**Section 21.120 Literacy Standards for All Teachers in the Middle Grades**

Each teacher in the middle grades shall possess the knowledge and skills articulated in this Section.

a) The Disciplinary Literacy Curriculum

Effective middle grade teachers:

1) understand and use the scientific basis of teaching to plan, evaluate and modify instruction (e.g., use of appropriate research in identifying and implementing effective instructional practices);

2) know the developmental sequence of language and literacy skills, along with age-level or grade-level benchmarks of development, particularly for adolescent learners;

3) understand the Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix D, State Goals for Learning), their organization, progressions and the interconnections among the skills;

4) understand the role of systematic and explicit teaching of literacy skills; and

5) understand the influence of students' literacy skills on their performance on discipline-specific assessments.

b)Foundational Knowledge

1) Language

Effective middle grade teachers understand:

A) the nature and communicative role of various features of language, including semantics, syntax, morphology and pragmatics;

B) major theories and stages of first and second literacy acquisition and the role of native language in learning to read and write in a second language;

C) language, reading and writing development across the middle school years using supporting evidence from theory and research;

D) the role of academic language in developing students' understanding of concepts, content, skills and processes; and

E) conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., irregular plural nouns, past tense of irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, perfect verb tenses).

2) Text

Effective middle grade teachers understand:

A) the quantitative, qualitative and individual factors that affect text complexity, including how to estimate text readability;

B) the organizational structures, literary devices, rhetorical features, text features and graphics commonly used in literary and informational texts;

C) the characteristics of various genre or forms of literary and informational text; and

D) the role, perspective and purpose of text in specific disciplines.

c) Using Research-Based Instructional Approaches

1) Reading Comprehension

Effective middle grade teachers:

A) select high-quality texts that match student needs and educational goals;

B) identify disciplinary text features that may impede comprehension (e.g., author's assumption of prior knowledge, use of unusual key vocabulary, complexity of sentences, unclear cohesive links, subtlety of relationships among characters or ideas, sophistication of tone, complexity of text structure, use of literary devices or data);

C) scaffold reading to enable students to understand and learn from challenging text (e.g., re-reading, pre-teaching of vocabulary or key information not provided in the text);

D) introduce texts efficiently providing a clear purpose for reading and refrain from revealing information that students can learn from reading the text;

E) guide close reading discussions that require students to identify the key ideas and details of a text, analyze the text's craft and structure (including the tone and meaning of words) and critically evaluate the text;

F) teach students to trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text and to distinguish claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those claims that are not supported;

G) provide instruction in interpreting graphic features (e.g., tables, charts, illustrations, tables of contents, captions, headings, indexes) and their relationship to text;

H) guide students to use note-taking, previewing, identification of main idea and supporting details, and review strategies to clarify and solidify comprehension;

I) ask high-level, text-dependent questions;

J) support students in analyzing the organizational structure of texts (e.g., sequentially, causally, comparatively) and in considering how specific sentences, paragraphs and larger portions of the text relate to each other and to the text as a whole;

K) assist students with recognizing features of text common to individual disciplines;

L) guide students to identify and analyze content in texts that indicates point of view, perspective, purpose, fact, opinion, speculation and audience;

M) guide the reading of multiple texts to enable students to comparatively analyze and evaluate information and synthesize information from the texts into a coherent understanding of a topic; and

N) model and encourage the use of reading strategies to improve comprehension (e.g., predicting, purpose-setting, sequencing, connecting, visualizing, monitoring, questioning, summarizing, synthesizing, making inferences, evaluating).

2) Writing

Effective middle grade teachers:

A) provide instructional support and opportunities for students to write routinely for authentic purposes in multiple forms and genres to demonstrate the power and importance of writing throughout their lives;

B) engage students in using writing to develop an understanding of content area concepts and skills;

C) support students in producing coherent and clear writing with organization, development, substance and style appropriate to the task, purpose and audience;

D) provide feedback to written work to guide students' revisions;

E) reinforce the process for writing arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence;

F) provide instruction to students on how to create a text that introduces an opinion on a topic, supports the opinion with information and reasons based on facts and details, uses appropriate transitional devices and concludes with a statement supporting the opinion;

G) provide instructional support for creating a narrative text based on real or imagined experiences or events that introduces a narrator and/or characters; uses dialogue, description and pacing to develop and organize a sequence of events; uses concrete words, phrases, sensory details and transitional devices; and uses a conclusion that follows from the experiences or events;

H) facilitate the writing of informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content;

I) instruct students in the skills necessary to conduct research projects using evidence drawn from multiple sources (including how to select and develop topics; gather information from a variety of sources, including the Internet; synthesize information; paraphrase, summarize and quote or cite sources);

J) provide support in using search terms effectively, assessing the credibility and accuracy of sources, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citations;

K) facilitate the use of the conventions of standard English grammar (e.g., irregular plural nouns, past tense of irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections, perfect verb tenses); and

L) engage students in using technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

3) Speaking and Listening

Effective middle grade teachers:

A) engage students in a variety of oral language activities, including whole and small group collaborative discussion, asking questions, reporting on a topic and recounting experiences;

B) teach students to present ideas and information; use facts and relevant details to support main ideas; and use presentation software, media and visual displays appropriate to the purpose and audience;

C) support students in using conventions of standard English, eye contact, voice projection and enunciation in formal presentations; and

D) teach students to listen actively and critically in order to understand, evaluate and respond to a speaker's message.

4) Vocabulary

Effective middle grade teachers:

A) for the instructional focus, select appropriate words central to the meaning of the text and likely to be unfamiliar, academic vocabulary and word relationships;

B) support the use of word-solving strategies for clarifying the meaning of unfamiliar words, including contextual analysis, structural analysis and the use of reference materials;

C) support oral and written language development and the use of newly acquired vocabulary across disciplines;

D) understand and implement the forms and functions of academic language to help students develop and express content understandings;

E) utilize authentic text to help students develop word consciousness; and

F) actively engage students in using a wide variety of strategies for developing and expanding vocabularies.

d) Using Materials, Texts and Technology

Effective middle grade teachers:

1) use a wide range of high-quality literature and informational texts, including primary sources;

2) select literature and informational texts that address the interests, backgrounds and learning needs of each student;

3) estimate the difficulty level of text using readability measures and qualitative factors, and make text accessible to students;

4) use culturally responsive texts to promote students' understanding of their lives and society;

5) use a variety of technologies to support disciplinary literacy instruction (e.g., computers, cameras, interactive websites, blogs, online research); and

6) use techniques for helping students navigate online sources, including the importance of critically evaluating the information available online by addressing sources, audience and purpose.

e) Monitoring Student Learning through Assessment

Effective middle grade teachers:

1) assess students' interest, engagement and response to instruction to guide teaching;

2) use assessment data, student work samples and observations from continuous monitoring of student progress to plan and evaluate disciplinary literacy instruction;

3) provide feedback to students on their work to help them understand their own progress and how to improve performance;

4) communicate results of assessments appropriately;

5) engage students in self-assessment; and

6) recognize how to maintain and use accurate records of students' performance and progress in meeting disciplinary literacy standards.

f) Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

Effective middle grade teachers:

1) understand the impact of cultural, linguistic, cognitive, academic, physical, social and emotional differences on language development and literacy;

2) seek appropriate assistance and support for struggling readers and writers;

3) collaborate and plan with other professionals to deliver a consistent, sequenced and supportive instructional program for each student;

4) differentiate strategies, materials, pace, levels of text and language complexity to introduce concepts and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of each student; and

5) make content accessible in appropriate ways to English language learners.

g) Constructing a Supportive Language and Literacy Environment

Effective middle grade teachers:

1) understand motivation and engagement and the use of the "gradual release of responsibility approach" to design learning experiences that build student self-direction and ownership of literacy learning;

2) establish classroom routines that promote independence, self-direction, collaboration and responsibility for disciplinary literacy learning;

3) incorporate student choices in determining reading and writing materials and activities; and

4) build collaborative classroom communities that support and engage all students in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and visually representing their thoughts and ideas.