NBPTS

Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading–Language Arts STANDARDS

for teachers of students ages 3–12

The National Board would like to express appreciation to the U.S. Department of Education for its support in the cost of developing and publishing this standards document.

This project is funded in part with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2002, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of $119.3 million, representing approximately 45 percent of the National Board Certification project. More than $143.0 million (55 percent) of the project's cost will be financed by nongovernmental sources.

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and the reader should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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(for teachers of students ages 3–12)

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The world-class schools the United States requires cannot exist without a world-class teaching force; the two go hand in hand. Many accomplished teachers already work in the nation's schools, but their knowledge and skills are often unacknowledged and underutilized. Delineating outstanding practice and recognizing those who achieve it are important first steps in shaping the kind of teaching profession the nation needs. This is the core challenge embraced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards® (NBPTS). Founded in 1987 with a broad base of support from governors, teacher union and school board leaders, school administrators, college and university officials, business executives, foundations, and concerned citizens, NBPTS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are teachers. Committed to basic reform in education, NBPTS recognizes that teaching is at the heart of education and, further, that the single most-important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching.

The National Board's mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by:

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification® in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers®.

Dedication to this mission is elevating the teaching profession, educating the public about the demands and complexity of accomplished teaching practice, and making teaching a more attractive profession for talented college graduates with many other promising career options.

National Board Certification is more than a system for recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers. It offers an opportunity to guide the continuing growth and development of the teaching profession. Together with other reforms, National Board Certification is a catalyst for significant change in the teaching profession and in education.

The Philosophical Context

The standards presented here lay the foundation for the Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts certificate. They represent a professional consensus on the aspects of practice that distinguish accomplished teachers. Cast in terms of actions that teachers take to advance student achievement, these standards also incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments that allow teachers to practice at a high level. Like all NBPTS Standards, this standards document is grounded philosophically in the NBPTS policy statement *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. That statement identifies five core propositions.

1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice, as appropriate, on the basis of observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem; motivation; character; sense of civic responsibility; and respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences.

2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subjects is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional resources that can be of assistance. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to learning the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve challenging problems.

3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain, and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students. They make the most effective use of time in their instruction. They are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at making use of their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own.

Accomplished teachers command a range of instructional techniques and know when to employ them. They are devoted to high-quality practice and know how to offer each student the opportunity to succeed.

Accomplished teachers know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment and how to organize instruction so as to meet the schools' goals for students. They are adept at setting norms of social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain students' interest even in the face of temporary setbacks.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as the progress of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for assessing student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to students, parents, and administrators.

4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity, and appreciation of cultural differences. They demonstrate capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth—the ability to reason, take multiple perspectives, be creative and take risks, and experiment and solve problems.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter, and instruction, and their understanding of their students, to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are grounded not only in the literature of their fields but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning, which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers examine their practice critically; expand their repertoire; deepen their knowledge; sharpen their judgment; and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas, and theories.

5) Teachers are members of learning communities.

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, thus engaging them productively in the work of the school.

The Certification Framework

Using the Five Core Propositions as a springboard, NBPTS sets standards and offers National Board Certification in nearly 30 fields. These fields are defined by the developmental level of the students and the subject or subjects being taught. The first descriptor represents the four overlapping student developmental levels:

- Early Childhood, ages 3–8;
- Middle Childhood, ages 7–12;
- Early Adolescence, ages 11–15;
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood, ages 14–18+.

The second descriptor indicates the substantive focus of a teacher's practice. Teachers may select either a subject-specific or a generalist certificate at a particular developmental level. Subject-specific certificates are designed for teachers who emphasize a single subject area in their teaching (e.g., Early Adolescence/English Language Arts, Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics); generalist certificates are designed for teachers who develop student skills and knowledge across the curriculum (e.g., Early Childhood/Generalist, Middle Childhood/Generalist). For some subject-specific certificates, developmental levels are combined to recognize the commonalities in teaching students at those developmental levels (e.g., Early and Middle Childhood/Art).

Standards and Assessment Development

Following a nationwide search for outstanding educators, the National Board appoints a standards committee for each field. The committees are generally made up of 15 members who are broadly representative of accomplished professionals in their fields. A majority of committee members are teachers regularly engaged in teaching students in the field in question; other members are typically professors, experts in child development, teacher educators, and other professionals in the relevant discipline. The standards committees develop the specific standards for each field, which are then disseminated widely for public critique and comment and are subsequently revised as necessary before adoption by the NBPTS Board of Directors. Periodically, standards are updated so that they remain dynamic documents, responsive to changes in the field.

Determining whether or not candidates meet the standards requires performance-based assessment methods that are fair, valid, and reliable and that ask teachers to demonstrate principled, professional judgments in a variety of situations. A testing contractor specializing in assessment development works with standards committee members, teacher assessment development teams, and members of the NBPTS staff to develop assessment exercises and pilot test them with teachers active in each certificate field. The assessment process involves two primary activities: (1) the compilation of a portfolio of teaching practice over a period of time and (2) the demonstration of content knowledge through assessment center exercises. Teachers prepare their portfolios by videotaping their teaching, gathering student learning products and other teaching artifacts, and providing detailed analyses of their practice. At the assessment center, teachers write answers to questions that relate primarily to content knowledge specific to their fields.

The portfolio is designed to capture teaching in real-time, real-life settings, thus allowing trained assessors from the field in question to examine how teachers translate knowledge and theory into practice. It also yields the most valued evidence NBPTS collects—videos of practice and samples of student work. The videos and student work are accompanied by commentaries on the goals and purposes of instruction and the effectiveness of the practice, teachers' reflections on what occurred, and their rationales for the professional judgments they made. In addition, the portfolio allows candidates to document their accomplishments in contributing to the advancement of the profession and the improvement of schooling—whether at the local, state, or national level—and to document their ability to work constructively with their students' families.

Teachers report that the portfolio is a professional development vehicle of considerable power, in part because it challenges the historic isolation of teachers from their peers. It accomplishes this by actively encouraging candidates to seek the advice and counsel of their professional colleagues—whether across the hall or across the country—as they build their portfolios. It also requires teachers to examine the underlying assumptions of their practice and the results of their efforts in critical but healthy ways. This emphasis on reflection is highly valued by teachers who go through the process of National Board Certification.

The assessment center exercises are designed to complement the portfolio. They validate that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are, in fact, accurate reflections of what candidates know and can do, and they give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio because of the candidate's specific teaching assignment. For example, high school science teachers assigned to teach only physics in a given year might have difficulty demonstrating in their portfolio a broad knowledge of biology. Given that the NBPTS Standards for science teachers place a high value on such capabilities, another strategy for data collection is necessary. The assessment center exercises fill this gap and otherwise augment the portfolio. Each candidate's work is examined by trained assessors who teach in the certificate field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards believes that a valid assessment of accomplished practice must allow for the variety of forms that sound practice takes. It must also sample the range of content knowledge that teachers possess and must provide appropriate contexts for assessments of teaching knowledge and skill. Teaching is not just about knowing things; it is about the use of knowledge—knowledge of learners and of learning, of schools and of subjects—in the service of helping students grow and develop. Consequently, NBPTS believes that the most valid teacher assessment processes engage candidates in the activities of teaching—activities that require the display and use of teaching knowledge and skill and that allow teachers the opportunity to explain and justify their actions.

In its assessment development work, NBPTS uses technology for assessment when appropriate; ensures broad representation of the diversity that exists within the profession; engages pertinent disciplinary and specialty associations at key points in the process; collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions, and independent research and education organizations; establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias with respect to age, gender, and racial and ethnic background of teacher-candidates; and selects the method exhibiting the least adverse impact when given a choice among equally valid assessments.

Once an assessment has been thoroughly tested and found to meet NBPTS requirements for validity, reliability, and fairness, eligible teachers may apply for National Board Certification. To be eligible, a teacher must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary school, middle school, or high school level; and have held a valid state teaching license for those three years or, where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state.

Strengthening Teaching and Improving Learning

The National Board's system of standards and certification is commanding the respect of the profession and the public, thereby making a difference in how communities and policymakers view teachers, how teachers view themselves, and how teachers improve their practice throughout their careers. National Board Certification has yielded such results in part because it has forged a national consensus on the characteristics of accomplished teaching practice in each field. The traditional conversation about teacher competence has focused on beginning teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has helped broaden this conversation to span the entire career of teachers.

Developing standards of accomplished practice helps to elevate the teaching profession as the standards make public the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of accomplished teachers. However, making such standards the basis for National Board Certification promises much more. Because National Board Certification identifies accomplished teachers in a fair and trustworthy manner, it can offer career paths for teachers that will make use of their knowledge, wisdom, and expertise; give accomplished practitioners the opportunity to achieve greater status, authority, and compensation; and accelerate efforts to build more successful school organizations and structures.

By holding accomplished teachers to high and rigorous standards, National Board Certification encourages change along several key fronts:

- changing what it means to have a career in teaching by recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers and by making it possible for teachers to advance in responsibility, status, and compensation without having to leave the classroom;

- changing the culture of teaching by accelerating growth in the knowledge base of teaching, by placing real value on professional judgment and accomplished practice in all of its various forms, and by encouraging teachers to search for new knowledge and better practice through a steady regimen of collaboration and reflection with peers and others;

- changing the way schools are organized and managed by creating a vehicle that facilitates the establishment of unique teacher positions, providing accomplished teachers with greater authority and autonomy in making instructional decisions and greater responsibility for sharing their expertise to strengthen the practice of others;

- changing the nature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development by laying a standards-based foundation for a fully articulated career development path that begins with prospective teachers and leads to accomplished teachers;

- changing the way school districts think about hiring and compensating teachers by encouraging administrators and school boards to reward excellence in teaching by seeking to hire accomplished teachers.

Although National Board Certification has been designed with the entire country in mind, each state and locality decides for itself how best to encourage teachers to achieve National Board Certification and how best to take advantage of the expertise of the National Board Certified Teachers in their midst. Across the country, legislation has been enacted that supports National Board Certification, including allocations of funds to pay for the certification fee for teachers, release time for candidates to work on their portfolios and prepare for the assessment center exercises, and salary supplements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification. Incentives for National Board Certification exist at the state or local level in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia.

As this support at the state and local levels suggests, National Board Certification is recognized throughout the nation as a rich professional development experience. Because National Board Certification provides states and localities with a way to structure teachers' roles and responsibilities more effectively and to allow schools to benefit from the wisdom of their strongest teachers, National Board Certification is a strong component of education reform in the United States.

Introduction

Literacy is fundamental to the growth of students coming of age in a rapidly changing world. The increased diversity within our borders and global interactions beyond them make literacy skills of the utmost importance for dealing with emerging and ongoing challenges. This document, *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards*, emphasizes the importance of reading at the early and middle childhood levels while conveying the importance and integration of all the language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Reading, and in particular the components of early reading development, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation, is both foundational to all learning and seamlessly connected to all the language arts. Literacy: reading–language arts teachers have a responsibility to ensure that all students gain full access to the reading–language arts curriculum in order to prepare students to succeed academically and communicate effectively in a complex world.[1] This document describes the important role accomplished teachers play in developing children's reading–language arts abilities, or *literacy*, and the knowledge and skills about literacy that they incorporate effectively in their teaching practice.

1. In this document, the field of literacy: reading–language arts is often referred to simply as *reading–language arts.*

Traditionally, *literacy* has been defined as reading and writing and all of the behaviors and strategies needed for understanding and producing written text. This definition has evolved to include the concept that learning is not only a cognitive process but also a social process. In the twenty-first century, literacy includes using reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing as modes of communication. Critical literacy, our ultimate goal for all individuals, includes learners' abilities to critique ideas, effect social change, and empower themselves to make a difference in their own and others' lives. When the word *literacy* is used in this document, we mean all aspects of this expanded definition.

The definition of literacy has also evolved to acknowledge the fact that texts are no longer only print-based materials. Advances in technology have continued to contribute to this evolving definition. Texts are any organized network of meaning including the system of cultural signs, inscriptions, and grammars (our talk), all of which shape our speech, reading, writing, and viewing. The word *text* in this document means oral, written, and visual text, unless otherwise noted.

Finally, educators also embrace the concept of multiple literacies; they realize that learners encode and decode meaning using various forms of representation, such as art and music. Multiple literacies provide for multiple pathways for students to gain and communicate understanding and knowledge in reading–language arts and in all other subject areas. These multiple literacies enrich the teaching of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing.

Just as the definition of literacy has evolved to better reflect what is known about how children learn and the social, historical, and political contexts within which they learn communication skills, the knowledge base also has changed in regard to what literacy approaches and programs best meet the needs of all literacy learners. In the past, educators often embraced a particular approach to teaching literacy skills, such as a phonics, skills-based, or whole-language approach. Embracing a particular perspective or approach became problematic for a number of reasons, including a growing concern that adopting one approach over another did little to serve the variety of diverse learners in any one classroom. A balanced, integrated, and comprehensive approach to teaching literacy supports the idea that a single approach to teaching literacy skills and strategies to learners is insufficient to meet the needs of all learners.

Introduction

This document does not embrace a particular approach or philosophy as to how literacy programs should be designed or how students should be taught. Rather, there is a consensus that the teacher is the single most important component of a comprehensive literacy perspective and that many elements are essential to promoting the development of literacy skills in a variety of contexts and with a variety of learners. This is true regardless of teachers' contexts, including those shaped by local, state, or national initiatives that may define how literacy skills are taught or what programs are implemented. A comprehensive perspective recognizes that learners need accomplished teachers of literacy who have a strong knowledge base in reading development, and who understand children and how they develop as literacy learners. Teachers also know the skills and strategies necessary for successful literacy learning and are able to respond to the needs of particular learners, supporting them when they are faced with specific reading–language arts challenges and helping them develop into strategic, flexible, motivated, and independent learners.

Within the field of Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts, accomplished teachers operate in many different contexts. Some have self-contained classrooms with a single grade level, emphasizing the language arts while threading them throughout the curriculum. Others are reading specialists who work with smaller groups, integrating the language arts while maintaining their emphasis on reading skills. Some may be reading–language arts teachers working with multiple classes or multiple grade levels. Some reading specialists work in pullout programs; others team-teach with a classroom teacher. Still other teachers are preschool teachers, reading coaches, or master reading teachers. Whatever their teaching context, accomplished reading–language arts teachers promote literacy not only in their classrooms but also in their schools and communities. Their goal is to bring children greater access to the communication skills they need for success in and out of school throughout a lifetime.

The early and middle childhood developmental level covers a wide range of child development, from toddlers to young adolescents. For the purposes of organization and clarity, some standards delineate the different but complementary skills developed at the early childhood and middle childhood levels. Regardless of their teaching level, teachers in this field are expected to know and understand the developmental patterns and range of literacy skills for students ages 3 to 12 in order to effectively teach and guide these learners. Children come to school with such a wide range of literacy skills and they progress at such varying rates that it is essential for teachers to know how to teach literacy skills across both the early and middle childhood developmental levels.

The language skills developed by young children enable them to increase their interactions with the wider world. Young children are curious; they bring openness and eagerness to learning; and they are also somewhat egocentric. Middle childhood students have the expanding perspectives and refined fine-motor skills that allow for continued development in their communication and critical-thinking skills. Teachers use the characteristics of their students' development as springboards to literacy and lifelong learning by providing active, meaningful learning experiences to stimulate and develop their language skills.

The development of skills in reading–language arts provides a strong base for the integrated and complementary skills of the entire early and middle childhood curriculum. Accomplished reading–language arts teachers understand the complexities of their field, particularly the ways in which the language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing—support and complement one another.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

In 1992, a committee of Middle Childhood/English Language Arts teachers and other English language arts educators began the process of developing advanced professional standards for teachers of students ages 7 to 12. The standards committee was charged with translating the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards into a standards document that defines outstanding teaching in the field. This led to the adoption of *Middle Childhood/English Language Arts Standards* by the NBPTS Board of Directors in 1998.

In 2000, the Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee, which comprised original committee members and a new group of educators—including National Board Certified Teachers and early childhood educators—was convened to expand and update *Middle Childhood/English Language Arts Standards* in order to create *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards*. This document is the result of the committee's deliberations at meetings and their input into working drafts of the standards.

The NBPTS Standards that the committee developed describe in observable form what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the professional consensus in the field at this point about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee were informed by various national and state initiatives on student and teacher standards that have been operating concurrently with the development of NBPTS Standards. This document also reflects the very latest evidence-based research findings in reading–language arts. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* will be updated again.

An essential tension of describing accomplished practice concerns the difference between the analysis and the practice of teaching. The former tends to fragment the profession into any number of discrete duties, such as designing learning activities, providing quality explanation, modeling, managing the classroom, and monitoring student progress. Teaching as it actually occurs, on the other hand, is a seamless activity.

Everything an accomplished teacher knows through study, research, and experience is brought to bear daily in the classroom through innumerable decisions that shape learning. Teaching frequently requires balancing the demands of several important educational goals. It depends on accurate observations of particular students and settings. And it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom. The professional judgments that accomplished teachers make also reflect a certain improvisational artistry.

The paradox, then, is that any attempt to write standards that dissect what accomplished teachers know and are able to do will, to a certain extent, misrepresent the holistic nature of how teaching actually takes place. Nevertheless, the fact remains: Certain identifiable commonalties characterize the accomplished practice of teachers. The 15 standards that follow are designed to capture the craft, artistry, proficiencies, and understandings—both deep and broad—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching.

The Standards Format

Accomplished teaching appears in many different forms, and it should be acknowledged at the outset that these specific standards are not the only way it could have been described. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished teaching, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of teaching that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but that are not discrete when they appear in practice.

The report follows a two-part format for each of the 15 standards:

I. ***Standard Statement***—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teacher. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.

II. ***Elaboration***—This passage provides a context for the standard, along with an explanation of what teachers need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions of teachers' dispositions toward students, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

Finally, a word about order of presentation. The 15 standards that follow have been organized around the critical nexus of education—student learning. They are divided into three categories: (1) teacher actions that create the conditions for productive student learning; (2) teacher actions that directly advance student learning in the classroom; and (3) teacher actions that indirectly support student learning through professional development and outreach initiatives.

Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 3–12)

OVERVIEW

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers into the following 15 standards. The standards have been ordered to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in this field.

Preparing the Way for Student Learning

I. Knowledge of Learners (p. 7)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers draw on their knowledge of learning and child development theories and their relationships with students to acquire knowledge of their students as intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and literate beings. Teachers use this information to inform teaching and learning practices.

II. Knowledge of the Field of Literacy: Reading-Language Arts (p. 11)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know and understand current literature and theories about reading–language arts. They evaluate this knowledge and use it in their instructional practice.

III. Equity, Fairness, and Diversity (p. 17)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers practice equity and fairness; they seek and capitalize on diversity and diverse perspectives. They encourage all students to know, value, and respect themselves and others in the classroom, school, and larger community.

IV. Learning Environment (p. 23)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers establish with their students a caring, supportive, inclusive, challenging, democratic, and safe learning community in which individuals take intellectual, social, and emotional risks and work both independently and collaboratively.

V. Instructional Resources (p. 27)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers select, adapt, and create a rich and varied collection of instructional resources; regularly involve students in the process of creating and selecting such resources; and engage students, teachers, parents, and other adults from the community to enrich instruction.

VI. Instructional Decision Making (p. 33)
Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers set informed and purposeful goals for students, develop meaningful learning opportunities, and interact effectively with students while extending to them increasing responsibility for their own learning.

VII. Assessment (p. 37)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to shape instructional decisions, monitor student progress, encourage student self-assessment, and gather information to report to various audiences.

Advancing Student Learning

VIII. Integration (p. 43)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers understand the reciprocal nature of the literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, and they provide developmentally appropriate learning activities that integrate among the language arts and across the curriculum.

IX. Reading (p. 47)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use their knowledge of reading processes, language development, texts, and ongoing assessment to advance literacy, develop strategic readers, promote an appreciation of reading as vital to lifelong learning, and create effective instruction so that readers can negotiate, inquire about, and construct meaning across the curriculum.

X. Writing (p. 53)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use their knowledge of writing processes, language development, writing development, and ongoing assessment to provide instruction in the components of writing, assist students in constructing meaning in their written work, and provide genuine opportunities for students to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

XI. Listening and Speaking (p. 59)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know, value, and teach oral language development and listening and speaking skills as essential components of literacy, and they provide opportunities for students to listen and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

XII. Viewing (p. 63)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know, value, and teach viewing as an essential component of literacy. They use a wide variety of print and nonprint resources to develop students' viewing and visual-representation skills.

Supporting Student Learning

XIII. Collaboration with Families and Communities (p. 67)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers develop positive and mutually supportive relationships with family and community members to achieve common goals for the literacy education of students.

XIV. Teacher as Learner (p. 71)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers constantly seek to improve their knowledge and practice through a continuing process of professional reading, writing, dialogue, inquiry, and reflection.

XV. Professional Responsibility (p. 75)

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers actively contribute to the improvement of teaching, learning, and the advancement of knowledge and professional practice.

The pages that follow provide elaborations of each standard that discuss the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and habits of mind that describe accomplished teaching in the field.

Preparing the Way for Student Learning

The first seven standards form the foundation for the instructional decisions made by Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers and are the basis for all of the other standards. Only by knowing their students well can teachers consistently make instructional decisions that will further students' learning. And only by having deep and broad understandings of reading–language arts subject matter and of pedagogical principles and tools can teachers organize and deliver instruction that helps students build their own deep and broad understandings of the field.

Standard I: Knowledge of Learners

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers draw on their knowledge of learning and child development theories and their relationships with students to acquire knowledge of their students as intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and literate beings. Teachers use this information to inform teaching and learning practices.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers make a commitment to knowing each student as an individual learner. They have a thorough understanding of current learning theories and the principles of child development, and they possess a deep and rich store of content knowledge and instructional strategies, all of which lend perspective to their instructional decisions. To complement this framework of knowledge, they also strive to acquire a particular knowledge of each of their students as an intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and literate being. They gain this knowledge by paying close attention to each of their students—observing, listening to, and conversing with them—and by seeking information about each student's home, family, and community life. Teachers[2] do all of this because they understand that each student is a unique language learner and that this individual history can help determine what kinds of learning experiences will most benefit each student.

Teachers Understand Learning and Child Development Theories

Accomplished teachers have a thorough knowledge of current theories about how children develop and learn and the implications for these theories on literacy learning. Teachers know that learning is a cognitive process in which students actively construct knowledge on a daily basis by adding new knowledge to previous information, by challenging misconceptions with new concepts, and by constantly modifying and expanding their knowledge base. Accomplished teachers also recognize that learning is a social activity and that students need multiple opportunities to discuss ideas with their teacher and peers, using language as a tool for constructing meaning.

Accomplished teachers have a thorough knowledge of child development theories, including knowledge about cognitive, social, emotional, and physical developmental

2. All references to teachers in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refer to accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers. These include classroom teachers, reading specialists, literacy specialists, Title I teachers, and others actively engaged in teaching reading–language arts.

patterns. Teachers recognize that a child's development is a highly individual process and that a child's learning, although indicated by some predictable markers, is influenced by a variety of factors both in and out of school. Teachers' understanding of major theories of child development provides a foundation for their observations, analyses, and decision-making processes. Accomplished teachers also know that current learning theories and knowledge of child development link with knowledge about literacy acquisition and development. They recognize that students' literacy acquisition is developmental in nature and that children's knowledge, skills, and abilities emerge over time in dynamic and purposeful ways. Teachers recognize where the child is in this developmental process and where the child needs to progress, and they provide the appropriate contexts, instructional activities, opportunities, and materials, coupled with purposeful support, to maximize students' learning.

Teachers Become Acquainted with Each Student as an Intellectual, Social, Emotional, and Cultural Being

Teachers understand that early and middle childhood learners are naturally inquisitive and want to make sense of the world. Children constantly explore new ideas, construct hypotheses about how these ideas relate to their previous understandings, and test out their theories. Children in the early and middle childhood years, like learners of all ages, want to connect to other people and, through these people, to the world at large. They value interaction with others in part as a way of confirming or challenging what they already know. Teachers structure these interactions to be positive and productive, leading to new insights, understandings, and questions. Teachers engage students' natural curiosity about the world to help students acquire and flexibly use the tools and skills necessary for independent meaning-making.

Teachers place a priority on becoming aware of the various characteristics of their students and capitalizing on their strengths and interests. They get to know their students as individuals, familiarizing themselves with attributes central to students' identities, such as their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and family backgrounds; their interests, goals, and expectations for themselves; their prior dispositions toward school and learning; their physical and mental abilities, including any exceptionalities that may bear on their preferred or optimal learning styles; and their prior life and learning experiences, including any emotional or behavioral issues. For example, accomplished teachers recognize the extroverted personality of one student, the persistence of a struggling learner, and the uncertain self-esteem of a third and use this information in their instructional decision making when encouraging discussion from each of these students. Likewise, teachers understand how some students may have well-developed or limited small- and large-motor skills at given points in their development, and they understand how this may affect students' writing. Teachers understand that not all students learn at the same rate or in the same manner, and therefore they design instructional programs to accommodate individual differences. They know how to create a secure, mutually supportive learning environment that encourages each student to meet high expectations. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*)

Teachers Become Acquainted with Each Student as an Individual Language Learner

Teachers understand that children come to school with diverse language and literacy backgrounds and with varying levels of language-learning abilities. Some are monolingual in English; a growing percentage has a background in other languages. Some have been immersed in language and read to from infancy and have an easy familiarity with books and the conventions of print by the time they come to school; others come from households whose members practice a rich oral storytelling tradition but who do not habitually interact with printed text. Some come from cultures in which children have talked with family members from earliest memory; others do not have the advantage of a stable home environment or an adult presence in their lives. Teachers understand that, regardless of children's background, most children learn at an early age that language is a medium for finding out more about the world and communicating with others.

Accomplished teachers know that many variations in language and literacy background frequently have important implications for the kind of learning activities that will benefit the student most directly. Accordingly, they actively seek knowledge about their students as individual language learners, and they value and respect the language(s) their students speak at home. They discover what—or whether—their students read for pleasure. They find out how their students perceive themselves as readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and viewers; that is, as interpreters of a wide range of texts, including print media such as books, newspapers, and magazines, and nonprint media such as audiotapes and videotapes, Internet resources, television, and film.

Teachers use many strategies for learning about students, including formal and informal interviews with students and their families; conversations with students' current or previous teachers or other appropriate specialists; review, if possible, of language arts portfolios from previous years; and their own ongoing formal and informal assessment practices. They know when to seek assistance from colleagues with particular areas of expertise or knowledge of students' backgrounds. Teachers know and document each student's history and experience as a learner and user of language. (See Standard VII—*Assessment* and Standard XIII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities*.)

Reflections on Standard I:

Standard II: Knowledge of the Field of Literacy: Reading–Language Arts

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know and understand current literature and theories about reading–language arts. They evaluate this knowledge and use it in their instructional practice.

Accomplished teachers are aware of the complexity of defining the field of Literacy: Reading–Language Arts because it embraces the multiple facets of communication and is thus an ever-evolving discipline. Nevertheless, teachers are aware that knowledge of the field entails a rich synthesis of (a) knowledge of the current literature on the reading process and how students learn to read, (b) knowledge of texts—traditional and contemporary, fiction and nonfiction, print and nonprint, (c) knowledge of the current literature on the writing process and how students learn to write, (d) knowledge of literacy acquisition and how language develops, (e) knowledge of the current literature on speaking and listening and the conventions of oral communication, and (f) knowledge of the current literature on viewing and the conventions of visual communication in various media.

In addition to a strong knowledge of the constructs that underpin literacy acquisition and development, accomplished teachers can articulate this knowledge and can use it to develop sound instruction for students. Across all components of literacy, accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the developmental levels of students, and they know how to use their pedagogical knowledge to match effective instructional strategies to literacy needs.[3] This standard on knowledge of the field focuses on the knowledge base of accomplished reading–language arts teachers; the separate standards on reading, writing, listening and speaking, and viewing (Standards IX–XII) elaborate on the knowledge base and focus on how teachers apply their knowledge of the field to promote the literacy growth of their students. Throughout these standards it is assumed that accomplished teachers are themselves skilled readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and viewers who know how to model effective communication for their students.

Knowledge of Reading

Accomplished teachers know and can evaluate current literature on reading, including theories of reading and pedagogies that support learning of reading. Teachers are able to discriminate between evidence-based research and unsubstantiated trends and between effective and ineffective strategies for their students, and they can articulate their knowledge and the rationale for their decisions.

Accomplished teachers know how children learn to read and that the reading process is developmental in nature. Teachers know that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, and motivation are key to developing proficient readers. Teachers

3. See the Introduction for usage of the term *literacy* in this document.

know that readers, from preemergent to sophisticated, use their knowledge about the world along with a variety of cueing systems, including graphophonic, pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic, as they construct meaning from text. (See Standard IX—*Reading* for a discussion of cueing systems, also known as *sources of information.*) They know that the purposes set for reading and the types of text used also affect the reading process.

Teachers recognize that their students will be at various points in their reading development. Teachers use suitable approaches, methods, materials, skills, and strategies to create a comprehensive literacy program designed to meet the needs of individual students and to challenge each student to grow as a reader.[4] They know the processes, skills, and strategies that students at various developmental levels need to learn to decode, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate texts. Teachers know how and when to teach these processes, skills, and strategies, based on the needs of students (e.g., phonemic awareness and phonics necessary for emerging literacy development; vocabulary development and self-monitoring strategies for assuring comprehension of a text; and techniques for evaluating an author's point of view for analyzing a text). Teachers know the particular problems that surround learning to read and match appropriate research-based strategies with individual learners to help prevent and address reading difficulties, to motivate students, and to further their development as readers. The ultimate goal of accomplished teachers is to help students develop into fluent, lifelong readers who are engaged in the process of learning, who comprehend what they read, and who read for enjoyment.

4. See the Introduction for an expanded discussion of balanced, comprehensive reading programs.

Accomplished teachers know the skills and strategies to help students comprehend a variety of texts. For example, teachers know comprehension strategies used to support student learning before students read selections, as they read, and in activities that follow reading. The goal is to help build students' understanding and prompt them to think about text analytically. Accomplished teachers know that even young children can engage in higher-order thinking skills about text; it is the sophistication of the text and the sophistication of the analytic or evaluative thinking that grows as the child matures.

Accomplished teachers know a wide range of written, spoken, and visual texts and the importance of engaging students with these texts. These include children's literature, such as picture books, poems, folk literature, and other narrative and expository texts. Teachers are knowledgeable about matching texts to students in terms of developmental, instructional, and interest levels. Teachers understand that the concept of *text* includes such materials as educational software, signs and labels, Internet resources, films, newspapers, and magazines. Teachers know that in an age of information-rich technology, students need the ability to read texts in all media and to make connections among different media. Teachers know the distinctive features of various genres and text structures and how those features achieve their effects on audiences. Teachers know literary terminology and how an understanding of these elements helps students construct meaning from texts. They know the historical and cultural backgrounds of texts, and they know and use texts that authentically represent diversity in terms of culture, abilities, gender, region, and use of language.

Knowledge of Writing

Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about current literature on writing, including theories of writing and pedagogies that support the learning of writing. Teachers can participate with professional ease in the conversations that surround the teaching of writing and can synthesize and select the best practices from sometimes conflicting views

of writing instruction to shape appropriate classroom strategies. They understand that oral language development supports the development of written language and that in the acquisition of both, the exchange of meaning motivates children to learn to communicate messages. When surrounded by print from an early age, children soon learn that it conveys ideas. They discover that they can interpret the written messages of others and create their own messages, starting with scribbles, drawings, and letter approximations; developing individual letters and words; then reading and writing a variety of increasingly sophisticated fictional and informational texts. Accomplished teachers know what constitutes good writing.

Teachers have knowledge of the major components of writing and can use this knowledge in their teaching. They are familiar with writing as a recursive and complex process that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, and they understand that writers do not progress through the writing process in a linear manner. They have knowledge of writing skills and techniques, including focus, organization, voice, support, descriptive language, and sentence variety. They understand that writers draw upon various sources of information as they write, and they know the role of purpose, audience, and context in writing. They know how format and genre relate to the expression of ideas.

Teachers are familiar with indicators of learners' writing development (e.g., emergent writers scribble as their first form of writing) and are able to challenge and nurture all students as they progress as writers. Teachers recognize and meet the needs of students at various developmental levels (e.g., as young writers move from writing narratives to other forms of writing, such as persuasive or expository writing, teachers offer strategies to help with these new forms of writing). Accomplished teachers recognize the developmental patterns inherent in learners' writing, from emergent writing and spelling to sophisticated writing that includes conventional use of spelling and grammar.

Teachers understand additional aspects of the teaching of writing. Teachers know effective strategies for teaching all aspects of the writing process, and they know how to help students write individually and collaboratively. They understand the role of explicit instruction and of independent writing on topics of choice. They know that students learn the conventions of written language (e.g., spelling, grammar, and punctuation) best in context, and they know how to weave language skills instruction throughout the writing process. They know that young children develop fine-motor skills slowly and need access to a variety of drawing and writing materials to support fine-motor development. Teachers know that children's literature and other print materials (e.g., letters, magazines, invitations, posters, and newspapers) are authentic written texts that students can use as models of writing. Teachers know the importance of both peer and teacher response, and they understand how to provide feedback that is respectful and constructive to student writers. They know the importance of maintaining a safe atmosphere in which students feel free to share their writing and take risks and grow as writers.

Knowledge of Literacy Acquisition, Oral Language Development, and Listening and Speaking

Oral language is the foundation for all literacy skills. Teachers deeply understand and can articulate the process of literacy acquisition and how learners' oral language is developed. While these are natural developmental processes, teachers know that explicit instruction and rich language experiences based on students' individual needs are necessary to expand students' use and appreciation of oral language. Accomplished teachers know and understand the literature that examines the connection between oral language development and the acquisition of reading and writing skills, both for native English speakers and for students learning English as a new language.

Accomplished teachers know that listening is more than the physical act of hearing. Teachers understand that listening involves receiving, attending to, understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and reacting to sounds and messages. Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the different types of listening, such as informational, critical, and appreciative.

Accomplished teachers recognize that students need to communicate effectively through speaking, and they model articulate oral communication in the classroom. Teachers know that effective speaking involves such factors as fluency, clarity, and awareness of audience, purpose, and context. They know the types of language that are appropriate in different situations and the conventions of formal and informal language. Teachers recognize that speaking and listening are related activities and necessary life skills. Teachers also have knowledge of the nonverbal skills, such as body language and facial expressions, that children need to be effective speakers and listeners. Included in this knowledge is the understanding that different cultures have different conventions for nonverbal communication.

Knowledge of Viewing

Visual communication has become an integral part of being literate in contemporary society. Accomplished teachers know that the components of critical viewing include the ability to analyze visual language, interpret graphic representations, interpret and evaluate media messages, and employ visual media as a means of communication. They understand that students need to be taught how to interpret visual materials by applying critical thinking skills and by knowing what makes the visual medium similar to and different from other forms of communication. Teachers know that visual texts range from illustrations, collages, and even fonts and white space in a piece of writing, to film and multimedia productions. Accomplished teachers also know the advantages and limitations of different media as means for expression and know how print and nonprint media often combine to create powerful communication.

Teachers know the conventions of various visual media, and they know a wide variety of visual texts appropriate for early and middle childhood students. They are familiar with common misconceptions about visual media, such as the notion that visual media directly transmit reality. Teachers understand how mass media, such as newspapers and electronic news, photographs, television programs and music videos, films, and Web pages, can both reflect and shape cultural values, and they understand the commercial underpinnings of such media. They also know how to evaluate various media as artistic expressions. Accomplished teachers are familiar with the literature on the role of viewing in the reading–language arts curriculum.

Accomplished teachers understand that multimedia computers and emerging technologies continue to broaden the types of visual media appropriate to the reading-language arts classroom, and these teachers know how to apply sophisticated viewing skills to these media as well. They know, for example, how to evaluate the placement of text and graphics on a Web site and how to assess the overall impression the owners of the Web site hope to project. Teachers also recognize that technology changes so rapidly that teachers must be flexible and constantly open to change and new understandings about viewing. Accomplished teachers understand the difference between knowing about visual media as objects of study (as texts for interpretation and as means for constructing and communicating meaning) and knowing about instructional media as tools for enhancing the teaching of literacy and other subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers know the district, state, and national standards that frame the curricula they teach across the language arts, and they know how to develop standards-based instruction that helps all students achieve. Accomplished teachers are lifelong learners who stay abreast of current research literature, issues, theories, and best practices to inform their instruction across all areas of reading–language arts.

Reflections on Standard II:

Standard III: Equity, Fairness, and Diversity

> Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers practice equity and fairness; they seek and capitalize on diversity and diverse perspectives. They encourage all students to know, value, and respect themselves and others in the classroom, school, and larger community.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers make a commitment to all of their students. They understand that each of their students is an individual learner and that the learning backgrounds of the students in a single classroom or a particular instructional setting[5] represent a tremendous wealth and diversity of human experience.

Teachers are committed to principles of fairness and equity, providing all of their students with the resources they need to develop both as language learners and as inquisitive, informed, and responsible human beings. Teachers maintain high expectations for all students and ensure that they receive equitable opportunities to learn and advance. Teachers encourage the development of each student's individual voice, in part through the emphasis on and modeling of democratic values. Teachers further understand that this growth is best supported by full membership in a collaborative learning community in which teachers and students show sensitivity and respect for one another and by full participation in an ambitious, meaning-centered curriculum. Accomplished teachers view the many forms of diversity represented in their students as opportunities for creating a richer social and learning environment for all, both in their classrooms and in the school community at large.

Teachers Are Committed to Fairness and Equity

Teachers foster equity in their classrooms. They encourage all students to participate in learning activities in ways that are instructionally sound for children as individual learners. Teachers allocate instructional resources, including one-on-one attention, fairly. At the same time, teachers recognize that the needs of students differ dramatically. Teachers are also aware of issues of bias in instructional and assessment practices and take care to use fair methods and strategies. For example, they know and address issues of gender equity in the classroom. Teachers seek colleagues and other professional resources to assist with specific challenges and to help them meet students' needs in fair and equitable ways. Teachers share an absolute sense of responsibility for the learning progress of each of their students, and they work collaboratively with other school professionals to meet the needs of all students and ensure that all of their students are engaged in pursuing high-quality curricula. Teachers understand that all students deserve the respect of high expectations; they set standards for students that challenge each to improve his or her learning toward greater complexity and breadth.

5. In this document, terms such as *classroom, learning environment*, and *instructional setting* are used interchangeably. The terms are intended to be inclusive of whole-class, pullout, and other reading–language arts teaching contexts.

Teachers are committed to fairness and equity with regard to technology use. They provide equitable access to technology in their classrooms. For example, they do not make access to a computer a reward for students who do well or who finish their work early because that would deprive some students of technology use. Nor do they limit the use of more sophisticated software to higher-performing students, while relegating other students to programs that require only lower-order thinking skills. Rather, they create learning experiences for all students that include technology tools and resources in instruction and applications. Teachers also confront issues of bias with regard to students' use of technology in their work. They assess such work fairly, for example, by not favoring a student's writing assignment because it contains sophisticated graphics available only on a home computer.

Teachers are aware of and attuned to the range of student abilities, needs, and academic progress. In addition, students may have particular cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, or physical needs and exceptionalities. Teachers accept, nurture, and support each student, teaching to students' individual strengths and incorporating their interests to form a solid base for helping students acquire the skills and abilities they need to succeed in society. For example, teachers of students with hearing impairments understand the challenges these students face in hearing sounds within words and pronouncing words, and they design instruction to develop these skills by using visual and tactile materials and explicit instruction. They create a learning community that solicits and respects the contributions of each student, regardless of academic skill level, and that values each student as a learner. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*)

Teachers meet the needs of students for whom English is a new language. Teachers make full use of the language resources that exist in the classroom, school, and community to help develop students' literacy skills. Teachers also serve as advocates for these students in the education process. They understand that acquisition of English as a new language—in particular, gaining confident control of the more academic uses of language—may take many years to achieve and should not be confused with the language acquisition of native speakers. Consequently, teachers advocate for students to receive the time, type of curriculum, and instructional approaches they need to become fully proficient in the complex uses of English. They understand when a student would benefit from instruction in the primary language and advocate for ways to support children struggling to acquire literacy skills. Teachers also help students who are literate in another language transfer their literacy skills to English.

Teachers Promote Respect, Strength through Diversity, and Multicultural Awareness

Accomplished teachers establish a climate of respect in their classrooms. They value diversity and appreciate the many facets of diversity students bring to the classroom, including language background, culture, ethnicity, gender, body image, household income, religious affiliation, family configuration, sexual orientation, physical or psychological exceptionalities, and literacy experience. They help students to understand and use the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equity and to recognize discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes when they appear in the classroom, in literature, and elsewhere. Teachers achieve this

goal by designing and implementing lessons that help students develop awareness of, sensitivity to, and respect for others, and by constructively challenging discriminatory or disrespectful behavior when it occurs. For example, when students engage in bullying, teachers do more than step in and offer students practical support and strategies for working through difficult situations; they also use literature and technological resources as a means to reduce and extinguish these kinds of behaviors by discussing the various conflicts and acceptable solutions that are featured in such resources.

Teachers have a welcoming attitude and are eager to work with each of their students. Their attitudes about teaching and learning invite students to become engaged in these processes. Teachers understand the many ways students can distinguish themselves from their peers, and they respond appropriately with strategies that not only will advance each student's learning but also will help both teacher and student better understand themselves and each other. Teachers frequently arrange students in heterogeneous small groups to bring those from different backgrounds and ability levels in contact with one another. For example, a teacher working with a homogeneous group of students, all reading at the same level, would help ensure that these students are in heterogeneous groups of students reading at varied levels at other times of the school day.

Teachers are sensitive to their students as cultural beings; they are aware of the impact culture has on how students learn, what students expect of themselves, and how students use language. Teachers understand the importance of respecting the cultural norms, resources, and knowledge students bring with them from home. Teachers are also conscious of their own cultural backgrounds and perspectives and how these affect their interactions with students, their students' interactions with each other, and their interpretations of texts. They choose texts and other resources that draw from a variety of literary and cultural traditions and that promote positive images of different ethnicities, cultures, exceptionalities, and languages, as well as of both genders. (See Standard V—*Instructional Resources.*) In interpreting materials, they help students become aware of the particular cultural view presented in the text, call attention to the use of dialect or to varying social conventions, and promote an analytic discussion of the social and ethical issues involved.

Teachers regard students for whom English is a new language as assets for the entire learning community and as resources from whom all learners can benefit while investigating languages and cultures. Teachers understand that children learning English can acquire meaning-based language seamlessly within the classroom context, so they adjust their practices to encourage such development. They know that learning language requires the willingness to take risks, so they work consistently to create a classroom culture in which students learning English feel safe, respected, and valued. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*) When students begin to speak in English, teachers concentrate on understanding what the student has to say and on responding to that intention rather than fixate on grammatical accuracy. Teachers understand that there are stages of new language acquisition, and they know how to provide support and curriculum adaptations for students at each of these stages. They accurately identify students' language abilities and stages, and they seek out resources and strategies to help students progress in their language learning. Teachers regularly ascertain whether the student for whom English is a new language understands what is transpiring in the classroom.

Teachers are clear and well-spoken oral communicators who know the standard rules of English grammar, syntax, and usage and employ them in their daily conversations. At the same time, they understand that dialect is

a culturally appropriate way of making meaning through language; that it serves the same communicative function as any other kind of language; and that its use often signals membership in a group and therefore is accompanied by powerful and emotional associations. Accordingly, teachers proceed sensitively in this area. They do not try to eliminate dialectal variation in their classrooms. Rather, they help children appreciate various language patterns and discover what dialects are appropriate in various settings. They also provide access to the standard dialect for all students, often through their own spoken and written example. They consistently foster classroom communities that encourage students to make discoveries about the varying functions and power of language even as they use language to pursue their own learning and recreational purposes.

Reflections on Standard III:

Standard IV: Learning Environment

> Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers establish with their students a caring, supportive, inclusive, challenging, democratic, and safe learning community in which individuals take intellectual, social, and emotional risks and work both independently and collaboratively.

A healthy and constructive social, intellectual, and emotional tone in the classroom is essential to fostering learning success for all students. Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers consciously work to create an environment in which all students have a place as valued members of the learning community. In such environments, children feel free to take risks as they explore language found in texts, various media, and the world around them. Effective literacy-learning environments are well managed, with a preponderance of academic activities that are highly engaging to students and that promote student independence. Accomplished teachers demonstrate a sincere interest in their students and make them feel welcomed, valued, and respected. This attitude encourages students to collaboratively support one another's learning progress.

Teachers Set a Caring, Mutually Supportive Tone in the Classroom

Teachers foster a sense of community, inclusion, and purposefulness about learning among their students in many ways, but primarily through the examples they set. They are personally friendly and welcoming in their interactions with all of their students. They listen carefully and dignify each student's contribution with their own attentiveness and thoughtful response. They are interested in their students' ideas, lives, and activities; enthusiastic in support of their students' initiatives; and generous in their recognition of a wide variety of student accomplishments and positive behaviors. They have a sense of humor with which they enliven the instructional day even as they communicate an underlying seriousness about the importance of learning. They firmly believe that all their students are capable of growing in their knowledge of the world and their competence in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, and they maintain high expectations for the success of each student.

Teachers organize learning activities so that students have frequent opportunities to interact and learn from each other as well as from teacher-led instruction. Teachers express their thoughts and ideas in ways that are clearly understood by their students. Teachers understand that communication is a two-way process. They are expert listeners and interpreters of what students mean. They demonstrate and coach students in the giving and receiving of constructive feedback and help students value one another's ideas. They model and teach active listening, showing how it is an important part of effective communication in general and constructive feedback in particular.

Teachers are committed to ensuring that students with special learning needs are an

integral part of the classroom community. Teachers are knowledgeable about when and how to use support services, integrating them into the classroom where possible. Reading specialists collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that students' reading skills are reinforced by the classroom teacher as well. Classroom teachers and specialists also form partnerships with other colleagues to benefit learners. When students are absent from class for part of the school day, teachers remain committed to fostering their overall development. For example, when children with special learning needs receive extra support outside of the classroom, the teacher acknowledges them upon their return and helps reengage each student through conversation, regular routines, organizing visuals, or class helpers when the teacher is working with another student or group. In addition, resource and classroom teachers work together to plan lessons that carry over from one context to another and to ensure manageable amounts of work for students who receive extra support.

Teachers instill in students an understanding that learning sometimes can be difficult, the reward for persistence is a sense of accomplishment and increased self-confidence, the willingness to experiment is an essential part of the learning process, and mistakes are not viewed as failures but rather as valuable lessons on the way to improved understanding. From the start of the school year, teachers use democratic processes to discuss classroom rules and consequences and to establish social behaviors that favor effective learning and living together considerately in the classroom and school community. They support students in assuming responsibility for their own actions, and they foster students' confidence, intellectual and social risk taking, and persistence. Teachers are aware that students want to become competent, and they publicly recognize and celebrate students' various achievements.

Teachers Foster a Well-Organized, Harmonious Environment for Learning

Teachers know that the physical setting, including the arrangement of furniture and choice of materials and classroom displays, can help support and extend student learning, engagement, and growth. Central to this environment is a classroom library, which contains a plethora of texts in a variety of genres and is organized for students of all reading levels and interests to browse through and use daily. Teachers collect resources that reflect a variety of perspectives, interests, cultures, and life circumstances for their classroom libraries. They take great care to ensure that students are able to access these resources with increasing independence and that students receive the necessary guidance in selecting texts for themselves. Accomplished teachers design routines, procedures, and organizational systems that lead the way for students to accomplish these goals. Accomplished teachers also recognize the importance of regularly introducing students to new literature and information, and they feature changing texts within the classroom book collection. In addition, teachers' classrooms are replete with student-generated work and functional messages in English as well as the home languages of students for whom English is a new language. (See Standard V—*Instructional Resources.*)

Accomplished teachers involve students in modifying and maintaining the classroom environment, rearranging it as needed to keep pace with assorted activities and student learning. They also know that safety is important for helping students learn, and teachers strive to ensure that learning environments are physically, academically, and emotionally safe for students. Teachers take measures to ensure that the physical arrangement of the classroom is conducive to the

learning of students with disabilities, for example, by ensuring that a student using a wheelchair is seated in ways that promote easy eye contact and sharing with other students, whether in large or small groups.

Teachers regard instructional time as a precious resource and use it well; their lessons are clear, purposeful, coherent, and well managed with transitions that flow smoothly. (See Standard VI—*Instructional Decision Making.*) Such teachers also recognize when an activity shifts away from the original plan, and they are flexible in accommodating and directing students' enthusiasm in a productive fashion. The focus of the classroom community is on high-level learning, with children and teacher working together harmoniously.

Teachers engage their students in predictable and workable classroom routines. Their students know what is expected of them. In some cases, students and teachers cooperate in setting standards and expectations. Accomplished teachers organize their classrooms and reading–language arts instruction into large blocks that allow for in-depth literacy experiences. Teachers' daily routines invite personal initiative, helping students create connections between subject areas and building on their previous learning. All teachers experience instances when the learning continuity of the classroom is disrupted by external events or by students acting out in a nonproductive manner. These teachers deal effectively with assemblies, rehearsals, drills, loudspeaker announcements, and other interruptions and, where appropriate, relate them to classroom activities. In addressing behavioral problems, teachers anticipate situations that may provoke a negative reaction and know how to prevent or mitigate adverse effects. When disciplinary action is necessary, they act promptly and fairly in ways that focus on the particular behavior rather than on the child.

The classroom activities of an accomplished teacher are organized purposefully and systematically. A student in the classroom of an accomplished teacher moves through a variety of learning settings—whole-class, small collaborative group, paired, and individual—in the course of the instructional day. When children engage in communicative tasks in their literacy explorations, such as keeping journals, listening to and talking about stories, reading to entertain or inform one another, or acting out a drama of their own invention, teachers use the grouping strategy best suited to the specific learning activity or goal and the social development of students. Groups are created as learning needs arise and modified or disbanded as learning needs change. Teachers do not allow a student to be stigmatized by ongoing membership in a particular group. Teachers know that varying the instructional format and grouping is important, and they have clear reasons for doing so. As teachers make these changes, they make sure that students understand new expectations. For example, when grouping students for a new writing workshop or a literature discussion based on students needs or interests, teachers help students adapt to changing group dynamics and teach students alternate ways and strategies for exploring and understanding texts.

Teachers instill in their students a love of learning and self-confidence based on achievement. Accomplished teachers lay the groundwork for students to have the skills and desires to continue learning and growing long after they leave formal education. They help develop students who hold high personal standards for achievement, appreciate and enjoy learning, and have confidence in their abilities.

Reflections on Standard IV:

Standard V: Instructional Resources

> Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers select, adapt, and create a rich and varied collection of instructional resources; regularly involve students in the process of creating and selecting such resources; and engage students, teachers, parents, and other adults from the community to enrich instruction.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers are familiar with a wide range of instructional resources that can enrich and extend the scope of students' engagement with the early and middle childhood curriculum. These resources range from print literature to creative uses of traditional and innovative technology and media, encounters with community resources, and student-generated works. Teachers involve their students in learning about language by encouraging them to use it to satisfy their curiosity about the world, clarify their thinking, promote their own point of view while understanding the views of others, and entertain themselves and others. To help promote this process, teachers involve students in the selection, adaptation, and creation of instructional resources that support their inquisitiveness and literacy growth. Direct student involvement is particularly important for engaging reluctant classroom learners and students learning English as a new language.

Teachers Have Clear Criteria for Making Decisions about Text Selections

Teachers know that children benefit from interacting with and analyzing texts of many kinds—including picture books, signs and labels, poems, fables, folktales, historical fiction, plays and skits, contemporary stories, biographies and autobiographies, nonfiction essays, as well as television programs, educational software, song lyrics, Internet resources, movies, speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, and other expressions of popular culture. They have a broad and deep knowledge of the different genres of literature, especially children's literature, and of a variety of authors and illustrators within those categories. Accomplished teachers use this knowledge to carefully assess and select quality texts across a broad range of literary genres. They also know that one of the attractions of good literature is that it tells powerful stories that speak directly to children about issues that matter to them. Consequently, teachers expose their students to a diverse variety of textual genres, traditions, cultures, styles, and perspectives representative of the breadth and depth of children's literature. They also expose students to a range of high-quality informational texts that extend and deepen their knowledge of the world.

Teachers consider students' interests and instructional needs when selecting texts of appropriate difficulty. For example, they know that student interest coupled with a well-written text can help generate the effort required for the development of fluency in reading. Teachers know how to encourage children to be adventurous in their sampling

of different kinds of texts. They provide entry to the full range of reading materials, sometimes by means of whole-class read-alouds; make connections between texts and their students' background knowledge; and encourage appropriate choices for independent reading. They are also knowledgeable about the different types of challenges inherent in texts and about how to match students' instructional needs to appropriate texts to enable growth and avoid frustration. (See Standard IX—*Reading.*) Accomplished teachers select texts to meet the constantly changing interests and needs of their students. They are purposeful and have clear criteria for choosing texts for whole-class, small-group, and individual consideration and can articulate these criteria clearly.

Teachers listen to their students' opinions about literature—for example, by following up on an enthusiastic reader's review of a new book or magazine—and incorporate that information into their future decision making. They know that students will work hard to understand a text whose subject matter is inherently engrossing to them. Accordingly, teachers make use of their extensive knowledge of children's literature and other texts, as well as their knowledge of the specific background, literacy levels, and interests of their students, to offer numerous alternatives to each student and to encourage both independent and whole-class reading, writing, and discussion about texts.

Accomplished teachers carefully critique texts for quality and know how to choose them appropriately. Teachers are aware of a variety of curricular and instructional resources that are available to support literacy development, and they know how to create and adapt such programs. Furthermore, they use required texts in productive ways to advance student learning. For example, they attend to the relationship between reading selections and the lives of their students, focus on eliciting students' honest responses to texts, supplement basal programs with additional resources, and integrate content-area learning across the curriculum.

Teachers Make Use of Technology Tools to Broaden and Support Their Students' Literacy Experiences

Teachers take advantage of technology tools—which may include audio and video equipment, cameras, computers, scanners, distance learning opportunities, or other resources—in many ways to help their students learn about the world and develop language competency. Technology tools can be used for teaching, production of student work products, and assessment. For example, young children might draw, scan, or take pictures of classroom events to serve as discussion topics. Teachers might encourage students to revise their drafts of written text on a classroom or school computer or word processor. They might have students use graphic-organizer software to storyboard their ideas. Teachers might use oral readings of books on audiotape and send them home for students to use as part of a homework assignment. They might have students explore accessing information electronically from the library in the course of conducting research. They might put students in communication with other students or individuals at a remote location through the Internet or by e-mail in order to solve a common problem or pursue a research query.

Teachers recognize that they are responsible for selecting developmentally appropriate technology that matches overarching curriculum goals, and they monitor students' use of appropriate technology. They teach students to select, retrieve, organize, use, and synthesize information, and they provide

instruction on up-to-date methods for documenting resources. Teachers make use of the highly interactive nature of technology but realize that technology tools are not ends in themselves. They make use of technology to support their students' investigations of language and the world, integrating the use of technology in developmentally appropriate ways throughout the curriculum. For example, students learning English as a new language might find e-mail correspondence not only personally rewarding but also an avenue for building language skills through the sharing of family histories with other students.

Teachers are also aware of and become familiar with assistive technologies that increase success for students with disabilities. For example, they may obtain an adaptive mouse for use with a computer, learn to program a voice simulator for a student who is without speech, or provide interactive software for a student with cognitive processing difficulties to help the student learn to read.

Teachers Make Use of Human Resources to Broaden and Support Their Students' Literacy Experiences

Teachers understand that instructional resources are not confined to texts and machines. They see people—classmates, parents,[6] members of the community, library media specialists, and other teachers and school staff—as important instructional resources whose ideas and use of language, whether encountered inside or outside the classroom, develop and sharpen students' thinking and literacy growth.

Students themselves make excellent interactive audiences and peer tutors. The variety of learning backgrounds of students, when appreciated and built on, becomes a source of strength and dynamism in the classrooms of accomplished teachers. (See Standard III—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity*.) Interactions among staff, too, help deepen students' learning experiences. Accomplished teachers work effectively with other practitioners, including other instructional specialists, to offer a coordinated program that gives all students access to a rich and stimulating curriculum. For example, two elementary teachers might team-teach aspects of a unit dealing with literature and science, thereby letting their students benefit from each teacher's special area of expertise. (See Standard XV—*Professional Responsibility.*)

The community is also an important resource in fashioning a relevant curriculum. Teachers purposefully integrate the classroom and the community. They bring the community to the classroom by means of guest speakers, volunteers, home language helpers, storytellers, and adult models; they bring the classroom into the community by means of field trips and projects that involve students in interviews, data gathering, and other interactions. These teachers take full advantage of community resources. For instance, speakers who represent the cultural diversity of the community can share their accomplishments and areas of expertise, providing strong role models for all students. Teachers foster partnerships with local businesses and organizations in school or classroom activities—for example, in staging theatrical productions or publishing student-authored texts.

6. *Parents* is used in this document to refer to the people who are the primary caregivers and guardians of children.

Teachers Involve Students in the Creation of Instructional Resources

Teachers understand that some of the most effective instructional resources—those that are inducements to literacy development and to a broader understanding of the world—are those created by students themselves. History projects, multimedia presentations, drama, science logs, original stories and poems, audiotapes of oral histories, and articles in class newspapers effectively promote language building because students learn through the process of creating them and, after their wider dissemination, through the responses of others. Teachers make student-produced texts of all kinds available for wider reading, listening, or viewing and for group consideration. They promote their production by making available appropriate materials and dedicating sufficient school time for students to generate them. They are also resourceful in locating and securing supplementary materials that support their students' meaning-making endeavors.

Reflections on Standard V:

Standard VI: Instructional Decision Making

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers set informed and purposeful goals for students, develop meaningful learning opportunities, and interact effectively with students while extending to them increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Accomplished teachers formulate purposeful, long-term, data-driven instructional goals that are based on local, state, and national standards and curricula. These goals are influenced by research, theory, and current issues in education. Teachers take into account the skills and abilities that students bring to their learning and ensure that instruction is both developmentally appropriate and relevant to their lives. In addition to their long-range goals, teachers develop instruction with embedded, short-term, and formative objectives in collaboration with other educators and families.

Teachers Develop Meaningful Learning Opportunities for Students

Teachers make appropriate choices regarding depth and breadth of content in their instructional planning. They plan recursive, purposeful units of study and rely upon appropriate resources but are flexible in adjusting plans based on student needs. Teachers base objectives on the needs of students through the use of data from multiple and varied assessments; effective management, sequencing, and pacing of instruction; high-quality instructional resources; grouping strategies; knowledge of students' interests; and alignment of teaching strategies with goals, objectives, and student needs.

Accomplished teachers engage students in differentiated, purposeful instruction. Teachers know a variety of student learning styles and use this knowledge to meet students at their points of need. They capitalize on students' strengths, design instruction to build on students' prior knowledge, and often include students in the decision-making process. They provide multiple paths to knowledge, varying teaching and learning modalities (e.g., responding to text by drawing a response rather than writing it). Teachers implement appropriate uses of technology, including assistive technologies, to extend opportunities for learning. Teachers use a variety of grouping variations and strategies to complement their instruction. In addition to creating groups of various sizes, they may implement dynamic grouping, where groups are temporary and flexible; create homogeneous and heterogeneous groups as appropriate to the instructional task; form groups based on students' interests; or have students self-select their groups. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*)

Teachers Interact Effectively with Students

Accomplished teachers interact effectively with students. They respond to students' needs and easily adjust their practice to make necessary accommodations for students. They can recognize the teachable moment and question students effectively to

determine what standards and benchmarks they have achieved. For example, as teachers watch and listen to students' discussions of a text, they can intervene carefully and respond appropriately to explicitly address a misconception or move a student in a new direction. Teachers interact with students by continually assessing and assisting them within their developmental range, using such strategies as questioning, suggesting, simplifying, or increasing an activity's challenge to move them forward.

The ultimate goal of education—cultivating independent, self-reliant learners—requires students to develop a sense of self-direction. Therefore, teachers work to increase student responsibility and to help students become active learners. They guide students in the practice of decision making by teaching strategies for making appropriate choices. At the same time, they provide students with opportunities for input—both on an individual and group level—as to what, where, and how to study. They know that students' motivation increases when material is relevant to their lives and when they can exercise a measure of choice of topic, product, process, and grouping.

Teachers are continually and deliberately reflecting on the objectives, processes, and products of the learning experiences they create, analyzing, evaluating, and strengthening them in order to make positive changes in their teaching. They are constantly observing which students are or are not engaged and which students are or are not applying strategies effectively and why. Such ongoing observation drives their instruction. Teachers are open to new ideas and seek input from a variety of sources, including students. Teachers model and teach the processes of reflection as part of ongoing self-assessment and expect the same from their students. (See Standard XIV—*Teacher as Learner.*)

Teachers assume responsibility for every student's engagement and learning, even as they develop students' accountability for their own learning. They can articulate their rationale for their instructional decisions, and they communicate these appropriately to students and families. Accomplished teachers strive to engage all students as active participants in their own learning, gradually increasing the degree of responsibility each is expected to assume.

Reflections on Standard VI:

Standard VII: Assessment

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to shape instructional decisions, monitor student progress, encourage student self-assessment, and gather information to report to various audiences.

Assessment—the process of discerning the breadth and depth of students' literacy skills and knowledge—is an ongoing element of the accomplished reading–language arts teacher's routine and serves a variety of critical purposes. Sound, appropriate, and well-designed assessment practices have the power to support deep and meaningful student learning. Accomplished teachers have command of a wide range of assessment methods and strategies that align with the central goals of the language arts curriculum, and they know how to use assessment data to help students progress as readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and viewers.[7] They have knowledge of standards and benchmarks indicating what proficient literacy learners are able to do at various developmental levels; observe and assess students' literacy skills; and know how to adjust their presentation and assist children who are having difficulty or need more of a challenge.

Accomplished early and middle childhood teachers constantly monitor their students' ability to use language to communicate and solve problems. Teachers' assessment practices support and inform their instructional practices; both continue throughout the school year, focus on real language tasks, and build on students' literacy strengths. Teachers and students systematically and jointly assess student progress on a continuing basis using developmentally appropriate assessments. Teachers effectively communicate their findings to students, parents, administrators, and the community, as appropriate, and they involve parents as partners in the instructional conversation.

In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, students become aware of their own progress in literacy development and general knowledge of the world; they also come to think of themselves as independent learners who are capable of evaluating their own work and setting goals for future learning.

Teachers Use a Variety of Appropriate Assessment Methods to Inform Their Instructional Decisions

Accomplished early and middle childhood teachers are constant and insightful observers of children at work and at play. Assessment is wholly integrated into daily instruction and is an ongoing, performance-based activity. Knowing the importance of understanding the development of children and their literacy skills, teachers collect, examine, and interpret a variety of data about the ways children communicate, carry out learning tasks, and interact with peers.

Assessment findings help teachers shape instructional planning for individual students, small groups, and the entire class. Using a variety of formative and summative assessments, teachers guide students to meet outcomes and measure their progress toward established standards. For accomplished teachers, assessment is a constant monitoring of student progress that precedes instruction (to establish a baseline), accompanies

7. Additional information about assessments in each of the language arts can be found in Standard IX—*Reading*, Standard X—*Writing*, Standard XI—*Listening and Speaking*, and Standard XII—*Viewing.*

instruction (to keep track of successful and unsuccessful strategies as well as the need to shift teaching to match immediate student needs), and follows instruction (to evaluate and report on student learning and to design future instruction). Teachers' formal assessments may include such practices as the use of classroom observation and documentation, in which indicators of individual oral and written literacy progress are systematically recorded; portfolio assessments, which trace the student's growing competency in the uses of language over time, often through an examination of written productions; oral reading assessments, which document the student's progress in reading by evaluating a series of oral reading performances using an analytic approach; multiple-choice tests, which offer information on student literary knowledge and understanding; and teacher-child conferences, which allow students to review and evaluate their learning experiences and, on the basis of that reflection, set goals with their teacher for future language exploration.

Teachers know the benefits and limitations of each method of assessment and choose the most appropriate form for the purpose at hand. Teachers take into account cultural, linguistic, and dialectal variations in their assessment practices and are careful to assess students fairly and equitably, adapting assessments to meet students' linguistic, social, and cognitive needs. (See Standard III—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity.*) Teachers design and select a variety of assessments to show both students' individual growth and their progress toward grade level norms.

Teachers keep systematic, comprehensive records of all students' progress across all domains of literacy. (See Standard IX—*Reading*, Standard X—*Writing*, Standard XI—*Listening and Speaking*, and Standard XII—*Viewing*.) Accomplished teachers are able to use technology to collect and organize data and to report information. Effective assessment of literacy activities involves a relationship of trust between the student and teacher. Teachers work hard to build that sense of trust, and they strive to have daily individual contact with each student as a way of staying abreast of their growth as individual language learners and social beings. Teachers continuously affirm students' language use and provide appropriate measures of encouragement and constructive feedback. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment*.)

Teachers choose and design assessments that are aligned with curriculum, instruction, standards, and goals and that meet the needs and demands of the individual students, class, school, district, and families. Teachers are skilled and thoughtful in the ways they assess students, and they understand that improving teaching and student learning is the primary reason for assessing student performance. Teachers also know that assessment of student learning takes many forms, and they do not make judgments about students on the basis of any single assessment.

In some states, teachers are accountable for student performance on districtwide or statewide standardized tests; these assessments may have important consequences for students as well. Teachers know the purposes and content of external assessments. Teachers recognize their responsibility with these assessments, meet their responsibility in creative and innovative ways, and ensure that preparations for these external assessments provide opportunities for significant learning for students. Teachers know how to analyze and interpret data from large-scale standardized testing programs and use that information to evaluate and design literacy programs at the classroom, school, and district levels. They also work with those outside the classroom to ensure that mandated evaluations are as consistent as

possible with the vision that frames instruction and assessment in the classroom.

Teachers use their knowledge of their students' literacy growth to decide which learning experiences to offer. They continually refine their teaching, learning, and assessment processes as new information about students becomes available. They frequently compare their assessment findings, employing the results of one method to cross-check the accuracy and validity of another. By using a variety of assessment practices, they describe each student in their classroom in terms of strengths as an individual language learner.

Teachers Involve Students in Assessing Their Own Literacy Gains and in Collaboratively Setting Learning Goals

Teachers understand that a central purpose of education is to cultivate lifelong learners, and they encourage students to become aware of and responsible for their own intellectual, social, and ethical growth. Toward that end, teachers have many ways to guide students in assessing their own literacy progress and establishing their own learning goals; they provide models, criteria, benchmarks, and feedback so that students can make accurate and realistic judgments about the quality of their performance. For example, in constructing a writing portfolio, teachers may ask students to choose the piece of writing they wish to see included in the portfolio and then explain what it shows about the student as a writer. Such an examination helps make students aware of their literacy growth over time.

Teachers may have students assess one another's writing, perhaps asking readers to describe to the author the impact that a draft has had on them. Over the course of several weeks of such peer assessments, students might work toward a consensus, developing their own summative rubrics defining what they as a group mean by the term *high-quality writing*. Teachers coach students as they apply these rubrics to their own writing, encouraging self-assessment and revision of drafts.

Guided opportunities for self-assessment and reflection may be particularly powerful for helping reluctant classroom learners find new connections between their curiosity and the skills and tools of the school curriculum. For example, during a conference with the teacher, a student may reveal a lack of interest in reading but express an interest in a hobby or sport. Through the teacher's wide knowledge of literature and the student's interest in a particular area, teachers and students can come to agreement about what texts would most engage the student in reading.

The self-assessment process is of particular importance to students for whom English is a new language because their progress in language acquisition is made readily apparent in the collection of student work over time. Thus, students for whom English is a new language have a record of, for instance, the ability to make their intentions clear to the reader or the increasing use of standard verb tenses as their new language knowledge develops.

Teachers Involve Families in the Assessment Process

Teachers understand that parents and other adult caregivers have a tremendous store of relevant prior information concerning a student's cultural and language history, likes and dislikes, work habits, goals, self-image, learning style, personality, and so on. This information helps the teacher support

language learning. Accordingly, teachers take steps to form alliances between home and school that center on the assessment of each student's language learning. (See Standard XIII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities.*)

In talking with parents about a student's language progress, accomplished teachers maintain a two-way exchange of information to obtain the insights of parents and to offer their own constructive suggestions to help students become better communicators. For example, they may arrange to have a conversation with parents early in the school year and use relevant information from this conversation as part of the student's learning profile. Later, teachers apprise parents of the results of assessments in terms that are clear, fair, objective, and trustworthy and that generate parental input. Teachers include students as participants in collecting, interpreting, and reporting assessment results.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers prepare reports of their evaluations that clearly communicate to parents and administrators the kind and quality of progress their students are making. Teachers provide parents with meaningful feedback on how their children are progressing in the acquisition of language processes; this feedback includes periodic comparisons with established performance standards. In this way, teachers help cultivate family support for student learning. (See Standard XIII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities.*)

Reflections on Standard VII:

Advancing Student Learning

The ways that Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers make decisions and implement their curriculum in a flexible, appropriate, and creative manner provide the most visible and, arguably, the most important demonstrations of accomplished teaching. The next five standards describe the ways teachers advance student knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the reading–language arts curriculum: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. These standards also explain the necessary integration and interdependence of the language arts and the important goals and purposes that guide teachers in their planning and instructional decision making about literacy learning.

Standard VIII: Integration

> Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers understand the reciprocal nature of the literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, and they provide developmentally appropriate learning activities that integrate among the language arts and across the curriculum.

Integrated instruction is a hallmark of accomplished teaching that encompasses two related concepts. The first is the well-established principle that although the literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing are different processes requiring specialized skills, they are also mutually reinforcing and cannot be taught in isolation. Accomplished teachers provide opportunities for active student participation and interaction by designing learning activities that integrate reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. The second concept is that the content of reading–language arts should directly connect students with broad themes, ideas, and issues across texts and disciplines. While recognizing the need for concentrated blocks of time to focus on the teaching of reading–language arts, accomplished teachers also connect their literacy instruction with student learning in the other disciplines.

This standard focuses on how accomplished teachers integrate the five language arts components into their instruction and across all curriculum areas. The four standards that follow describe in greater depth the knowledge and abilities accomplished teachers use to foster the acquisition and development of specific literacy skills. (See Standard IX—*Reading*, Standard X—*Writing*, Standard XI—*Listening and Speaking*, and Standard XII—*Viewing.*)

Reciprocal Nature of Language Processes

In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, the reciprocal nature of the language arts is brought to bear in purposeful lessons that incorporate numerous combinations of the five language arts. Teachers know that students' oral and written language development and visual skills, for example, are mutually reinforcing processes and that growth in one aspect of the language arts often transfers to all of the others. When a teacher takes dictation from a young child and reads it back, the student begins to understand the relationship between the written and spoken word and may then attempt to

write. Teachers use shared books as one way to incorporate all the language arts skills. For example, when teachers read aloud and point to text, students learn to match the spoken word to the written word, gain an understanding of directional concepts, and use picture cues and predictable patterns to gain meaning from text. Teachers also use these shared, patterned texts as a model to encourage student writing and illustrating, as well as a springboard for inviting students to share their new books orally with classmates.

When students are listening to, reading, and discussing a poetry selection, teachers may demonstrate how writers use language in interesting and descriptive ways. Teachers then support students as they experiment with language in their own writing or speech. Teachers integrate oral and written language development by engaging in frequent, instructional conversations with students, individually or in small groups, to talk about text.

Accomplished teachers also know that students may be more successful in some language arts than others and that tapping into a student's assets in one language art may provide momentum for growth in another. For example, struggling readers who may build strong interpretation skills when critically viewing and discussing a film may then learn to apply their skills in interpreting character or ideas in film to reading and writing tasks. Similarly, students who are reluctant to talk during class discussions may gradually gain confidence through developing language competence in their writing and then be more willing to take risks and share their thoughts in pairs, in small groups, and with the class.

When teachers plan assignments that integrate all the language arts, they often have the opportunity to engage their students in high-level critical thinking and creative connections. For example, an assignment of a slide show presentation may require students to read, research, and prepare notes; to translate notes into writing formats; to design layouts and captions for the information; to orally or visually present reports with classmates and teachers; and to listen, critique, and provide feedback to one another.

Integration across the Curriculum

The reading–language arts classroom teacher who also teaches subjects such as social studies, science, and mathematics is in a somewhat different position to deliver integrated instruction across the disciplines than the reading specialist who teaches in a pullout setting. All teachers—whether teaching students individually, in small groups, or in the classroom—know that literacy skills provide the foundation for learning across the curriculum and that students need cohesive literacy instruction throughout the school day, and they act on this knowledge. Although many accomplished reading–language arts teachers are in unique contexts with various constraints, they maximize instructional opportunities to make links to other areas of the curriculum through their own instruction and through careful planning with colleagues. (See Standard XV—*Professional Responsibility.*)

Teachers know that learning language and deepening one's understanding of the world are inseparable processes. Students do not learn language in the abstract; they do so through concrete applications and authentic contexts. Students develop and expand their knowledge of the world simultaneously with and as a result of the acquisition of language to express their new understandings. Teachers of reading–language arts recognize this interdependence and are themselves

knowledgeable about the various subject areas covered in the early and middle childhood curriculum, particularly as they pertain to the development of language. They provide reading materials for students, at their individual reading levels, in subjects such as science and social studies, and they give guided reading lessons that help students understand the specific conventions, language, and strategies of historical and scientific texts. If not students' regular classroom teacher, the reading-language arts teacher may coteach lessons that support the specific literacy learning needs of a small group of children, and coordinate materials and skills development for students in pull-out programs to enhance the classroom program.

Teachers also understand that language is the vehicle by which students come to develop the processes of reasoning and problem solving in the areas of mathematics and science. They help students find language that expresses relationships with precision, logically validates their critical thinking, and communicates their reasoning to others. For example, teachers support students in components of the mathematics program, such as problem solving, that rely heavily on written language.

Teachers help students develop the ability to make connections across the curriculum in many ways. Teachers of reading–language arts may involve their students in using the language arts to investigate the past and present, reporting their findings in connection with the social studies curriculum. They may help students discover how a historical era influences particular authors, documents, or reference works. In each of these instances, they can assign projects that require students to integrate reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing as well. Teachers might also have students write and act out their own plays or express themselves through dance, music, and the visual arts. Reading specialists collaborate regularly with all personnel to coordinate literacy initiatives that provide children with a comprehensive literacy program through activities such as developing schoolwide reading incentives or assisting students in selecting materials at their reading levels. (See Standard XV—*Professional Responsibility.*)

Accomplished teachers often coordinate thematic instruction that allows students to shape and express their ideas across the curriculum. For example, students may be asked to read stories about the ocean in reading–language arts at the same time that they learn about animal and plant life in the ocean in science and learn about the major oceans and waterways in social studies. Teachers of students in pullout programs may try to select books on the theme the classroom teacher is addressing that will meet the needs of individual students in one-on-one instruction, and may collaborate with the classroom teacher by suggesting multiple resources for the particular theme. Accomplished teachers seek such opportunities to enrich their instruction through broad themes while simultaneously assuring that literacy learning for their students is also enhanced.

In sum, accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers constantly engage students in enlarging their view of the world by having them read, write, speak, listen, and view across the curriculum.

Reflections on Standard VIII:

Standard IX: Reading

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use their knowledge of reading processes, language development, texts, and ongoing assessment to advance literacy, develop strategic readers, promote an appreciation of reading as vital to lifelong learning, and create effective instruction so that readers can negotiate, inquire about, and construct meaning across the curriculum.

Accomplished teachers understand that reading is a complex process and that successful readers employ a variety of strategies to construct meaning. Teachers are knowledgeable about language development and the reading process, including knowledge of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, multiple text structures, various cueing systems to help students construct meaning from print, and motivation strategies. Teachers recognize the pivotal importance that reading has in each child's development—both as a preparation for continuing success in school and work and as a means of fostering more knowledgeable, thoughtful, and responsible adults. Teachers recognize the social, cultural, political, cognitive, critical, and pleasurable elements of reading, and they help students make connections between texts and students' prior knowledge and cultural backgrounds to facilitate understanding. Teachers' instructional decisions are based on the needs of children; sound language, reading, and literacy theories; knowledge of children's literature and other texts; and local, state, and national standards for teaching and learning.

Instructional Components

Teachers are themselves avid readers with a broad curiosity about and experience with written texts of many kinds. They model their enjoyment of the reading process, talking with their students about the substance of their own reading and reading aloud to students from a representative variety of children's literature. Teachers expect students to become involved in reading in school and on their own, and they set aside time on a regular basis for students to engage in independent reading activities. They also provide students with access to a rich selection of texts—including community texts (e.g., scrapbooks, stories written by family members) and student-generated texts—through classroom, school, and community libraries.

Teachers understand the social nature of reading and provide opportunities for students to share their reactions to reading specific materials. They recognize that students are able to influence one another's ability to think critically about what they read and can motivate one another to read by sharing ideas and information about reading materials, authors, and illustrators. They recognize that the degree of curiosity and motivation students bring to texts directly affects their willingness to work hard at understanding texts. Teachers make available to individual students texts that expand on their current interests and help them develop new interests. (See Standard V—*Instructional Resources.*)

Accomplished teachers know and act on the knowledge that literacy skills are taught through careful planning and instruction. Through their actions, they bring to bear the notion that dedicated literacy time is a

necessary component, and they provide a variety of instructional segments to give students sustained practice in reading and the other language arts. Teachers employ a variety of instructional components. These include, but are not limited to, guided reading groups (i.e., students with the same instructional needs share a common text and the teacher provides instruction to meet those needs), shared reading (i.e., all participants having the same text as a class or partnership), read-alouds (i.e., teacher or students reading aloud), word work (i.e., learning new words through application of analogies, phonics skills, and spelling patterns), and independent reading (i.e., students reading at their independent levels with ease and fluency). Accomplished teachers also recognize that all of the components call for instruction on the part of the teacher to establish routines and expectations and to meet student needs.

Effective Learning Experiences for Readers

Accomplished teachers teach readers effective strategies for developing their literacy skills. They work to develop students' phonemic awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, concepts of print, understanding of all cueing systems, phonics skills, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension strategies, metacognition, and other key reading skills. They teach these skills and processes in meaningful, motivating, and appropriate ways, and their continuous assessment of their students guides their planned and spontaneous pedagogical decisions.

Teachers develop students' early reading skills. These include an understanding of phonemic awareness (i.e., the ability to hear and identify individual sounds in spoken works) and the alphabetic principle (i.e., letter recognition and recording letters and sounds for words). They familiarize young children with basic concepts of print: holding a book; turning pages correctly; reading from left to right and top to bottom; and recognizing words, spacing, and punctuation. Teachers know that some emergent readers see words as shapes rather than as combinations of letters. Teachers understand that young children identify iconographic symbols and use that awareness to develop the concept that print conveys meaning and has consistency.

Teachers know that strategic readers use a variety of cueing systems to help construct an ongoing understanding of text. These include *graphophonic cues*, those based on the reader's knowledge of sound-symbol relationships (or *phonics*); *pragmatic cues*, those based on the context in which the text appears, such as accompanying illustrations; *semantic cue*s, those based on the reader's vocabulary, sense of story, and relevant prior knowledge of the world; and *syntactic cues*, those based on the reader's knowledge of the grammatical structure of the language. Teachers help students learn to use these cueing systems flexibly and effectively in their reading, providing students the varied experiences and strategies they need to develop the independent ability to use each system appropriately without an overreliance on any one of them.

Accomplished teachers provide all students, whether emergent or sophisticated readers, with appropriate texts, strategies, and opportunities to practice reading with sufficient fluency and automaticity to demonstrate such skills as speed, accuracy, and expression. For example, teachers give students multiple opportunities to read and reread familiar texts. They also teach students to use an array of strategies to develop vocabulary (i.e., words students must know to read and communicate effectively), improve comprehension (i.e., understanding, analyzing, and evaluating what has been read) and become independent readers.

Teachers employ modeling, explicit instruction, and a variety of other strategies to help students become competent readers. For example, if a student overrelies on sounding out words, the teacher might demonstrate the use of pictures and thinking about the story's meaning as a support to promote more effective problem solving of new words. If the teacher observes a small group of students reading stories without attending to written information (i.e., using only pictures, predictable and repetitive patterns, and memory), the teacher might refocus the students on the words and letter-sound relationships. Teachers help students develop more efficient processing and self-monitoring strategies to support comprehension.

Teachers understand that reading is the process of constructing meaning from text. They also understand that the process of reading is transactional—that is, the reader brings meaning to and takes meaning from a text—and that a student's response to a given book, play, poem, or other communicative form is influenced by his or her prior knowledge and experiences. Teachers support their students' engagement with text and active response to it. They are dedicated to helping children discover and articulate what a given text means. Teachers see their role as helping students deepen, enrich, and clarify their responses to text as well as helping students critically examine and question what they read. Teachers provide students a variety of strategies to use before, during, and after reading. They help students interpret evidence and information in texts, identify bias, and constructively critique inaccurate portrayals and information. Teachers provide guided experience to support students' reading development.

Teachers provide texts for children to read at their developmental levels while using interactive teaching and learning experiences that build on students' interests and learning styles to develop their reading abilities as fully as possible. Teachers also establish a comfortable environment to invite and encourage reading. They read aloud to students, even when those students are sophisticated readers themselves. Teachers know that reading aloud can serve a number of purposes, including extending students' vocabulary, developing students' higher-level thinking skills, modeling phrased and fluent reading, or introducing a new book.

Teachers use a variety of genres (such as poetry, narratives, nursery rhymes, biographies, and informational texts) to promote each student's progress and success in reading. For example, teachers understand that literature, even as it entertains children, has the power to help learners develop comprehension and critical thinking skills. Teachers also understand that reading informational or expository texts is a complex and vital intellectual skill with broad implications for reading all types of texts across the entire curriculum. Students who are capable readers can identify literary elements, such as plot, theme, character, and foreshadowing; locate the most important ideas in a text and relate them to concepts encountered in other texts and real-world experience; summarize arguments; and make reasonable predictions. In order to secure these gains, teachers work conscientiously to provide skill and strategy instruction matched to the challenges posed by texts and the needs of readers. They also seek to broaden their students' repertoire of reading strategies.

Teachers encourage students to think critically about texts. They engage students in meaningful learning experiences that introduce texts and concepts to students, as well as promote enthusiasm for reading. They guide students as they make predictions and preview important textual and visual cues. These activities are especially helpful for students learning English as a new language and students who are challenged by aspects of the reading process. Teachers foster substantive conversations about books and other texts as a regular part of classroom life.

In these conversations, the process of exploring ideas in a text is understood as a shared responsibility, one that teachers and students undertake in a spirit of collaboration and mutual trust. Students are encouraged to question and speak candidly about their responses to the text and the connections they may have made between it and their lives (text-to-self), as well as responses comparing texts (text-to-text) and relating texts to real-world events (text-to-world), partly by following the examples they have watched their teacher set. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*) Teachers ensure that students' skills in reading as critical interpreters of texts are continually developed across all areas of the curriculum and in all instructional settings. For example, as part of research projects, accomplished teachers select texts—including electronic texts available through the Internet—at students' instructional level to support the content areas.

In promoting serious interpretive dialogue about text, accomplished teachers are attentive listeners; they are receptive to the various opinions they hear put forward by their students. They encourage a range of interpretations, helping students recognize, respect, and learn the inherent value of differing responses to the same text. At the same time, they ask that students support their points of view with evidence gathered from a close reading of the text and other sources and use this evidence as a starting point to make judgments and inferences that further their understanding of text and the world.

Teachers encourage students to respond to texts in a variety of ways: through class discussion; writing about what they have read; dramatic re-enactment; or other creative expressions, such as music, dance, or original works of art. They expose their students to meaningful texts across the entire early and middle childhood curriculum, including social studies, science, health, mathematics, the arts, and other subject areas, as well as through regular encounters with a variety of quality literature. (See Standard VIII—*Integration.*) They keep the instructional focus on meaning-making, constantly integrating the development of the child's ability to read with his or her expanding understanding of the world.

Assessing Reading

Accomplished teachers recognize the power of assessment in delivering appropriate reading instruction to all students. They construct their classroom procedures, schedules, and student assignments in ways that allow for ongoing, meaningful assessments to take place on a regular basis and pay particular attention to students with special learning needs. Teachers recognize that one assessment does not fit the needs or levels of all readers and that assessment is most helpful when analyzed in collaboration with other teachers, parents, and sometimes the students themselves. (See Standard VII—*Assessment.*)

Teachers carefully diagnose and are able to examine student reading behavior and comprehension in effective and efficient ways. For example, teachers use specialized reading assessments that capture the essence of skills required by the emergent reader through tools that record student understanding of the alphabetic principle, concepts of print, reading level, phonemic awareness, fluency, and word recognition. Teachers use running records or other systematic and sensitive methods for recording how emergent and more sophisticated students decode and use phonics, understand vocabulary, and comprehend texts at different gradients of difficulty. Teachers also provide multiple opportunities for students to self-assess their progress in reading and interpreting text. Teachers of early childhood students may

use oral retelling and drawing as primary assessment strategies to document comprehension, while teachers of middle childhood students might use a combination of written response, multiple-choice assessments, and dramatic interpretations. Teachers use this knowledge on an ongoing basis to determine subsequent texts and strategies to advance reading skills.

Reflections on Standard IX:

Standard X: Writing

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers use their knowledge of writing processes, language development, writing development, and ongoing assessment to provide instruction in the components of writing, assist students in constructing meaning in their written work, and provide genuine opportunities for students to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Writing is the process of exploring, transposing, and transcribing one's thoughts. Using writing, students can inform, persuade, beguile, explain, impress, or otherwise influence an audience. Writing helps a writer clarify attitudes, communicate ideas, create new worlds, relate to others, and discover his or her own thinking. Writing draws on a complex web of social and cognitive skills that take time and effort to acquire.

Accomplished teachers lead students to develop useful, practical, and developmentally appropriate approaches to writing, regardless of the writing task. Teachers develop students' proficiency with traditional and technological writing tools, as well as with assistive technology, as appropriate. As they do with reading, listening, speaking, and viewing, teachers integrate the skills of writing with those of the other language arts. They also integrate writing across the school curriculum.

Instructional Components

Accomplished teachers are themselves experienced writers capable of presenting their ideas in clear and cogent prose, and they model writing throughout the instructional day. Teachers share the struggles and satisfactions of their own writing process and their own written products with students. They understand that the ability to write has a positive effect on students' reading skills. Consequently, they are aware of the critical value of gaining experience with this complex mental process, and they help students develop metacognitive awareness of this relationship.

Teachers help students see writing as a recursive process that often includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Teachers give guidance as the students sort through information to identify writing topics, find information to support the writing of ideas, seek ways to organize and develop thoughts, reconceptualize thoughts to reorganize material, revisit activities when they are struggling to clarify a message, and edit work. Teachers understand that writing instruction cannot be delivered in a linear fashion, and they therefore employ focused, explicit lessons as part of a rich, powerful, ongoing conversation between students and teachers about writing.

Accomplished teachers use many types of strategies for helping students with writing. For example, teachers use modeled writing (where teachers wield the pen and deliberately "think aloud" as they write). They also use shared writing (where teachers solicit ideas from students as the teacher writes), interactive writing (where teachers and students share the task in some way), guided writing (where students wield the pen and the teacher supports and instructs as necessary), paired writing (where students work together on their writing), and independent writing (where the student accepts responsibility for thinking or writing on self- or teacher-selected topics).

Accomplished teachers understand that young children are fascinated with writing—how adults write, the tools used for writing, and the results of children's own efforts. They also know that students take pride in knowing that their developing writing conveys meaning to an audience. Teachers know that learning to write involves knowing how writing and speech relate, how form and style vary depending on different situations and purposes, and how a reader will react to what was written. Teachers provide young children with ongoing opportunities to experiment with and explore writing, and teachers supply appropriate materials, such as various types of paper and writing instruments, to do so. Teachers also provide appropriate instruction in handwriting skills, including manuscript and cursive letter formation.

Teachers continually develop students' writing skills and techniques, including such areas as focus, organization, support, mechanics, voice, knowledge of audience, word choice, and sentence variety. Teachers also guide student writing across many genres, such as essays, poetry, drama, news articles, and short stories. Teachers help students develop and employ a variety of resources to draw upon as writers, such as lists of transitions, word gradients, similes, and topic ideas. They help students to become descriptive, expressive, and persuasive writers who recognize their ability to use writing that has an impact on the audience.

Developing Students' Writing

Accomplished teachers develop the student skill of writing, using oral language as the starting point and encouraging young children to capture their ideas on paper in the form of drawings, scribbles, letters, and labels. For example, one young child may produce a scribble, and another may write "ILM." Both mean "I love Mom," and both represent beginning writers' developing skills in translating thoughts to graphic representations. Through purposeful instruction, these written forms eventually mature into more complete written text. Teachers understand the characteristics of emergent writing, including inconsistent usage of conventional mechanics, and developmental spelling patterns. They know that early attempts at spelling reflects children's efforts to communicate using print, and that it is a powerful means for acquiring insight into children's literacy and linguistic growth. It also provides an initial opportunity for young children to begin to view themselves as writers who can convey meaning through their work. Therefore, teachers focus on responding to the nature of the content and ideas produced by their students while holding conventional spelling as a critical goal for all students. Knowing that children acquire skills at their own pace, teachers constantly monitor skill development in order to assist children in all stages of literacy development. They work to develop their students' writing abilities by helping them set challenging goals and providing assistance in achieving those goals.

Accomplished teachers know that students learn to write through meaningful and regular practice, and they create blocks of time for varied literacy experiences in which students write informally and formally. These may include using learning logs to solve problems in mathematics or science; composing original stories and skits; keeping various types of journals for reflection; producing class newsletters; corresponding with others using e-mail; and using signs, labels, charts, and lists in the classroom.

Teachers recognize that advancements in technology have introduced additional components to the writing process. Teachers are aware that students who learn to write

using word-processing software applications may think differently about the writing process from those who learned to write longhand. Teachers are able to guide students to think about and practice writing as a recursive and iterative process. Technology opens up new publication possibilities in the classroom; teachers use a range of writing projects that may incorporate graphics and may be presented as brochures, multimedia presentations, Web pages, or in other formats, helping students to learn the different purposes of writing and modes of production. Teachers ensure that students develop keyboarding skills, and they provide opportunities for keyboarding practice. Teachers are careful to use available technology in developmentally and instructionally appropriate ways to help students develop skill as writers and achieve curriculum goals.

Teachers delight in the natural curiosity of children and in the original way early and middle childhood students express themselves in their everyday written comments and investigations of the world. Teachers know that students develop as writers and speakers best when they are allowed to compose text on subjects that intrigue or otherwise matter to them. Accordingly, teachers regularly involve students in choosing their own topics and purposes for writing, in addition to teacher-selected activities designed to support the broad development of students' writing. This might involve anything from labeling a picture of the child's family to writing a verse or developing a narrative describing the results of a science experiment.

Accomplished teachers are aware that spelling, punctuation, and grammar are most effectively taught in the context of writing. Therefore, they use the texts that students produce to illustrate the conventions of language. As students realize the importance of such matters as complete sentences, properly placed periods and commas, correct spelling, and legible handwriting in communicating to their audience on matters they care about, they come to appreciate the utility of mastering conventions and become motivated to do so. Teachers make students aware that employing the conventions of language, including correct spelling and grammar, will help them communicate with a wider audience. Teachers also help students see that because written language can be revised and edited, most readers hold it to a strict standard of conventional accuracy. Teachers assist students for whom English is a new language and students who use various English dialects to take risks in writing for meaning, and they encourage students to use the skills they already have acquired in other languages and dialects to gain proficiency in Standard English. Teachers also assist students who are learning in their primary language to take risks and express their ideas.

Teachers understand that writing is often a social process—a way of finding one's voice in society—and that the desire to make one's ideas known to others often serves as a powerful motivator for writers. Whenever possible, teachers help students find audiences for their writings. For example, they may have children take turns reading their favorite compositions to the class and answering questions about them. They may set up discussion groups in which students develop writing topics, listen to one another's compositions, and make helpful suggestions about how a piece might be revised. They may regularly publish a class newsletter or class book. They may bind student research papers into reference books that become part of the class library to be read, thought about, and commented on by classmates. Teachers also develop audiences outside the classroom and school, including older or younger students, parents, and readers of student writing publications, by involving students in interactive writing experiences.

Teachers understand that the primary goal of writing is not always simply to communicate with others. They know that writing carries an emotional impact and that students often use writing as a way of exploring emotional issues, such as those that occur with their friends or in their families. They help students write for a variety of purposes, including enjoyment, reflection, discovery, and giving form to personal insight. For example, students keeping a daily log on growing mealworms might, through their written observations, come to understand life cycles, even though no person other than the author will read the log. Teachers also help students engage in functional writing tasks, such as composing recipes or thank-you letters, that students will encounter outside of school. Students may also keep personal journals for their own enjoyment, writing poetry or reflections on the events of their lives.

Teachers understand that writing is an intellectual adventure requiring discipline. They recognize that writing is a complex, recursive thinking process that varies widely from individual to individual. They nurture each student's discovery of approaches to writing—free association, brainstorming ideas, writing from an outline, the use of multiple drafts, or other techniques—that work well for him or her, and they guide exploration in new approaches. Teachers develop a connection between reading and writing by using children's literature as prompts and models for students as they study other writers' craft and develop their own writing. Teachers regularly provide explicit lessons on specific compositional aspects when they observe such a need in the writings of a student or group of students. For example, they might help students become aware of the power of using precise words (e.g., "bounding" into a room in place of "walking") to develop a character or convey mood in a piece of fiction, or they might show students when and how breaking a line in poetry can support meaning. Recognizing that students learn a great deal from other authors—including published authors, teachers, and peers—teachers invite students to share the discoveries they have made and insights they have gained about their writing from other authors.

Teachers provide timely and constructive responses that help students see their writing more clearly. In reading a student-authored text, the teacher is careful to respect each child's individual voice and respond to what the student has to say, honoring the child's ownership of the text. Teachers interact with students to engage them actively with what they have written and, when appropriate, to help them make informed decisions about revising and editing.

Assessing Writing

Teachers know and use varied and meaningful assessments, such as prompted writing and spelling analysis, and feedback strategies, such as writing conferences, written comments, and developmental descriptors, in order to help students as they develop their writing skills. They effectively match and individualize the assessment to the task and use the resulting information to inform further instruction. They are able to guide student self-assessment and peer assessment in ways that help students become more independent writers both in and out of school. Teachers include students in the assessment of writing by asking them to create and then use rubrics or other tools for critiquing writing. They have students collect their writings over time in portfolios to reflect upon their progress and set future learning goals. (See Standard VII—*Assessment.*)

Reflections on Standard X:

Standard XI: Listening and Speaking

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know, value, and teach oral language development and listening and speaking skills as essential components of literacy, and they provide opportunities for students to listen and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Listening and speaking are the original modes of language acquisition and development, and accomplished teachers understand that they are inexorably intertwined. Oral language constitutes a primary means by which children make sense of the world and communicate with others, and their development of oral language supports their further development in reading, writing, and viewing. Teachers provide abundant opportunities for all students to speak and listen in order to help students construct meaning, understand the relationships between listening and speaking, develop comprehension strategies and auditory discrimination, engender respectful relationships within and outside the classroom community, and make meaningful connections with other disciplines.

Accomplished teachers know that children acquire and use oral language as a way to mediate their world—to make their needs known, to ask questions, and to interpret and control their environment. Teachers know that children constantly test possible "rules" of language (e.g., that the past tense of a verb in English is formed by adding the /d/ phoneme) by trying them out (e.g., "I *goed* to Grandma's"). Teachers provide opportunities for such experimentation, and they use formal and informal instruction to increase children's language proficiency. In doing so, students become more capable, confident users of conventional language. Teachers structure learning activities to promote students' playful discovery of language, their sense of oral language conventions, and their ability to interpret the world through oral language. Teachers consistently use oral language as a vital component of regular assessment, both of students' attitudes toward learning and their progress in learning.

Instructional Components

Accomplished teachers are themselves articulate speakers and sensitive listeners who demonstrate excellent oral language skills in their day-to-day leadership in the classroom and throughout the school community. They model, attend to, and help students understand the importance of listening and appropriate talk by seeking clarification of student responses, probing for reasons behind student actions, registering students' reactions to learning activities and social interactions, encouraging students to use language to make connections between previous experiences and new experiences, asking students their opinions, and responding appropriately to them in individual conversations or group interactions. Teachers provide opportunities for self-expression and peer interaction, and they help students engage in meaningful discussion.

Teachers are deliberate and purposeful in their teaching of listening skills throughout the early and middle childhood levels. They

emphasize comprehension and teach students to listen with a purpose in mind, such as following directions, drawing conclusions, showing respect, or responding to a question. They provide opportunities for students to develop higher-level thinking skills as they listen for specific purposes. For example, when teachers read aloud, they encourage students to share personal connections or connections to books already read in class. They are able to discriminate between the use of listening as a classroom management tool and listening as a vital skill in the support of children's growth and development.

Accomplished teachers provide many opportunities for students to speak with and listen to one another and their teachers in whole-class, small-group, and paired settings. Teachers engage in responsive, sustained dialogues with students, adjusting talk and pace according to individual needs, in order to help students develop oral communication skills. Students may be invited to give their opinions about books, read or sing together in choral recitations, role-play or reenact stories, paraphrase what they have read, interview members of the community to create an oral history, create puppet shows, recall a sequence of events from a personal experience, improvise a new ending to a familiar plot, engage in pantomime, conduct a town meeting, or engage in other oral language activities. Teachers also recognize that students benefit from creating and responding to music as both a form of expression and a learning tool. Teachers allow time to read aloud to students regularly; these readings are purposeful and rehearsed. They use information about students' prior experiences to help plan for read-alouds, using texts that capture students' interest and are appropriate to the students' developmental levels and literary experiences. Teachers instruct students in techniques of formal speaking, such as identifying audience and purpose, using eye contact, and talking at an appropriate volume and speed. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to develop formal and informal presentation skills. Students are given opportunities to self assess their progress in listening and speaking for a variety of purposes using predetermined criteria.

Teachers create a mutually supportive classroom environment in which all students feel safe to take part in classroom discussion and other oral language exchange, and they schedule small-group conversations with students to ensure that all students have opportunities to express themselves. They model and teach group communication skills, such as how to "disagree agreeably," how to respond to one another's comments, and how to take turns. They teach appropriate words and body language. Teachers take advantage of variations in dialect, language background, and personal experiences within their learning communities as a resource for students to learn about and appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers help children understand and respect cultural differences in nonverbal communication systems as well. (See Standard III—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity* and Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*) Teachers are also adept at meeting the dual goals of respecting language diversity and helping students acquire the necessary skills for speaking Standard English.

Assessing Listening and Speaking

Accomplished teachers know that children need frequent opportunities to talk to develop oral language fully, and they employ evaluation processes and tools that capture the essence of these developing skills. They construct their classroom environments, routines, and schedules in ways that value student speaking and listening, as well as

allow them to seamlessly conduct ongoing assessments of these skills. Teachers use anecdotal records, checklists of discussion points, rubrics and developmental indicators, retelling, language samples, and tape recordings to assess these skills. Teachers design assignments, such as book talks and project presentations, that include embedded assessment opportunities for speaking and listening skills for students as individuals and as part of a group. (See Standard VII—*Assessment*.)

Teachers also use a combination of assessments and formats when evaluating student speaking and listening skills. They create opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-teacher talk and are skilled in assessing student speech patterns, word usage, and sentence structure. Accomplished teachers provide oral assessments, knowing that some children can express their understandings better through the spoken word than the written word. When students demonstrate difficulty with oral skills, teachers confer with experts to find the most appropriate and effective ways to help the student develop effective speaking and listening skills. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to create assessment tools and rubrics for effective speaking and listening in order to assess their own efforts and those of their peers.

Reflections on Standard XI:

Standard XII: Viewing

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers know, value, and teach viewing as an essential component of literacy. They use a wide variety of print and nonprint resources to develop students' viewing and visual-representation skills.

Viewing is an essential form of communication in today's media-saturated world. Helping students interpret and produce visual language and images prepares them to become more knowledgeable and sophisticated consumers and producers of communication in different media. Teachers realize that students need awareness and understanding of visual cues, such as a speaker's gestures and facial expressions (both natural and deliberate), printed signs and symbols, graphs, the use of formatting in printed texts, and the setting of a television scene. Teachers understand that the concept of *text* has expanded beyond written texts to include such visual texts as illustrations, graphs, labels, collages, sign language, wordless books, picture symbols, photographs, television programs, advertisements, magazines and newspapers, plays, films, Web sites, multimedia resources, and works of art. Teachers construct varied learning opportunities that develop students' ability to create and critically analyze such visual texts.

Teachers provide visually rich environments and varied learning experiences in classrooms and other learning spaces for students of varied developmental levels, and they make certain that all students learn how to comprehend, interpret, analyze, and create many forms of visual text. Teachers help all students interact with their visual environment as an important part of the learning process. Visual, dramatic, and environmental cues serve as important supports for student learning, particularly for the academic and social development of emergent readers and students for whom English is a new language, students with hearing loss, and students from culturally and dialectally diverse backgrounds.

Instructional Components

Accomplished teachers consider viewing as an essential element in the process of developing students' literacy, and they share with students their enjoyment of viewing. Teachers are themselves skilled viewers, able to analyze and interpret a wide variety of visual texts. Teachers demonstrate for students critical viewing skills. For example, they teach students to form questions about the purposes, intended audiences, and beneficiaries of a particular advertisement. They are also knowledgeable about the types of viewing experiences their students have—what television shows students see, what movies they go to, what Web sites they visit, for example—so they can help students become reflective and analytic viewers both at school and at home. Teachers also are sensitive to gaps in student access to various media and technology at home, so teachers can make sure that they provide equity to all students as students learn viewing skills at school.

Accomplished teachers have clear learning goals when they teach viewing to early and middle childhood students. They help learners use illustrations to understand written materials. They support and extend learning generated from print text by helping students understand how to interpret and

create graphs, tables, charts, and maps. Teachers give early and middle childhood students frequent opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills as they guide students in the use of visuals. For example, teachers may help students understand the connection between written text and an illustration to enhance their interpretive skills, or teachers may use political cartoons to explore various perspectives of current issues in a social studies class. Teachers know that students learn from each other, so they plan many activities where students can share ideas about visual text in small-group and whole-class settings.

Accomplished teachers help students develop a repertoire of skills for interpreting and creating visual text. They help children navigate around visual text, for example, helping them know what to look at first if an image is complex. They help students understand the similarities and differences among oral, written, and visual text, and how to use this understanding to interpret visual text and make decisions about which media to use in communicating their ideas. For example, teachers may ask students to compare a story from a book to a film version of the same story, discussing the point of view expressed in each and the way the different media have created the point of view. Likewise, they may have students discuss the way a particular theme addressed in class is represented in both a poem and a photograph or film. Similar to the teaching of literary elements that increase student understanding of literature, accomplished teachers familiarize students with a vocabulary for understanding the elements of visual communication. For example, teachers may discuss the concept of framing with students, helping them to notice what elements of an event or scene a photographer has chosen to include and exclude before asking students to create an image themselves. Alert to opportunities to integrate many of the language arts, the accomplished teacher may also ask students to write a paragraph describing why they made the choices they did. Accomplished teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to express themselves visually. For example, teachers may help students understand the effect of the appearance of their writing by having students change the amount of white space and the fonts they use in a computer-generated work, or teachers may have students expand their ideas by selecting photographs to accompany their written text or by scripting and presenting a multimedia presentation.

Teachers show their students how the world is translated by various media and how media are produced. Teachers give their students opportunities to view and analyze photographs, logos, movies, billboards, advertisements, documentaries, TV shows, plays, Internet designs, Web sites, works of art, magazines and newspapers, and other visual resources. They also help students understand the interrelation of sounds and visuals in many types of media, such as films, speeches, musical performances, and Web pages. They teach their students how to be discriminating viewers who can recognize bias and propaganda. They critically discuss with students media ethics, the ways in which media reflect and shape the values of a society, and the appropriate uses of different media. They engage students in a conversation about what makes a television show or film "high quality," and they help students begin to develop clear standards of quality for visual text. Teachers also teach students to use different media to explain, persuade, and evaluate. Teachers take advantage of the motivating nature of various media to create critical viewers and thinkers among their students.

Teachers use various technological resources in teaching early and middle childhood students to express themselves, and they oversee the appropriate selection and use of current and emerging media, including computers, CD-ROMs, audio and video

recorders, or multimedia resources. (See Standard V—*Instructional Resources.*) Teachers help students understand how to use various texts and graphics to design creative or research-based work with these various technological tools.

Assessing Viewing

Accomplished teachers know students need multiple opportunities to communicate visually. Accomplished teachers engage in ongoing assessment of students' viewing skills and provide written and oral feedback to students aimed specifically at a student's level of development and degree of skill. Teachers evaluate the extent to which their students are discriminating consumers and producers of visual communication by using all the language arts. For instance, they listen carefully as students discuss visual text in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. They have students write about visual text, such as writing captions for photographs, describing in a journal why they watch the television shows they do, or writing a review of a film they have seen or a Web site they have visited. They have students produce visual text, from early drawings and scribbles to illustrated reports or multimedia presentations. They reflect on the results of these evaluations and alter their instruction accordingly. Teachers also share rubrics for assessments with students and have students help create appropriate rubrics for projects as well. An important part of the evaluation of student viewing is helping students become self-evaluators, aware of their own developing viewing skills. (See Standard VII—*Assessment.*)

Reflections on Standard XII:

Supporting Student Learning

The last three standards describe other important decisions, actions, activities, and frames of mind that support and contribute to the practice of accomplished reading–language arts teachers. These include the ways teachers advocate for and reflect on their own professionalism, as well as the way they work with others, including parents and colleagues, to create intellectually lively and spirited classrooms that support their learning goals.

Standard XIII: Collaboration with Families and Communities

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers develop positive and mutually supportive relationships with family and community members to achieve common goals for the literacy education of students.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers recognize parents and other adult caregivers as their strongest allies in the education of young children. Family members are usually keen observers and accurate reporters of the strengths and needs of the children in their care. They can have a strong interest in and continuing influence on their children's development and attitudes toward school and learning. Accomplished teachers understand the formative role of parents, learn from them, and help them foster their children's learning. Teachers also recognize the pervasive influence that the community can have in shaping and enhancing the student's educational experience as well as in supporting the family. Teachers take the initiative to form alliances with parents, families, and community members on behalf of the literacy development of their students.

Teachers Are Effective Communicators Who Form Meaningful Partnerships with Families

Teachers know that gaining an understanding of students' lives outside of school is essential to establishing a successful learning program inside it. They establish open, two-way communication with families early in the school year, seeking out relevant information concerning students' language history, background, culture, reading interests, learning goals, and home life. They are flexible in their modes of communication, for example, offering to meet off-hours with parents whose work schedules conflict with the regular school day, or offering to converse with them on the telephone, by e-mail, or through other Internet technologies.

They collaborate with students' other teachers appropriately prior to communicating with parents concerning important topics such as students' learning assignments, academic growth, literacy development, behavior, and class accomplishments. Often communications with parents are in the form of a letter or progress report. Teachers may ask parents to sign such notices, indicating they have read them, and invite comments, questions, or suggestions. Teachers have these letters translated into the home language when appropriate and possible. They determine the most effective ways to communicate with parents regardless of parents' spoken and written English skills. They find occasions to inform parents when a student has made a breakthrough as well as when problems have arisen. They enlist the support of parents and encourage their advice when dealing with typical sources of conflict, such as a student's classroom behavior and the completion of homework. They interpret and discuss the body of students' work, using portfolios, report cards, and test scores in a manner that provides families with an accurate portrait of their children's progress.

Teachers Assist Families in Supporting Their Children's Learning Development

Teachers share information with parents about how they can support the literacy development of their children. For example, they may hold occasional informal workshops for parents (with interpreters when needed) in which they explain some aspect of the curriculum, such as the process of writing, children's literature, or how to read together effectively. They share their professional expertise with parents about how to help their children develop good learning habits and study skills, complete homework, set goals, and improve their academic performance. They recognize that classroom climate powerfully affects parent participation. As a result, teachers create a warm, welcoming environment where parents feel valued and connected to their children. They may suggest and provide materials and resources that parents can use in working with their children.

Teachers invite parents and other community members to support the program indirectly by participating in classroom or school functions, such as book fairs, student performances, luncheons, holiday celebrations, and fund-raising, or directly by supporting individual instruction, reading to students, or speaking with them about an area of special expertise.

Teachers actively involve parents and families in every aspect of the educational process, keeping them briefed both through formal and informal means. For example, in addition to developing a newsletter to inform families of learning activities, a teacher would provide parents with enrichment activities to extend literacy development; a teacher might coordinate a student-led conference with the student's family and other teachers. When necessary, teachers assist parents by serving as advocates for students within the school. In instances where literacy materials are not available at home, teachers work with parents and children to make such materials available.

Accomplished teachers also recognize that parents have their own school history and convictions about education that must be taken into account in fostering a positive home-school climate. For example, adults who had mainly negative educational experiences may be reluctant to become involved. On the other hand, some concerned parents may insist that their children receive instruction in reading–language

arts as they remember having been taught. Accomplished teachers know how to open—and maintain—lines of communication. They are sensitive to parental perspectives and seek to resolve concerns in respectful ways. They enter each discussion expecting to reach a workable solution. They focus the discussion on what parents care about—the welfare of their child—as they keep their students' best interests in the forefront of their minds and actions.

Teachers Encourage School Collaboration with Community Members

Accomplished teachers know that no school or classroom is isolated from the larger community. Therefore, they seek ways to involve themselves and their students with the community. Their awareness of the importance of community relations leads these teachers to inform the community at large about school goals, classroom projects, and student successes, and they alert administrators to activities that warrant media attention. They seek to establish the kind of informed understanding that can occur when school and community work together.

Teachers seek opportunities within the community to expand their students' and their own advocacy and decision-making skills while advancing students' literacy skills. For example, they may help students respond to community issues through letters to the editor, or they might organize students in volunteer programs with direct community impact. They look for opportunities to involve their students with a cross-section of citizens—for example, leaders in politics and the arts, merchants, senior citizens, and others. They actively practice their belief that connecting schools to the community can provide mutually enriching experiences for all parties. (See Standard V—*Instructional Resources.*)

Reflections on Standard XIII:

Standard XIV: Teacher as Learner

> Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers constantly seek to improve their knowledge and practice through a continuing process of professional reading, writing, dialogue, inquiry, and reflection.

The depth of experience and knowledge accomplished teachers possess comes from their years of working with students and addressing students' specific needs. As part of their belief in learning, teachers regularly reflect on their own practice and seek to improve their pedagogy and expand their professional vision. Accomplished early and middle childhood teachers recognize that language arts teaching is an evolving field, one in which teachers must employ their professional judgment to discern what constitutes sound practice while facing challenges that do not lend themselves to simple solutions. Teachers recognize that the demands of their craft will change over time—indeed, they may change with each class and each student. They view each year as another opportunity to expand their understanding of teaching, learning, and assessment; improve the quality of their teaching practice; and enhance their profession. In short, they are lifelong learners.

Teachers Seek a Better Understanding of Their Craft from a Variety of Sources

Teachers are confident enough about their pedagogical practices and beliefs to engage regularly in critically examining them. They are risk takers, willing to communicate with others and to try new teaching strategies that may improve the effectiveness of their instruction. They continually seek to learn more about reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Teachers also assume the responsibility of staying current relative to the purposes and uses of technology in the teaching-learning process. Accomplished teachers are lifelong users of literacy for information and recreation, and they are models of literate persons.

Teachers avail themselves of many resources in analyzing the quality and scope of their teaching. They are good listeners who learn with and from their students. They carefully analyze comments received in parent-teacher and parent-student-teacher conferences as well as from informal conversations with parents. They value their colleagues—teachers, specialists, and administrators—as rich sources of information, perspective, and insight. (See Standard XV—*Professional Responsibility.*)

Teachers are also avid readers and effective, confident writers. They stay abreast of significant research findings in their field and related areas. They are familiar with relevant curriculum guides; local, state, and national standards; and professional publications. They draw on such texts to improve their practice. They consistently take advantage of professional development opportunities, including workshops, classroom observations, Web sites, and strategy-sharing sessions with colleagues. Teachers seek training and resources to continue to find new ways to use current and emerging

technologies, such as digital cameras, photo imaging, and scanners. Most of all, they search their own experiences, regularly reflecting on the events of the day and posing problems and questions for research. This reflection, written in an anecdotal journal, for example, is one form of inquiry and may be read and reviewed by the teacher alone or shared as a professional resource. Teachers constantly probe the nature of their relationships with students, asking questions of themselves, wondering, and experimenting. Through this habit of reflection and inquiry, they weave together their classroom experiences, knowledge of theory, and contemporary research to solve problems and constantly reinvigorate their practice.

Teachers Take Responsibility for Their Own Professional Growth

Teachers have a vision for their students, the dynamic of their classrooms, their own teaching role, and the future of the profession. They have well-reasoned positions on the major issues in the field. They hold an evolving set of beliefs about the teaching and learning processes, which they employ in systematically reflecting on their practice. They can persuasively explain the pedagogical decisions they make.

Teachers know their own personal strengths and weaknesses. They work constantly to examine the ways their particular cultural background, values, biases, and experiences might affect their beliefs, behavior, and relationships, with the goal of broadening their perspectives and improving their effectiveness within the learning environment. In this regard, teachers may participate in discourse with colleagues, seminars, workshops, and courses that challenge or develop their current thinking.

All teachers experience exhilaration and disappointment in the exercise of their profession. Through their habit of self-reflection and insistence on high expectations for themselves and their students, accomplished teachers cultivate the attribute of refined professional judgment. They are alert to the teachable moment, consistently able to take maximum advantage of the unpredictable opportunities that present themselves in the course of the school day.

Accomplished teachers embrace the lifelong study of the art and science of teaching in order to ensure continued professional growth. They often make this effort public to raise in their students a curiosity, enthusiasm, and passion for learning. These teachers exemplify the highest ideals of scholarship and ethics. They take responsibility for their own professional growth, embrace professional standards in assessing their practice, and reflect on their profession to ensure that they teach with effectiveness and dignity.

Reflections on Standard XIV:

Standard XV: Professional Responsibility

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers actively contribute to the improvement of teaching, learning, and the advancement of knowledge and professional practice.

Accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers define their responsibilities as professionals to include a commitment to the continuing growth and development of their colleagues, their schools, and their field. They act as members of a learning community with responsibilities that extend beyond their classrooms, collaborating with other professionals to enhance the school's professional culture and programs and to benefit education in general. Accomplished teachers routinely collaborate with all reading–language arts educators to share in the reading–language arts instruction of students. To this systematic, collaborative process teachers bring a deep knowledge of the field and an intimate knowledge of the learner in a context that is professional, purposeful, probing, and productive.

Teachers Contribute to the School's Intellectual Life and Overall Quality of Instruction

Teachers take leadership roles within the school community and beyond in many ways. They may, for example, serve as peer coaches or mentors to preservice and student teachers, new teachers, or experienced colleagues; in turn, they welcome colleagues to observe them in class. They may develop sessions for their colleagues on reading and writing across the curriculum. They work with colleagues to design, improve, or evaluate staff development plans and practices. They initiate informal discussions about professional issues with colleagues. Teachers contribute to the design, review, or revision of curriculum guidelines.

Accomplished teachers value collaboration with colleagues as a means of strengthening instructional practice and of designing and implementing new programs for interdisciplinary learning. They take seriously their responsibility to collaborate with peers because they understand that their involvement is mutually beneficial—capable of improving not only their effectiveness as teachers but also the effectiveness of their colleagues and, ultimately, the education of students.

Through their interactions with colleagues and the profession, accomplished teachers advocate for educational excellence. They question ideas, requirements, curricular assumptions, and other factors that may limit teaching effectiveness, school quality, or student learning, and they do so in ways that have a positive impact on the learning community. They are advocates for policies, programs, and resources that benefit their students, their school, and their profession. For example, they may take part in the setting of site-based policies, help review the compatibility of external assessments with schoolwide learning goals, seek grant support, advise the school board by proactively sharing information about reading–language arts programs, or otherwise

attempt to bring about instructional improvement. They display their leadership by fostering an attitude of innovation, open-mindedness, and collaboration among colleagues in order to advance professionalism throughout the school.

Teachers work with colleagues and administrators to understand and improve instruction. They help ensure the greatest possible chance for success for students by easing their transitions across the elementary and middle school grades. They may also coordinate their work with special education and resource teachers to identify eligible students and provide well-integrated curricula that meet their learning requirements and contribute to interdisciplinary understanding. They advocate for students' right to read a variety of materials and write and talk about a variety of topics. In addition, when the opportunity arises, these teachers participate effectively on school or district committees and projects with other educators to improve school policies, organization, or procedures.

Teachers Contribute to the Advancement of the Profession

Accomplished teachers define their responsibilities as professionals to include a commitment to the continuing growth and development of their field and their profession. Often they will go beyond the confines of their classrooms and schools to extend their professional commitment, and they may choose to do so in a variety of ways. They may provide leadership and advice to other teachers on ways to involve parents in their children's education. They may collaborate with colleagues at the district, state, and national levels to improve the quality of programs and to contribute to the professional growth of the education community. They may take on a leadership role in a professional organization. They may make presentations at professional conferences and conventions or conduct ethnographic or action research in their classrooms and share the results with colleagues. They may contribute letters or articles to professional magazines and journals or serve on education policy committees. They may compose letters to the editor or participate in television or radio interviews. They may also collaborate with educators from colleges, universities, or other institutions and agencies to pilot programs, teach postsecondary courses, or monitor the work of student teachers and interns. Such commitment is central to their dedication to the quality of their practice and to the advancement of reading–language arts education.

Reflections on Standard XV:

The 15 standards in this document represent a professional consensus on the characteristics of accomplished practice and provide a profile of the accomplished Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teacher. Although the standards are challenging, they are upheld every day by teachers like the ones described in these pages, who inspire and instruct the nation's youth and lead their profession. By publishing this document and offering National Board Certification to reading–language arts educators, NBPTS aims to affirm the practice of the many teachers who meet these standards and challenge others to strive to meet them. Moreover, NBPTS hopes to bring increased attention to the professionalism and expertise of accomplished reading–language arts educators and, in so doing, pave the way for greater professional respect and opportunity for these essential members of the teaching community.

In addition to being a stimulus for self-reflection on the part of teachers at all levels of performance, *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* is intended to be a catalyst for discussion among administrators, staff developers, and others in the education community about accomplished practice in this field. If these standards can advance the conversation about accomplished teaching, they will provide an important step toward the NBPTS goal of improving student learning in our nation's schools.

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** **These committee members developed *Middle Childhood/English Language Arts Standards*.**

Acknowledgments

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards' *Early and Middle Childhood (EMC)/ Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* reflects more than a decade of dialogue about accomplished teaching in reading–language arts. These standards derive their power from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus. Through the expertise and input of two standards committees, convened eight years apart; numerous reviews by a 63-member board of directors; and two periods of public comment by educators, policymakers, parents, and the like, these standards emerge as a living testament to what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is deeply grateful to all of those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to *EMC/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards*. Any thank-you must begin with the pioneers in 1992, who as a committee spent six years debating, reflecting, and articulating the multiple facets of accomplished teaching in Middle Childhood/English Language Arts. The standards for this field were adopted by the NBPTS Board of Directors in 1998. Special thanks go to committee member Doris Dillon, whose wise leadership guided the committee throughout its work.

In 2000, NBPTS convened the EMC/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee. This committee was charged with using the first iteration of the standards as a foundation, and revising the standards to include teachers of students at the early childhood level and to reflect best practice of the early twenty-first century. The EMC/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. NBPTS extends heartfelt thanks to each member of the standards committee.

The standards committee and the NBPTS staff would like to dedicate these standards to Chair Sheri Lyn Galarza, a former Kamehameha Schools preschool teacher. Sheri worked tirelessly with committee colleagues to create standards that would promote accomplished teaching and meaningful literacy learning for all young learners—regardless of their backgrounds or life circumstances. From the time Sheri began as chair in June of 2000 until her death on May 13, 2002, her quiet, thoughtful manner, complemented by her determined, fighting spirit, inspired the committee in their work. We all feel fortunate to have known her, to have collaborated with her to create standards that she believed in, and to carry on her commitment to excellence in teaching and learning through this document.

Special thanks also go to Vice Chair Deborah Dillon for her strong leadership, deep knowledge, and unswerving commitment, both during and between meetings, and to Facilitator Kathy Swann for her expert and energetic guidance throughout the standards development process. In addition, NBPTS thanks Vivian Vasquez for serving as a liaison from the National Council of Teachers of English, and Carmelitta Williams for serving as a liaison from the International Reading Association.

The work of the EMC/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee was guided by the NBPTS Board of Directors. Two working groups of the board of directors—the Standards and Professional Development Working Group and the National Board Certification Working Group—deserve special thanks as they reviewed the standards document at various points in its development, made suggestions about how the standards could be strengthened, and recommended to the full board of directors the adoption of the standards. Representing the board of directors as liaisons to the Early and

Acknowledgments

Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Committee were Julie Ashworth and Sarah Stewart, whose extensive knowledge of the field and enthusiasm made them treasured advisors and friends. They contributed significantly to the work of the committee and were helpful in representing its views at NBPTS board meetings. Thanks also go to the NBPTS Board Liaisons for *Middle Childhood/English Language Arts Standards*: Susan Adler Kaplan, C. Janie Hydrick, and Joyce Elliott.

Individuals not directly associated with NBPTS also made substantial contributions to the development of *EMC/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards*. Reading–language arts teachers and other scholars, state and local officials, and representatives of disciplinary organizations reviewed a draft of the standards document when it was disseminated nationwide during a public comment period.

Many staff members and consultants to NBPTS also deserve thanks for helping to make the publication of *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* possible. Chuck Cascio, former Vice President for Certification Standards and Teacher Development, initiated the standards development process. Michael Knab, Manager for Certification Standards, and Teacher-in-Residence Maria Telesca, NBCT, worked directly with the standards committee, making suggestions and guiding the development process. Writing credits also go to Michael Knab who, with help from Maria Telesca, turned the ideas from the committee's rich conversations into clear and cogent prose. Thanks go to Consultant Angela Duperrouzel, who coordinated the standards committee meetings; Teacher-in-Residence Mary Lease, NBCT, who assisted in the editorial process; and Administrative Assistant Glowena Harrison, who ably supported the work of the standards committee in ways too numerous to mention.

In presenting these standards for accomplished reading–language arts educators, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recognizes that this publication would not have evolved without the considerable contributions of numerous individuals and institutions. On behalf of NBPTS, I extend my thanks to all of them.

Katherine S. Woodward
Director, Certification Standards
2002

The core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

1) *Teachers are committed to students and their learning.*

2) *Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.*

3) *Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.*

4) *Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.*

5) *Teachers are members of learning communities.*

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