



Aurora Public Schools Literacy Framework

What Readers and Writers Need – The Research Base

The process of developing vibrant, enduring literacies that continue to grow in strength and complexity in response to changing demands is exceedingly complex. “Becoming literate,” says Peter Johnston (2005), “involves developing identities, relationships, dispositions, and values as much as acquiring strategies for working with print.” Instructional designs that support this complex development must provide a context for rich, rigorous and relevant engagement in a broad range of reading, writing and learning experiences that position students as confident and resilient lifelong learners.

A long history of literacy research (Braunger & Lewis 2005) asserts that readers and writers at all stages of development need access to:

- Time for reading, writing and learning
- Texts of all kinds and rich resources for reading
- Knowledgeable and supportive teachers who understand literacy processes
- Appropriate instruction in skills and strategies
- Demonstrations of how readers, writers and texts work
- Other readers and writers, both novice and expert
- Support for their own reading and writing processes

21st Century Learning

“To achieve success in the 21st Century, students must achieve higher-order learning outcomes. These outcomes include knowledge-transfer skills....The effort to promote educational equity and close the achievement gap is consistent with the basic promise of public education in the United States: Schools should function as the equalizers of opportunity.”

--Boykin & Noguera, *Creating the Opportunity to Learn*



“We are at a pivotal point in American education where we can view knowledge through a reductionist lens or an envisionment lens. An envisionment approach will better prepare students for the career and college readiness we’re seeking.”

—Judith A. Langer, Distinguished Professor in the School of Education, University of Albany

Colorado Academic Standards

A strong command of the language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is vital for being a successful student and ultimately a productive member of the 21st century workforce. Language skills have always been fundamental for academic and professional success. However, students in the 21st century are now facing more complex challenges in an ever-changing global society. These challenges have created the need for rigorous state standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.


“Language has the power to shape our consciousness, and it does so for each human child by providing the theory that he or she uses to interpret and manipulate their environment.”

--Michael Halliday

Philosophy and Core Beliefs

As educators we believe:

- The learner is the center of the educational experience.
- All students have a rich and varied potential for learning and must be provided with appropriate educational opportunities to meet their diverse learning needs.
- Instructional methods and sequences are based on the strengths, needs and experiences of the learners.
- Students build knowledge and develop competency over time.
- Students use reading, writing and language as tools for learning and thinking.



Key Shifts in P-12 Literacy Standards:

- Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational
- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction

Literacy Instruction for students in APS:

- All students have access to the entire range of APS curricula across content areas, grade levels, levels of English language proficiency and developmental needs.
- All students experience high quality instruction in a Readers/Writers Workshop format that is responsive to student needs along developmental continua and that accelerates student growth and proficiency

- Teachers' use of instructional time, grouping strategies and resources results in high levels of student engagement in rigorous, meaningful learning and acceleration of student growth and proficiency
- In their instruction, teachers demonstrate a sound theoretical understanding of the reading/writing processes resulting in increased student proficiency
- Skills/strategies are consistently taught in the context of meaningful, authentic reading/writing experiences through a Readers/Writers Workshop format
- Reading and writing are supported by a variety of resources that include teacher demonstrations, trade books, periodicals, reference materials, leveled texts and other authentic resources
- Multiple assessment measures include both formative and summative assessments to inform instructional decisions that lead to increasing the numbers of students meeting or exceeding state standards

