

Guiding Principles for E/LA Instruction MSD of Wayne Township



Language arts instruction must be rigorous and relevant.

Instruction must address rigorous and relevant core content and skills for language arts at each grade level, and provide the support and opportunity for all students to reach high expectations. Successful instruction blends language arts content with an engaging learning environment that changes to meet the dynamic needs of all students. Core content, skills, and expectations for each grade level are consistent across the district, while instructional strategies and methodology should be matched to the needs of the students.

Language arts instruction must be connected and integrated.

Individual reading, writing, language, and grammar skills may be taught in isolation, but must be connected in application - to other areas of language arts, to other subject areas and disciplines, and to life outside of school.

Purposeful assessment drives instruction and affects learning.

Language arts instruction should be grounded in and informed by balanced formative and summative assessment practices. Purposeful assessment practices help teachers and students understand where they have been, where they are, and where they might go next, providing the opportunity for reflection and feedback about learning. No single assessment can provide sufficient information to plan teaching and learning.

Responsive environments engage learners.

Responsive learning environments adapt to the needs of each student (culturally, linguistically, academically, and socially) and encourage learning by promoting collaboration and purposeful interaction, in addition to opportunities for independence. Daily instructional decisions are based on the individual needs of students, and will not follow a "one size fits all" approach.

Teachers build on students' strengths and experiences.

Every student's unique personal history enriches classrooms, schools, and the community. This diversity is our greatest asset, and teachers should capitalize upon and celebrate this diversity for the benefit of all students. Language arts instruction should build on a child's language, culture, and experiences, enhancing their chances for success in learning to communicate, collaborate, and comprehend. Multicultural perspectives should be integrated throughout instruction: through the texts students read, the topics students study, the perspectives that are represented, and the authors of texts that are available to students.

Skillful, knowledgeable teachers are more effective than any specific program or method.

The teacher's knowledge and ability to make principled, insightful instructional decisions for individual children, and the ability to orchestrate effective instruction for the students being taught, are more influential factors in students' literacy achievement than knowing particular procedures for instruction or following scripted lesson plans. Knowledgeable teachers are experts in both pedagogy and content, and cultivate opportunities for collaboration with colleagues and the larger community.

Classroom environments should immerse students in literacy and language.

All students should have access to a high volume of texts that they are interested in and are able to read. Students should be surrounded by a print-rich environment throughout the school and in each classroom, and should be given extended amounts of time and multiple opportunities to read, write, think, listen, and speak daily, for a variety of purposes and audiences. Increasing reading and writing volume increases students' achievement, as well as the opportunity for applying isolated skills. Teachers should provide student choice as often as possible: choice of text, topic, format, audience, or mode of response.

Technology tools should be purposefully and intentionally matched to instructional goals.

Effective teaching of 21st century learners requires the use of multiple forms of technology as tools for accessing, evaluating, synthesizing, organizing, and communicating ideas and information. Integration of technology should be purposefully connected to curricular outcomes, not as a disconnected add-on.

Language arts instruction should promote lifelong literacy.

Instructional practices should extend beyond the teaching of essential literacy skills to help students acquire the habits of reading and writing, and see themselves as lifelong readers and writers. Teaching in ways that fosters enthusiasm for and engagement with multiple literacies enhances the likelihood that students will become lifelong readers and writers.