

LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM REVIEW

REPORT TO THE SCHOOL
BOARD March 27, 2007



HIGH SCHOOL

Major findings of the high school curriculum review:

- Variation in curriculum content and implementation within and between schools
- District outcomes not clearly aligned with state standards
- Common assessments needed



The Committee focused efforts on creating more clarity and consistency in Language Arts curriculum across the District...

- Curriculum adjusted to align with the state academic standards for 9th and 10th grade courses—completed
- Writing Guide for Student Writing Project—completed
- A resource for teachers indicating standards to be addressed in each course to be developed
- Common assessments developed and being refined



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Major findings of the middle school curriculum review:

- Standards not aligned with outcomes and courses
- Need for coherence in the curriculum
- Need for consistency across the three middle schools
- Model inadequate to effectively address the full continuum of student learning needs



The Committee focused efforts on increasing clarity and consistency in the Language Arts curriculum across the District, and on providing appropriate levels of support and challenge according to the needs of students.

Aligned standards with curriculum

Improved the model to include challenge and intervention classes at each grade level

Created new District-wide integrated language arts curriculum



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Findings of the Review

*Most Mounds View students
make strong progress in
reading and score well on
District, state and national
tests*

And...

*Specific program improvement
needs were identified.*



The curriculum review conducted last year by the Language Arts Committee indicated needs for the following improvements and updates in the elementary reading program:

1. Greater consistency in implementation of the reading program in the elementary schools
2. Better integration of reading, language arts, spelling and writing
3. Instructional materials that support differentiation to address the wide range of student abilities
4. Curriculum based assessment tools



The Language Arts Committee identified specific criteria for reviewing a reading series.

In order to effectively meet the needs of Mounds View students and teachers, a reading series must:

Address the Mounds View learner outcomes

Provide multiple assessment tools

Provide a cohesive scope and sequence of skill instruction

Offer leveled reading opportunities for students and instructional strategies for teachers

Offer opportunities to integrate reading instruction with spelling and writing

Offer opportunities to integrate reading with unit studies that include social studies, science, health)

Promote consistency across the District

The materials currently in use are outdated and do not fully meet these criteria.



The Reading Program Pilot September 2006-June2007

The Language Arts Committee agreed to pilot the Houghton Mifflin reading series in the 07-08 school year.

- 2 pilot teams in each of our six elementary buildings.
- 40 teachers
- 2 pilot classrooms at each grade level
- ELL
- Special Education
- High performance

The pilot materials were used with students representing a wide range of abilities, from students receiving ELL and special education students to students in high performing reading classes.



Communication about the reading program being piloted has been thorough and on-going...

Among teachers involved in the pilot

The Language Arts Curriculum Committee

All elementary teachers

Elementary principals



Teachers' Response to the 2008 Edition of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series, Invitation to Literature

- Overwhelmingly positive response
- Unanimous recommendation from pilot teachers to adopt the Houghton Mifflin reading series.
- Language Arts Committee unanimously voted to endorse the recommendation to adopt the Houghton Mifflin reading series.

No significant concerns or questions have arisen from the schools.



Pilot teachers evaluated the series by ranking the following indicators based on their implementation experiences:

The 2008 Edition of Invitations to Literacy...

Supports the MV Language Arts learner outcomes.

Supports a balanced approach to literacy.

Has a variety of assessment tools which inform instruction.

Meets the needs of a wide range of readers.

Is applicable to a variety of instructional groupings.

Includes a variety of instructional materials.

Provides student materials to support guided reading.

Provides teacher instructional materials for guided reading lessons.

Integrates spelling instruction with reading.

Integrates writing instruction with reading.

Promotes research-based best practices.

Supports a home-school literacy connection

Is motivating to students.

Promotes district-wide consistency.



**If the Houghton Mifflin 2008 edition is adopted,
what are the next steps?**

- Materials for teachers and students will be ordered and distribution plans will be developed.
- A variety of professional learning opportunities will be planned and developed.

It is likely that training and materials will be offered at the Balanced Literacy Institute in June and during the August workshop week.



K-5 LANGUAGE ARTS MATERIALS ADOPTION

Based on the positive outcome of the pilot and the enthusiastic response of pilot teachers, the Language Arts Committee recommends the adoption of the Houghton Mifflin 2008 Invitations to Literacy Series.

