

Curriculum Forum Notes

2-3-2011

Teachers presented the content of their common planning discussions around English language arts.

At the elementary level, teachers shared that they have been reviewing the range of instructional practices for reading and writing. They are recognizing that the reading program could be strengthened by developing greater consistency within and across grade levels. Current common practices include the use of leveled readers, guided reading k-3, literature circles, Readers Workshop, Word Works, high frequency words, and use of benchmark assessment.

Over the past 4 years, teachers have participated in substantial professional development related to implementation of the Writers Workshop model of writing instruction. Since implementation of this program, there has been an increase in 4th grade STAR writing scores. Teachers spoke very favorably about continuing this as a program model (See handout).

At the middle school level, teachers shared that they have been working on aligning curriculum in 6-8th grade. Curriculum guides were shared. The middle school teachers also shared their efforts to revise writing rubrics that will be used in a common writing assessment at each grade level. The teachers shared that they are having many discussions about standards for writing and how students are assessed. This includes working towards greater consistency in terms of the expectations teachers set for all students at a grade level.

At the high school level, Mr. Booker presented a proposal for an 11th grade honors English course. This class is being recommended for the 2011-2012 school year. In addition, teachers are working on alignment of writing expectations across classes and establishing greater consistency around general expectations.

Dr. Roth summarized that the effort around the District is to establish greater consistency in regards to standards, expectations, and opportunity. This leaves room for teachers to add their individual strategies and flare. In other words, we are promoting equity for students and want the art of teaching, which can be unique to an individual teacher to remain.