



MCAE Schoolwide Title I Handbook 2023 - 2024

**Mount Carmel Area
Elementary School**

***Dear Parents, please assure you read and sign the last page and return the last page only to your child's teacher as soon as possible.*

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MCAE's Schoolwide Title I Program Purpose

Mount Carmel Area Elementary School operates a Schoolwide Title I program. Title I is a federally funded program designed to support the academic growth of *all* students, and is a part of the “Every Student Succeeds Act” of 2015. The funds generated through the Title I grant are dedicated to ensure students have access to supplemental instruction in core content areas, research based instructional strategies and assessments, a focus on early childhood literacy, and highly qualified teachers. Reading specialists are strategically placed in regular classrooms in grades 4-6, while students in grades K-2 may receive supplemental instruction from our Title I Reading Specialist. These staff members work with classroom teachers to support and instruct struggling students, as determined by standard assessments, universal screening tools, running records, and teacher observations. This is a fluid program that provides academic support, based on multiple data sources, to *any/all* students, at any time throughout the school year.

Academic support includes:

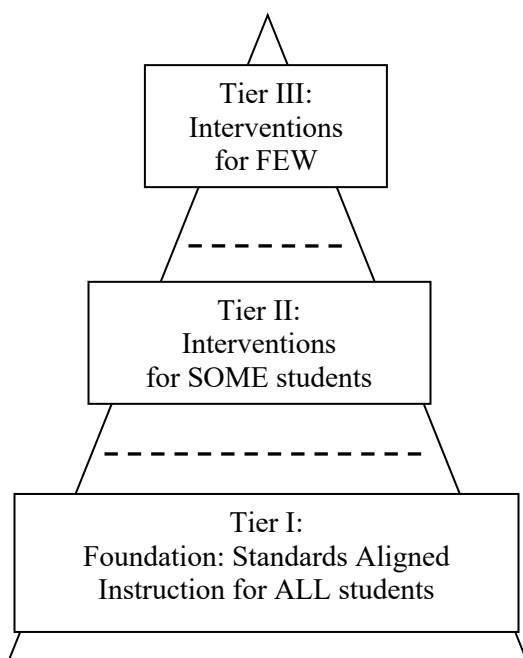
- Benchmark reading assessment (DIBELS) of *all* students in K-2, three times a year to monitor that they are reading at or above grade-level.
- iReady Diagnostic Assessments.
- Hybrid Learning Instructional Model in grades 4-6.
- Strategic intervention groups that meet, in addition to classroom core instruction, for students in need of research-based reading and/or mathematical interventional instruction strategies. The groups are designed to help students of similar ability levels learn and achieve more than they do from only core classroom instruction.
- Intervention programs which improve reading skills like phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
- Individual support for struggling learners who require support beyond our intervention programs.
- Parent communication and resources to support students’ reading and math at home.

If you have any questions about our Title I program, please contact building principal, Ms. Susan Nestico.

What is RTII?

Response to Instruction and Intervention

The graph below shows PA’s RTII Framework, a recommended approach to helping struggling students achieve grade-level success, which the Mount Carmel Area Elementary School is in the process of implementing over the next two school years. Here is how it works:



- ALL students receive high-quality instruction and PA Common Core Standards-aligned curricula in Tier I. This instruction should meet the academic needs of at least 80% or more of our students.
- SOME students, however, will need additional research-based programs to help them perform at grade-level in certain skills.
 - For these students we have highly effective (and fun) interventions that can be delivered in small groups.
 - Once these students get the help they need, they move out of the intervention. The decision to move students in and out of interventions is made using data collected in the interventions, DIBELS assessment results, and teacher observation.
 - If the interventions are NOT helping the student, they may need even more, intense and individual support.
- These FEW students receive Tier III time as well.

It is important to note that intervention time does NOT happen in *place* of core classroom instruction, but at a time when *all* students are working in small groups at their level. This is called their intervention block.

Reading Curriculum and Assessments

❖ Our Core reading program in grades K-5 is *McGraw-Hill Wonders* and in grade 6 is *McGraw-Hill Study Sync*. It is a comprehensive program that includes elements of structured literacy and includes whole-group direct instruction in reading, writing, and language arts; centers to build students' self-directed learning; small-group guided reading; and, at various levels, big books, reader's theatre, and interactive technology. All students participate in all of the above, including curriculum-based assessments, as appropriate to grade level, with their classroom teacher.



- ❖ Supplemental structured literacy programs include Wilson Foundations (grades K-3) and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (grades K-2).
- ❖ DIBELS is an assessment administered to all students in grades K-3. DIBELS stands for *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, and tests five skills that are necessary for learning to read. Children who learn these skills become good readers. The tested skills at each grade level may include:
 - Phonemic Awareness: Hearing and using sounds in spoken words
 - Alphabetic Principle: Knowing the sounds of the letters and sounding out written words
 - Accurate and Fluent Reading: Reading stories and other materials easily and quickly with few mistakes
 - Vocabulary: Understanding and using a variety of words
 - Comprehension: Understanding what is spoken or read and responding orally or in writing

DIBELS is made up of seven short individual tests, called subtests. Each DIBELS subtest focuses on a different skill and takes only about 1 minute to deliver because they are used as *indicators*. Much like using a thermometer to take a child's temperature is an indicator of overall health; each subtest is an indicator of how well a child is doing in learning a particular early reading skill. We use DIBELS to help us identify children who may need extra help to become good readers and to check up on those children while they receive the extra support to make sure they are making progress.

- ❖ iReady Reading Diagnostic Assessment is an online program fully aligned to the Common Core. It provides the data driven insights that classroom teachers and school and district administrators need to determine exactly where to focus their instructional time to ensure all students are on track to meet these more rigorous expectations and to succeed on the accompanying assessments. The iReady Reading Diagnostic:
 - Covers the main Common Core domains: Phonics, Phonological Awareness, High-Frequency Words, Vocabulary, Comprehension of Literature, and Comprehension of Informational Text.
 - Diagnostic includes multimedia-paired passages in which students are asked to synthesize ideas from multiple sources.
 - Assessment and instruction are offered for both reading comprehension of informational and literary texts.
 - Online lessons provide explicit instruction on key skills across all domains, including close reading of authentic text.
 - Engaging, animated characters model close reading and finding evidence within text.

Math Curriculum and Assessments

- ❖ Our Core Math Curriculum is delivered through *McGraw-Hill's Reveal Math* program. In Mathematics, numbers, skills, and mathematical concepts are applied to real world situations. Mathematics lessons include time for whole-group instruction as well as small group, partner, or individual activities. These activities balance teacher-directed

instruction with opportunities for open-ended, hands-on activities, long-term projects and on-going practice. Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT's) and PSSA data in grades 3-6, and Baseline and common math assessments in grades K-6 inform teachers of the areas that students may need additional supports.

❖ iReady Math Diagnostic Assessment is an online program fully aligned to the Common Core. It provides the data driven insights that classroom teachers and school and district administrators need to determine exactly where to focus their instructional time to ensure all students are on track to meet these more rigorous expectations and to succeed on the accompanying assessments. The adaptive Math Diagnostic:

- Covers the main Common Core domains: Number and Operations, Algebra and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data, and Geometry.
- Includes diagnostic questions with new technology-enhanced items.
- Emphasizes conceptual understanding as well as procedural fluency and reflects PA Common Core's focus on rigor, relevance, and coherence.
- Provides tasks that draw on multiple standards to ensure students are making important connections between math concepts.
- Includes content that builds across grades and major topics are linked within grades.



Technology Resources

- ❖ Reflex Math is a supplementary program utilize to help students increase their mathematics facts and fluency.
- ❖ iReady and Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT) adaptive assessment are conducted during the school day two to three times per year.

❖ Starfall Reading www.starfall.com and www.abcy.com: Two great resources for school and home to practice and inspire good reading habits.

Standards-Based Report Cards (SBRC's)

A standards-based report card highlights the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. In our elementary school learning environment, students receive marks that report student progress toward meeting content and performance standards four times a year.

SBRC and Grading FAQ for Parents

❖ How is a SBRC different than traditional report cards?

The marks on a standards-based report card are different from traditional letter grades. Letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met his particular teacher's expectations, how he performed on assignments and tests, and how much effort the teacher believes he put in. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their children have mastered or whether they are working at grade level. Because one fourth-grade teacher might be reviewing basic multiplication facts, while another is teaching multiplication of two- or three-digit

numbers, getting an A in each of these classes would mean very different things. The parent of a child in these classes would not know if the child were learning what he should be to meet the state standards.

Standards-based report cards should provide more consistency between teachers than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents can see exactly which skills and knowledge their children have learned. The marks on a standards-based report card show only how well the child has mastered the grade-level standards, and do not include effort, attitude or work habits, which are usually marked separately.

❖ **What are the proficiency levels on the SBRC report card?**

The proficiency level represents a student's progress on the report card. There are four categories, 1-4 and are designated as follows:

Earning a "4" means the student has advanced understanding and exceeds grade-level expectations. A student receiving a "4" demonstrates academically superior skills in that specific area. This student shows initiative, challenges himself or herself, and demonstrates this advanced knowledge at school. A "4" is **difficult to obtain** and indicates unusually high achievement.

Earning a "3" means the student has proficient understanding and meets grade-level expectations. We want all of our students to reach a level "3." *A student receiving a "3" is right on track with our high academic expectations. A "3" is something to be celebrated!*

Earning a "2" means the student has basic understanding and partially meets grade-level expectations. A student receiving a "2" understands the basic concept or skill, but has not yet reached the proficient level. A "2" should indicate to parents that their child may need some extra help or extra time to practice/understand that concept or skill.

Earning a "1" means the student has minimal understanding and does not meet grade-level expectations. A student receiving a "1" has academic delays according to our district standards, and interventions may be needed to learn and stay on track with district expectations.

Please keep in mind that these numbers are not indicators of a linear performance from marking period to marking period; rather, they are reflective of the goals of the current marking period. For example, your child may receive a "2" in a content skill in one marking period, but he/she may not automatically receive a "3" in that same content skill in the next marking period. This can be reflective of the natural progression of skills and curriculum benchmarks that developmentally change throughout the year.

We want parents to recognize that our teaching and assessments are directed at ensuring that all students have an opportunity to meet our curriculum standards. Different students progress at different rates, so standards may be met in varying amounts of time, with varying amounts of teacher support.

❖ **How Can My Child Exceed the Standards?**

Another change for students is learning how to understand the concept of exceeding the Standard. **Exceeding is not the equivalent of an A on a traditional report card.** For example, if a first grader received A's on every math test during the marking period, he or she would probably receive an A on a traditional report card. If those math tests measured only the concepts first graders are expected to master, those A's would be the equivalent of meeting the standard on a Standards-Based report card; the student is doing what he or she should be doing very well, but not necessarily more. Standards-Based report cards encourage students to demonstrate their ability to apply skills and knowledge beyond grade level expectations. Performance is characterized by self-motivation and the ability to apply skills with consistent accuracy, independence, and a high level of quality.

❖ **Has Grading Changed in Grades 3-6?**

Yes and No. Parents will still the same report card with numerical averages just as before. The numerical ranges for an “A”, “B”, etc. remain the same. Please be mindful, though, the expectations are now higher at each grade and thus, more challenging for students. In other words, obtaining scores such as a 97-100 is very difficult to attain and will be uncommon in many cases. This does not mean your child is not doing as well as they have in the past. It simply means they have more room to grow given the new level of standards and expectations.

Parent Involvement

- ❖ As stated in our District and Title I Parent Involvement Policies, we strongly believe that the involvement of parents in a child’s education is a huge part of our collective success. We will strive to provide opportunities for parent involvement in decision making and educational outreach. We value your input and want to create a culture of shared learning and accountability. This will include elementary Family Nights to review our Title I procedures and provide parents and students engaging entertainment or workshops related to helping students be successful in school. Additionally, we will continue our practices of Open House, Parent/Teacher Conferences, an active Parent Volunteer program, PTA Family Fun Nights, and periodic evening meetings/workshops for families.

Parents are encouraged to become engaged in our Title I process and policies. Our Parent Involvement Policies can be found on our school and district websites. If you are interested in attending Title I meetings to provide input regarding our Title I program, parent outreach, and home communications, or in obtaining free books and resources to help support your child’s academic achievement at home, please contact Susan Nestico at 570-339-1500 or nesticos@mca.k12.pa.us.