

EARLY LEARNING PLAN 2021-2022

LEA Name: Walden School of Liberal Arts

Date of Local Board Approval: August 18

Directions:

- *To support LEAs in successful completion of this plan, a Look Fors Document has been created and can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UPrrELZJrXX73aotjbFWH-icRtqUfqC-/view?usp=sharing>*
- *Submission of an Early Learning Plan (sections A, B, and C) is required for each LEA regardless of applying for funding.*
- *Submission of Section D is optional depending on the LEA's intent to apply for PreK-3 Professional Learning Funds.*

Funds Being Applied for: *Check all that apply.*

- Early Literacy Program Funds**
DISTRICT ONLY - Matching Funds:

Program	Amount Matching	Levy
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Income Program	\$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Guarantee Program	\$	

- PreK-3 Professional Learning Funds**

Submission of Early Learning Plan: [Pathways to Early Learning Program \(ELP\) Plan Submission and Approval](#)

- Submission on or before August 1st: For ELP **preapproval**, submit your plan as a WORD document to earlylearning@schools.utah.gov **by August 1st.**
- Submission after August 1st: For ELP **final approval**, submit your plan (as an attachment), budget, and local board minutes (as an attachment) in <https://utahgrants.utah.gov/> **no later than September 1st by 5 p.m.**
- Goals must be submitted into the Data Gateway - Early Literacy Page <https://datagateway.schools.utah.gov/> **no later than September 1st by 5 p.m.**

Submission of Professional Learning Grant Budget:

- Submit the Professional Learning Grant budget in <https://utahgrants.utah.gov/> **no later than September 1st by 5 p.m.**

***Note - if applications are not concise, include excessive detail, or are too long, they will be sent back for consolidation prior to being reviewed.**

SECTION A: EARLY LITERACY

1. List core instruction (tier 1) components for grades K-3 in the following areas:

Core Area	Duration	Frequency	Grades	Evidence-based Curriculum
Phonological Awareness	20	Daily	K-3	Montessori Phonological Awareness lessons & activities, Imagine Learning software, Dyad Reading and Learning A-Z.
Phonics	20	Daily	K-3	Montessori lessons & hands-on materials, decodable texts, phonics & word analysis, Dyad Reading and Imagine Learning software.
Fluency	20	Daily	K-3	Montessori materials including sight words, fluency phrases, & passages, Dyad Reading, Learning A-Z and Imagine Learning software.
Vocabulary	20	Daily	K-3	Montessori Language materials including language frames, Learning A-Z, Dyad Reading and Imagine Learning software. Cross-curricular vocabulary from science, history, geography, arts learning, and math curricula.
Comprehension	20	Daily	K-3	Montessori Language & other cross-curricular materials, variety of grade-level texts, language frames and comprehension strategies.
Oral Language	20	Daily	K-3	Daily Oral Language activities, Montessori materials and a wide variety of language rich activities across all content areas.
Writing	20	Daily	K-3	Daily Writers' Workshop including diverse mentor text activities, mini lessons with Montessori Language, Grammar lessons and shared texts.

2. In a single paragraph, explain how literacy assessments are used for core (tier 1) instruction to make instructional decisions and ensure interventions are aligned to students' diagnostic needs.

All K-3 students receive Acadience BOY, MOY, and EOY benchmark assessments. In addition to classroom observation/assessment and Acadience, A-Z and Imagine Learning leveling are used three times a year. In addition, together, these assessments provide data to determine movement from tier 2 to tier 3 services. The literacy director oversees all literacy assessment processes and data analysis.

Classroom teachers, the elementary director, and literacy specialists collaboratively consider data for students performing below benchmark on composite scores and subtests to determine differentiated core instructional strategies and interventions as part of weekly team meetings or meetings specially scheduled to discuss specific student needs. These data from assessments are considered along with teacher observations and informal classroom assessments to gain as broad a picture of individual student performance and achievement as possible. Where needed, individual and small group intervention strategies are aligned to identified needs. Students performing below benchmark receive regular progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of interventions. All students' reading and spelling performance are regularly leveled to assure that instruction is accurately targeted and differentiated to individualized needs.

3. In a single paragraph for each tier below, describe the evidence-based intervention system available to students struggling to reach grade-level benchmark goals in reading.

Tier 2: Tier II: In addition to Tier I instruction (including daily classroom instruction and differentiated instruction in individualized and/or small groups delivered by regular teacher; differentiated pathways on Imagine Learning software in classrooms), students identified by teacher observation and/or through Acadience as below benchmark meet daily in targeted individualized or small groups for up to a total of 90 minutes per week with a trained classroom assistant or specially trained literacy tech. Regular progress monitoring in addition to teacher observations provide specific information to guide instruction and differentiation.

Tier 3: Tier III: Students requiring more intensive intervention receive daily intensive individualized intervention (focused on skill gaps identified by progress monitoring and teacher observation/classroom assessment) from the teacher, reading interventionist, and/or reading specialist for one hour or more per week. Students receiving SPED services receive additional reading instruction using evidence-based strategies as defined in their IEPs. SPED services supplement, not supplant regular education instruction.

4. Describe in one paragraph, the professional learning opportunities that will be provided for K-3 teachers, literacy coaches, and interventionists to support meeting Early Literacy goals. *These funds cannot be used for faculty or staff in grades 4-6.*

Administration, literacy director, K-3 teachers, interventionists, and teaching assistants will attend regular weekly/monthly professional development opportunities:

- Professional development will target identified needs/gaps including:
 - a. A strong emphasis on gathering and using data, an emphasis originally requested by teachers).
 - b. Implementation of phonological awareness instruction/support
 - c. Coaching by the school literacy director and other contracted experts
 - d. Implementation of high yield, evidence based strategies to develop, improve and maintain fluency
- Weekly walk through observations by administration and literacy director with targeted feedback
- Specific professional development supporting oral language development
- Program teaching teams will meet weekly to discuss and refine literacy instruction
- Data analysis of benchmarks and progress monitoring with follow up support with Literacy Director
- Writing PD on high yield, evidence-based writing strategies with follow-up coaching and team collaboration time.

SECTION B: EARLY MATHEMATICS

1. What evidence-based curriculum is being used in K-3 mathematics?

The evidence-based curriculum used at Walden is heavily embedded in the Montessori Math materials and sequence. The math materials are some of the most conceptually beautiful and logically sequenced materials available for the teaching of mathematics. However, the materials do not work on their own. They require well trained and knowledgeable adults to guide children through the sequence that includes both direct instruction and discovery activities. The Montessori Method is over 100 years old. In the century the method has existed, many myths and misconceptions have arisen, but the fundamental principles of learning on which it is based are grounded in research. Specifically, eight foundational research-based concepts can be seen as providing the basis of the method and establishing an environment in which the logical mathematical mind can optimally grow:

- Movement and cognition are intertwined. Young children learn best when they are free to move within the learning environment.
- Choice and a sense of personal autonomy contribute positively to the process of learning.
- An understanding of child development in general and a knowledge of each child as a unique individual are both critical if the teacher is going to effectively create learning opportunities that engage each child in the learning process.
- Intrinsic motivation is preferable to external rewards and motivators (which are, at best, transient and often negatively impact learning in the long run).
- Learning from and with peers is an effective and meaningful learning strategy.
- Learning situated in meaningful and relevant contexts is typically richer and deeper than learning in abstract contexts.
- The level of a teacher’s approachability and warmth of interaction is important in creating a safe learning environment.
- Order and in the environment assist in the development of order in brain development.

Recognizing that these are high expectations for even the most experienced teachers, Walden has established a system in which teachers are helped to integrate the Montessori method with the state core standards and to incorporate supplemental materials where needed to assure that all state standards are adequately met.

2. Describe how the following mathematical components are incorporated in grades K-3.

Mathematical Components	Evidence-based Strategies
Conceptual Understanding: the comprehension and connection of concepts, operations, and relations.	The Montessori Math curriculum used at Walden for grades K-3 is grounded in a wealth of enticing manipulatives that cultivate mathematical play and exploration thus encouraging the development of mathematical intuition, comprehension, and relations. For example, students are shown the standard algorithm for the four operations through multiple different materials, but they are also encouraged to play with and explore several other algorithms and concepts.
Procedural Fluency: the meaningful, flexible, accurate, and efficient use of procedures to solve problems.	Our Montessori Math curriculum focuses on building a foundation of conceptual understanding, strategic reasoning, and problem solving prior to working on procedural fluency in kindergarten. While kindergarten students will begin to memorize some math facts, the emphasis for fluency begins in 1st grade and continues through the elementary grades. Through

	manipulative materials and online programs such as Imagine Math, procedural fluency extends students' computational fluency and aptitudes in all strands of mathematics. Personal timed tests allow students to track their own progress and provide data teachers can incorporate in their observations and instructional planning.
Strategic and Adaptive Mathematical Thinking: the ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems with the capacity to justify the logic used to arrive at the solution.	Montessori math manipulatives are exemplary at increasing student's abilities to formulate, represent and solve mathematical problems. From beads that are used as one to one correlates of the decimal system, to complex abstract algebraic and geometric representations, students build upon their strategic and adaptive mathematical thinking in a developmentally progressive system of experiences.
Productive Disposition: the ability to see mathematics as useful and worthwhile while exercising a steady effort to learn mathematics.	We recognize that mathematical dispositions are formed early and heavily influenced by teacher and parental attitudes. We are asking our instructional coaches and mentors to set goals and support positive outcomes for math dispositions among teachers and through parent education events.

3. In a single paragraph, explain how mathematics assessments are used for core (tier 1) instruction and intervention to make instructional decisions and ensure interventions are aligned to students' diagnostic needs.

Walden uses information gathered from Acadience Math assessments (BOY/MOY/EOY and Progress Monitoring) and classroom observations and assessments to create a robust data tool that provides real time information regarding each student's and each class's progress in very specific aspects of mathematical learning and development. Teachers are able to track the effectiveness of their own instruction as well as the effectiveness of interventions for individual students and groups as well as their own class. Coaches and admin can also track progress, provide support, and design or contract PD and PLC opportunities.

4. In a single paragraph for each tier below, describe the evidence-based intervention system available to students struggling to reach grade-level benchmark goals in mathematics.

Tier 2: Tier 2 interventions are provided by a paraprofessional aid using Montessori hands-on, concept-based materials contained within each classroom. Students that demonstrate need for additional help, or score is yellow through the Acadience Math assessment and/or other in-class observations and assessments are given support twice a week for 30 minutes and extra help on work assignments as needed. They also receive progress monitoring at least once every other week by the math intervention team. If data through progress monitoring indicates that the student is falling further behind, or their score has turned red, the math intervention team will provide tier 3 interventions. This information is shared in team meetings and shared data documents among teachers, the math team, special education department and school administration.

Tier 3: Tier 3 interventions are provided by the math intervention team using Montessori hands-on, concept-based materials in the commons area. Additional strategies are employed as needed, such as Everyday Math, strategies learned during professional development, and Midas classes. Students are typically provided interventions twice a week for 30 to 40 minutes each time and interventions are tailored to each student's individual needs. Data from the Acadience Math assessment is used to target the areas that need support and recorded in a shared document that teachers, the math team, special education case managers and school administrators access. Students receive progress monitoring weekly to check for understanding and effectiveness of the interventions. Interventions are adjusted as needed.

SECTION C: LOCAL GOALS

Requirements per 53F-2-503: Goals must be measurable, address current performance gaps in student literacy data, and include specific strategies for improving outcomes.

For literacy goals only, include early intervention K-3 software if being used.

Goal Sentence Frame:

By [date], [who is responsible] will [what will change and by how much--measurable] by [how--which evidence-based strategy(ies) will be used, including early reading software if being used] to [why—for what purpose].

1. Early Literacy Goal (required)

By June 1st, 2022, Walden kindergarten teachers and literacy team will increase the number of kindergarten students who make typical, above, or well above progress from BOY to EOY on Acadience Composite Score measures by at least 3% over 2020/21 scores by increasing Tier 2 interventions including direct instruction in correct letter sound automaticity; participating in PD to increase effectiveness of student time on Imagine Learning by understanding and using data more efficiently; and providing independent follow up activities for student work time in order to increase effectiveness of instructional time in class and to provide a solid foundation for future literacy development.

2. Early Literacy Goal (required)

By June 1st, 2022, Walden 3rd grade teachers and literacy team will increase the number of 3rd grade students who make typical, above, or well above progress from BOY to EOY on Acadience DORF Fluency Score measures by at least 3% over 2020/21 scores by implementing DYAD reading in all 3rd grade classes, by increasing Tier 2 fluency interventions; providing PD and coaching for teachers to increase effectiveness of student learning and using data more efficiently; providing highly engaging texts and follow-up activities for student work time in order to improve fluency and increase students' motivation and desire to read. Students will also engage in Imagine Learning texts 30 minutes a week as supplemental instruction to support their fluency/literacy needs.

General Assurances: *Check all the boxes below.*

- ✓ The Early Learning Plan submitted has been reviewed and approved by your local school board in an open, public meeting. (August 18)
- ✓ The Early Learning Plan must be submitted in Utah Grants along with local board approval minutes no later than September 1 by 5 p.m.
- ✓ The Early Learning Goals must be submitted in the Data Gateway-Early Literacy page no later than September 1 by 5 p.m.
- ✓ We understand our state growth goal for literacy is to achieve at least 60% of students in grades 1-3 making typical or better progress on Acadience Reading.

- ✓ We understand that we will assess literacy and mathematics using state mandated assessments within the state required testing windows: before September 30, December 1- January 31, and mid-April - June 15.
- ✓ We understand that we will submit our literacy and mathematics data and SIS special codes including if a student received or did not receive intervention by October 30, the last day in February, and June 30 annually.
- ✓ We understand that we must implement evidence-based interventions for reading and mathematics if a student is scoring below or well below benchmark.
- ✓ We understand that if our plan is not approved by October 15, we forego our Early Literacy Program funds and Professional Learning Grant funds (*see R277-406*).
- ✓ We understand that we will report literacy and mathematics results to all parents of students in grades 1-3 three times per year following guidelines in R277-406.
- ✓ We understand that if our LEA does not meet goal requirements laid out in state code and board rule for two consecutive years, our LEA will be required to participate in the System of Support.
- ✓ Early Literacy Program funds shall only be used for early literacy interventions and supports in kindergarten through grade 3 that have proven to significantly increase the percentage of students who are proficient in literacy (*53F-2-503*).
- ✓ We understand that if program money is used in a manner that is inconsistent with 53F-2-503, R277-406, 53F-5-214, and R277-326 our LEA is liable for reimbursement for the amount of funds improperly used.

By submitting this form, I certify the information I provided on and in connection to this application is true, accurate and complete. I also understand that any false statements on this application I file with the Utah State Board of Education may be grounds for disqualification for Early Literacy Program funds.

SECTION D: PreK-3 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Per state code 53F-5-214, the state board shall award grants to LEAs to provide teachers in preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1 through 3 with professional learning opportunities in early literacy and/or mathematics. Professional Learning must be a comprehensive, focused, sustained, and evidence-based approach to improving teachers' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Board rule R277-326). Evidence-based professional learning includes follow up and accountability from a coach/principal to ensure effective implementation and improvement in outcomes. For allowable expenditures, see R277-326. If choosing to receive these funds, you are required to complete a USBE survey of performance measures. Click [here](#) to see LEA estimated funding amounts.

Important Definitions per Board Rule:

- **Evidence-based**- a strategy that has demonstrated a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes.
- **Focused**-professional learning that is targeted to strategies that align with an LEA's plan and goals that would best support improving outcomes.
- **Job-embedded**-learning that is during the workday and designed to enhance instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning outcomes.
- **Professional Learning**-a comprehensive, sustained, and evidence-based approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

- **Sustained**-multiple professional learning sessions with ongoing support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Check appropriate boxes to indicate professional learning focus:

<input type="checkbox"/> Early Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> K <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> P <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> K <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3
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1. Describe how the professional learning opportunities are comprehensive, focused, sustained, job-embedded, and evidence-based (see definitions above).

Walden’s professional learning plan (PPL) for 2021-22 meets the criteria listed above. Our professional learning opportunities are:

- **Comprehensive:** Our PPL will not only provide evidence-based support for math and language instruction but for a variety of other needed topics including STEAM instruction, behavioral supports, inclusion, personalized learning and more.
- **Focused:** All scheduled professional learning is aligned with Walden’s strategic improvement plan, with Utah Core Standards, and with USBE and legislative rule.
- **Sustained:** We will start the year with intensive professional learning opportunities, but with the help of this grant we will be adding **job-embedded** coaching and mentoring in K-3 specifically to enhance instructional practices in the areas of language and mathematics literacy with a particular emphasis in raising student achievement in mathematics by providing continuous assistance and support.
- Our PPL is **Evidence-based** in that it is based on prior practices that have demonstrated evidence of efficacy. We will center our PPL around analysis of ongoing data. We will invest in experts while also drawing on expertise within our own school and classrooms in order to strengthen and support our internal leadership. We will develop and communicate a shared vision for change by studying current research and conducting our own ongoing cycles of inquiry and action research.

2. Describe how the professional learning opportunities are aligned with the Early Learning Plan and targeted to attain the state and local goals. *(If choosing early math, there is no need to describe how it is targeted to attaining goals as there are no math goals this year, however the rest of this question still needs to be answered).*

The professional learning component of our early learning plan has always been an integral aspect of our kindergarten and lower elementary focus and progress. In the spring of the year, classroom teachers, admin, and our literacy team compare classroom observations and assessments with BOY/MOY/EOY data to assure we are aware of the strengths and gaps these data reveal and to gather as much information as to why some areas are stronger than others. At this time, we begin to consider which concerns are relatively quick fixes or tweaks to instruction and the learning environment and which areas need targeted support and professional development. This information is further discussed in PLCs, focus groups, admin planning sessions, etc. over the summer to be set in place for the following year. In the years we have been doing this, the areas of strategic focus for professional learning we identify for our school have always been closely aligned with state literacy goals. There are relatively few quick fixes but, over the years, we have seen sustained progress. A few years ago, we recognized that our progress in the area of mathematics had not kept pace with language and reading achievement. We began to put into place the same strategies in the area of mathematics instruction. While we have chosen not to set a specific math goal this year for our early learning plan, math learning is a focus of our school’s strategic improvement plan and our school board has set school-wide goals aligned to state core standards of learning that are incorporated into our professional learning opportunities this coming year. We are excited to interweave our early learning goals into our school wide initiatives. This year, the preliminary step is to involve instructional coaches and mentors to help better identify long term strategic directions

for our lower elementary grades and to initiate a more robust vertical K-12 mathematical alignment as part of our efforts in conjunction with the state's vision of a portrait of a graduate. We are excited to be part of this groundbreaking effort.

3. Describe how your LEA intends to increase benchmark assessment scores and related outcomes through these professional learning opportunities.

Our school's strategic improvement plan (2020-2025) has set as primary academic goals 1) 60% of students will reach proficiency in English Language Arts as measured by Acadience and State Assessments and 2) to improve math scores in transitional grades (3, 6, and 9) by 10 points over five years. While we did not plan for a pandemic to hit in the early stages, the school board has held fast to these pivotal goals. Each of these goals rely heavily on robust and effective professional learning opportunities (PPLs) which are also supported by PPL goals and action steps in our strategic improvement plan. These goals and related action steps are reviewed annually by the board and by the school improvement committee (with its related focus groups) and continually by administration and faculty. Increasing benchmark assessment scores and related outcomes is therefore a key indicator of the success of our PPLs and will be under continual scrutiny in order to achieve success.

4. Describe how the professional learning opportunities are aligned with the [professional learning standards](#) set forth in 53G-11-303 and R277-519.

<p>Learning Communities: occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, individual and collective responsibility, and goal alignment</p>	<p>K-3 PLCs meet weekly and focus on continuous improvement, individual and collective responsibility, and goal alignment</p>
<p>Skillful Leaders: requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems, for professional learning</p>	<p>Walden's elementary director has doctoral level coursework in literacy and has taught university teacher education coursework in the field. It's literacy directory has 3 decades of experience teaching literacy skills to children and educators. This year, we will be adding expert coaches to support the professional learning of our K-3 faculty.</p>
<p>Resources: requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning</p>	<p>Time is set aside weekly for PLCs. Targeted PPLs are scheduled multiple times a year.</p>
<p>Data: uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning</p>	<p>Walden's Literacy Director has developed a robust tool that tracks data from a variety of sources to provide the most comprehensive, real time, longitudinal data access point for teachers and admin to access. It has been a life-changing tool. She recently adapted it for mathematics and so we have access to this amazing document in both of these key core areas.</p>
<p>Learning Designs: integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes</p>	<p>Faculty, including support faculty attend two external conferences a year to broaden their understanding of learning design and current research.</p>
<p>Implementation: applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change</p>	<p>Teachers request support for current concerns and PPLs are designed around their current concerns leading to the most relevant professional learning and long-term change.</p>

<p>Outcomes: aligns with performance standards for teachers and school administrators; and performance standards for students as described in the core standards for Utah</p>	<p>Among the outcomes we consistently see are greater collaboration and more consistent instructional practice leading to more consistent performance aligned with Utah Effective Teaching Standards.</p>
<p>Technology: both incorporates the use of technology in the design, implementation, and evaluation of high quality professional learning practices; and includes targeted professional learning on the use of technology devices to enhance the teaching and learning environment and the integration of technology in content delivery.</p>	<p>Over the past 18 months, as we have struggled with the pandemic, our regular PPLs targeting the technology devices and applications used in classes were not able to be scheduled. Teachers noticed this gap and have asked that it be reestablished this year. From an administrative perspective, it was encouraging to recognize that teachers find these sessions more helpful than we realize. These have been rescheduled for the coming year. In addition, our school has been awarded a computer science grant that, together with our Digital Teaching and Learning grant, will help to assure that teachers are better able to keep up with advancing technology in learning.</p>

General Assurances: *Check all the boxes below.*

- ✓ **ONLY CHECK IF APPLYING FOR SECTION D FUNDING** - The Professional Learning Grant must be submitted in Utah Grants no later than September 1 by 5 p.m.
- ✓ **ONLY CHECK IF APPLYING FOR SECTION D FUNDING** - We understand that if our professional learning application is not approved by October 15, we forego our Professional Learning Program funds (R277-326).
- ✓ **ONLY CHECK IF APPLYING FOR SECTION D FUNDING** - We understand that these funds must only be used for sustained professional learning opportunities that are evidence-based and focused (R277-326).
- ✓ **ONLY CHECK IF APPLYING FOR SECTION D FUNDING** - We understand that if program money is used in a manner that is inconsistent with 53F-5-214 and R277-326, our LEA is liable for reimbursement for the amount of funds improperly used.
- ✓ **ONLY CHECK IF APPLYING FOR SECTION D FUNDING** - We understand the requirement to complete a USBE survey of performance measures by the end of the year.

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