

January 23, 2012

Dear Parents,

In order to provide a better understanding of the philosophy behind Readers Workshop and to respond to some parent requests, I have put together a list of research and resources that can give a broader picture of this model. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it does provide a good overview of the research that has been done through the years in support of balanced literacy and the workshop model. As you will see, many years of research by noted experts in the field of reading substantiate the effectiveness of this approach.

One of our district goals for the last six years has been differentiated instruction. Readers Workshop is predicated on the principle that all students learn in individual ways and need instruction that supports their specific needs. Readers Workshop utilizes a child centered format, combined with direct instruction and teacher modeling, which provides detailed literacy instruction geared to each child. This requires a paradigm shift in teaching methods and planning, which we are supporting through training and practice for our teachers. We understand that learning how to do something in a different way can cause some trepidation and nervousness; however, the rewards for our children's education are worth the growing pains.

The building principals, literacy coaches and I will continue to provide support to the teachers through training workshops, common planning time, and discussion. We are also available to meet with any parents who have individual concerns.

Thank you for your interest and concerns.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

*Susan Alston*

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Supervisor of Humanities K-12

## Research and Resources Related to Readers Workshop

### On the Web

#### **On Reading, Learning to Read, and Effective Reading Instruction: An Overview of What We Know and How We Know It**, The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

This research shows how teaching direct comprehension strategies, such as those which comprise Readers Workshop, are the keys to effective reading instruction.

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/onreading>

#### **A Call to Action: What We Know About Adolescent Literacy and Ways to Support Teachers in Meeting Students' Needs**, NCTE

This position paper shows that adolescents need comprehension skills and strategies, which are taught and practiced in Readers Workshop, in order to succeed at higher level thinking and with ever more complicated text.

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/adolescentliteracy>

#### **Developing Reflective Readers through Readers' Workshop**

This research shows the importance of being a reflective and thoughtful reader and how that is promoted through Readers Workshop. The conclusion and reflections are particularly meaningful.

<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/info/researchfestival/tsellevaag.htm>

#### **The Reading Workshop**

This blog is by Frank Serafini, a noted reading expert, who comments here on the research on comprehension skills and how they are crucial to becoming a good reader. The skills he highlights are the cornerstone of Readers Workshop.

<http://thereadingworkshop.blogspot.com/>

### **Readers Workshop and the Common Core Standards**

This resource from Teachers College shows how Readers Workshop complies with the Common Core Standards

<http://tc.readingandwritingproject.com/resources/common-core-standards/units-of-study-and-the-ccs.html>

### **Books**

In the Middle by Nancy Atwell, Boynton/Cook publishers, Heinemann.

Conversations by Regie Routman, Heinemann.

Strategic Reading by Jeffery Wilhelm, Heinemann.

Mosaic of Thought by Ellin Keene and Susan Zimmermann, Heinemann.

Guided Comprehension, A Teaching Model for Grades 3-8 by Maureen McLaughlin and Mary Beth Allen, International Reading Association.

What Really Matters for Struggling Readers, Designing Research-Based Programs by Richard L. Allington, Addison Wesley Longman.

Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6, Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literature by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, Heinemann.

Classrooms That Work, They Can All Read and Write, 3rd edition by Richard L. Allington and Patricia Cunningham, Addison Wesley Longman.