



SFUSD

English Language Arts  
PK-12 Core Curriculum



### OUR DEFINITION OF A CORE CURRICULUM

“By ‘curriculum’ we mean a coherent, sequential set of guidelines in English Language Arts, specifying the content knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn, over time, in a thoughtful progression across the grades. We do not mean textbook offerings, daily lesson plans, or rigid pedagogical prescriptions.”

- SFUSD Humanities Department

## SFUSD English Language Arts PK-12 Core Curriculum: Working Principles

### Design and Development Principles for the SFUSD ELA PK-12 Core Curriculum

The principles for the SFUSD ELA PK-12 Core Curriculum are informed by the operating beliefs used in defining the role of central office which include the following:

- Students are at the center of all our work
- We will differentiate our service to schools in order to achieve the non-negotiable student outcomes at all schools
- Adopt and adapt – we will roll things out, they will not be perfect, and we will make changes based on feedback from the field
- We will be transparent about our expectations and commitments
- We will focus on building people’s knowledge and skills and on recognizing internal assets
- We will model our values of equity and access and these principles in every action we take, i.e., how we allocate resources and how we make decisions
- We will do whatever it takes to “walk the talk” of our Strategic Plan



The principles presented below embody the beliefs about what is important in SFUSD’s core curriculum. The principles undergird decision-making in the design, development and enactment of the curriculum. They apply to student learning at the district, school and classroom level. Educators in the process of planning, prioritizing, revising and refining the learning experiences for all students abide by these principles.

Both the designed and enacted curriculum must be consistent with these principles.



“By its very nature, learning involves progression. To assist in its emergence, teachers need to understand the pathways along which students are expected to progress. These pathways or progressions ground both instruction and assessment.”

- Margaret Heritage (2008)

### High Expectations

All students are engaged in rigorous academic learning experiences that support their development and mastery of grade level content and performance standards designed to prepare them for postsecondary opportunities.

Educators envision the success of all students as their goal and trace a trajectory for all their students with attention to academic benchmarks that spell out intermediate actions and their results to meet grade level content and performance standards. Educators reflect on teaching practices and use formative assessments to inform instruction. Multiple strategies are put into action to enable students to reach the high performance expectations aligned to grade level standards and college readiness skills.

### Relevant Application

All students are engaged in learning that prepares them for the option of enrolling in a four-year college or university, pursuing a successful career, participating actively in San Francisco’s

cultural and civic life and of living a healthy life. Students’ learning experiences build strong habits of mind and promote purposeful practices such as critical thinking and problem solving, curiosity and imagination, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, focus and persistence, effective oral and written communication, collaboration and persuasion and accessing and analyzing information.

Educators share a common vision with students, parents and the community as to the purpose of learning. They design and enact curriculum that has meaning for students, connects with their lives and aspirations and engages the support of their families and communities. Educators design and deliver rigorous learning experiences aligned to standards that are increasingly multi-lingual and multi-cultural, interdisciplinary, integrated, project-based and purposeful in nature.

### Coherence

Learning experiences offer all students venues to make connections within and across subject areas, provide coherent transitions and propel future growth and understandings.

Educators participate in ongoing forums for professional development and reflection that support student engagement and achievement. Educators collaborate within and across subject areas and grade levels to offer students learning opportunities and pathways that offer joyful, robust, rich, aligned and integrated learning experiences. Educators differentiate and craft multiple coherent routes aligned to standards in which learning can be optimized for all students.

### Personalization

Students are known by adults and are engaged in experiences that respond to their individual needs and support their particular aptitudes, talents and learning styles. Students’ identities, cultures, languages, abilities and talents are recognized, affirmed and enriched and their learning needs are



“Teaching is the highest form of understanding.”  
- Aristotle

addressed. Students jointly work on academic projects through multiple collaborative venues that meet their needs and accelerate concept and skill development. Students reflect on their own learning processes and receive support to reach their full potential in ways that work for them.

Educators know all their students by name and understand that what makes teaching effective is that it responds to the specific situations in which they work and to their particular group(s) of students. Educators have a strong understanding of students' individual needs, culture, linguistic and educational backgrounds, aptitudes, talents and learning styles. Educators monitor students' progress and adjust or modify their learning experiences for results based on a wide variety of evidence gathered from class observations, student and teacher projects, student artifacts, teacher collaboration, formal and informal assessment test results, parent surveys, etc. The regular study of this data enables teachers to continue the course, emphasize certain aspects of their curriculum and/or design unique interventions that will ensure the acceleration of their students' accomplishments.

#### **Depth of Knowledge**

Students' learning involves accumulating ideas and building deeper and more refined understandings. Students' learning develops over time through multiple opportunities to explore, experience, act and reflect on newly acquired knowledge and skills. Students learn concepts by using, applying, comparing, evaluating and synthesizing them in the production of novel thoughts, and in doing so they become well-rounded and prepared to enter public and academic discourse. They learn the language they need to

work with the new concepts and communication of their ideas exhibits facility with oral and written academic vocabulary and the employment of language for a purpose.

Educators have a strong understanding of the core concepts and skills that build college and career readiness. Educators plan carefully designed lessons to build and extend learning. Educators increase intellectual rigor, create opportunities for integration and creativity, as well as for interpretation, evaluation, analysis and synthesis of knowledge and skills. All learning is mediated by language; thus, all teaching involves the intentional attention to language challenges within the subject matter and across disciplines. Educators understand the interplay between the acquisition of academic content and language, and they are purposeful in the use of academic language as a tool that is required to understand, express and give rise to innovative ideas. Consequently, all teachers are teachers of the language of their discipline and knowledgeable of the language scaffolds that assist students in the acquisition of new learning.



**Office of Humanities  
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