

Dropout Prevention

The purpose of the state dropout prevention program is to keep students in school to complete successfully their high school education. The dropout prevention program seeks to assure the positive development of all students (pre-K- 12) and to provide the special assistance needed for at-risk students. All staff, not just dropout prevention specialists, must be involved if the program is to be successful. A dropout is any student who leaves school for any reasons before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school, including a community college. The necessary components of a successful dropout prevention program include the following:

- Since the prevention of problems is the most effective approach, the identification of factors that may lead to problems and the identification of problems at their earliest stages are critical. This process should begin in the pre-K-3 years and continue through grade 12. Following the identification, intervention is needed to prevent the further growth of those problems.
- A dropout prevention plan should guide the program as a discrete part of the system's overall educational program. It should outline the problems and detail the objectives and approaches to be used to solve them. In addition to reducing the dropout rate, the plan should be designed to reduce in-school and out-of-school suspensions, behavior problems, and truancy; enhance self-esteem and positive personal adjustment; and encourage academic success. LEAs with a dropout rate above the state average are required to develop a dropout plan and have it on file in the central office.
- The system should provide a method for tracking at-risk students and gathering aggregate data on at-risk students and dropouts.
- Efforts designed to meet particular local needs and priorities take a variety of forms, the basic requirements being that each have as its primary goal keeping students in school. Among the options are academic enhancement.
- Making parents active partners with the schools in the positive development of their children offers many opportunities.
- Since all members of the school system's staff have a role to play in keeping students in school, all must be adequately prepared, and involved in staff development that builds educators' skills and attitudes to work with at-risk students.

A wide range of programs for dropout prevention and students at risk is needed within every school system and community to complement the quality educational programs available to all students. Listed below are the types of programs which may be funded through state dropout prevention and students at risk funds. Within these general options, the specific programs to be implemented will be determined by each local school system based on an assessment of needs and local priorities. Local programs may include components of one or more of these options, but every school system is encouraged to develop programs which can most effectively meet local needs.

Early Identification and Intervention Programs

Early identification and intervention programs seek to recognize students who may face problems and prevent or ameliorate those problems before they become severe.

Counseling for At-Risk Students

Counseling for at-risk students focuses the skills of counselors on preventing and alleviating the problems facing students which can lead to dropping out. Counselors identify at-risk students and follow up to assure that needed services are provided.

Behavior Improvement Programs

Behavior improvement programs seek to improve discipline in the schools through a variety of approaches, with the ultimate goal of greater self-discipline. The emphasis is on increasing the ability of teachers to handle discipline within their own classrooms. In-school suspension programs are one alternative for students whose behavior is extremely disruptive and could result in out-of-school suspension or expulsion. The programs focus on reduction of disruptive behavior and provide classroom instruction as well as counseling in a therapeutic setting.

Academic Enhancement Programs

Academic enhancement programs are designed to accelerate the learning of students who are falling behind their peers in academic achievement. Through remediation, accelerated learning, continuous progress learning, and other enhancements, the goal is to increase achievement while keeping these at-risk students a part of the overall educational program of the school.

Alternative School Programs

Alternative school programs offer a variety of options which distinguish them from traditional school programs and provide choices of routes to completion of school. They may vary from other programs in such areas as teaching methods, hours, curriculum, or sites and are intended to meet particular learning needs. Extended school day programs are an alternative which provides extension of the conventional high school program designed to meet the particular learning needs and styles of dropouts and potential dropouts and offer them an alternative program for completing their high school education. Meeting in afternoon and evening hours, they offer flexibility in curriculum, scheduling, and teaching methods. Schools-within-schools, operating within the framework of traditional schools, are another alternative. The focus in any alternative program should be on expanding the options for learning for all students rather than separating certain groups of students from other learners.

Work-Related Programs

Work-related programs identify potential dropouts and offer counseling, remediation, career guidance, and job preparation services designed to meet their individual needs. These services are intended to assist at-risk students in moving from school to the work environment and to provide them with skills necessary to compete in today's society.

Special Programs for At-Risk Students

Special programs for at-risk students are designed to meet particular local needs and priorities. The basic requirement of each program is that its primary goal be encouraging achievement and keeping students in school. Among the types of programs that may be funded are attendance improvement programs and other programs that serve groups of at-risk students, such as the handicapped, juvenile and youthful offenders, substance abusers, pregnant students, and/or adolescent parents. Programs may also provide special services, such as school social work, school psychology services, or school nursing. Such options as after-school support clubs, summer activities, peer helpers, outdoor experiences, student advocacy, and parental involvement are encouraged (to the extent that they may be funded under other guidelines set forth here).

Remedial and Compensatory Efforts

Local school administrative units shall provide remedial education to all students who fail to meet State promotion standards or who are identified as in danger of failing to meet these standards.

Remediation can occur during the regular school year or during the summer.

Compensatory education programs provide assistance to students who need additional help to succeed in school, particularly in basic academic areas. Compensatory and remedial assistance should be provided to students who have been defined as being educationally deprived and may include migrant, bilingual, and refugee children.

Student Services

Student services programs focus on the well-being of students and on helping to prevent or correct any conditions which might interfere with learning.

Pre-School Screening

Each school district will have a comprehensive pre-school screening program for the purpose of identifying student's physical status and developmental strengths and needs prior to school entry. Results of screening will be used to develop educational plans to address student's individual strengths and needs, and to identify students who should be referred for further observation or evaluation. The areas to be screened include: speech, hearing, sight, gross and fine motor skills, health, and cognitive, social, and emotional maturity.

School Counseling

School Counselors:

- Provide individual counseling for students
- Share information with school personnel, parents, and community agencies about the needs and concerns of students
- Provide group counseling for students
- Assist students in educational and vocational placement based on their aptitudes, achievements, and interests
- Refer students to community agencies for services

School Social Work Services

School social workers:

- Provide a liaison between the school, home, and community resources in resolving problems of school adjustment and attendance
- Help students, their families and school in crisis situations by reducing tensions, providing support and offering alternatives for action
- Serve as a student advocate to ensure that the student's educational, legal and personal rights are not violated
- Refer students to community agencies for help in problems such as substance abuse, family violence, and individual and family counseling.

School Psychological Services

School psychological services are provided in the areas of prevention, early intervention, and remediation.

Direct services for students, parents and school personnel include:

- Consulting with parents, teachers, and administrators about the educational, behavioral, and mental health needs of students
- Providing services such as counseling, behavior management, social skills training, and crisis intervention
- Assessing students to determine their instructional needs, strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, etc.

Indirect services include:

- Coordinating group testing programs and assisting school officials to identify student needs
- Coordinating services from other community agencies to meet the educational and mental health needs of students
- Disseminating research findings to teachers and staff on topics such as effective instruction and student learning styles.

Health Services

Health services promote physical and mental well-being of children by:

- Providing health counseling
- Providing assessments and referrals concerning health care needs
- Assisting in disease prevention and control
- Monitoring health hazards and their removal
- Educating students to develop positive health habits
- Removing barriers to community health services

Child Nutrition

The child nutrition program helps to provide all students access to nutritionally sound meals each school day. These meals promote the health and well-being of all students and enable them to take full advantage of their schooling. The child nutrition program reinforces activities promoting good eating habits.

All school districts participate in federally-funded child nutrition programs, which provide breakfasts and lunches at full, reduced, or free prices based on federal guidelines.

Federal funds available through the Nutrition Education and Training program are used for developing instructional resources and for training teachers and school food service personnel. All resources used in the classroom are developed in accordance with competency goals and objectives at each grade level, are provided at no cost to school districts, and support other nutrition education efforts in the classroom.

Library/Media Programs

Media and Technology Programs

A school library media collection reflects the diversity of materials that are now available. This collection is comprised of print and non-print materials, instructional technologies, and accompanying equipment. In order to build a balanced collection, choices need to be made from all categories and reflect the following:

- Curricular needs of the school
- Interests of the students
- Learning styles of the students
- Ability levels of the students
- Needs of the community
- Professional needs of the teachers

Collection Development

Developing a collection to meet the needs of a school's students and faculty is cyclical in nature and involves four basic processes:

- Analysis of needs
- Assessment of collection
- Selection of resources
- Acquisition of resources

The school media coordinator, with the help of the Media and Technology Advisory Committee, assesses needs constantly; examines the collection; weeds old, inaccurate, out-of-date, and unattractive materials; and replaces them with new, more appropriate materials and formats. An effective, dynamic collection requires complete and perpetual inventory and evaluation. Assessing faculty and student needs without carefully determining how the collection is meeting those needs gives a media coordinator only half the information necessary for acquiring resources. Adding new resources and formats without discarding older, less appropriate ones creates an overwhelming mixture of materials that is difficult to use and impossible to discern.

In addition to the regular collection, a professional collection should be provided to encourage teachers to keep abreast of current education initiatives and to apprise them of experimentation in all fields of education. Access to professional literature and technology formats supports the informed selection of appropriate materials and equipment for the school's instructional program. Management of the professional collection by a media coordinator who is both active and proactive provides guidance to teachers in both the theory and application of effective practices.

Needs Assessment/Collection Analysis

The actual assessment process is logical, although time consuming. It is a process that can involve the Media and Technology Advisory Committee as much or as little as is appropriate. The individual school's curriculum, community standards, and faculty and student needs and interests must be analyzed, and then the resource requirements that correspond with this evaluation are determined. Once the needs assessment is completed, a plan for collection development can be put into

(Pending BEP Advisory Council and State Board of Education Approval)

place. There are many needs/collection analysis methods available, some more effective than others, some more difficult and time consuming than others. All offer **concrete** ways to prove whether or not a collection is meeting the needs of the people who use it.

- **COLLECTION MAPPING:** A process by which collections are analyzed according to numbers of materials that meet specific curricular needs per student. (*Premise:* Number of materials in particular curricular areas per user indicates collection effectiveness.)
- **AVERAGE AGE OF THE COLLECTION:** A simple formula that allows the computation of the average copyright date of materials to give an idea of how old a collection is. (*Premise:* An older collection does not meet needs of clientele as effectively as a more up-to-date collection.)
- **USE STATISTICS:** By using circulation statistics (or reference contacts), the media coordinator can determine how well certain areas of the collection are meeting the needs of faculty and students by their rate of use. (*Premise:* Students and faculty use only the materials that adequately meet their needs.)
- **OPINION SURVEYS:** By interviewing students and/or faculty either verbally or through written instruments, the media coordinator can determine whether or not the collection is meeting their needs. (*Premise:* Users will be honest and aware of what they need.)

Selection

Selection of resources, like collection analysis, is an ongoing process. It is based on a sound, system-level, written policy as called for in: **PUBLIC SCHOOL LAWS OF NORTH CAROLINA**, General Statute 115C-98 (b) and (c). With the introduction of new and varied formats and technology, the selection process is more complicated. One can no longer simply rely on a review of a book or video in making selections. Likewise, choosing the least expensive format may not be the most effective use of limited funds. The media coordinator and/or the Media and Technology Advisory Committee determines how information can be most effectively accessed. All these selection decisions can be made only at individual schools with careful analysis and discussion within the Media and Technology Advisory Committee (or site-based management team). While there are no right or wrong answers, there are several universal criteria to consider:

- Is this the best format for presentation of this information?
- Can this technology/format be used by many students of varying ability levels at approximately the same time? (Is this criterion necessary for this particular resources?)
- Can the school provide ongoing support for this format? (e.g., telecommunications charges)
- Does this format take into consideration the school's goals and objectives for its students/teachers?
- Is this the best use of limited resources?
- Do the items selected require adherence to the Division of State Purchase and Contract guidelines?

Once the questions are addressed and decisions made, items can be selected and acquired, keeping a variety of specific selection criteria in mind.

Collection Management

All school-owned materials need to be organized and arranged so that users can obtain any item quickly and easily. This organization includes classifying, cataloging, and providing entries for all materials in a unified catalog. Cataloging is a labor-intensive function that is particularly suited to computerization. The development of a standardized machine readable bibliographic format (MARC record) for cataloging materials, as well as technological advances in both individual and network computer systems, has revolutionized cataloging services in school library media centers.

The catalog itself may be in either a traditional print format or an automated online catalog. One advantage of the online catalog over a card catalog is easier access to wider ranges of subject headings and cross-references, which results in more successful patron searches. In addition, the online catalog increases access speed for the user and facilitates updates to the catalog. These “user-friendly” advantages encourage increased use of media services and resources.

Circulation and loan policies must encourage users to borrow materials and equipment for use throughout the school, at home, and in the media center. For example, access to materials should not be denied to students who cannot afford photocopying fees. Review circulation policies periodically to ensure that all students have equal access to information and that no obstacles inhibit the use of media resources.

Microcomputers are being used successfully in most school media centers to manage circulation, to report overdues, to generate circulation statistics, and to facilitate inventory. In addition, these automated systems provide additional security for circulation of materials and equipment. By using technology to perform these labor-intensive functions, the media coordinator saves considerable time that then can be used for working with students and teachers.

Regular maintenance of the collection includes ongoing inventory, weeding, and preventive maintenance and repair. Collection development plans and budget proposals should include provisions for these maintenance functions.

All resources in the school should be readily accessible to every user. Accessibility involves:

- adequacy of physical facilities
- provision, organization, location, and arrangement of the resources
- flexible scheduling to accommodate students, teachers, and the media and technology staff

Media and technology staff and patrons must be aware of and comply with copyright regulations affecting the availability of materials.

Materials

The variety of activities and personal interests found in a school places great demands on the school library media collection. Technological advancements coupled with these demands have created dramatic changes in the character and composition of the library media center collection. Collections once dominated by books have been extended by large collections of computer software, videotapes, CD-ROM, and dozens of other kinds of resources.

The description of a library media collection traditionally focused on the collection housed in the school. The contemporary description of the school's library media collection encompasses materials organized and housed for retrieval in the school and information that is located outside the school – in other libraries, in electronic databases, in museums, or in other information agencies. Today's media coordinator is more an information access manager than a keeper of the collection.

Media coordinators need the flexibility to change the way media programs provide services to students and faculty in support of the instructional program; therefore, **the need for quantitative standards for collections is no longer valid**. In moving toward resource-based schools, the types and sizes of collections depend on services provided by the media program, the curriculum, the instructional program, and on teaching strategies.

A **qualitative** approach to collection development, administered thoughtfully by the school's Media and Technology Advisory Committee and interpreted carefully to school administrators, promotes the development and maintenance of a modern and usable collection. It should reflect the recommendations of the school and school system technology plans.

Schools that have chosen to become members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) should consult the SACS standards since their quantitative standards still are in place.

Sports Medicine

All high schools are required to employ a teacher athletic trainer who is qualified to provide sports medicine services to students injured in interscholastic athletics and provide paramedical services to those students and/or teachers injured during regular school hours.

IV. General Standards

Amended Promotion Standards from the Basic Education Program for North Carolina Public Schools

The state requires mastery of reading and mathematics competencies in grades 3, 6, and 8 prior to promotion to the next level. In the past, the state standard was implemented in three phases and required the administration of the MSDT in phases 2 and 3. The policy of the Board, however, included language which allowed amendments: "The State Board of Education" will modify state promotion standards and minimum competencies as necessary to be consistent with the curriculum described in the "Basic Education Program." Curriculum revisions have been completed in reading and mathematics, and Benchmarks of Proficiency have been developed in these areas. These benchmarks indicate proficiency based upon consistency and accuracy of performance, the amount of learner independence, and the complexity of the material. They reflect the revised curriculum and assessment standards. Therefore, the Board will provide an amended process to insure that proficiency in these areas has been reached in grades 3, 6, and 8. Although LEAs may choose to use the existing

standards for phase I, II, and III, they are encouraged to use the amended process described below which is more closely aligned with revised curricula.

The state standard will not apply to students already retained in the same grade span (K-3, 4-6, 7-8) or identified as trainable mentally handicapped, educable mentally handicapped, or severely/profoundly mentally handicapped, or to other identified handicapped students who have been exempted by policy of the local Board of Education on the basis that the standard is not a reasonable one for the student. The parent(s) of any excluded child should have the right to contest the exclusion of his or her child from promotion standards under the procedures set out in G.S.15C-116.

Amendments to Phase I, II, and II

The essence of this process is to require that students be evaluated as being in the Level I category for two consecutive years before being required to attend summer school. Thus, a single test score is not used to require students to attend summer school. This process identifies similar proportions of students as the previous Promotion Standards Policy. To accomplish this, Phases I, II, and III are amended as follows:

PHASE I (AMENDED):

Students in grades 3, 6, and 8 may be identified as “at risk” based on data from the previous year. For grade 3, data from the Grades 1 and 2 Assessment for reading and math may be used to identify “at risk” students if they were below qualitative expectations for the grade level. For grade 6, students who scored at Level I on the EOG Tests in grades 4 or 5 may be identified as “at risk.” For grade 8, students who scored at Level I on the EOG Tests in grade 7 may be identified as “at risk.” Students identified as “at risk” should be evaluated throughout the year by the teacher using the benchmarks which have been developed for reading and mathematics. If teacher observations indicate that these students have not mastered the basic skills necessary for the grade by April, plans should be made to recommend them for summer school or some other type of program that considers how the curriculum content and instructional methods may be modified.

PHASE II (AMENDED):

Students identified as Level I in the previous year and who score at Level II or higher in the current year shall not be required to go to summer school because of State standards. The LEAs may require higher standards based upon local policies on promotion. The parents of “at risk” students may, however, elect to have their children attend summer school to insure that the progress made during the year is continued. Any “at risk” student who scores at the Level I category in grades 3, 6, or 8 shall attend summer school or receive some other remedial assistance.

PHASE III (AMENDED):

The State Board will not require that a test be given at the conclusion of summer school since the promotion decision is presently made by the professional judgments of the teacher(s) and the principal.

English Language Arts (Communication Skills) Proficiencies: Benchmarks for Grades 3, 6, and 8

The English Language Arts (Communication Skills) Benchmarks for grades 3, 6, and 8 are developmentally appropriate indicators of student progress toward proficiency in the goals and objectives of the North Carolina *Standard Course Of Study*. They describe what students should know and be able to do consistently and accurately at the end of a grade level. The benchmarks are designed to enable teachers to assess student progress over time and in a variety of situations. Teachers can gather data by observing the processes that students use as they work, by observing students' work products, and by using classroom-based and external measures. The data gathered will allow teachers to make informed instructional decisions and to integrate instruction and assessment.

The reading benchmarks are categorized as Characteristics of the Reader, Reading Strategies, and Reading Comprehension. The writing benchmarks include the related categories of Characteristics of the Writer, Composing Process (strategies), and Composing Products. Although individual benchmarks may be important, a more complete picture of what a student knows and can do emerges based on these broader categories.

The benchmarks, which focus on concepts as opposed to discrete facts, vary according to the complexity of material used and the amount of support given by the teacher. They show the correlation between reading and writing and reflect progression between grades. Since they are not repeated at higher grades but are cumulative, it is imperative that teachers be familiar with the grade levels that precede and follow their own. This document includes proficiencies for grades 3, 6, and 8. The K-12 proficiencies are included as Appendix C in the *Standard Course of Study* for English Language Arts (Communication Skills).

Reading Grade 3

Third graders read many types of texts—literary, informational, and practical. They distinguish between fact and opinion and note and chart details. These students interpret poetry and infer main ideas, lessons, or morals in a variety of prose. Students in this grade use a variety of reading strategies to construct meaning for text. They choose to read silently for extended periods of time for pleasure and information.

Characteristics of the Reader: Exhibits the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a reader.

Recommends materials for others to read.

Reads materials on a variety of topics.

Reads for a variety of purposes such as for pleasure, to gain information, or to support an opinion.

Describes personal reactions to poetry, informational, practical, and narrative texts.

Perseveres when the task requires reading silently for extended periods of time.

Reading Strategies: Uses one or more of the following strategies as appropriate to construct meaning from text.

Continues to predict based on semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues (using increasing knowledge of letter clusters, vowel patterns, affixes, and roots).

Searches, predicts, monitors, and cross-checks using semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues independently.

Reads on and rereads to check predictions and clarify meaning.

Uses analogy by identifying a word as being the same or almost the same as a known word.

Uses chunking by using familiar word parts to identify increasingly complex unknown words.

Notes unknown words for later study.

Paraphrases information from text in own words.

Uses text aids such as headings, bold print, and italics.

Focuses on details of print only when meaning is lost.

Reading Comprehension: Constructs meaning from literary, informational, and practical texts.

Reads literary, informational, and practical text.

Interprets poetry and recognizes stanza and rhyme as characteristics of poetry.

Infers main idea, lesson, or moral in a variety of prose including fairy tales, tall tales, fables, legends, and myths.

Compares traits of characters as evidenced in the text.

Compares and contrasts characters, events, episodes, and/ or stories.

Compares and contrasts poems, informational selections, or other literary selections.

Distinguishes between fact and opinion.

Recognizes the author's use of figurative language such as simile or metaphor.

Supports ideas by reference to evidence presented in texts.

Summarizes and records information.

Notes and charts detail.

Discriminates between cause and effect relationships.

Understands and interprets maps, charts, diagrams, and other visual representations.

Compares and contrasts information in printed and visual form.

Writing Grade 3

Third graders write a variety of poetry and prose and can support their ideas with references to their reading. They use a variety of prewriting activities, revise their writing by adding detail, and recognize incorrect spelling.

Characteristics of the Writer: Possesses the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a writer.

Shows originality in word choices.

Uses excitement, humor, suspense, originality in word choice, or some other creative element.

Creates characters and events from outside personal environment.

Writes in response to literature, informational, and practical texts.

Chooses to write for pleasure.

Begins to write for extended periods of time.

Incorporates feelings and personal experiences in narrative writing.

Uses vocabulary, ideas, themes, and structures from books in writing.

Records what the student knows, wants to know, and has learned by writing in learning log.

Composing Process: Uses one or more of the following strategies to write literary, informational, and practical texts.

Shows recall of visual patterns by using conventional spelling most of the time.

Uses punctuation conventionally.

Assesses own performance in reading by writing in learning log.

Uses paragraphs to organize information and ideas and maintains the topic focus.

Uses a prewriting activity such as drawing, brainstorming, webbing, or storyboarding independently.

Revises by adding detail for elaboration.

Marks incorrect spelling when editing writing.

Edits to verify and self-correct spelling.

Experiments to vary word order in sentences.

Uses concepts of order and time in writing.

Critiques books in reading log/response journal by discussing what makes a good book or why a particular author or genre is preferred.

Composing Products: Writes literary, informational, and practical texts to convey meaning, to learn, and to clarify thinking.

Writes using characters, setting, problem, and solution.

Explains in writing the main idea, lesson, or moral of a selection when appropriate.

Writes a variety of poetry and prose including fairy tales and personal narratives.

Writes practical texts such as news articles, recipes, directions and interviews.

Writes to support ideas with reference to evidence presented in text.

Expresses meaning inferred from text.

Reading Grade 6

Sixth graders are learning to read materials with more complex characters, settings, and episodes. They read literary, informational, and practical texts from a variety of genres, subjects, authors and styles. Sixth graders learn the importance of organization, supporting evidence, and text aids in expository text and of theme, sound, and figurative language in literary texts. They identify opposing points of view and acknowledge a range of interpretations of texts. They change reading strategies when they encounter difficulties in text and check the reliability of information in reference materials such as periodicals, charts, and maps.

Characteristics of the Reader: Exhibits the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a reader.

Appreciates reading as an essential life skill.

Responds to novels, biographies and informational books through oral, artistic and dramatic projects.

Questions and reflects on issues encountered in texts.

Establishes criteria and justifies own appraisal of a text.

Acknowledges a range of interpretations of text.

Reading Strategies: Uses one or more of the following strategies as appropriate to construct meaning from text.

Changes reading strategies to clarify meaning.

Checks reliability of information through the use of biographies, reference books, periodicals, charts, and maps.

Analyzes use of text aids such as headings, bold print, graphics, and print styles.

Reading Comprehension: Constructs meaning from literary, informational, and practical texts.

Reads literary materials with complex characters, settings, and episodes with teacher support .

Reads informational and practical materials with complex vocabulary, concepts, and formats with teacher support.

Reads materials from a variety of genres, subjects, authors, and styles.

Responds to questions about a subject based on prior knowledge.

Recognizes the characteristics of expository (clarification) text.

Recognizes coherence, logic, and organization in expository (clarification) text.

Recognizes relatedness and sufficiency of details in expository (clarification) text.

Recognizes themes beyond personal experiences.

Identifies story structures and organizational patterns of text.

Discovers related ideas, concepts, and generalizations in text.

Recognizes characteristics of a particular author's style.

Recognizes the author's use of sound devices such as alliteration and onomatopoeia.

Recognizes the author's use of figurative language such as personification and hyperbole.

Identifies opposing points of view and main and supporting arguments in text.

Writing Grade 6

Sixth graders write using multiple characters and episodes. They write on a variety of topics and in more than one genre. They express main ideas and support them with details in narrative, descriptive, and expository writing. These students use a range of writing forms and are becoming independent users of the writing process with revision focusing on the smooth flow of ideas, deleting extraneous information, and establishing personal voice. They edit their work for errors and use basic grammatical terms while conferencing about their writing with their peers and teacher.

Characteristics of the Writer: Possesses the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a writer.

Recognizes the value of writing to clarify thinking, to express emotions, to make decisions, and to solve problems.

Offer reasons for the feelings provoked by text by writing in reading log/response journal.

Composing Process: Uses one or more of the following strategies to write literary, informational, and practical texts.

Understands and uses stages in the writing process with moderate teacher support.

Revises work to improve the smooth flow of ideas and reorganizes work to make it more readable.

Revises by deleting extraneous information or ideas.

Uses a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and forms.

Uses **basic** grammatical terms **necessary** for conferencing when revising and editing.

Evaluates the revision suggestions of others to maintain personal voice and authorship.

Selects organization and layout of written text that is accurate and appropriate for purpose, audience, and situation.

Uses concrete images and vivid descriptions in expository (clarification) writing.

Writes in a range of writing forms.

Uses repetition of sounds and words in writing poetry.

Chooses narrative, descriptive, and some forms of expository as appropriate to purpose and task.

*Edits written work for errors in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Composing Products: Writes literary, informational, and practical texts to convey meaning, to learn, and to clarify thinking.

Writes using multiple characters and episodes independently.

Writes literary, informational, and practical compositions independently.

Writes on a variety of topics and in more than one genre.

Assesses individual performance as the member of a group by writing in learning log.

Develops longer descriptions coherently.

Expresses main idea and uses details in expository (point of view) writing.

Writes expository (clarification) texts that have a coherent, logical, and organized structure.

Writes expository (clarification) texts that provide sufficient, related, elaborated reasons to clarify why a relationship exists between the writer and the subject.

Compares and contrasts ideas and information by writing in learning log.

***See Editing Proficiencies for Grade 6**

Reading Grade 8

Eighth graders read literary texts with complex characters, settings, and episodes. They read informational and practical materials with complex vocabulary, concepts, and formats. They synthesize and expand on information from a range of texts and analyze and formulate critical opinions. Eighth graders recognize authors' bias and the characteristics of argumentative texts. These students manage identified resources for their research and assess their own performance.

Characteristics of the Reader: Exhibits the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a reader.

Recognizes that reading can change attitudes and behaviors.

Expresses emotional reactions and personal opinions and relates personal values to a selection or experience.

Acknowledges that there are many reasons for seeking information such as curricular pursuits, personal interests, or consumer needs.

Compares and offers critical analysis of materials presented in the media.

Reading Strategies: Uses one or more of the following strategies as appropriate to construct meaning from text.

Uses knowledge of word formation, sentence structure, or other context clues.

Maps out the plots and character developments in novels and other literary texts.

Supports argument or opinion by reference to evidence presented in sources outside the text.

Assesses own performance relative to material and purpose.

Manages identified resources needed to complete reading tasks.

Formulates questions about a subject based on prior knowledge.

Uses print and electronic catalogs and indices to locate materials.

Reading Comprehension: Constructs meaning from literary, informational, and practical texts.

Reads literary materials with complex characters, settings, and episodes independently.

Reads informational and practical materials with complex vocabulary, concepts, and formats independently.

Recognizes the characteristics of argumentative (persuasive) text.

Recognizes coherence, logic, and organization in argumentative (persuasive) text.

Recognizes relatedness and sufficiency of details in argumentative (persuasive) text.

Extracts ideas embedded in complex passages of text.

Synthesizes and expands on information from a range of texts.

Recognizes the author's bias.

Evaluates appropriateness of persuasive techniques such as personality, tradition, rhetoric, and reason.

Analyzes and formulates a critical opinion about literary and informational material.

Recognizes how sound, diction, symbolism, and figurative language interact to communicate multiple interpretations.

Discusses ways language and visuals bring characters and events to life.

Writing Grade 8

Eighth graders write argumentative pieces that have a coherent, logical, and organized structure, and that provide sufficient, elaborated reasons to persuade an audience. They conference during revising and editing, using basic grammatical terms. Eighth graders can write both practical texts and critical opinions. These students edit their written work for sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Characteristics of the Writer: Possesses the attitudes, habits, and dispositions of a writer.

Appreciates writing as a major source for learning through note taking, brainstorming, listing, or writing in journals or learning logs.

Works collaboratively on a written product that expresses a response to a selection or experience. Writes with ease in both short passages and extended writing.

Composing Process: Uses one or more of the following strategies to write literary, informational, and practical texts.

Understands and uses stages in the writing process independently.

Writes on a variety of topics and in more than one genre and mode.

Assesses own performance relative to audience and purpose.

Manages identified resources needed to complete writing tasks.

Revises vocabulary, organization, and tone as appropriate for audience and purpose.

Chooses organization and layout appropriate for audience.

Uses literary devices and design elements as appropriate to describe, support an opinion, or persuade an audience.

Selects vocabulary as appropriate to reduce ambiguities and to indicate shades of meaning.

Uses grammatical terms **necessary** for conferencing when revising and editing.

*Edits work for errors in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Composing Products: Writes literary, informational, and practical texts to convey meaning, to learn, and to clarify thinking.

Writes arguments that have a coherent, logical, and organized structure.

Writes arguments that provide sufficient, related, elaborated reasons to persuade an audience to adopt a position.

Writes practical texts such as letters of request and complaint, application forms, or written directions.

Offers critical opinions or analysis of reading and expresses an alternate point of view of author by writing in learning log.

***See Editing Proficiencies for Grade 8**

***Editing Proficiencies for Grade 6**

Edits for errors in sentence formation—misplaced modifiers, incorrect subordination, and incorrect coordination.

Edits for errors in usage—pronoun/antecedent agreement, indefinite pronoun reference, inappropriate homonyms, comparison and superlative degrees.

Edits for errors in mechanics—punctuation and capitalization of quotations and superfluous commas.

Edits for patterns of misspellings.

***Editing Proficiencies for Grade 8**

Edits for errors in sentence formation—non-parallel structure.

Edits for errors in usage—shift in tense and point-of-view.

Edits for errors in mechanics—semicolons, colons, and hyphens.

Edits for patterns of misspellings.