

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #137 (2004-2005)

December 13, 2004

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED CORE LITERACY PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve and authorize the Superintendent to purchase the Houghton Mifflin, c. 2005, core literacy curriculum for Title I elementary schools.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The K-6 Literacy Curriculum Committee actively reviewed research, analyzed state and local data, identified effective instructional practices and aligned and wrote grade level expectations for kindergarten through sixth grades. Research findings the committee reviewed included evidence that a core literacy curriculum increases student achievement. Assessment data showed us that Title I schools are of highest concern in terms of student achievement.

A core curriculum will provide consistency of instruction in our highest need schools. The Title I schools that will participate in this proposed adoption are Creekside Park, Denali, Fairview, Government Hill, Lake Otis, North Star, Ptarmigan, Russian Jack, Taku, Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Whaley Center, Williwaw, Willow Crest, and Wonder Park. Title I schools that have previously implemented a K-6 core curriculum are William Tyson, Mountain View and Muldoon. Both Mountain View and William Tyson have been utilizing a K-6 core literacy curriculum for multiple years and have shown significant gains in achievement. **Schools that have been implementing a core curriculum will not be required to change to the Houghton-Mifflin curriculum due to the intensive staff development and materials purchases that have been on-going at these sites.**

The K-6 Literacy Curriculum Committee, composed of Title I and non-Title I teachers, program specialists, administration and parents, identified key, essential components for a comprehensive, core program. These components are reflected in the K-6 Language Arts Program Evaluation Criteria (Attachment A). The criteria established the programs to be reviewed. Two literacy programs met the criteria and following a

thorough and intensive investigation, Houghton Mifflin c. 2005 was selected by the committee as the program that best supports literacy instruction for ASD students, K-6 (Attachment B).

Upon approval, materials will be purchased. Training is planned for January 2005. Additional training is planned for both April and the June academy and again prior to the beginning of the school year. Full implementation will occur in the 2005-2006 school year. Title I staff and curriculum and reading specialists will support teachers in the first year of implementation.

The availability of funding was a key reason to support the review and recommendation of a core curriculum for designated Title I schools this year. By law, the Title I department had to set aside 20 percent of their budget for NCLB provisions such as choice for schools in Level II status, and supplemental services for schools in Level III status. Not all of the designated funds were used for these purposes, so funds were available for this purchase.

The adoption of a core literacy curriculum will increase student achievement as we continue to focus on the importance of effective instructional practices for all learners. The District commitment to professional development efforts such as school-based classes, modeling and coaching, lab and demonstration classrooms and other innovative practices that allow teachers to develop their expertise will continue. The years of work dedicated to building school-based, leveled libraries, implementing comprehensive literacy practices and staff development through the elementary literacy initiative provide a solid foundation for this adoption and all future efforts in the area of literacy. If, in the future a core curriculum is purchased for non-Title I schools, it is recommended that Houghton-Mifflin, c. 2005 be considered the District adoption for the sake of consistency of instruction throughout the elementary schools,

The Title I staff, as well as the elementary education and curriculum departments, are committed to making this a successful adoption and implementation process. Materials are available for review in the School Board Office.

Attachments

CC/JC/EH/PM/MK

Prepared by: Mardell Kiesel, Curriculum Coordinator, Language Arts  
Enid Hunter, Executive Director, Curriculum/Instructional Support  
Patricia McRae, Executive Director, Elementary Education  
Julie Jessal, Supervisor, Title I

Approved by: Jan Christensen, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

# Anchorage School District

## The Language Arts - K-12

Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing are the language arts. Their fundamental purpose is to equip all students with the strategies and skills to make sense of self, others, and the world. The understandings achieved will be profoundly influenced by the ways in which we use the language arts as tools for thought and communication. The language arts are integral cornerstones to every student's academic success.

The Anchorage School District's six-year plan identifies foundation pieces for school and life-literacy beginning in kindergarten. One of our goals is to work toward comprehensive and consistent curriculum, K-12, that maintains high expectations and strives to maximize each student's potential. Reading and writing skills are identified, aligned to standards, and articulated through the grade levels. Writing process and instruction are integrated throughout the curriculum and based on the traits of effective writing. With increased analysis of data in relation to the language arts standards, curriculum and the delivery of instruction will be more responsive to the needs of students at each benchmarked level. And, lastly, by integrating language arts resources, skills, and strategies with other content area curriculum, we have identified additional ways of scaffolding learning for all students.

Throughout the language arts plan, actions are detailed to recommend varied genres and quality choices of text so teachers can effectively meet the daily challenge of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students within the context of regular classroom instruction. Approved curriculum resources as well as classroom literature collections will include books that positively address cultural, linguistic, academic, and physical diversity. All of these components are part of a comprehensive program that is culturally responsive and reflected in the composite communities in our classrooms.

Mardell Kiesel  
Language Arts Coordinator  
2004-05

Anchorage School District  
Curriculum and Instructional Support

Language Arts Core Program Evaluation  
Grades K -6 - 2004-2005

Name of Book or Series \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Ratings Averages

Student Text

Teacher's Manual

Program Considerations

Total of Average Scores

Rank of this text among  
texts reviewed

**Rating Code:**

- 0 Unacceptable
- 1 Below Expectations
- 2 Adequate
- 3 Good
- 4 Superior
- N/A Not Applicable \*

Name of Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

\* If N/A is given on a specific criteria, the divisor for calculating the average rating would be decreased by the weight given for that criteria.

Anchorage School District  
 K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria  
 2004-2005

## Student Text(s)

DRAFT

**Book or Series Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Rating Code:</b>	
0	Unacceptable
1	Below Expectations
2	Adequate
3	Good
4	Superior
N/A	Not Applicable

STUDENT TEXT(s)	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS & COMMENTS
1. Does the text(s) align and support state / district performance standards and grade level expectations? (GLEs)		
2. Does the content of the (texts) provide appropriate representation of all groups... such as race, ethnicity, religion, culture, physical disability and gender?		
3. Are illustrations and photos of people non-biased and free of stereotype?		

Anchorage School District  
K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria  
2004-2005

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## Student Text(s)

STUDENT TEXT(s)	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS & COMMENTS
4. Is the content of the text(s) free from stereotypes of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, and physical disabilities?		
5. Do students text(s) provide a wide variety of engaging titles and topics?		
6. Are text(s) available in language(s) other than English and are they culturally authentic?		
7. Is the readability of the text(s) appropriate for the intended grade level?		
8. Do the text(s) have appropriate features that help students access understanding? (table of contents, bold print, vocabulary definitions, captions, marginalia, glossary, etc.)		

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2004-2005

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**Student Text(s)**

9. Do the text(s) use a variety of appropriate graphics, maps, and visuals; do they support the text?		
10. Are the text(s) well written and engaging?		
11. Are concepts presented clearly and in a way that is appropriate for the intended grade level?		
12. Do the text(s) appeal to students through color, design, layout and illustration?		
13. Do the text(s) include multiple and engaging genres? (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, plays, biography, science fiction, etc.)		
14. Are student text(s) available for each grade in a range of reading levels?		
15. Are there quality and appropriate text(s) and related resources available for bilingual and ESL students?		

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K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria  
2004-2005

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## Student Text(s)

16. Do the text(s) provide content for critical thinking and comprehension levels beyond the literal? (Bloom's Taxonomy)		
17. Does the student text(s) have related resources available such as audio books and are they quality recordings?		
18. Are the writing activities extensions of and related to the reading selections?		
19. Are the modes of writing and the writing activities grade level appropriate and clearly defined?		
20. What is your overall rating of the student text(s)?		

**Total Rating**

(80 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Average Rating**

(Divide total rating by 20)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Transfer Average Rating to Cover Page**

Anchorage School District  
**K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria 2004-2005**

## Teacher's Manual

**Book or Series Title:**

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**Rating Code:**

- 0 Unacceptable
- 1 Below Expectations
- 2 Adequate
- 3 Good
- 4 Superior
- N/A Not Applicable

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS, & COMMENTS
<b>Does the teacher's manual ...</b>		
1. Provide organizational structures and features that are user-friendly? (comprehensive, inclusive, tabbed and on CD)		
2. Indicate the skills and instructional goals and objectives of the book or series?		

Anchorage School District  
**K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria 2004-2005**

## Teacher's Manual

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS, & COMMENTS
<b>Does the teacher's manual ...</b>		
3. Suggest a wide variety of teaching strategies, to include interdisciplinary connections? (social studies, science, math, etc.)		
4. Provide specific suggestions for instructional procedures and strategies to address different learning needs? (differentiation)		
5. Provide specific intervention plans and reference resources for remediation?		
6. Provide specific plans and reference resources for lesson enrichment?		
7. Provide the guidelines and support for a variety of grouping strategies?		
8. Provide specific support for shared, guided and independent reading and writing practices?		

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**K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria 2004-2005**

## Teacher's Manual

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS, & COMMENTS
<b>Does the teacher's manual ...</b>		
9. Provide recommendations for reading aloud? (themes & titles)		
10. Provide support for literature groups and writing/reading workshops? (process and skills)		
11. Provide connections to assessment tools? (pre, post & ongoing)		
12. Provide connections to program support resources? (blackline masters, DVDs, CDs, transparencies, etc.)		

**Total Rating** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (48 points maximum)

**Average Rating** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (divide total rating by 12)

**Transfer Average Rating to Cover Page**

Anchorage School District  
**K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria -- 2004-2005**

## Program Considerations

DRAFT

**Book or Series Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Rating Code:**

- 0 Unacceptable
- 1 Below Expectations
- 2 Adequate
- 3 Good
- 4 Superior
- N/A Not Applicable

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS & COMMENTS
1. Is the program supported by research and is the research evident in the resources?		
2. Does the program service agreements include sufficient teacher training and appropriate support?		
3. Are there suggestions for classroom libraries of high quality, engaging texts?		
4. Is there a strong spelling instruction component integrated with writing?		
5. Is handwriting instruction (continuous stroke) evident and integrated with writing lessons?		

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**K-6 Language Arts Evaluation Criteria -- 2004-2005**

## Program Considerations

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	RATING	EVIDENCE, PAGE NUMBERS & COMMENTS
6. Is there a balance of emphasis on process writing as well as skill instruction?		
7. Is technology integrated as a tool for instruction and learning? (lesson planning, graphic organizers, online resources, student engagement)		
8. Are "big books" available for shared learning as well as easel charts, posters, multiple copies, etc.?		
9. What is your overall rating of program considerations?		

<b>Total Rating</b>	_____
(40 points maximum)	
<b>Average Rating</b>	_____
(Divide total rating by 10)	
<b>Transfer Average Rating to Cover Page</b>	

		<b>Harcourt School Publishers</b>					<b>Houghton Mifflin</b>					
	Grade	Pgm	T M	S T	Total	Wt Av.	Pgm	T M	S T	Total	Wt Av.	
1	Assess	3.33	4	4	11.33	3.7725	2.4	2.07	2.28	6.75	2.26528	A
2	2	2.71	2.43	3.09	8.23	2.7866	3	3.64	3.9	10.54	3.52566	O
3	K	3	2.9	2.05	7.95	2.5972	3	2.79	2.26	8.05	2.65132	O
4	4	2.7	3.21	3.05	8.96	2.9734	2.76	3.57	3.66	9.99	3.33057	O HAR = 12
5	Title	2.38	2.23	2.44	7.05	2.3642	2.24	2.29	2.47	7	2.34434	A HOU = 18
6	3	3.35	3	3.15	9.5	3.1783	3.11	2.28	2.95	8.34	2.82736	A
7	1	2.5	2.85	3.09	8.44	2.8262	3.62	3.5	3.57	10.69	3.56849	O
8	Title	3.06	2	2.95	8.01	2.7364	2.69	1.5	2.85	7.04	2.43906	A
9	1	2.56	2.71	2.86	8.13	2.7185	3.75	3.86	3.81	11.42	3.80283	O
10	title	3.03	2.57	2.95	8.55	2.8768	2.75	2.21	2.95	7.91	2.6866	A
11	2	3.47	3.29	3.57	10.33	3.4621	3.65	3.79	3.9	11.34	3.78604	O
12	6	2.55	2.78	2.09	7.42	2.4285	1.72	2.14	2.19	6.05	2.01717	A
13	Title	2.82	2.92	3.3	9.04	3.0366	3.64	3.79	3.1	10.53	3.46566	O
14	K,3	2.71	3.29	2.95	8.95	2.9583	3.06	3.71	3.14	9.91	3.2634	O
15	2	2.41	2.92	2.23	7.56	2.4734	3.7	3.64	3.9	11.24	3.7634	O
16	3	3	2.79	2.75	8.54	2.8455	2.59	2.07	2.75	7.41	2.51604	A
17	3	3.35	2.71	2.9	8.96	3.0026	2.29	2.14	2.7	7.13	2.41283	A
18	1	2.5	2.71	2.81	8.02	2.6783	3.69	3.64	3.76	11.09	3.70453	O
19	4	1.57	1.64	1.79	5	1.6757	1.43	1.55	1.67	4.65	1.55679	A
20	2,3	3.17	2.86	3.1	9.13	3.0604	3.76	3.14	3.48	10.38	3.48528	O
21	4, 5, 6	2.68	2.14	2.85	7.67	2.6047	2.62	2	3	7.62	2.60679	O
22	1	2.5	2.43	2.81	7.74	2.6043	3.8	3.43	3.62	10.85	3.63094	O
23	2.3	3.05	2.93	3.1	9.08	3.0381	3.24	3.78	2.95	9.97	3.26774	O
24	1	2.44	2.64	2.86	7.94	2.6592	3.75	3.36	3.57	10.68	3.57566	O
25	Title	3.18	2.8	2.8	8.78	2.9291	2.8	2.57	2.8	8.17	2.73925	A
26	4	3.29	3.07	2.84	9.2	3.0536	3.24	3.14	3.16	9.54	3.18189	O
27	Title	3.82	3.86	3.81	11.49	3.8266	3.63	3.71	3.95	11.29	3.77792	A
28	6	2.42	2.46	2.56	7.44	2.4860	2.83	2.38	3.47	8.68	2.96472	O
29	Title	3.06	2.14	2.8	8	2.7140	2.63	1.65	2.71	6.99	2.40283	A
30	6	2.63	2.57	2.52	7.72	2.5706	2.63	2.07	2.95	7.65	2.60887	O

Average Total Score = 8.47

Weighted Average = 2.8313

Average Total Score = 8.96

Weighted Average = 3.00564