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The logo for Kalamazoo Public Schools features the letters 'KPS' in a large, red, serif font. Behind these letters is a blue rectangular box with a white border. Inside the box, the words 'Kalamazoo Public Schools' are written in a white, serif font.

Kalamazoo Public Schools

Every child, every opportunity, every time!

# English Language Arts Curriculum

K-12

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## **Kalamazoo Public Schools English Language Arts Curriculum Guides Phase II**

Kalamazoo Public Schools' motto, "Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Time", exemplifies the goal of helping every student learn to use language effectively, both as a tool for communication and as an instrument for thinking, learning, and imagining. The Michigan Curriculum Framework and the Grade Level Content Expectations guide the curriculum objectives for each grade level of the Kalamazoo Public Schools English Language Arts Curriculum. The kindergarten through twelfth grade objectives are specific enough to give direction, but not so specific as to prohibit teachers from exercising professional judgment in order to meet the academic, social, and interest needs of his/her students. The design of the curriculum is to provide balanced literacy instruction to help students become strong readers and writers, help them learn to speak and listen effectively, and help them develop skills as investigators capable of undertaking their own research.

The English Language Arts Curriculum is based on two foundational principles. The first is from the work of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky explained three zones of student development. The first zone is the "zone of actual development" where the student can perform on her/his own unassisted. A student's learning takes place in the child's "**zone of proximal development**" (ZPD). Activities in the ZPD are just a little bit beyond the child's developmental level. The teacher assumes the responsibility and uses language to model the process or learning. The next level is the new zone of actual development, in which the new learning is practiced until it becomes internalized and automatic.

The second principle, **the gradual release of responsibility** (Pearson, Gallagher 1983), (1.1) is directly related to the zone of proximal development. The teacher begins instruction with modeling and gradually releases more responsibility to the student. Kalamazoo Public Schools has chosen this gradual release of responsibility as the District's focus in a balanced literacy framework (1.2). The components of the gradual release of responsibility are: read aloud/think aloud (modeling metacognition), shared reading/writing, guided reading/writing, and independence.

The Kalamazoo Public Schools' Curriculum Framework was designed in 2001-2002 as the procedures for curriculum improvement. Its purpose is to keep the curriculum of all content areas current with research and to reflect the use of data to improve instructional practices for student success. English Language Arts began the process of curriculum development with Phase 1 during the 2002-2003 school year. Each grade level, kindergarten through twelfth, developed a literacy index aligning to the Michigan Curriculum Framework and the Grade Level Content Expectations.

Phase II, 2003-2004, involved the completion of the curriculum components in grades kindergarten through twelfth (1.3). Each grade level or high school course identified and aligned instructional resources, strategies, and assessments to meet the objectives of the curriculum. Themes were developed for each grade level to ensure cross-text discussions

based on universal themes or generalizations. Phase II, as well as Phase I, included professional development for the teachers involved in the curriculum work.

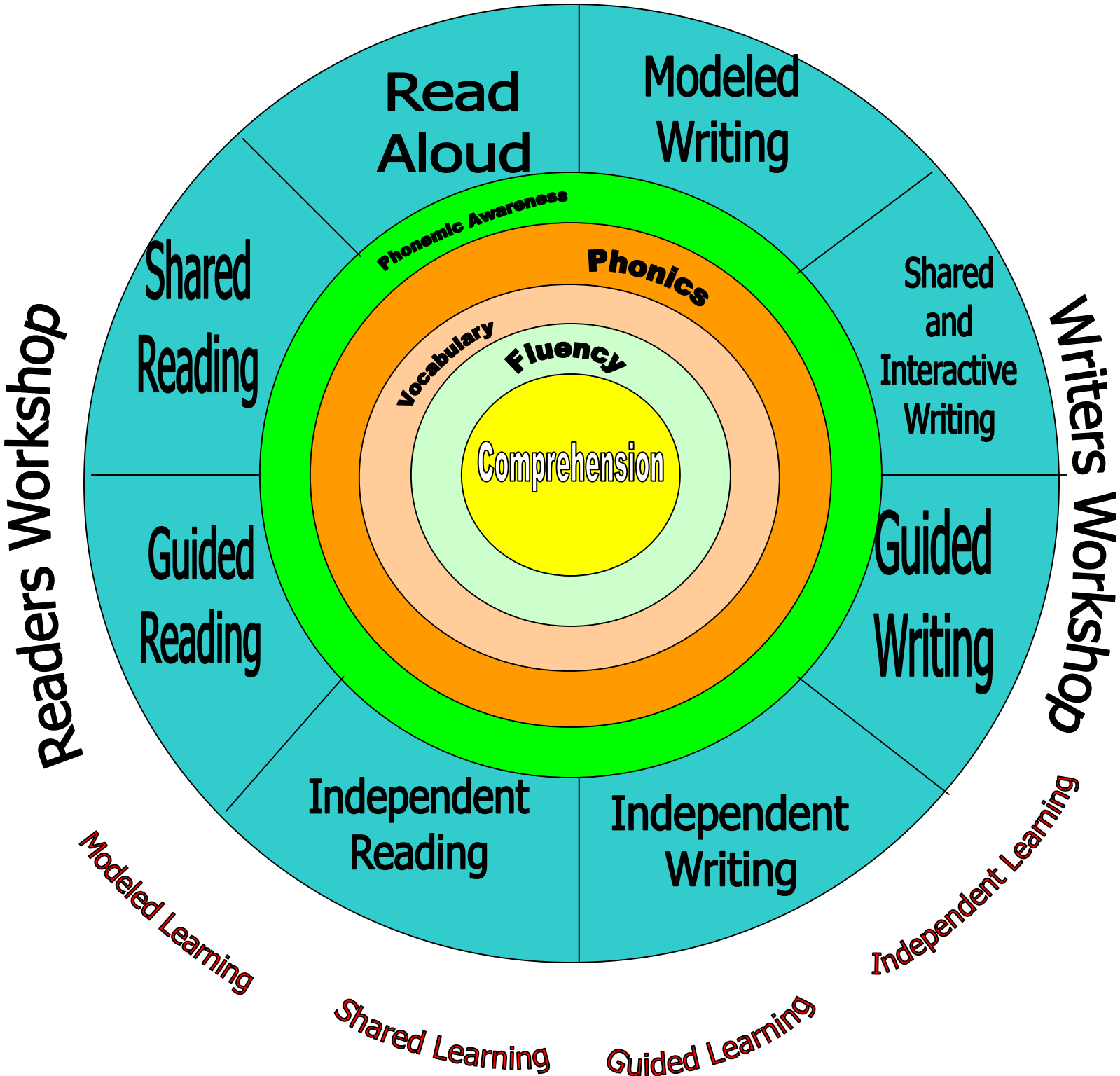
Recruiting of teachers for Phase III is scheduled for the Spring and Summer of 2004. Teachers, during the 2004-2005 school year, will teach and evaluate the curriculum objectives using the aligned instructional resources and strategies as indicated in the grade level curriculum guide. Teachers will work in teams using the process of lesson study. The mission of lesson study is to improve the craft of teaching through collaborative lesson planning, observation of student learning, discussion and reflection in a teacher led professional development process. It is the process of lesson study that will improve the instructional practices. These practices will become a part of the tool kit of the curriculum guide. The data from lesson study will provide necessary information that leads to student achievement. Groups of teachers will focus on different grade level/course objectives in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and research.

Phase IV is designed for full-scale implementation and evaluation. The District has gradually added comprehensive programs (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, Great Source, and Harcourt) for the areas of greatest need during the Transition Phase. Building literacy rich classrooms is an ongoing process to ensure students are taught at their instructional level (ZPD). Classrooms need a balance of fiction, non-fiction, and other texts. The selection of instructional materials will align and integrate with the standards and benchmarks of all content areas. Professional development is essential for the success of the curriculum. Follow-up sessions to initial professional development are necessary for continual conversations based on the curriculum and data of student achievement (1.4).

Phase V is designed to continue implementation and monitoring of the English Language Arts K-12 Curriculum. During Phase V an English Language Arts Advisory Committee will review data for the first year of implementation. Program modification will be made based on District and State data and new research in literacy instruction.

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Kalamazoo Public Schools  
Literacy Focus



# **The Components of Kalamazoo Public Schools Literacy Focus**

## **Read Aloud**

Teachers select text and read to students. The purpose of the read aloud may be to share a well-written piece of text, to model fluent, expressive reading or to model and teach a needed strategy or skill. Teachers read from texts of all genre: literature, magazines, newspapers, letters, and informational. Teachers should read aloud as part of teaching in every content area. Reading aloud from informational sources during science and social studies supports students as they make needed connections between the content and the real world. In the primary grades teachers read aloud several times during the day.

## **Shared Reading**

Teachers directly teach strategies and skills of effective reading. Students have a copy of the text and can follow as the teacher reads the text. Shared reading objectives are based on the curricular objectives from the grade level curriculum guide and the teacher's professional judgment based on assessment of student needs.

## **Guided Reading**

Guided Reading is designed for small group instruction with students who have similar needs and instructional reading levels. Teachers select a text that is challenging, but within students' skill range, (highest instructional reading level). Students read the selection on their own. Students read aloud from text levels as the teacher concentrates on a single reader and observes the strategies being used effectively and consistently to decode unknown words and construct meaning from the text. The teacher notes which strategies need continued support, explanation, or practice. The teacher guides the student to return to a difficult part of the text and teaches a needed strategy or skill. The teacher works with each student in the small group. Older students or proficient readers read the text silently. The teacher listens to each student read a portion of the text aloud and observes the strategies being used effectively and consistently to decode unknown words, concentrate on vocabulary, and construct meaning from the text. The teacher notes which strategies still need support, explanation, or practice. The teacher guides the student to return to a difficult part of the text and teaches a needed strategy or skill. The teacher works with each student in the group. Secondary students may engage in literature circles, book clubs, or a reciprocal teaching model.

## **Independent Reading**

Students spend time each day quietly reading books they select to read. This is an opportunity for students to select books from all categories of genre and

interest. Students are practicing and perfecting strategies and skills needed by effective readers.

## Modeled Writing

Teachers demonstrate how they think about and compose text while students watch and listen. Teachers instruct students in all strategies and skills used by effective writers. They balance instruction to include ideas/content, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, conventions, and presentation.

## Interactive Writing/Shared Writing

Teachers work with a small group or whole group of students to compose a message or text together. Teachers directly teach the skills and strategies of effective writing by demonstrating and inviting students to participate in the writing. Shared writing objectives are based on the curricular objectives from the grade level curriculum guide and the teacher's professional judgment based on assessment of student needs. The instruction should reflect process writing and its recursive nature.

## Guided Writing

Guided Writing involves small group instruction for students with similar instructional needs. Students share their written work with the teacher and the teacher teaches a needed skill or strategy.

## Independent Writing

Students spend time each day writing their own text. Topics are selected by the teacher or selected by students. As students write they practice and perfect strategies and skills needed by effective writers.

## Modeled, Shared, Guided, and Independent Learning

The KPS Literacy Focus is designed for use in all content areas. New concepts or knowledge (new learning) found in the student's zone of proximal development should involve the gradual release of responsibility.

# Scaffolding Instruction To Build Agents

Teacher  
Support

Student-Learner  
Responsibility

Students as  
Agents of Their  
Learning

**TO**

**WITH**

**BY**

**BECOME**

Exposure

Explanation  
modeling whole activity

Step-by-step modeling

Guidance while using

Feedback on whole and parts  
model with focus on parts

Encourage use

Guided practice

Independent practice  
and use

In control of their  
own learning

They are readers,  
writers, speakers and  
listeners