

Plattsburgh City School District Literacy Philosophy



The beliefs and practices underlying the teaching of reading and writing in the PCSD are guided by educational research on current best practices in literacy. Reading and writing are the active cognitive process of making meaning from print. The goal of reading and writing is to comprehend and apply what is read to real world experiences. The acquisition of reading and writing skills and strategies is developmental and influenced by students' individual experiences and their motivation.

Reading and writing are processes that include relevant literacy experiences before, during and after reading. Experiences with rich vocabulary and language promote reading comprehension. Therefore, opportunities for discussing, reflecting, listening and questioning in conjunction with reading and writing are fundamental. In order to read and write effectively, children must develop the understanding that text takes varied forms for different purposes. This is achieved through a combination of exposure to and direct instruction in a wide variety of text forms in a print-rich environment. Nonfiction reading materials are integrated throughout the content areas. The materials must meet the range of reading/writing levels and student diversity always present in any classroom.

Reading instruction is multi-dimensional and must include five components: Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Quality literacy instruction provides the foundation skills and strategies necessary to attain reading/writing competence and extend students' learning in order to meet the NYS Common Core Standards in ELA. Finally, quality literacy instruction encourages students to develop an appreciation of reading/writing that will last throughout their lives. This is best achieved through a balanced literacy program that supports the development of students' oral language and communication skills through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Effective literacy instruction is differentiated based on the needs and skill levels of each student. It incorporates a combination of whole class and small group instruction at each student's appropriate level. Effective literacy instruction is connected to written and oral language and, when possible, should be integrated into other content areas. A good balanced literacy program incorporates a variety of instructional approaches: Modeling strategies through thinking or reading aloud, shared reading/writing, independent reading/writing, and listening to stories read aloud. Effective reading/writing instruction in all five areas is sequential, systematic, and explicit. On-going assessments should be used to inform classroom reading/writing instruction and to monitor student progress.