

Curriculum Council January 21, 2020

The TESD Curriculum Council met on January 21 from 9 am until noon. Thirty Committee members, led by Dr. Wendy Towle and including professional staff, administrators, and community members, gathered to review information about Literacy, the focus of the 2020 Curriculum Council meetings. This meeting, in particular, focused on elementary literacy.

Dr. Towle established group norms in order to facilitate open feedback and discussion. The norms included the Four Agreements used in the District's equity work that were developed by Pacific Educational Group – Stay engaged, Experience Discomfort, Speak Your Truth, and Expect/Accept Non-Closure. Additional group norms were discussed and included a focused on group participation, respect for all opinions and establishing a Committee free from social media. Dr. Towle described literacy instruction as it occurs in both core classrooms and as support. Literacy instruction, Dr. Towle explained, occurs in both whole and small groups for between 60 and 120 minutes daily, depending on grade level. Literacy Instructional resources include a core program and additional texts of all genres. It incorporates the five pillars of literacy and is informed by assessment.

To learn more about the Five Pillars of Literacy, the Committee engaged in a group activity to explore the Five Pillars of Literacy. Using resources provided by the administration, table groups defined and described their Pillar and identified what they wondered and wanted to know more about. Each group reported out, summarized in the attached table. Learning more about the intersections of the Five Pillars will be some of the work of future meetings.

Dr. Towle shared information about what the District is doing to support teacher learning. She briefly describes the District's new data tool – Performance Matters and explains that the District will be using this tool to gather and analyze data that will support literacy instruction. Teachers are beginning to explore this tool during inservice time. More information about Performance Matters will be shared at future meetings of the Committee. Teachers are also engaged in other professional learning experience to enhance teacher knowledge about literacy. These include the following:

1. Orton-Gillingham training, for all Special Education teachers K-12 and select reading specialists
2. LETRS – Modules 1-3, for all K-2 grade level teachers and members of the Reading Program Selection Committee
3. PaTTAN's Leadership in Literacy – for some District and Building Administrators

The Committee received information about the LETRS program and professional learning from PaTTAN Literacy Consultants Kirsten DeRoche and Dr. Pam Kastner. They provided an overview of the program and its value in the science and teaching of reading. The Committee discussed some of the instructional practices forwarded in the classroom including: sound walls, decodable text, waiting to move into leveled reading, explicit routines for teaching vocabulary, and routines for teaching writing.

Dr. Towle shared the work done by the Reading Selection group in selecting a new reading resource and reported that we will have additional training in LETRS once a final selection is made.

PILLAR OF LITERACY	DEFINITIONS	WONDERINGS
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word.	At what point do you test a child for auditory memory?
	Phonemic Awareness is the knowledge and ability to recognize sound	What assessment tools are used to check for Phonemic Awareness and at what times?
	Auditory Memory	At what age do children achieve PA?
	Acquired by exposure to sound	How do you differentiate for children who already are proficient in PA?
	Phonemic Awareness also includes the ability to hold on to sound, blend into words and also take apart words.	When does BRIDGE start and how long does it last?
		What training do teachers receive in PA?
		How explicit for teachers is the PA instruction in the current curriculum resource/tools in the District?
		What happens if a child does not achieve PA?
		At what point do you decide a child needs more?
COMPREHENSION	Is the intentional thinking process that occurs as we read	What is the lowest level of comprehension?
	STRATEGIES: Good readers....	K-1: What is the priority focus with the pillars?
	monitor comprehension	building blocks: pillars hold up the literacy house
	use prior knowledge	Do comprehension strategies vary by grade
	ask questions	What are the comprehension assessments?
	recognize story structure	
	summarize	
FLUENCY	Is about practice but...modeled expression, intonation and pacing while reading.	Are norm referenced (timed) pacing tests natural?
	Students move from decoding to sight-reading.	How are fluency and comprehension interrelated?
	Moving toward comprehension	How does fluency style and strength impact comprehension?
PHONICS	Match letters to sounds (decoding/encoding)	How is time spent teaching phonics?
	All students benefit	How is it balanced with reading comprehension?
		How much teacher training in the District?

		How does phonics instruction look across grade levels?
PILLAR OF LITERACY	DEFINITIONS	WONDERINGS
		How do we assess it?
		How do assessment results impact instruction?
		What does support look like for students?
		Why are some children getting it?
		What obstacles are some children facing?
VOCABULARY	Students need words to better understand	How much impact does the home have on the classroom?
	Real world experiences are important to develop a working vocabulary	What knowledge is presented in the classroom to develop vocabulary?
	The skill of being able to construct without knowing all of the words is Reasoning	How does the teacher/classroom utilize and recognize what students bring to the classroom?
	Impacts to vocabulary/comprehension	Is vocabulary recognition vs comprehension addressed in the classroom?
		How is vocabulary assessed?
		How are the vocabulary words selected?
		What is the difference between a spelling list and a vocabulary list?