

Beecher Community School District

The Vision for Ambitious Teaching of Reading Instruction

Reading is the complex act of constructing meaning from print. Reading allows us to better understand ourselves, others, and the world around us; we use the knowledge we gain from reading to change the world in which we live. In an educational setting, ALL teachers, regardless of content area expertise, are teachers of reading and writing. In order for all students to develop this in-depth knowledge of literacy, teachers must teach in an ambitious and culturally responsive way.

Becoming a reader is a gradual process that begins with our first interactions with print. There is no fixed point at which we suddenly become readers. Instead, all of us bring our understanding of spoken language, our knowledge of the world, and our experiences to make sense of what we read. We grow in our ability to comprehend and interpret a wide range of reading materials by making appropriate choices from an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies that develop over time. These strategies include, but are not limited to phonemic awareness, decoding, predicting, inferencing, visualizing, questioning, making connects, retelling, summarizing, comprehension monitoring, critical thinking, and using context.

Success requires a strong collaboration, with support for students provided at home and school. Thus, the importance of involving families and community partners as a collaborative partner in the development of language and literacy requires a commitment to working together in and out of the school classroom. Educators help families and community partners add to their repertoire of strategies by promoting literacy at home.

Core practices of ambitious teaching, include:

To ensure that all individuals have access to the personal pleasures and intellectual benefits of full literacy, National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) believes that our society and our schools must provide students with:

- access to a wide range of texts (digital and print) that reflect students' abilities, interests and grade level;
- ample time to read a wide range of materials, from the very simple to the most challenging;
- teachers who help develop an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies;
- opportunities to learn how reading, writing, speaking, and listening support each other;
- access to literacy skills needed in a technologically advanced society;
- variety of discourse strategies to facilitate deep thinking that enables them to respond to other's thinking

Instructional Implications

- Explicit instruction of [essential practices](#) for effective reading instruction
- Recognize the role that motivation plays in students' reading by modeling for students how to engage with complex texts that do and do not interest them
- Enable active constructions of meaning through performance reading responses such as gesture, mime, vocal intonation, characterization, and dramatization
- Construct a collaborative environment that builds on the strengths of individual students

- Have students read multiple texts focused on the same topic to improve comprehension through text-to-text connections
- Foster students' engagement with complex texts by teaching students how different textual purposes, genres, and modes require different strategies for reading
- Encourage students to choose texts (fiction and nonfiction) to help them apply reading strategies and develop a sense of self-efficacy
- Demonstrate how digital and visual texts including multimodal and multi-genre texts require different approaches to reading
- Connect students' reading of complex texts with their response to reading and with writing that uses complex texts as mentors so they will recognize and be able to negotiate different types of complex texts
- Develop students' ability to engage in meaningful discussion of complex texts so they can learn to negotiate and comprehend these texts independently

Result of Ambitious Reading Instruction

When teachers choose research-based instructional approaches, students learn how to select, apply, and reflect on diverse strategies as they take up the varied purposes, subjects, and genres that present complex challenges for readers. Talking to others about what we are reading expands and strengthens our comprehension and interpretation. In these interactions, we learn to read critically, to question what we read, and to respond. We learn to ask:

- What does this text say? (key ideas and understanding)
- How does this text say it? (vocabulary, authors craft, structure)
- What does this text mean? (authors purpose, intertextual connection)
- What does this text inspire me to do? (so what?)

These questions help us uncover underlying assumptions and motives that otherwise operate invisibly. Because of ambitious reading instruction, students will demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Students use a variety of strategies to derive meaning from texts and increase comprehension. These metacognitive strategies include:
 - a. Summarizing
 - b. Inferring
 - c. Asking and answering questions about texts
 - d. Using text structures to make sense of and remember information
 - e. Visualizing
2. Students use a variety of methods to increase vocabulary, including finding appropriate meaning, identifying parts of words, looking for context clues, and use of reference materials.
3. Students analyze, comment on, compare, and share their thinking about what they have read by learning-focused "talk".
4. Students write to make their thinking visible.
5. Students read multiple texts focused on the same topic and can make text-to-text connections and can compare and contrast these texts.
6. Students demonstrate understanding and are able to synthesize and evaluate texts.
7. Students use formative assessment to monitor progress daily.

REFERENCES

National Council of Teachers of English, Position Statement, February 1999,
<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/positiononreading>

Schoenbach, R., Greenleaf, C., and Murphy, L., *Reading for Understanding: how reading apprenticeship improves disciplinary learning in secondary and college classrooms*, Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Brooks-Yip, M., Fleischer, C., and Norman, N., *Study of Early Literacy: a network model for teacher professional development*, Michigan Reading Journal, 47 (2), 2015

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force (2016). *Essential instructional practices in early literacy: K to 3*. Lansing, MI: Authors

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force (2016). *Essential instructional practices in early literacy: Prekindergarten*. Lansing, MI: Authors

MI Excel Vision Statement for Ambitious, High Quality Subject Specific Instruction, 2016

Beecher's Vision for Ambitious Teaching of Reading Instruction was developed February 23, 2017 with input from Andrea Aurino, Kenya Williams, Kimberly Harden-Olamina, Penny Kentish McWilliams, Teresa Krawczyk, April Matthews, Melissa Wing