

LECS LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

Our language arts curriculum is inspired by the work of Nancie Atwell and the Center for Teaching and Learning. In the simplest of terms it demands that students read and write daily. Its research-based assumption is that there is only one way for reading and writing skills to improve, and that is by purposeful, habitual, critical, engaged reading and writing. In other words students learn to read by reading and learn to write by writing.

In grades 2 – 8, Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop has been adapted to fit into each language arts class. Through mini-lessons, reading and writing conferences, book talks, round table discussions, and publishing parties, reading and writing are celebrated daily.

During Readers’ Workshop, students are encouraged to self-select “just right” (in content and in reading level) books to read. We want our students to read for information and for pleasure. We want them to read for discovery and for the sheer joy of being in “the reading zone” where the story is all that exists and the real world recedes into the background (Atwell, 2006). Daily, during class, students are asked to enter “the reading zone” during independent reading time. Students are expected to read at home for 20 minutes each night in grades 2 – 5, and for 25 minutes each night in grades 6 – 8.

Enter a language arts classroom during Writers’ Workshop and you will find students busy with “in-progress” pieces of writing. Some students may be capturing ideas in their Writer’s Notebook or drafting while others may be editing, revising, or maybe putting the finishing touches on a soon to be published piece. Students are encouraged to apply the writer’s craft, techniques, or strategies that have been taught in mini-lessons to their writing in various writing territories. Writing territories covered in grades 2 – 8 may include memoir, personal narrative, expository and persuasive essays, poetry, short stories, book reviews, new articles, and letter writing among others. Students are expected to write for 20 minutes each night in grades 6 – 8, and in grades 2 – 5 as assigned.