

## Literacy Planning for the 2011-2012 School Year

Literacy has been the focus of board-level discussions during this school year and for much of the last decade. Improvements have been made. Ten years ago, barely 50% of our students passed the language arts portion of ISTEP; in 2010 that figure stood at 65%. Working within the Literacy Collaborative Framework, the elementary faculties have persevered against many odds to make these student gains occur.

While the improvements have been noteworthy, for the last five years, our student test scores have remained relatively flat. This has prompted serious consideration for a different instructional framework for literacy. There are a number of factors which support a need for an RCS Reading Framework Action Plan that represents a significant change in our instructional program, including:

- The State Board of Education adoption of the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, which is available to download from <http://www.doe.in.gov/opd/languagearts/reading-framework.html>
- The Indiana Department of Education Elementary Reading Plan requirement, which is included as a component of the IDOE Plan to Ensure Student Literacy by the End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade (available at [www.doe.in.gov/super/2010/04-April/042310/documents/sb\\_grade\\_3\\_reading\\_plan.pdf](http://www.doe.in.gov/super/2010/04-April/042310/documents/sb_grade_3_reading_plan.pdf))
- Results of the RCS Survey of Literacy Strengths and Needs
- RCS student data which reveal a 70% or less passing rate on the English/LA portion of ISTEP+

The Richmond Community Schools Board of School Trustees has adopted the goal of 90% of all RCS elementary students reading at or above grade level. To that end, in compliance with the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, Richmond Community Schools will be implementing the following in preparation for the 2011-2012 school year.

### Reading Goals

The district and each elementary school will develop measurable formative and summative reading goals for each grade level. The summative goals will provide the end-of-year goal for each grade level, while the formative goals will provide benchmarks to ensure students are on target to meet those summative goals.

### Instruction

RCS will implement a scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) -based core instructional reading program for the 2011-2012 school year. Pearson will be providing the Reading Street K-6 core reading program at no cost to all elementary schools. Every effort is being made to ensure that these materials are available to teachers before the end of the current school year. Implementation of this core program represents a shift to an explicit instruction model, and ensures compliance with the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework.

Each school will develop a master schedule to include a ninety-minute uninterrupted block of time for core instruction, with an additional daily thirty-minute intervention block. Principals and teachers will be working to create these schedules to maximize instructional time for reading without compromising the quality of our related arts programs.

We will be working to align the RCS Response to Instruction with the IDOE RtI Guidance Document. The experience gained through Crestdale's participation as an Opportunity School during the current school year has demonstrated the strength of the tiered interventions available within the core instructional program. The availability of those resources, as well as a need for alignment of Tier 2 interventions with the core instructional reading program, has led to a need to evaluate the continued use of current tiered interventions, including Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Intervention. While SuccessMaker will continue to be available, individual schools, through their Reading Leadership Team, will be given the authority to determine the frequency and setting for its use.

## **Assessment**

For grades K-2, RCS will implement the mClass Diagnostic Assessment Tools, which include both the Reading 3-D and Mathematics Assessments. These will include beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year assessments which will be evaluated against expected benchmarks for each assessment period. Grades 3-6 will continue to use the Acuity assessments to gauge student progress. There are also assessments within the core reading program that will provide frequent feedback on student mastery of the reading content. Continued use of the F & P Benchmark Assessments and running records will not be required, as the core reading program assessments will provide similar information to guide instruction.

## **Professional Development**

Clearly, the transition to the IDOE Reading Framework creates a need for professional development. RCS will provide professional development for teachers, coaches, and principals in the Reading Framework, the five components of reading, explicit instruction, assessment, and the core instructional program. Training will be provided over the summer, and will also be ongoing throughout the 2011-2012 school year. A professional development calendar is being created, and will be updated once all dates have been set. Please refer to the attached RCS Reading Framework Action Plan for those dates which have already been established. Trainings conducted during the summer months will be recorded for those unable to attend. Teachers will be paid the \$20.00 per hour professional development stipend for any training provided outside the teacher work day. In preparation for the professional development opportunities, teachers should read the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, which may be accessed at <http://www.doe.in.gov/opd/languagearts/reading-framework.html>.

## **Leadership**

Ultimately, the principal is the instructional leader of the school and is responsible for the implementation of effective reading instruction and results. However, the principal cannot do it alone. As noted in the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework, "Leadership is distributed and nurtured at many levels – principal, mentor, coach, grade-level teams, and the Reading Leadership Team – in order to establish and sustain the instructional coherence and structures necessary to enable all students to read at grade level or above." Each elementary will establish a Reading Leadership Team, whose first task is to develop all aspects of the reading plan and communicate in one voice. Members of the leadership team, including the principal, reading coach, and grade level teams, will perform different leadership functions, which are outlined in the K-6 Reading Framework. Each elementary will have one full-time coach for the 2011-2012 school year. There are a number of reasons for making this change, including:

- Consistency with the Indiana K-6 Reading Framework recommendation that "ideally, coaches should not have direct teaching responsibilities other than to model lessons for teachers. Having to teach a classroom or student group hinders the coach's ability to observe reading instruction, provide support to teachers, and fulfill the other functions that are a part of the coaching role."
- Streamlining of funding to one fiscal source (Title I) for the coach removes any suggestion of supplanting.
- Professional development for coaches during the school day will not result in any interruption of student instruction.

## **Commitment**

School staffs are involved in the implementation of many curricular initiatives. However, no single academic goal is as important to school achievement and lifelong success as learning to read well. Schools must focus on reading achievement and be very specific about what they will do to enable all students to become proficient readers. The commitment of the school community to ensure a high level of reading achievement is reflected only in the actions it takes. The school's Reading Plan is the written pledge; the actual classroom instruction and student achievement reflect the actions taken.