**Section 21.140 English Language Arts Standards for Literacy Teachers in the Middle Grades**

In addition to the standards set forth in Subpart B of this Part, each literacy teacher in the middle grades shall possess the knowledge and skills articulated in this Section.

a) The Language, Literacy and Literature Curriculum

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

1) understand and use the scientific basis of teaching to plan, evaluate and modify instruction (i.e., the 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, their organization, progressions and the interconnections among the skills;

4) understand and evaluate the components of a comprehensive English language arts curriculum that develops students' literacy skills and strategies, and ensures that instructional goals and objectives are met;

5) understand the role of systematic and explicit teaching of literacy skills in prekindergarten through grade 12;

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

7) understand the connections between the English language arts curriculum and developments in culture, society and education;

8) understand and use research-based instructional strategies that have been demonstrated to be particularly successful for supporting struggling readers;

9) know how adolescents read and compose texts and make meaning through interaction with media environments; and

10) understand a wide range of developmentally appropriate literacy assessments, recognizing their purposes, strengths and limitations, (e.g., standardized assessments, diagnostic measures, universal screening, curriculum-based assessments, progress monitoring).

b) Foundational Knowledge

1) Language

Effective middle grade literacy teachers understand:

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

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

C) 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;

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

E) the evolution of the English language and historical influences on its forms and how to integrate this knowledge into student learning;

F) 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); and

G) the impact of language on society.

2) Alphabetic Code

Effective middle grade literacy teachers understand:

A) phonological awareness (sound structure of words, including syllables, onsets and rimes, phonemes), its development (from word and syllable separations to phonic segmentation) and relationship to reading and writing proficiency;

B) the orthographic-phonological system, including sound-letter relationships, and common English spelling patterns and their relationship to pronunciation; and

C) structural analysis (e.g., syllabication, affixes, root words) for decoding unknown words.

3) Text

Effective middle grade literacy teachers understand:

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

B) the organizational text 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;

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

E) how to analyze a modern work of literature and determine how it draws on themes, patterns or events or character types from myths, traditional stories or religious works, such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new; and

F) a variety of textual and programmatic resources for addressing the needs of struggling readers, including those that are high-interest, low-readability.

4) Literature for Adolescents and Younger Adults

Effective middle grade literacy teachers understand:

A) works representing a broad historical and contemporary spectrum of the United States, Britain and the world, including non-Western literature;

B) works from a variety of genres and culture, including adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire and graphic novels;

C) works of poetry, including narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads and epics;

D) works of one-act and multi-act plays, both in written form and on film;

E) works of literary nonfiction, including subgenres of exposition, argument and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical or economic accounts written for a broad audience;

F) works by female authors and authors of color; and

G) works that represent the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

c) Using Research-Based Instructional Approaches

1) Decoding and Fluency

Effective middle school literacy teachers:

A) use a variety of developmentally appropriate approaches for teaching decoding (e.g., phonemes, sound-symbol relationships, spelling patterns, syllabication, structural analysis) of regular words, irregular words and multi-syllable words, in isolation and within texts; and

B) use a variety of approaches for supporting the fluent reading of text (i.e., with sufficient accuracy, rate and expression).

2) Reading Comprehension

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

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

B) identify 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 without revealing information the 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, to analyze the text's craft and structure (including the tone and meaning of words) and to critically evaluate the text;

F) teach students to recognize literary elements and devices across literary genres and forms of informational text;

G) 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 claims that are not supported;

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

I) provide instruction in using note-taking, previewing, identification of main idea and supporting details, and review strategies to clarify and solidify comprehension;

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

K) provide instruction 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 the whole;

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

M) provide instruction and opportunities for students to identify and analyze content in texts that indicates point of view, perspective, purpose, fact, opinion, speculation and audience;

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

O) guide the reading of multiple texts across similar themes to compare the approaches taken by the authors, and how the structures contribute to meaning and style; and

P) teach students to use reading strategies to improve comprehension (e.g., predicting, purpose setting, sequencing, connecting, visualizing, monitoring, questioning, summarizing, synthesizing, making inferences, evaluating).

3) Writing

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

A) teach 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 concepts and skills;

C) provide instruction 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) provide instruction in writing arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence;

F) provide instruction in creating 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 instruction in 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) provide instruction in writing 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) teach students 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 and cite sources;

J) provide instruction in conducting online searches (i.e., assessing the credibility and accuracy of sources, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citations);

K) provide instruction in the 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);

L) provide instruction in the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling;

M) use sentence combining as a method to provide students with opportunities to embed words, phrases and clauses in a variety of grammatically appropriate forms of sentence structures;

N) provide instruction in using technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others; and

O) use "conferencing" to motivate and scaffold students' development throughout the writing process.

4) Speaking and Listening

Effective middle grade literacy 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) instruct students in presenting ideas and information using facts and relevant details to support main ideas and using presentation software, media and visual displays appropriate to the purpose and audience;

C) provide instruction for students in using conventions of standard English, eye contact, voice projection and enunciation in formal presentations, and when to adjust speech to a variety of contexts and tasks;

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

E) engage students in critical analysis of different media and communication technologies and their effects on students' learning.

5) Vocabulary

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

A) utilize authentic text to help students develop word consciousness;

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

C) introduce students to forms of language that enhance vocabulary and understanding of language (e.g., idioms, figurative language, poetic devices, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, adages, proverbs);

D) teach the use of word-solving strategies for clarifying the meaning of unknown words, including contextual analysis, structural analysis and the use of reference materials;

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

F) provide instruction in oral and written language development and the use of newly acquired vocabulary across disciplines; and

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

d) Using Materials, Texts and Technology

Effective middle grade literacy 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);

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

7) use research-based criteria for selecting and evaluating instructional materials for use in the teaching of the language arts.

e) Monitoring Student Learning through Assessment

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

1) understand and use a wide range of developmentally appropriate literacy assessments and rubrics (e.g., standardized assessments, diagnostic measures, universal screening, curriculum-based assessments and progress monitoring), recognizing their purposes, strengths and limitations;

2) monitor student progress in meeting developmental benchmarks in literacy, and maintain and use accurate records of students' progress and performance;

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

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

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

6) communicate results of assessments appropriately;

7) engage students in self-assessment;

8) interpret and use assessment data to analyze individual, group and classroom literacy performance and progress; and

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

f) Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

Effective middle grade literacy teachers:

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

2) plan and implement targeted literacy instruction that is responsive to the strengths and needs of each student (e.g., English language learners, struggling learners, gifted learners) to ensure high rates of success;

3) seek and provide for appropriate assistance and support for struggling readers and writers;

4) collaborate and plan with other professionals to deliver a consistent, sequenced and supportive instructional program for each student across all areas of the curriculum;

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

6) make content accessible in appropriate ways to English language learners;

7) use data-based decision-making to target interventions to needs of struggling readers;

8) deliver literacy instruction within a multi-tier system of support in order to meet the needs of all students; and

9) deliver instruction explicitly to struggling readers (i.e., modeling, prompting, guided practice, response, corrective feedback).

g) Constructing a Supportive Language and Literacy Environment

Effective middle grade literacy 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, and incorporate student choices in determining reading and writing materials and activities; and

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