

Language Arts Curriculum Review (2004-2005)

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Overview Report to Board
7-12 Language Arts Curriculum Study
June, 2004

1. Reviewed and revised philosophy statement (see attachment A).
2. Reviewed our beliefs about a language arts program (see attachment B).
3. Reviewed current curriculum to determine if, when and to what extent we were meeting the state content standards.
 - Concluded that generally we are strong in reading and writing and need to implement more speaking, listening and viewing skills. The exception is at the sophomore level, which is especially strong in speaking.
4. Discussed concerns and goals for the future.
 - Change the junior high language arts curriculum to teach grammar, usage and conventions through literature.

Note: The literature book we choose is strong in incorporating grammar, usage and mechanics into the literature. We also ordered a *Writing and Grammar* book that directly corresponds to the literature book.
 - Incorporate more novels into the 8th grade reading curriculum. (See attachment C)
 - Reinforce speaking, listening and viewing skills on all levels, except grade 10, which is already strong in those areas.
 - Incorporate more nonfiction and critical reading into the curriculum.
 - Continue to incorporate Accelerated Reader into the curriculum
 - Incorporate daily oral language skills at all levels.
 - Insure that all types of essays (i.e. narrative, cause and effect, compare and contrast) are being presented somewhere in the curriculum.
 - Approached the technology committee with concerns and requests. We would like the following: 1) 1 computer in our classrooms dedicated to Accelerated Reader; 2) a bank of 4-5 laptops for classroom use (i.e. Tutorials, small group projects, quick research); 3) easy access to a laptop with an In Focus projector.

Note: Our new texts have many components dealing with technology.
5. Textbook selection--we heard presentations from three book representatives and studied five series. We selected Prentice Hall based on the following points:
 - Content was more in-depth than other series.
 - It is the series we have been using for many years and feel confident in the materials.
 - Materials are directly tied to the SD content standards.
 - Teaching resources are plentiful.
 - i-text is available.
 - Directly ties into the Writing and Grammar books.
 - Representative was very helpful, professional and will provide in-service for us.

Appendix A

Language Arts Philosophy

May, 2004

Language arts encompass reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, research and presentation skills. It is, in essence, all communication. Language Arts is an ongoing process that not only fulfills the state-required standards but permeates all other disciplines as well. It is the vehicle for teaching values and Christian morality, particularly in the Catholic Christian educational setting.

Appendix B

Statement of Beliefs

General Beliefs

We believe language arts is a vehicle for teaching values and Christian morality, particularly in the Catholic setting.

We believe language skills are interrelated processes utilized by the reader to comprehend and convey meaning through reading, writing, speaking, viewing, presentation and research skills.

We believe language arts is an ongoing process that not only fulfills the state-required standards but permeates all other disciplines as well.

We believe students learn to communicate by using language in natural and purposeful ways.

We believe teachers incorporate both direct (in the classroom) and indirect instruction, such student-directed research and independent reading.

We believe students learn to value their own language when it is valued by others who hold high expectations for all students.

We believe learning is enhanced in an environment where students are encouraged to: critically and creatively about ideas, relate the content of the message to personal experiences, understand and use patterns and structures of language (comprehension).

We believe assessment procedures should be balanced to include multiple-choice testing, open-ended questions, portfolios, demonstrations, debates, reports, investigations and so forth. Generally, assessment should promote quality, depth and extensions of student work.

We believe teachers should provide many kinds of support (Six Traits of Writing, Accelerated Reader, guided reading, Daily Oral Language, Free to Read, cooperative learning and so forth) including skills emphasis and meaning emphasis.

We believe students should share the responsibility for their learning. They must develop an increasing awareness of their own thinking, including attitudes habits and dispositions. Student-initiated learning involving choice, collaboration and active participation is more likely to produce a high level of interest and accomplishment than teacher-centered exposition.

We believe students should have opportunities to use technology to enhance learning experiences.

Reading

We believe students use decoding skills to interpret new vocabulary words.

We believe children learn to enjoy reading by being read aloud to, silent reading and reading books on their reading levels.

We believe students should make connections, inferences, predictions, comparisons and ask questions while reading.

We believe students should be able to read and be able to distinguish between a variety of genres including fiction (classics and contemporary), fantasy, nonfiction, science fiction, historical fiction and so forth.

We believe students should predict, infer, question, draw conclusions and use context clues to construct meaning from the text they read.

We believe students should identify cause/effect and fact/opinion.

We believe students should use reference tools such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, globes, maps, Internet and periodicals to locate information, analyze it and draw conclusions.

We believe students should interpret and respond to diverse works from various cultures and time periods.

Writing

We believe students learn to write by writing and encourage all teachers to incorporate writing every day.

We believe students should identify what constitutes a paragraph.

We believe students should write paragraphs that include a topic sentence, supportive details and a conclusion.

We believe students should write to narrate, to persuade, to explain to express opinion or to share information.

We believe students should use appropriate content, organization, form and style in technical, business, creative and personal writing.

We believe students should write across content areas to clarify and enhance the understanding of information.

We believe students should use correct conventions in their work.

Speaking/Listening/Viewing

We believe students learn from oral presentations.

We believe students should be given opportunities to practice speaking through poetry, presentation, shared writing, Mass participation and plays or choral readings.

We believe listening skills should be taught K-12.

We believe students should listen critically.

We believe students should use various listening and viewing strategies in social, academic and occupational situations.

We believe students use strategies to retrieve, interpret and evaluate ideas and information from various oral/visual sources.

Appendix C
 Novels/Drama

* Indicates new additions for 2004-2005

<p>7th grade</p>	<p><i>Farewell to Manzanar</i> <i>The Giver</i> * <i>Taking Sides</i> * <i>A View from Saturday</i> * <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> * Drama: "Our Town"</p>
<p>8th grade</p>	<p><i>Diary of Anne Frank</i> <i>A n/ma! Farm</i> * <i>House of Dies Drear</i> * <i>The P,'man</i> * <i>Tuck Everlasting</i> * Drama: "Midsummer Nights Dream"</p>
<p>9th grade</p>	<p><i>The Outsiders</i> <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> <i>The Pearl</i> <i>A Separate Peace</i> <i>West Side Story</i> Drama: "Romeo and Juliet"</p>
<p>10th grade</p>	<p><i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> <i>The Adventures of Huck Finn</i> <i>A drift</i> Drama: "Julius Caesar"</p>
<p>11th grade</p>	<p><i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> <i>The Great Gatsby</i> <i>Of Mice and Men</i> Drama: "The Crucible"</p>
<p>12th grade</p>	<p><i>Catcher in the Rye</i> <i>flowers for Algernon</i> <i>Lord of the flies</i> Drama: "Macbeth"</p>
<p>Other novels available in limited quantities</p>	<p><i>Black Boy</i> <i>Cry, My Beloved Country</i> <i>Lord Jim</i> <i>Jane Eyre</i> <i>Mayor of Casterbridge</i> <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> <i>Things Fall Apart</i> <i>Wuthering Heights</i></p>