

Reeths-Puffer Schools' Curriculum Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY STANDARDS:

"The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school. The K–5 standards include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including but not limited to ELA. The grades 6–12 standards are divided into two sections, one for ELA and the other for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects the unique, time-honored place of ELA teachers in developing students' literacy skills while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other areas must have a role in this development as well.

Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding." CCSS Introduction Pg. 4

MATH STANDARDS

The Standards are set up as grade-specific standards. The goal of the CCSS math standards is that all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-school lives. The Standards should be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset, along with appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students with special education needs. The Standards were designed to provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students." Math Introduction pg. 4

The math standards will require a new level of rigor from our students. For example, "The CCSS Math Standards define what students should know and be able to do. The new standards will ask students to justify, why a particular mathematical statement is true or where a mathematical rule comes from. There is difference between a student who can give a response to a question versus a student who can explain why an answer is correct or can explain in writing their thinking behind the solving of the problem. Mathematical understanding and procedural skill are equally important, and both will be assessable using mathematical tasks of sufficient richness both in the classroom and on standardized assessments." Math Introduction

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

The curriculum created for Reeths-Puffer Schools is the "road map" for every student that walks through our doors. This map starts in Kindergarten and charts a course toward high school graduation; each year building on the skills previously learned while ensuring that when students graduate they will be career and college ready. As a parent of a Reeths-Puffer student, it is your right to know what will be expected of your child and the skills they will learn at each stop on their journey toward graduation. It is also important for Reeths-Puffer parents to know how the district level curriculum has been created in the past as well as the changes that are coming from the state.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

In 2004 the State of Michigan adopted the first Grade Level/High School Content Expectations (GLCE/HSCEs) in English Language Arts and Math. Since that time the core subject areas have been created for all grades, kindergarten through twelfth. The content expectations have been used as the foundation for curriculum development here at Reeths-Puffer over the past eight years. During this time, as new Content Expectations (CEs) were released teachers conducted a gap analysis, which identified the gaps between the new expectations and what has been taught in the class. After curriculum gaps are identified, instructional adjustments are made to ensure all necessary Content Expectations are covered in grade level and course.

Teachers used the gap analysis work to develop curriculum maps and common assessments for each of their classes. The curriculum map identified the essential CEs that every student should master in a particular class throughout the school year. The curriculum map also identified the resources, (text, activities, etc.) and important vocabulary taught to students to ensure mastery. Finished maps were shared across grade levels and subject areas to ensure that students mastered the same material regardless of school building or teacher.

New Standards Brought About Changes in Standards, Curriculum Maps, and Assessments

In June 2010, the Michigan Department of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The goal of states adopting the standards is to bring consistency in education across the states and ensure strong educational learning goals are set and measured in a consistent manner.

“The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help the students. The standards were designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.” – CCSSO

The goal of the new standards is to ensure that all students graduating from Reeths-Puffer Schools will graduate College and Career Ready (CCR).

What Did These Changes Mean for Teachers, Students and Parents?

Reeths-Puffer, like every other school across the state began the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into classroom practice. The CCSS required us as educators to do new things in our classrooms, resulting in the need to adjust our instructional practices and materials. This was a change for staff, as well as for students and parents. The changes are taking us two-to-three years to fully implement. As a district we will work systematically to make the transition in a collaborative manner. Together we will create this new system within Reeths-Puffer to ensure our students will reach the new learning goals and the new assessment expectations set before them.

With the transition of the new content standards, there was also a transition to a new assessment. The state requires our students to utilize 21st Century skills in order to demonstrate their understanding to a collection of questions and activities that are meant to measure capacities such as depth of understanding, writing, research skills, and complex analysis in reading and in mathematics. Therefore our instruction and assessment practices will continue to evolve with the transitions between the old and the new State assessment systems (M-STEP) (PSAT 8/9). (PSAT 10), SAT as well as the MME for Science and Social Studies for all 11th-grade students.

FUTURE INFORMATION:

Since the changes in the CCSS require more than just a change in standards we will rely on existing structures as well as new recommendations from curriculum and content experts across the United States. Some of these educational reform leaders include: John R. Anderson, Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Eric Jensen, Robert J. Marzano, Spence Rogers, Mike Schmoker, Douglas Reeves, John Hattie, Bill McCullum, Dr. Deborah Ball, and William Schmidt. We will tap into the knowledge of these experts to help us navigate the educational changes we will be making. Throughout these changes we will continually work to ensure that Reeths-Puffer Schools becomes even a better place for children to Learn, Contribute and Compete.