

Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Committee
Anchorage Education Center - Red Room
March 6, 2007

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

M After-School Treats and Catching-Up Time

Call to Order

- Introductions
- Agenda Approval
- Minutes Approval

Reports

Literacy Specialists:

Reading Coaches:

Coordinator's Report: Mardell Kiesel

- Serum Run
- Young Writers' Retreat
- ESL Testing

Unfinished Business

- Standards Based Report Card Update
- Language Arts and Handwriting!

New Business

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For the good of the order...

(In the folders)

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- 4
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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 –March 6, 2007

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

Members Present:

Cindy Bagley	Taku	Stephany LaPointe	Rabbit Creek
Martina Henke	Kincaid	Mary Eldred	Title I
Jan Flavel	Kincaid	Pearl Theonnes	Government Hill
Denise Demetree	Denali	Brooke Hull	Rogers Park
Katherine Miller	Lake Hood	Terry Patka	Reading Teacher
Brenda Councell-Johnson	Ursa Major	Janice Summers	Eagle River
Archie Green	Ursa Major	Sherry Girard	FTL
Karen Iris	Title I		
Maureen Retzel	Muldoon		
Julia Gibeault	Title I		
Carissa Cote	Ocean View		
Celeste Long	Muldoon		

After-School Treats and Catching-Up Time

Call to Order

- **Introductions**
- **Agenda Approval—approved**
- **Minutes Approval—will be sent via email**

Reports

Literacy Specialists:

- Terry Patka: Reading First Summit was this week.

The Literacy Support Specialists are continuing support the implementation of HM. The seven schools slated next year for implementation are the following: Bayshore, Ravenwood, O'Malley, Trailside, Aurora, Kasuun, Inlet View, and 4th, 5th, 6th at Tyson.

Reading Coaches: Julia Gibeault reported they also have been helping with the speaking portion of ESL tests. While time-consuming, the time spent with the students is enjoyable.

Karen Iris: Reading First Conference allowed two days with Anita Archer, Consultant, University of Oregon who addressed the "big five;" she was an excellent speaker/resource. She addressed how

important writing and fluency are to be able to pass tests and be successful.

Mary Eldred, Title 1, reported that year two of the HM implementation is so much smoother. By year two, the theme tests are providing useful information. We are able to assess what has been learned and what need to be addressed through instruction.

QUESTIONS:

Will the DRA assessment continue, as well as leveled passages?
(Yes, and some changes will be made regarding when the test is given based on information from teachers.)

Will it be possible to provide a sub day for HM assessments mid year?
(Not known at this time)

Is there discussion regarding a late start in the school year for first grade assessments like the kindergarten model?

(Some schools are doing already implementing that model and more are being considered.)

Coordinator's Report: Mardell Kiesel

•**Serum Run.** Channel 14 These multi-disciplinary episodes repeat several times and can download on a computer. The Family Activity booklet coordinates with language arts, science, math, health, PE, art and social studies curriculums as well as with the Indian ED program and Social and Emotional Learning. Footage of the conclusion and the banquet will be shown next week. Each school received 100 copies of the activities booklet and could decide how to disseminate. The booklet can also download page-by-page from the District website. This has been a collaborative project!

•**No Young Writer's Retreat** At this time, there are no funds available. Costs range from \$5000- \$6000 for a successful experience for approximately 250 students and 60 adults. Mardell stressed that this initiative should not be abandoned, rather it should re-activated when funding and staff levels allow.

- **ESL Testing:** Mardell reported that she and numerous others have been involved with ESL assessments across the District.

Unfinished Business

– Standards Based Report Card Update

SBRC Update: We will be meeting one more time this school year by grade level. Each ad hoc committee will look at Dr. Marzano's recommendations, make adjustments, and recommend back to the district-wide committee. The committee will also be asked to provide input for the ASD-SBRC Staff Development Committee.

– Language Arts and Handwriting!

The following position statement was passed by the ELACC in September, 2004.

The K-6 Committee recognizes that legible handwriting is crucial for effective communication and should be consistently taught. The committee proposes to study and summarize current research regarding instructional methods for handwriting, and to use this information to recommend district-wide policies regarding handwriting curriculum and instruction in the elementary grades.

The ELACC has established that handwriting instruction varies radically across the district. Informal school surveys indicate "little to consistent" instruction is offered at the primary levels. Often the instruction, whatever level, is dropped in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. As a committee, we have read several articles of research about the critical nature of handwriting skills and fluency.

As a committee we are ready and very interested in looking at the *next piece* within the literacy block...that being handwriting instruction.

The criteria for a comprehensive handwriting program includes the following:

- 1) Left-handed instruction is not an "add on" but rather clearly supported with strategies for the teacher and the student.
- 2) Strategies for teaching handwriting in the primary and intermediate grades are developmentally appropriate.

3) Cursive strokes are introduced by grade 3 and supported with review and practice in grades 4 - 6.

4) The "scope and sequence" introduces and supports a comprehensive approach to teaching handwriting skills from K-6.

5) Handwriting instruction is integrated in the literacy block.

6) Blackline masters/practice sheets are re-usable.

7)

Stations were set up to include sample materials from D'Nealian (Scott Forsman) Handwriting Without Tears, Zaner Bloser and the resources available from Houghton Mifflin. Each set of materials includes a response sheet that should be completed by each rotating group.

Following the investigations by each rotating group, the group discussed the responses for each handwriting program.

Following the discussion, Mardell asked the committee to consider the following questions with the goal of reaching consensus statements.

1) Do we currently possess adequate resources to teach handwriting skills, K-6? MM&C that K-6 does not currently have adequate resources to teach handwriting skills.

(HM is a resource, but not adequate for comprehensive handwriting instruction. Additionally, there are no instructional materials for grades 4-6. HM does not have a scope or sequence and lessons are not integrated in the teacher's manual.

2) Is there a handwriting approach/program that can be eliminated from consideration at this point in time?.

(MM&C to eliminate the Zaner Bloser program.)

The ELACC will continue this review and discussion. More time is necessary to reach an informed recommendation. The committee will be informed of a date and time in April.

Meanwhile, a room at the ASD Education Center (the Book Nook) will have the handwriting materials for people to peruse. We are charged with polling teachers, talking with OTs, etc. to gather additional information before the next ELACC meeting.

(<http://www.hwtears.com/> (website for Handwriting without tears))

Adjournment: 6:00 PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Martina Henke, Kincaid Elementary