

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM GUIDE

**Developmental Reading and
Study Skills**

Approved by the Board of Education on October 10, 2006

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SECTION I - Course Information

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Language Arts Philosophy

Students communicate with the world around them through the use of language. Language is comprised of several components, primarily reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Language Arts is the instructional program that teaches these components as interdependent and interrelated parts of the communication process.

The aim of the Darien Public Schools' Language Arts Program is threefold: to help students become effective language users; to produce graduates who demonstrate their ability to think, read, write, speak, and listen proficiently; and to assist students in developing language fluency, not only in the school setting but in the wider world.

Acquisition, development, and mastery of both basic and advanced language arts skills are a continuous process. Students attain higher levels of skill development in incremental stages. Measurable gains in language arts skills are realized when challenging language activities occur in meaningful contexts and through purposeful applications.

(from Darien Public Schools K-12 Language Arts Guide – 1997)

Developmental Reading Philosophy

The Developmental Reading and Study Skills curriculum is designed to produce independent learners who are literate and fluent. The curriculum also seeks to teach the students to think clearly, perceptively, and critically and to develop discriminating taste and sound judgment.

This course is for students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The students have a wide range of ability and needs. They range from reading levels well below state and national norms to well above grade level. The classes include both regular and special education students. Some students are in the ESL program, some score high on standardized tests but receive low grades in academic courses, and some take reading because they choose not to take a foreign language. This is a regular education class although about half of the students are under the special education umbrella. Class size ranges from one to ten students. The smaller the class size, the more individualization can be done. Classes are grouped by grade, when possible, and sometimes even by academic team. However, because of scheduling constraints, some classes have students in different grades and of far ranging ability levels.

PROGRAM GOALS

Developmental Reading and Study Skills Goals

There are two major goals for students in this course. The first is to improve the reading ability of the students. This will be accomplished by teaching decoding, phonics, and word-attack skills which will lead to fluency in oral reading. Reading comprehension strategies will be taught so students can improve their level of reading. Skimming, scanning, and speed increasing strategies will also be taught. The second goal is to improve the study skills of the students. These include listening and note-taking skills, vocabulary and dictionary skills, textbook pre-reading and reading strategies, review and study techniques for quizzes and tests, and notebook organization skills. By improving reading ability and study skills, students will find greater success in their social studies, science, and English / language arts course work.

OVERVIEW

Students enroll in Developmental Reading and Study Skills for a variety of reasons. Some opt not to take a foreign language, some want to further develop reading and/or study skills, and some are recommended based on a range of measures, including performance on the Connecticut Mastery Tests. The intent of this reading and studies skills course is to help students develop the techniques and strategies necessary for academic success. The instruction is geared to the individual needs of the students, and emphasis is placed upon applying these skills to the students' other subjects. It is felt that all these students will benefit from more continued instructional help in the basic areas of reading and study skills rather than an early undertaking of a foreign language. Students will be involved in various activities including decoding skills, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, study skills, and writing techniques.

Middlesex Middle School

DEVELOPMENTAL READING and STUDY SKILLS

Course Description:

This course concentrates on teaching skills that will enable the student to be as successful as possible in the content areas of social studies, science, and English / language arts. We focus on listening and note-taking skills, vocabulary and dictionary skills, textbook pre-reading and reading skills, review and study techniques for quizzes and tests, and notebook organization skills.

Classroom Expectations:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time with the following materials:

Pencil and pen

Assignment pad

Notebooks and texts for social studies, science, and English / language arts

Reading book

Course Activities:

Part of each period is spent together as a class working on reading and other skills activities. Among the sources used are *News for You* newspapers, *Time for Kids* magazine, biographies, and listening comprehension tapes. These activities include exercises, which are graded. Students will also be evaluated every month for reading speed and comprehension using *Reading Drills* by Fry. Each student will also take the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test* sometime during the first quarter and will be post-tested at the end of the year.

The remainder of each period is spent either on homework, preparing for tests and quizzes, or reading. The teacher will work with individuals or small groups while other students work on their own on English / language arts, social studies, or science.

Evaluation:

The course is graded "Pass/Fail". Progress reports will be mailed home midway through and at the end of each marking period. These reports will include the student's reading exercise scores and a checklist on the student's progress.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does improvement in reading help us to learn in content area courses?
- How do study skills help us to learn in content area courses?
- How will reading improvement make us more confident individuals?
- How does reading help us write effectively?
- How does reading help us understand our world and ourselves better?

PROCESS SKILLS

Reading and Responding

Content Standard 1: Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts.

- a. describe the thoughts, opinions and questions that arise as they read, view or listen to a text, demonstrate a basic understanding of the text, and identify inconsistencies and ambiguities
- b. examine the fit between the text and prior knowledge by reconciling differences, extracting clues or evidence, making inferences, drawing conclusions, predicting events, inferring motives and generalizing beyond the text
- c. demonstrate literary and aesthetic appreciation of the text, awareness of the author's style, understanding of textual features, and ability to challenge the text and think divergently
- d. adapt appropriate strategies to deepen initial understanding and go beyond the text to judge its literary quality
- e. ask and answer their own and each other's text-related critical and analytical questions
- f. predict outcomes of the texts they read, listen to and view, then assess the validity of their predictions
- g. determine the most effective means of monitoring their comprehension, then apply those methods to texts read, listened to and viewed
- h. apply their understanding of textual features of each genre to their interpretations of that genre

- i. use word recognition strategies to perfect reading fluency in ever more sophisticated works
- j. read extensively and apply the variety of vocabulary strategies to read ever more complex texts
- k. describe theme, symbolism, tone and other complex elements of fiction, and identify point of view, manipulative language and other elements of bias in nonfiction materials
- l. use the literary elements of a text (theme, symbolism, imagery, conflict, etc.) to draw conclusions about a text
- m. entertain, explore and defend multiple interpretations of all fiction and nonfiction they read
- n. apply collaborative skills to elaborate on concepts being addressed and to describe processes used in achieving results

The reading program provides experiences which help students to develop and to improve cognitive reading skills and abilities, as well as to find enjoyment in reading. Students need to become independent readers with a desire to read widely and to extend and expand their knowledge and interests. Through reading, students will gain a better understanding of themselves and others, an appreciation of their cultural heritage, and the development of discriminating tastes in reading.

Students will continue to develop reading comprehension skills, and the process of becoming independent readers and critical thinkers will deepen and grow as students read different types of literature that examine problems of adolescence, different societies, and beliefs. Teachers will use the following as guidelines to accomplish these goals:

- Oral Reading
 - Decoding, pronunciation, fluency, build sight word vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension
 - Main idea, details, sequencing, retelling, summarizing
- Reading Analysis / Inference
 - Author's meaning, author's purpose, predicting (cause and effect), organizing (Venn diagram)
- Drawing Generalizations / Conclusions
- Reading (Evaluation)
 - fact / fiction, fact / opinion, propaganda, relevance / off topic
- Interpreting Graphics
 - maps, charts, graphs, cartoons
- Listening Comprehension
- Using Learning Resources and Technology
 - reference books, internet sources
- Working Independently and Collaboratively
- Study Skills
 - Following directions, surveying chapters and news articles, skimming and scanning, note-taking, outlining, using graphic organizers, memorization techniques

STUDENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Worksheets
Written Summaries to News Articles and Books
Word Puzzles
Pre- and Post-Tests (Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test)
Reading and Writing Activities

GRADING GUIDELINES

Students are graded “Pass – Fail“on report cards. Progress reports are sent home every five weeks. (See below) Students are pre-tested in September and post-tested in June to determine their reading grade level.

	<u>Expectations of Students</u>	<u>% of Report Card Grade</u>
Notebook	Maintains organized notebook	10%
Tests and Quizzes	In-Class Assessments	20%
Preparation for Class	Brings appropriate materials	10%
Mid-Year Exams	N/A	N/A
Final Exams	GMRT Post Test	0%
Performance Tasks	In-Class Work	40%
Class Participation/Effort	Attentiveness to Work, Positive Attitude, Effort	10%
Use of Individual Time	Uses Time Effectively and Efficiently	10%

**DEVELOPMENTAL READING AND STUDY SKILLS
PERSONAL PROGRESS REPORT**

DATE: _____

STUDENT: _____

GRADE: _____

TEAM: _____

PERIOD: _____

Dear Parents:

This course concentrates on teaching skills that will enable your child to be as successful as possible in the content areas of social studies, science, and English/language arts. We focus on lecture listening and note-taking skills, vocabulary and dictionary skills, textbook pre-reading and reading skills (survey, main idea, and details), review and study techniques for quizzes and tests, and notebook organization skills. We also use the weekly publications of News for You and Time for Kids to improve reading comprehension.

E= Excellent

S= Satisfactory

N= Needs Improvement

1. _____ Brings materials to class (texts, notebooks, etc.)
2. _____ Follows directions
3. _____ General cooperation / conduct
4. _____ Accepts instruction
5. _____ Maintains concentration and effort
6. _____ Uses individual time constructively
7. _____ Participates in class activities
8. _____ Scores on in-class reading exercises

COMMENTS:

SUMMARY OF UNITS

While this course doesn't have any units of study that run for several weeks of consecutive days, it does have some units that include multiple lessons spread out over a marking period or an entire year.

<u>Unit Title</u>	<u>Duration (Weeks)</u>
<u>Fiction (novel and short story)</u>	15 lessons per novel 6 lessons for short stories
<u>Nonfiction</u>	10 lessons for biographies 20-80 lessons from newspapers or magazines 5 lessons of nonfiction narratives
<u>Standardized Test Preparation</u>	15 lessons
<u>Vocabulary Study</u>	7 lessons

UNIT 1: FICTION: Novel and Short Story

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How does reading help us better understand the world and ourselves?

How does reading improvement make us more confident individuals?

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Initial Understanding

- **Identify and define** key vocabulary from the texts used in class.
- **List** key terms that emerge from texts.

Developing an Interpretation

- **Comprehend** main ideas from texts.
- **Develop** note-taking strategies to improve comprehension

Making Connections

- **Describe** how themes and characters from the texts are related to contemporary situations.
- **Compare and contrast** the authors' styles of the texts read in class.

Taking a Critical Stance

- **Make predictions** related to students' understanding of the different texts.

Darien Standards addressed in this unit

Reads materials with a wide variety of styles and topics

Determines word meanings through context

Predicts, using knowledge of language structure and/or sound-symbol to make sense of a word or phrase

Recognizes links between personal experience and ideas in the text

Discusses different types of reading materials, both fiction and nonfiction

Offers critical opinion or analysis of reading passages in discussion

Understands cause and effect

State Standards addressed in this unit

Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary texts.

National Standards addressed in this unit

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the culture of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experiences, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

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Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experiences, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

VOCABULARY

Each vocabulary list is connected to literature, for example Reading the Sky has about 40 words.

ACTIVITIES

The following is a description of the main texts that frame this unit:

Athletic Shorts is a collection of short stories by Chris Crutcher. The stories deal with the problems of high school athletes. For each story the students will take notes and write a summary.

Students will take notes while listening to Best Loved Stories on cassette. Then they will write a summary of each story.

The two Joey Pigza novels by Jack Gantos are about a main character who has Attention Deficit Disorder as well as family problems. During this unit the students will read along as the cassette is played. After each chapter, the students will respond to a daily reading sheet and discuss its content.

Reading the Sky by Avi is about a boy with dyslexia. During this unit the students will take turns reading aloud and then answer questions, study vocabulary, and make predictions.

Reading Drills by Fry has excerpts from novels or short stories for the students to read. The teacher times how long it takes each student to read the excerpt. Then the students answer comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary, and personal response questions. The teacher graphs each student's progress through the year.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key by Jack Gantos

Joey Pigza Loses Control by Jack Gantos

Reading the Sky by Avi

Athletic Shorts by Chris Crutcher

Best Loved Stories Told at the National Story-telling Festival, vol.2 by Mary Carter
Smith, et.al.(cassette)

Reading Drills by Edward Fry

Cassettes of the texts

UNIT 2: NONFICTION

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How does improvement in reading help us to learn in content area courses?

How does reading help us understand our world and ourselves better?

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Initial Understanding

- **Identify and define** key vocabulary from the texts used in class.
- **List** key terms that emerge from texts.

Developing an Interpretation

- **Comprehend** main ideas from texts.
- **Describe** the unique feature of non-fiction.
- **Outline** main ideas in order to reinforce understanding

Making Connections

- **Connect** works of non-fiction with curriculum taught in general classes.

Taking a Critical Stance

- **Respond** to editorials in works of non-fiction.

Darien Standards addressed in this unit

Reads materials with a wide variety of styles and topics.

Determines word meanings through context.

Self-corrects, using knowledge of language structure and/or sound symbol relationships.

Predicts, using knowledge of language structure and/or sound symbol to make sense of a word or phrase.

Recognizes links between personal experience and idea in text.

Reads at different speeds, using scanning, skimming, or careful reading as appropriate.

Selects relevant phrases to answer questions without necessarily reading the whole text.

Identifies opposing viewpoints and main and supporting arguments in texts.

Discusses different types of reading materials, both fiction and nonfiction.

States main idea in reading materials.

Makes generalizations and draws conclusions from reading.

Supports conclusions with examples and specific references to text.

Comprehends and utilizes new vocabulary in reading responses.
Offers critical opinion or analysis of reading passages in discussion.
Understands cause and effect.

State Standards addressed in this unit

Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, and persuasive texts.

National Standards addressed in this unit

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the culture of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

VOCABULARY

Each vocabulary list will be developed based on the non-fiction that is read.

ACTIVITIES

Various worksheets from Time for Kids and News for You
Biog. sheet for 100 People Who Changed America
Question cards for Popular Music Stars
Questions for Reading Drills

CORE TEXTS

News for You newspaper
Time for Kids magazine
100 People Who Changed America Scholastic
Popular Music Stars Media Materials
Reading Drills Edward Fry

UNIT 3: Standardized Test Preparation for Reading Sections

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How will reading improvement make us more confident individuals?

How does reading help us write effectively?

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Initial Understanding

- **Identify** different types of test-taking strategies.

Developing an Interpretation

- **Describe** those strategies that the student feels are most successful for their own learning.

Making Connections

- **Identify** strategies that would be useful both in testing situations and in regular classroom applications.

Taking a Critical Stance

- **Write** a persuasive or narrative essay as a response to a prompt

Darien Standards addressed in this unit

Reads materials with a wide variety of styles and topics.

Determines word meanings through context.

Reads at different speeds, using scanning, skimming, or careful reading as appropriate.

Selects relevant phrases to answer questions without necessarily reading the whole text.

Identifies opposing viewpoints and main and supporting arguments in text.

States main idea in reading materials.

Makes generalizations and draws conclusions from reading.

Supports conclusions with examples and specific references to text.

Offers critical opinion or analysis of reading passages in discussion.

Understands cause and effect.

State Standards addressed in this unit

Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, and persuasive texts.

National Standards addressed in this unit

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and the culture of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and the other texts, texts, their word identifications strategies, and their understanding of textured features (e.g. sounds-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

ACTIVITIES

Teach hints for test taking.

Take practice tests.

CORE TEXTS

CMT Preparation for reading sections (booklet from state)

Test-Wise: Strategies for Success on Standardized Tests (Intermediate), Troll

Test-Ready, Curriculum Associates, Inc

How to Get Better Test Scores Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8, Perfection Learning

Reading Comprehension , Volume 1 and 2, Saddleback Publishing

Developing Key Concepts in Comprehension, books B,C,D, Barnell-Loft

UNIT 4: VOCABULARY STUDY

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

How do study skills help us to learn in content area courses?

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Initial Understanding

- **Identify and define** key vocabulary from the texts used in class.
- Use a dictionary effectively.

Developing an Interpretation

- **Create** lists of antonyms and synonyms for words studied
- **Describe** multiple meanings of some words

Making Connections

- **Examine** how new vocabulary can be used in students' own written and oral work.

ACTIVITIES:

- Learn how to use a dictionary.
- Learn how to use a thesaurus.
- Learn how to make flash cards.
- Learn how to use flash cards.

CORE TEXTS

Dictionary

Thesaurus

Vocabulary Cartoons, New Monic Books, Inc.

ADDITIONAL TEXTS:

Students' Social Studies, Science, and English texts

Darien Standards addressed in this unit

Determines word meanings through context.

Recognizes links between personal experiences and ideas in text.

State Standards addressed in this unit

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g. libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

National Standards addressed in this unit

Students read a wide variety of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the culture of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g. sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).

Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g. print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g. libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

SAMPLE CORE TEXTS FOR STUDENTS

<u>Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key</u>	Jack Gantos	6 th
<u>Joey Pigza Loses Control</u>	Jack Gantos	6 th
<u>Reading the Sky</u>	Avi	6 th , 7 th
<u>Athletic Shorts</u>	Chris Crutcher	8 th
“Who’s on First”	Abbott and Costello	7 th , 8 th
<u>100 People Who Changed America</u>	Scholastic Books	
6 th , 7 th , 8 th		
<u>Best Loved Stories Told at the National Storytelling Festival, Vol. 2</u>	Mary Carter Smith, et. al.	6 th , 7 th

Periodicals

<u>News for You</u>	New Readers Press	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Weekly newspaper
<u>Time for Kids</u>	Time, Inc.	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Weekly magazine

ADDITIONAL TEXTS/ RESOURCES FOR USE BY STUDENTS

Miscellaneous Sources

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	Riverside Publishing Co.	Level 6, Forms L,S,and
T Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	Riverside Publishing Co.	Level 7-8, Forms L,S,
and T <u>Reading Drills – Middle Level</u>	Edward Fry	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Test Wise</u>	Troll	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Popular Music Cards</u>	Media Materials	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Reading Study Cards</u>	Media Materials	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Vocabulary Cartoons</u>	New Monic Books, Inc.	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Test-Ready</u>	Curriculum Associates	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>How to Get Better Test Scores</u>	Perfection Learning	Grades 6, 7, and 8

Miscellaneous Sources

The students’ English, social studies, and science texts	6 th , 7 th , 8 th
<u>Diagnostic Reading Scales</u>	George D. Spache

Learning to Learn
The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists
Reading Comprehension: Volume 1,2
Reader's Handbook
Reading and Writing Source Book
Developing Key Concepts in Comprehension
Teaching Phonics and Word Study
The Reading Teacher's Survival Kit
Clues for Better Reading: Book C

Gloria Frender
Fry, Kress, Fountoukidis
Saddleback Publishing
Great Source
Great Source
Barnell Loft
Wiley Blevins
Wilma H. Miller
Lapp and Flood

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

Computer Software

Super Solvers – Reading Ages 9-12
Clue Finders 6th Grade Adventures
High School Success
Great Source Diagnostic Tests
Study Skills for Successful Learning

The Learning Company
The Learning Company
Kaplan
Great Source
Homeworkhelp.com,inc.

APPENDIX: Developmental Reading and Study Skills Curriculum Guide

Sample Forms, Worksheets, and Exercises

Daily Review, Summary, and Prediction Sheet
Reading the Sky Worksheet
Cassette Stories Questions, Note-taking, and Summary Sheet
Test Taking Strategies
Time for Kids Chart Reading Sheet
Reference and Study Skills Sheet
Note- Taking Worksheet
Biographies from 100 People who Changed America
Black History Month Worksheets
Black History Month Quiz
Time for Kids Skim and Scan Worksheet
News for You Graphics Worksheet
News for You Sequencing and Questions Worksheet
People in the News Worksheet
Magazine Survey Sheet
Dictionary Skills Sheet
How to Study for a Quiz Sheet
How to Study for a Quiz Test
Social Studies Practice Quiz
News for You Crossword Puzzle
Student Self- Evaluation Sheet

Darien Public Schools' K-12 Curricular Language Arts Goals

The overarching goal of the Darien Public Schools' Language Arts Program is to produce students capable of demonstrating the highest levels of communication proficiency and fluency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Basic Assumptions, Instructional Principles, and Teaching Strategies

1. Students come to school with different levels of knowledge and skill upon which further learning will be based. While specific language skills are initially taught to all students through direct instruction, students acquire more sophisticated levels of communication through the integration of the four primary language arts components in a variety of interrelated and interdependent activities and experiences.
2. Skillful communication, however, is more than a working knowledge of the primary language arts components. It is the composite of all acquired skills, achieved through the proficient use of the reading, writing, speaking, and listening components.
3. When students are immersed in an atmosphere that supports a love of learning, and engaged in topics that interest them, learning how to communicate skillfully occurs in a natural, integrated way.
4. Language arts learning is enhanced when students are provided with a language-rich environment and given opportunities to communicate in a variety of ways.
5. Language arts instruction must be imbedded in all curriculum areas.
6. Excellent communication models for students are essential for continued growth at all grade levels. Models of appropriate student and professional writing and speaking provide examples for students to emulate; they also set challenging standards for students to meet.
7. A wide variety of high quality literature, both fiction and non-fiction, must be read.
8. Building upon students' existing knowledge on a topic is a fundamental means of engaging students in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

9. Drawing upon students' current base of knowledge by challenging them to analyze, anticipate, and predict information and themes found within their reading develops readers who come to understand and relate to what they read.
10. The most effective way to teach writing systematically is as a process: brainstorming, composing, conferring, revising, editing, and polishing for others to read.
11. The teaching of writing should focus on the process of writing as a means toward an end: developing clear, thoughtful, polished pieces of writing.
12. The development of strong, basic language skills (e.g. grammar, punctuation, phonics, vocabulary, and spelling) is an essential part of the language arts program. Skill development is best addressed by a combination of direct instruction and individual instruction within the context of each student's own reading and writing experiences.
13. Speaking and listening skills need to be addressed in all grade levels. Students need opportunities to speak confidently and proficiently in informal and formal settings appropriate to grade level; they need to become adept at listening for ideas and information, tone and point of view.
14. The effective use of technological resources is an important part of developing students' skills in research and communication.
15. The Language Arts Program and its stated goals must be supported by all staff throughout the District. Regular communication among staff members and administration, as well as District support of appropriate ongoing staff development activities, is essential.

The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards

1. Reading and Responding. Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, and persuasive texts.
2. Producing Texts. Students will produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.
3. Applying English Language Conventions. Students will apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication
4. Exploring and Responding to Texts. Students will use the language arts to explore and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

National Standards for the English Language Arts (sponsored by NCTE and IRA):

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.