

ELA Adoption Questions and Answers **As of 3/6/2010**

The following is a list of questions that were raised from the Informational Meeting. We will continue to keep the document updated as questions arise during staff chats or from emails we receive. We realize that some of you may not be able to attend a staff chat. Please feel free to forward your questions and thoughts to Alice and Virginia at any time.

1. Q. In some reading about RTI, it was suggested to not adopt a “program” put out by some publishers based on the fact that they push to put programs together and are not always as good as they think. Have you read this?
 - A. No –
We will be a good place as we begin this adoption process, though.
The RTI Steering Committee has been working monthly, all year long to design the district’s RTI plan. An overview of RTI and the district plan will be included in the committee work.
The committee will also do revisions to the ELA curriculum maps before the actual review of programs. Hopefully, this will enable the committee to select a program that best aligns to the district’s written curriculum and RTI plan and not be influenced by a publisher’s attempts at advertising the features of their programs

2. Q. Why July 2? Did you take into consideration the holiday weekend?
 - A. It was very difficult to choose dates that would meet everyone’s plans.
We will be working on revising the curriculum on July 2 and plan to work only until 12:30 (at the latest).
Please do not let one date prohibit you from joining the committee.
As long as you can participate in the majority of the dates, and as long as you can “live with” the work that would occur during your absence, then please submit your name to Judy Christiansen and Jeff Van Zile.

3. Q. What if writing is weak in one of the programs? Will we be able to choose a second program?
 - A. Yes

4. Q. Do you realize that June 30 is the training date for Site Teams? Some committee members may have a conflict.
 - A. Yes – Dr Marino has endorsed the June 30 date for the ELA Adoption work. Please see answer # 2 above regarding committee attendance.

5. Q. Which maps will be revised? Diary or Essential?
 - A. Essential

6. Q. If I'm on the committee can I pilot? How many teachers will pilot?
- A. We will be having conversations at our staff chats and with the committee, about the value of a pilot. Why do we pilot?
7. Q. As the state standards and indicators do not concretely indicate how handwriting is to be developed and presented in the classroom, what will be the consensual format and grade level presentation of the handwriting component?
- A. The committee work will include revising the ELA curriculum maps, therefore handwriting will be addressed as part of that work.
8. Q. At the informational meeting you mentioned that the committee would be divided in half. One half of the committee would focus on reading and the other half would focus on writing, spelling and handwriting. When we express interest in serving on the committee, should we indicate which area we would like to focus on?
- A. No. We will determine how the committee will be divided at the first meeting.

Staff Chat Questions:

9. Q. You mentioned that the committee will be divided into 2 groups, reading and writing (spelling and handwriting), how will we assure that there is consistency amongst the two groups?
- A. Both committees will work on the same days; we will design a plan that will enable the 2 groups to begin and end together, for the purpose of discussing and comparing information.
10. Q. What about adopting different parts of different publishers?
- A. If we have to consider a different program for reading, writing, spelling and handwriting, we will.
11. Q. How will we have time to fit in a new program that includes handwriting and keyboarding at 6th Grade?
- A. A committee has been formed to select a new keyboarding program that will replace *Ultra Key*.
- The ELA adoption committee will be selecting a reading, writing, spelling and handwriting program. The work to review the curriculum will assist in very clearly defining more specifically what, should be taught when.
12. Q. How will Reader's and Writer's Workshop fit in with a new program?
- A. We will definitely have that conversation with the committee.

13. Q. Do we want them to read short stories and answer questions or do we want them to learn how to read books?
- A. This is another important conversation for the adoption committee.
14. Q. In 5th and 6th grade we spent a lot of time on our curriculum maps. Will that work be valued?
- A. Absolutely! We will start the review process with the current essential curriculum maps. Please remember that curriculum mapping is an on-going process...
15. Q. When do you anticipate completing the adoption process?
- A. The goal is to implement the new programs by September 2011.
16. Q. What will Pre K and K do in terms of the Curriculum work? Dr Walmsley is working with us now to revise our ELA curriculum?
- A. We have arranged to have Dr Walmsley work with the ELA committee. He will facilitate the same process with the ELA committee, that he will have done with the Pre K and K teachers. The work will all fit together.
17. Q. Are we committed to finding a consistent series Pre K – 6?
- A. Yes – that was the charge from the Superintendent
18. Q. Will we be looking at all content area curriculum maps or just ELA? It's important to look at all curriculum maps to integrate ELA skills in all areas.
- A. For the time being we would like to bring more clarity to the ELA maps. However the Strategic Plan calls for literacy skills to be integrated across content areas.
19. Q. How detailed will the curriculum maps be?
- A. Dr Walmsley will facilitate a process that will develop curriculum maps that meets the need of the district.
20. Q. Will the timeline be followed with a recommendation to the board?
- A. The committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education according to Board Policy/Regulation 4511R
21. Q. Will professional development be incorporated in the process? Throughout?
- A. Yes - Professional development will occur during the process and during implementation.

22. Q. Will there be a pilot?
- A. We will have this discussion with the committee. A pilot is not required in Board policy. At each of our staff chats we have asked the question, “What are the pros and cons of a pilot?”; We will share these responses with the committee.
23. Q. Will the process start with a philosophy instead of looking at the program as a magical fix?
- A. Yes
24. Q. Is 4 Blocks a district wide philosophy? Is there a district – wide philosophy?
- A. 4 Blocks is practice in many classrooms throughout the district, but it is not a consistent practice and therefore not a philosophy.
There is not a district wide ELA philosophy
25. Q. What if there is more than one person in each grade level from a building that may want to be on the committee?
- A. The Committee configuration is one person per grade level per building. Judy Christiansen and Jeff VanZile collaborate to determine committee members.
26. Q. When will we know if we have been selected to serve on the committee?
- A. March 12 is the last day to indicate interest in serving on the committee. Selected members will be notified ASAP after Jeff VanZile and Judy Christiansen have collaborated to compile the list of committee members. A confirmation memo will come from the Assistant Superintendent’s office
27. Q. Will the Big Five Workshop be offered more than once?
- A. We will make arrangements for the BIG Five Workshop to be offered again, if there are members of the committee who are not able to attend one of the following sessions:

Big Five Grades PreK – 2

March 29	8:00 – 3:00	(Release day)	
Or			
March 29	3:30 – 6:30	} 6 hours of in-service credit	
May 17	3:30 – 6:30		

Big Five: Grades 3 – 6

April 5	8:00 – 3:00	(Release day)	
Or			
April 5	3:30 – 6:30	} 6 hours of in-service credit	
May 24	3:30 – 6:30		

These are listed on the district in-service registration site.

28. Q. Will we look at other programs that were not at the fair?
- A. Yes - If there are other programs that the committee would like to look at, we will.
29. Q. Was the McGraw – Hill *Treasures* on the list of scientifically researched based programs?
- A. Yes.
30. Q. Is there a complimentary test preparation program that is included with these programs?
- A. The committee could include test preparation program as a criteria to include when evaluating programs.

ALVA
2/12; 2/18/2010;2/24/2010;3/2/2010;3/6/2010