

D146 English Language Arts Curriculum

Elementary and Central Middle School

The primary reading resource is called *Schoolwide*. The focus of the curriculum is upon the study of genre: fiction, nonfiction and poetry. The curriculum develops so that students can independently apply learning about the genre elements, styles and structures to better understand texts they select and encounter as readers.

Our curriculum utilizes a model called workshop. In this model, the following instructional practices are prominent:

- **Shared reading-** Students all experience the same rigorous text through a teacher led shared reading lesson. The shared text is written at grade level or above grade level. This type of instruction allows for all students to experience and learn from the same piece of high quality text so that genre structure, elements, vocabulary, grammar, reading strategies and author's voice are delivered and explored together as a class. The teacher guides learning with the students as students take a deeper look at word meaning, genre structures and elements. Grammar usage is often taught from the author's examples. Students then practice the skills using the shared text or their own choice book.
- **Interactive read aloud-** The teacher provides whole group instruction using a high-quality text called a mentor text. The teacher models how good readers tackle text and make meaning as it is read aloud to the class. Students are provided time to reflect and note how they can use the strategies in their own choice reading. Students and the teacher create anchor charts from the students' reflections. These charts serve as a reference point for students as they read independently. Students in grades 2-8 write in their reader's notebook about their own reading strategies often called "my life as a reader."
- **Mini Lesson-** The teacher provides instruction around a specific reading strategy or skill using a targeted, short lesson delivered to the whole class. Students turn and talk, try the strategy together and explore ways the lesson helps them as a reader. This time may also include a grammar lesson or a language usage lesson on a specific skill. An anchor chart will often be generated by the class for reference. Students are provided independent time to apply the new learning using their choice book. The teacher monitors the independent work. Students often respond to what they are reading in their reader's notebook (grades 2-8) during this practice time.
- **Guided Reading small group-** The teacher selects students to receive additional instruction in areas that need more time to develop. The text used with the small group is often common to the group.
- **Book Clubs-** The classroom teacher guides small groups of students with similar interests to read the same book, books by the same author or books with the same theme/topic. This group reads together as a book club. They ask questions of one another to further their collective understanding, they respond to one another's ideas and students often respond to their group's learning in their reader's notebook. Often times the book club will present to the class as a culminating project.
- **Conferring-** This is the time a teacher works 1:1 with a student to set goals, assess progress and plan for re-teaching when necessary.
- **Supplemental resources:** Grade level teams also have access to supplemental resources to support student learning needs.

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Writing

The elementary writing curriculum resource is called *Writing Aviator*. Central Middle School's writing resource is called *Schoolwide*.

Both resources are focused upon the workshop model. In the model, the following instructional practices are prominent:

- The teacher provides **whole group instruction** beginning with a read aloud of a high-quality mentor or touchstone text(s). The common text(s) provide a model for students to see and hear some well written examples of the genre. Students will be required to produce this genre type as a result of the lessons.
- **Mini Lesson**- The teacher provides an instructional focus upon skills required for students to master at their grade level. Examples may include: Writing conventions of the genre, sentence structures, subject/ verb agreement, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation.
- Students will write independently while practicing the desired skill(s) in their writer's journal.
- Elementary students write every day in their writer's journal/notebook; practicing skills they have learned. Central Middle School students write every day in either their writer's journal/notebook or reader's notebook.
- Typically, these instructional strategies occur in our writer's workshop:
 - **Try-its**- A teacher directed sample of writing that may focus upon one or more skills during a lesson: author's style, word usage, sentence types, paragraph development, and/ or writing conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - **Guided writing groups**- Students meet with the teacher in a small group for additional instruction and practice with a needed skill.
 - **Writer's workshop**-The time when students strategically go through the writing process to develop a specific type of writing: generate an idea, draft, revision, edit and publication. The teacher is conferencing with the student 1:1 and in small groups to improve the craft of writing as the student progresses through the writing process.
 - A writing rubric is utilized to assess the quality and features of the student's final publication.
- Students will produce a final copy of every required genre of writing for the grade level as specified by the Illinois learning standards.
- The genres of writing may include:
 - Narrative writing
 - Memoir
 - Argumentative writing
 - Opinion writing
 - Research/ report writing
 - Informative writing
 - Explanatory writing
 - Poetry