

# **Poudre School District**

## **K-12 LANGUAGE ARTS**

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## **Introduction**

. . . A curriculum is a prediction concerning how people learn, what people should be learning and the contexts that will support learning.

Kathy G. Short & Carolyn Burke

*Creating Curriculum: Teachers and Students as a Community of Learners*

**The purpose** of the essential standards is to guide teachers in the following:

- Plan learning objectives around specific skills
- Plan assessments that will test these specific skills
- Develop grade level curricula to support the learning of these skills

**These essential standards:**

- Are meant to reinforce instruction
- Will be consistent
- Will create articulation of skills

**Skills described:**

- Will be mastered at the grade level at which they appear
- Will not necessarily be tested on CSAP
- Are considered essential learning in Poudre School District

**These essential standards have been created under the following assumptions:**

- In reading, all students are taught the required curriculum of Open Court Reading (SRA/McGraw-Hill) in kindergarten through six grades
- Writing instruction has no required curriculum, but should teach writing as a process, establish a community of writers through the writer's workshop model, use Six<sup>+</sup> 1 Traits for assessment and informing instruction and use reading to reinforce writing through an integrated approach

**Resources include:**

- Vertical alignment of standardized skills
- Glossary of terms
- PSD Novels List
- Procedure for Adding Titles
- Open Court Supplemental Novels
- Developmentally appropriate Six-Trait Rubrics
- Specialized secondary rubrics

During the past decade in Poudre School District, we have been working on establishing a direction for learning by creating a standards-based, articulated curriculum. Much work was done in 1996 with committees working with our then new state standards and creating *Standards in Poudre School District*. Work in Summer Standards Institute helped teachers integrate standards-based instruction in to their individual curricula. As the Colorado Model Content Standards were modified and supported with CSAP testing over the past six years, standards and high-stakes assessment were linked and caused us to refocus on our curriculum. In reading, this alignment of standards and assessment was solidified with the mandated curriculum of *Open Court*, thus creating a K-6 scope-and-sequence for reading. In late August of 2001, a committee began a long year's worth of work on reviewing the writing standards and creating a curriculum framework for writing. It was completed in May of 2002.

Almost immediately after, another committee began work to review, refine and create a combined reading and writing curriculum, the Essential Language Arts Standards. These Essential Standards are linked to Colorado Model Content Standards and CSAP assessment. In May of 2002, McREL (Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratories) provided us with a document to help us begin. The document was organized using the Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing. Under the benchmarks for each grade, McREL's researchers listed indicators of skills from a variety of sources: Colorado Model Content Standards, CSAP released items, NAEP tests, New National Standards and indicators used in top states. Our committee began its work over the summer of 2002 by reviewing and digesting the information provided by McREL, marking indicators that we felt were essential learning objectives. Beginning in September of 2002, the committee met each month to create a K-6 list of Essential Language Arts Standards. As our work progressed, we focused on K-6 and discovered that there were many gaps in essential skills, especially in K-2. After creating a horizontal alignment of standards, we then began work on creating a vertical alignment to make sure there were no gaps or redundancies.

In December of 2003, the 7-12 committee began meeting to continue the work begun the year before. Their work focused on secondary essential standards. The final work of this committee was to review and refine K-12 so that it represented a clear articulation of skills. This work was completed in May of 2004.

This document contains both a vertical and horizontal alignment of skills. The vertical alignment gives a good picture of K-12 articulation of skills. The horizontal alignment will give the grade-level teacher a concise overview of skills required to be taught to mastery at his or her grade level. A glossary of terms and editing symbols follows the horizontal alignment. Words that appear in bold in the text can be found in the glossary. Six-trait rubrics are located in the Appendix.

Skills listed on this document should be mastered at the grade level they appear on the document. We consulted various documents to help us make decisions regarding mastery, but largely relied on released CSAP items and when they were tested. It is our hope that the work that has been completed will be useful for principals and teachers in Poudre School District.

# Acknowledgements

## **2001-02 Writing Committee**

- Vicki Collet, Tavelli Elementary
- Larre Hanford, Shepardson Elementary
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