students by providing choice in both text selection and response production.
- Provide a range of texts to meet the diverse needs of students, including digital and multimodal forms, rather than relying on a single class text or whole class novel.
- Provide opportunities to engage in authentic inquiries using existing and emerging information and communication technology to deepen understanding, transform student thinking and develop critical literacy skills.
- Through conferencing with students, assess comprehension and communication skills regularly, providing specific, descriptive feedback for learning.
- During Strong Beginnings in Middle Years, continue to use the Fountas and Pinnell assessment system to obtain formative assessment information to guide instruction. Record the benchmark instructional reading level in a literacy database in September and June. In addition, in French Immersion, complete formative assessment of lecture using BEF tools and GB+.
- In Senior Years, in collaboration with Student Support Team, use the Fountas and Pinnell assessment data to inform and guide instruction.
- With the Student Support Team, collaboratively plan to accelerate struggling readers and writers by building interest and engagement and significantly increasing the amount of recreational reading in independent level text.
- Focus professional discussions and common planning times on student achievement using student work samples and problem-solving processes.
- Engage students in metacognition through meaningful self-assessment and goal-setting connected to literacy development.
• Provide opportunities for learners to network, share and celebrate literacy accomplishments.
• Appreciate, understand, plan, monitor and support the development of literacy with English as an additional language learners.
• In French language programs, support oral language development by providing a rich linguistic environment which maximizes students’ exposure to and use of the French language.

Teacher-Librarians:

• Develop a learning commons approach where students feel libraries provide an important and accessible resource for all literacy learning.
• Build a literacy culture through school-wide literacy initiatives; for example, MYRCA, I Love to Read, writing contests, media literacy or online publishing projects, and by highlighting and recommending interesting and important texts, for both colleagues and students on an ongoing basis.
• Collaborate with colleagues to provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic inquiries using existing and emerging information and communication technology to deepen understanding, transform student thinking and develop critical literacy skills.
• Teach and provide practice in using a variety of learning strategies for reading, interpreting and composing multiple forms of narrative and informational text in collaboration with classroom or subject area teachers.
• Ensure there are a variety of accessible texts available, including oral, print, visual, digital and multi-modal resources, addressing common topics in our curricula.
• Develop relationships with all learners in your school and provide a culturally diverse collection of resources which address student needs (at-risk, indigenous perspectives, LGBTQ).
• Help all students to find engaging and enjoyable texts and to have a positive view of literacy.
• Teach students to select appropriate books for independent reading.
• In collaboration with administrators, coordinate programs which address equity and summer learning loss, for example, by providing free texts or involving universal digital access.

“Research on meta-cognitive activities, ‘thinking about thinking’, reported a significant effect size on reading comprehension.”

- John Hattie, Visible Learning
Resource Teachers:

• Work collaboratively with classroom and Reading Recovery™ or Intervention teachers to plan and support high quality classroom literacy instruction and targeted interventions.
• Focus on strategy learning in instructional text and providing extended periods of independent reading in continuous text for at-risk literacy learners.
• With colleagues, collaboratively plan to accelerate struggling readers and writers by building interest and engagement and significantly increasing the amount of recreational reading in independent level text.
• Work with administrators to establish later literacy programs, such as Reading is Thinking courses, for students in need of targeted intervention at middle years and senior years.
• Provide educational assistant training in how to support students effectively, while reinforcing the need for teachers to work directly with struggling literacy learners.

Educational Assistants:

• Support high quality classroom instruction by providing individual, targeted small group and whole class support as directed by the teacher.
• Model and reinforce the use of effective reading and writing strategies when working with students.
• Collect and record information and observations for the teacher.
• Help organize, collect and maintain literacy materials such as home reading, text sets and word walls.

Literacy Leaders/Coaches:

• Coach, mentor, co-teach and highlight effective literacy instruction and assessment, working side by side with colleagues.
• Review research related to effective literacy practices, facilitate professional discussions and participate in school-based planning.
• Lead and support professional development; for example, facilitate Level 4 joint PD experiences, PLTs, book studies related to strengthening critical literacy.
• Support the development of shared instructional literacy resources across a range of readability levels to provide appropriate success and challenge for all learners across the curriculum in collaboration with teacher librarians, classroom teachers and school administrators.
• Support school-based initiatives to engage families in discussions about literacy learning.
7 Effective Strategies for Deepening Comprehension

1. **Accessing prior knowledge** – examples: book walk, KWL
2. **Questioning** – examples: talk show host, Jeopardy
3. **Visualizing** – examples: guided imagery, scene enactment
4. **Vocabulary building** – examples: word walls, wordsplash, concept circle
5. **Synthesizing and inferring** – examples: 2 column notes (I see, I think), VIP (very important points)
6. **Understanding text structure** – examples: story maps, Venn diagrams, rebuilding text, signal words
7. **Summarizing and reflecting** – examples: exit slips, electronic portfolios

“Research based on over 2000 studies . . . demonstrates the importance of gaining a set of learning strategies to construct meaning from text. This shows the importance and value of actively teaching the skills and strategies of reading across all years of schooling.”

- John Hattie, *Visible Learning*
Reading Recovery™ Teachers:

- Ensure daily lessons are provided and scheduled to avoid classroom literacy blocks.
- Teach to ensure success using the tools and training provided by Reading Recovery™.
- Ensure that the lowest achieving students are selected for Reading Recovery™.
- Engage parents in the home reading process and make arrangements for parents to observe a Reading Recovery™ lesson and talk about how to support their child at home.
- Share selection sheet data and observations with the early literacy team. In schools where there are an unusual number of students requiring Reading Recovery™, there should be strategic planning to strengthen student achievement through systematic implementation of effective research-based classroom practice.
- Collaborate and problem-solve with grade one teachers for struggling readers and writers not yet in Reading Recovery™ programs.
- Ensure communication and continuity between the language and strategies of the classroom and the language and strategies used in Reading Recovery™.
- Collaborate with grade one and two teachers and resource teachers to provide support for quality classroom literacy programs; for example, coaching on running record analysis, suggestions on teaching the alphabet.
- Invite all early years teachers and administrators to observe a Reading Recovery™ lesson and discuss the aspects of strategic lessons which have been shown to ensure early reading success.
- Participate in providing professional development for teachers and educational assistant’s or volunteers supporting at-risk readers and writers.
- Encourage other teachers to apply and train in Reading Recovery™ to build our capacity over time and provide more classroom teachers with the expertise to maintain and extend reading gains in the classroom.
- Ensure grade one and two classroom teachers discontinue their own students wherever possible, to provide the best possible transition back to the classroom program.
- Ensure a process is in place to successfully transition Reading Recovery™ students referred for further support.

“To create schools that work for all children, we need to create a stronger sense of shared responsibility.”

- Allington, Schools that Work for All Students
**Intervention en littératie deuxième année (IL2) Teachers**  
(Grade 2 Literacy Intervention - French Immersion):

- Collaborate with the classroom teacher, administrator and parents to strengthen emerging literacy skills in the French language.
- Teach to ensure success using the tools and guidelines set out by IL2.
- Observe and assess students who are identified by the classroom teacher for inclusion in the IL2 group.
- Together with the classroom teacher, analyze the ways in which recommended students apply and transfer new knowledge and self-regulate in order to provide appropriate support.
- Assess comprehension skills and use of reading and writing strategies in order to plan appropriate programming.
- Through social interaction and by building on prior knowledge, develop oral language and connect it to reading and writing experiences.
- Complete ongoing reading records and track student progress during the intervention.
- Engage students in the learning process through metacognitive activities.

**Divisional Staff:**

- Behaviour and Learning Support Teachers, Career and Community Teachers, Indigenous Student Success Teachers and Clinicians support literacy development by providing a variety of student specific assessments, observations and by planning targeted interventions collaboratively with classroom teachers.

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“It is teachers using particular (research-based) teaching methods, teachers with high expectations for all students, and teachers who have created positive student-teacher relationships that are more likely to have above average effects on student achievement.”

- John Hattie, *Visible Learning*
The Pembina Trails community continues to explore effective research-based practices in literacy. This includes the work of the Literacy Network and the K-12 Literacy Collaborative, the research of Fullan and Sharratt, Clay, Allington and Hattie. The literacy standards embed this learning in the context of our Assessment and 21st Century Learning beliefs.