



Striving Readers

Kent County Public Schools

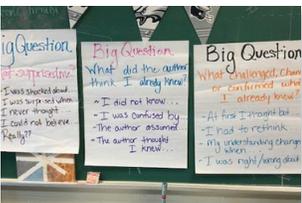
Writing To Read

Libby Jachels has visited us so many times now, we feel like she's one of the family. Libby first came to us in September to introduce the Six Traits of Writing—that fun, engaging, dynamic way to teach writing. She returned in January to model even more ways to use the writing kit and returned again this spring to guide teachers through the end of their year. The teachers like the strategies that this research based program uses for teaching: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions, and they have also really appreciated Libby's continuous support throughout the course of the school year. We can't wait to see what these teachers do with the Six Traits of Writing next school year!



Oral Language Development with Jennifer Ralston and Missy Butler

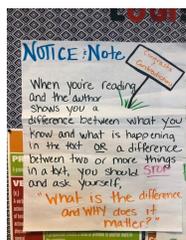
Our pre-k teachers had the opportunity to work with Jennifer Ralston, content specialist from MSDE, while our elementary teachers participated in a training with Missy Butler, an educational consultant. Both of these groups spent their day diving into oral language. They studied the components of oral language and how each component is assessed. They analyzed the locally developed screening tool and report card, shared other tools for assessing oral language, as well as discussed oral language instruction and what oral language looks like in the classroom. The time spent with these two oral language experts was extremely productive and our students will surely benefit from this important work.



Notice and Note

During our spring professional development, teachers spent time during a gallery walk perusing examples of how the

Notice and Note strategies have been implemented in the classrooms since Kylene Beers and Bob Probst visited us in January. Kylene and Bob sure will be impressed when they come back to work in our classrooms next fall and see all that our teachers and students have been doing.



Young children need **writing** to help them learn about **reading**, they need **reading** to help them learn about **writing**; and they need **oral language** to help them learn about both.

Partnering with Echo Hill

Echo Hill Outdoor School's mission is to "provide students with positive experiences in the outdoors that are exciting, interesting, and fun" which makes them a perfect partner with Kent County Public Schools. This spring KCPS Literacy Coaches spent time on Echo Hill's beautiful campus providing some professional development for their staff. While there we explored many aspects of child development as well as Disciplinary Literacy and the NexGen Science Standards. Their staff is just as exciting, interesting, and fun as their programs are! It's easy to see why our students love the EHOS experiences!



Wil Haygood Returns

Wil Haygood's first visit to Kent County High School in January was a huge success. We were lucky enough to have him visit again in March. While here, Mr. Haygood visited each grade at Kent County High School, spent time with student athletes, had an interview on the high school's radio station 90.5, and even spent some time in English classrooms to see how the students have been studying and enjoying his book, *Tigerland*. Since Mr. Haygood held an evening event for the entire community at Kent County Middle School that opened with the Kent County High School's marching band and color guard, student readings inspired by *Tigerland*, stories shared by Mr. Haygood, and concluded with a book signing. Mr. Haygood even took time out to get the eighth grade students at Kent County Middle School ready and excited to read his book when they enter ninth grade next year.



COLLABORATING WITH DR. GUTHRIE

Our Literacy Leadership Team has had the good fortune of realizing we have one of the most respected names in literacy engagement right here in Kent County. Dr. Guthrie was the Jean Mullan Professor of Literacy in the Department of Human Development at the University of Maryland, College Park. As Director of the Maryland Literacy Research Center, he studies motivations and strategies in reading at all school levels. Before coming to Maryland, he was Research Director for the International Reading Association. He began his career at Johns Hopkins University, where he founded the Kennedy School for children with reading disabilities. Since December, we have benefited from the research based instructional strategies of Dr. Guthrie. We have seen first hand the impact that his coaching and partnership with teachers can provide in the classroom. Effort towards engagement, choice, and literacy support has increased independent reading in English classrooms and excited our young readers. We will continue to strengthen this work this summer and next school year by creating a small team that will work with Dr. Guthrie to help embed these practices into our regular instruction as well as our unit and lesson design.



SOMLA Conference and Doug Fisher



In April our Literacy Leadership Team had the opportunity to attend a two day conference dedicated to literacy. Doug Fisher presented two extremely compelling sessions which resonated with us. Mr. Fisher was a major contributor to the Common Core State Standards during their inception and continues to devote himself to increasing literacy engagement and supports in classrooms. Citing the research of Dr. John Hattie, Mr. Fisher presented evidence based instructional strategies that have a direct impact on student growth and achievement. He also willingly shared all of his work and presentations with our team so that we were able to use this information for professional development. The research of Dr. Hattie and the proven strategies of Doug Fisher will help guide grades 3-12 in curriculum writing and development as school teams begin collaborating to embed proven instructional practices to increase literacy proficiency. Much of Mr. Fisher's work compliments that of Dr. Guthrie and we are excited to continue benefiting from the work of such influential educators and researchers.



THINGS WE LEARNED FROM THE APRIL 18TH LITERACY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

The new KCPS unit template is a great way to organize my lessons and be strategic in my planning. Learning specific activities to develop oral language skills like segmenting sounds was useful, and I now see the alignment with the literacy grant data collection, and our local reporting. I have been thinking a lot about the importance of aligning my lesson goals to standards and making sure they are measurable. These are a few of the things that you, KCPS staff had to say about the April 18th Professional Development day sessions. We love to hear what our staff have to say and use it to guide future trainings. Check out these additional comments lifted from the April 18th evaluation forms.

A takeaway for me was...

"writing/drawing then talk about adding more details, using gratitude journals"

"love the Six Traits writing resources- mentor texts and six traits rubrics"

"Great oral language skill review. Some good techniques/ ideas which would have been great to make as a make and take. AM session was totally worthwhile."

"Unpacking standards which parallel the learning experiences created within the unit to create rigor within the classroom for each student / Creating an environment for learning which illuminates specific standards for reading literacy and writing to advance growth for PARCC testing"

"Thinking more about what specialized instruction a student may need, based on their disability, to make progress in the general education classroom; using the IEP self-assessment rating tool to write better IEPs."

"It was a very productive day! I liked the collaboration across grade levels and schools."

Growing in Every Way

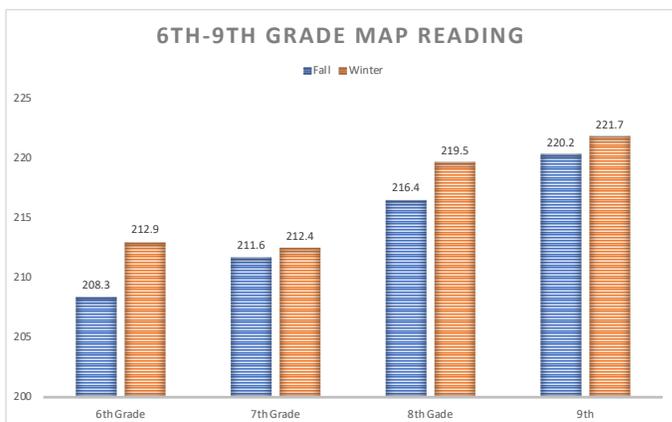
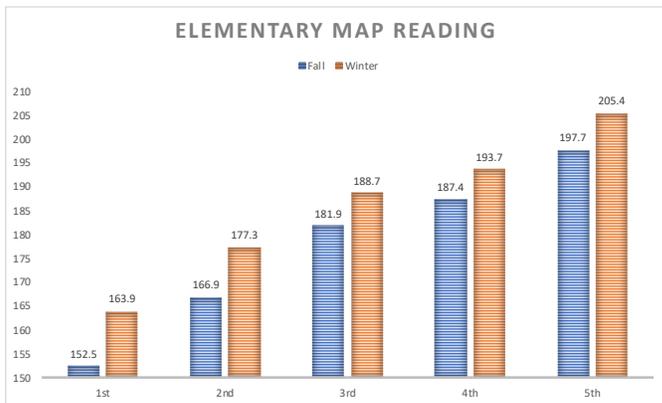
In September and again, just a few months later after winter break, our students participated in MAP testing. MAP stands for the Measure of Academic Progress. It is a computerized adaptive test which helps teachers, parents, and administrators improve learning for all students and make informed decisions to promote a child's academic growth. Due to the students' diligence and the dedication of their teachers, we are happy to report that in a few short months of school our students showed growth in their MAP test scores. Below are charts showing the growth in grades 1 through 8 in the



Student A -Reads **20 minutes** per day
 -1,800,000 words per year
 -**90th percentile** on tests

Student B -Reads **5 minutes** per day
 -282,000 words per year
 -**50th percentile** on tests

Student C -Reads **1 minute** per day
 -8,000 words per year
 -**10th percentile** on tests



Several studies have been conducted to discover if students who read self-selected literature for pleasure would experience greater academic success than their non-reading peers. These studies successfully proved that students who read for pleasure performed better in English, mathematics, science, and history. One study conducted a reading survey and found that pleasure reading was on the decline. Students were preoccupied with technology and social media, and many indicated that they did not value reading. The educators from the same study agreed that pleasure reading would improve student performance in the classroom. "Those educators interviewed had observed higher-level vocabulary, an advanced ability to communicate in writing across content areas, and increased fluency in their students who chose to read...they unanimously agreed that pleasure reading was an essential component for academic and future success" (The Journal of Multidisciplinary Graduate Research 2016, Volume 2, Article 4, pp. 48-64). At Kent County Public Schools, we are proud to say that our teachers know the value of reading, work hard to model reading and instill its value in our students, and allow time for reading to happen every day.