



# ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

### LITERACY FRAMEWORK FOR PRIMARY DIVISION (K-3)

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board's Literacy Framework for the Primary Division is to ensure that all students in Grade K-3 receive the strategic instruction and support they need to develop as fully literate readers, writers, talkers and thinkers. The framework follows closely the advice found in the Early Reading Strategy, Report of the Expert Panel (2003).

#### References

*Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Kindergarten Manual*

*Early Reading Strategy, Report of the Expert Panel (2003)*

*Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3 (2003)*

*The Ontario Curriculum, Kindergarten (2006)*

*The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language (2006)*

*PM Benchmark Kit 1*

*PM Benchmark Kit 2*

*Boucher, I., Dye, L., Reid, S., Project Literacy, A Handbook for the Early Years, Scholastic Canada Ltd., 2003*

*Hill, P., Crevola, C., The Role of Standards in Educational Reform for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (article)*

#### Procedures

##### **The Literacy Framework**

The framework is aimed at making literacy a central focus of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board's learning culture and the key element for placing students first and bringing about excellence for all. Beliefs and understandings about teaching and learning occupy the central position in the framework design which is organized around the eight elements of the current research of Carmel Crevola and Peter Hill as outlined in, *Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3, 2003*. The eight elements include:

- Standards and Targets
- Monitoring and Assessment
- Interventions and Special Assistance
- School and Class Organization
- Classroom and Teaching Programs

- Professional Learning Teams
- Home, School and Community Partnerships
- Leadership and Co-ordination

## Beliefs and Understandings

The framework is based on the beliefs that:

- All students can learn, given the sufficient time and support
- Expectations must be high for all students and staff
- Teaching must be focused on the learning needs of all students

## Standards and Targets

Standards and associated targets provide a starting point for refocusing the missions of schools and redesigning how the schools operate in order to meet the standards that have been established and outlined in the curriculum documents. Content standards define the “what” and “when” of the program, and performance standards attempt to define to what level students will progress and by what grade. Teachers should have a clear understanding of all standards to ensure consistent programming, assessment and target setting. Targets are motivational goals for students and help map the journey to student success.

The target setting process engages Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board schools in gathering and evaluating data about student learning generated at the classroom level, as well as through the province-wide assessments administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Improvement targets are described in relation to the provincial standard (level 3 / 4) for student achievement. There should be an alignment of schools and system standards and targets.

It is expected that:

- By 2008, 75% of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Grade 3 students will be performing at or above the provincial standard (level 3 or 4) on the EQAO assessments of Reading and Writing.
- By November of each year, each school will develop school based targets. Using the Grade 1, 2, and 3 PM Benchmark data from September/October, each school will establish one SMART goal (Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Results Oriented-Time Bound) in Reading for Grade 1, 2, and 3.
  - by June 200\_, \_\_\_\_% of Grade 1 students will have achieved level 16 (PM Benchmarks)
  - by June 200\_, \_\_\_\_% of Grade 2 students will have achieved level 22
  - by June 200\_, \_\_\_\_% of Grade 3 students will have achieved level 27
- By the end of the Senior Kindergarten year, students will achieve in the range of level 3 to 5 on the PM Benchmark Assessment.
- By December of each year, each school will confirm EQAO Grade 3 Reading and Writing targets for student achievement based on the results from a variety of assessments (eg. PM Benchmarks, EQAO results, report card data).

## Monitoring and Assessment

Through Professional Development opportunities and capacity building experiences, teachers recognize that different assessments generate a variety of student information. Teachers assess for learning (classroom and school based e.g. PM Benchmarks) and complete assessments of learning (large scale, e.g. EQAO) throughout the school year.

Teachers use student assessment information (data) to guide instruction in order to improve student learning in literacy. Schools collect, manage and analyze their students' data and the system identifies and provides assessments for accumulating data on student achievement.

It is expected that:

- Primary Division teachers (K-3) will administer the specific assessments as outlined in the Administrative Procedures, entitled Assessment Measures K-3.
- Data collected from the specific assessments will be analyzed and used to program for all Grade K-3 students.
- Grade 1 to 3 teachers (and Kindergarten teachers where appropriate) will complete a full PM Benchmark assessment for each student at least twice a year (Term 1 & Term 3) and will use individual assessment strategies in their daily classroom work.
- A Running Record will be completed at least once a month for each Grade 1 to 3 student (Kindergarten students where appropriate).
- EQAO Provincial Assessment will be administered to all Grade 3 students (May/June).
- Each school will develop and use a TRACKING BOARD that records Kindergarten to Grade 3 students' PM Benchmark Assessment results and Running Record levels, in order to monitor the reading levels of students in Grade K-3. Information on the Tracking Board should always be treated in a confidential manner.
- Each school will develop an ASSESSMENT FOLDER (8.5 x 11 blue file folder) for each Grade K-3 student, which will store all educational assessments required to be completed.
- Throughout the year, blue Assessment Folders will be organized and managed by the pertinent classroom teacher. At the end of June all Assessment Folders will be submitted to the Principal for storage in the office. In September the Assessment Folders will be distributed to the students' classroom teachers. When a student transfers to another school (in or out of the Board) the blue Assessment Folder, with all completed assessments, will be attached to the student's OSR and sent to the receiving school.
- Psychological assessments completed for any Grade K-3 students will be stored in the student's Ontario Student Record file (OSR).
- The Ontario Provincial Report Card, Grade1-8, as mandated by the Ministry of Education, is a summary of student achievement, which will be completed and distributed to parents/guardians three times yearly (November, March and June).

- The use of classroom visitations by parents/guardians or teacher/parent/guardian conferences and a Board developed Kindergarten Report Card (March and June) are the methods used to communicate student achievement at the Kindergarten level.

### **Intervention and Special Assistance**

Research indicates that early intervention is crucial to ensure further success in literacy, in particular in reading. Therefore, schools must ensure that primary students who require intervention have access to timely, appropriate programs. A number of the system's schools provide additional support to our neediest Kindergarten learners by providing all day, every day kindergarten.

It is expected that:

- Targeted intervention will occur for Grade K-3 students who require support beyond the highly effective instruction in the classroom
- Additional support, outside of the classroom literacy block, will be available for Grade K-3 students, who are struggling with reading and writing

### **School and Classroom Organization**

School and classroom organization must be based on the learning needs of all students. Therefore, allocation of time, staff and resources must be organized to maximize teaching and student learning. Students' time on task is essential during large uninterrupted blocks of literacy related activities. Classroom routines and organization are important as literacy activities require large and small group teaching areas, literacy work stations, a classroom library and storage for resources and materials. Classroom walls should display class generated anchor charts to support learning, as well as student work, such as level 3 or 4 examples of students' reading responses and writing.

It is expected that:

- An uninterrupted 2 hour block will be allocated for literacy in Grade K-3.
- Each K-3 classroom will have classroom teaching and learning materials to support literacy instruction (e.g. overhead projector, literacy chart/stand, pocket charts, white board, listening centre, designated guided reading space etc.).
- Each K-3 classroom will have a diverse selection of leveled and non leveled, fiction and non fiction print resources.
- A bookroom or book space will be available to organize and store, print resources that are easy to find, use and return.

### **Classroom Teaching Program**

In K-3 classrooms, the balanced literacy program is highly structured and designed to meet the learning needs of all students. The components of balanced literacy are taught in an interrelated approach during the daily uninterrupted 2 hour literacy block. It should be emphasized that the goal of reading is to make meaning.

It is expected that:

- Grade K-3 students will be engaged in all components of a balanced literacy program.
  - Reading including, read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading which focus on both oral and written responses
  - Writing including guided, shared and independent writing
  - Oral language and working with words activities which allow the students to practice hearing, identifying and manipulating individual sounds in spoken words
- Instructional strategies that reflect higher order thinking skills will be a focus. Students' reading and writing responses should demonstrate level 3 and level 4 thinking.

### **Professional Learning Teams**

The role of the professional learning team is to promote effective and ongoing learning opportunities that focus on improving the quality of instruction, thereby enhancing student achievement. As a result, staff members engage in professional dialogue and development, to further their knowledge and understanding of excellent literacy programs.

It is expected that:

- Each elementary school will have a School Improvement Committee. Depending on the size of the school, the committee, made up of representation from each division, administration and special education staff, may focus on both literacy and numeracy initiatives or may have two subcommittees, one for literacy and one for numeracy.
- The School Improvement Committee will develop and monitor the School Improvement Plan and focus on gathering evidence of improved student achievement.
- Professional Learning Teams, made up of staff members with a shared focus (e.g. primary division teachers) will meet at least once a month to discuss ways that their own teaching practices can be enhanced to improve the learning of students.

### **Home, School and Community Partnerships**

School staff members know the importance of paying attention to nurturing relationships with parents/guardians and the larger school and parish communities. The staff will facilitate opportunities for the partners to learn and work together in order to further improve student learning. Regular communication and collaboration with a focus on high expectations and improved achievement for all students are necessary.

It is expected that:

- The School Improvement Committee, with the leadership of the school principal, will share the School Improvement Plan's literacy goals and EQAO results with the Catholic School Council, and provide opportunity for feedback and dialogue.
- Staff will engage parents/guardians using a variety of strategies to support and enhance literacy practices in the home. Suggestions are:
  - Family Literacy Events
  - School and classroom newsletter tips to support literacy within the home
  - Home Book Bag Program
  - Family Information Events
  - School Website Tips

### **Leadership and Co-ordination**

Strong, focused leadership and co-ordination are essential to the success of improving student achievement throughout the primary grades as well as in the whole school. All staff members should participate in shared leadership where they each contribute to the development and implementation of a common vision. It is the principal's responsibility to provide appropriate support to promote the development of vibrant professional learning communities, who, through dialogue and action, can bring about effective teaching practices in the classrooms.

The school improvement planning process is key to bringing about a shared vision, setting goals, and using strategies, such as focused professional development, acquiring and using pertinent teacher and student resources in order to bring about change that positively impacts on students' learning. The school's literacy goals are developed collaboratively and provide direction that will lead to increased student success.

It is expected that:

- The principal will lead the staff in the development of a School Improvement Plan, with literacy goals that are developed by analyzing and dialoguing about school and classroom data, and Board and school targets, which will improve students reading, writing, thinking and communication skills.
- The principal will support Professional Learning Teams and ensure that they meet to discuss, plan and exchange ideas.
- The principal will identify and empower leaders and aspiring leaders within the literacy initiatives.

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