

# Collective Understanding of a Viable Reading Curriculum



Charles Elementary

Principal: Kirsten Phillips

[kirstenp@rcs.k12.in.us](mailto:kirstenp@rcs.k12.in.us)

Team Members:

Kelly Amos & Taylor Shera

# Background Leading to this Inquiry

- High turnover of staff
- Large gap between understanding of reading foundations and training in reading
- Terms and level of understanding standards and best practices

*“Essentially a guaranteed and viable curriculum is one that can be taught in the time available and is being taught in every classroom”*

*(Marzano, Warrick, Simms)*

# Purpose of This Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to improve the consistency of the balanced literacy framework building-wide.

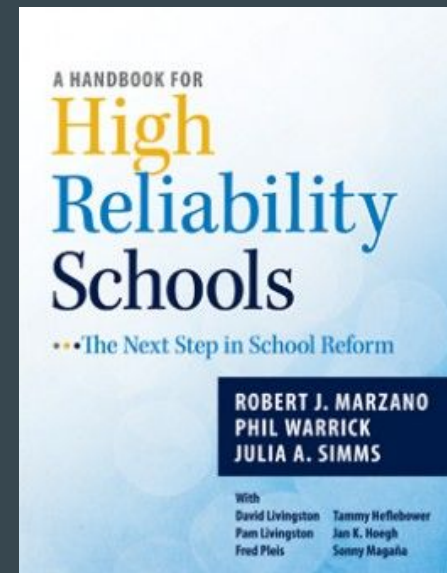
# Our Wondering

With this purpose, we wondered if our staff has the same understanding of what highly effective instruction looks like at Charles Elementary during the balanced literacy block.



# Identified Indicators

- ❑ Leading Indicator 2.1: The school leader communicates a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school
- ❑ Leading Indicator 2.3: Predominate instructional practices throughout the school are known and monitored
- ❑ Leading Indicator 3.1: The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards
- ❑ Leading Indicator 3.2: The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers



# Our Actions

- 8-Step Team met with Leadership Team to ensure consistency and a shared vision
- Created and refined a list of highly instructional practices during the balanced literacy block
- Polled our teachers on their understanding of the balanced literacy block using Padlet



# Our Actions

- ❑ Staff development for what highly effective instruction should and should not look like for the mini-lesson, guided reading, interactive read aloud, literacy stations, and independent reading
- ❑ Principal walk-throughs of reading environment and resources
- ❑ Coaching cycle of writing instruction that led to a team going to Smekens writing conference. Staff development from this team was presented to all staff

*“You don’t have to dive in all at once to make huge, positive changes.” (Kirr, 2017).*

### Checklist to Set Up My Literacy Classroom

**1. Classroom Culture/Environment:** I am supporting our classroom culture and environment by structuring my classroom to support the Gradual Release of Balanced Literacy Instruction.

- I have planned for smooth transitions and movement across the Gradual Release of Responsibility
- I have classroom spaces designated for a gathering place, independent reading areas, small group area, etc.
- I have an interactive Word Wall or Content Vocabulary Wall to support reading, writing, and vocabulary development
- I have a place and process for sharing student work that is both developing and shows mastery

**2. Classroom Library Structure and Organization:** My classroom library is organized for self-selection

- The library bins and shelves are organized and labeled by genre, text type, content area, etc. (not just leveled)
- The classroom has several areas for students to read comfortably
- The library area has room for 3-4 students to review and self-select texts
- I have a process for selecting, returning, and checking out texts to keep the library organized

**3. Rituals and Routines:** I have a plan to collaborate with students to develop, teach, model, practice, and post rituals and routines for all aspects of the Gradual Release of Balanced Literacy Instruction

- Good Fit/Just Right book process
- I CHARTS or Anchor Charts for whole group, small group, collaborative student-led groups, paired reading/writing, independent reading, conferring and other expectations and behaviors during learning time.
- QR**
- I CHARTS or Anchor Charts for each of the Daily 5-Daily 3 for Intermediate (Read to Self, Read to Someone, Word Work, Work on Writing, Listen to Reading)
- Transition rituals and routines to support timely movement between the components of Balanced Literacy Gradual Release

**4. Independent Reading:** I have 30 minutes of daily independent reading scheduled and a plan for implementation

- I have a plan to build each student's stamina to read consistently and with engagement for up to 30 minutes from the first day of school (Primary may do two 15 minute segments)
- I have a plan to partner with students to establish the classroom book bin protocol (minimum 6-8 primary and 3-4 intermediate to include fiction, narrative nonfiction, informational texts)
- I have identified our classroom strategies for student self-selection of good fit books
- Self-selection strategies and Book Bin routines are posted in the library area

**5. Conferring:** I have designated daily reading and outlined my conferring plans

- I have a conferring schedule for the first 6 weeks
- I have a plan for the first rounds of conferring (Good Fit Books-What is in my book bin?)
- I have a system to record and collect conferring data

# Checklist for Literacy Classroom





# Data Collection

Padlet of what our staff “thought” of the 90 minute reading block (balanced literacy).

[Click here for Padlet.](#)



# Our Data

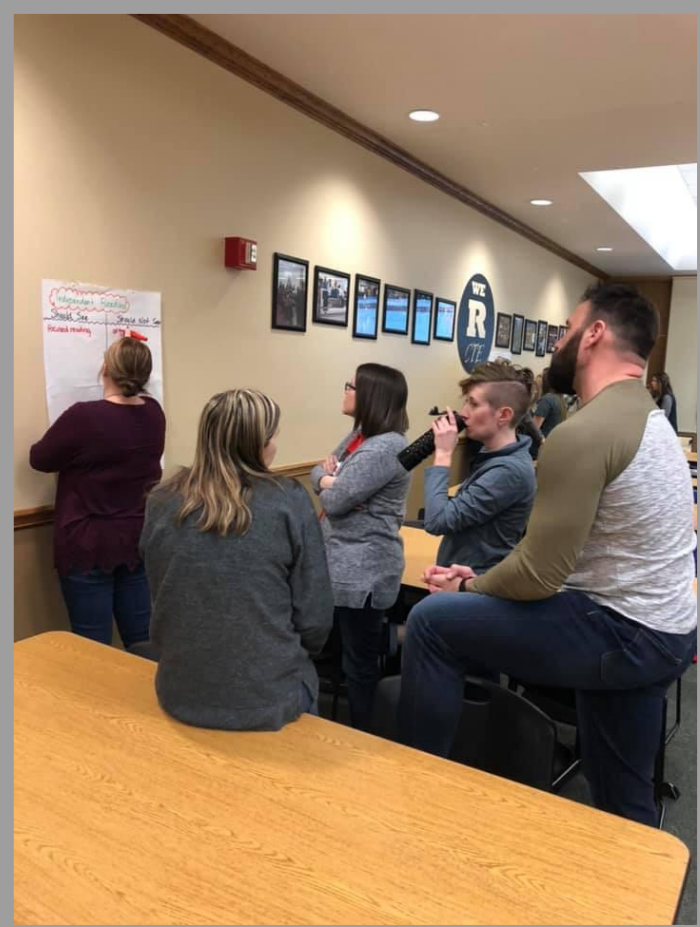


## Charles Elementary School

### Instructional Model

<b>Should See and Hear Almost Daily</b>	<b>Might See and Hear</b>	<b>Should Not See and Hear</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear classroom routines and procedures</li><li>• Differentiated instruction, assessment and support</li><li>• Students and staff engaged in learning</li><li>• Staff building relationships with students</li><li>• Collaborative school environment</li><li>• Purposeful work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technology used to enhance learning</li><li>• Students being accountable for their own learning</li><li>• Structured practice session</li><li>• Movement or physical activity</li><li>• Flexible learning environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students who are unsupervised</li><li>• Students or staff being disrespectful</li><li>• Low expectations for students or staff</li><li>• Extended disengaged students</li><li>• Physical harm of any kind</li></ul>

# Professional Development 90-Minute Literacy Block



# Professional Development 90-Minute Literacy Block





# Professional Development 90-Minute Literacy Block

Independent Reading	
Should See	Should Not See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>focused reading</b></li><li>• grade level appropriate books</li><li>• practicing skills and strategies</li><li>• flexible seating</li><li>• teacher listening to readers</li><li>• enjoyment</li><li>• reader's notebooks<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>building stamina</li><li>technology</li><li>Comprehension strategies</li><li>Content connections</li><li>Reader choice</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>off task / playing</b></li><li>• not browsing</li><li>• talking</li><li>• bathroom breaks</li><li>• doing other work</li><li>• <b>disengaged reading</b></li></ul>

Interactive Read Aloud	
Should See	Should Not See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Total participation</li><li>Daily targeted focus</li><li>Teacher lead discussion</li><li>Animated reading</li><li>student emotion/engagement</li><li>predictions</li><li>discussion throughout reading</li><li>author study</li><li>partner talk</li><li>think-pair-share</li><li>Variety of question (open ended questions)</li><li>modeling</li><li>variety of genres</li><li>same book</li><li>multiple uses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Just T talking</li><li>Off task behaviors</li><li>no discussions</li><li>book not appealing</li><li>spending time on management</li></ul>

# Professional Development 90-Minute Literacy Block

Guided Reading	
Should See	Should Not See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• differentiation</li> <li>• small groups</li> <li>• browsing boxes</li> <li>• answering questions <small>Before During After</small></li> <li>• focus question/skill</li> <li>• book clubs</li> <li>• centers</li> <li>• whisper reading</li> <li>• discussion</li> <li>• provide text evidence <small>- content running records</small></li> <li>• procedures</li> <li>• variety of genres</li> <li>• flexible grouping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• off task</li> <li>• interruptions</li> <li>• teacher off task</li> <li>• one student dominating conversation</li> <li>• not all round robin</li> <li>• teacher doing all talking</li> </ul>

Literacy Stations	
Should See	Should Not See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboration with peers</li> <li>• movement procedures</li> <li>• differentiation</li> <li>• purposeful work</li> <li>• connect to big 5</li> <li>• guided reading groups - teacher</li> <li>Exit slip / Accountability ✓</li> <li>Meaningful practice</li> <li>Standards driven</li> <li>Independence</li> <li>quick transitions</li> <li>voice level awareness</li> <li>• skills practice</li> <li>• groups of 2-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not all pencil/paper</li> <li>• silence</li> <li>• off task</li> <li>Not interfering w/ g. rdg groups</li> <li>• one student doing all the group work</li> <li><del>no</del></li> <li>• new skills</li> </ul>



# Professional Development 90-Minute Literacy Block

Should See	Should Not See
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· focused 1 skill</li><li>· small and/or whole group</li><li>· reinforced in stations</li><li>· pictures/multi sensory instruction</li><li>· differentiated word list</li><li>· active learning</li><li>· high frequency words <i>*Some</i></li><li>· word walls</li><li>· manipulatives</li><li>· technology</li><li>· model before independent time</li><li>· options of activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· multiple skills being taught</li><li>· random vocabulary<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- has to connect to skill</li></ul></li><li>· not all paper/per</li><li>· OFF TASK</li></ul>

# Data Collection

Padlet of what our staff “thought” they needed in order to maximize their literacy framework after January Professional Development

[Click here for Padlet](#)





# Our Discoveries

- ❑ Learning Statement: We discovered there are gaps in understanding of expectations, procedures, and instruction during the balanced literacy block.
- ❑ Learning Statement: We need targeted professional development in mini-lessons and guided reading to fully understand expectations and procedures.



# Our Discoveries

Learning Statement: We discovered there are gaps in understanding of expectations, procedures, and instruction during the balanced literacy block.

- ❑ From this year's building observations, over half of our teachers are going over the 10-15 minute mini-lesson target time.
- ❑ Running records are not consistent.
- ❑ Non-negotiable vs the flexibility of teacher judgement must be in writing in regards to the balanced literacy block.

*“Until you figure out what's wrong it will be impossible to solve the issue” (Kirr, 2017).*

# Our Discoveries

Learning Statement: Targeted professional development including mini-lessons and guided reading to fully understand expectations and procedures is a top priority.

- ❑ Empowering building staff to develop and provide professional development, if applicable
- ❑ Instructional rounds would increase exposure to our balanced literacy framework through highly effective teachers
- ❑ All staff must be trained to close the gap of understanding



# Where We Are Heading Next

- ❑ With a new reading curriculum, we need to provide staff with training but also applying the instructional framework.
- ❑ Evaluate and monitor classroom setting and resources to ensure we are consistent is what we provide for students.
- ❑ Begin teacher led instructional rounds for monitoring of instructional framework.
- ❑ Maintain focus on mini-lesson and guided reading.

# Bibliography

Kirr, J. (2017). *Shift this*. San Diego, CA: Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

Marzano, R. J., Warrick, P., Simms, J. A., Wills, J., Livingston, D., Livingston, P., . . . Grift, G. (2014). *A handbook for high reliability schools*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.



## Collective Understanding of a Viable Reading Curriculum

**Principal Name:** Kirsten Phillips

**School Name:** Charles Elementary

**Team Members' Names:** Kelly Amos & Taylor Shera

**Principal's Email Contact:** kirstenp@rcs.k12.in.us

### **Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)**

Since taking over Charles Elementary 3 years ago, my staff has turned over 50%, I've decreased my sections by 5, losing 3 of the 5 to a different building due to redistricting. I currently have 3 openings next year due to retirements which means we need a common language and consistent list of best practices and trainings for our new staff and our students. I currently have 6 teachers with 3 or less years of experience. We are currently moving away from a basal and into F and P Balanced Literacy. One thing I've noticed during observations is that we are all over the place in understanding terms of the balanced literacy block and how we teach and monitor kids. When listening to Warrick and reading Marzano, I realized we can't move forward until we get a grasp on our curriculum. Working with Taylor and Kelly this past year has only started the process of forming a collective understanding of our reading block.

### **The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)**

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to improve the consistency of the balanced literacy framework building-wide.

### **Our Wondering (Slide 4)**

With this purpose, we wondered . . . does our staff have the same understanding of what highly effective instruction looks like and how it impacts our balanced reading block? This wondering has spiraled into several other wonderings as we have had conversations with our 8 step team. We had already begun the process of forming common language and expectations last summer with high frequency word lists, terms to use when teaching comprehension and writing strategies, and creating a fluid scope and sequence of math problem solving strategies. We looked at our HRS data and found the following indicators to be of importance:

- Leading Indicator 2.1-The School Leader communicates a clear vision as to how Instruction should be addressed in the school.
- Leading Indicator 2.3-Predominate instructional practices throughout the school are known and monitored.
- Leading Indicator 3.1-The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.

- Leading Indicator 3.2- The school curriculum is focused enough hat it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.

### **Our Actions (Slide 6-)**

Once we identified that we needed to work on the literacy block, we met with the 8 steps team to share our vision. Together we created an instructional model for effective literacy instruction. Then, we took the instructional model to staff to share, get input, and revised based on everyone's ideas. Lastly, teachers were asked to complete an online activity about the literacy block. In January, with the help of our instructional coach, we presented a professional development session on highly effective instruction in the literacy block. The topics included were: mini-lessons, guided reading, interactive read-alouds, literacy stations, and independent reading. During the PD, teachers presented their favorite read-aloud and strategies, rotated through different stations where they shared what each component should and should not look like, and had brief overview of mini-lessons. Principal Phillips completed walk-throughs looking for literacy rich environments, library structure, independent reading area, and conferencing areas. Four teachers completed the coaching cycle with our instructional coach after attending the Smekens writing conference. The team shared this information with the staff.

### **Data Collection (Slide 9-16)**

We used a Padlet to collect initial thoughts and group understandings into PD topics. We gathered anecdotal notes from our training and met again as a team to discuss ideas. We did another Padlet to collect new learning and questions about the 90 minute reading block.

### **Our Discoveries (Slide 17-19)**

- Learning Statement: We discovered there are gaps in understanding of expectations, procedures, and instruction during the balanced literacy block.
- Learning Statement: We need targeted professional development in mini-lessons and guided reading to fully understand expectations and procedures.

Learning Statement: We discovered there are gaps in understanding of expectations, procedures, and instruction during the balanced literacy block.

- From this year's building observations, over half of our teachers are going over the 10-15 minute mini-lesson target time.
- Running records are not consistent.
- Non-negotiable vs the flexibility of teacher judgement must be in writing in regards to the balanced literacy block.

*“ Until you figure out what’s wrong it will be impossible to solve the issue”* (Kirr, 2017).

Learning Statement: Targeted professional development including mini-lessons and guided reading to fully understand expectations and procedures is a top priority.

- Empowering building staff to develop and provide professional development, if applicable
- Instructional rounds would increase exposure to our balanced literacy framework through highly effective teachers
- All staff must be trained to close the gap of understanding

### **Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 20)**

With a new reading curriculum, we need to provide staff with training but also applying the instructional framework. Our team will need to evaluate and monitor classroom setting and resources to ensure we are consistent in what we provide for students. We will also begin teacher led instructional rounds for monitoring of instructional framework. Our first objective would be to maintain focus on mini-lesson teaching and guided reading; from there we will bring together OG and F & P phonics mapping.

### **Bibliography (Slide 21)**

Kirr, J. (2017). *Shift this*. San Diego, CA: Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

Marzano, R. J., Warrick, P., Simms, J. A., Wills, J., Livingston, D., Livingston, P., . . . Grift, G. (2014). *A handbook for high reliability schools*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.