LITERACY… The Root of All Learning

Growing Stronger Roots Through Balanced Literacy

Charles City County
Public Schools

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Balanced Literacy

It starts with the basics. The wording in the Charles City County Public Schools' Strategic Plan is clear. All students will meet high standards of achievement by demonstrating excellence in the skills necessary to compete in a global economy.

Word work and balanced literacy are integral to achieving this goal. In order for students to develop the skills they need to meet high academic standards and compete in a global economy they must practice reading, writing and communicating. This opens the door for critical thinking in all subject areas. Balanced literacy is the foundation and the framework.

Balanced literacy begins in Preschool and continues through all grades and across all curricular areas. It provides explicit instruction in reading comprehension, utilizing guided practice, and modeling. This provides an opportunity to learn how to make sense of the text before, during and after reading. Teachers and staff initiate the building of learning communities engaged in higher levels of critical thinking by reading critically, predicting, inferring and sequencing.

As students develop into independent thinkers and readers structured time for independent reading is factored into the instructional day.

This provides an opportunity for students to explore texts which interest them and to practice skills and strategies

Daily opportunities to write provided in all classes, facilitates students becoming effective communicators. By taking part in abundant reading and writing opportunities, students become literate global citizens. They can formulate questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.

Through balanced literacy, Charles City County Public Schools will help students meet high standards of achievement and become life long learners.
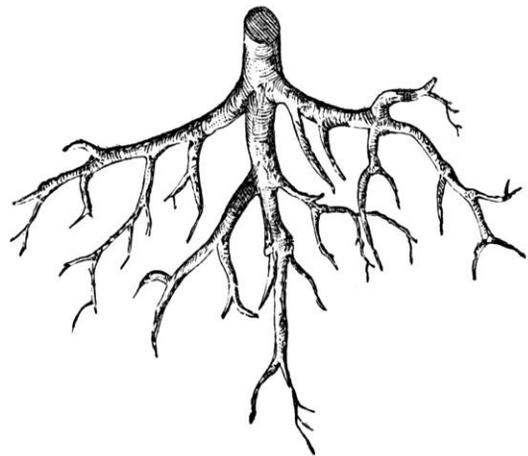
Defining Instructional Components

Language Arts Department

Charles City County Public Schools will provide educational opportunities in a safe, inviting and student-centered environment where students are prepared to be lifelong learners, responsible citizens and productive contributors in a global society. Charles City Schools is committed to developing independent and strategic readers, writers, thinkers and communicators while infusing technology.

English Standards of Learning

The Virginia Department of Education provides standards for teaching students to read, write, and communicate.
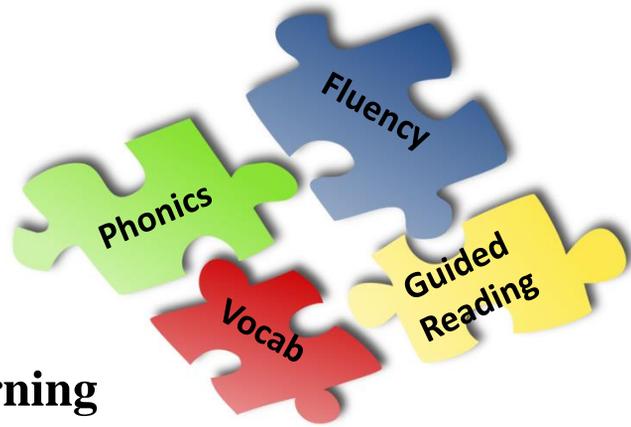
Best Practices for Literacy Learning

- Focus on making meaning by activating prior knowledge
- Research based strategy instruction
- Modeling
- Guided practice, and independent practice guided by assessment
- Immersion in a variety of texts
- Differentiation for students, individually and in small groups
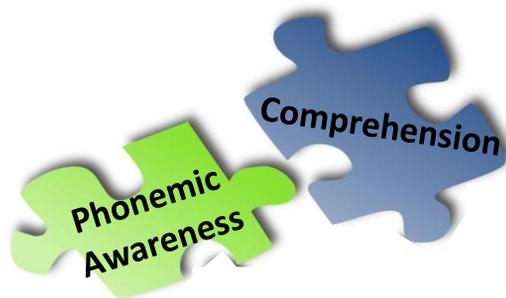
The National Reading Panel provides a summary of empirical research, identifying key areas of reading instruction:
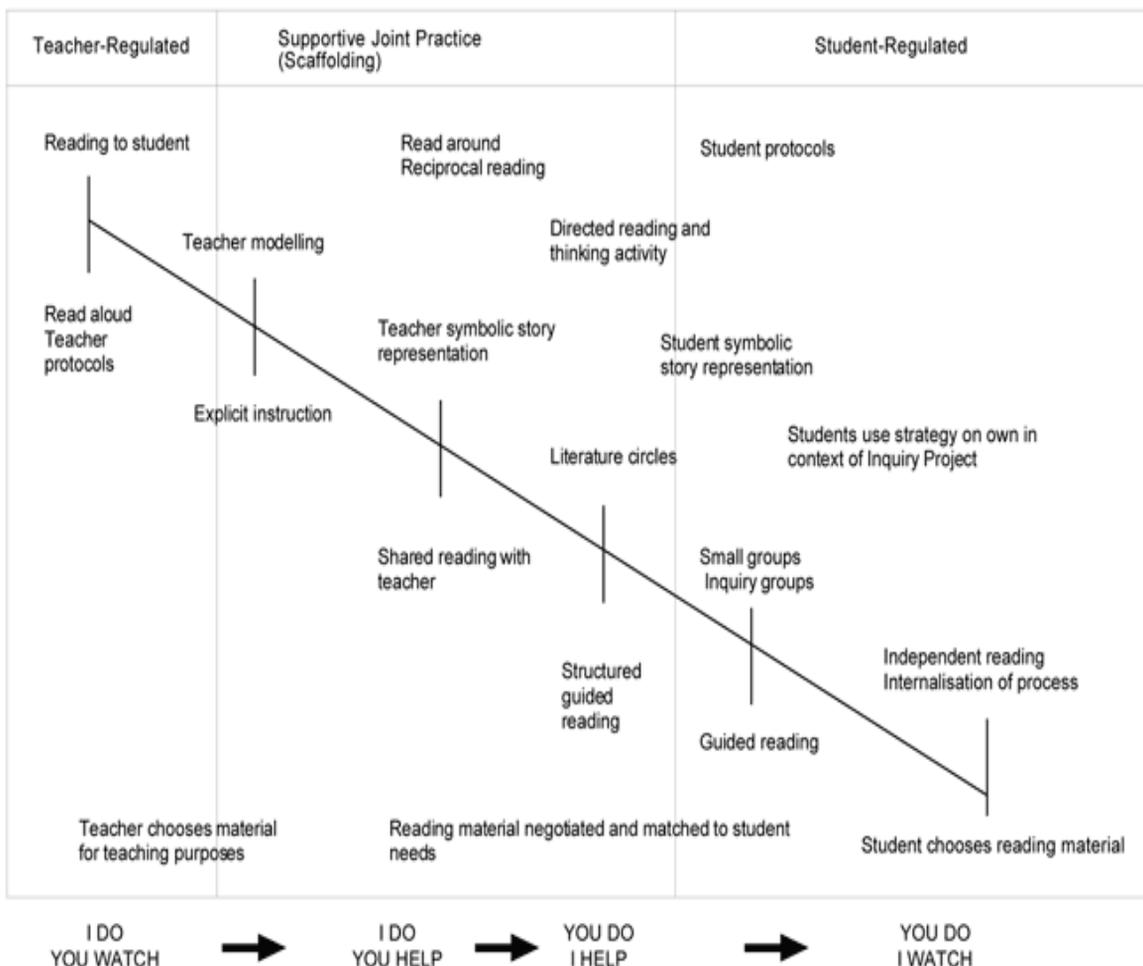- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Guided Reading
- Teaching Vocabulary Words
- Reading Comprehension Strategies

Components of Balanced Literacy

WRITING

READING

WORD WORK

ORAL LANGUAGE

Scaffolding Learning. Through modeling, guided practice, and independent practice, teachers gradually release their level of support as students master concepts and allow students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Ways of Assisting Readers Through Their Zones of Proximal Development: Modes of Scaffolding

Teacher-Regulated	Supportive Joint Practice (Scaffolding)	Student-Regulated
Reading to student	Read around Reciprocal reading	Student protocols
		Directed reading and thinking activity
Read aloud Teacher protocols	Teacher modelling	
	Teacher symbolic story representation	Student symbolic story representation
Explicit instruction		Students use strategy on own in context of Inquiry Project
		Literature circles
	Shared reading with teacher	Small groups Inquiry groups
		Independent reading Internalisation of process
	Structured guided reading	Guided reading
Teacher chooses material for teaching purposes	Reading material negotiated and matched to student needs	Student chooses reading material

I DO YOU WATCH → I DO YOU HELP → YOU DO I HELP → YOU DO I WATCH

Oral Language

Oral language provides a strong foundation for the development of all literacy skills. This foundation is built by daily listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Thinking ⟩ Oral Language ⟩ Written Language ⟩

Best Practices For Oral Language Development
▪Model effective communication skills
▪Set high expectations for purposeful conversations throughout the day
▪Allow time for and encourage students to elaborate on oral responses
▪Provide opportunities for students to utilize new words

Benefits of Daily Read Alouds
▪Introduces new vocabulary
▪Shows various types of written language
▪Models the sound of fluent reading
▪Motivates children to read more
▪Provides ideas for student writing
▪Provides an opportunity for oral responding
(Galda et al. Pp341-342)

Developing Oral Language Through Balanced Literacy

Reading Workshop
▪Read Alouds
▪Readers' Theatre
▪Songs, Poems
▪Literature Circles
▪Summaries and Retellings

Writing Workshop
▪Presentations
▪Peer Editing
▪Oral Storytelling
▪Read Aloud (Mentor Text)

Words Workshop
▪ Peer Discussions
▪ Sorting
▪ Vocabulary Hunts
▪ Word Games

Reading Workshop

Reading workshop is a framework for teaching the complexities of reading . It incorporates multiple instructional methods including shared, guided and independent reading. Teachers model good reading and actively involve student in the process. Throughout the workshop students are given many opportunities to practice and apply reading strategies and skills, build vocabulary knowledge, develop fluency, and internalize the habits of good readers.

Making Meaning: The Act of Comprehending

Comprehending is understanding meaning. It is the goal of all reading. These are some of the strategies that build comprehending.

Making Connections – activating background knowledge and life experiences to increase understanding of text

Visualizing – Creating a mental picture using the senses

Predicting – thinking ahead to determine what might happen

Inferencing – Formulating inquiries to guide thinking. Combining clues from the text to determine what the author meant but did not implicitly state.

Summarizing – Sorting out what is really important. Finding the main idea and supporting details.

Self –monitoring and Clarifying – Monitoring understanding, and applying new strategies when understanding breaks down.

Best Practices for Reading
- ✓ Engage students in authentic, useful , and meaning making reading
- ✓ Focus on reading strategies to build comprehension
- ✓ Read a variety of genres for a variety of purposes. Compare and contrast genres. For example read historical fiction and then a nonfiction historical selection
- ✓ To build fluency you need to model fluency. Model rereading familiar texts.
- ✓ Differentiate reading based on reader skills and levels.
- ✓ Read across the curriculum. When possible use thematic units.

Stages of a Developing Reader

Emergent Reader → Early Reader → Transitional Reader → Extending Reader/Fluent →

Parts of the Reading Workshop
Shared Reading

Shared Reading Focus:

The focus is on comprehension strategies and skills. The teacher models how good readers pull meaning from the text using think aloud strategies and skills. In the upper grades students may read a longer text and spend more time practicing the skills. Group interactions during shared reading provide an opportunity for student to learn from one another and to utilize higher order thinking skills.

Shared reading is:

- ✓ A focus on teaching comprehension strategies and skills.
- ✓ Explicit modeling teaching students how good readers draw meaning from text.
- ✓ Having younger less experienced reader reread familiar texts to practice different skills.
- ✓ Having experienced readers read longer works and practicing refining the same skill over time
- ✓ Group interactions allowing students to learn from peers and to apply strategies and thus higher levels of thinking
- ✓ Giving students skills to use during guided and independent reading.

Do I need Skills or Strategies? BOTH!
✓ Skills - necessary for low level thinking.
✓ Strategies – Complex decisions that support higher level thinking. Strategies lead to metacognition and facilitates understanding at a deeper level.

Parts of the Reading Workshop
Guided Reading

Guided Reading Focus:
Guided reading allows the teacher to observe, and support students during reading development. It provides opportunities for students to practice strategies learned during shared reading. The teacher differentiates instruction by working with smaller groups of students at similar developmental levels. Groupings are determined by ongoing assessment. The teacher guides students through carefully selected texts. Instruction within guided reading changes as students become more proficient with strategies and skills.

Guided Reading Is:
✓Matching students to books based on ongoing assessment
✓Assisting them with thinking through the text
✓Assisting students with developing a purpose for reading and activating prior knowledge
✓Introducing specific vocabulary that may be difficult for students
✓Encouraging higher order thinking by actively encouraging students to think beyond the text.
✓Prompting the use of effective strategies
✓Revisiting the text to demonstrate and reinforce reading strategies
✓Sharing noticing and thinking.

Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop Focus:

The focus is to help students develop effective written communication skills. It provides an authentic context for students to apply knowledge of phonics, spelling, and grammar. Teachers model effective writing techniques and can correct and remediate grammar skills as students write for a variety of purposes. Teachers confer with students individually before students share their writing with peers, allowing them to learn from other writers in a safe and supportive environment.

Writing Workshop Is:

✓ A way for students to become effective communicators utilizing written language

✓ A context and medium for student to share their knowledge

✓ A path to develop an appreciation for the written word

✓ A time to develop writing skills

✓ Providing models of effective writing skills and techniques

✓ Students writing for a variety of purposes

✓ Students sharing their writing with other students allowing them to learn from each other.

✓ A safe and supportive environment fostering self-directed learners.

The Writing Process

The writing process is fluid. Writers start by exploring inspirations for writing and thinking about the type of writing required. Once writers have committed to a writing project, a draft is started. Through revisions and editing students move toward publishing a final product. Fountas and Pinnell *Developing Accomplished Writers* pp53-54

Types of Writing

Narrative	Expository	Descriptive	Reports

Letters	Poems

Words Workshop

Word Workshop Focus:

Word Workshop helps students identify patterns within written language, master spelling   and meaning and to transfer word knowledge to reading and writing. This enhances comprehension.

Word Study Is:

✓ Students identifying patterns present in written language

✓ Teachers facilitating the recognition, spelling and meaning of certain words

✓ Word knowledge transferred to reading and writing which enhances fluency and comprehension

✓ Word activities that develop phonemic awareness, phonics, automaticity with high frequency words

✓ Developing sound/symbol correspondence in the primary grades

✓ Sorting and word building activities that deepen word knowledge in the upper elementary grades.

Spelling follows a developmental sequence. Your child's teacher can work with you to understand the progression of skills involved in becoming a proficient speller.

Progression of Spelling Development

Alphabet ⟶ Pattern ⟶ Meaning

Derivational Relations
5th to 12th grade

Syllables & Affixes
3rd to 8th grade

Within Word Pattern
1st grade to mid 4th grade

Letter Name – Alphabetic
K to mid 2nd grade

Emergent Spelling Stage
Pre-K to mid 1st grade

Bear, D., et al. Words Their Way

Assessments

State	District	Classroom
▪ PALS (Grades Prek-3) ▪ SOL Test (Grades 3-6)	▪ Words Their Way Spelling Inventory ▪ LAA Writing Assessment ▪ Interactive Achievement Benchmark Assessments	▪ Word Sort Tests ▪ Spelling Tests ▪ Writing Samples ▪ Words Their Way Inventory ▪ Star Reading Test ▪ IXL

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Understanding the Stages of the Developing Reader

Reading Levels Correlation Chart

Label	Grade Level/ Basal	Fountas & Pinnell	Reading Recovery	DRA	Lexile	Number of Books in Student Bin Per Week	Benchmark Books
Green 1	Kindergarten *Readiness* *PrePrimer*	A	A, B / 1	A-1	BR-100	8-10	Baby Gets Dressed
Green 2		B	2	2			Ball Games
		C	3 / 4	3			The Sandwich (Dominie)
Green 3	Grade 1 *PrePrimer 2*	D	5 / 6	4			Shush!
Green 4	*PrePrimer 3*	E	7 / 8	6 / 8			It Looked Like Spilt Milk Mrs. Wishy Washy
Red 1	Grade 1 *Primer*	F	9 / 10	10			Rosie's Walk The Carrot Seed
Red 2		G	11 / 12	12			Cows in the Garden Dinosaurs, Dinosaurs
Red 3	Grade 1 *1*	H	13 / 14	14	200-299	6-8	Goldilocks and the Three Bears (Rigby) Goodnight Moon
Red 4		I	15 / 16	16			Tails Wheels on the Bus
Yellow 1	Grade 2 *2*	J	17	18	300-399	3-6	The Cat in the Hat Henry and Mudge
Yellow 2		K	18	20	400-499		Nate the Great Arthur's Loose Tooth
Yellow 3		L	19	24			Pinky and Rex Cam Jansen
Yellow 4	Grade 3 *3*	M, N	20-22	28-30	500-599	3-4	Junie B. Jones Herbie Jones
Blue 1		O, P	24	34-38	600-699		Boxcar Children Encyclopedia Brown
Blue 2	Grade 4 *4*	Q, R, S	26	40	700-799		Shiloh Great Gilly Hopkins
Blue 3	Grade 5 *5*	T, U, V	28	50	800-899		Bridge to Terabithia Baby (Maclachlan)
Blue 4	Grade 6 *6*	W, X, Y, Z	30	60-70	900 +		Missing May (Rylant) Where the Red Fern Grows

Instructional Components

Oral Language

Oral language is the foundation for the developmental of all literacy skills. These skills are developed and supported through daily opportunities to engage in listening, speaking reading and writing.

READIING

Reading Workshop (60-90 minutes)

Shared Reading
During shared reading, teachers provide explicit comprehension instruction. Through modeling and guided practice, teachers demonstrate and assist students as they learn how proficient readers make sense of text before, during, and after reading. This includes developmentally appropriate skills such as how print is organized, read, and interpreted. This daily instruction allows teachers to build a community of readers who are actively engaged in intentional, thoughtful interactions with text while mastering reading strategies and skills.

Guided Reading
Guided reading enables the teacher to observe, teach, and support a small group of students as they develop an understanding of the reading process and practice their literacy skills. Students read a book that has been carefully selected bases on their strengths and needs. The teacher facilitates learning and guides and directs the readers.

Independent Reading
Independent reading provides students with an opportunity to apply reading strategies in a text of personal interest. Time should be devoted daily for independent, self-selected reading. During this time, students read independently to practice and refine reading strategies and skills learned during shared and guided reading. Structured independent reading helps students build stamina for longer texts and helps develop the habit of lifelong reading.

WRITING

Writing Workshop (30-45 minutes)

Instruction in writing occurs daily and is framed by the writing workshop model. Students have an opportunity to apply phonetic principles, understand the basics of written communication, and learn about the writing process. Through continual practice with many types of writing, students become effective communicators. The workshop begins with a teacher directed lesson, followed by time for students to write as the teacher confers with students and guides their writing development. The workshop ends with students sharing their writing and responding to the writing of others. This model is designed to build a community of writers in a safe and supportive environment.

WORDS

Words Workshop (15-30 minutes)

The goal of working with words is to guide students in building word knowledge that will enable them to read and write fluently. Teachers use phonemic awareness and phonics to help the youngest students learn sound and letter relationships. Building on this basic knowledge, students analyze word patterns, learn high frequency words, and extend their vocabulary in order to apply this knowledge in the context of reading and writing.