

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Position Statement on Language Arts

Adopted February 4, 2004

The State Board of Education believes that a strong language arts program is essential to ensure that students develop the skills they need to comprehend and communicate effectively. The language arts are unique among the subjects because the underlying domains — reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing — include skills and competencies that are applied to learning in all of the disciplines. These domains are the means by which we communicate and receive ideas and acquire new information. The ability to communicate with others through these domains is essential for a productive life.

The Board believes that the language arts contribute to children's education and preparation for life in numerous ways. For example, the language arts program:

- provides a foundation for students' success in all content areas and in future careers;
- enables students to obtain and communicate information;
- provides exposure to others' lives and to worlds beyond their own through literary text;
- helps students use language to think critically and to solve problems in everyday life; and
- provides students with the tools and motivation to continue their learning beyond school.

A quality language arts education should therefore be part of the core curriculum for all Connecticut students. PreK-12 language arts education program should enable students to achieve the goals and standards outlined in *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning* and the *Connecticut Language Arts Framework*. By the end of high school, all graduates should be able to:

- develop and communicate informed opinions through reading, interpreting and evaluating various texts;
- recognize the influences of individual, social, cultural and historical contexts on readers and writers;
- read and interpret texts in a variety of disciplines;
- write in a variety of formats;
- write and speak in acceptable standard English;
- construct meaning from communications in a variety of forms;
- read and respond to a variety of authors, texts and genres, and share responses to extend understanding and enjoyment;
- compose, revise and edit written materials using conventions of standard English, including correct spelling, grammar and legible writing;
- view theatre, film and art with an eye toward appreciation and evaluation;
- apply effective listening and speaking skills in a variety of settings;
- communicate with others to create interpretations and evaluations of written, oral and visual text; and
- appreciate the influence that contemporary and classical artists and authors have on human thought.

Improving student achievement in the language arts is therefore an important component of implementing the Board's general education agenda outlined in *Working Together for Student Achievement*.

(continued)

In providing all children with a quality language arts education, everyone has a role.

Teachers and schools play an essential role in ensuring quality language arts education by:

- providing a quality language arts program which includes reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing;
- providing a comprehensive PreK-12 reading program, which includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension;
- setting high expectations for all students to ensure earlier and more equitable opportunities to learn to read and write;
- providing a rigorous study of language arts skills and concepts and their applications to reading and writing in real-world contexts;
- creating classrooms that are rich learning environments that foster literacy in all students;
- providing more active student involvement with language arts, including:
 - reading and writing that relate to students’ current world and their future career needs and demands; and
 - using a variety of skills to foster effective communication and lifelong love of reading and writing;
- fostering more systematic and appropriate use of technological tools to enhance instruction in language arts;
- assessing students’ knowledge and skills and providing appropriate instruction based on that assessment;
- providing students with evaluations that are continuous and based on many sources of evidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies to guide students in developing literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities;
- collaborating with colleagues such as speech language pathologists, English as a Second Language professionals and teachers of sign language in the acquisition of literacy; and
- serving as role models in speaking and writing.

Parents play an essential role in children’s language arts learning by:

- providing multiple opportunities to engage their children in conversations and communications about life experiences;
- talking to and questioning their children from a very young age and carefully listening to their responses;
- reading to their children regularly and listening to their children read; and
- setting up the home environment with many print, media and visual materials.

Teacher and administrator preparation and professional development programs play an essential role in improving the quality of language arts education by:

- providing programs to develop skilled educators in the language arts;
- providing faculty members and administrators with opportunities to improve their ability to deliver quality instruction, including participation in local, statewide and regional in-service sessions and conferences specifically designed for employing the language arts in their discipline; and
- providing more professional collaboration and teacher externships to provide a stronger focus on language arts.