

# Middletown Township Public Schools

## Elementary Language Arts Guidelines for Parents 2007-2008

December 2007

### 1. THE ADOPTED PROGRAM:

Implementation of our current nationally recognized and approved reading series, Macmillan-McGraw Hill, involves whole group instruction as well as small group instruction using the leveled readers with appropriate interventions based on the results of assessment. The program is supplemented with authentic literature as appropriate. The most appropriate use of practice books is during small group intervention and for homework.

In order to provide rigor in the Language Arts program, the number of novels expected to be read each year will increase from grades three through middle school where students are expected to read six (6) novels each year.

### 2. REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS:

- a. Unit Tests, Mid-Year Tests, and End-of-Year Tests are not mandated for grades K to 5. There is a value to giving unit tests at grades K and 1 at the teacher's discretion as they can be in building confidence for emergent readers.
- b. Assessment of students' reading levels to inform instruction will be done three times a year for all students in kindergarten and first grade, twice during the year for all second grade students, and at least twice during the year for those third to fifth grade students who are "partially proficient" on their last NJ-ASK

### 3. SPELLING:

Students should learn to spell the words they read in their books at their grade level—i.e., concept vocabulary from science and social studies, critical vocabulary from the reading units and other stories. These words are displayed on word walls in the classroom. In addition, high frequency or sight words are displayed on word walls as well in kindergarten through second grade. Students should be expected to be able to spell these words.

Consistent with the NJ Core Content Curriculum Standards (next page) and the *Writing Workshop* approach we are using, spelling is addressed at the individual level with each student through conferencing and editing.

Research done over the past fifteen to twenty years refutes the value of traditional spelling tests in having any impact on a child's ability to spell. Rather, we are moving toward evaluating a child's spelling using a rubric during the holistic scoring of a written piece of work when it is being presented for publishing.

### 4. GRAMMAR:

As is the case with spelling, we are also moving toward systematic instruction grammar through the adopted programs and toward evaluating grammar using a rubric during the holistic scoring of a written piece or work when it is being presented for publishing.

### 5. WRITING:

The *Writing Workshop* approach will be used to guide students in process writing, a key element of our adopted curriculum. Students will be expected to produce at least eight completed pieces of work in grades K to 2. They will keep their work in a portfolio/folder as they work on it during each stage of the process. In grades 3 to 5, students will keep a journal or notebook and produce at least six completed pieces of work.

# **NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards Addressing Spelling in Reading and Writing Grades K-5**

## Kindergarten:

1. Recognize some words by sight.
2. Write (print) own first and last name.
3. Use letter/sound knowledge in attempting to write (print) some words.
4. Attempt to put ideas into writing using pictures, developmental spelling, or conventional text.
5. Begin to sequence story events for writing using pictures, developmental spelling, or conventional text.
6. Spell own name.

## Grade 1:

1. Recognize high frequency words in and out of context.
2. Develop a vocabulary of 300-500 high-frequency sight words and phonetically regular words.
3. Recognize and use rhyming words to reinforce decoding skills.
4. Continue to use pictures, developmental spelling or conventional text to create writing drafts.
5. Apply sound/symbol relationships to words.
6. Use developmental spelling or phonics-based knowledge to spell independently, when necessary.
7. Develop awareness of conventional spelling.

## Grade 2:

1. Read many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common endings.
2. Develop a vocabulary of 500-800 regular and irregular sight words.
3. Use correct spelling of some high frequency words.
4. Recognize and apply basic spelling patterns.

## Grade 3:

1. Recognize grade-level words accurately and with ease so that a text sounds like spoken language when read aloud.
2. Spell previously studied words and spelling patterns accurately.
3. Edit work for basic spelling and mechanics
4. Use Standard English conventions that are developmentally appropriate to the grade level: sentences, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
5. Develop knowledge of English spelling through the use of patterns, structural analysis, and high frequency words.

## Grade 4:

1. Know and use common word families to decode unfamiliar words.
2. Review and edit work for spelling, mechanics, clarity, and fluency.
3. Use Standard English conventions that are appropriate to the grade level, such as sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.
4. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly with particular attention to frequently used words, contractions, and homophones.
5. Use knowledge of base words, structural analysis, and spelling patterns to expand spelling competency in writing.

## Grade 5:

1. Apply spelling and syllabication rules that aid in decoding and word recognition.
2. Review and edit work for spelling, usage, clarity, organization, and fluency.
3. Use Standard English conventions in all writing, such as sentence structure, grammar and usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.
4. Use knowledge of roots, prefixes, suffixes, and English spelling patterns to spell words correctly in writing.
5. Edit writing for correct grammar usage capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.