

English Language Arts Curriculum Revisions

Several teams of BSSD English Language Arts teachers are involved in curriculum revision efforts intended to meet two important goals:

- (1) to align the district's 6-12th grade English/LA curriculum with the Common Core Standards;
- (2) to better prepare graduating seniors for the demands of college-level reading and writing requirements.

Three district English teachers have been invited by DESE's Curriculum and Instruction Department to join a team of writers who are creating a state "model curriculum" in English for grades 6-12. On January 23, Maridella Carter, Lori Frederick, and Sara Crump will attend the initial meeting in Jefferson City to begin work on this challenging task of creating a model curriculum for Missouri secondary English teachers. The goal is to address crucial aspects of the Common Core Standards, especially in the reading of complex nonfiction texts and the writing of expository, analytic, and persuasive essays. Lori will write curriculum for middle school, Sara for grade 10, and Maridella for grade 12. The resulting curriculum will guide district teachers at grades 6-12 as they continue to revise the district's curriculum to align it with the Common Core.

Meanwhile, at the district level, several teams are revising two courses at grade 12 to ensure that the district's graduating seniors have the best opportunity possible to succeed in college when they are faced with numerous diverse texts to read and reports and essays to compose. English IV, the course most seniors take for their fourth required English credit, looks different this year because the revision process has been ongoing since last spring: English IV now focuses as much on the reading of current nonfiction texts as on traditional English literature. A nonfiction "reader" much like the ones used in introductory required college English composition courses has been added, and the writing assignments focus on summarizing, analyzing, and persuading, much like those in college composition courses.

The other senior-level English course on which revision is just beginning is the one-semester Computer Composition class, which will become Introduction to College Writing next year. The assigned writing will be aligned to that required of students in entry-level college writing courses, and students will review and practice the writing and grammar skills they need to succeed on the ACT and COMPASS English tests.

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