

Language Arts Newsletter: December 2018



Welcome!

Agency Update

Seeing as American Education Week was November 12-16, I want to start this newsletter by thanking all of you and your colleagues for the amazing work you do in our schools every day. Every person who works within the school and its system contributes to the life and success of each Kansas kid. Thank you for making their lives better!

Our Item Writer Workshop for the 2020 ELA Assessment was quite the success! We had 20 teachers from across the state come together to write assessment items. As they will also tell you, this workshop was not only incredibly educational, but it was incredibly productive. How great is that in Kansas we are working toward building a test that is exclusively written and reviewed by Kansas teachers!? It would not be possible without you all, so thank you.

During October, my online course discussed the importance of standards in the classroom. As we get to the end of the semester, and you begin

finalizing your grades, think about what a student's grade in your class means. Does it truly reflect student learning? Will students know how to improve based on where they fall on the grading scale in your class? Take a moment in the coming weeks to consider those questions.

Over your upcoming break, remember to take time for yourself. Teaching can be a stressful profession, and one where we can often give more than we receive. I love the expression, "You can not pour from an empty glass". Remember to keep yourself 'full' so that you can be your best self every day.

Lastly, I would encourage you to get involved in professional organizations. I was able to attend the Conference on English Leadership this past month (a subgroup of NCTE), and it was well worth the trip! Joining could be one thing you do for you!

-Sarah Perryman

Professional Learning Opportunities

Online Learning: December/January: Literacy Across the Curriculum

(url for course: <https://learning.ksde.org/course/view.php?id=144>) (key: DEC2018)

You can sign up **beginning** December 10)

Online Collaborative Discussions (choose 1): December 17 or January 24 3:30-4:45 pm

December and January: Phonics (Pre-K-3rd Grade) Professional Development- learn more [here](#)

December 6-7, 2018: Differentiating Instruction and Universal Design for Learning in Kansas City, KS

Learn more information and register [here](#)

January 25, 2019: Current Approaches to Learning Disabilities and Reading Interventions including Dyslexia Training in Topeka, KS from 9-2; Learn more [here](#)

January 30-31, 2019: Learning Forward Kansas Conference in Wichita, KS

Learn more at <https://learningforwardkansas.org/conference-2018/>

January 30-February 2, 2019: National ESEA Conference in Kansas City, MO

Register at www.eSeanetwork.org/conference

December-March 2019: Apply for the Flint Hills Writing Project

Learn more at <http://fhwp.org/> Apply [here](#)

****Have you ever wondered how your schools' resources measure up to the rest? Visit <http://www.edreports.org> to review their evaluations of the many instructional resources schools have available to them today.**

****Have you ever wondered what curricular resources were being used across the state? Greenbush recently surveyed curriculum leaders to find out the answer to that popular question. You can access [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) results.**

Standards and Assessment News

In order to better support teachers, I would like to use this section to highlight not only new resources on the KSDE ELA page, but also, to highlight a teaching structure every month that could be beneficial to ELA practitioners across the state working with all grade levels.

Structure of the Month: Question-Answer Relationships ([QAR](#))

This strategy is meant to teach students the different types of questions they can be asked, and then, how to answer the question properly (or find the answer) based on its type. This strategy states that questions can fall into one of four categories: right there, think and search, author and me, and on my own. When students know what type of question they are being asked, they will find it easier to answer the question.

ELA News: If you check the ELA page regularly, you will notice new resources and information sheets. As part of our state ESSA plan, I put together a starter guide to best practice in ELA; I created an information sheet for speech/debate teachers to assist them in pulling standards for their courses; and I have continued to revise errors in our standards documents. If you have ideas for future resources, please let me know.

Agency News: The Commissioner's STAR Recognition Program has been put on hold. In order to make sure that this program does what it is intended to do, the agency has decided to postpone initiating the program. We have lots of training opportunities for education professionals. To learn more about these opportunities, I would encourage to join agency email groups. Email me if you need help subscribing to our various listservs.

Assessment News: We had a very successful Item Writer Workshop in November. 20 hard working educators (with a combined total of more than 500 years of experience!) came to KU and wrote well over 300 items! These items will start appearing on our state assessment as early as 2020. We are so proud to be developing a state assessment in Kansas that is reviewed and written by Kansas teachers. The conversations that occurred during our three days of work prove how intelligent, conscientious, and dedicated our Kansas educators are to their craft and to their students. If you were not able to participate in this workshop, please know there will be future opportunities for you to get involved in the process. Stay tuned! Also, don't forget that the **second interim window is December 3-14!** These predictive tests are generally accurate when given all three times.

Good Things

Poetry Out Loud- Registrations for the Poetry Out Loud contests are coming along well; we have 24 schools registered to date which is more than we had last year! But, we are still hopeful we will gain a few more with the "at large" registrations. Learn more by going to: <https://goo.gl/CezUAb>

The Kansas Masonic Foundation – They offer scholarships to many Kansas Students wishing to attend two year or four year universities. Learn more about this opportunity for your Juniors and Seniors by going [here](#). They also sponsor a book club that offers incentives and recognition for students to improve their reading. You can learn more, and get involved, by clicking [here](#).

For more information, contact:



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