

Literacy Preschool-5th Grade

.....**Definition** The Albuquerque Public School (APS) District defines literacy as: “The development and use of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills to construct meaning in order to communicate effectively with a variety of individuals for a variety of purposes”

.....**District Philosophy** Each school within the APS district must use a balanced approach to literacy development. A balanced approach to literacy means that the decision-making approach to literacy development is based on a school-wide literacy philosophy, common language and program implementation. A balanced literacy approach includes students reading aloud, sharing reading, guided and independent reading and writing. The teacher makes thoughtful choices each day about the best way to help each child become a better reader and writer. Essential elements are:

- APS Literacy Standards and District Core Curriculum that are aligned with the New Mexico State Standards and Benchmarks, serve as the basis for meeting instructional outcomes.
- Instructional time and resources dedicated to literacy
- On-going assessment that drives instruction and determines appropriate interventions.
- A variety of instructional approaches used to meet learning needs
- Instruction organized around a variety of groupings
- A range of reading materials appropriately matched to student needs
- Administrative knowledge of the instructional model and support for implementation.

A balanced approach to literacy requires a commitment to focused, long-term, on-site professional development in order to implement and sustain the approach. The approach builds the capacity of teachers and schools to provide high quality literacy instruction for all students.

.....**Literacy Models** The Albuquerque Public Schools have adopted nationally recognized research based balanced literacy models from which APS elementary schools are encouraged to select.

Design for Literacy—sets aside a large block of uninterrupted time for literacy instruction. The model focuses on a shared and guided reading and writing, phonics, and direct instruction in a comprehensive approach. In Design for Literacy students are grouped in a variety of ways; large group, small group, ability groups, partners and independently in order to facilitate learning.

Four Blocks—Integrates the four approaches to reading instruction into a comprehensive instructional model. The instructional framework includes guided reading, self-selected reading, writing and working with words.

Reading Recovery--- is an early intervention program designed to assist children in the first grade who are having difficulty learning to read and write. Children who are not learning in the traditional classroom setting receive a short-term individually designed program of instruction. Reading Recovery provides one-on-one tutoring, five days per week, 30 minutes a day, by a specially trained teacher.

Success for All—Success for All focuses on prevention of reading deficits and early intervention. During daily 90 minute reading periods, students are regrouped across age lines so that each class contains students reading at the same level. Writing is emphasized throughout the grades and parent support is essential. Students may also receive daily one-on-one tutoring by a trained tutor.

Multisensory Structured Language Approach—is an approach where explicit, systemic instruction is the focus. Instructional delivery involves systematic, sequential, explicit teaching of concepts. Students learn the structure of the English language through simultaneous visual, auditory, and kinesthetic input. This has been found to assist memory and learning since all three pathways to the brain are activated.

.....**Stages of Reading Development** All children learn to read in different ways and at different rates. The following are the various stages children will go through and the associated characteristics:

Emergent Reader

- *Looks at the pictures to read the story
- *Recognizes familiar words

Early Reader

- *Looks at words to read
- *Tries to figure out unfamiliar words

Competent Reader

- *Uses different ways to figure out words and make sense of their reading
- *Read aloud with expression

Fluent Reader

- *Reads a variety of materials independently
- *Uses strategies in a balanced and integrated way

.....**Strategies to Support Students** Efforts to support children who are not reading at grade level:

- 1) Each school has tutoring or intervention programs that use assessment information to plan specific activities and strategies for individual students.
- 2) Summer School—has a literacy and mathematics focus. Using assessment data, students will be grouped by ability to build skills and knowledge to move them towards grade level proficiency. Teachers will be trained in balanced literacy approaches and interventions to meet individual learner needs.

3) Second Grade Reading Academy—modeled after the Mayor’s Enriched Reading Instructional Team (MERIT). The program is designed to address the students who are reading below 2nd grade level. The students are provided with an intensive 6 week reading academy in the summer. The students attend school three hours a day five days a week. Teachers were given special training and utilize a balanced literacy approach with a 6-1 student/teacher ratio. Families commit to getting their child there everyday and doing reading with their child at night.

Families should be aware that children who have difficulty learning to read, are not “stupid” but just have different ways of learning. The goal is for all students to find success in reading. Reading opens the doors to a world of information and knowledge.

If you are concerned about your child’s reading skills contact your child’s teacher or principal. They can provide you with information and/or refer you to other organizations for support.

There are many things families can do to support early literacy development. Link to “America Reads” website, www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads, for ideas and resources your family can do to support early literacy development.

.....Community Groups Involved There are various groups doing things to support early literacy development. The following are some of the groups with a brief summary of what they are doing:

ABEC—is piloting five strategies at 10 elementary school sites. The strategies include; additional resources for books; enhancing preschool and before and after school services; modifications to teacher preparation program and public awareness.

Americorp—utilizes Americorp volunteers in variety of community based literacy efforts.

APS Foundation-- The Foundation is supporting the Second Grade Reading Academy. The Foundation will be providing \$40K for in service training for K-3 teachers in summer of 2001 & 2002. The Foundation will be providing \$250K for school improvement and 15K to support the UNM Reading Faculty Institute (summer 2001 & 2002).

Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation—Has a family literacy program at all of its seven Community Centers. Each site has a Literacy Assistant. The program goals is to provide one-on-one tutoring program for children and families of Bernalillo County in order to raise student’s reading, writing, and spelling skills to levels commensurate with their current grade level

Rocket Readers/Campfire Boys and Girls-- A partnership among Sandia National Laboratories, APS, United Way and Camp Fire Boys and Girls to pilot a literacy tutoring program. The tutors, tutor first and second grade students, working one on one to improve reading and writing skills. The tutor commits a minimum of 45 minutes a week to improve their reading and writing skills. The

tutors are given initial training in the reading process as well as the specific lesson plan format used in the program. Ongoing training and mentoring is provided throughout the year. The tutoring takes place during the school day.

Middle School Cluster Initiative-- Serves the Middle School and the Elementary School communities that are within the City of Albuquerque limits or the majority of their students reside in City limits. Each Middle School and their feeder elementary schools have a Collaborative made up of school and community people who decide on how to meet the needs of their students, particularly "at-risk", this including how to utilize the resources allocated to their school. Many schools provide some kind of tutoring and homework help.

Oasis Intergenerational

Libraries

If you are aware of other groups please e-mail us.

.....Links to other sites of interest

State Department of Education-<http://www.sde.state.nm.us/>Has information on language arts standards, professional development and teacher licensure. This site also has information on how individual schools are doing in relation to performance.

- Albuquerque Public Schools-www.aps.edu

Has information on language arts standards, curriculum links of strategies and resources and information on individual school home pages.

- U.S. Department of Education—America Reads—

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads>

Has many resources, research information, activity for kids, what families can do, what businesses can do, and what educators can do.

- National Association of the Education of Young Children—www.naeyc.org

- National Research Council—www.nap.edu (enter Starting Out Right)

Provides a guide to promoting children's reading success.

- Reading Lady--- www.readinglady.com

This site provides educators with a resource to interact with other educators as they expand their understanding of literacy teaching. The Four Blocks--- method of teaching, at www.readinglady.com is outlined and explored, recommended reading lists are provided, teaching resources and ready to implement lesson plans.