



Elementary Balanced Literacy Instruction

Pre-K-Grade 5

Carroll County Public Schools uses a balanced approach to teach students literacy skills, including an integration of multiple modalities aimed at guiding students towards proficiency and lifelong reading. The balanced literacy approach is characterized by explicit instruction and the use of authentic texts. Our literacy program includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and oral and written communication. These skills are taught through read aloud, differentiated small group instruction, shared reading, shared writing, writing workshop and written response to reading across disciplines. Students are instructed through a structured literacy program using both fiction and nonfiction texts through the McGraw Hill Wonders Reading Program and the Carroll County Public Schools Humanities curriculum.

Read Aloud	Read aloud is a process by which teachers select a text to model specific reading strategies often used by readers as they silently read. The process of reading aloud helps to support students' listening comprehension skills, as well as reinforce behaviors when reading independently.
Small Group Instruction	Differentiated, small group instruction allows for explicit practice of a behavior or skill at a particular reading level, based on assessed needs. During small group instruction, students read aloud chorally, whisper read, and/or read silently while the teacher takes turns listening and monitoring progress. Small group instruction gives students the opportunity to apply the strategies they know to new text, with the ultimate goal of independent reading and understanding.
Shared Reading	Shared reading is a process in which a teacher and student share in reading a text and the teacher models the skills of a proficient reader. When engaged in shared reading, the teacher and students both interact with the text. The teacher guides students in utilizing reading and comprehension strategies to develop understanding.
Phonemic Awareness	Phonemic awareness is noticing, thinking about, and working with sounds and words in oral language. We teach these foundational skills through Foundations. Foundations is a strategic prevention and intervention program for word study that provides a multisensory structured literacy approach for all students, Pre-K to Grade 3.
Phonics	Phonics instruction connects phonemes with written letters so students can transfer their knowledge of sounds to the printed word. Phonics instruction is an important component of early reading education. We teach these foundational skills through Foundations. Foundations is a strategic prevention

	and intervention program for word study that provides a multisensory structured literacy approach for all students, Pre-K to Grade 3.
Vocabulary	Direct instruction of vocabulary helps students learn difficult vocabulary, such as words that represent complex concepts that are not part of the students' everyday experiences. We teach vocabulary using our Wonders and humanities resources. In fourth and fifth grade, students learn Greek and Latin roots to determine word meaning and increase comprehension across content.
Shared Writing	Shared Writing is a process by which teachers and students share the pen, essentially modeling parts of the writing process. The teacher has most of the responsibility to act as the scribe. The children are invited to write the parts that they know while the teacher fills in the unknown. In a large or small group, the teacher uses chart paper or a white board, markers, and post-it tape.
Writing Workshop	Writing Workshop includes a mini-lesson and independent writing time in which students are expected to practice a particular strategy during a phase of the writing process (generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). It also includes teacher-student conferencing, small group instruction, and an opportunity to model or share how they used the strategy during the workshop time. Teachers include instruction in narrative, informational and opinion-based writing. Student writing is evaluated using the CCPS Writing Rubrics in Grades K-5.
Response to Reading	Teaching <i>response to reading</i> allows students the opportunity to communicate orally, in writing, and digitally about the text they are reading. Students are encouraged to use textual evidence to support their thinking/answers. In addition, it provides teachers with a snapshot of student comprehension and understanding.

The ideas expressed in this work are generalizations and adaptations based on the shared reading method developed by Don Holdaway, the works of Fountas & Pinnell and <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/17-18/what-is-guided-reading/>