

# **Regional School District #10**

## **Philosophies of Reading and Writing Instruction**

Revised May 19, 2015

### **Philosophy of Reading Instruction, Grades Pre-K – 12:**

We believe that a balanced literacy approach is the most effective way to implement reading instruction. The following are components of this type of reading instruction, along with their definitions:

#### **Every child experiences direct instruction to become an engaged and successful reader.**

**Direct Instruction of Reading** is the foundation of reading instruction, setting the stage for what students should know and be able to do as readers. Anchored in the Common Core State Standards and effective reading strategies, teachers provide explicit strategy instruction. This mini-lesson is designed to be teacher-led, brief (5-15 minutes) and inform students' independent practice as readers.

#### **Every child listens to a fluent adult read aloud.**

**Shared Reading or Interactive Read-Aloud**– Both shared reading and interactive read-aloud include interactive experiences in which students share in reading and thinking about a text with their teacher. The teacher models reading strategies and processes before, during, and after reading the text. The students are invited to share their thinking as well. This practice allows students to listen to fluent reading, and to observe effective comprehension strategies. During shared reading, students need access to the text the teacher reads so they can share in the reading work, whereas in an interactive read-aloud, the teacher may be the only person with access to the text. Teachers should choose texts at the high level of text complexity for their grade-level band when engaging students in these activities.

#### **Every child will read accurately and read something he or she understands.**

##### **Small Group Instruction**

Students are grouped based on teacher observation on the need to develop the same skill or strategy as readers. There are a variety of ways to instruct readers in small groups. The essential elements are matching the appropriate instructional strategy and text level to the reader.

- All students in grades K-2 will participate in guided reading lessons a minimum of four times per week.
- All students at-risk in grades K-8 will participate in guided reading lessons a minimum of four times per week.
- Students who meet or exceed grade-level expectations in grades 3-8 will participate in small group instruction two to three times per week.

**Guided Reading**– Guided reading is an instructional context for teaching reading in small groups. It allows teachers to provide scaffolding to students in order to approach increasingly more complex texts with success. During guided reading, teachers support students with developing strategies for processing and thinking about texts. Books for guided reading should be chosen at students' instructional levels. The guided reading format includes an introduction to the text, reading of the text, discussion of the text, teaching points, word work, and extension work at the teacher's discretion.

**Literature Study**–All literature study involves choice, agency, and diverse groupings. Students within these groups will have varying strengths and needs, so it is crucial to offer books that are accessible to all students within a group. Books to choose from must also be relevant, and of interest to the group of readers. Texts should promote thinking and discussion among group members. Teachers should express clear expectations for group work, how to choose topics for discussion, and how to give and receive feedback. They will also facilitate the meetings and monitor students' written work. These groups help to create classroom communities, and expose students to other points-of-view on the same text. They also develop students' speaking and listening skills while promoting agency and independence.

**Strategy Instruction** – Even everyday actions require strategic thinking, and all readers need to utilize strategies in order to access texts with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. In order to activate strategies in working memory, students need to be aware of these strategies. If made aware of effective reading strategies, and shown their benefits, students will use conditional knowledge (understanding when and in which situations to utilize certain strategies) to employ them effectively.

**Every child reads something he or she chooses every day.**

**Independent Reading** – Students should have multiple opportunities at school and at home to interact with texts at their independent levels for extended periods of time. These texts are self-selected, but may be monitored by the teacher as needed. Student text choice should be of appropriate difficulty while addressing a variety of genres. Students should be held accountable for volume and variety of independent reading. Independent reading, particularly when it involves goal setting, builds stamina and fluency, and gives students time to gather their thoughts about texts.

**Individual Conferring** – Meeting with individual students to give and receive feedback contributes to student success in reading. Feedback must be timely to be effective, and the student must be able to express his or her needs. Teachers can determine what students need to learn as readers by monitoring their reading habits (through observations and reading logs), oral reading behaviors, discussion, and written work about their reading. Since the support given in a reading conference is pointed and individualized, it has a strong impact on the student.

**Every child talks with peers and adults about reading.**

**Conversations About Reading** – In every classroom, students should engage in conversation surrounding their books. In order for successful conversation to occur, teachers need to build and foster habits of discussion in their students. These include actively listening, speaking audibly, looking at the speaker, elaborating, building on others' ideas, evaluating replies, prompting others, giving praise, hinting, giving think time, staying focused, and preparing for the conversation ahead of time. This type of discussion of texts aligns with the expectations of the Common Core State Standards and positively impacts comprehension and engagement.

**Every child writes about something personally meaningful.**

**Writing About Reading** – In every classroom, students need repeated opportunities to compose work that expresses their unique thoughts and opinions about texts. This work prepares students for discussion, allows them to keep track of their thinking over the course of a book or books, and helps students to clarify and extend ideas. Responses to reading should be reflective, and indicative of each student's individual thinking. These written responses should address various metacognitive strategies with growing depth of knowledge levels.

## ***Writing Instruction***

### **Philosophy of Writing Instruction Grades Pre-K-12:**

We believe that in order to execute effective writing instruction, teachers need to implement the following:

**Every child experiences direct instruction to become an engaged and successful writer.**

**Direct Instruction of Writing** is the foundation of writing instruction, setting the stage for what students should know and be able to do as writers. Anchored in the Common Core State Standards and effective writing strategies, teachers provide explicit strategy instruction. This mini-lesson is designed to be teacher-led, brief (5-15 minutes) and inform students' independent practice as writers.

**Small Group Instruction-** Students are grouped based on teacher observation on the need to develop the same skill or strategy as writers. All writers need to utilize strategies in order to communicate ideas effectively and write with accuracy, fluency, and independence. In order to activate strategies in working memory, students need to be aware of these strategies. If made aware of effective writing strategies, and shown their benefits, students will use conditional knowledge (understanding when and in which situations to utilize certain strategies) to employ them effectively.

**Conferring About Writing-** Meeting with individual students to give and receive feedback contributes to student success in writing. Feedback must be timely to be effective, and the student must be able to express his or her needs. Teachers can determine what students need to learn as writers by monitoring their writing habits (through observations and conferring), discussion, and written work. Since the support given in a writing conference is pointed and individualized, it has a strong impact on the student.

**Every child writes routinely over extended time frames for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.**

Students will write in a variety of modes (arguments, informative/explanatory and narrative) across all content areas and grade levels. Students will write using relevant and credible information from multiple print and digital sources. Writing experiences should be authentic and meaningful for the writer. Good writers recognize their audience and consider it when producing written work.

**Every child writes with clarity and coherence.**

Students learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly. Good writers develop and organize their ideas with attention to word choice, grammar, conventions and spelling.

**Every child talks with peers and adults about writing.**

Good writers share their ideas to elicit feedback from peers and adults. Good writers recognize that in order to develop and strengthen their writing they need to edit, revise, rewrite or try a new approach.

**Every child writes about something personally meaningful.**

Students have opportunities to write about topics of their own choosing. This will include topics from across all content areas and writing for a variety of purposes. Teachers will provide opportunities to foster the connection between students' reading and writing.

**Every child will use technology to produce and publish writing.**

Students will have the opportunity to develop their writing and research skills using appropriate technology. By the end of grade 4, students will demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

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