

**CHERRY HILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey**

**DISTRICT ESSENTIAL CURRICULUM**

**SUBJECT: ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**

**GRADE LEVEL: 8**

## An Overview from the Committee

The K-8 Language Arts Essential Curriculum represents the best thinking of the Cherry Hill Community, of educators new and seasoned, who responded over months of curriculum development to the many drafts that preceded this document which is now ready to be Board approved. Hundreds of teachers' thoughts are represented in this document.

As you use this guide to plan for your year of instruction, think beyond the template in your hands and reflect upon the bigger mission that this document represents. Although a teacher who uses this document is charged with delivering the Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks, the true charge to all who use this curriculum lies in our ability to live a literate life and to do so as a model for our students and for our colleagues. Developing a lifelong learner, an individual who values personal and academic literacy, is the true mission of our work. As we plan lessons, create units, and map our way thorough our teaching, we must understand that this curriculum is a vehicle to impart a deep love of literacy to all of our children. The curriculum is a living representation of our teaching community's love of language and our belief in the power of communication. It thrives through you, the reflective educator. This belief can elevate our work further as students journey through the rich, literate experiences that are planned within our K-8 collaborative teaching community.

This curriculum has a life. It is not something for the bookshelf. It is something to be lived. The focus of the curriculum, the Standards and benchmarks, mark Cherry Hill's commitment to achieving a preeminent education. These Standards and Benchmarks go well beyond the State standards. Teachers can confidently plan with this document and know that they are supporting their students who must demonstrate competency for local and State assessments. Living the curriculum, therefore, does not mean teaching to the test. Rather, it suggests that student who experience a year of instruction focused on the Cherry Hill Language Arts Standards, can perform at proficient levels of communication and can demonstrate their literacy for a wide variety of audiences and purposes. The design of units based upon the Standards and Benchmarks assures alignment with the State and national view of Language Arts. However, teachers using this document are challenged to design experiences that go beyond what is designated in the standards. Teachers are challenged to offer students the chance to reflect and demonstrate knowledge that gives their learning depth. As teachers work together to plan units of study based upon the Language Arts curriculum, as they share the units throughout the building and district, our skill at creating these rich unit designs will grow.

Implementation for the K-8 Language Arts curriculum suggests collaboration among teachers. Principals and teachers are urged to plan conversations, staff meetings, and faculty meetings around the Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks. To assure the document lives, teachers are charged with the creation of curriculum maps and unit plans based upon the K-8 template. As we continue, resources such as literature and teacher support materials, will create a fuller implementation. By adopting this document, the Board has shown its willingness to support the curriculum with appropriate materials and resources.

The district curriculum assessments that students take as the year unfolds will provide us with data regarding our capacity to create effective units and reliable assessment tools. Data will provide us with feedback that feeds our knowledge of how children are learning and achieving as they journey through the curriculum.

As the committee turns its energy and attention to creating a similar product for the high school, a grade 9-12 Standards-based curriculum, it wishes to acknowledge the support of the entire educational community, teachers, principals, Central Office and the Board, for allowing the thoughtful, reflective nature of curriculum work to be honored.

On behalf of the entire committee, thank you for allowing us to advance this district vision of Language Arts through the K-8 Essential Curriculum.

Trish Rubin  
Language Arts Chairperson

Committee Members: Ann Allen, Jennifer Aristone, Deborah Banecker, Mary Bates, Jennifer Baughman, Louise Carlo, Theresa Church, Laura Gertel, Jane Koury, Alicia Leinmiller, Terry Malone, Donna Morocco, Karen Onyx, Denise Poole, Carole, Roskoph, Janice Showler

### ASSESSMENTS

**To measure the student's ability to demonstrate success in meeting/exceeding the standards, teachers should use a variety of assessments. The following assessments are required:**

**Ongoing Literacy Assessment Process:** Outcomes and tools for implementation

**Writing:** Outcomes to Assess Communication  
(Please keep in Literacy Folder)

Writing Sample (Spring/ Fall) \*\*

Writer's Notebook

Yearly Writing Focal Areas: \*\*

- Persuasive Essay (issue-based, multi-paragraph)
- Cross-curricular research-based product \*\*
- Collage Essay
- Writer's Workshop including GEPA preparation
- Literature Essay/ Personal Response / Reflection

Poetry (suggested)

Open-ended responses (cross-curricular)

(cause/effect, fact/opinion, compare/contrast, text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world)

Prompted timed-writing opportunities (cross-curricular)

Narrative based on picture prompt

Rubrics

Graphic organizers

**Reading:** Tools to Assess Fluency/ Comprehension

District Literacy Assessment (3 formative assessments)\*\*

Response to literature (Resiliency theme immersion )

Reader's Journal entries (literal, inferential, and interpretive responses)

Open-ended questions (cross- curricular)

(cause/effect, fact/opinion, compare/contrast, text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world)

Annotated Bibliography (cross-curricular)\*\*

Rubrics

Graphic organizers

**End of the Year Assessment: (\*\*)** District Portfolio to be passed to Grade Nine teacher

Cumulative Contents:

Writing Sample- (Fall/Spring) State Rubric

Eighth Grade Language Profile sheet

Cross-curricular research-based product

Student-selected focal piece

Annotated bibliography: encompassing all-class, small-group, and independent-reading selections

**STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS CONCEPTS/KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS**

To successfully complete the study of this curriculum, the student must demonstrate the ability to meet or exceed the following Cherry Hill Standards. Based upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Eighth Grade each student will:

**SUBJECT AREA STANDARDS**

STANDARD	BENCHMARKS	TERMINOLOGY
<p><b>2.1 Reading: Concepts about print</b></p> <p>The student reads, listens to, comprehends, and responds to a wide variety of print material representing different cultures.</p>	<p>A. Recognize/distinguish various print formats: books, newspapers, magazines, and electronic texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and locate features that support text meaning (e.g., maps, charts, illustrations, <b>environmental print</b>, <b>organizational structures</b>, topic sentences, introductory and concluding paragraphs)</li> <li>• Use glossary, index, and <b>graphic organizers</b> to locate information and support comprehension</li> </ul> <p>B. Recognize different forms of literature, especially those with a theme of resiliency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiction</li> <li>• Non-fiction</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Drama</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environmental print:</b> train schedules, menus, directions, brochures, instructions</p> <p><b>Organizational structures:</b> logical order, comparison/contrast, cause and effect</p> <p><b>Graphic organizers:</b> visual interpretation of student's thinking such as a Venn diagram, web, story map</p>
<p><b>2.2 Reading: Literacy</b></p> <p>The student reads to develop personal and academic literacy.</p>	<p>A. Read 3 to 5 books including a minimum of one fiction and one non-fiction selection from the Cherry Hill Core Literature List by engaging in <b>whole-class</b>, in-depth study*</p> <p>B. Read 1 to 3 books from the Cherry Hill Core Literature List on the appropriate level in small-group settings (<b>book clubs/literature circles</b>)*</p> <p>C. Read 5 to 10 <b>monitored, independent books</b> including one non-fiction that are developmentally appropriate *</p> <p>D. Read at least 10 to 15 short texts including articles, short stories, picture books, and poetry*</p> <p>E. Actively listen to teacher and other <b>expert voices</b> read aloud quality texts on a regular basis, e.g., reflect in <b>journal</b>, discuss in <b>pair-share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend vocabulary through listening</li> </ul>	<p>* At least 2 pieces displaying the theme of resiliency must be studied within these areas</p> <p><b>Whole class</b> study: studying a novel or non-fiction selection as a class</p> <p><b>Book clubs:</b> small groups of children read and discuss a book that is at their independent reading level.</p> <p><b>Literature circles:</b> students come together as a small group to discuss a text within a framework</p> <p><b>Monitored Independent Reading-</b> Students independently select and read from a variety of texts, fiction and non-fiction, and keep records of their reading</p> <p><b>Expert Voices:</b> accomplished readers who read with fluency, tone, and expression</p> <p><b>Reading Log/ Journal/Notebook-</b> A place for students to document and write about their reading</p> <p><b>Pair-share:</b> two students engaged in accountable talk, then sharing with larger group</p>

<p><b>2.3 Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <p>The student applies a variety of strategies to gain understanding of the text.</p>	<p>A. Apply a variety of <b>metacognitive strategies</b> to all forms of print in whole-class and small-group settings as well as in independent practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on <b>synthesis</b> and integration of new understandings into reading</li> <li>• Continue to develop strategies of prior knowledge/ making connections, making mental images, inferring, questioning, automatically monitoring for meaning, producing essential questions, making text-to-self connections and determining importance</li> <li>• Employ “<b>Post It</b>” <b>strategy</b> for active reading of whole-class, small-group, and independent texts</li> </ul> <p>B. Read accurately at different speeds to locate information using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Skimming</b></li> <li>• <b>Scanning</b></li> <li>• Reread for clarity</li> </ul> <p>C. Use text structures and organizational patterns to gain understanding and affect oral fluency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Titles</li> <li>• Topic sentences</li> <li>• Paragraphs</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> <li>• Bold print</li> <li>• Captions</li> </ul> <p>D. Use <b>cueing systems</b> of meaning, structure, and <b>graphophonics</b> to determine pronunciation and meaning</p> <p>E. Apply “<b>fix-up</b>” <b>strategies</b> such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reread</li> <li>• Read on</li> <li>• <b>Chunk</b> the sentence into meaningful phrases</li> <li>• Analyze specific words</li> <li>• Think aloud</li> </ul> <p>F. Use strategies for developing vocabulary <b>through reading and other curricular content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using idioms and words with literal and figurative meanings</li> <li>• Infer word meanings from learned roots, prefixes, and suffixes</li> <li>• Infer word meanings from context clues</li> <li>• Infer word meanings based on part of speech</li> <li>• Identify and correctly use antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs</li> <li>• Use a grade-appropriate dictionary or thesaurus to define, clarify, and refine unfamiliar words</li> </ul> <p>G. Read critically to enhance comprehension in fiction, non-fiction and poetry through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesis</li> <li>• Inference</li> <li>• Recognition of when meaning breaks down and monitor comprehension</li> <li>• Understand the elements of poetry including idioms, analogies, metaphors, simile, meter, rhythm, rhyme scheme,</li> <li>• Understand the elements of fiction including theme, setting, character, plot, voice, point of view, and mood</li> <li>• Understand the elements of non-fiction including main idea, point of view, supporting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Metacognitive strategies:</b> strategies the student uses to understand own thinking</p> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> constructing new meaning by revising understanding as new information is added to old</p> <p><b>“Post-it” Strategies-</b> A reading strategy that uses Post-it notes to mark places in the text for ideas, reactions, or questions that occur during reading</p> <p><b>Skim:</b> a quick read that forms a general picture of a text and an overview of the main ideas</p> <p><b>Scan:</b> skimming with a specific goal in mind, such as viewing headings or captions</p> <p><b>Cueing systems:</b> systems of meaning, syntax, and use of visual information to decode words and gain meaning</p> <p><b>Graphophonics:</b> the association of the sounds made by letters and letter combinations</p> <p><b>“Fix-up” strategies:</b> strategies used to regain meaning once student realizes that it has been lost</p> <p><b>Chunking:</b> breaking the sentence into meaningful phrases to increase fluency and fluidity</p> <p><b>Through reading and other curricular content:</b> these are general skills that should be practiced in all content areas</p>
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<p><b>2.3 Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <p>The student applies a variety of strategies to gain understanding of the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details, voice, and text graphics</li> <li>• Support interpretations with convincing evidence from the text and providing elaborated reasoning beyond the text</li> </ul> <p>H. Articulate the purposes and characteristics of different genre of literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiction</li> <li>• Non-fiction</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Drama</li> </ul> <p>I. Maintain reading log/journal to demonstrate understanding and reflection through writing</p> <p>J. Produce an in-depth, multi-paragraph literary response that demonstrates comprehension such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal essay</b></li> <li>• <b>Literary essay</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal essay:</b> a multi-paragraph essay the student produces that shows a connection he/she has made during a literary study that demonstrates a deep correlation between the text and his/her own life</p> <p><b>Literary essay:</b> a multi-paragraph essay in which the student develops a thesis about a piece of literature he/she has read and supports that idea with examples from the text and his/her world</p>
<p><b>2.4 Reading: Immersion</b></p> <p>The student develops a depth of knowledge about one topic or genre.</p>	<p>A. Engage in an in-depth study of the theme of resiliency that addresses gender, ethnicity, culture, and historical time periods which will result in written and oral reflections/ responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: <b>Resiliency</b></li> <li>• Short stories, novels, biographies, and poetry</li> </ul> <p>B. Connect real-life situations and personal experiences with texts by <b>making text-to-self</b> and, <b>text-to-world connections</b> to enhance understanding</p> <p>C. Make <b>text-to-text connections</b> that demonstrate the theme of resiliency by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing and reflecting on setting, character, plot, heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs</li> <li>• Comparing</li> <li>• Contrasting</li> <li>• Synthesizing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resiliency:</b> novels and short stories that address the human capacity of becoming stronger through adversity</p> <p><b>Text-to-Self Connections-</b>The student makes connections relating text to his life experiences</p> <p><b>Text-to-World Connections-</b> The student makes connections relating a text of study to events of the world with which they are familiar.</p> <p><b>Text-to-Text Connections-</b> The student makes connections relating a text of study to a text previously read</p>
<p><b>2.5 Writing: Process</b></p> <p>The student understands and uses the writing process to craft clear, concise, organized writing that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.</p>	<p>A. Identify the characteristics and structures of writing through immersion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to teacher “<b>read-alouds</b>”</li> <li>• Read published and peer models</li> </ul> <p>B. Write <b>weekly</b> for one dedicated <b>30- minute period across the curriculum</b> to maintain writing habits and stamina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use <b>Writer’s Notebook</b> to develop ideas for writing and reflection</li> <li>• Use Reader’s Journal to respond to literature</li> </ul> <p>C. Use Strategies for Writing Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Pre-writing</u>: brainstorm, read, talk about ideas, free write, use <b>artifacts</b></li> <li>• <u>Drafting</u>: elaborate a seed idea, write with voice and attention to audience from the pre-write, use graphic organizers, focus on introductions, transitions, and conclusions</li> <li>• <u>Revising</u>: reread, evaluate, and refine draft for: voice, precise language, organization, narrowed focus, deletion of unnecessary information, elaboration, detail, audience, purpose, and crafting; confer with peers and adults and effectively utilize feedback; justify revisions made</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read-alouds:</b> stories or articles read aloud to whole class to model fluidity, pacing, emotion, etc.</p> <p><b>30- minute period across the curriculum:</b> Science labs or observations, Math “peaks and valleys,” Art reflections, learning logs, timed-prompts, picture prompts...</p> <p><b>Writer’s Notebook:</b> A tool used daily in the Writer’s Workshop that is necessary for learning to write in any genre. It is often called a “seed bed” for ideas and provides a place where ideas are explored and developed, sometimes to a finished product</p> <p><b>Artifact:</b> an object that stimulates an idea for writing</p>

<p><b>2.5 Writing: Process</b></p> <p>The student understands and uses the writing process to craft clear, concise, organized writing that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Editing</u>: use an editing checklist that focuses on capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word choice, grammar, and appropriate sentence and paragraph structure; use a variety of reference material to improve writing</li> <li>• <u>Publishing</u>: produce final word-processed product that is ready to be shared with an audience</li> <li>• Use a <b>coaching/scoring rubric</b> to support the writing assignment</li> </ul> <p>D. Choose and reflect on written work across the curriculum in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Literacy Folder</u></li> <li>• <u>District Portfolio</u></li> <li>• <u>Writer’s Notebook</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>Coaching/scoring rubric:</b> instructions and scoring criteria shared with students at beginning of assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coaching</b>- a step-by-step set of instructions that defines expectations and guides performance</li> <li>• <b>Scoring</b>- a scoring guide that describes varying levels of achievement based on a set criteria</li> </ul> <p><b>Literacy Folder:</b> a holding folder of student’s work that goes home at the end of the year-see page 2 for requirements</p> <p><b>District Portfolio:</b> a cumulative collection of student’s work that shows growth over time and is passed on to the next year’s teacher -see page 2 for requirements</p>
<p><b>2.6 Writing: Product</b></p> <p>The student writes with increasing effectiveness through frequent writing opportunities across the curriculum.</p>	<p>A. Build an awareness of appropriate voice and audience by using reporting voice/expert tone to communicate information</p> <p>B. Practice reflection and crafting as learned through <b>immersion</b> in teacher “read-alouds” and by the viewing of published and peer models</p> <p>C. Write <b>across the curriculum</b> in a variety of informational forms applying <b>crafting elements</b> appropriate to that genre to elevate its quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cross-curricular research-based product*</b> requiring focus, synthesis of multiple sources, works cited page (MLA format), graphics as needed (e.g., maps, charts, illustrations)</li> <li>• District pre/post samples*</li> <li>• Non-fiction/Feature articles*</li> <li>• Open-ended responses</li> <li>• Collage Essay (subject to teacher in-service)</li> <li>• Persuasive piece- issue based</li> <li>• Picture response</li> <li>• Response to timed prompts</li> <li>• Everyday workplace writing (e.g., memo, business letter, email)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immersion:</b> the teacher chooses a variety of texts that represent a particular genre or author. Through this study, the students develop a depth of knowledge about the genre or author</p> <p>* Required for <b>District Portfolio</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-curricular research-based product</li> <li>• Non-fiction/Feature articles</li> <li>• District pre/post samples</li> </ul> <p><b>Across the curriculum</b> implies that this writing should be done both within Language Arts and other content areas</p> <p><b>Crafting elements:</b> examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging openings or introductions</li> <li>• use of dialogue</li> <li>• addressing the reader directly</li> <li>• use of sound words (onomatopoeia)</li> <li>• use of similes and metaphors</li> <li>• use of alliteration</li> <li>• use of satisfying conclusions or endings</li> </ul> <p><b>Cross-curricular research-based product:</b> researched product done in conjunction with another content area</p>

<p><b>2.7 Writing: Language Conventions</b></p> <p>The student uses Standard English conventions that are developmentally appropriate to grade level.</p>	<p>A. Apply language conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply all eight parts of speech</li> <li>• Indent paragraphs</li> <li>• Apply comma usage and conventions of dialogue</li> <li>• Punctuate and capitalize increasingly complex sentences</li> <li>• Spell high-frequency words</li> <li>• Apply spelling patterns to spell unfamiliar words</li> </ul> <p>B. Compose increasingly complex sentences, varying in structure and syntax to express ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent clauses</li> <li>• Dependent clauses: subordination, coordination, apposition</li> <li>• Parallelism</li> <li>• Prepositional and adverbial phrases</li> <li>• Transitions</li> </ul> <p>C. Use legible cursive or print to prepare published products</p>	
<p><b>2.8 Speaking</b></p> <p>The student speaks in clear, concise, organized Standard English that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes</p>	<p>A. Use Standard English to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a formal presentation (opening, supportive details, central theme, logical sequence, closing statement)</li> <li>• Read aloud with fluency</li> <li>• Contribute to class and small-group discussion</li> <li>• Express ideas</li> </ul> <p>B. Prepare evidence that supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughts</li> <li>• Questions</li> <li>• Point of view</li> </ul> <p>C. Select and apply interview techniques to gain information using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who, what, when, where, why, and how?</li> <li>• <b>Literal, inferential, and evaluative questions</b></li> <li>• Restatement for clarification (paraphrase)</li> </ul> <p>D. Use appropriate strategies to prepare, rehearse, and deliver a formal presentation considering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience (large and small group)</li> <li>• Visual aids</li> <li>• Volume modulation</li> <li>• Word choice</li> <li>• Proper pacing</li> <li>• Pronunciation</li> <li>• Enunciation</li> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Body language</li> <li>• Eye contact</li> <li>• Peer/teacher feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>Literal question:</b> a question with a specific answer within the text</p> <p><b>Inferential question:</b> a question with an answer that can be implied from the text</p> <p><b>Evaluative question:</b> a question that requires judgement to answer</p>

<p><b>2.9 Listening</b></p> <p>The student listens actively to information from a variety of sources in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>A. Listen attentively and actively in group discussions, in class discussions, and as part of an audience by displaying appropriate listening behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face the speaker</li> <li>• Make eye contact</li> <li>• Show respect through silence</li> <li>• Ask pertinent questions</li> <li>• Recognize persuasive techniques</li> <li>• Take notes on received information</li> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> <li>• Give appropriate responses</li> </ul> <p>B. Listen for a variety of purposes to determine relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To obtain information</li> <li>• To apply received information</li> <li>• To critique information</li> <li>• To follow directions</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2.10 Viewing</b></p> <p>The student accesses, views, evaluates, and responds to print, non-print, video, and electronic resources.</p>	<p>A. Use print, non-print, video, and electronic resources effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisements</li> <li>• Photographs</li> <li>• Films</li> <li>• Picture books</li> <li>• Charts and diagrams</li> <li>• Graphs</li> <li>• Web sites</li> <li>• <b>Environmental text/</b> everyday print</li> </ul> <p>B. Use library classification systems to locate information</p> <p>C. Examine and evaluate effects of media in the family, home and school</p> <p>D. Consider the use of setting in conjunction with other elements, such as theme or characters, to support media presentations</p> <p>E. Recognize and respond to visual and print messages of metaphor, humor, irony, persuasion, credibility</p>	<p><b>Environmental text:</b> everyday print- train schedules, menus, directions, brochures, instructions</p>