

The Core Reading Program

A Balanced Literacy Approach

Listed below are the instructional approaches used in the Kiel Area School District as part of the universal reading program. Teachers utilize the Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model. This framework includes the following components that are used to plan and deliver instruction: **a focus lesson** for explicit instruction and teacher modeling; **guided instruction** delivered in whole group, small group, or individually which includes doing the work together as the teacher models and demonstrates; **collaborative learning** in which students work together to complete a task or clarify their understanding; **independent learning and practice** to provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability and complete task alone; lastly, **whole group closure** connects to the focus or purpose of the lesson.

CURRICULUM

The K-12 literacy curriculum utilizes the CESA 7 Curriculum Companion modules. These modules are aligned to the English Language Arts Standards including: Foundational Skills (K-5), Literature, Informational Text, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language. Units are created with an Overarching Enduring Understanding (OEU) with concepts broken into modules. The modules contain themes in which the standards are taught. Essential questions drive the “big ideas” that students take away from the learning. The open-ended essential questions develop deep thinking and inquiry into the topic and drive the learning targets or objectives that students will know and be able to do. Emphasis on Bloom’s taxonomy and/or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge are used to construct and guide the learning outcomes. A learning plan is developed by the teacher with activities and instruction that students will take part in during the core reading block. A variety of formative and summative assessments developed by the teacher are used to measure the learning targets. 4K uses the Wisconsin Early Literacy Standards to develop curriculum and plan lessons.

READING WORKSHOP MODEL

The reading workshop model allows students to use authentic texts of fiction and nonfiction to strengthen their reading skills. The basic components of literacy are integrated into the workshop model: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness and phonics (as appropriate). The core instruction in the workshop model is based around the GRR components. The ultimate goal of reading workshop is to develop lifelong readers and instill the habits of proficient readers when approaching a variety of texts. Within the model various strategies are used such as comprehension strategies, inferring, synthesizing, questioning, visualizing, etc.

WRITING WORKSHOP MODEL

Using the Lucy Calkins units of study K-8 provides the structure and continuum of learning to facilitate the writing workshop. Within the curriculum, teachers demonstrate, scaffold, and release students to perform independent writing. The writing process with explicit instruction and feedback are important elements of the model. Strategies are used to support the writing

process and guide the writer to a wealth of strategies that will be used throughout their lifetime as they encounter the need to write in various formats.

THE DAILY FIVE

The Daily Five is a structure used to facilitate the reading program and manage the literacy block at the elementary level. The primary goal of this structure is to develop independent, life-long readers. The Daily Five is a student-driven structure designed to fully engage students in reading and writing.

GUIDED READING

The purpose of guided reading is for the teacher to provide direct support with a small group of students providing additional instruction and guidance in reading strategies and skills. Groups may be structured based on the developmental level of students, proficiency or literacy skills, or strategies. An appropriate text is chosen at the student's instructional level. Students within the small group typically read the same text and read with teacher support.

INDEPENDENT READING

Students are encouraged to read outside of class, at home, and have time within the school day for independent reading. The purpose is to enable students to practice new skills and strategies, to build fluency and comprehension, and to instill life-long habits of reading for enjoyment.

INTERACTIVE READ ALOUDS

A common text may be used or teachers may select a text of their own choice to conduct the daily read-aloud. During an interactive read aloud, the teacher stops periodically to point out or discuss key points with the students and promote discussion between the students. The purpose of the interactive read aloud is to provide modeling, expose students to a variety of genres, encourage listening and speaking skills, and engage students in various formats of literature.

WORDS THEIR WAY

Words Their Way is a systematic approach to word study. It provides hands-on sorting activities for students to understand word structure. Phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary are developed through the lessons and activities within the program.

INQUIRY CIRCLES/LITERATURE CIRCLES/BOOK CLUBS

Small student-led discussion groups form the structure for inquiry circles, Socratic seminars, literature circles, or book clubs. There are similar components in these discussion-based models. Students in these groups learn to direct their own conversations about literature. Students often self-select books based on interest. Students are responsible for the goals and discussion among the group. This autonomy is important as students develop independence and set goals. These discussions are part of a balanced literacy approach and integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking.