

## Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Committee

### Anchorage Education Center - Red Room

4:30 - 6:00 PM -October 3, 2006

Our purpose as leaders in the language arts curriculum is to provide leadership and support in our schools for the Anchorage School District goals.

1. Increasing achievement for all students
2. Supporting effective learning environments
3. Accomplishing increased public accountability
4. Establishing diversity in the workforce

#### ✳ After-School Treats and Catching-Up Time

#### Call to Order

- Introductions
- Agenda Approval
- Minutes Approval

#### Reports

Literacy Specialists: Terry Patka  
Reading Coaches: Carolyn Fuller  
Coordinator's Report: Mardell Kiesel

#### Unfinished Business

- ▶ TEACHER'S CHOICE! Credit Course and Readers
- ▶ Connection Collections: Remember Them?
- ▶ Standards Based Report Card Update

#### New Business

- ▶ 7 Weeks of School-Celebration! What's Working?



#### For the good of the order...

- (In the folders) ▶ ELACC minutes 5/11/06  
▶ SBRC Schedule ▶ CILC Brochures

#### Adjournment

*And...thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to attend and commit to the ELACC. If you have questions, concerns or just need more clarification, please contact me via email, #4852 or, better yet, drop by! Mardell*

**Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Committee**

**Anchorage Education Center - Red Room**

**4:30 - 6:00 PM -October 3, 2006**

**Mardell Kiesel, Coordinator**

**Present at Meeting:**

Celeste Long	Muldoon	Tamera Boring	Bowman
Karen Iris	Literacy Coach	Melanie Sutton	Aurora
Archie Green	Ursa Major/Title I	Stephany LaPointe	Rabbit Creek
Carolyn Fuller	Literacy Coach	Maureen Retzel	Muldoon
Jan Flavel	Kincaid	Katherine Miller	Lake Hood
Martina Henke	Kincaid	Denise Demetree	Denali
Terry Patka	Literacy Specialist	Julia Gibeault	Literacy Coach
Karla VonKennen	Ptarmigan	Cindy Bagley	Taku
Brooke Hull	Rogers Park	Tony Freeman	Lang Arts Curr

**Call to Order**

• **Introductions:** Members introduced themselves and reviewed changes in grade levels, schools, etc. Mardell reminded us of our role as a *Standing Committee*; to include oversight of the work of ad hoc groups, to share and receive input on the reading and writing instruction/training in the elementary grades; to recommend and advise as appropriate. Looking around the room, she noted that our standing committee membership overlaps several ad hoc committee members. ☺ As we move to ad hoc committees for projects this year, Mardell will be inviting new people. The LA Standing Committee includes many grade levels, locations and job descriptions. Mardell is still open to adding more people to the committee for the remaining meetings. According to ASD Board policy, we must meet 4 times per year. We have set dates for the rest of the year. (Dec. 5; Mar. 6; May 1). Let Mardell know if we know of others who are interested in this committee.

• **Agenda Approval:** Members invited to add items for *the good of the order*.

Celeste: *Pencils Full of Stars*

Agenda approved.

• **Minutes Approval:** Members were invited to scan the minutes to be apprised about what occurred at our last meeting in May. A motion to approve was made and seconded.

Discussion:

Question from Maureen: Projects for 06-07: Will we be working on/addressing GLEs and writing continuum, as these are not listed on today's agenda?

Answer from Mardell: K-1-2 ad hoc committee has reviewed the ASD/GLEs and feels confident they are aligned with state GLEs. We can revisit upper grades if it seems necessary. Regarding Writing: As we move into the second year of HM implementation, we are more ready to analyze our writing program and identify strengths and areas to support.

Hearing no other discussion, motion was passed to approve minutes.

•**Reports:** (Mardell asks that specialists please report from their perspective of the language arts program and related events.)

**Literacy Specialists: Terry Patka**

Thirteen new HM schools were added this year. The Literacy Specialists' job is to help new schools implement the HM program. The first days of the school year were spent getting materials out to schools/teachers. They inventoried, stamped and distributed the materials.. HM was very helpful; distributor in Portland had everything ready to go and everyone did the best they could do to get the materials in buildings in a timely manner. Still, several sites did not receive materials until the day before school. Some sites are still missing parts of their inventory. Efforts are ongoing to track the missing materials. Teachers are encouraged to let principals know about missing materials.

Much of the remaining time has been with year 1 schools getting up and running. The specialists are assisting with the DRA assessment. Also, for year 2 HM schools, grades 1,2 & 4 have been attending training in vocabulary instruction as presented by CORE (Consortium for Reading Excellence.) Stephany asked for more information about CORE.

CORE is a private group out of CA hired by many Reading First schools to help implement their reading programs. CORE offers support to districts as well. (Jan asked if they are connected with HM?) The training is applicable with any program. It is supplemental; they give you theory and teaching ideas for your task (i.e. vocabulary) and you then apply that to your particular program. Stephany asked if they have researched the program to be able to correlate; Terry says some of the trainers are trained in HM.

Principals, Reading Coaches and Literacy Specialists are also receiving CORE training. Archie asked why Title I coaches were not included in CORE training? Terry explained that space was the issue.

On behalf of teachers in her building, Jan asked whether programs, such as Intensive Needs could expect HM materials as part of this adoption. They are sharing materials, but this is very difficult for several reasons.

Terry replied that Special Ed teachers and Bilingual tutors should have received a set of teacher's manuals. In addition each should have received the extra support and ELL handbooks. Classroom teachers have been asked to share the leveled readers for ELL or Language Support. That expectation may cause some frustration if the teacher has extra support students who do not qualify for SPED services. Another concern is that materials are scattered throughout the building and difficult to track. (Committee members reported that SPED teachers in their buildings are finding it difficult to do the HM when they have no materials.)

Julia asked if it is appropriate for alternative materials to be used for kids with IEPs? Terry replied that encouragement is given for all teachers to give HM a try. In instances where there are no materials, alternatives must be identified. Karen added that the problem was compounded when pre-registration numbers did not match the actual enrollees. Equitable material distribution was challenging.

### **Reading Coaches: Carolyn Fuller**

Carolyn explained that each Reading Coach has one CORE school and one non-CORE school, and noted that the CORE person *was* familiar with the HM program. (Related to the earlier question about training with CORE personnel.) She explained that a CORE school has a trained person who did a "walk-through" at the school and then met with them to discuss improvements that could be made. The primary recommendation was centered on "implementation" and being more proficient with the materials. The CORE person helps the principal, nudging toward more implementation in the second year. The ten lowest achieving schools for last year are CORE schools.

Katherine noted a concern regarding inequity between first and second year schools. (Missing big books, etc.) She requested follow-up and feedback.

Maureen asked if this committee could recommend and encourage continued efforts toward materials equity and timeliness of the materials in building. Mardell urged everyone to remember that orders go through several levels of approval and many factors can affect the time sequence.

Every teacher did have a teacher's manual in the spring. That was something we did right! 😊

### **Coordinator's Report: Mardell Kiesel**

Everyone is probably aware of the well-attended (103 people) Vicki Spandel, Six-trait Writing Institute in June. A \$200 stipend was offered to a contact person from each building. That person agreed to do an in-service and in some way support their staff with knowledge of the traits. She has received email from contact teachers who are following through with the in-service plans. Not all schools opted to have a person as a contact. This meant that there was some money remaining, and she was able to give stipends to more than one person from some buildings.

An ad hoc committee worked in July to align ASD, K-2 GLEs with the state GLEs. The committee worked on aligning and adding ASD/GLEs to those the state had defined. These were in principals' hands for back-to-school meetings. This resource is accessible on the Language Arts Department web site. The LA Online! site is being updated and Mardell encourage input regarding content and related resources.

Stephanie Harvey was here in August to work with teachers. Over 100 teachers participated in the non-fiction, literacy institute. Colleen Stevens, TPD, provided \$100 stipends to teachers who had registered on MLP by June 20. This serves as a reminder to ALWAYS go to MLP!

Another big push this fall has been to support the 15 RIF schools. Mardell and Tony visited all the schools. Mardell noted that the RIF (Reading Is Fundamental) grant budget was doubled this fall. The "local share" (25% of the budget) has caused some schools concern. All of the efforts of school RIF managers, district personnel and parent volunteers are worth it when

books are distributed to kids three times a year. Jan asked how schools qualify to be a RIF school. Mardell pointed out that it has been according to early program qualifications and "grandfather rights" in a few cases. After this year, RIF funding and privileges will be awarded to those buildings that qualify by free/reduced lunch percentages.

### Unfinished Business

**TEACHERS' CHOICES BOOK PROJECT!** Tony: The credit class has been entered in MLP> There were 24 registered by lunchtime today. Teachers interested in reading but not wanting a credit should let Tony know; you don't have to be in the class to read the books. Just pick a time to come get books. It is important to keep the books moving as often as possible. Requirements will be discussed for those readers who want credit during the first class, this Thursday, in the Red Room. Readers can return books by inter-school mail. Class will run 4:30-7:00. Mardell notes that when you see the books, you will drool; the books are wonderful! She will have a space dedicated to house and display the Teachers' Choice books with space to read and write reviews. Publishers send books that they think will be picked, so these are the best they have to offer. Readers get to keep the books at the end of the year. Teachers who choose to be readers will need to write a review of each book they read. If not taking the class, stop by and get books, or Tony can send them to you. Over 200 books are here now; about one hundred more are coming.

- **Connection Collections:** Remember them? These were created in the early to mid-90s as a response to the LA adoption. We didn't feel there were enough materials for theme-related instruction. That was the concern from teachers at the time. We found ways to get books, (Teacher's Choice, grants, etc.) and we had 230+ collections. These are tubs of book collected around various themes. The concern arose that these books were not being used as they had in the past. Although efforts are made each year to inform new teachers and librarians, several do not know about this resource. This past summer, Tony and Sherry were hired to evaluate this project. They began weeding and sorting books. The current goal is to align the collections of books with the themes in the K-6 HM program. Several collections were disbanded, especially if the books were in poor condition. The

titles of the remaining tubs may still be the same as those in the past for to make ordering to occur. Currently there are 103 tubs. Tony brought two collections for the committee to peruse. It was noted that the AV catalog is available online. Teachers were reminded that they can access and order all AV materials online, through the District Connection. Orders can be placed for the entire year. When using this resource, teachers are reminded that the Client ID is the last six digits of the person's Social Security number, with no dashes. The password is the school's phone number, with no dashes.

Melanie noted that there needs to be a packet of information for new-to-district people about the resources available in this district. Many teachers are unaware of what is available to them from the various curriculum departments.

- **Standards Based Report Card Update** There is a sheet in our folders with grade levels and meeting dates to work on this. We are going to meet by grade levels. When Mardell analyzed the materials that grade levels had created at the last few meetings, she found that every grade level was at a different place. This summer the state published a blueprint of measurement topics for the elementary SBAs. (Marzano calls the smaller items measurement topics and the bold items strands. We may need to rethink the labels we have been using.) Sherry has been working at home and she has taken our grade level work and aligned it with the state's blueprints for GLEs and the SBAs. Mardell had examples to pass around for us to look over. All committees will be at the same place and will go forward from this place. The next step is the rubric for assessing where kids are on the GLEs; we do have a model for a jump start. If you want to be on the committee, let her know, especially if there are changes. (i.e. you have moved grade levels.) The goal is to send a product on Nov 6, to Dr. Marzano. (Side note: Dr. Marzano has expressed that he hasn't gotten anything from LA. Despite the fact that he had our binder in hand when he was here, and we had finished our first draft some time ago.) Mardell will set up a whole-group meeting to video-conference with Dr. Marzano... hopefully in early December.

## New Business

### - 7 Weeks of School-Celebration! What's Working?

Mardell invited each member to share celebrations about strategies, activities and events that are working in support of reading and writing in our classrooms.

• **Stephany Lapointe:** *It's my second year with HM, and I am amazed how much smoother and more organized things are. Delivery is much better.*

• **Melanie Sutton:** *I am using a four square graphic organizer. Student writes one idea in each square, and a feeling sentence in the last square. Students add to it each day, editing as they go. By the end of the week, they have a paragraph. This method breaks the writing process into do-able chunks for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.*

• I'm excited that all my assessments are finished and small groups are running. Kids are excited!

• **Brooke Hull:** *Gifted department teachers had Socratic seminars training. Kids were excited to be reading and seminar-ing.*

• **Karla VonKennen:** *I am teaching a combo 5/6 class with HM. It is a special dance, and I am doing the dance! It is working quite well.*

• **Terry Patka:** *What's working? ME, and hard. Actually, I am very pleased with the year one HM schools. The teachers are open to implementing and year 2 schools are refining.*

• **Martina Henke:** *Everyone in my building is using the same language about reading.*

• **Jan Flavel:** *Even some people who were adamantly opposed the HM adoption are giving it a genuine effort.*

• **Julia Gibeault:** *Building relationships with people... because I am so new and people have been patient and professional.*

• **Archie Green:** *...being at a school where it's the second year of HM, and you hear positives instead of negatives.*

• **Karen Iris:** *Reorganization in the office with a new supportive boss in our corner and 2 wonderful new coaches.*

• **Maureen Retzel:** *I am working as a librarian to incorporate the reading series with what happens in the library. Also this year 3-6 graders are writing library goals tied in with personal dreams. Students have been coming into library with a purpose for reading as a result.*

• **Celeste Long:** *My students have a passion for literacy, outside of the program and that's the bottom line. As a class we are working toward*

*universal goals and taking those to heart. Moving beyond just literacy to explore what we do with literacy and its power.*

• **Cindy Bagley:** *I received a compliment at bus duty. A parent came up to me and said "What are you doing to my kid? I can't get the books out of her hand!"*

• **Denise Demetree:** *I teach 3 grade levels and implementing and adapting HM to Montessori. I'm having fun with it.*

• **Katherine Miller:** *I am at a 2<sup>nd</sup> year HM school and am finding I can look at the writing part of the lesson for the first time. I have begun incorporating writing workshop and 6 traits.*

• **Pencils Full of Stars.** (Celeste Long) There will be 2 more years and then this program could get a new title. There will be a cry for participants. This is the longest running poetry anthology, approx. 37-38 years. There will be a workshop in November and it will be on MLP. Please remind teachers and students to be involved and go beyond the reading program, especially Title I schools. Deadline for poems will be in February. The selected poems will be sent to the printers the Friday before Spring Break so books come out in April.

**For the good of the order...**

(In the folders) • **ELACC minutes 5/11/06**

• **SBRC Schedule** • **CILC Brochures**

• **Mardell asked the committee to focus on writing and effective instruction for the next meeting.**

**6:10 PM The meeting was adjourned.**

**NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 5, 4:30 -6:00PM RED ROOM**

**ASD ED CENTER**

**Respectfully submitted by Martina Henke, Kincaid Elementary**

*And...thank you for taking time out of your busy lives to attend and commit to the ELACC. If you have questions, concerns or just need more clarification, please contact me via email, #4852 or, better yet, drop by! Mardell*