Writing and Communication Policy

Boyd County Middle School

Aligned with Kentucky Department of Education

Writing Program Review

**Curriculum & Instruction**

The overall goal of Boyd County Middle School’s writing and communication program is to ensure that all students, across all grades, and within all content areas develop 21st century communication skills that will serve them in real-life situations. According to Senate Bill 1, “writing [is] a purposeful act of thinking and expression that uses language to explore ideas and communicate meaning to others. Writing is a complex, multifaceted act of communication.” Accordingly, student work will include oral and written communication, multi-media communication, and communication through technology. Students at all grade levels will produce a variety of oral/written communications, including narrative, informative/explanatory, and argumentative texts, developed during writing-to-learn activities, writing-to-demonstrate-learning activities, and pieces created for authentic purposes and audiences in a variety of forms and modes. Boyd County Middle School’s policies were developed collaboratively by teachers and school leaders, and are intended to address components of Senate Bill 1, Kentucky Common Core Standards, and state and federal guidelines.

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| **Demonstrator 1:** All BCMS teachers and administrators will collaborate in designing and implementing a rigorous communication curriculum that provides for all students to develop and refine 21st century communication skills. |
| A. All teachers will vertically and horizontally align the curriculum according to Common Core Standards.  B. All teachers will provide students with a curriculum that provides a variety of experiences for frequent, authentic communication, requiting the application of 21st century skills.  C. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competency with 21st century technology, applications, resources, communication skills, and tools. |

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| **Demonstrator 2:** All BCMS teachers will implement a rigorous communication curriculum where students demonstrate disciplinary understanding and interdisciplinary connections. |
| A. All teachers will integrate the five strands of literacy (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and observing) across the curriculum, in all content areas.  B. All teachers will use specific, explicit instruction to develop communication skills.  C. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to apply disciplinary understanding in real-world learning experiences which integrate communication skills.  D. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to communicate for multiple purposes and using a variety of forms and media, as appropriate to the given content area.  E. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to research questions from their own interests and to communicate their learning.  F. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to use a developmentally-appropriate research process, including the evaluation of resources, interpretation of data/findings, citation of sources, synthesis of multiple sources and points of view, and consideration of visuals and other data. |

**Curriculum & Instruction**

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| **Demonstrator 3:** All BCMS teachers will engage students across the curriculum in critical thinking and communicating. |
| A. All teachers will intentionally plan to foster students’ use of critical thinking, writhing, and communication skills.  B. All teachers will scaffold instruction that is strategic and developmentally-appropriate.  C. All teachers will provide students with opportunities to use thinking and writing skills to learn and to demonstrate learning.  D. All teachers will provide opportunities for students to use a variety of communication models and other resources to improve communication skills.  E. All teachers will provide students opportunities to explore, plan, draft, revise, and edit in order to refine student ideas and products.  F. All teachers will provide multiple opportunities to publish for authentic and appropriate audiences.  G. School administrators will require that all teachers compile a writing and communications folder with every student, containing products that reflect student interest and the development of writing and communication skills over time and across content areas. (More specific requirements of this documentation of school-wide writing and communication can be found in the section, labeled “Portfolio.”) |

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| **Demonstrator 4:** All BCMS teachers and administrators will arrange for students to develop communication skills through collaboration and feedback. |
| A. All teachers will provide students opportunities to discuss and share ideas and work through conferences with teachers, peers, and others.  B. All teachers will provide opportunities for students to use feedback to make decisions about revisions to their work and to reflect on their learning.  C. All teachers will provide opportunities for students to collaborate with teachers, peers, and others to learn to problem-solve and generate products. |

**Curriculum & Instruction**

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| **Demonstrator 5:** All BCMS teachers and administrators will provide differentiated learning experiences in communication skills; that is, appropriate interventions and enrichments will be provided for students. |
| A. The BCMS curriculum will offer advanced (or accelerated) learning or enrichment opportunities that enhance writing and communication skills.  B. The BCMS curriculum will implement a system of interventions to meet individual students’ needs in developing writing and communication skills.  C. All teachers will encourage students to publish or share their work.  D. All teachers will provide differentiated learning experiences during the course of classroom instruction to meet individual students’ needs in developing writing and communication skills. |

**Formative & Summative Assessment**

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| **Demonstrator 1:** All BCMS teachers and administrators will align writing and communication assessments with Common Core State Standards across all grade levels and all content areas. |
| A. All teachers will collaborate to review writing and communication assessments in order to comply with Common Core State Standards.  B. All teachers will collaborate to align writing and communication across grade levels quarterly.  C. All teachers will use writing and communication skills to formatively assess all content area learning.  D. All teachers will deconstruct standards to determine specific learning objectives and align both instruction and assessments with those objectives. |

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| **Demonstrator 2:** All BCMS teachers will embed ongoing formative and summative assessments in their instruction for writing and other forms of communication. |
| A. All teachers will work collaboratively during common planning time to develop a variety of formative and summative assessments for writing and communication.  B. All teachers will present examples of content-appropriate written/oral materials to students that demonstrate specific learning objectives.  C. All teachers will instruct students on the revision process and provide opportunities to revise and apply learning during the writing process, before summative assessment of end products.  D. All teachers in all subjects will provide opportunities for students to reflect on their writing within content areas multiple times throughout the year. |

**Formative & Summative Assessment**

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| **Demonstrator 3:** All BCMS teachers will assess students’ writing and communication skills formatively and summatively to provide feedback and inform instruction across the curriculum. |
| A. BCMS will develop a plan to monitor student progress in developing writing and communication skills consistent with grade-level writing standards.  B. All teachers (in all grade levels and content areas) and administrators will meet twice yearly with progress evidence to evaluate the growth of students’ writing and communication skills.  C. All teachers will formatively assess students’ writing and communication processes and products in order to determine areas for improvement.  D. Teachers will provide feedback regarding students’ writing and communication products to inform students of strengths and methods for future growth.  E. All teachers (in all grade levels and content areas) will provide opportunities for students to reflect on their writing and communication skills.  F. Teachers will assist students in setting goals that are appropriate for them and that meet writing and communication standards.  F. Teachers will provide students with opportunities to reflect on personal strengths and areas for future growth.  G. Teachers will provide students with opportunities to give and receive feedback to one another in order to reflect on personal strengths and areas for future growth. |

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| **Demonstrator 4:** Teachers will promote student ownership by requiring students to analyze and use feedback from formative and summative assessments of writing and communication skills. |
| A. Teachers will provide opportunities for students to analyze feedback and reflect on their writing and communication to set goals that are appropriate in meeting writing standards.  B. Teachers and students will use models to partner in developing scoring guides and rubrics to assess writing and communications.  C. Students will utilize scoring guides and rubrics to self-assess achievement of learning objectives. |

**Professional Development & Support Services**

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| **Demonstrator 1:** A team appointed by the SBDM Council will review the writing and communication program to generate a professional development action plan. |
| A. The team will consist of a representative from every content area, BCMS Principal and/or administrators, one Strategic teacher, the Library/Media Specialist, and Central Office personnel.  B. The team will evaluate the findings of the Program Review and determine school-wide need for future professional development opportunities.  C. The team will communicate its findings and subsequent action plan through a variety of modes (e.g., team leader meetings, websites, and newsletters). |

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| **Demonstrator 2:** The school principal will promote the professional development plan to ensure high quality writing and communication instruction. |
| A. The above team will collaboratively evaluate and reflect on the impact of the writing and communication instruction by distributing, collecting, and summarizing the needs of every teacher in the building. This should be completed immediately after the Program Review is conducted and before the end of the school year.  B. The above team will collaboratively evaluate and reflect on the impact of the writing and communication instruction by distributing, collecting, and summarizing the needs of every content area in the building. This should be completed immediately after the Program Review is conducted and before the end of the school year.  C. The principal will allocate equitable time and resources to implement the needed professional development action plan. |

**Professional Development & Support Services**

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| **Demonstrator 3:** Teachers and outside sources will be utilized to promote high quality writing and communication instruction. |
| A. Resources for completion should include District Office personnel, Library/Media Specialist, Guest Speakers/Authors, KEDC, and other resources as determined beneficial for the promotion of an efficient writing and communication program.  B. Resources for completion should also include emerging technology, including but not limited to resources such as Skype and ListServs that focus on writing and can be distributed school-wide. |

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| **Demonstrator 4:**  Teachers will participate in professional learning opportunities that enhance the delivery of high quality writing and communication instruction. |
| A. School administrators will identify teacher leaders to demonstrate exemplary instructional practices to pods of teachers (organized by content areas) in an authentic classroom setting. These teacher leaders will return throughout the school year to support those content area teachers as they use newly-learned instructional strategies in writing and communication. (This would be particularly useful as teachers include emerging instructional technology and could also be accomplished within the building, utilizing BCMS’s own teacher leaders in a similar manner.)  B. School administration will provide opportunities (such as release days) for Language Arts teachers to go into content area classrooms to co-teach using exemplary instructional strategies in writing and communication, particularly on topics that the Program Review identifies as areas needing improvement.  C. School administration and/or District Office personnel will provide opportunities for all staff to engage in professional development opportunities in formative and summative assessment and in other specific areas as future need indicates. |

**Administrative Leadership Support & Monitoring**

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| **Demonstrator 1:** The SBDM Council will monitor implementation of policies for the writing and communication program. |
| A. The SBDM council will review data two times per year (winter and spring) regarding the implementation of the school’s writing and communication program and will make recommendations for improvements as needed based on data analysis.  B. The SBDM council will monitor effectiveness of staffing allocation decisions for supporting the writing and communication program.  C. The SBDM council will monitor instructional time and resources for supporting the writing and communication program. |

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| **Demonstrator 2:** School leaders (Principal, Assistant Principals, Central Office Personnel, Curriculum Coordinators, and Content Leads) will guide implementation of the school-wide writing and communication program through a long-term, common vision for the program. |
| A. School leaders will communicate expectations for implementing the school writing and communication program to all BCMS teachers and give support to teachers and staff in developing, implementing, and monitoring a long-term plan for literacy.  B. School leaders will promote a building-wide culture that fosters student success as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and effective communicators by monitoring the implementation of the school-wide writing and communication policy.  C. School leaders will promote a building-wide culture in which teachers, staff, and students, alike, participate in writing and communicating within the school community.  D. School leaders will support teachers' efforts to implement research-based writing and communication instruction with sufficient funding and resources as deemed necessary for program efficiency.  E. School leaders will provide additional learning opportunities for teachers and support staff new to the school in implementing the school’s writing and communication program. |

**Administrative Leadership Support & Monitoring**

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| **Demonstrator 3:** Teacher leaders will assist administration in implementing the school’s writing and communications program. |
| A. School leaders will provide opportunities (such as but not limited to release days) in order for teacher leaders to collaborate with other BCMS teachers in efforts to efficiently implement the school writing and communication program |

**Portfolio & Content-Area Communication Folder**

Senate Bill 1 and section one, “Curriculum and Instruction,” of the Kentucky Department of Education’s Writing Program Review guide both require an on-going collection of samples of student work covering the five strands of literacy: Writing, Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Observing. In compliance with both, the following requirements will be met by BCMS teachers in order to document students’ writing and communication progress.

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| Demonstrator 1: All BCMS teachers will collect students’ writing and communication samples in order to show progressive growth over time in content-area communication. |
| A. Content-area communication (CAC) folders will be maintained at all grade levels by each teacher in each classroom and will be electronically passed on via students’ ILPs to each student’s next grade or school.  B. Students will participate with teachers in decisions about what to include or purge from the CAC folder two times per school year (winter and spring).  C. Each PLC along with grade level teams will develop a plan for grade-level contents of CAC folders, which will reflect students’ interests and work at various stages of development, with consideration given to relevant state regulations/standards of each content area.  D. CAC folders will indicate that some writing has been produced over time (with constructive revisions and feedback) and other writing has been done in a limited time frame.  E. The contents of the CAC folder will include communications for a variety of authentic purposes.  F. The contents of the CAC folder will include communications in a variety of forms: oral, written, and multi-media texts; communication through technology; and narrative, informative/explanatory, and argumentative texts, some based on research and some based on content learning. Other types of communication may also be included, e.g., products of writing-to-learn activities and writing-to-demonstrate learning activities.  G. Students and teachers will have opportunities to review collections of their work and determine plans for improvement. |