

MEMO

To: Mason Teaching Staff and Administration

From: Matt Stuard - Executive Director of Curriculum

Date: Friday, 9/9/16

Re: K-12 ELA Study Committee

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for working so hard to make the start of the 2016-2017 school year such a success! Your enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning is inspiring. To those new to Mason Public Schools, thank you for joining an incredible staff who is dedicated to continuous improvement, and to ensuring that we provide an exceptional educational experience for all students.

Beginning December 2014, community members and Mason educators began the work of analyzing Mason's K-12 students' data as part of the Strategic Planning process. After the adoption of the Strategic Plan in December 2015, teachers and administrators continued analyzing students' data, and began reviewing its K-5 English Language Arts (ELA) Core Reading program. Also during the 2015-2016 school year, all K-5 classroom teachers, and most secondary ELA teachers, completed the Surveys of Enacted Curriculums (SEC) that compared Mason's enacted ELA curriculum to the ELA Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

While Mason is an exceptional district in many areas, a few K-12 ELA issues emerged as a result of the work described above. In no way are these issues a reflection of the hard work each of you continually display:

- The K-12 ELA enacted curriculum is not adequately aligned to the CCSS both horizontally and vertically
- In some areas, the K-12 ELA enacted curriculum does not meet the rigor required by the CCSS
- The District needs to improve upon its K-12 ELA assessment system to guide ELA curriculum and instruction effectively
- ELA literacy skills are not consistently integrated across all K-12 subject areas, which includes, but is not limited to, Science, Social Studies, and the Technical Subjects. The Technical Subjects are defined by the CCSS as, "a course devoted to a practical study, such as engineering, technology, design, business, or other workforce-related subject; a technical aspect of a wider field of study, such as art or music"
- ELA technology integration needs additional support in some areas
- Mason's K-5 Core Reading program is not CCSS aligned in all areas, and doesn't always provide the rigor required of the CCSS

After careful consideration of these issues, building and district administrators have endorsed the formation of a K-12 ELA Study Committee. The K-12 Study Committee will review new K-12 Core Reading programs, our current *Prentice Hall* 6-8 program, and the 9-12 core ELA courses offered at the high school. The formation of this committee will afford an opportunity for transparent collaboration that gives students and teachers the tools necessary to ensure every possibility of success.

Soon your building principals will provide additional information about the K-12 ELA Study Committee. Thanks for your commitment to all students and to making Mason Public Schools an exemplary learning community!

Sincerely,

Matt Stuard
Executive Director of Curriculum