

LEGACY OF  
*Dr. Josie R. Johnson*  
MONTESSORI

Formerly Bright Water Elementary  
Established 2020

**Legacy of Dr. Josie R. Johnson Montessori**

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT #4189-07**

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**LITERACY PLAN**  
**Read Well by Third Grade**  
School Year 2020-2021

# School Information

## **Administration**

Tonica Abdur Salaam, Head of School

Jamal Abdur Salaam, Principal

## **Grades Served**

16 months - 6th grade

## **Year Opened**

2004 (Preschool)

2008 (Elementary)

## **Mission and Vision**

**Mission:** Bright Water provides an excellent and equitable Montessori education in North Minneapolis to an intentionally diverse community of students.

**Vision:** Our students will develop the character strengths, social and emotional skills, creativity, passion for learning and college-preparatory academic capabilities that will enable them to lead lives of joy and purpose.

## **Purpose**

Our school works to fulfill its purpose by providing an intentionally diverse public charter school in North Minneapolis dedicated to providing its students with an authentic, equitable Montessori education. We believe in the power of an authentic Montessori environment to ignite curiosity and student-led learning, to pursue equity, and to build a community of support and love. We align our work with Minnesota state academic standards while focusing on the development of the whole child and our collective community. As a Montessori school, and a school authorized by the Audubon Center of the North Woods, we put an added emphasis on environmental education and taking care of our planet.

# Montessori Philosophy

Montessori pedagogy is driven by principles that are based on an understanding of human development established through observation of children and teaching practice in Montessori learning environments around the world for more than 100 years.

## **Multi-Age Classroom**

We enroll children across a three year age range in each of its classrooms.

- Children's House (CH): 3-6 year old children (Preschool & Kindergarten)
- Elementary 1: 1st - 3rd graders
- Elementary 2: 4th - 6th graders

### **Extended Work Cycle**

Our school strives to incorporate one of the keys to a Montessori classroom by scheduling extended, uninterrupted work time. The extended time can last up to three hours, allowing children to:

- Settle into deep and serious academic work without interruption
- Complete high levels of academic work
- Meet their social and movement needs without disrupting the learning environment
- Have skills, work habits, and progress assessed by the Lead Guide regularly through observation
- Receive lessons from the Lead Guide in small groups or individually
- Receive remediation or advancement from the Lead Guide
- Choose to help or receive help from other children in their academic and social work

### **Freedom within Limits**

The balance of freedom within limits is a key tenant of Montessori education. Children have the freedom to move and choose if they demonstrate responsibility with that freedom. As the children demonstrate a certain level of self-discipline, respect, and responsibility, the Lead Guide will then loosen up the structure of the classroom to allow the children to move more freely and have more choices in the materials as well as the duration and location of work.

### **Observation**

One of the foundational pieces of a well-functioning Montessori classroom is the observation of students. Record keeping helps the Lead Guide know the work choices and habits of each child, and which concepts and skills need strengthening or challenge.

### **Interest and Choice**

Montessori education allows space for students to follow their interests and to make their own choices about the types of activities in which they would like to participate and which types of text they wish to read. When students have more control over their learning via interest and choice, their learning becomes more relevant and engaging. Interest and choice contribute to student motivation. From this intrinsic motivation, the lead guide supports the student find success in tasks, and eventually confidence.

### **Environmental Education**

Our school has an environmental focus and incorporates elements of environmental education (EE) in project-based learning at all classroom levels. Students and staff strive to have an attitude of appreciation and concern for the environment and are dedicated to increasing their problem solving skills and critical thinking skills as it relates to environmental education and human life. Students and staff also are dedicated to increasing their capacity to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment.

# Standards-based Literacy Learning

## Foundational Reading Skills

	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Print Concepts	X	X					
Phonetic Awareness	X	X					
Phonics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fluency	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### Children's House (CH) - Kindergarten

<b>Narrative Text</b>	<b>Informational Text</b>	<b>Foundational Skills</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year.	Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year.	Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, and Phonics skills are practiced through direct instruction and individual learning with use of Montessori materials.	Grammar and Vocabulary skills are learned through direct instruction and individual learning with use of Montessori materials.	Students write (through illustrations and/or dictation as necessary) an opinion, informational, and narrative text based on EE themes.

### Elementary 1 - Grades 1-3

<b>Narrative Text</b>	<b>Informational Text</b>	<b>Foundational Skills</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year. Students choose texts based on	Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year. Students choose texts based on	Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Fluency skills are practiced through direct	Grammar and Vocabulary skills are learned through direct instruction, small group, and individual	Students write daily for a variety of purposes. Students write an opinion, an informational,

choice and guidance from the Lead Guide. High quality texts are used for strategy instruction.	choice and guidance the Lead Guide. High quality texts are used for strategy instruction.	instruction, small group and individual learning.	learning	and a narrative paper based on EE themes.
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**Elementary 2 - Grades 4-6**

<b>Narrative Text</b>	<b>Informational Text</b>	<b>Foundational Skills</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year. Students choose texts based on choice and guidance from the Lead Guide. High quality texts are used for strategy instruction.	Students analyze a variety of narrative texts throughout the school year. Students choose texts based on choice and guidance from the Lead Guide. High quality texts are used for strategy instruction.	Phonics and Fluency skills are practiced through direct instruction, small group and individual learning.	Grammar and Vocabulary skills are learned through direct instruction, small group, and individual learning.	Students write daily for a variety of purposes. Students write an opinion, an informational, and a narrative paper based on EE themes.

LJJM promotes the Montessori methodology into language arts. This puts every child at the center and provides an education for every child that is tailored to each child’s learning needs at any given moment. We promote:

- Personalized instruction
- Student centered instruction – encourages choice and engagement
- Data driven decision making based on on-going formative assessments
- Explicit teaching of skills, strategies and concepts
- Independence
- Participation in the larger community of language use
- Trusting relationships between Lead Guides and students
- Honoring life experiences and cultural heritage

<b>Traditional Model</b>	<b>Montessori Model</b>
Teacher decides pacing of curriculum	Curriculum is paced according to student ability and interest

Students practice skills and memorize facts	Students practice skills in meaningful context and learn by doing
Content is broken down into discrete, sequential steps	Rigorous and intentional content areas are studied as meaningful wholes
Products are of primary importance (ie. answers on tests)	The process of learning is honored foremost
Avoiding mistakes is important	Mistakes are an important key to learning
Performance on tests is highly valued	Tests meaningfully assess only a portion of overall learning
Teachers do the evaluating and grading	Student self-assessment plays a pivotal role
Learning is expected to be uniform	Each student learns in his or her own way and course
Focuses attention on what to learn	Attention is given to how students learn, and why
Promotes genre and skill-based teaching	Promotes holistic and integrated learning

## Assessment

The LJJM assessment program incorporates local and state standardized testing in addition to formative and summative classroom assessments, and continual observations from the Lead Guide. The combination of these assessments and observations allow Lead Guides to track student’s learning and growth. LJJM prides itself on creating and prioritizing developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive assessments to our diverse learners.

The NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Assessment is given in both English and Spanish to 3rd-6th grade students while students in grades K-2 take the Fountas and Pinnell’s benchmark reading assessment. These assessments are administered in the fall, winter, and spring to screen and measure student progress.

Focus	Assessment	Grades Administered	Times per Year	Assessment Type
Evaluative	MCA	3-6	1	Summative
Grammar, Vocabulary,	NWEA- MAP		3	Formative

Reading Comprehension				
Reading Comprehension	Fountas and Pinnell	K-2	3	Formative

The Fountas and Pinnell assessment screens for students in need of help in one or more of the five areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Lead Guides use this data to lesson plan, create student grouping, select appropriate texts, and communicate student progress with families. Lead Guides use this data during their weekly PLCs.

The NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Assessment is a screening assessment that measures a student's ability to read and comprehend literature and informational text as well as read, understand, and apply vocabulary. It measures individual growth and adjusts to find a student's unique learning level. Lead Guides use MAP data to inform their instruction, set learning goals with students, identify students in need of support or enrichment, and communicate growth and progress with families.

## Use of Data

We use data to ensure effective and appropriate instruction while maintaining a system of accountability for students and teachers. The school works to share grade level, non-confidential grade level and school-wide data to ensure we are all progressing towards our goals. Lead Guides use data in weekly PLCs to guide instruction. Data is used to identify students who are below grade level in reading proficiency before students finish kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade.

## Strategies

We utilize a number of strategies to support students in their learning:

- Teachers share instructional strategies in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Spring Early Childhood screenings hosted on site for families
- 4 AmeriCorps Reading Corps volunteers
- Culturally relevant texts in each classroom
- Use multisensory teaching strategies
- Intentional opportunities for literacy learning through a variety of activities
- Use of assessments to inform teaching and professional development
- Small group instruction
- Family literacy events and an annual Scholastic Book Fair
- Incorporate literacy across the curriculum
- Field trip to the North side Black StoryTellers community event

# Interventions

Our staff are knowledgeable in assessing learning gaps, instituting effective and appropriate interventions, tracking the data for a specified amount of time and revising the intervention if the student is not making progress. We take the following steps:

1. Identify any learning gaps.
2. Make grade level decisions of what interventions would best teach the needed skills to accelerate student growth and reach the goal of reading at or above grade level proficiency by the end of the current school grade and school year.
  - a. The interventions chosen by the Lead Guide should encourage family engagement and collaboration with school and community programs where possible.
3. Notify the parents or guardians.
4. Conduct the interventions with fidelity for a specified amount of time.
5. After a specified amount of time, share data with the child's team and parent to determine a continuation of the intervention, to try another intervention, or seek another professional opinion.

If a student does not read at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade, the school will continue to provide reading intervention until the student reads at grade level.

Our guiding principles for using reading interventions include:

1. Implementation of interventions must be guided by student data. The interventions must respond to the data on student progress.
2. Interventions must be offered as soon as it is clear the student is not meeting expectations that are critical to reading growth.
3. Monitor progress regularly to determine whether or not students are responding adequately to the instruction/intervention.
4. Interventions must be motivating, engaging, and supportive—a positive atmosphere is essential.
5. Regular communication and collaboration between intervention and classroom is associated with stronger reading outcomes.
6. Match the level, intensity, duration, and frequency of instruction/intervention to the identified student needs

## **The Child Find Team**

Any child who has received additional instructional support/interventions in the classroom as described above, yet are not closing the achievement gap according to his/her assessments, are referred to the Child Find Team.

The Child Find team consists of Principal, Special Education director, Special Education teacher, Social Worker, Mental Health Practitioner, present and past teacher. Parents will be informed and are able to opt-in or out of the meeting. A teacher or parent comes to the team with concerns about the development of the child. A teacher will refer a student to Child Find with a referral form (background, the present level of performance and where they are struggling. The Child Find team will help put together a plan for the student by coming up with a series of

interventions that are to be completed to determine if any additional support can successfully aid a student's learning. After several weeks of interventions, the Child Find Team then determines if an evaluation is needed for the student.

### **Child Study**

The school has an on-site SPED Director one day each week and a Business compliance manager half day, one day each week. The SPED Director is also a part of the Child Study Team that meets every Monday at 7:30-8:30 AM.

If it is determined that a student may need additional services, the next step is child study. Members of the Child Study team include SPED Director, Principal, SPED teachers, Social Worker, Mental Health Practitioner, Psychologist, and Occupational Therapist. The teacher will meet with the Child Study team who will start the referral for evaluation. Students will then be evaluated by a team that includes a special education teacher, school psychologist, and a general education teacher. Additional team members may include Autism consultant, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, teacher of deaf/hard of hearing, and audiologist. At the completion of the evaluation, it will be determined if the student meets the criteria set by the State of Minnesota. An Individual Education Plan will then be generated and will include all of the relevant components that support the student through the educational curriculum for the year.

### **Dyslexia and Convergence Insufficiency Disorder Screening**

Universal screening through NWEA takes place three times a year, which includes Dyslexia and Convergence Insufficiency Disorder screening assessments in the pre-referral process. Students who test in the high risk range receive targeted interventions and progress monitored and designed to track a student's response to intervention. After progress monitoring reflects that at least two planned and documented interventions result in scores below the target, the student will be referred for a Special Education evaluation.

Sonday, a research based intervention for targeted special education students, is used in both the intervention room and the Special Education resource room. This option allows resource teachers to adapt instruction to meet the needs of struggling readers through multi-sensory instruction.

## **Emerging Bilinguals**

Students who are Emerging Bilinguals, will be identified through the home language questionnaire and WIDA ACCESS English language assessment and will receive services following the school's Emerging Bilingual Plan of Service to achieve grade level literacy. We are committed to monitoring the progress and providing reading instruction appropriate to the specific needs of Emerging Bilinguals.

Parents of students who are identified as in need of EB services are informed via a letter of their child's placement in the EL program within the first 30 days of entering school in the fall. The

parents and guardians will be notified at least every 4-6 weeks of their student's continued progress and will also be informed about how they can help their child make progress at home.

## Professional Development

Our staff regularly participate in weekly 60-minute professional learning community (PLC) meetings. Discussion focuses on supporting staff to work more effectively with students regarding both social and academic areas. At PLC meetings, staff will learn about, discuss and make decisions about:

- Learning goals
- Lesson planning to meet standards
- Assessment results and processes
- Supporting student challenges

All school staff meet at least once per month for professional development. Topics of professional learning led by the principal include:

- Montessori principles
- MN State standards
- Racial equity
- Reading instruction
  - oral language
  - phonemic awareness
  - phonics
  - fluency
  - vocabulary
  - comprehension
  - writing
- Engagement with students
- Relationship building
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices
- Children's mental health
- Special Education
- Meeting the needs of Emerging Bilinguals
  - oral academic language
  - academic literacy
- Trauma informed care
- Behavior management

## Family Engagement

We believe that supporting parents' understanding of the school's mission and vision is a priority. Parent involvement is also important to promote a positive and effective school climate. Opportunities for Family Engagement include:

- School conferences

- Frequent phone calls and emails from teachers
- Newsletters – A school newsletter from the principal goes out once a month and classroom lead guides send home frequent classroom newsletters.
- Volunteering in the classroom
- Family learning seminars
- Scholastic Book Fairs
- Grand Friends Day
- Track & Field Day
- Parent Teacher Association
- Field Trips
- Environmental Education weekend trip
- Information regarding how to obtain and use a library card as well as how to get to and from their local library.
- Information on free online resources through Hennepin Public Library.

## Parent Notification

Parents and guardians of students at LJJM will be notified of their child's test results and general classroom progress at parent-teacher conferences three times a year. Here, they will be able to review with the child's Lead Guide their child's quarterly report card indicating if the student is performing at, below, or above grade-level standards as measured by locally adopted assessments. Lead Guides will also review any interventions that are being used, if any, and the child's progress toward goals, as well as any strategies parents can use at home. They also have access to student progress through the online portal, JMC Student Information System.

This Literacy Plan will be available to parents on the district website. In addition, printed copies of the plan will be available upon request at the front desk.