March 4, 2024

Dear Superintendent Swinehart:

Thank you for submitting the Great River Connections Academy Reading Achievement Plan. The Department appreciates your time and commitment in developing this comprehensive literacy plan. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine recently launched ReadOhio, an exciting statewide effort to encourage improved literacy skills for all students, including the implementation of high-quality instructional materials and professional development aligned with the science of reading.

Your plan has been reviewed and is compliant with Ohio Revised Code 3302.13. Below, the Department literacy experts have provided feedback highlighting the strengths of your plan and suggestions to bolster specific sections. Regional literacy specialists are available to support the implementation of your plan. Please reach out to your state support team or educational service center for implementation support.

Strengths of the Reading Achievement Plan:
- There are systems listed in the plan to address small group needs and individual student needs.
- The progress monitoring plan is clear and allows for biweekly student data analysis and reteaching.
- The external factors contributing to the students' reading difficulties are clear and specific to the school.

This plan will benefit from:
- The professional development plan mentions training in specific programs but not in teaching foundational literacy skills.
- The RAP should be specific about how the school will ensure that teachers are implementing the strategies with fidelity and about how adjustments will be made as needed.
- The goals listed focus on attendance and completion of course work. These are not specific to addressing the areas of weakness in literacy.
- Consider including a root cause analysis to make the plan stronger.
- Consider including internal factors that may be contributing to the students' reading difficulties.

The Reading Achievement Plan and this memo will be posted on the Department's website. If Great River Connections Academy revises its Reading Achievement Plan and would like the revised plan to be posted to the Department's website, the request and the revised plan must be sent to readingplans@education.ohio.gov. If you have any questions, please email the same inbox.

25 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215 U.S.A.
education.ohio.gov

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hearing, please call Relay Ohio first at 711.

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On behalf of the Department of Education and Workforce and Director Dackin, thank you for all your efforts to increase literacy achievement for your students.

Sincerely,

Melissa Weber-Mayrer, Ph.D.
Chief of Literacy
Section for Literacy Achievement and Reading Success

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Department of Education & Workforce

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READING ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

Ohio law requires each school district or community school that meets the following criteria, as reported on the past two consecutive report cards issued for that district or community school, to submit to the Ohio Department of Education a Reading Achievement Plan by Dec. 31.

1.The district or community school received a performance rating of less than three stars on the Early Literacy measure.

2. 51 percent or less of the district's or community school's students scored proficient or higher on Ohio's State Test for grade 3 English language arts.

The recommended length for Reading Achievement Plans encompassing grades Kindergarten through grade 3 should be 25 pages. Comprehensive Pre-K through grade 12 Reading Achievement Plans are expected to be longer than 25 pages. Section headings in the template marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

DISTRICT NAME: Great River Connections Academy

DISTRICT IRN: 017233

DISTRICT ADDRESS: 3650 Olentangy River Rd., Suite 430, Columbus, OH 43214

PLAN COMPLETION DATE: December 21, 2023

LEAD WRITERS: Jason Swinehart, Laura Barber-Purvis

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine recently announced the ReadOhio initiative, an exciting statewide effort to encourage improved literacy skills for all ages that includes the implementation of curriculum aligned with the science of reading in Ohio's schools. The Governor also released a video to explain what the science of reading is and why it is important.

In addition, the Ohio Department of Education developed the ReadOhio toolkit to guide school leaders, teachers and families in this important work. The toolkit is filled with resources including the Shifting to the Science of Reading: A Discussion Guide for School and District Teams, professional learning tools and practices for schools as they prepare for the start of the new academic year.

As described in Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement, Ohio's vision is for all learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to become proficient readers. The Ohio Department of Education and its partners view language and literacy acquisition and achievement as foundational knowledge that supports student success. To increase learner's language and literacy achievement, the Department is urging districts and schools to use evidence-based systems and high-quality instruction, select high-quality instructional materials and employ culturally responsive practices.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE*

"Culturally Responsive Practice" means an approach that recognizes and encompasses students' and educators' lived experiences, cultures and linguistic capital to inform, support and ensure high-quality instruction. In a Culturally Responsive environment, educators have high expectations of all students, demonstrate positive attitudes toward student achievement, involve students in multiple phases of academic programming, and support the unique abilities and learning needs of each student.

The Department encourages districts and schools to consider Culturally Responsive Practices as Reading Achievement Plans are developed.

Please see the Department's *Culturally Responsive Practice program page.*

SECTION 1: DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERSHIP, STAKEHOLDERS, DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND PLAN FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION*

SECTION 1, PART A: LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDERS*

Insert a list of all leadership team members, stakeholders, roles and contact information. The Department encourages districts and community schools include team members from the early childhood providers that feed into the district or school.

Name	Title/Role	Location	Email
Jason Swinehart	School Leader/Principal	GRCA	jaswinehart@grca.connectionsacademy.org

*Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

Name	Title/Role	Location	Email
Laura Barber-Purvis	K-8 Assistant Principal	GRCA	labarberpurvis@grca.connectionsacademy.org
Jennifer Geyer	Manager of Special Education	GRCA	jegeyer@grca.connectionsacademy.org
Lesley Maxey	Director of Student Accountability	GRCA	lemaxey@grca.connectionsacademy.org
Megan Jaynes	Kindergarten Teacher/Teacher Leader	GRCA	mjaynes@grca.connectionsacademy.org

SECTION 1, PART B: DEVELOPING, MONITORING AND COMMUNICATING THE READING ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

Describe how the district leadership team developed the plan and how the team will monitor and communicate the plan.

Great River Connections Academy's Reading Achievement Plan was initially developed by the administrative team as a result of data analysis of standardized tests, benchmark assessments, course assessments, and observations. The plan is aligned with an existing K-8 Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plan (SIP). The plan was then reviewed and discussed as a leadership team. Discussions covered how to implement research-based programs in order to best service the needs of all students. Implementation and monitoring plans are formally written and provided to all necessary stakeholders.

Regularly scheduled meetings were established to ensure continued monitoring. Those meetings take place during PLC time (bi-weekly) and during monthly touch base meetings between teachers and supervisor.

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

Describe how the Reading Achievement Plan is aligned to and supports the overall continuous improvement and equity efforts of the district or community school. Districts and community schools established under Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code that are required to develop or modify a local equitable access plan, an improvement plan or implement improvement strategies as required by section 3302.04, 3302.10, 3301.0715(G) or another section of the Revised Code shall ensure the plan required by this section aligns with other improvement and equity efforts.

The Reading Achievement Plan is an extension of Great River Connections Academy's mission statement. The mission statement reads: Great River Connections Academy collaborates with families to ensure learners find success by connecting learning and academic growth through meaningful relationships, individualized support, and an engaging curriculum. Student academic success is embedded in our mission statement as well as in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is GRCA's ongoing effort to place emphasis on student achievement, success, and family engagement. Areas of focus in the SIP that are aligned to overall continuous improvement include the following:

- Continuous improvement in LiveLesson (live classroom time) instructional strategies in both small group and classroom settings;
- SST/RTI development with a focus on processes and identification

Additionally, the school has developed a K-8 Improvement Plan to address how staff plans to increase student achievement levels on state assessments, as well as increase the K-3 Literacy rating on the state report card. The K-8 Improvement has three main focus areas:

- AIR proficiency: Grades 3-8 are focused on moving students from limited and basic to proficient, as well as moving students from proficient to accomplished and advanced;
- Attendance: Grades K-8 are working towards ways to better align how attendance is captured so that it is consistent and captures
- K-3 Literacy: Grades K-3 will continue efforts to build students' reading comprehension skills through consistent word recognition/decoding and language comprehension practice.

There are three major reasons for why these are the most critical areas of need. 1. The transient nature of the school means that students come from various educational backgrounds. Some students are on grade level, others above, and many are below. As a result, AIR performance levels are inconsistent and do not consistently reflect the efforts made by the teachers to close the learning gap. 2. Attendance mindset and misunderstandings. Teachers are continuing to understand how to capture attendance accurately, but it can be difficult when students are not properly engaging in school. Students and families also need to be reminded of the importance of attendance and the direct correlation to learning. This is of a greater importance for those late enrollees who may have a steeper learning curve. 3. K-3 literacy greatly impacts a student's entire learning experience. Students are more likely to graduate from high school if they are confident readers by the completion of their third grade year. Not all students learn to read the same way and we continue to learn how the brain grasps written language and the steps towards reading proficiency.

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

SECTION 3 PART A: RELEVANT LEARNER PERFORMANCE DATA*

*Insert **disaggregated** student performance data from sources that **must include**, but are not limited to:*

- **The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment,**
- *Ohio's State Test for **English language arts assessment for grades 3-8,***
- **K-3 Reading diagnostics (include subscores by grade level),**
- **The Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA)**
- **The Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities** *and*
- *benchmark assessments, as applicable.*

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

	Fall 2023
Emerging Readiness	37%
Approaching Readiness	39%
Demonstrating Readiness	24%

	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
On Track	45%	51.3%	35%

English Language Arts State Assessment: Proficiency Percentages

	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
3rd Grade	48.1%	43.5%
4th Grade	52.7%	38.5%
5th Grade	47.2%	54.7%
6th Grade	49.4%	37.0%
7th Grade	56.0%	42.6%
8th Grade	36.0%	41.5%

K-3 Reading Diagnostics: STAR Early Literacy/Reading "On Track"

	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Kindergarten	80%	62%
1st Grade	67%	68%
2nd Grade	69%	52%

***Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.**

3rd Grade	67%	70%

Ohio English Language Arts Proficiency Assessment (OELPA)

	2021-2022	**2022-2023**
EL Students Included	5	1
EL Met Proficiency/Growth Percent	40%	100%
EL Growth Percent	20%	100%
EL Proficiency Percent	20%	0%

Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Proficiency (English Language Arts)

	2021-2022	**2022-2023**
4th Grade	N/A	100%
5th Grade	0%	0%
6th Grade	25%	N/A
7th Grade	100%	33%
8th Grade	67%	50%

SECTION 3 PART B: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO UNDERACHIEVEMENT IN READING*

Insert internal and external factors believed to contribute to low reading achievement in the school district or community school.

Various factors have affected student performance data in recent years. The main factors GRCA currently faces include high mobility/transient student population, truancy and engagement, and parental involvement.

It is more common for online schools to experience a high transient population. According to the 2023 Ohio School Report Card, 43.2% of students moved into or out of the district. While this is a decrease from the previous year's 47.4%, the overall number of students remains fairly high. Research shows that moving one or more times during a school year impedes a student's chances of being proficient on standardized tests. Moving can also impact a student's cognitive and social-emotional development which can prevent a student from properly engaging in the online platform.

Truancy and engagement concerns are also a common occurrence in the online setting. This challenge is nothing new for online schools, but the pandemic did increase the concerns. Online schools were told it was "business as usual" when traditional schools locked down in March 2020. The ongoing challenge with these lockdowns is that some districts were unable to properly educate students for one reason or another. Some families also went without internet access and had little to no communicate during this time. As new students continue to enroll, GRCA has discovered that not all students

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

received consistent exposure to education during the closures. Students, and teachers, continue to play catch-up with curriculum missed during the most challenging times of the pandemic. In the 2023-2024 school year, GRCA continues to see an increased number of students who have missed entire years of schooling or experienced high levels of truancy and then placed into the next grade level (by the previous school). This has led to more students missing key pieces of learning how to read and comprehend.

Parental/caretaker involvement, or lack thereof, can have a great impact on a student's success. Students whose parents engage with the curriculum, properly support their child, and communicate with the school are performing at higher levels than those who have less involved parents/caretakers. Unfortunately, at times there is a misconception that a student can be sat in front of a computer screen and the adult in the home can walk away without additional involvement. All enrolling parents/caretakers are required to sign a learning coach agreement. This document explains that online schools use a more independent learning model and require a high degree of involvement from the parent in addition to support from the teachers. The staff does what it can to support families, but some families are not properly equipped to fully support their students.

SECTION 3 PART C: ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Insert a root cause analysis of the provided learner performance data and factors contributing to low reading achievement.

SECTION 4: MEASURABLE LEARNER PERFORMANCE GOALS AND ADULT IMPLEMENTATION GOALS*

Describe the measurable learner performance goals addressing learners' needs (Section 5) based on student performance goals by grade band (K-3) that the Reading Achievement Plan is designed to support progress toward. Also describe the measurable adult implementation goals based on the internal and external factor analysis by grade band (Kindergarten through grade 3). The plan may have an overarching goal, as well as subgoals such as grade-level goals). Goals should be strategic/specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound. In addition, goals should be inclusive and equitable.

Goal 1: Students in grades K-3 will improve core course completion rates to 95% overall during each school year.

Goal 2: GRCA will improve the total attendance metric to 95% for each school year.

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

Each action plan map describes how implementation of the Reading Achievement Plan will take place for each specific literacy goal the plan is designed to address. For goals specific for grades K-3, at least one action step in each map should address supports for students who have Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans. Include a description of the professional development activities provided for each goal.

Goal # _1__ Action Map

Goal Statement: Students in grades K-3 will improve core course completion rates to 95% overall during each school year.

Evidence-Based Strategy or Strategies:

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3
Implementation Component	Train all K-3 teachers on identifying Power Standards in the curriculum	Monitor RTI/MTSS small group participation and progress	Engage students and families consistently
Timeline	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025
Lead Person(s)	K-3 Team School Administration Teacher Trainer	K-3 Team School Administration RTI Leads	K-3 Team School Administration
Resources Needed	Grade level curriculum Organizational templates State standards	Diagnostic data Progress monitoring data	Technology (phone, email, CLASS platform for live instruction)
Specifics of Implementation (Professional development, training, coaching, system structures, implementation support and leadership structures)	Professional development/ training Follow-up meetings with the teacher trainer PLC time to discuss further implementation/results of implementation	Professional development/ training Coaching with RTI/MTSS leads	Professional development/ training Data analysis tracking student engagement

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3
Measure of Success	Completed templates along with course completion rates increasing	Tracking of students in/out of RTI/MTSS process	Students attend live instruction and contact teachers regularly
Description of Funding	NA	NA	NA
Check-in/Review Date	Ongoing during bi-weekly PLC meetings and in monthly touch base meetings with supervisors	Ongoing discussions with scheduled meetings to discuss student progress (a minimum of every 6 weeks)	Ongoing Details covered in monthly meetings with supervisor

Goal # _2__ Action Map

Goal Statement: GRCA will improve the total attendance metric to 95% for each school year.

Evidence-Based Strategy or Strategies:

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3
Implementation Component	Approve student attendance weekly	Work with students and families when an Absence Intervention Plan is put in place	Engage students and families consistently
Timeline	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025	Fall 2023 – Spring 2025
Lead Person(s)	K-3 Team School Administration Attendance coordinator	K-3 Team School Administration Attendance coordinator	K-3 Team School Administration
Resources Needed	Student activity tracker	Student activity tracker Grade book Student log	Technology (phone, email, CLASS platform for live instruction)

Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

	Action Step 1	Action Step 2	Action Step 3
Specifics of Implementation (Professional development, training, coaching, system structures, implementation support and leadership structures)	Professional development/ training to review how to appropriately approve attendance Attendance coordinator monitors missing/incorrect submissions	Professional development/ training Coaching on attendance requirements – what they looks like in an online environment AIP meeting led by administration	Professional development/ training Data analysis tracking student engagement
Measure of Success	Student attendance matches their engagement	Student gets back on track with attendance and truancy charges are avoided	Students attend live instruction and contact teachers regularly
Description of Funding	NA	NA	NA
Check-in/Review Date	Weekly	Ongoing	Ongoing Details covered in monthly meetings with supervisor

SECTION 6: PROCESS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN S STRATEGIES.*

Describe the process for monitoring the progress and implementation of the plan's strategies.

Teachers monitor and collect data for the students in their homerooms and content courses. STAR Early Literacy/Reading benchmark assessments are administered in the fall, winter, and spring. Renaissance CBM assessments are also used as a form of progress monitoring and assess for possible dyslexia concerns. Teachers conduct monthly curriculum-based assessments (CBAs), in which they work one-on-one over the phone or in LiveLesson. LiveLessons are our live instruction time and take place using the CLASS platform. CBAs allow teachers to check for understanding, monitor progress in coursework, and ensure students are on-track with their learning. If a student is considered off track then time is spent reviewing content and re-teaching. All CBA calls are logged for individual students so that other teachers, as well as administration, can review. STAR data is shared with parents and caretakers. All of the students on a RIMP are part of the data collection in the K-1 and 2-3 PLC groups. Student progress is discussed bi-weekly during PLC meetings; PLC leads meet monthly with administration to further discuss progress toward learner performance goals.

***Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.**

SECTION 7: EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS AND SCHOOLS*

SECTION 7 PART A: STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LEARNERS*

Describe the evidence-based strategies identified in Section 5 that will be used to meet specific learner needs and improve instruction. This must include a description of how these evidence-based strategies support learners on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMPs).

**Under Ohio Revised Code 3313.608, Districts and schools must create Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMP) for a student who is not on- track (reading below grade level) within 60 days of receiving the reading diagnostic results.

**Under Ohio Revised Code 3313.6028(C) Beginning not later than the 2024-2025 school year, each school district, community school established under Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code, and STEM school established under Chapter 3326. of the Revised Code, shall use core curriculum and instructional materials in English language arts and evidence-based reading intervention programs only from the Department's approved lists. The RIMP continues throughout the student's K-12 academic career until the student is reading on grade level.

Students who are marked as needing a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) are also marked as being in either Tier 2 or Tier 3 (based on student needs and data). The level of the tier then determines how many small group sessions the student is expected to attend each week.

Renaissance's Lalilo is an innovative, visually engaging, standards-aligned literacy software program. Students are exposed to games, songs, and activities that address five essential keys of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. All K-2 students, and some students in 3rd grade, are automatically placed into the program regardless of reading ability level.

Freckle is a Renaissance program that allows for adaptive practice in English language arts for all 3-8 students. Once a student completes an initial STAR assessment, the student's activities and practice within Freckle are aligned with ability. Teachers can assign specific tasks within Freckle, and a student can work at an individual pace at the appropriate performance level. The purpose is to build upon the knowledge and skills the student currently has in order to move toward grade level standards and, if applicable, accelerate beyond that.

UFLI is another program utilized by the elementary team. It is a reader development program that serves both emergent and struggling readers. UFLI is used for small group instruction, 1:1 sessions, and in whole group settings. Currently, the goal is to utilize UFLI instruction 2-3 times a week with students in the RTI process. While the focus is on students in grades K-3, GRCA has also trained teachers in 4th and 5th grade due to students in those grades missing key pieces of phonics. Both general education and special education teachers are utilizing this program with students.

All three programs are backed by research and proven to work. Teachers utilize the data collected through these programs to influence their instruction for small groups, large groups, and one-on-one instruction.

Small group, large group, and one-on-one instruction are planned well in advance in order for teachers to incorporate recent data and student progress within their Language Arts course. Data is analyzed to identify areas students have mastered and are ready to move on from, as well as areas students continue to struggle and need more practice.

*Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

SECTION 7 PART B: ENSURING EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVING UPON STRATEGIES (STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ADULT IMPLEMENTATION)*

Describe how the district will ensure the proposed evidence-based strategies in Section 8, Part A will do the following:

1. *Be effective;*
2. *Show progress; and*
3. *Improve upon strategies utilized during the two prior consecutive school years.*

Be Effective
The only way for any program to be effective is to use it and use it the way it is intended to be implemented. All of the strategies in use to support learners are implemented with a plan to ensure effectiveness. Teachers are trained and provided a structure on the best use for each.

Show Progress
Teachers regularly pull data from all three programs. This data is used to plan instruction, as well as adjust the current supports to meet the needs of individual students. Data is shared with parents/caretakers as they are partners in the learning process. Data is also reviewed during touch base meetings with administration and in PLC meetings. Stakeholders frequently review data to ensure progress is being made; if a student is not progressing as planned then modifications are made in a timely manner.

Improve upon strategies utilized during the two prior consecutive school years
Teachers and administrators review data regularly and reflect often on if current efforts are effective. Some of the adjustments GRCA has made after reflecting include adding intervention teachers in K-5, in addition to a course teacher, to focus on reading skills, and implementing a co-teaching approach with intervention specialist teachers.

SECTION 7 PART C: STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN*

Insert a professional development plan that supports the evidence-based strategies proposed in the Reading Achievement Plan and clearly identifies the instructional staff involved in the professional development. Refer to the definition of professional development in the guidance document. Please indicate how the professional development activities are sustained, intensive, data-driven, and instructionally focused. Explain how the district is addressing Culturally Responsive Practice and the Science of Reading in the professional development plan.

**Under Ohio law (House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly Section 265.330 Districts and schools shall require all teachers and administrators to complete a Science of Reading professional development course provided by the Department not later than June 30, 2025.

**Ohio's [Dyslexia Support Laws](#) require all kindergarten through third grade teachers, as well as teachers providing special education instruction to children in kindergarten through grade 12, to complete professional 18 hours of approved development on identifying characteristics of dyslexia and understanding pedagogy for instruction of students with dyslexia.

Teachers are trained on Renaissance assessments to ensure tests are administered appropriately in order to gather initial data, in addition to benchmark assessments.

Teachers have, and will continue to, receive training on Freckle and Lalilo. GRCA has a designated Renaissance expert on staff to answer questions, in addition to a Renaissance representative who is also available to answer questions. Staff received training in Lalilo at the end of August 2023 and students are actively engaged in the program. One Freckle training took place at the end of September 2023 and another is scheduled for mid-November 2023.

*Section headings marked with an asterisk are required by state law.

Teachers have received training on effective teaching practices in an online environment. Teachers took a deep dive into their data at an in-person professional development session in mid-August. Additionally, trainings on power standards, and the process of unpacking them, have taken place in mid-August and early October 2023. The work with power standards is an ongoing piece of the PLCs.

APPENDICES

If necessary, please include a glossary of terms, data summary, key messages, description of program elements, etc.