WATERFORD TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY CURRICULUM

GRADES K-6

Revised: November 19, 2018

WATERFORD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Waterford Township, in partnership with our community, is to provide each student with a comprehensive education in a safe and supportive environment that fosters the pursuit of lifelong learning.

Through our curriculum and innovation, we will provide an education that develops each child's potential. We will encourage the development of personal strengths, promote a positive self image, and an appreciation for the uniqueness of individuals.

Our goal is to educate students who are capable of meeting future challenges and becoming contributing members of a global society.

WATERFORD TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kimberly Hurley, President
William Wilhelm, Vice President

Members

Matthew DeNafo
Daniel Hoover
Roseanna Iles
Michael McClintock
Al Pangia
Michael Vitarelli
Maria Yeatman

Administrators

Patrick Davidson, Principal
Dr. Brenda Harring, Principal
Heather Kondas, Principal
Dr. Brenda Harring, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Mary Stansky, Director of Student Services
Julie Lyons, Director of Elementary Education

English Language Arts Committee Members

2015 - 2016	ELA Summer 2016	2016-2017	ELA Summer 2017	ELA Summer 2018
Lindsay Hickman - Preschool Christine Harris - RR/LLI Tracey Bober - Kindergarten Karen Baranowski - RR/LLI Carla Brown - Grade One Ashley Power - Grade One Alexandra Handzus - Grade Two Idalis Williams - Grade Two Christina Kennevan - Grade Three Jill O'Donnell - Grade Three Christine Manna - Grade Four Dana King - Grade Five Dana Tonrey - Grade Five Maggie Johnson - Grade Six Candice Michelini - District Literacy Coach	Trish Chance - RtI Chelsea Macauley - Special Ed Alexandra Handzus - Grade Two Idalis Kizee - Grade Two Lauren Ingemi - Grade Four Jamie Stephan - Grade Four Dana King - Grade Five Ashley Power - Title I Coach Candice Michelini - District Literacy Coach	Lindsay Hickman - Preschool Christine Harris - RR/LLI Madeline Bowden - Kindergarten Carla Brown - Grade One Ashley Power - Grade One Alexandra Handzus - Grade Two Carolyn McGinnis - Grades ⅔, LLI Idalis Williams - Grade Two Jill O'Donnell - Grade Three Heather DeNafo - Grade Four Dana King - Grade Five Dana Tonrey - Grade Five Tina Kennevan & Carol Young - Grade Six Candice Michelini - District Literacy Coach	Jessica Shaper - Kindergarten Jamie Stephan - Kindergarten Carla Brown - Grade One Georgiann Raso - Grade One Nancy Harbold - Reading Recovery Alexandra Handzus - Grade Two James Moore - RtI Candice Michelini - District Literacy Coach Ashley Power - District RtI Coach Lauren Ingemi - Grade Five Dana King - Grade Six Alana Catania - Grade Five Kathleen Iuliucci - Grade Four Jessica Borman - Grade Four Kelly Walsh - Special Ed.	Madeline Bowden & Jamie Stephan - Kindergarten Carla Brown & Shannon Vitagliano - Grade One Alexandra Handzus & Kimberly Worley - Grade 2 Dawn Agoston & Jessica Borman - Grade 4 Lauren Ingemi - Grade 5 Christina Kennevan & Dana King Candice Michelini & Ashley Power, K-6

English Language Arts
Philosophy

The Waterford Township Schools English Language Arts Curriculum is designed to prepare students to develop literacy skills and competencies in order to be equipped with the knowledge and decision-making skills necessary to assume their roles as active and informed citizens.

To achieve our mission for student literacy learning, our English Language Arts curriculum actively engages learners in experiences that help them to construct and refine their knowledge about literacy in its various forms. Strategies for becoming effectively literate are an integral part of everyday classroom instruction. Students and teachers are actively involved in using the common language of readers, writers and viewers of information. This includes teachers modeling effective literacy behaviors through a gradual release model that provides multiple opportunities for students of all ages to purposefully participate in authentic literacy activities. The classroom climate is one in which "risk-taking in safety" is encouraged so that literacy attempts can be valued and nurtured as they develop. Students also actively participate in their literacy development by making choices related to topic, text and task. These student-centered choices are critical to the goal of developing in students a love of and desire to become life-long readers and writers. According to Allington (2002), if we want to increase substantially the amount of reading that children do, it is important to give children books they can read and choices regarding which books they will read.

Equally important to effective literacy instruction is the need to acknowledge the expansion of the definition of literacy in the twenty-first century. Traditionally, literacy has been defined as a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups in society. With new technologies emerging every day, those practices are expanding to include a wider variety of media experiences and immediate virtual access to global audiences. "Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies" (NCTE Position and Guidelines, 2008, p.1). To provide students with the necessary skills to participate fully in our expanding global community, we must design curriculum that immerses students in traditional modes of communication as well as emerging modes of technology. By

participating in multi-dimensional literacy experiences, students will be prepared to become active members of a literate society.

To ensure our goals for students, both the strategies and structures of the literacy classroom are reflective of the best practices in literacy instruction. As expressed by the National Council of Teachers of English, this is a call to action, a call to help our students read and write often and well, and through these literacy experiences become the expert citizens of our country, world, and future (NCTE, 2009).

In the classroom, adequate blocks of time are available for sustained experiences in meaningful, authentic literacy tasks. The language arts literacy program is balanced with attention being given to reading, writing, word study, speaking, and listening, both within the language arts time block and across the curriculum. The importance of both the processes and products of literacy is also taken into account. In developing a literate classroom, instructional materials are varied to complement the diversity of literacy experiences. A variety of rich texts such as trade books, articles, and artifacts of literacy dominate classroom literacy activities. Skills critical to literacy development, such as grammatical usage and conventions of print, are taught within the context of legitimate literacy tasks (Smith & Wilhelm, 2007). Flexible grouping of children within the classroom by ability, interest and task accommodates and supports individual student needs. As Allington (2002) noted in his study of exemplary literacy classrooms, student success rests largely on the capacity of classroom teachers to provide expert, exemplary reading and writing instruction. This highly-effective teaching "is not regurgitation of a common script but is responsive to children's needs" (p. 740).

Just as research-based instructional practices maximize and accelerate literacy development, thoughtfully-constructed assessments that match instruction increase opportunities for students' literacy achievement. Assessment helps the teacher learn about the individual strengths and needs of students so as to inform instructional practice. This kind of assessment therefore is a necessary and integral part of everyday classroom literacy experiences. Formative assessments are designed to provide constructive feedback to students and to assist teachers in modifying instruction. Multi-dimensional summative assessments are included to incorporate a variety of ways for students to demonstrate literacy knowledge (Winograd & Arrington, 1999; Cunningham & Allington, 1999). Such assessment practices are instrumental to addressing the primary purposes for literacy acquisition. **"The goal of instruction is to prepare students to be full, literate members of our society and not just people who can pass a test" (Higgins, Miller,**

and Wegman, 2006, p. 318). This notion is supported in a study by Langer which found that students who are taught to read and write well will also be successful on standardized tests (in *Readicide* by Gallagher, 2009, p. 26).

Key members of the learning community, including parents, teachers, students, administrators and citizens, must collaborate in their support for effective literacy practices for all students. This effort will help students to effectively meet the challenges of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and to be prepared to function successfully in a literate society.

Within this framework, our vision for developing literate citizens will be realized. All members of the classroom community will successfully use the language arts to communicate, analyze, evaluate, gain knowledge and enrich their understandings of events and ideas. Students will additionally gain the necessary competencies to think critically and become self-directed learners who can be successful in an ever-changing global society.

GOALS FOR STUDENTS

So that they achieve the benefits and characteristics of members of a literate society, we have established the following goals for our students:

- Develop an intrinsic value for and competency with all aspects of literacy: reading, writing, word study, speaking and listening;
- Acquire the attitudes and habits of literate persons;
- Become strategic in the creation, analysis and interpretation of texts;
- Use a variety of literacy tools and technologies to extend understanding;
- Gain new information and create original works;
- Collaborate with others in the construction of meaning.

GOALS FOR TEACHERS

Strategies and concepts presented by teachers will need to apply constructivist theory and give equal attention to process and product in the development of literacy behaviors. Toward that end, teachers will:

- Design authentic learning tasks that require students to actively construct their knowledge about literacy;

- Model effective strategies for enriching student understanding of literacy concepts;
- Create opportunities for students to use prior knowledge and life experiences to make connections and apply literacy skills and strategies in real life situations;
- Challenge students to create, critique, analyze and evaluate multimedia texts, ideas and perspectives;
- Reflectively and formatively assess student learning to inform and adapt instruction;
- Participate in ongoing professional development to enhance knowledge of content and strategies for effective literacy instruction.

Our vision is to develop a community of learners who value literacy and use it in their everyday lives for pleasure, purpose and enrichment, both for themselves and for the world around them.

Program Description

Instruction in English Language Arts formally begins in Kindergarten and proceeds through sixth grade. Reading and writing instruction is integrated to maximize opportunities for literacy learning to be developed. Integration of content and strategies across the curriculum is incorporated at all grade levels.

Classes are organized into heterogeneous groupings, with core concepts being introduced to meet developmental needs and curriculum standards set for students at each grade level. Opportunities for flexible within-class groupings are provided to correspond to individual strengths, needs and interests throughout each of the five literacy blocks.

In the primary grades (K-3), curriculum materials are integrated so as to allow literacy to emerge as part of everyday experience. Reader's Workshop texts correlate with monthly thematic units of study that bridge social studies, science and the related arts. Additionally, blocks of time for Writer's Workshop, Reader's Workshop, Guided Reading and Word Study are provided within the daily schedule.

In the upper elementary grades (4-6), blocks of time for Shared Reading, literature discussion groups, Reader's Workshop, Guided Reading, Writer's Workshop and Word Study are provided.

Special education teachers at all grade levels follow this curriculum framework with appropriate modification as determined by individual needs and individual education plan specifications.

Overview of Balanced Literacy

<u>Reader's Workshop:</u>

Shared Reading
- Reading of authentic texts (fiction and nonfiction)
- Appreciation of a variety of genre
- Whole-class modeling and application of strategies

Independent Reading
- Variety of genres
- Students reading at their Independent Reading Levels
- Reader response where appropriate
- Student-teacher conferring

<u>Word Study:</u>
- Working with Commonly Misspelled Words
- Phonemic Awareness/How Words Work/Phonics
- Encoding/Decoding Spelling Strategies
- Etymology of Words
- Vocabulary

<u>Guided Reading:</u>
- Small, Flexible Groups
- Reading Strategies Modeled and Practiced
- Text Selection to Match *Instructional Reading Level* of Readers
- Other students involved in authentic literacy tasks
- Book Clubs / Literature Circles

> ### *Writing:*
> - *Teacher modeling of the process of putting ideas into written language*
> - *Topics across range of genres, with the opportunity for student choice*
> - *Mini-Lessons for Craft and Mechanics*
> - *Conferring and Sharing (Student-teacher and peer conferencing)*
>
> **Handwriting is integrated at different times throughout the day, with more targeted instruction at Kindergarten and First Grade.*

Reader's Workshop
Overview

Reader's Workshop is the literacy block when students and teachers engage in shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading experiences. The focus of the Reader's Workshop block is the study and appreciation of a variety of well-written literature selections from a wide range of genres. In Waterford Township, literature used during this time block is based on a district-developed list of mentor texts for each grade level. Units of instruction for the mentor texts will be used to focus the direction of the literature study and to integrate curriculum objectives for that grade level.

Oral and Silent Reading

Beginning in kindergarten, students are exposed to a wide range of literature through Shared Reading Experiences, with a focus on repeated reading of predictable books to enhance understanding and apply Word Work strategies. Since the goal of reading instruction is to develop student facility with independent reading, students should be encouraged to silently read as soon as they are able. This will evolve, of course, to correspond with developmental needs of students. For example, in Kindergarten, students are read to from both familiar and new mentor texts. They are encouraged to respond to the pictures, story and print. In grades one and two, the focus shifts to a shared reading model in which teachers guide and scaffold students as they explore text together. As students in the primary grades develop more control of text, they are encouraged to read independently.   In the upper elementary and middle grades, students are expected to be reading independently.

Teachers' reading aloud of Reader's Workshop texts should be limited and should correspond with grade level expectations as stated above. In the upper elementary and middle grades, teacher read-alouds of selected portions of core books can be used to introduce a book, model for phrasing and fluency, and/or emphasize a particular teaching point. However, novels at these grade levels are <u>not</u> intended to be read aloud to students in their entirety.

Just as independent silent reading is the goal for all students, oral reading of texts by students should be limited and strategic to specific developmental needs and goals. ***Please note that unrehearsed oral reading on the first reading of a text limits***

individual student ability to self-monitor for meaning, phrasing and fluency. All oral <u>re-reading</u> of texts should be limited to specific selections in response to questions posed in discussion following silent reading. **Oral reading aloud of entire selections of Reader's Workshop texts by students, round robin reading, or popcorn reading in place of independent reading do not reflect best practices.**

Selection of Reader's Workshop Titles

The curriculum is organized into integrated units of study that focus on the interests, capabilities, and compelling needs of young children. Each grade level's integrated curriculum is organized around key themes, strategies, and standards. Several mentor texts and special book titles that have been selected for these themes, strategies, and standards are required readings.   Some special books are designated as science, social studies, or writing connections.   Titles have been selected to correlate to themes, strategies, and standards. While each grade level has some *required grade-specific genres*, there is flexibility in selection of titles within those genres to meet instructional needs and interests of students.
(See year-at-a-glance charts following this overview.)

For book clubs/literature circles, teachers may select books from the district's grade level lists for each grade level. Selection criteria should take into account grade level proficiencies, student interest, and skill needs. It is important to note that teachers should use the titles on their grade level's list and *not in any grades above their level*. Teachers are permitted to use titles from lower grades when appropriate for such cases as students with special needs or as mentor text.

Teacher Modeling During the Reading Process

During the initial implementation of Reader's Workshop each year, the teacher establishes organizational routines and procedures through whole class modeling and discussion.   Additionally, all through the year, teachers demonstrate new reading techniques, genres, and strategies.

Reader's Workshop Study emphasizes the reading process: Pre-Reading, Reader-Text Interaction, and Post-Reading. Teachers should model and implement all portions of the reading process. This includes strategies for making reasonable

predictions, posing good questions, monitoring comprehension, interacting with text, etc. In this way, students clearly understand the steps in the process and what procedures and strategies are appropriate in the classroom. Teacher demonstration and modeling followed by student practice are essential to success with literature study.

Guided Reading
Overview

The purpose of Guided Reading is to teach reading strategies. During the Guided Reading block, students are arranged in small, flexible groups for instruction. Optimally, there should be no more than five students in a group. A Guided Reading group typically meets for about twenty minutes, with the lowest level readers meeting more frequently. Optimally, the teacher will meet with the lowest level readers daily, or at least three times per week. Above grade level readers can be met with less frequently, but at least once per week. Students are selected for groups based on reading level, but more importantly, their need for similar and particular reading strategy instruction.

The texts used in each group are matched to the readers. They are selected based on reading level, interest, and their ability to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice the identified reading strategy.

During a typical Guided Reading group, teachers introduce the text, providing an overall idea of what the text is about. This introduction may be more extensive if the level is more difficult, or content is less familiar, or may be more sparse if teachers are trying to determine whether students are ready to handle more complex text.

In addition, teachers introduce the strategy, and model how to use it proficiently. They do this by using a think aloud model, talking to the students specifically about the thought process they used to make sense of this part of the text.

Prior to allowing the students an opportunity to try the strategy, teachers set dual purposes for reading. One purpose is meaning-based; that is, it has to do with what the text is about and will be a bridge between the silent reading (or whisper reading with emergent readers) and discussion of the text. This creates a natural place for teachers to begin a discussion of the text. The other purpose is strategy-based. This purpose typically asks students to notice and/or mark places where they use the strategy, and may ask students to think about or note how using the strategy helped to enhance the reading.

After modeling, teachers provide opportunities for guided practice within this small group setting. This may be done by asking the students to read a contiguous portion of the text or the entire text, depending on text length. The initial reading is always done silently, with the exception of whisper reading for emergent readers.

During this time, students read at their own pace, while they practice using the strategy. The teacher's role during this time is to facilitate strategy use, specifically praise efficient strategy use (ex. "I like the way you used the text clues and your background knowledge to infer how that character felt."), and guide students, through prompting, who are using the strategy ineffectively. Students typically need multiple opportunities to use the strategy prior to practicing independently.

Teachers also record anecdotal notes and take running records during this time in order to capture the reading behaviors of their students during authentic reading experiences. **Teachers should take a running record of at least one reader per day during Guided Reading.** This may occur during a warm-up text or between groups that are being seen on a particular day. These notes should be analyzed in order to guide and plan for future instruction, flexible grouping and subsequent text selection.

After the reading, teachers will debrief with the group about the purposes they set for reading. Teachers always return to meaning first, discussing the text and its contents. Next, they revisit the strategy purpose, again, specifically praising any efficient use of the strategy, and modeling particularly tricky parts or areas where all students in the group struggled to use the strategy effectively.

When teachers are reasonably certain that students are able to use the strategy on their own with little to no guidance, they provide opportunities for independent practice. This may be accomplished by asking them to read another contiguous portion of the text or by giving them a new text. The group debriefs as a whole after independent practice is completed, **again talking about meaning first**, and then how the strategy was used. Additional modeling and/or guided practice may occur at this time, as needed.

Teachers may also choose to complete some additional word work after discussion of the text in order to further differentiate instruction for the students in their classrooms.

As students become more proficient with particular strategies, teachers may choose more complex texts to assure independence with the strategy. All groups must be fluid and flexible. Students must be regrouped periodically based on daily running records and application of strategies.

At the beginning of the year, the teacher will need to establish an effective management structure to allow for optimal use of Guided Reading time. This can be

accomplished through demonstrating procedures and routines, as well as communicating clear expectations. Additionally, students will need to be shown how to self-select books of varying genre, how to talk about books, how to develop book projects and book responses, and how to listen to others as they orally report about their book. Successful methods for "showing what you know" about books include story retellings, writing a letter to a character, story mapping, dialogue journals, response logs, book talks, oral reports and digital presentations. Although it is important to build a management structure early in the year, it is essential to evaluate progress, reflect, and make changes as needed. Observations of the students will help teachers monitor expectations and procedures so that students can begin to self-monitor and organize themselves.

Once an effective system is established, students can begin working independently, while the teacher meets with guided reading groups. A typical Guided Reading block includes a student update (Status of the Class or other accountability check), sustained student reading and responding time.

In addition to the anecdotal and running records aforementioned, teachers will keep records of each group's progress. *They will continuously document current membership of each group, and include titles read, teaching points used during modeling and guided practice, the number of sessions conducted and changes made in members' group placements.*

Formal Guided Reading instruction begins mid-year in Kindergarten. In first through sixth grades, Guided Reading is taught daily beginning by mid-October of each year.

Guided Reading materials include: little books, short stories, single, unrelated chapters of non-fiction texts, newspaper and magazine articles, poetry, or other brief texts that can be read in one to four sessions. Teachers should seek advice from the supervisor if they are unsure about the appropriateness of a text for Guided Reading.

Independent Reading
Overview

Reader's Workshop is a block of time during the day at all grade levels when students engage in reading and responding to self-selected texts at their independent reading levels. Self-selection and choice are important, both to fostering life-long reading habits and to substantially increasing the amount of reading children do (Allington, 2002).

In the primary grades, students are engaged in a variety of independent activities that could extend and enrich personal reading experiences. Activities include reading, re-reading and sharing of Big Books, browsing box books, class-made books, charted stories, poems and songs. For emergent readers, "pretend" reading and picture-reading are also appropriate activities during Independent Reading.

As soon as students are able, they begin to self-select books that they can read independently at their appropriate level of challenge. Students should be encouraged to read a variety of genre for purposes they set themselves. Poetry, fantasy, historical fiction, biography, and informational text are just a few examples of genre that students should explore during Independent Reading. Teachers may need to spark students' interest in different types of text through the use of modeling and periodic mini-lessons.

The teacher's primary role during Independent Reading is to facilitate book selection, confer with students and maintain daily records. Informal assessment is also an important element of this block. In addition to praising student efforts and recognizing progress towards goals, it is necessary to identify areas of strength and need in order to plan for future instruction. Clear record-keeping procedures will allow the teacher to get a snapshot of progress during Independent Reading.

Some teacher methods for assessing growth and monitoring book selection may include recording anecdotal notes, taking running records, asking open-ended questions and assigning book responses. The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment and running records can be used to identify students' independent reading levels in order to supply them with the appropriate leveled reading materials   (See Assessment section of this guide for description of various

evaluation tools.) Methods of student accountability will vary by teacher; however, it is essential that all teachers provide time for individual and/or small group conferences to share students' book responses. These accountability methods should match the varied student book responses noted earlier for students to "show what they know".

Writer's Workshop
Overview

Writer's Workshop is a daily, sustained block of time devoted to student and teacher immersion in a variety of learning experiences for writing. Mini-lessons, student writing, teacher-modeled writing, conferencing with teacher and peers, sharing of ideas and pieces of writing, and self-reflection are essential components in an effective Writer's Workshop. In addition, a critical aspect of Writer's Workshop is student opportunity for self-selection of topics for writing.

Each year, initial implementation of Writer's Workshop begins with establishment of organizational routines and procedures. In addition, students are exposed through whole class modeling and mini-lessons to a variety of structures, such as Book Making, Writer's Notebooks, Author's Chair, peer conferencing, etc.

Throughout the school year, teacher modeling, sharing of student work, and mentor texts expose students to new crafting techniques, genres, and strategies for writing. In kindergarten and first grade, writing instruction includes shared, interactive, and independent writing. At these grade levels, the goal is for students to develop fluency in their writing and begin viewing themselves as real authors. Beginning in second grade, and continuing through sixth grade, the emphasis shifts to the introduction and implementation of the writing process: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing, and Publishing. The level of implementation of this process will vary and increase in complexity from grade level to grade level (see Grade Level Specifications for detailed descriptions). Teachers differentiate instruction during this time block to meet the developmental needs of their student writers.

A typical Writer's Workshop should include a daily student update of some kind (e.g., Status of the Class or other accountability tool), a mini-lesson or teaching point, uninterrupted student writing time, and some type of sharing, either daily or several times a week. A mini-lesson is a *brief* period of direct instruction that includes modeling focused on one strategy lesson or teaching objective needed to extend the skills of students for the writing piece they are developing. Mini-lessons may take the form of procedural lessons, craft lessons or lessons in technical conventions of writing. Mini-lessons can introduce a new concept or skill, or review

and further develop a previously introduced concept. *A new skill does not need to be introduced each day.* However, there should be a short teacher-directed lesson related to the writing stage students are in during that week.

It is imperative that with each writing piece, mini-lessons regarding craft, transitions, openings/closings, compositional risks, grammar and punctuation should be taught within the context of the writing process. Teachers will "…teach terms that students need in order to do important work in their writing and reading by creating occasions in which students can see the necessity of the terms they're learning. The work that the terms are immediately applied to should be the work that matters to students and that clearly counts in the world" (Smith and Wilhelm, 2007, p. 16).

Once the mini-lesson is complete, students will be writing, conferring with peers or the teacher, gathering ideas for writing, working in their Writer's Notebook or involved in another writing-focused activity.

During this sustained writing time, the teacher's primary role is to monitor student writing. This can be accomplished by circulating the room to check on progress, assisting those who have Writer's Block or need some "nudging," conferencing with individuals or small groups of students with similar needs, and "listening in" on student conferences. In general, it is important for the teacher to be on the lookout for good things going on in the classroom in order to praise student efforts, as well as to identify areas of strength and need in order to better plan for future instruction. Anecdotal records on individual students will be kept to effectively document observations and assess student progress.

Teachers at all grade levels should plan to conference frequently with individual students about their writing. A minimum of three individual student/teacher contacts should be made on a daily basis. For process pieces, teachers will need to meet with individual students multiple times, including in-depth conferences. Student/teacher conferences are critical to extending the students' zones of proximal development. Teachers will develop a regular schedule for holding individual student-teacher conferences so that this becomes a routine practice during Writer's Workshop. Peer conferences will also occur, as peers can provide valuable feedback and opportunities for reflection and growth for both writer and audience. Peer conferencing techniques (both for crafting and editing) should be modeled and practiced prior to implementation in peer groups.

Final copies of student work should include artifacts of all stages of the process. This includes prewriting webs and charts, first draft, efforts toward revision, draft and revision conference sheets, editing notes, and any other pertinent documentation. This "history" may be attached to the final work or preserved in file/digital folders, notebooks, etc., and should be part of the final assessment of that student's piece.

To assist teachers in planning for instruction, tables of teaching expectations for specific writing strategies and conventions have been developed for grades K-6. These tables are found in the Instructional Strategies section of this document. Within these tables, teachers can see the scope and sequence of grade level expectations at a glance. The goal is for teachers to develop a common language, understanding and use of specific writing techniques, conventions and terms.

GRADE LEVEL SPECIFICATIONS FOR WRITING

Kindergarten

In kindergarten, some children are just beginning to understand that marks on a paper convey a message, while others already know that letters represent language sounds and words convey meaning. Therefore, the teacher models everything from choosing a topic to matching letters to sounds, and spacing between words while composing. Teachers establish routines for teaching writing using three different structures that include shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. Each of these instructional processes provides a different level of support for beginning writers. There are three units of study developed including narrative, opinion, and informational.

Shared writing involves the children in regular opportunities to generate written language as a whole group. The teacher acts as a scribe for the children and models various writing strategies. Emphasis is placed on the composing process and on constructing a text. This demonstration helps children to become aware of the structures and patterns of written language. Interactive writing is similar; however, the children "share the pen" and actually do much of the writing. Teachers and students work together to create class charts, signs, labels, and other short pieces of text. Shared and interactive writing lessons should be brief and attentive to the developmental needs of students at this age.

Independent writing occurs in both Writer's Workshop and Choice Time. Kindergarten students enjoy creating their own drawings, letter strings, or spelling attempts to convey their own messages; therefore, choice is essential. Teachers begin the year "thinking aloud" as they notice particular writing features in various core and special book titles which are used as mentor texts. Writing Center is introduced in September and students are encouraged to explore book making using what they already know about writing, as well as what they have learned from these published authors and from teacher modeling. Completed work samples from both students and teacher should be shared with the whole class in order to create interest and motivation for Writer's Workshop. Throughout the year, teachers continue to model and think aloud about "noticings" in texts as students experiment with these strategies in their own writing. Different mentor texts are featured monthly, along with a writing connection lesson that helps to frame instruction and ensures students are exposed to a variety of authentic writing experiences (see Writing Pacing Guide for K-2, following this overview, for featured monthly mentor text titles and themes).

Grade 1

In first grade, Writer's Workshop provides daily opportunities for children to participate in various authentic writing experiences. The focus continues to be on book making using teacher modeling, student work examples, and mentor texts. Students are introduced to a variety of writing forms using *monthly* units of study (see Writing Pacing Guide, following this overview, for a complete list of monthly units of study). There are three units of study developed including narrative, opinion, and informational. Each unit of study is several weeks in length, and provides teachers with a framework for instruction. Each unit has specific writing goals with developed mini-lessons that include modeling, followed by guided and independent practice. Student choice is still provided through each of the studies.

In first grade, the goal of independent writing is for students to develop fluency and build confidence in themselves as authors. Teachers value young writers' approximations as students experiment with various writing structures and formats within the complexity of the writing task.

First Grade writing begins with a unit on "where writers get ideas". The focus of the study is on generating personal topics for writing and getting students used to the basic components and routines of Writer's Workshop. Students also explore how published authors get their ideas for writing. By the end of the unit, students are

used to the idea of book-making and begin to make thoughtful choices about what they are writing.

Grade 2

In second grade, Writer's Workshop continues to provide daily opportunities for children to participate in various authentic writing experiences. They are also formally introduced to the writing process (see Writing Pacing Guide for Grade 2)

Writer's workshop units will begin with students gathering ideas for writing. One structure that provides an efficient means for accomplishing this task is Writer's Notebook. Writer's Notebook is a writing tool that can provide an effective catalyst for developing quality student writing. It serves as a vehicle for student writers to generate self-selected topics of interest that may eventually become full-length writing pieces. Writer's Notebook typically is used every day in class to record ideas, gather seeds for new pieces, follow as a piece is drafted, and much more.

Each writing unit takes several weeks. There are four units of study developed including narrative, opinion, informational, and poetry. All units of study provide a framework for instruction in order to teach students about the writing process, from prewriting to publishing. The teacher takes the students through the process, using a piece of his or her own writing as a model for the class. Related mini-lessons for each stage of the process are included in each unit of study.

Grade 3

In third grade, Writer's Workshop continues to provide daily opportunities for children to participate in various authentic writing experiences. They are also formally introduced to the writing process (see Writing Pacing Guide for Grade 3)

All students will begin the year by gathering ideas for writing. One structure that provides an efficient means for accomplishing this task is Writer's Notebook. Writer's Notebook is a writing tool that can provide an effective catalyst for developing quality student writing. It serves as a vehicle for student writers to generate self-selected topics of interest that may eventually become full-length writing pieces. Writer's Notebook typically is used every day in class to record ideas, gather seeds for new pieces, follow as a piece is drafted, and much more.

Each writing unit takes several weeks. There are four units of study developed including narrative, opinion, informational, and comparative. All units of study provide a framework for instruction in order to teach students about the writing process, from prewriting to publishing. The teacher takes the students through the process, using a piece of his or her own writing as a model for the class. Related mini-lessons for each stage of the process are included in each unit of study.

Grades 4-6

Students in grades 4-6 will take approximately three to four pieces of writing through the full process. Teachers will use their own writing as a model for pieces taken through the process. In addition, they may also choose to incorporate other published or student-written texts as mentor texts.

Process pieces are student-composed writings that are taken through the entire writing process. Teachers will use their own writing as a model for the class. Topics selected should be individual to each student. It is not considered student choice for a teacher to provide students with a set list of topics from which to choose. Mini-lessons for each process piece will be developed based on analysis of students' writing as well as grade level specifications for introduction or development of particular writing strategies and conventions (see tables of Writing Strategies and Conventions in the Instructional Strategies section of this document for specific grade level expectations).

At grades four to six, all students will begin the year by gathering ideas for writing. One structure that provides an efficient means for accomplishing this task is Writer's Notebook. The Writer's Notebook is a writing tool that can provide an effective catalyst for developing quality student writing. It serves as a vehicle for student writers to generate self-selected topics of interest that may eventually become full-length writing pieces. The Writer's Notebook typically is used regularly in class to record ideas, gather seeds for new pieces, follow as a piece is drafted, and much more**.**

It is imperative that lessons regarding craft, transitions, openings/closings, compositional risks, grammar and punctuation should be taught within the context of the writing process. Teachers will ". . . teach terms that students need in order to do important work in their writing and reading by creating occasions in which students can see the necessity of the terms they're learning. The work that the

terms are immediately applied to should be the work that matters to students and that clearly counts in the world" (Smith and Wilhelm, 2007, p. 16).

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the goals of our language arts curriculum and address the various learning styles and multiple intelligences of all our students, teachers must maintain a repertoire of appropriate, effective, and flexible strategies and resources. Students learn best through personal hands-on experiences and by connecting new information to what they already know.

This is best accomplished through a gradual release of responsibility model. Gradual release begins with teacher modeling. The teacher explains the strategy, demonstrates how to apply the strategy successfully, and thinks aloud to model the mental processes used when reading or writing.

After explicit modeling, the teacher gradually gives the students more responsibility for task completion. This is referred to as guided practice. The teacher and students practice the strategy together. The teacher scaffolds the students' attempts and supports student's thinking, giving feedback during conferring and classroom discussions. Students share their thinking processes with one another during small and large group discussions.

After working with their teacher and peers, students then try to apply the strategy on their own. This is referred to as independent practice. The students receive regular feedback from the teacher and other students. This model ultimately leads to the application of the strategy in real reading and writing situations. Students apply a clearly understood strategy to a new genre or format and demonstrate the effective use of the strategy in more difficult text.

The regular use of cooperative learning and differentiated instruction affords all students the opportunity to become active participants in their learning process. Integrating language arts with other disciplines across the curriculum encourages students to make connections between content areas and makes learning more meaningful.

By employing varied and engaging strategies appropriately, teachers assist students in applying language arts to their everyday lives. The following table incorporates strategies and suggestions from professional literature, Internet resources, NJSLS, and Waterford professionals.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Resource	Description	Suggestions for Application
Bulletin Board	An interactive visual that provides students an opportunity to explore a particular concept in greater depth.	· Students use the board to share and report about a concept · Teachers post questions for investigation and reflection
Carouseling	A brainstorming activity where learners travel from station to station in a carousel motion, sharing, recording, and reporting ideas or participating in activities.	· At each station, the learners will record a response to a specific teacher-guided prompt · Students can use carouseling to elaborate on a topic and add details to writing
Cooperative Learning	Small heterogeneous groups of learners working together to achieve a common goal.	Suggested structures: · Think – Pair – Share · Investigation · Partner quiz · Team interview · Peer discussion
Differentiated Instruction	Differentiated Instruction is "responsive teaching" that considers the variance in student readiness, interests, and learning profile rather than "one-size-fits-all". A teacher proactively plans varied approaches to what students need to learn (content), how they will learn it (process), and/or how they can express what	· Book Clubs · Guided Reading · Tiered-Assignments · Choice

	they have learned (product) in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or she can as efficiently as possible.	
Displays & Models	Interactive, visual, conceptually-oriented devices that incorporate student involvement (ex. data representations, bulletin boards, posters, PowerPoint, photographs).	· Present concepts · Motivate interest · Stimulate discussion · Synthesize concepts · Invite student contributions
Flexible Grouping	Utilization of a variety of grouping options, including cooperative groups, whole class, small group, partners and individuals, to achieve goals and concepts.	· Participate in several different grouping options in order to analyze, synthesize, investigate, challenge, and defend as it relates to literacy
Games	Motivational activities that introduce, reinforce and review concepts. Examples: WORDO, Buzz, Concentration, Guess My Rule, Jeopardy, computer games.	· Participate in teacher/student-created games · Participate in interactive computer games · Participate in appropriate commercially-developed games related to literacy concepts
Graphic Organizers	Visual illustration of verbal and/or written statements; they help the learner organize, comprehend, summarize, and synthesize information.	· Timeline · Problem/solution outline · Network · Herringbone map · Cycle · Venn diagram · Tree diagram · Mindmap · Web

		· Ranking ladder · K-W-L chart
Graphic Representations	Information organized and presented graphically; pictorial device demonstrating literacy concepts. Examples: charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, flowcharts, maps.	· Extrapolate data · Classify and organize information · Evaluate/record information · Utilize appropriate format (chart, graph, etc.) · Summarize/synthesize information
Inquiry-Based Teaching	Students use inquiry to conduct investigations: · Structured inquiry (students follow precise instructions and answer specific questions in a teacher-directed investigation) · Guided inquiry (students generate procedure to follow in a teacher-directed investigation) · Student-directed inquiry (students generate their own procedures in a student-directed investigation)	· Exploration of mentor texts · Author or genre studies · Word sorts
Jigsawing	Each student in turn becomes the "expert" on one topic by working with members from other teams. Upon returning to their team, each "expert" teaches the home group.	May be used for the following: · Acquiring new literacy concepts · Reviewing concepts learned · Learning and sharing different points of view

Modeling	The act of demonstrating the strategy, skill or behavior which is to be performed by the students.	· Teacher models (e.g., writing draft) · Student models · Mentor texts
Questioning	Purposeful questions require students to use thinking skills; questions can be organized according to Bloom's Taxonomy, higher and lower level, open and closed. · Know goal; select context · Plan questions · Phrase questions clearly · Allow flexibility · Avoid yes/no questions · Allow wait time (at least 3 seconds) · Avoid saying learner's name before the questions · Select learners randomly · Use positive feeling tone · Respond positively to all answers · Use probing techniques to elicit more thorough responses · Redirect and rephrase · Use learner's questions for instruction	· Ask higher-level, open-ended questions (How & Why) · Allow students to react to and rephrase other responses
Researching	Use of various science materials and methods to answer questions about a topic.	· Extends knowledge of a specific topic · Utilize reference materials to learn about areas of interest or need · Present new information to whole

		class
Stations	Different areas of the classroom where students work on various tasks simultaneously.	· At each station, students explore materials, conduct investigations, analyze data, conduct research, synthesize learning, etc.
Utilizing & Evaluating Media	Students integrate and evaluate information that brings the real world into the classroom.	· Computers · DVD · TV · Recording devices · Audio-visual devices · Listening centers · Internet · Interactive Whiteboards
Utilizing Tools and Manipulatives	Concrete materials such as magnetic letters, sorting cards, etc.	· Use tools like the word wall as a spelling aid · Utilize materials to facilitate hands-on learning (e.g., Making Words, Word Sorts)

Assessment and Evaluation

To ensure that students are attaining the proficiencies identified herein and thereby becoming literate in the richest sense of the word, teachers will assess their progress continuously, using a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques. This ongoing, multi-dimensional approach to assessment provides teachers with the information they need to assess student progress toward specific learning goals, analyze student areas of strength and challenge, and make powerful teaching decisions. Ongoing authentic assessment should provide a comprehensive portrait of students' academic development in language arts rather than a snapshot of a single performance on a test. It also should be the basis for reporting students' progress to parents and district administrators as well as other teachers who may work with these students to promote literacy.

Authentic multi-dimensional assessment must be a part of the evaluation process in literacy instruction. The student (or group of students), given a meaningful literacy task, responds; his/her response generates information that can be documented either through observation (anecdotal records or checklists, for example) or through some student-created product (open-ended responses to literature, a story in writing workshop, a book project or presentation). This documentation – and the ongoing student performance it reflects – constitutes authentic assessment.

Teachers using authentic assessment effectively involve students in meaningful literacy tasks that allow them to apply, practice and master strategies for constructing meaning in reading, writing, word study, listening, speaking and viewing. In addition, they invite students to reflect on their own learning. Teachers emphasize critical reasoning and understanding of process rather than the single recall of facts. Typically teachers will gather a substantial body of information about an individual student's performance during the course of an evaluation period, using a variety of authentic assessment techniques that are embedded within the curriculum. They will then evaluate the student's overall performance and growth in literacy.

Teachers in Waterford Township will utilize a variety of the following techniques to assess students in the language arts: Running Records, Miscue Analysis, Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Observation Survey (OS), Benchmark Assessment, Performance Assessments, Checklists, Rubrics, Retellings, Conferences, Anecdotal Records of Independent Reading and

Writing, Open-ended Literature Responses, Work Samples, Portfolios and Assessments from District curriculum documents. A description of each is provided on the following pages.

DISTRICT-WIDE STANDARD ASSESSMENTS

Observation Survey (OS): This assessment is primarily used by Reading Recovery teachers as well as Reading Specialists to determine eligibility for Reading Recovery. The OS was developed by Marie Clay as a tool for judging whether the youngest readers are building a foundation that will lead to successful reading and writing after their first year of schooling. The OS has six components: Letter Identification; Word Test (a check on sight words); Concepts About Print CAP), Writing Vocabulary, Hearing Sounds in Words or Dictation; and Text Reading.

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark Assessment: The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) seamlessly and gracefully links assessment to instruction along The Continuum of Literacy Learning. This comprehensive system for one-on-one assessment reliably and systematically matches students' instructional and independent reading abilities to the F&P Text Level Gradient™.

Benchmark Writing: Students in grades K-6 are given benchmark writing to which they must respond in a designated time period. This benchmark assessment requires the student to demonstrate his/her general proficiencies in writing. The writing sample is evaluated using a scoring rubric.

ONGOING & FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Anecdotal Records of Independent Reading and Writing: This structure organizes data, notes, etc. that summarize and keep track of independent reading and writing for insight about students' attitudes and habits. Anecdotal notes can be collected on most literacy tasks including participation in book clubs or literature circles, contributing to group discussions and peer conferences. They can also be collected on student behaviors during guided reading, Reader's and Writer's Workshop, or Word Work. Additionally, teachers respond with reflective summary comments with regard to journals.

Checklists: This assessment technique utilizes a form which lists targeted behaviors as indicators of literacy achievement, knowledge, or skill. Each checklist contains specific qualities or traits being assessed and some procedures for recording what is observed. Checklists can be used for evaluating tasks such as writer's notebook, literature logs with open-ended responses, student understanding of various mini lessons, and teacher observations made during performance assessments. Checklists provide insight into what a child is already demonstrating and what the child needs to address next in his/her literacy development.

Conferences: This procedure involves both structured and unstructured meetings between teacher and student. Conference time can be used for sharing and discussing literature or student writing, providing a mini lesson on a particular skill, or assessing students' progress in other various literacy tasks.

Miscue Analysis: Similar to running records, miscue analysis allows a teacher to analyze a student's orally-read text. Miscues happen whenever a child's reading response doesn't match the text he/she has been asked to read. Miscues can be analyzed to determine what strategies and cueing systems – meaning, structure and visual – a student is using or neglecting while reading. For example, a child who read: "The bunny jumped over the fence" for: "The rabbit jumped over the fence" would be using meaning and structure and neglecting visual information provided by the sound/symbol correspondence of our language. Typically teachers employ miscue analysis together with a running record "to get a window into" the student's reading process and scaffold neglected decoding strategies or cueing systems. Use information to guide instruction.

Open-ended Literature Response: This tool provides a questioning structure for examining a response written by a student for a variety of purposes. Questions are posed that require students to reflect on and analyze text in order to construct meaning or extend understanding. Questions are also developed to access prior knowledge and a connection to life experiences of the student. They are used to assess higher order thinking and application skills.

Examples of open-ended questioning:
- "Did you have strong feelings as you read the story? What did the author do to
make you feel strongly?"
- "If the story took place somewhere else or in a different time, how would it be changed?"

- "What idea or ideas does this story make you think about? How does the author get you to think about this?"

Performance Assessments: This form of assessment utilizes any meaningful task that requires students to demonstrate literacy knowledge and/or skill. Performance tasks should be engaging to the student, connected to content knowledge, process skills, and work habits emphasized in the curriculum. Performance assessments enable teachers to analyze literacy development and plan subsequent instruction. Examples of performance assessments include such tasks as creating posters, reports, book projects, open-ended responses, speeches, plays or making "real world" responses that show such abilities as reading, following directions, etc. Teachers developing performance assessments to enhance student literacy will want to be sure to target specific strategies, skills and/or concepts for students to learn, identify performance tasks that will require students to use the targeted strategy, skill and/or understanding and put together a rubric or checklist for evaluating whether learning goals have been achieved.

Portfolios: This structure includes collections of an individual student's work gathered over a period of time to present a picture of each student's performance and progress.   Portfolios may include pieces of writing, responses to reading, checklists, rubrics, various performance tasks completed in guided reading groups, literature studies and writers workshop. Portfolios may take the form of examples of best works as well as working portfolios, performance portfolios and process portfolios.   Samples of work over time enable students themselves to generalize about strengths of their work and goals for improvement. Teachers read students' assessments of their learning and provide feedback to students about accuracy of their personal evaluations.

Retellings: This assessment tool involves students in recalling what they remember either orally or in writing, following a reading or listening activity (Morrow, 1989). Retellings give insights into student thinking, organization, use of literary language and general understanding of text as well as the message of the author. Various formats for retelling may be used. (See appendix for examples.)

Rubric: Also referred to as a rating scale, this procedure provides a set of clear guidelines or acceptable responses for the completion of a task in which a scoring point system is used.   Unlike checklists, rubrics describe the overall quality of student work at each of several score points. The rubric is a "shorthand" reminder of the essential characteristics of each level of quality. Rubrics can be effectively used

to assess most areas of literacy development as well as to model appropriate literacy behaviors. Rubrics can be developed with the students or shared so that students are clearly aware of the objectives to be met.

Running Records: In this individually-administered assessment, students read a sample of text (usually between 100-200 words) and teachers record their performance, using Marie Clay's notetaking conventions. All miscues, i.e., rereading, substitutions, omissions, multiple attempts at unknown words and self-corrections are recorded. Teachers use the running record to assess a student's reading level and to get a picture of the kinds of strategies students employ or neglect when they read. In addition, teachers use the running record as the basis for making powerful teaching points that will enhance students' use of neglected decoding strategies and improve phrasing and fluency.

Work Samples: Work Samples are constructed by students and are used to demonstrate understanding of various literacy concepts. Work Samples may include such things as sticky notes, graphic organizers, notebook/journal entries, drafts, etc.