

Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards

Second Edition

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

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For teachers of students ages 3–12

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

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About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a board of directors, the majority of whom are practicing teachers. NBPTS recognizes that teaching is at the core of education and that the single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching. With its origins grounded in the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has more than two decades of experience in developing high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

The National Board's mission is to advance student learning and achievement by establishing the definitive standards and systems for certifying accomplished educators, providing programs and advocating policies that support excellence in teaching and leading, and engaging National Board certified teachers and leaders in the process.

The NBPTS framework for accomplished teaching is set forward in its 1989 publication, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. The five core propositions listed below and explicated on page 11 serve as the foundation for all National Board standards and assessments. The five core propositions explained below serve as the foundation for all National Board standards and assessments. The core propositions define the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and commitments that accomplished teachers demonstrate. Teachers embody all five core propositions in their practices, drawing on various combinations of these skills, applications, and dispositions to promote student learning.

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.

About the Standards

Every child deserves an accomplished teacher—one who is qualified to equip students with the skills to succeed in a global community. The core mission of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is to create field-specific standards for accomplished teaching that are grounded in the Five Core Propositions and that articulate the actions that accomplished teachers employ to advance student learning. Each standards document represents a professional consensus on the attributes of practice that distinguish accomplished teaching in that field. Many school systems use the standards as the basis for ongoing professional development, and many colleges and universities incorporate the standards into their undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Standards are developed and revised by a committee of 12–15 members who are representative of accomplished professionals in their field. A majority of standards committee members are practicing teachers. Other members include experts in academic content and child development, including teacher educators, researchers, and other professionals in the relevant field. Standards are disseminated widely for public comment and subsequently revised as necessary before adoption by the NBPTS Board of Directors.

Throughout the development of both the standards and the certification process, NBPTS 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; and establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias.

National Board standards and certifications are defined by the developmental level of the students and the subject or subjects being taught. Teachers select the subject area that comprises the substantive focus of their teaching. They may choose Generalist certificates if they do not focus on one particular subject area in their practice. The four overlapping student developmental levels (listed below) indicate the age of the majority of their students. The joined developmental levels of some certificates recognize commonalities of teaching students across those levels.

- Early Childhood (EC)—ages 3–8
- Middle Childhood (MC)—ages 7–12
- Early Adolescence (EA)—ages 11–15
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood (AYA)—ages 14–18+

About Certification

National Board Certification is a voluntary, three-year certification process for experienced teachers who demonstrate how accomplished teachers transform the core propositions into practice. In order to be eligible for certification a teacher must:

- Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution;
- Have a minimum of three years teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school level; and
- Where it is required, hold a state teaching license.

The assessments, aligned with the core propositions and standards, are designed so that teachers demonstrate their practice by providing evidence of what they know and do. The evidence-based assessment honors the complexities and demands of teaching. The assessment consists of two parts—the portfolio and the assessment center exercises.

Teachers develop four portfolio entries that represent an analysis of their classroom practice as it relates to student learning. The portfolio is designed to capture what a teacher knows and is able to do in real-time and in real-life settings through description, analysis and reflection of student learning that is captured on video and in student work samples. In addition, teachers document their accomplishments in contributing to the advancement of the profession and the improvement of student learning as they collaborate with families, colleagues, the community, and other stakeholders. The process requires teachers to reflect on the underlying assumptions of their practice and the effects of that practice on student learning.

Teachers also respond to six assessment exercises delivered at a secure testing site and designed for teachers to demonstrate content knowledge by responding to open-ended questions. These exercises complement the portfolio; validate that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are accurate reflections of what candidates know; and provide candidates an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio.

Assessments are based on the standards and are developed by educators in the particular field and developmental level in which the teacher practices. One or more assessors will score each of the 10 National Board Certification responses for certificate areas that have been offered for more than one year, with at least three portfolio entries and all assessment center exercises being scored by two assessors.

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 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 their interest even in the face of temporary setbacks.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that 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.

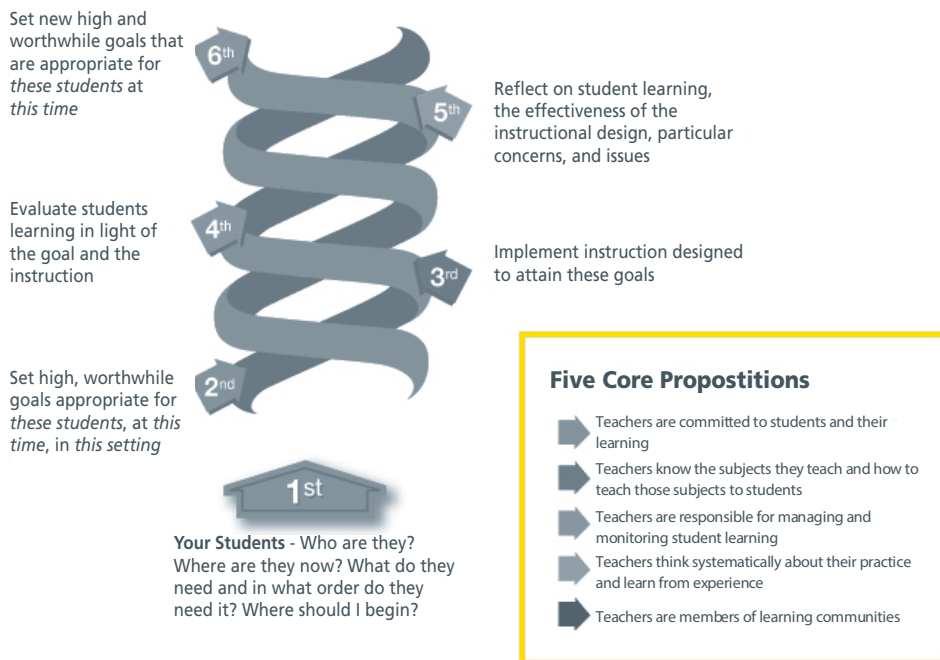
Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state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

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

Architecture of Accomplished Teachers

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching provides a view of how the use of the five core propositions and the standards that are developed from them result in student learning. As depicted in the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching, shown below, one strand represents teaching practice as grounded in the five core propositions, while the other represents the teacher's impact on students and their learning.

The Architecture of Accomplished Teaching: *What is underneath the surface?*



The NBPTS program certifies accomplished teachers who positively influence student learning through effective teaching practice. The process includes the core propositions for all teachers, a common set of accomplished teaching standards specific to the content field and students' developmental level, and a set of evidence-based assessments specific to the field that certify what accomplished teachers know and do.

Introduction

Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers embark on an exciting and rigorous task — teaching literacy to all learners. Literacy is fundamental for learning and social interaction, and literacy teachers play a powerful role in activating the voice of each student. Teachers realize that all students have a right to literacy because it is the vehicle by which people navigate through life. Literacy teachers know that the complexity of literacy development begins before formal education is introduced and continues throughout life. Teachers acknowledge that literacy originates during infancy when parents sing, speak, and read to their babies. Literacy teachers take that foundation and seize the opportunities that arise in the school setting to change the lives of children, to open their minds to new worlds, and to help them gain meaning through literacy.

Literacy allows children to explore their own beliefs and the world around them. Teachers know how to empower students to become meaning makers through multiple avenues. They guide students to use literature to view their world from a variety of perspectives; they also teach students to examine and understand the human condition. Accomplished teachers expand students’ thinking and their ability to interact with the world by creating an environment in which students engage with literacies and learn to appreciate the beauty and power of language.

Accomplished Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers recognize that literacy instruction involves a complex pedagogy that encompasses a holistic, innovative approach designed to meet the needs of diverse students in an ever-changing world. Teachers help children see the relevance of literacy by personalizing instruction based on individual student interests and needs. Literacy teachers understand that students need a strong foundation in literacy to become critical thinkers and productive citizens in a democracy.

Accomplished teachers know what it means to be literate in a global society. They understand that literacy is a social construct that is continually redefined by societal needs. They recognize that literacy is crucial to their students’ future successes as learners as they grow into productive members of society. Whereas literacy was once narrowly defined as the ability to read and write in the predominant language of a culture, literacy has evolved to encompass reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing across a variety of contexts, providing multiple ways of making meaning in the world.

The ability to read and write across a variety of texts is crucial within our information-saturated world. Just as the definition of literacy has expanded, so too has the definition of what constitutes a text. Within this document, the term “text” refers to various print and

nonprint forms such as books, signs, images, plays, films, and so on. Advances in technology continue to change the way we communicate, ever expanding what it means to be literate. Accomplished teachers believe that students need to develop the ability to critically interpret the world in which they live. Teachers strive to empower their students to use their literacy skills to explore issues of social justice.

Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers are committed to students and their literacy learning. They recognize that literacy learning occurs on a continuum and that learners possess a wide range of literacy skills. Because literacy learners develop at varying rates, it is imperative that teachers possess a deep understanding of the developmental patterns and ranges of literacy skills of children from toddlers to young adolescents. Literacy teachers value students’ energy and eagerness and skillfully provide engaging opportunities that facilitate literacy learning. They know that literacy does not begin or end with formal schooling, and they value students’ home literacy experiences. Teachers recognize the diverse needs of all student populations, and they plan for and provide differentiated instruction tailored to meet individual needs. Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers artfully orchestrate interventions for struggling learners as well as enrichments for accelerated learners, building on students’ strengths and backgrounds. Accomplished teachers recognize the need for a balanced, integrated, and comprehensive approach to teaching literacy in order to best support the needs of all learners as they grow to independence.

Literacy teachers possess a deep knowledge of the processes of the language arts — reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing; they also understand how to teach literacy to students. They recognize the ways in which the separate literacy strands are intertwined, and they comprehend the interconnectedness of the language arts and all of the content areas. Literacy teachers combine their content knowledge with effective techniques to teach the skills and strategies necessary for student learning. They understand that instruction is based on the individual needs of students, as opposed to believing in a one-size-fits-all approach. They identify gaps and misconceptions that students may have in respect to literacy, and they use all relevant information to systematically plan instruction. As a result, accomplished teachers organize their learning environment to be conducive to literacy development, creatively integrating literacy across the curriculum and utilizing assistive and instructional technology, when appropriate. Through their understanding of the processes of the language arts and their recognition that literacy is the backbone of life and learning, teachers enable students to transform themselves into self-regulated, independent, lifelong learners.

Literacy: Reading–Language Arts teachers are committed to managing and monitoring the growth and literacy learning of their students. Accomplished teachers are keen observers. They create an engaging environment that promotes literacy learning for all students. They establish consistent routines and skillfully manage transitions to optimize students’ opportunities for learning. They effectively utilize a variety of ongoing formal and informal assessments to monitor the individual progress of their students, the class as a whole, and their own professional practice. They use data for curriculum decision-making such as planning for interventions and enrichments. Accomplished teachers recognize the importance of communicating with students, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders as they manage and monitor student learning.

Accomplished teachers think systematically about their literacy practices, and they learn from experience in order to refine their teaching. These educators are role models for students; they embody what it means to be a literate, reflective individual through reading, writing, listening, speaking, and

viewing. Accomplished teachers cyclically reflect as they plan and design literacy instruction. They seek to improve their knowledge and practice through reflection, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues, and also by mentoring, conducting their own research, making professional contributions, and being members of learning communities. Literacy teachers recognize that reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing are interconnected and interdependent with every content area. They understand that literacy is more than a set of discrete skills, and they comprehend that students' growth depends on their mastery of literacy skills. Moreover, accomplished teachers acknowledge their ethical responsibilities in regard to teaching literacy. They reflect on issues of equity, fairness, and diversity. Thus, they are reflective problem-solvers and decision-makers in their field.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers are proactive literacy leaders and members of learning communities. They believe in a strong partnership with students, colleagues, families, and other stakeholders. They encourage parents to actively participate in their children's literacy development, and they communicate frequently with parents about their children's progress. Accomplished teachers are committed to the continued growth and development of the field of literacy. As literacy leaders, they collaborate with their colleagues on curriculum issues that affect their day-to-day instruction as well as on other topics of importance to the field of literacy instruction. They also partner with other stakeholders to enhance student learning. Literacy teachers read professionally, reflect on their practice, and share new knowledge both locally and globally through the use of new technologies. Accomplished teachers incorporate current research in order to develop innovative methods that positively impact student learning. They are advocates for the profession, their students, and high-quality literacy practices.

When the previous edition of *Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* was published, literacy experts, with thoughtfulness and forward thinking, established rigorous standards describing the essential components of literacy instruction. Since then, the field of literacy: reading-language arts has changed and expanded. Effective teaching practices remain intact; what has expanded is the knowledge of how teachers build strategic literacy learners. Through research and collaboration, literacy educators have learned more about how to intentionally differentiate literacy instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Accomplished teachers deliberately create a rich learning environment and help students create and convey the meaning of their world. A world steeped in new and various forms of literacy has raised teachers' responsibility and accountability to ensure that students have the necessary skills to navigate various forms of media. The current edition reflects, responds to, and addresses this continual evolution of literacy.

The standards committee revised the standards document based on current research and practice. The committee condensed the 15 standards from the previous document into 13 in the current edition. The separate standards entitled *Instructional Decision-Making* and *Instructional Resources* were combined into a single standard entitled *Instruction* to demonstrate their interdependence. Elements of the standard entitled *Knowledge of the Field of Literacy* were purposefully interspersed throughout the new standards document in order to emphasize specific knowledge within each of the content-focused standards of *Reading*, *Writing*, *Listening and Speaking*, and *Viewing and Visualization*. Some standards were renamed. The standard entitled *Teacher as Learner* was retitled *Teacher as Learner and Reflective Practitioner* to highlight the value and importance of reflection. The standard entitled *Integration* was

changed to *Literacy Across the Curriculum* to reflect a more global understanding of curriculum integration. The concept of integration was also emphasized in each content-focused standard to show how reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing mutually reinforce each other. *Viewing* was expanded and renamed *Viewing and Visual Literacy* to parallel a world in which the students need to connect their literacy learning with media and emerging technologies in order to become critical producers and consumers.

Throughout the standards, the committee placed greater emphasis on certain educational principles. These principles include: differentiating instruction as an essential method to meet a variety of needs, such as those related to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic status; embracing diversity, equity, and fairness by going beyond awareness to becoming change agents for social reform; expanding the concept of texts beyond print forms to forms such as visual and multimedia texts; emphasizing the importance of working with data to reflect on teaching; and finally, expanding the idea of the learning environment, both by addressing it in a separate standard and by making references throughout the document to the importance of the environment to literacy learning. No single standard has greater importance when compared to another; rather, when the standards are viewed holistically, they become a powerful guide to and indicator of accomplished teaching.

Teachers are invited to systematically review these rigorous standards for improving literacy instruction and are encouraged to thoughtfully consider the elements that make up accomplished literacy teaching. *Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards* represents an ideal vision of the knowledge, dispositions, and skills that define accomplished practice—an ideal towards which all literacy teachers should strive. By understanding the various elements that encompass literacy, reflecting on individual teaching practices, seeking additional resources, and collaborating with others as described in these standards, teachers will gain a comprehensive view of how implementation of these standards will directly and positively impact the literacy learning of all students.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards describes what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the professional consensus at this point about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the 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. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, these 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 observa-

tions of particular students and settings, and it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom.

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 commonalities characterize the accomplished practice of teachers. The standards that follow are designed to capture the knowledge, artistry, proficiency, 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.

Standard Statement—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished literacy: reading-language arts teacher. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.

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 teacher dispositions toward students, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

In addition, throughout the document are examples illustrating accomplished practice and demonstrating how decisions integrate various individual considerations and cut across the standard document. If the standards pull apart accomplished teaching into discrete elements, the examples put them back together in ways more clearly recognizable to teachers. Because the National Board believes there is no single “right” way to teach students, these examples are meant to encourage teachers to demonstrate their own best practice.

Literacy: Reading–Language Arts Standards Second Edition (for teachers of students ages 3–12) Standards Statements

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished teachers of literacy: reading–language arts into the following thirteen 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 Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading–Language Arts.

Standard I: Knowledge of Learners

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers draw on their relationships with students as well as their knowledge of literacy and child development to acquire knowledge of their students as intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and language learners.

Standard II: Equity, Fairness, and Diversity

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers practice equity and fairness; they value diversity and diverse perspectives. They teach all students to know and respect themselves and others and to use literacy practices to promote social justice.

Standard III: Learning Environment

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers establish a caring, supportive, inclusive, challenging, democratic, and safe learning community in which students take intellectual, social, and emotional risks while working both independently and collaboratively.

Standard IV: Instruction

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers employ rich instructional resources and provide instruction that is tailored to the unique needs of

students in order to foster inquiry; facilitate learning; and build strategic, independent thinkers who understand the power of language.

Standard V: Assessment

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use a range of ongoing formal and informal assessment methods and strategies to gather data in order to shape and drive instructional decisions; monitor individual student progress; guide student self-assessment; gather information to communicate to various audiences; and engage in ongoing reflection.

Standard VI: Reading

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use their knowledge of the reading processes, of their students, and of the dynamic connections within the other language arts to create effective instruction so that all readers construct meaning and develop an enduring appreciation of reading.

Standard VII: Writing

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use their knowledge of writing processes, language acquisition, writing development, and ongoing assessment to provide authentic and relevant instruction that prepares students to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard VIII: Listening and Speaking

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers know, value, and teach oral language development, listening, and both verbal and nonverbal communication skills as essential components of literacy, and they provide opportunities for all students to listen and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Standard IX: Viewing and Visual Literacy

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers know, value, and teach viewing and visual literacy as essential components of literacy instruction in order to prepare students to interpret and interact with an increasingly visual world.

Standard X: Literacy Across the Curriculum

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers understand the reciprocal and interrelated nature of the literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing and engage students in language arts processes in all disciplines.

Standard XI: Teacher as Learner and Reflective Practitioner

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers seek to improve their knowledge and practice through a recursive process of learning and reflecting.

Standard XII: 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 all students.

Standard XIII: Professional Responsibility

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers actively contribute to the improvement of literacy teaching and learning and to the advancement of literacy knowledge and practice for the profession.

Standard I

Knowledge of Learners

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers draw on their relationships with students as well as their knowledge of literacy and child development to acquire knowledge of their students as intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and language learners.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers¹ are committed to knowing each student as an individual learner. Accomplished teachers have a thorough understanding of current research and theories about learning and 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, teachers strive to acquire a particular understanding of each of their students as an intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and literate individual. They gain this knowledge by closely watching, listening to, and conversing with all stu-

dents, and by seeking information about each student’s home culture, family, and community life. These teachers then apply their knowledge of students’ individual histories to help determine what kinds of learning experiences will most benefit each student. Accomplished literacy teachers are aware that within diverse categories of student populations, a wide range of achievement and ability still exists. Teachers understand that there are also many individual variations in levels of academic performance and English proficiency within groups that are sometimes perceived as homogeneous. Therefore, accomplished teachers take these factors into account and make provisions in their instruction. Moreover, they adhere to the goals and accommodations within individualized educational plans for students with exceptional needs, and they extend their instruction for the optimal learning of these students.

¹ 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 general education and special services teachers, reading and literacy specialists, administrators, and others actively engaged in teaching reading–language arts.

Understanding Learning and Child Development Theories

Accomplished teachers have a thorough knowledge of current theories about how students develop and learn, and they understand the implications of these theories for literacy development. Teachers know that students learn by building on background knowledge and by encountering new concepts. They also recognize that learning is a social process 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 current child development theories, including knowledge about cognitive, social, affective, and physical developmental patterns; they have knowledge of the latest relevant research. Teachers use their understanding of major theories of child development as a foundation for their observations, analyses, and decision-making processes.

Accomplished teachers recognize that a child's development is a highly individual process which is influenced by a variety of factors, both in and out of school. They recognize that although students' language acquisition and literacy development, including the acquisition of new languages, occur along a continuum, they do not always take place in a series of predictable, linear steps. Literacy teachers recognize that children's knowledge, skills, and abilities emerge over time in dynamic and purposeful ways.

Accomplished teachers create a safe learning environment,² knowing that students may be subject to circumstances beyond the control

of the school and their families, which can affect a student's literacy development. For example, a student may have experienced traumatic events such as war, natural disaster, or personal loss. Literacy teachers determine where a particular student is in the developmental process and where the student needs to progress; and teachers provide the appropriate contexts, instructional engagements, learning opportunities, and materials, coupled with purposeful support, to maximize students' learning.

Knowing Each Student as an Intellectual, Social, Emotional, Cultural, and Language Learner

Accomplished teachers understand that early and middle childhood learners are naturally inquisitive and want to make sense of the world. Children constantly explore new ideas, relate these ideas to their previous understandings, construct hypotheses, and test their theories. Students in the early and middle childhood years want to connect to their peers, teachers, and members of their school, local, and global communities. These teachers know that students value interaction with others partly as a way of confirming or challenging what they already know. Literacy teachers structure students' interactions to be positive and productive, leading to new insights, understandings, and questions. They engage students' natural curiosity about the world to help students acquire and then flexibly apply the tools and skills they will need in order to become independent, self-regulated meaning-makers and language users.

Accomplished teachers understand that children learn at an early age that language is a medium for finding out more about the world and about communicating with others and that children come to school with diverse language and

² 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.

literacy backgrounds. Literacy 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; reviews, if possible, of language arts portfolios from previous years; and their own ongoing formal and informal assessment practices. They know how to access and interpret data to provide a foundation for student learning. (See Standard V—*Assessment* and Standard XII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities*.) They know when to seek assistance from colleagues who have particular areas of expertise or knowledge of students' backgrounds.

Accomplished teachers realize that students, both English language learners and native English speakers, have varying degrees of prior exposure to oral and written language. Some have been read to from infancy and have an easy familiarity with books and the conventions of print by school age. Others come from households whose members practice a rich oral tradition but do not habitually interact with printed text. Literacy teachers understand that some students come from national, regional, or socioeconomic backgrounds in which children have spoken with family members from earliest memory. Others arrive at school having had less prior experience with conversation. Teachers are aware that some of their students may have acquired important life skills, but not necessarily the attributes that will privilege them in a school setting.

Accomplished teachers know that English language learners possess a range of literacy skills, educational backgrounds, and linguistic foundations. Some have had no formal schooling; others have had interrupted formal schooling; and still others had continuous formal schooling in other countries. English language learners may be proficient in languages other than English, or

they may not have developed grade-level literacy proficiency in their first language. Teachers do not make assumptions about students' prior literacy experiences; rather, they make the effort to learn about each student's familiarity with language and then intentionally provide students with rich oral and print language experiences through differentiated instruction.

Accomplished teachers have an awareness of popular culture which they use to connect with students' out-of-school literacy practices; they also develop proficiency with current and emergent technologies in order to connect with their students. Literacy teachers understand how to use media to engage visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modalities in the learning process. Teachers understand that because many media are multi-sensory, they promote holistic learning. Skillful use of media in the classroom promotes learning that flows seamlessly from the literal to the deeply conceptual, thus increasing students' critical thinking skills.

Accomplished teachers are aware of the inequity that exists in regard to students' access to technology. In the cases of students who have been surrounded by technology, teachers capitalize on their knowledge and expertise. In the cases of students who are less familiar with technology, teachers try to increase access and model related skills and provide meaningful engagements with a variety of technologies.

Accomplished teachers perceive students' individual attributes as strengths. They recognize students' cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and family backgrounds; their interests, goals, and expectations for themselves; their prior dispositions toward school and learning; any exceptionalities that may have a bearing on their learning; their prior experiences; and any physical, medical, behavioral or emotional considerations related to literacy. Literacy teachers then use their

knowledge of children to differentiate learning experiences for individual students, small groups, and whole class instruction. (See Standard III—*Learning Environment*.) For example, in the case of a student who has difficulty with written expression, the teacher encourages oral expression while carefully planning to support the student's growth in writing. Teachers know how to create a secure, supportive learning environment that encourages each student to meet high expectations.

Accomplished teachers know that students' specific language abilities and literacy backgrounds have important implications for the kinds of learning activities that will benefit students most directly. Accordingly, they place a high priority on becoming aware of the char-

acteristics of their students and then capitalize on students' strengths and interests. They get to know their students as individuals, familiarizing themselves with attributes central to students' identities. For example, they know how to best use student questionnaires and interest inventories in order to gain knowledge about students' out-of-school interests. 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 and composers of a wide range of texts. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers use their knowledge of individual students for the optimal impact of student literacy learning.

Reflections

Standard II

Equity, Fairness, and Diversity

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers practice equity and fairness; they value diversity and diverse perspectives. They teach all students to know and respect themselves and others and to use literacy practices to promote social justice.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers make a commitment to the success of all their students. As they teach and interact with students, they are deliberately mindful of students' language background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, body image, household income, religious affiliation, family configuration, sexual orientation, physical or psychological exceptionalities, and literacy experience. Literacy teachers have a welcoming attitude and are eager to work with each of their students and families. Their approach to teaching invites students of all cultures and backgrounds to become engaged in learning. Accomplished teachers know and act upon the belief 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 are an asset and represent a tremendous wealth and diversity of human experience.

Accomplished teachers are committed to principles of fairness and equity and to

providing all their students with the resources they need to develop as literacy learners and as inquisitive, informed, and responsible individuals. Teachers maintain high expectations for all students and ensure that all of them receive equitable opportunities to learn and advance. Teachers encourage the development of each student's individual voice, in part through the emphasis on and the modeling of democratic values. Literacy teachers further understand that each student's growth as an individual 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 a challenging, meaning-centered curriculum. Teachers view a diverse learning community as a valued learning context for their students and themselves. Accomplished teachers help students become aware of their own biases and overcome them in a safe environment.

Promoting Fairness and Equity

Accomplished teachers are aware of the issues related to fairness and equity in literacy instruction. Teachers recognize that the needs of students differ dramatically, and they are aware of issues of bias in instructional and assessment practices. Teachers hold themselves accountable for advancing equity in their classrooms in a variety of ways. They design instructionally sound activities for individual learners, and they fairly allocate instructional resources, including one-on-one attention. Literacy teachers ensure that all students are equitably engaged in high-quality curricula, and teachers set expectations that challenge all students to improve their learning, continually moving toward greater complexity and breadth. These teachers expect all students to exercise fairness and equity as they engage with others in the classroom. If an issue arises, they talk with older students about the use of words from popular culture that may be offensive to certain groups of people. Teachers address issues such as gender equity in the classroom. For example, they might read to their students fairy tales featuring strong female characters or family stories in which the father is the primary caretaker.

Accomplished teachers know that fairness means more than treating all students equally; it involves knowing students as individuals and adjusting instruction and learning resources to meet their particular requirements. Teachers are aware of the range of student abilities, needs, and academic progress. They know that many students have particular cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, linguistic, or physical needs and exceptionalities, including subtle or undiagnosed impairments. Teachers seek to provide instruction or acquire the services necessary to meet each student's needs in an accepting, nurturing,

and supportive way. They teach to students' individual strengths using differentiated instruction, and they incorporate students' interests to form a solid base for helping students acquire the skills 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 in pronouncing words, and they design explicit instruction to develop these skills by using visual and tactile materials. Teachers create a learning community that solicits and respects the contributions of each student, regardless of academic, language, and developmental skill level. Teachers deliberately collaborate with parents to understand the unique needs of every child.

Accomplished teachers meet the unique needs of all students as literacy learners. Teachers make full use of a wealth of literacy resources that exist in the classroom, school, and community to help develop students' literacy skills. Literacy teachers may also design and adapt materials to meet student needs. Additionally, 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 support all students who struggle to acquire literacy skills, including students with exceptional needs.

Accomplished teachers make special efforts to meet the needs of students for whom English is a new language. They understand that the acquisition of English as a new language—in particular, the process of gaining confident control of the more academic uses of language—may take several years to achieve and should not be confused with the language acquisition and grade level expectations of native speakers of English. When possible and appropriate, teachers support use of parallel instruction in a student's primary language. Teachers also help students who are lit-

erate in another language transfer their literacy skills to English. Furthermore, teachers collaborate with colleagues and seek out professional resources to assist with specific challenges and to meet all students' needs in differentiated and equitable ways.

Accomplished 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 adjust their practice to assist students who are learning English. Teachers know that acquiring a new 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. When students begin to speak in English, teachers concentrate on understanding what they have to say and respond to that intention, while respectfully modeling grammatical accuracy. Literacy teachers are familiar with the stages of new language acquisition, and they know how to provide support and curriculum adaptations for students at each of these stages. Teachers regularly ascertain whether students for whom English is a new language understand what is transpiring in the classroom.

Accomplished teachers discuss the nature and consequences of the unethical use of communication tools. They point out that unethical use can be detrimental and has the potential for significant negative impact on a student's future. For example, they make their students aware of how poor choices in the use of technology can affect them and their peers, including legal consequences, ostracism, physical and emotional harm, and self-destructive behaviors.

Accomplished teachers are committed to fairness and equity with regard to the use of media and technology. They provide equitable access to

technology in their classrooms for both initial learning and enrichment experiences. Teachers also try to compensate for any lack of prior experience with technology. They are aware that some students who live in rural settings may have limited access to technology at home; therefore, teachers attempt to provide these students with as much access to technology in the school as possible. Literacy teachers also confront their own possible bias with regard to students' uses of technology in their work. They assess students' work fairly; for example, they do not favor a student's writing assignment because it contains sophisticated graphics available only on a home computer.

Promoting Diversity

Accomplished teachers value diversity and appreciate the many facets of diversity students bring to the classroom, including language background, culture, ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, body image, household income, religious affiliation, family configuration, sexual orientation, physical or psychological exceptionalities, and literacy experience. Literacy teachers understand that diversity extends beyond outward appearance; diversity encompasses every aspect of who people are, what they think, and what they do. Teachers are conscious of their own cultural backgrounds, and they analyze the ways that their cultural perspectives affect their interactions with students. Accomplished teachers also examine how their and other teachers' perspectives shape students' interactions with one another and students' interpretations of texts. For example, accomplished teachers do not limit students' play activities or reading selections based on their gender. Accomplished teachers understand that the larger global community is increasingly in-

terconnected, and they are aware that familiarity and comfort with diversity will help students function successfully in the future.

Accomplished teachers establish a climate of respect in their classrooms by daily modeling for students a respect and understanding of differences. They help students to understand and apply the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equity; and they help them to recognize discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes when they appear in the classroom, in literature, and elsewhere. Teachers design and implement lessons that help students develop awareness of, sensitivity to, and respect for others. For example, accomplished teachers are aware that children may begin to question their sexual identity at a young age. Teachers know that acceptance of their curiosity will make them feel safe and secure. In such instances, teachers may feature children's literature in which diverse gender roles are portrayed. Literacy teachers also constructively challenge discriminatory or disrespectful behavior whenever it occurs and whatever population is targeted. For example, if students engage in sexual harassment or bullying in any form or context, teachers do more than step in and offer practical support related to the specific situations; they also use literature and technological resources as a means to extinguish these kinds of behaviors by discussing with students the root causes of bullying as well as discussing acceptable solutions. Accomplished teachers are proactive in helping students understand the power of language to build respect and rapport.

Accomplished teachers ensure that when they make references to diversity as part of instruction, those references are authentic and relevant to their students. They choose literature and other learning resources that reflect a wide array of differences among people. They seek multiple perspectives and solutions when exam-

ining social issues with their students. Teachers highlight past and present events relating to issues of diversity as a way to promote students' understanding of how they function in a diverse world. Literacy teachers help their students take the step beyond awareness and acceptance of diversity to becoming advocates for social justice in a pluralistic, democratic society. For example, as teachers discuss problems relating to social justice with their older students, they might assign an essay in which their students respond to instances of racial profiling. Teachers of younger students might have their students read books about homelessness.

Accomplished teachers are sensitive to their students as members of cultures; they are aware of the influence culture has on what students expect of themselves, how students use language, and how students learn. Teachers understand the importance of respecting and seeking to understand the cultural norms, resources, and knowledge students bring from home. Teachers know that cultural perspectives vary in regard to social interaction. For example, they know that in some cultures, it is considered rude for a child to make direct eye contact with an adult and that hand gestures considered acceptable in one culture can have negative meanings in another. Literacy teachers actively examine their assumptions about students' ethics, cultures, home environments, values, and access to technology. They understand that every culture encompasses its own diversity, and they know that many students' backgrounds are a blend of different cultures. Teachers respect home languages and vernacular speech, and they recognize the various dialects found in the United States. They understand that non-standard uses of language are not wrong, just different. They know 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 the area of promoting students' abilities to use standard English. They do not try to eliminate dialectal variation in their classrooms. Rather, they help students recognize and appreciate various language patterns and discover what speech patterns are appropriate in various settings. They also provide access to models of standard English for all students, often through their own use of language. Accomplished teachers are clear and well-spoken oral communicators who know the rules of English grammar, syntax, and usage and employ these rules in their daily conversations.

Accomplished teachers go beyond a literacy curriculum that celebrates diversity only through heroes and holidays. Rather, teachers carefully and deliberately 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, genders, and languages. They use texts and resources that authentically represent these examples of diversity, including some that are created by individuals who represent these groups. When interpreting materials, accomplished teachers help students become

aware of the particular cultural view presented in a text; call attention to the use of dialect or to social conventions; and promote an analytical discussion of the social and ethical issues involved. Literacy teachers are aware of materials that portray stereotypes. They teach students to critically examine print and nonprint texts in which issues of power, equity, and justice are portrayed. For example, in the media and in books, some populations may be portrayed in a negative light; therefore, accomplished teachers are prepared to address the history behind such stereotypes and to help students challenge them.

Accomplished teachers understand that students have their own personal identities and perspectives. They actively encourage the expression and celebration of individuality among their students. Teachers frequently arrange students in heterogeneous small groups to bring those from different backgrounds and ability levels into close contact with one another.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers view literacy instruction as an opportunity to respect diversity, promote fairness, and work toward equity. They foster in their students an ability to examine multiple perspectives that encourage mutual respect for themselves, their peers, and members of local and global communities.

Reflections

Standard III

Learning Environment

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers establish a caring, supportive, inclusive, challenging, democratic, and safe learning community in which students take intellectual, social, and emotional risks while working both independently and collaboratively.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers know that a healthy and constructive emotional, physical, and intellectual tone in the classroom is essential to fostering successful literacy learning for all students. These teachers intentionally work to create an environment in which all students have a place as valued members of the learning community. Accomplished teachers create positive affective environments in which children feel free to take risks as they expand their approximations of literacy and explore language found in texts, various media, and the world around them. They also create comfortable, appealing, and efficient physical environments for literacy learning. Literacy teachers know that intellectual literacy learning environments are well managed, offering an array of academic activities that are highly engaging to students and that promote student independence. Accomplished teachers demonstrate a sincere interest in students,

families, colleagues, and all stakeholders. These teachers structure their environments by genuinely making everyone feel welcomed, valued, and respected as an integral part of the classroom. Teachers' attitudes encourage collaboration and respect and are optimal for literacy learning. They are masterful at creating a learning environment that promotes literacy learning.

Establishing the Affective Environment

Accomplished 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 their students. They listen carefully and dignify each student's contribution with attentiveness and thoughtful responses. They are interested in their students' ideas, lives, and activities; enthu-

siastic in support of their students' initiatives; and generous in their recognition of a wide variety of students' accomplishments and positive behaviors. They use a sense of humor to 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 in terms of their competence in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Accomplished teachers maintain high expectations for the success of each student.

Accomplished teachers understand the relationship between the classroom environment and a student's ability to learn. They know that safety is essential for learning, and they strive to ensure that learning environments are physically, intellectually, and emotionally safe for students. In the classroom of an accomplished teacher, each student feels valued and respected by the teacher and by peers. Above all, the teacher creates an inclusive environment that promotes a sense of security for every individual in the classroom.

Accomplished teachers address student behavior by using foresight and by setting clear expectations. In some cases, students and teachers collaborate in setting standards and expectations in order to promote students' sense of ownership of the learning environment. Literacy teachers explicitly teach procedures and routines that foster harmony. When disciplinary action is necessary, teachers act promptly and respectfully, focusing on a particular problematic behavior rather than assigning general blame. Teachers anticipate situations that may provoke a negative reaction and know how to prevent or mitigate adverse effects. Accomplished teachers respond skillfully to instances when the classroom is disrupted by external events. These teachers deal effectively with assemblies, rehearsals, drills, loudspeaker announcements, and other inter-

ruptions, and, when appropriate, relate these interruptions to classroom activities.

Accomplished teachers are committed to ensuring that students with exceptional needs are an integral part of the learning community. Teachers are knowledgeable about when and how to use support services, blending them into the classroom where possible. Reading specialists collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that students' reading skills and strategies are reinforced in both classroom and other settings. Literacy teachers form partnerships with colleagues to benefit all students with exceptional needs, whether they remain in the classroom or receive instructional services in a separate area. For example, the teacher and the interpreter for a student who is deaf might collaborate to ensure that the student is actively involved with peers throughout the day. When certain students routinely miss classroom instruction for part of the school day, teachers remain committed to fostering their overall development. For example, when students with exceptional needs receive extra support outside the classroom, the teacher acknowledges them upon their return and helps reengage each student through conversation, regular routines, organizing visuals, or with the assistance of class helpers when the teacher is occupied with another student or group. In addition, resource and classroom teachers collaborate to plan lessons that carry over from one context to another and to ensure manageable amounts of work for students who receive extra support.

Establishing the Physical Environment

Accomplished teachers realize that physical surroundings have powerful implications for learning. Therefore, whether they have their own classrooms or travel to different areas of the

school building to provide instruction, literacy teachers make effective use of available resources and collaborate with colleagues to optimize the physical environment for all students.

Accomplished teachers make deliberate choices about the physical environment, considering such aspects as color, lighting, and décor. Teachers know that the physical setting of the classroom, including the arrangement of furniture, the choice of materials, and the displays, can help support and extend student learning, engagement, and growth. The classrooms of accomplished literacy teachers are replete with student-generated work such as anchor charts, writing exemplars, and artwork as well as photos of the students to ensure they feel part of the classroom community. Literacy teachers may display many functional messages in English as well as in the home languages of students for whom English is a new language. Accomplished teachers involve students in modifying and maintaining the classroom environment, rearranging it as needed to keep pace with assorted instructional engagements and student learning. For example, a teacher might invite students to help set up the dramatic play area or hold a class meeting to discuss how to rearrange furniture to organize the classroom library.

Accomplished teachers arrange the physical environment to ensure that students with exceptional needs are an integral part of the classroom learning community. Teachers know that in the case of a student with physical challenges, the physical organization of the classroom has a great impact on the student's ability to move around. The teacher is therefore purposeful about the layout of the classroom and any potential hindrances. Additionally, accomplished teachers are intentional about making instructional resources easily accessible for students with exceptional needs.

Accomplished teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. 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 can interpret what students mean. Literacy teachers 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. Accomplished teachers purposefully plan opportunities for students to discuss and reflect on their learning to promote positive social interactions, which may include classroom meetings and peer mediation.

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. Accomplished teachers create spaces that are conducive to whole-group, small-group, and independent learning. Groups are created as learning needs arise and modified or disbanded as needs change. Literacy teachers do not allow a student to be singled out by ongoing membership in a particular group. As teachers modify groupings based on students' needs or interests, they ensure that students understand the resultant expectations. For example, when grouping students for a new writing workshop or a literature discussion, teachers help members adapt to group dynamics and explicitly teach group members how to communicate clearly and supportively.

Establishing the Intellectual Environment

Accomplished teachers create environments in which learning resources are easily accessible.



They take great care to ensure that students are able to access learning resources with increasing independence. For example, the teacher can make a variety of engaging writing materials readily available for times when writing opportunities arise, such as when children receive a postcard in the mail and are motivated to independently write a response. Additionally, accomplished teachers ensure that students receive the necessary guidance in selecting texts and other learning materials for themselves—that they know where materials are and know how to select those that will meet their personal and academic literacy needs.

Accomplished teachers take measures to ensure that the physical arrangement of the classroom is conducive to the learning of all students, including students with exceptionalities. For example, teachers ensure that the environment allows a student using a wheelchair to be seated in ways that promote easy eye contact and sharing with other students, whether in large or small groups.

Accomplished teachers know that central to a literacy learning environment is a classroom library. To the best of their abilities, teachers stock and organize the library for students of all reading levels and interests. An abundance of texts and a variety of genres in print and non-print formats are available in the library, and students are allowed to browse through it and use it daily. Teachers collect resources that reflect a variety of perspectives, interests, cultures, and life circumstances for their classroom libraries. Literacy teachers also recognize the importance of regularly introducing students to new literature and information, and they feature changing texts in the classroom book collection. Additionally, they provide access to a variety of media for instructional purposes and offer students opportunities to select media that meet their individual

learning needs. Teachers provide a variety of tools for reading; for example, during independent reading, some students may choose to use a digital reading device.

Accomplished teachers are aware that the learning environment extends beyond the walls of the classroom. They collaborate with families and invite students' lives and cultures into the classroom. They build partnerships with the community that enhance student learning (See Standard XII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities*). In addition, literacy teachers recognize that online environments are increasingly a part of the overall learning environment. Teachers create opportunities for students to engage in social networking and to collaborate locally, nationally, and globally in developmentally appropriate ways. Teachers also take measures to maintain students' safety in online environments.

Through the learning environments they create, accomplished teachers foster intrinsic motivation in their students. Accomplished teachers instill in students an understanding that although learning can sometimes be difficult, the reward for persistence is a sense of accomplishment and increased self-confidence. Teachers explain that a willingness to experiment is an essential part of the learning process, and they demonstrate that mistakes should not be 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 teach conflict resolution skills and support students in assuming responsibility for their own actions. They provide students with opportunities to make meaningful choices both socially and

Standard IV

Instruction

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers employ rich instructional resources and provide instruction that is tailored to the unique needs of students in order to foster inquiry; facilitate learning; and build strategic, independent thinkers who understand the power of language.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers are reflective as they plan, select resources, and teach. They set clear and appropriate goals, and they can articulate and justify their plans. They draw on knowledge of learners and professional expertise to design instruction that meets the needs of diverse students. Teachers deliberately locate, create, and align resources to help them meet their instructional goals. They create engaging, interactive, and differentiated opportunities for students to engage in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing in meaningful ways. They are flexible and responsive as they modify their teaching during instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers engage in a recursive cycle of planning, selecting resources, teaching, and then reflecting on the impact of their decisions to guide future instruction.

Planning for Learning

Accomplished teachers begin the planning process by engaging in reflection. They think about previous instruction and consider how previous decisions affected student learning. Teachers formulate purposeful, long-term, data-driven instructional goals that are based on local, state, and national standards and curricula. In addition to their long-range goals, teachers develop lesson plans containing short- and long-term objectives.

All of an accomplished teacher’s instructional goals are influenced by research and theory. Teachers set goals based on what is developmentally and linguistically appropriate for their students and what is relevant to their students’ lives. Teachers take into account their students’ prior knowledge, skills and strategies, and their cultural and family backgrounds. Teachers use the results of ongoing formative and

summative assessments when setting goals, and they consult with other educators.

Accomplished teachers know that in order to design effective instruction, they must systematically plan what will happen in each instructional unit and each lesson within a unit. Teachers make professional, informed choices regarding the depth and breadth of content, the sequence in which content is presented, and the pacing of instruction. They purposefully plan recursive units of study while incorporating well-researched, relevant, and effective resources.

Accomplished teachers deliberately plan to create opportunities for optimum levels and types of engagement among students and between students and their teacher. Teachers use data to plan for the most effective ways to group learners. Teachers plan for groups that are dynamic, fluid, and flexible; they create homogenous and heterogeneous groups as appropriate to the instructional task. For example, a sixth-grade teacher might allow students to choose their own small groups for literature circles during one part of the day and then assign pairs to work with the teacher on revising their writing samples during another part of the day.

Accomplished teachers are able to articulate the rationale of how the overall instructional plan will affect student learning. They can explain their planning to administrators, colleagues, families, and other stakeholders. This articulation builds awareness of the curriculum and fosters mutual understanding of student expectations. Additionally, this articulation creates a collaborative effort in which all parties can reinforce learning expectations and find unique ways to contribute to students' academic successes.

Selecting Resources

Accomplished teachers are familiar with a wide range of instructional resources that enrich and

extend the literacy development of their students. These resources range from traditional print literature to innovative technology and media, community resources, and student-generated work. Literacy teachers are deliberate and reflective as they locate and select resources for teaching. Accomplished teachers critically evaluate professional resources and lesson plan ideas as they seek new resources for instruction, evaluating all potential resources in terms of their cultural relevancy and biases. They select curriculum resources based on previous experiences and their expectation that the materials will promote student literacy growth. They adapt and modify materials as needed. Teachers are also resourceful in obtaining and creating supplementary materials that support student learning in all content areas, such as primary documents, audio recordings of speeches, Web sites, and video clips. Accomplished teachers provide students with a variety of textual genres, traditions, cultures, styles, and perspectives representative of the breadth and depth of children's literature.

Accomplished teachers are adept at selecting texts which match varying instructional needs. Teachers have a rich knowledge of children's literature, including print and non-print texts. Teachers select texts that encourage literacy development; represent diverse genres and a range of difficulty levels; exhibit high quality; extend conceptual knowledge of the world; and encourage engagement by students of varying backgrounds. For example, teachers in early grades might select picture books that repeat sounds to foster the development of phonemic awareness, whereas teachers in the upper grades might read aloud picture books that feature figurative language to serve as mentor texts for poetry writing.

Accomplished teachers select media and technology tools that enhance and extend their

students' opportunities to learn about and through language. Teachers recognize that they are responsible for selecting developmentally appropriate technology and media that match overarching curriculum goals and that are appealing and accessible to learners. For example, teachers might help students set up blogs in which they communicate with students from around the world as both groups read the same novel, or they might have English language learners employ email as an avenue for building language. Accomplished teachers are aware of assistive technologies that increase success for students with exceptionalities. They may obtain an adaptive mouse for a student to 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 that student learn to read and write.

Accomplished teachers regard instructional time as an invaluable resource, and they maximize its use; their lessons are clear, purposeful, coherent, and well managed, with smooth transitions between one activity and the next. Teachers engage their students in predictable classroom routines; their students feel secure because they know what is expected of them. Accomplished teachers organize their 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 build on their previous learning.

Accomplished teachers know that students must be active participants in the learning process in order to construct new knowledge; therefore, they select resources and materials that encourage active engagement and social interaction. They recognize that many early and middle childhood students are kinesthetic learners, and

so they provide students with concrete materials. For example, teachers may provide groups of younger students with puppets when they teach retelling. Teachers of older students might ask pairs of students to use comic strip software to storyboard as a part of prewriting a story.

Accomplished teachers know that the community is also an important resource when they are fashioning a relevant curriculum and implementing instruction. Teachers purposefully connect the classroom and the community. They may bring the community to the classroom by means of guest speakers, volunteers, and storytellers. 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 also take the classroom into the community by means of field trips and projects that involve students in interviews, data gathering, service projects, and other interactions that demonstrate to students the many ways that language can bring about change in the world. Teachers foster school partnerships with local businesses and organizations, for example, in staging theatrical productions or publishing student-authored texts.

Accomplished teachers communicate with others in the literacy field—both locally and globally, face to face and online—to supplement and refine their repertoire of strategies and resources. 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. They might work collaboratively with the reading specialist or classroom teacher to develop a plan to provide needed instructional experiences for individuals or small groups of learners, thus facilitating continued literacy development. (See Standard XIII—*Professional Responsibility*.)

Accomplished teachers understand that some of the most effective instructional resources are those created by students themselves. Student history projects, multimedia presentations, dramas, 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 dissemination, through the responses of others to their work. Teachers promote the production of such materials by giving students appropriate materials and sufficient time. Teachers subsequently make student-produced texts of all kinds available for wider reading, listening, or viewing—both by individuals and in groups.

Teaching

Accomplished teachers know that literacy teaching is a dynamic, responsive process through which a teacher immerses students in the language arts. Teachers know that accomplished instruction involves a constant flow of communication, both to convey information and to invite students to respond with higher-level thinking. Accomplished teachers think flexibly about elements of teaching, including resources, time, and student engagement that will connect literacy learning to real-world expectations. Literacy teachers use information from previous experiences, current research, and established instructional strategies as they modify instruction to meet the needs of their learners. Teachers are mindful that they must seek to make students independent in their use of literacy skills. To achieve that, teachers assess, instruct, provide resources, refine teaching, and differentiate in a cyclical fashion and with fluidity. They convey the importance of literacy skills to students in multiple ways in order to encourage active en-

gagement. Teachers also continuously reflect—to plan thoughtfully, to be mindful of teachable moments, and to consider whether objectives and needs have been met.

Accomplished teachers understand that effective instruction engages students in critical intellectual processes. Teachers believe that inquiry—the process of seeking to know and understand through questioning—is a powerful route to understanding. They encourage students to actively use questioning to inquire about the world, clarify their thinking, and engage with stories and ideas. Teachers use effective questioning themselves. They craft questions to support students' learning and to gauge students' levels of engagement and understanding.

Accomplished teachers implement resources and materials flexibly and equitably. They support all students by creating instruction that invites active engagement. They provide ample opportunities for students of all ages to take part in social, dramatic, and intellectual play because of the way that play supports oral and written language development and conceptual learning. Literacy teachers at times use project-based learning to foster greater depth of knowledge and critical thinking. They may also use problem-based learning to ground instruction in real-world contexts.

Accomplished teachers use the results of ongoing assessments to refine their plans and differentiate instruction as needed. Accomplished teachers hold the same high expectations for all students' literacy learning; however, they differentiate instruction by providing different resources, learning engagements, or levels of support in order to help all students meet those expectations. Teachers do this by providing whole group, small group, and individualized instruction in flexible and responsive ways. For example, during independent reading confer-

ences, the teacher may observe that several students read self-selected texts accurately, but are unable to read aloud with fluency and expression. The teacher might group these students for guided fluency instruction, providing a text that is conducive to phrased, fluent reading, such as a poem or the lyrics to a song. Teachers may provide differentiation by varying the amount of time they allow students to complete assignments or providing students with choices in literacy engagements. When appropriate, teachers may vary the readability levels of instructional materials. For example, when a class is studying insects, the teacher might ask small groups to read passages at different readability levels and then discuss their learning or record important ideas on a chart with the whole group.

Accomplished teachers understand that instruction often involves an ongoing dialogue with students. Teachers know that dialogue builds a close relationship between the student and teacher, with both parties providing vital feedback on efficient and creative ways of using the instructional period. These creative collaborations foster increased independence in the learner. For example, teachers might think aloud to model their use of metacognition as they read and reread a difficult text. Afterward, they might ask students to talk with each other about how to apply the same rereading strategy. Finally, teachers would encourage students to reread whenever meaning breaks down during their own independent reading. This allows students to become aware of what they know, understand, can do, and can apply in new ways in the future.

As they implement instruction, accomplished teachers continuously engage in reflection, evaluating whether their instruction is achieving their goals. Accomplished teachers capitalize

on teachable moments. During instruction, accomplished teachers understand that flexibility is crucial and that adjustments will become necessary as the teacher scaffolds student learning. Teachers make subtle and effective modifications in response to their observation of students' gestures, facial expressions, and comments as well as in response to what is happening in the classroom and in the world.

Accomplished teachers demonstrate a sense of passion and immediacy that communicates the importance of literacy. They understand that their own body language, tone, and pauses during speech affect student engagement and comprehension, and they skillfully adjust their modes of communication to optimize student learning.

Reflecting on Learning

Reflection is an integral part of all aspects of teaching but is critical to planning and implementing instruction. Accomplished teachers know that reflection is a recursive process that, ideally, occurs before, during, and after instruction; therefore, teachers purposefully schedule time within each day to engage in reflective thinking or writing. Accomplished teachers reflect on ongoing assessments, observations, and curricular expectations as they make or adjust instructional plans. They reflect during daily lessons, considering the level of student engagement or performance, and adjust instruction accordingly. They reflect on how lessons affect student learning and strive to improve future lessons, even when lessons go well. They reflect on their use of time, resources, and instructional strategies, always looking for effective ways to refine and improve their own practice. They seek student input on the effectiveness of their teaching and reflect on ways they might enhance

Standard V

Assessment

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use a range of ongoing formal and informal assessment methods and strategies to gather data in order to shape and drive instructional decisions; monitor individual student progress; guide student self-assessment; gather information to communicate to various audiences; and engage in ongoing reflection.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers assess what students bring to instruction, what they learn from instruction, and what they still need to learn. Literacy teachers understand that improving their teaching and student learning is the primary reason for assessing student performance. These early and middle childhood teachers continuously monitor their students' literacy development through formal and informal assessments. Teachers' assessment practices support and inform their instructional practices, continue throughout the school year, focus on authentic language tasks, and build on students' literacy strengths. Teachers systematically assess student progress, using developmentally appropriate assessments and communicating their findings to students, parents, administrators, and community stakeholders.

Accomplished teachers assess student progress jointly with the students themselves, collaborate with other profession-

als on assessment, and encourage parents' active participation in the assessment process. Teachers use assessments as a way of providing students with the opportunity to monitor and reflect on their own literacy achievement. In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, students become aware of their progress in literacy development and come to think of themselves as independent learners who are capable of evaluating their own work as well as setting goals for future learning.

Knowledge of Assessment

Accomplished teachers understand that assessment is the process of discerning the breadth and depth of students' skills and knowledge. They know that assessment must be an ongoing component of the accomplished literacy teacher's routine and that assessment serves a variety of critical purposes. Teachers realize that sound, appropriate, and well-designed assessments

have the power to lead to extensive and meaningful student learning. Teachers understand the difference between assessing and evaluating, and they know that grading is only one part of these processes. Accomplished teachers have a command of a wide range of valid and developmentally appropriate assessment methods and tools 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. Teachers have thorough knowledge of the local, state, and national standards and benchmarks that indicate proficiency in literacy at various developmental levels.

Accomplished teachers understand the many purposes of assessment, including to evaluate student learning; to inform their own teaching practices; to provide feedback to students; to communicate with stakeholders about individual student progress and overall school performance; and to foster both teacher and student self-reflection. Teachers know the full range of assessment types. They understand the purposes and uses of both formative and summative assessments, and they understand that within these two broad groupings there are both formal and informal assessment tools. Literacy assessments may include classroom observation and documentation; records of reading; portfolio assessments; oral reading assessments; multiple-choice tests; teacher-student conferences; and mandated assessments. Accomplished teachers know the strengths and limitations of each type of assessment tool, and they understand that rich and robust educational plans require a multifaceted approach to assessment.

Accomplished teachers understand the value of encouraging students to take responsibility for their own intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical growth. Teachers know that by promot-

ing metacognitive awareness in their students through self-assessment, teachers allow students to take responsibility for their learning and help them become more reflective thinkers. Literacy teachers recognize the importance that self-assessment plays in developing literacy learners. Teachers know that students who can make meaningful connections and pose self-generated questions are positioned to become active, engaged, and self-regulating. These teachers realize that teaching students how to self-assess and reflect on their learning may be particularly powerful for helping reluctant classroom learners find new connections between their curiosity and the school curriculum. Accomplished teachers also recognize that self-assessment can be valuable for English language learners, since collecting their work over time makes evident their progress in language acquisition. Furthermore, accomplished teachers understand that student self-assessment can provide an opportunity for the teacher to determine the efficacy of instruction.

Accomplished teachers know that they are accountable for student performance on local and national standardized tests. They familiarize themselves with the purposes, features, and learning outcomes of these assessments prior to administering them to their students. Teachers recognize their responsibility in regard to mandated assessments, meet their responsibility in creative and innovative ways, and ensure that preparations for these assessments provide opportunities for significant learning for students. Teachers know how to analyze and interpret data from standardized testing programs; and they know how to use that information to design, evaluate, and modify literacy curriculum and instruction. When possible, teachers work with those outside the classroom to ensure that mandated evaluations are consistent with the vi-

sion that frames instruction and assessment in the classroom.

Selecting and Administering Assessments

Accomplished teachers are constant and insightful observers of students at work and at play. In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, assessment is wholly integrated into daily instruction and is an ongoing process. Teachers continuously collect, examine, and interpret a variety of data about the ways students communicate, carry out learning tasks, and interact with peers.

Accomplished teachers know that effective assessment of literacy activities involves establishing a relationship of trust between 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 students' development as individual language learners and as social beings.

Teachers continuously affirm students' language uses, and they provide appropriate measures of encouragement and constructive feedback before, during, and after assessment.

Accomplished teachers choose, design, and select assessments that are aligned with the curriculum, instructional practices, standards, and goals and that meet the needs of individual students, the class as a whole, the school and the district, and families. Literacy teachers take into account students' cultural and linguistic variations and are careful to assess students fairly and equitably, adapting assessments to meet the needs of specific populations. (See Standard II—*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.

Accomplished teachers draw on the strengths and interests of their students in order to ensure that assessments accurately reveal what students know and can do. In some situations, teachers may offer students an array of assessment options. For example, when trying to determine students' comprehension of a given piece of literature, a teacher might allow students to write, create an oral presentation, or produce a work of art in response to the text. When 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.

Accomplished teachers consider each student's culture and background knowledge when selecting and administering assessments. When appropriate, teachers modify assessments according to their knowledge of students' schemas. For example, a teacher might use an assessment in a student's primary language to obtain a more accurate representation of the student's ability. A literacy teacher might also consider adapting test terminology to accommodate regional language differences, such as the fact that students living in the South may think of a toboggan as a hat, whereas people in other parts of the country are more likely to think of it as a sled.

Accomplished teachers 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 decisions. Literacy teachers model strategies that students can use before, during, and after reading new or challenging texts. A teacher might provide students with a variety of self-assessment tools and invite students to make thoughtful selections and then use the tools appropriately. For example, a teacher might scaffold for students the process of evaluating portfolio selections.

Accomplished teachers also facilitate peer discussions focused on assessment.

Accomplished teachers prepare their students appropriately for all types of assessments, providing practice in the particular skills needed to complete specific types of assessments, such as standardized tests, online assessments, or portfolios. For example, when preparing students who do not customarily take standardized tests in multiple-choice format, the teacher would first explain the format to students and then allow them practice in completing sample items. The teacher would also ensure that students are familiar with the types of directions and types of genres likely to appear on all tests. Literacy teachers help students emotionally and physically by creating a testing environment that is comfortable and conducive to concentration, using knowledge of the community and individual student needs to provide appropriate encouragement and preparation.

Teachers understand that parents and other adult caregivers have a tremendous store of relevant information that can help teachers learn about the whole child. This pool of knowledge includes the student's cultural and language history, likes and dislikes, work habits, goals, self-image, learning style, and personality. Accomplished teachers take steps to form alliances between home and school to select and refine their assessments. (See Standard I—*Knowledge of Learners* and Standard XII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities*)

Accomplished teachers know how to select the most efficient and effective technology available for collecting assessment data, and they are adept at applying this technology. For example, a teacher might make an audio recording of a student reading a short passage and then analyze the reading for miscues or fluency. A teacher might use a computer program to calculate the

readability level of a text used in a reading assessment. Accomplished teachers understand the challenges that some technological assessment tools may pose for students. For example, students who find it difficult to navigate texts in a screen-based format may need support in order to complete online assessments. Teachers also assess students' progress by providing opportunities for students to use technology to demonstrate literacy development. For example, teachers might allow students to use a Web tool to develop a class rubric or have students create a book review by making a short video.

Analyzing Assessment Data

Accomplished teachers realize the importance of engaging in continuous reflection, alone and with colleagues, about the data collected from assessment. 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. Rather, they analyze data from many different assessments to build a comprehensive, multidimensional picture of each student's abilities, achievements, and needs.

Accomplished teachers consider the purpose of each assessment and identify any nonacademic factors that may affect results, such as distractions in the environment, poor motivation on the part of students, or a lack of clarity in test directions. For example, if most students performed poorly on a given item, the accomplished teacher would take the next step to determine if students failed to master the relevant content or if the item was somehow flawed. Accomplished teachers examine individual test results and also analyze data across the class to determine whether both individual students and the class as a whole mastered the skills and knowledge being assessed.

Accomplished teachers realize that a given assessment provides insight into students at a given moment; therefore, they collect, analyze, and compare data over time, looking for significant patterns and trends. They frequently compare their assessment findings, employing the results of one method to cross-check the accuracy and validity of another. Teachers analyze and discuss results with colleagues. They keep systematic, comprehensive records of all students' progress across all domains of literacy. Literacy teachers know how to interpret the results of standardized tests. They understand the statistical analyses performed on results from such tests, and they carefully read published reports. Accomplished teachers carefully record and analyze data from informal assessments as well as from formal ones.

Accomplished teachers use technology to analyze the data they collect, making use of spreadsheets or other statistical analysis programs. They may use a database to aggregate and disaggregate data and to create graphic representations such as bar graphs or scatter plots in order to analyze students' progress and inform instruction. They look for patterns and trends in data and know how to account for such phenomena in data as outliers.

Communicating the Results of Assessment

Accomplished teachers clearly communicate assessment results to students, parents, administrators, colleagues, school board members, and other stakeholders, and they do so in a timely manner. Literacy teachers prepare reports of their evaluations that clearly communicate the nature and degree of the progress that students are making. These teachers use the public release of data about the school's performance on stan-

dardized tests as an opportunity to communicate with parents and stakeholders about ways in which teachers are striving to meet the needs of students. Teachers provide parents with meaningful feedback on how their children are progressing in the acquisition of language processes. Accomplished teachers use feedback as a way to cultivate family support and celebrate student achievement.

Accomplished teachers communicate both quantitative and qualitative data and explain the significance of both types. They also explain to students, parents, and community members that numerical scores may obscure subtle differences in achievement. For example, if a student receives a 3 on a standardized test, the teacher needs to clarify the total scale (3 out of what possible total score?); the range of performance within the score (in other words, there may be high 3's or low 3's); and the difference in proficiency between a 3 achieved at one grade and the same score achieved at a higher grade. Accomplished teachers assist parents in recognizing academic growth from year to year. (See Standard XII—*Collaboration with Families and Communities*.)

Accomplished teachers communicate regularly with students about assessments and their results, and they help students understand the data so that students can reflect on their own learning. Teachers explain the value of multiple assessments and the ways that a variety of feedback can improve learning. They may discuss how to interpret a variety of assessment results and how to understand rubrics, checklists, the meanings of scores on standardized tests, and other assessment tools. Accomplished teachers make certain that students understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of various assessment tools for understanding their own literacy achievement in general and specific aspects of

reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing in particular.

Accomplished teachers are adept at communicating the complexities involved in converting assessment data into grades. Teachers explain that, when grading, they take into consideration the student's motivation, effort, potential, and progress, as well as comparing the student's performance to grade-level expectations and developmental benchmarks. Literacy teachers communicate why it is important to avoid grade inflation, but they also demonstrate their understanding that grades can be demoralizing for individual students or populations of students whose scores may reflect a history of institutional and cultural challenges. Accomplished teachers clearly articulate the rationale for how they establish grades and help keep grades in perspective relative to other measures of student learning.

In talking with parents about a student's literacy 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 grow in their literacy development. For example, teachers might arrange to have a conversation with parents early in the school year and then use relevant information from this conversation as part of the student's learning profile. Throughout the year, 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 reporting assessment results.

Accomplished teachers effectively use available technologies to communicate assessment data to parents and other stakeholders. They may use digital software to create graphs or charts of individual, class, or school performance in order to display growth over time. If they are required

by the district to use assessment portals, they may choose to go above and beyond merely entering numerical grades and communicate additional pertinent assessment information to parents. For example, teachers might maintain a Web site which offers information about how parents can help students prepare for assessments, including components such as test preparation modules or explanations of testing jargon. Teachers might provide parents with information on their child's performance through emails or other forms of digital communication. They might use technology to inform stakeholders about assessments. For example, a teacher might use presentation software to display results of standardized testing and help stakeholders better understand how these data are used to refine and improve instructional programs.

Using Assessment Results

Accomplished teachers use assessment findings to guide instructional planning for individual students, small groups, and the entire class. Teachers use data from a wide variety of both formative and summative assessments to decide which learning experiences to offer. To accomplished teachers, assessment is never simply the end of a unit of teaching, but also is used to determine what students are ready to learn next, to determine the best ways to teach, and to differentiate instruction for students.

Accomplished teachers use assessment results to plan instruction in multiple ways. Assessments provide information about student interests and abilities that help teachers differentiate instruction. Teachers may use reading interest surveys to select books for literature circles or use students' writing samples to determine the next mini-lessons to teach during writing instruction. Literacy teachers use results of re-

curing assessments to monitor student progress across the language arts. When student progress is not as expected, teachers engage in more in-depth assessment to understand why and then make instructional changes or provide interventions to accelerate learning. For example, teachers may gather regular records of reading and use the results to make informed decisions about which aspects of literacy to emphasize during small-group instruction.

Accomplished teachers use assessment data to reflect on their teaching as well as on their students' learning. They perceive all assessments as an opportunity for professional growth. As teachers review assessment data, they question

whether benchmarks have been met and goals have been accomplished. They consider whether their instructional decisions have had the desired impact, and they refine their instructional practices accordingly. Teachers may realize that a particular small group struggled with an assignment to critique a Web site and reformulate groups accordingly; or they may review students' scores on a checklist of listening skills and decide to spend more time teaching students to be considerate listeners when they confer with partners.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers use assessment to understand student learning and achievement and to guide and improve their own instructional practice.

Reflections

Standard VI

Reading

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use their knowledge of the reading processes, of their students, and of the dynamic connections within the other language arts to create effective instruction so that all readers construct meaning and develop an enduring appreciation of reading.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers recognize the pivotal importance that reading plays in each child’s development. Literacy teachers understand that reading is a complex process and that successful readers employ a variety of strategies to construct meaning. Teachers are knowledgeable about the entire range of practices related to language development and the reading processes. Their instructional decisions are based on the needs of students, and these decisions are guided by literacy research and theories; by knowledge of children’s literature and other texts; and by local, state, and national standards. Accomplished teachers are able to create a rich environment that promotes literacy while assisting their students in using all the language arts to access and enrich other content areas. Teachers know how to differentiate instruction for all students and are able to articulate their rationale for instructional decisions. Accomplished teachers are

themselves avid readers with a broad curiosity about and experience with written texts of many kinds.

Knowledge

Accomplished teachers know that literacy learning begins early in life and progresses along a continuum of development, and they recognize that their students are at various points in their reading development. Literacy teachers possess a repertoire of approaches, methods, and materials to meet the needs of individual students and to challenge each student to grow as a reader. Accomplished teachers know the processes, skills, and strategies that students at various developmental levels need to learn in order to decode, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate increasingly more complex texts.

Accomplished teachers understand the particular challenges related to learning to read, and they know that each student may

need to overcome various challenges. Teachers ensure that all students receive high-quality instruction that motivates them and furthers their development as readers. Teachers know how and when to assess students to select texts that relate to student needs and interests. For example, the teacher might notice from a record of reading that a student relies on picture support, so the teacher would select texts with close picture-text correspondence for that particular learner. The ultimate goal of accomplished teachers is to help students develop into lifelong readers who are engaged in the process of learning, who are able to comprehend and critique what they read, and who read for enjoyment.

Accomplished teachers recognize the relationship that exists between students' background knowledge and their abilities to comprehend the texts they read. Teachers know the importance of honoring, assessing, and activating the prior knowledge that students bring to the classroom. Literacy teachers understand how to help students draw upon their background knowledge to interpret evidence and information in texts, identify bias, and constructively critique inaccurate portrayals and information. Teachers know how to help students connect to text by providing them with a variety of strategies to use before, during, and after reading. They also know how to create authentic experiences both inside and outside the classroom to build a base of shared knowledge for their students.

Accomplished teachers understand that reading is the process of constructing meaning from texts. They also understand that reading is transactional—that is, the reader brings meaning to and takes meaning from a text—and that a student's response to a text is influenced by his or her prior knowledge and experiences, purposes for reading, and the context in which the text is read. For example, the accomplished teacher

would understand that in the case of some rural students who may never have seen an escalator, it would be helpful to show a picture of an escalator or a video clip of one on the Internet and explain its similarity to a conveyor belt.

Accomplished teachers know that students can motivate one another to read by sharing ideas and information about reading materials, authors, and illustrators, and that students can also influence one another's ability to think critically about texts. Literacy teachers recognize that the degree of curiosity and motivation students bring to texts directly affects their willingness to work hard at understanding them.

Accomplished teachers know that strategic readers use a variety of cueing systems, and they understand how to instruct students to use these systems flexibly. Teachers know how to provide all students, whether emerging or proficient readers, with appropriate texts, strategies, and opportunities to practice reading with sufficient fluency and automaticity. Literacy teachers recognize that students have varying degrees of experience with texts and concepts of print. Teachers know to assess for and purposefully teach concepts of print, knowing that these concepts become increasingly sophisticated along the reading continuum. For example, teachers of young students understand that a basic understanding would be directionality and return sweep, while teachers of older students would include more advanced concepts such as knowing how to navigate a graphic novel.

Accomplished teachers are familiar with a wide range of written, spoken, and visual texts. These might include children's literature such as picture books, poems, and folk literature; other narrative and expository texts; and non-print and multimedia texts appropriate for early and middle childhood. Teachers understand the importance of engaging students with all these types of texts.

Literacy 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 understand the importance of providing students with access to a rich selection of texts—including community and student-generated texts—through classroom, school, and community libraries. Accomplished teachers comprehend the historical and cultural contexts of texts, and they know and use texts that authentically represent diversity in terms of culture, abilities, gender, region, and use of language.

Environment

Accomplished teachers establish a safe and comfortable literacy environment that invites and encourages reading. They use a variety of materials that are authentic, engaging, and culturally appropriate, and they allow students to engage with those materials in a variety of ways. Literacy teachers capitalize on both the physical and affective opportunities within the learning environment.

In the physical environment, accomplished teachers promote visual literacy through a deliberate dispersion of reading materials such as diverse literature, big books, word walls, content and motivational posters, word banks, shared poetry, and technology. They set aside areas in the room for independent cozy reading, paired practice, small-group lessons, and whole-group instruction. They purposefully incorporate play in their classrooms and, when possible, offer puppets and props to retell or act out a story. Teachers also ensure that all students have access to technology in the reading environment.

Accomplished teachers carefully foster an emotionally safe learning environment where students feel secure enough to take risks as they

are learning how to read. Teachers cultivate a collaborative learning community in which students encourage, support, and promote the literacy development of their peers. Teachers engage students through purposeful reading routines and opportunities for students to read throughout the school day.

Instruction

Accomplished teachers know that reading is a meaning-making process in which the ultimate goal is comprehension. Teachers provide students with a variety of strategies to use before, during, and after reading; they match these strategies to the challenges posed by texts and the needs of readers. Literacy teachers help students learn to use cueing systems flexibly and effectively in their reading. Teachers provide students with the varied experiences and sophisticated skills they need to develop the independent ability to use each system appropriately without an overreliance on any one of them. Accomplished teachers expose students to new texts and to new concepts and promote enthusiasm for reading. They teach reading in engaging, meaningful, and authentic ways that support students' abilities to comprehend texts in sophisticated ways.

Accomplished teachers invite students to respond to texts in a variety of ways. In promoting serious interpretive dialogue about texts, these teachers are attentive listeners, and they are receptive to the various opinions put forward by their students. Teachers understand the social nature of reading and provide opportunities for students to share their reactions to reading specific materials. Literacy teachers encourage a range of interpretations, helping students recognize and respect the inherent value of differing responses to the same text. At the same time, teachers ask that students support their points of

view with evidence gathered from a close reading of the text and other sources and that they use this evidence as a starting point to make judgments and inferences that further their understanding of texts and the world.

Accomplished teachers model and explicitly teach students to use metacognition to select and apply a variety of comprehension strategies to monitor their comprehension of texts, and to engage explicitly in strategies that support meaning-making when comprehension breaks down. For example, during a read-aloud, the teacher may demonstrate a think-aloud by pausing and saying, “I wonder if...” or make a connection using a phrase such as, “This makes me think about...”

Accomplished teachers model for students how to locate the most important ideas in a text and how to relate those ideas to concepts encountered in other texts and in real-world experiences. They teach students to draw on background knowledge as they read, to summarize arguments, and to preview important textual and visual cues in order to make reasonable predictions. For example, literacy teachers inform their students about text features such as headings, bullets, and bolded words which will help students organize their thinking and further comprehend what they are reading.

Accomplished teachers encourage students to think critically about texts. They model for students how to question the intent of the author as well as the impact of the text through the development of critical reading skills. Teachers ensure that students’ skills as critical interpreters of texts are continually developed across all areas of the curriculum and in all instructional settings.

Accomplished teachers foster students’ abilities to be flexible as they decode unfamiliar words so they can unlock the meaning of texts.

Teachers purposefully plan word study, and they also capitalize on opportunities for word learning that arise spontaneously. Literacy teachers teach students effective strategies for developing their reading skills. For example, they know that by providing students ample time to write, students will approximate the spelling of words by applying their knowledge of phonics. Teachers work to develop students’ phonemic awareness, understanding of phonics, and understanding of the alphabetic principle. They teach these skills and processes in systematic, meaningful, motivating, and appropriate ways. Teachers may use songs, rhymes, or poetry with younger students to explore onsets and rimes, or they may engage older students in word sorts to explore spelling patterns or the meanings of prefixes.

Accomplished teachers support students’ vocabulary acquisition, which in turn fosters reading comprehension. Teachers use an array of strategies to develop students’ vocabulary. They introduce students to an abundance of new words through real conversations in authentic contexts as well as by reading aloud to students; engaging students in wide reading of diverse texts; and employing vivid, complex, and varied oral language experiences. Literacy teachers support students’ acquisition of a variety of ways to learn new words such as using reference tools and using the context of the text to determine word meanings. They select appropriate vocabulary for explicit word study based on their assessments of students’ word knowledge and the utility of words for supporting future oral and written communication. Accomplished teachers value the relationship between content vocabulary and conceptual knowledge in the content areas, and therefore, they develop students’ discipline-specific vocabulary.

Accomplished teachers are aware that fluency affects comprehension, and they are care-

ful to select accessible texts that are matched to students' instructional needs. Literacy teachers understand that fluency involves automaticity, prosody, and rate, and they are careful not to emphasize rate over comprehension. Teachers know that fluency is best taught by providing students with opportunities to engage in the reading of connected texts. For example, a teacher would allow a student with emerging language skills multiple opportunities to reread a familiar shared poem or short story.

Accomplished teachers understand the value of reading aloud to students, even when those students are sophisticated readers themselves. Teachers use reading aloud in the classroom to serve a number of purposes, including extending students' vocabulary; developing students' higher-level thinking skills; modeling well-phrased and fluent oral reading; introducing a new genre, author, writing style, or concept; and modeling comprehension strategies.

Accomplished teachers are aware of the advantages and limitations of various media and know how print and non-print media often combine to create powerful communication. They teach students how to critically interpret and assess messages conveyed in the texts they read. Teachers use various current and emerging technologies and are familiar with the common benefits and challenges of using these reading resources. They provide students with high-quality literature across the entire early and middle childhood curriculum. Literacy teachers keep the instructional focus on meaning-making while constantly integrating the development of the student's ability to read with the student's expanding understanding of the world.

Accomplished teachers recognize the powerful role that assessment plays in determining how to deliver appropriate reading instruction to all students. Teachers conduct formal and in-

formal reading assessments on a regular basis and for a variety of purposes. Literacy teachers use assessment to gain a clear understanding of students' reading abilities, including assessing students' abilities to decode, their knowledge of vocabulary, their fluency, and their literal and inferential comprehension of texts. Teachers may also assess students' uses of strategies, their reading interests, and their ability to critique the texts they read. Accomplished teachers select reading assessment tools in a variety of formats, including a paper-and-pencil format if appropriate. In addition, teachers may also assess students' discussions of books in large and small groups; their online responses to what they have read; dramatic reenactments of literature; or responses to texts using other creative expressions, such as music, dance, or original works of art.

Accomplished teachers engage in assessment to monitor students' progress in reading and to revise instruction based on student growth or identified student need. They provide specific interventions for struggling readers. Teachers are skilled interpreters of assessment data who realize that it can be helpful to analyze assessment results in collaboration with others, including the students themselves as appropriate. Teachers also provide multiple opportunities for students to self-assess their progress in reading and interpreting texts.

Connections

Accomplished teachers know how to make connections between reading and the other language arts by integrating speaking, listening, writing, and viewing with reading instruction. They also foster critical reading of texts across the content areas by extending and enriching opportunities for students to read multiple genres across the curriculum.

Accomplished teachers understand the connection between oral language and reading comprehension in developing critical readers. Therefore, teachers foster substantive conversations about books and 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 literacy teachers and students undertake in a spirit of collaboration and mutual trust. For example, a teacher might encourage students to discuss a text with a peer and then complete the process again with another peer to compare and contrast multiple perspectives. (See Standard VIII—*Listening and Speaking*.)

Accomplished teachers understand the reciprocal relationship that exists between reading and writing. They understand that the act of reading texts supports students' growing writing abilities and that writing supports reading comprehension and furthers the development of reading skills. They teach students to “read like writers”—in other words, to analyze the way that texts are constructed in order to inform their own writing processes. (See Standard VII—*Writing*.)

Accomplished teachers recognize that in an information-rich society, developing viewing skills and visual literacy are essential to reading instruction. Realizing that the meaning of the term *text* has expanded to include both print and non-print versions, they purposefully select a variety of texts in order to help students develop the critical reading skills of analyzing and critiquing non-print texts. Literacy teachers often extend and enhance reading instruction by employing visual texts such as photographs, artwork, Web sites, graphics images, and video clips.

Accomplished teachers help students understand that similar skills are needed in order to read both print and non-print texts. For example, the teacher might teach a lesson on how to draw conclusions from a photograph as a way to scaffold student learning as they then draw conclusions from a printed text.

Accomplished teachers help their students comprehend, interpret, and critique a variety of 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 high-quality literature. Literacy teachers understand that students must apply discipline-specific skills and strategies in order to read content-area texts, and they explicitly teach the text features, structures, and unique reading processes in the disciplines, including teaching students to read a variety of both print and multimedia texts. Accomplished teachers help students make connections across texts and critique the authenticity and validity of the texts they read in the content areas. (See Standard X—*Literacy Across the Curriculum*.)

Accomplished early and middle childhood teachers know that the language arts are a complex, interwoven collection of tools through which students make meaning and communicate in their world, both personally and globally. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers deliberately and carefully balance reading experiences within the language arts and other content areas to help promote access for all students so that they grow into confident and successful global citizens.

Standard VII

Writing

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers use their knowledge of writing processes, language acquisition, writing development, and ongoing assessment to provide authentic and relevant instruction that prepares students to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers know that writing is the process of exploring, organizing, and transcribing one’s thoughts in a variety of print and non-print forms. They understand the power that writing has to allow the writer to clarify thinking, communicate ideas, create new worlds, relate to others, and make discoveries. They know that writing draws on a complex web of social, physical, and cognitive skills that take time and effort to acquire. They teach students to use writing to inform, persuade, beguile, impress, or otherwise influence an audience. Literacy teachers understand that writing is an intellectual adventure requiring discipline and daily practice. They recognize that writing is a complex, recursive thinking process that varies widely from individual to individual, and they create an environment that nurtures each student’s discovery of approaches to writing. Accomplished teachers are experienced and skilled writers themselves, and they model writing throughout the instruc-

tional day. Teachers help students develop metacognitive awareness of the interdependence of writing and the other language arts along with connections between writing and other content areas.

Knowledge

Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the current literature on the subject of teaching writing, including theories of writing and pedagogies that support the learning of writing. Accomplished teachers can participate with professional ease in conversations that surround the teaching of writing, and they can select and synthesize sound instructional practices. Accomplished teachers understand all stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, and they know that the writing process is recursive, not linear.

Accomplished teachers understand that writing is in many respects a social pro-

cess—a way of finding one’s voice in the world—and that the desire to make one’s ideas known to others often serves as a powerful motivator for writers. Literacy teachers understand that the goal of writing is not simply to communicate with others. They also know that writing can be used to express emotion; reflect on learning; record discoveries; and summarize, analyze, and synthesize concepts across the curriculum. Finally, teachers know that whatever its purpose, writing can have a profound influence on learners.

Accomplished teachers understand the links between writing and the other language arts; in particular they understand the foundational and complex relationship between oral language and writing. They understand that what students articulate is the basis for what they are able to write. Literacy 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. These teachers are aware of the range of oral language acquisition levels of their students and how these levels influence students’ writing. Literacy teachers pay special attention to the oral language acquisition levels of culturally and linguistically diverse learners and students with exceptional needs. Accomplished teachers know that without explicit instruction in and accommodations for their oral language development, English language learners and students with exceptional needs may have difficulty mastering the written language.

Accomplished teachers are well informed about the connections between writing and reading. They understand that the ability to write has a positive and reciprocal effect on students’ reading skills and that readers who understand how texts are composed can apply this knowledge to their own writing. Literacy teachers understand that to write certain genres and formats, students

need first to have experiences reading those kinds of texts. Additionally, teachers know that it is critical for students to understand the relationship between viewing and writing. For example, teachers know that careful observation of visual images can help students write with greater detail, and teachers also appreciate that inserting illustrations in written texts can help writers better communicate their meaning. (See Standard IX: *Viewing and Visual Literacy*.)

Accomplished teachers are familiar with the stages and indicators of learners’ writing development. Teachers understand that the concept of emergent writing applies to English language learners as well as to young children, and accomplished teachers can distinguish between the ways these two populations learn to write. Literacy teachers know that early attempts at spelling reflect children’s efforts to communicate using print, and teachers realize that the way a child spells can provide insight into the child’s literacy and linguistic growth. Accomplished teachers understand that many aspects of writing fascinate children. They know that young children are impressed when they first realize that written symbols convey spoken words.

Accomplished teachers recognize that students of all ages can develop voice, agency, and new ways of viewing the world and their place in it through written expression. Literacy teachers understand that these aspects of writing become especially important as older students become more adept at the writing process and engage in independent writing such as personal journals, poetry, and creative prose. Online venues such as social media and writing sites which provide communities of practice regarding popular culture encourage writing outside of school. Accomplished teachers recognize the importance of encouraging older students in these personal writing venues while maintaining a supportive,

collaborative writing community in school where all learners are encouraged to write for personal pleasure and interests as well as for more formal academic and professional purposes.

Learning Environment

Accomplished teachers know that students learn to write through meaningful writing engagements; therefore, they create environments conducive to writing instruction and practice. They dedicate daily blocks of time for teaching the process of writing and flexibly use writing as a tool for learning throughout the day. They establish a print-rich environment with spaces for students to gather for guided instruction, write for extended periods, confer with the teacher and peers, and share their writing. They create a safe and comfortable setting where students can explore, extend, and expand their writing repertoire, and they create predictable routines for activities before, during, and after writing.

Accomplished teachers provide students with a variety of engaging and inviting writing tools and materials, and they establish routines and procedures for how materials and resources are accessed and managed. They scaffold writing tasks by providing exemplars of various writing genres such as children's literature and student writing samples. They offer support within the classroom environment through such instructional materials as anchor charts, word lists, or inspiring visual images. Literacy teachers provide access to technologies to facilitate all aspects of the writing process and allow students to create and publish innovative, authentic written products. They allow students to self-select these tools. Space is allowed within the classroom for students to organize and store their drafts and revisions. Teachers provide ways to manage less formal writing, as well, such as content-area

journals. They also allocate space for students to store final writing products, or they may allow students to maintain an electronic portfolio. Accomplished teachers showcase writing in the classroom, school, and wider community.

Instruction

Accomplished teachers lead students to develop useful, practical, and developmentally appropriate approaches to writing. Literacy teachers take into consideration each learner's age, grade, developmental level, prior knowledge, and access to technology as they instruct students in the process and craft of writing. Teachers integrate the skills of writing with those of the other language arts—reading, listening, speaking, and viewing. Additionally, accomplished teachers integrate writing across the curriculum and understand the correlation between writing and the learning environment. They guide student writing across many genres and purposes.

Accomplished teachers teach students the process of writing. They show students a variety of strategies for planning and generating ideas. They help students draft writing and demonstrate how students can use their knowledge of the qualities of good writing to guide revision. Literacy teachers teach students to use knowledge of grammar and mechanics to edit their writing, and they create meaningful opportunities for students to share writing with multiple audiences. When giving feedback to students, accomplished teachers focus on responding to the ideas and organization of students' writing, while helping them maintain the use of conventions.

Accomplished teachers clearly demonstrate that writing proficiency occurs along a continuum rather than consisting of a set of discrete skills. They use oral language as a foundation in

developing the skill of writing. Literacy teachers integrate talk throughout writing instruction, including allowing students to converse about ideas before writing, to discuss writing during the revision stage, and to share and provide feedback on one another's final drafts.

Accomplished teachers guide students to be fluid and flexible writers across many genres and forms, and they help students use writing to communicate effectively with others, both in and outside of school. Teachers help students to discover the wide array of purposes for writing, from reflecting and storytelling to informing and persuading. Accomplished teachers teach students various forms of functional writing, including writing for standardized tests, extended responses in content areas, and writing letters. They use quality children's literature or other mentor texts to model how writers can achieve each purpose effectively. Literacy teachers use many instructional strategies for helping students with writing, such as interactive writing, paired writing, and teacher modeling. At times, teachers deliberately think aloud while writing to demonstrate the metacognitive process of writing. They identify skills to be developed and link them to types of writing that can target these skills, while always focusing on students' engagement.

Accomplished teachers regularly provide explicit lessons on the craft of writing. For example, they might help students become aware of the power of using words with specific connotations to develop a character or convey mood in a piece of fiction, or they might show students how breaking a line in poetry can support meaning. Teachers might show students how to vary the lengths of sentences in order to create different moods, or they might show students how to create inviting leads. Accomplished literacy teachers explain the importance of figurative

language and sensory imagery to convey meaning, heighten emotion, and engage the reader, and they encourage students to use language in interesting ways.

Accomplished teachers help students find audiences for what they have written. Teachers are aware of the need to foster a collaborative and supportive writing community where students feel safe sharing their work with multiple audiences. For example, they may have students take turns reading their favorite compositions to the class and answering questions about them. Literacy teachers may create opportunities for students to publish a class newsletter or class book, in hard copy or online. Teachers may also help students develop face-to-face and online audiences outside the classroom and school community.

Accomplished teachers are familiar with a variety of tools used to assess the writing process and written products, including both the content of texts and the mechanics. Teachers know and use appropriate, varied, meaningful, differentiated, and authentic formative and summative assessments. Teachers can analyze assessment results and use the data to inform further instruction. Moreover, literacy teachers may use feedback strategies, such as writing conferences, written comments, and developmental descriptors, to help students hone their writing skills. Teachers also help students analyze and meet the expectations contained in published rubrics, including those that will be used to evaluate their writing on standardized tests. (See Standard V—*Assessment*.)

Accomplished teachers use the results of assessments to differentiate writing instruction for all students. Teachers use guided writing groups that are dynamic and fluid and based on student needs. Teachers know that when planning lessons, it is important to vary options related to

the process and the products to meet the varied interests within the class. A literacy teacher might display visual images and artifacts to make a writing assignment more comprehensible or allow the final product to be a podcast, rap, song, video, or an electronic book. Accomplished teachers increase their students' writing skills by helping them set challenging yet attainable goals and by providing assistance in achieving those goals.

Accomplished teachers recognize that the students in their classroom may speak a variety of foreign languages or English dialects at home and bring varying levels of facility with oral and written English language skills to school. Literacy teachers adapt their instruction accordingly by providing consistent scaffolds such as brainstorming; writing students' ideas on chart paper; and providing students with thesauruses, bilingual dictionaries, child-friendly English dictionaries, and word walls. Accomplished teachers know that these or similar accommodations can be applied to all students.

Accomplished teachers provide timely and constructive responses that help students develop as writers. In reading a student-authored text, the teacher is careful to respect each student's individual voice and respond to what the student has to say, honoring the student's ownership of the text and viewpoint. Teachers interact with students to engage them actively with what they have written and to help them make informed decisions about revising and editing.

Accomplished teachers understand that students who are able to assess their own work will become more independent writers, both in and out of school; therefore, they guide their students in the techniques of self-assessment. Teachers acknowledge that student self-assessment relies on reflection throughout the writing process. Accomplished literacy teachers model reflection

and self-assessment strategies that help writers solve problems when they are writing. Teachers may ask students to create a rubric to use when critiquing their own texts. Accomplished teachers have students collect their writings over time in physical or digital portfolios and then guide students to review their portfolios periodically to reflect upon their progress and set future learning goals.

Accomplished teachers guide students to assess one another's work. Teachers show students that peer assessment should be a collaborative, formative process in which writers provide each other with constructive feedback so that they feel safe and nurtured. In the classrooms of accomplished teachers, the peer assessment process is collegial and collaborative, and the teacher ultimately remains responsible for providing summative assessments and scoring the writing.

Accomplished teachers deliberately use available technology in developmentally and instructionally appropriate ways to help students develop skill as writers and achieve curriculum goals when creating written projects. Teachers use technology to guide students to think about and practice writing as a recursive and interactive process. Accomplished literacy teachers understand the ways that technology is changing the way students conceptualize language and writing. They possess a repertoire of ways to engage students with a wide variety of media to promote writing in the classroom. These can include creating a digital book, responding to a blog, and responding to literature through social media. Teachers understand that emerging technologies can open up new publication possibilities in the classroom; teachers guide students to use a range of writing projects that may incorporate graphics and may be presented as brochures, multimedia presentations, Web pages, blogs, podcasts, digital stories, or in other formats.

Accomplished teachers introduce students to the physical aspects of writing both on paper and online. They engage their students in appropriate instruction in handwriting skills, including manuscript and cursive letter formation, and they provide support for students to practice writing legibly. Teachers also ensure that students become proficient in the use of computer hardware and software related to writing, acquiring keyboarding, navigational, and editing skills. Accomplished teachers provide opportunities for students to apply these physical aspects of writing by composing and revising a variety of authentic texts.

Accomplished teachers instruct students in the conventions of language. Teachers understand that students become more motivated to master conventions when they see how they can affect the clarity of a writer's message. Therefore, teachers use mentor texts and other examples of writing, including students' own texts when appropriate, to illustrate how important it is to employ correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling to communicate effectively. Accomplished literacy teachers help students understand that because written language can be revised and edited, most readers hold it to a strict standard of conventional accuracy. Teachers model for students how to use standard English and how to combine sentences without distorting their meanings. Teachers help students write academically, following proper standards and formats for reports and essays as well as creating or filling out functional texts.

Accomplished teachers delight in the natural curiosity of children and in the original ways in which early and middle childhood students express themselves in writing. Teachers know that students develop best as writers when they are allowed to compose texts on subjects that are student-centered and relevant. Accordingly,

literacy teachers regularly involve students in choosing their own topics and purposes for writing in addition to completing teacher-directed writing activities.

Connections

In their writing instruction, accomplished teachers make connections between writing and the other language arts, and they also teach students to use writing across the curriculum. Literacy teachers understand the reciprocal nature of reading and writing. They recognize that students must have multiple opportunities to read the genres and formats of texts they are expected to write; therefore, they use children's literature and other texts as prompts and models. As they share these texts, they guide students in analyzing the authors' craft and the conventions of the genres. Teachers engage students in author studies because they recognize that students learn a great deal from studying the craft of published writers. Teachers demonstrate the process of analyzing how authors have used word choice, imagery, and other elements of writing to convey their message. They may engage students in analyzing the conventions of various writing formats, such as examining the ways that authors of graphic novels use panels and gutters to convey a story or looking at how authors of patterned books use repetition. In addition to having students read other texts as models, literacy teachers engage students in reading throughout writing instruction. They engage students in re-reading drafts of their own and their peers' writing and teach students that an important aspect of revising writing is the careful and thoughtful rereading of their own work.

Accomplished teachers integrate viewing and visual literacy with writing instruction. They may use visual images such as paintings or

photographs to inspire writing. They also teach students the ways that visual images such as illustrations, graphs, and charts can help authors communicate their message. They show students how the visual aspects of the writing such as the size or shape of the font, the placement of elements on the page, or the spacing of words can affect the ideas the writing conveys. Literacy teachers help students understand and analyze the particular conventions of style and format that are employed in various media texts prior to composing them. For example, they may have students examine the ways that presentations can be enhanced by the way the author arranges words and images in their visuals, or they may ask students to examine the ways that colors and images on Web pages affect their impact.

Accomplished teachers provide students with meaningful opportunities to write across the curriculum. They understand that writing about learning depends on understanding. They may ask students to engage in short, informal writing prior to learning to activate prior knowledge or to write as a quick assessment of students' understanding. Literacy teachers provide students frequent opportunities to write throughout con-

tent-area learning. For example, they may provide students opportunities to write summaries after reading primary sources in social studies, to keep journals in mathematics, or to record observations in learning logs in science. Teachers also engage students in the writing process as a part of content-area instruction and provide students with opportunities to compose formal written works. They create opportunities for students to conduct research, take notes, synthesize ideas, and use writing to communicate ideas in organized and effective ways. They teach students the conventions of particular genres and formats of writing found in the disciplines, from teaching how to write timelines and lab reports to helping students understand how historians use evidence to support an argument in an essay.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers recognize the power of writing. They are able to use their students' worlds and words as springboards for meaningful writing activities. They create writing opportunities that demonstrate for students how writing can be an expressive, proactive tool for communicating with others and for engaging with the world around them.

Reflections



Standard VIII

Listening and Speaking

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers know, value, and teach oral language development, listening, and both verbal and nonverbal communication skills as essential components of literacy, and they provide opportunities for all students to listen and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers know that listening and speaking are more than the aural and oral aspects of communication. Literacy teachers understand that these two processes are closely interrelated and that they are foundational to language acquisition and to all aspects of literacy development. Teachers purposefully plan opportunities for learners to engage in communication through both formal and informal conversations. Teachers assess learning and speaking skills and the strategies for learning these skills. They assess listening and speaking separately, in connection with each other, and in combination with the other language arts. Accomplished teachers realize that listening and speaking are an essential part of a rich, robust language arts curriculum and should extend throughout the content curricula.

Knowledge

Accomplished teachers are aware that oral language is the foundation for all literacy skills. They 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. Teachers understand that speaking and listening are the primary means by which many children make sense of the world and communicate with others and that development of oral language supports further development in reading, writing, listening, and viewing. They recognize that the activities of speaking and listening help students develop auditory discrimination, construct meaning, and develop social relationships.

Accomplished teachers realize that listening is more than the physical act of hearing. Literacy teachers understand that listening is a process that involves receiving, attending to, understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and reacting to sounds and messages. Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the various types of listening, such as informational, critical, and social.

Accomplished teachers recognize that students need to communicate effectively through speaking. Teachers know that effective speaking involves such factors as fluency; clarity; appropriate volume and speed; and awareness of audience, purpose, and context.

Accomplished teachers know the types of spoken language that are appropriate in various situations, and they are aware of the conventions of formal and informal language. Teachers know that children initially overgeneralize the rules of English grammar and need explicit instruction in words that are exceptions to those rules, such as irregular past tense verb forms, irregular plural nouns, and irregular comparative adjectives and adverbs such as “better” and “well.”

Accomplished teachers know that children acquire and use oral language as a way to navigate their world in order to make their needs known, to ask questions, and to interpret and control their environment. Teachers understand that oral language acquisition is a natural developmental process, and they are deeply familiar with the stages of typical oral language development. However, teachers also comprehend that individuals acquire oral language skills at different paces and with varying degrees of ease or difficulty. Teachers know that in order to expand students’ facility with and appreciation of oral language, teachers must provide students with explicit instruction and rich language experiences geared to their individual needs. Teachers also have knowledge of

the nonverbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, that children need to interpret and use to be effective speakers and listeners. Accomplished teachers are aware of some of the common problems associated with oral language development, and they access interventions for addressing them.

Accomplished teachers understand that different cultures apply different conventions to verbal and nonverbal communication. For example, students may come to school with different perceptions of the social rules governing appropriate use of tone and volume in conversation. Accomplished teachers actively seek to understand each student’s background of verbal and nonverbal communication and to help students communicate well with their peers and with adults.

Learning Environment

Accomplished teachers create a mutually supportive classroom environment in which all students feel safe to take part in classroom discussions and other exchanges of oral language, and teachers frequently plan for small-group conversations to ensure that all students have opportunities to express themselves. These teachers model and explicitly teach group communication skills such as how to “disagree agreeably,” how to respond to one another’s comments, and how to take turns. Teachers recognize and make accommodations for students to use speaking and listening to enhance their learning.

Accomplished teachers design their classrooms in ways that foster active participation for all learners. Seating may be arranged for small-group work, and open areas may be available for larger group activities. Accomplished teachers ensure that students can see each other during morning or community meetings and are facing

the learning activity for demonstrations, speakers, or presentations. Teachers are sensitive to the effects that background noises and other sounds may have on students' listening and speaking, and they work to provide an optimum learning environment.

Instruction

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 help students understand the importance of listening and speaking. Literacy teachers purposefully model how to use language in a variety of settings related to learning activities and social interactions. They demonstrate how to make connections between previous and new oral language experiences, and they encourage students to do the same. For example, after participating with the teacher in a teacher-led conference, students may take the initiative in student-led conferences that include parents and teachers.

Accomplished teachers are deliberate and purposeful in their teaching of listening skills throughout the early and middle childhood levels. They teach students skills such as following single- and multi-step directions, drawing conclusions about what they have heard, showing respect for a speaker, and knowing when they need to respond to a question. Teachers emphasize comprehension and meaning-making as an essential part of active listening. They provide opportunities for students to develop higher-level thinking skills as they listen for specific purposes. Accomplished literacy teachers are able to teach students to discriminate between listening as a conversational courtesy and listening as a vital comprehension skill.

Accomplished teachers deliberately structure developmentally appropriate 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. Students may be invited to apply oral communication skills in multiple ways that are appropriate for the classroom setting. For example, students can role play, reenact stories, and take part in poetry readings and Readers' Theater, all of which make listening and speaking engaging, purposeful, and enjoyable.

Accomplished teachers intervene to increase students' oral language proficiency. For example, if a student says, "I *goed* to Grandma's," the teacher might respond, "Oh, you *went* to Grandma's," thereby modeling standard English without criticizing the student's error. Such instruction helps students become more capable, confident users of conventional language. Although they intervene to increase students' language proficiency, accomplished literacy teachers are always mindful to respect students' home languages and stages in speaking and listening development.

Accomplished teachers instruct students in the techniques of formal and informal speaking, such as identifying their audience and purpose, using eye contact, and talking at an appropriate volume and speed. Teachers assist students in understanding how phrasing and tone impact speech, and they model and provide explicit instruction on how students can control these aspects of speech in order to become more effective communicators. Teachers provide opportunities for students to develop and practice both formal and informal presentation skills, increasing the public and performance aspects as students gain knowledge and proficiency. For example, prior to a school-wide poetry reading for older students, teachers would practice with students

to help them gain confidence, proficiency, and fluency.

Accomplished teachers offer many opportunities for students to speak with and listen to one another and their teachers in the whole class, small groups, and pairs. Teachers carefully scaffold their teaching of listening and speaking in order to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all students, including but not limited to students with language and speech impairments, English language learners, and students with other communication challenges. Accomplished literacy teachers accommodate for differences in the ways students learn. They understand that some students naturally and easily process information through listening and speaking, whereas other students need to be taught listening and speaking processing skills. Teachers use assessment data and student records from school and home when developing instructional plans to support students' speaking and listening development.

Accomplished teachers take advantage of variations in dialect, language background, and personal experiences within their learning communities as resources for teaching students about linguistic and cultural diversity. They are also adept at meeting the dual goals of respecting language diversity and helping students acquire the necessary skills for speaking standard English. Literacy teachers help students understand and respect cultural differences in nonverbal communication systems as well. They model for students how body language and gestures are powerful communicative skills that add to the spoken message. For example, when giving practical directions such as dismissing students for lunch, accomplished teachers supplement oral instructions with relevant gestures and visual cues. (See Standard II—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity* and Standard III—*Learning Environment*)

Accomplished teachers understand the evolving role that technology plays in assisting students in learning how to listen and speak, and they employ such technology when it is possible and appropriate to do so. Teachers are aware of language programs that allow students to practice listening and speaking with engaging, interactive computer software. Literacy teachers realize that computer-mediated programs are used to enhance the modeling, interacting, and instruction that happen in the classroom and are parts of a language-rich, socially mediated classroom learning community.

Accomplished teachers employ a variety of formal and informal evaluation processes and tools that capture the essence of students' developing skills in the areas of speaking and listening. They construct their classroom environments, routines, and schedules in ways that allow them to seamlessly conduct ongoing assessments of individuals and groups. Teachers use a variety of tools to assess students' oral language uses, such as anecdotal records, language samples, rubrics, developmental growth indicators, retelling, and digital recordings of students' speech. Teachers design assignments such as book talks and project presentations that include embedded opportunities to assess speaking and listening skills. They understand the progression of oral language from playground conversations to more sophisticated academic language usage. Literacy teachers collaborate with students to create rubrics related to listening and speaking skills. For example, they might develop rubrics for oral presentations. Teachers use oral language in formal interviews and informal conversations with students to assess student learning, progress, and attitudes in order to guide instructional decisions. (See Standard V—*Assessment*.)

Accomplished teachers use a combination of assessment formats when evaluating student

speaking and listening skills as well as when using speaking and listening to assess other content areas. They create opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-teacher talks and are skilled in assessing student speech patterns, word usage, and use of sentence structure. Literacy teachers use oral assessments, knowing that some students can express their understandings better through the spoken word than the written word. When students demonstrate difficulty with oral or aural skills, teachers confer with experts to find the most appropriate and effective interventions.

Accomplished teachers provide students with opportunities to assess their own progress in listening and speaking as well as the progress of their peers. Teachers deliberately teach students the assessment criteria ahead of time. Student self-assessment in listening and speaking may extend to work in other classrooms and to speaking and listening activities within their families and the greater community.

Connections

Accomplished teachers support students' listening and speaking beyond the classroom. In addition to collaborating with other teachers to provide support and opportunities for students to expand their knowledge, teachers find community connections that will celebrate and support listening and speaking. For example, poetry

readings, presentations, and debate clubs are traditional opportunities for listening and speaking outside the classroom.

Accomplished teachers recognize the connections that emerging technologies bring to the classroom. For example, having students listen to professional audio podcasts and then create their own audio podcasts will capitalize on the reciprocal connection between listening and speaking. Literacy teachers may also draw on students' listening and speaking when designing digital stories that will be shared with an audience beyond the classroom. Accomplished teachers are aware of the impact that new technologies have on students' abilities to use listening and speaking in the real world.

Accomplished teachers ensure that listening and speaking opportunities enhance the learning in other content areas. Examples might include listening to historic speeches in social studies to determine how the speaker's inflection and tone enhance the communication of main ideas and supporting details, listening to multi-step directions in physical education when learning games, listening to voices and instruments in interpreting music, and listening attentively for correct pronunciation of words in a foreign language. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers realize that listening and speaking skills are critical foundations of a rich language arts curriculum.

Reflections

Standard IX

Viewing and Visual Literacy

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers know, value, and teach viewing and visual literacy as essential components of literacy instruction in order to prepare students to interpret and interact with an increasingly visual world.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers know that students are inundated with information in both print and non-print forms and that viewing skills and visual literacy are critical in today's media-saturated society. Teachers realize that reading non-print texts requires explicit instruction in viewing skills and strategies, and they consider viewing to be just as essential to literacy development as the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They realize that today's students live in a digital world and that viewing is no longer a passive undertaking. Viewing has evolved because of a proliferation of visual media and emerging technologies. It has become an interactive, reciprocal process known as visual literacy, which involves being able to decode, interpret, understand, and encode meaning through visual language. Accomplished teachers are aware of this evolving literacy. They provide an environment that is conducive to learning about and

through an array of visual media because they believe it is crucial for students to interpret the world beyond traditional print texts. Literacy teachers use visual media in both instruction and assessment to provide authentic ways for students to make meaning and demonstrate understanding as well as to deepen content-area knowledge in all domains.

Knowledge

Accomplished teachers understand that students need a significant skill-set to develop viewing and visual literacy. This repertoire includes the ability to analyze visual images; interpret graphic representations; interpret and evaluate non-print, visual media messages; and employ visual media as a way to make meaning and communicate. Visual literacy also incorporates the ability to analyze the purposes of visual texts, including for propaganda, commercial, aesthetic, and intellectual uses.

Teachers understand that today's students must learn to be both critical consumers and skilled producers of many visual media. Therefore, accomplished literacy teachers facilitate students' interactions with the visual environment as an important part of the learning process.

Accomplished teachers know that the concept of what constitutes a text has expanded beyond printed texts. Printed texts are those that involve encoding and decoding alphabetic and other standard printed symbols in order to make meaning. Non-print visual texts include but are not limited to videos, illustrations, graphs, collages, body language, sign language, wordless books, picture symbols, photographs, television programs, billboards, plays, films, and works of art such as sculptures, paintings, or stage sets.

Accomplished teachers understand that in order to read the full range of visual information, students must learn how to interpret a wide range of visual cues. These include such elements as text features; details and patterns in photographs, videos, and interactive games; or the body language and facial expressions that accompany speech and modify its meaning. Teachers know that visual information often adds layers of significance beyond that conveyed in the written word. For example, an accomplished teacher knows to direct students to information contained in a bar graph accompanying an informational text and how to extend the discussion by identifying other ways the author might have conveyed the information.

Accomplished teachers realize that visual media transform and mold society; therefore, they recognize how important it is for their students to become informed consumers and producers of visual media such as Web sites, blogs, email, video clips, software, video games, and other current and emerging technologies. They understand that if students are to compete within

a global society, they must not only be critical consumers of visual media but also be creative producers who are capable of having a positive impact on the economy. Literacy teachers embrace new technology and find innovative uses of traditional technologies.

Since this field is continuously evolving, accomplished teachers are flexible and open to new ways of understanding visual literacy. Teachers are themselves skilled viewers, able to analyze and interpret a wide variety of visual texts. They seek to become 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. Teachers know how to help students become reflective and analytic viewers both at school and at home. They seek out professional development in this area. They might take a course on critical reading to develop a deeper understanding of how visual media are read, or they might attend a workshop on how to integrate the use of video clips into their literacy instruction. They might help colleagues develop visual literacy by engaging in critical conversations about the images found within the school environment as well as in the community. For example, an accomplished teacher might recognize cultural bias in a poster encouraging parental involvement and address it with school administrators.

Environment

Accomplished teachers create visually rich environments and varied learning experiences in physical learning spaces, which make certain that all students learn how to interpret, analyze, comprehend, and create many forms of visual texts. Visual and physical environmental cues serve as important supports for student learning, particularly for the academic and social de-

velopment of emergent readers and students for whom English is a new language, students with hearing loss, and students from culturally and dialectally diverse backgrounds.

Accomplished teachers purposefully plan for students to interact with visual texts. They construct an environment open to the inquiring nature of early and middle childhood students and help all students interact with their visual environment as an important part of the learning process. Literacy teachers plan extended amounts of time for students to have purposeful conversations with one another in order to build students' critical viewing skills while extending and expanding important socialization skills. Teachers also deliberately teach students how to visually navigate an array of texts through a variety of settings. For example, teachers help students understand the different navigation skills needed between both fiction and non-fiction books and print and non-print resources.

Accomplished teachers know the importance of providing a rich physical environment that promotes visual literacy through a deliberate saturation of environmental print such as word walls, content and motivational posters, word banks, and shared poetry. For example, teachers may place labels containing both visual images and words in various parts of the classroom to reinforce academic vocabulary for students who have a limited command of the written word. Literacy teachers also ensure that the physical environment is inviting to whole group, small group, and individual visual literacy skill development by allowing students access to materials for additional literacy enhancement. Teachers provide their students with opportunities to view, analyze, and discuss interpretations of visual media such as photographs, logos, movies, billboards, advertisements, documentaries, TV

shows, plays, Internet designs, works of art, magazines and newspapers.

Accomplished teachers are sensitive to gaps in student access to various visual media and technologies. They are aware that some students have interacted with visual media and technology from an early age while for others the classroom may be the only place they interact with these media. Because accomplished teachers consider viewing as an essential element in the process of developing students' literacy, they seek to provide equitable access for all students through purposeful and planned engagements. Literacy teachers believe that incorporating visual media seamlessly and in developmentally appropriate ways will advance learning for all students.

Instruction

Accomplished teachers understand that developing students' abilities to interpret and manipulate visual elements requires purposeful and planned instruction. They teach their students how to be discriminating viewers who can synthesize the message and identify the purpose of a given medium and also recognize bias and propaganda embedded in visual media. For example, accomplished literacy teachers might have groups of students critically analyze images on a Web site to identify examples of bias and discuss the social ramifications. Teachers critically discuss with students visual media ethics, the ways in which visual media reflect and shape the values of a society, and the appropriate uses of different visual media. Accomplished teachers are able to reflect upon a given medium's potential impact on society at large and facilitate their students' understandings of these issues.

Accomplished teachers have clear learning goals when they teach viewing and visual literacy to early and middle childhood students. They rec-

ognize that it is important to purposefully and explicitly teach students to read and create multiple forms of visual media so that they can make meaning and sense of the world. They help learners use illustrations to further understand written materials. They support and extend learning generated from printed texts by helping students understand how to interpret and create illustrations, graphs, tables, charts, maps, and other non-print graphic features often found in concert with printed text. Literacy teachers offer early and middle childhood students frequent opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills as they guide students in the use of visuals. For example, with older students, teachers may discuss the concept of framing, helping students to analyze what elements of an event or scene a photographer has chosen to include and exclude. Then they might ask students to frame an image themselves.

Accomplished teachers help students develop a repertoire of skills for interpreting and creating visual texts. Much in the way that teachers introduce and reintroduce literacy elements throughout elementary and intermediate grades with increased sophistication and complexity, accomplished literacy teachers recognize that students of all ages need them to model and scaffold how to comprehend and create visual texts. Teachers begin by providing knowledge of visual literacy and viewing. Teachers can help students navigate visual texts by helping them know what to look at first in an image that may be new or complex in its design. Teachers build comprehension by helping students identify and describe the similarities and differences among oral, written, and visual texts, and they model how students can use this understanding to interpret visual texts and make decisions about which visual media to use in communicating their ideas. For example, literacy teachers may ask students to compare a book and a film, discussing the point of view

expressed in each, analyzing the different techniques used to create the point of view, and evaluating the effectiveness of each.

Accomplished teachers deliberately teach students the specific critical thinking skills necessary to analyze and evaluate visual media. By assisting students in the interpretation and production of visual language through the use of non-print texts, literacy teachers support students to become more knowledgeable and sophisticated consumers and producers of all forms of communication. For example, students of accomplished teachers will synthesize visual media such as graphs or photographs to enhance their expository writing. These students have learned to recognize the value visual images have in interpreting new and complex information. An accomplished literacy teacher might explicitly model how to read the illustrations in children's literature so that students develop an understanding of how the meaning of the written word can be altered or extended by such visual elements as characters' facial expressions or the use of color to create mood.

Accomplished teachers use various technological resources in helping early and middle childhood students to express themselves, and they explicitly model how to access and use various aspects of current and emerging visual media appropriately. For example, a kindergarten teacher might use the interactive white board to allow students to create a shared drawing after taking a virtual field trip to a zoo. Teachers might have students expand their ideas and connect with others within and beyond the school community through the use of technology. They might provide students with digital cameras in order to capture images from the students' home cultures and then have students develop autobiographical photo essays as a means of building a shared classroom community.

Accomplished teachers teach students to use visual media to explain, persuade, and evaluate. Additionally, teachers model for students how to use visual media to share perspectives, opinions, and understandings. The students of accomplished teachers learn that communicating to an audience, whether live or virtual, requires an understanding of how the message will be received. For example, the teacher might ask students to develop a critical review of a book by creating a book advertisement using digital technology. The advertisement might be posted on a school Web site where students in other grades, regions, or countries could comment on the post.

Accomplished teachers use visual media to engage students in metacognitive processes, or knowledge of their own thoughts. For example, students might use technological tools to create graphic organizers or thinking maps. A teacher might have students find examples of accomplished works of art that evoke feelings similar to those produced by a poem, or a teacher might ask students to respond to literature by graphically representing the theme of a story. Literacy teachers understand that it is through the use of metacognition that students conceptualize their learning experiences, understand the purpose of learning, and become motivated to seek new knowledge.

Accomplished teachers address with their students the ethical issues that arise for producers and consumers of visual media. A teacher might have students watch a video clip of an advertisement for a new toy and discuss how different audiences might be influenced by the advertisement. When engaging students in any form of communication, teachers make students cognizant of the potential consequences of communicating through emerging technologies and explain how to navigate these technologies safely, securely, and appropriately. For example, teachers explicitly teach students about Internet safety,

cyber-bullying, sharing information with others on the Internet, and the consequences of transmitting messages and images via digital technologies. Literacy teachers are familiar with the persuasive and motivating nature of popular culture and help students become aware of its forces.

Accomplished teachers believe that assessment is a recursive process that affords teachers the opportunity to gain insight into students' needs. Literacy teachers engage in ongoing assessments of students' viewing skills, and they provide written and oral feedback to students aimed specifically at each student's level of development and degree of viewing skills and strategies. Teachers evaluate the extent to which their students are discriminating consumers and producers of visual communication by using all the language arts. For instance, teachers listen carefully as students discuss visual texts in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. They have students write about visual texts, for example by writing captions for photographs, describing in a journal why they watch certain television shows, or writing a review of a film they have seen or a Web site they have visited. They have students produce visual texts, from early drawings and scribbles to illustrated reports or multimedia presentations. Teachers assess and reflect on both the processes students follow and the products they create, and then teachers alter their instruction accordingly. Teachers share rubrics for assessments with students and have students help create appropriate rubrics for projects as well. An important part of the evaluation of students in the area of viewing is helping them become self-evaluators, aware of their own developing visual literacy.

Connections

Accomplished teachers know that skillful use of visual media in the classroom promotes learn-

ing that flows seamlessly from the literal to the deeply conceptual, thus increasing students' critical reading and thinking skills through all the language arts. Literacy teachers know that critical viewing skills must be explicitly taught but are best learned in concert with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers keep meaning-making at the heart of their instruction and help students see connections and disparities between the skills needed to read and write traditional texts and those needed to view and compose visual texts. For example, a teacher might explain the difference between reading a story and viewing an image on a billboard. Accomplished teachers help students understand the interrelation of sounds and visual elements in media such as films, speeches, musical performances, and Web pages. For example, prior to showing a film in class, a teacher might help students understand the language of film, including such elements as the filmmaker's use of camera angles, lights, sound, editing, and set design. In addition, a teacher might show a film clip with-

out the accompanying music to help students consider the way music or sound effects add deeper meaning to visual images.

Alert to opportunities to integrate viewing and visual literacy with other language arts and other content areas, accomplished teachers might ask students to create a comic strip to retell an event during a period in history, create mosaics to depict a theme in a story, or create a short film to explore social issues. Teachers encourage students to decode and encode visual messages. An accomplished teacher might have students maintain a content-area journal in which students draw graphic images to conceptualize a mathematical problem or better understand a science concept such as the food chain. They recognize that visual literacy provides students with the ability to make meaning beyond the written word. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers realize that strengthening viewing skills and visual literacy affords students multiple ways of understanding the world and of demonstrating that understanding.

Reflections

Standard X

Literacy Across the Curriculum

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers understand the reciprocal and interrelated nature of the literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing and engage students in language arts processes in all disciplines.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers are aware of the importance of integrating literacy instruction. They understand that integrated literacy instruction involves two interrelated concepts. The first is the well-established principle that although the five language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing—are distinct processes requiring specialized skills, they are also mutually reinforcing and cannot be taught in isolation. The second is that teachers integrate the language arts across other disciplines. They incorporate content area texts in their literacy instruction and work to strengthen their students' literacy skills in content areas beyond literacy. Although accomplished teachers recognize the need for concentrated blocks of time focused on the teaching of reading–language arts, they also connect their literacy instruction with student learning in the other disciplines. Accomplished literacy teachers constantly engage students in enlarg-

ing their view of the world and expanding their literacy skills by having them read, write, speak, listen, and view across the curriculum.

Understanding the Reciprocal Nature of Language Processes

Accomplished teachers know that all areas of the language arts are mutually reinforcing and that growth in one area often transfers to the others. Therefore, in the classrooms of accomplished teachers, the reciprocal nature of the language arts is acknowledged in purposeful lessons that incorporate numerous combinations of the different skills.

Accomplished teachers read texts aloud to students as one way of integrating the language arts processes. For example, when teachers point to a text as they read it aloud, younger students learn to match the spoken word to the written word; gain

an understanding of directional concepts; and use picture cues, auditory cues, and predictable patterns to gain meaning from text. When teachers read aloud to older students, the teachers model fluency, tone, emphasis, and phrasing, demonstrating the ways in which the speaker's control of these elements can improve the listener's comprehension. Teachers also use read-alouds to inspire writing and speaking. Teachers might share simple, well-written texts as models to encourage student writing and illustrating as well as a springboard for inviting students to respond orally. When students are listening to, reading, and discussing texts, accomplished teachers might analyze the ways in which authors use language in interesting and descriptive ways. For example, as they share poetry or nursery rhymes, literacy teachers help students listen for rhythm and rhyme and then support students as they experiment with these components in their own writing or speech.

Accomplished teachers integrate oral and written language development by engaging in frequent instructional conversations with students, individually or in small groups, to talk about texts. Teachers also integrate oral and written language and develop higher level thinking by having students write about what they have heard or discussed. Teachers may encourage students to employ technological tools as means of discussing texts. For example, the teacher might encourage students to use social networking to discuss their responses to books they have read, plays they have seen, or lyrics they have heard.

Accomplished teachers know that students may be more successful in some language arts than others and that tapping into a student's assets in one area may provide momentum for growth in another. For example, a struggling reader who possesses strong interpretive skills when viewing and discussing a film can be

taught to apply these skills to reading a text. Similarly, students who are reluctant to participate in class discussions may gradually gain confidence by developing language competencies through their writing and then be more willing to share their thoughts orally.

When accomplished 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, creating a visual presentation may require students to conduct research using print and non-print texts; to write and organize notes; to create a formal presentation; to design layouts and captions for the information; and to orally or visually present the final result. When planning instruction that integrates the five language arts, literacy teachers differentiate based on the age levels, interests, and abilities of their diverse students, including general education students, students with exceptional needs, and English language learners, regardless of whether they are achieving at, below, or above grade level.

Teaching Literacy Across the Curriculum

Accomplished teachers know that content-area literacy instruction can be delivered in multifaceted ways, and they provide their students with regular opportunities to read, write, and view science, social studies, mathematics, and other technical texts during literacy instruction. Literacy teachers also use the language arts to foster content-area learning. Across the content areas, teachers provide students with strategies for reading textbooks and other texts. For example, they teach students to use text features such as boldface print and headers to navigate informational texts, both to obtain an overview

of the contents and to locate specific information quickly. Teachers help students understand that content-area texts are not always linear and teach them to navigate these texts in flexible ways. Teachers also help students learn to interpret and critique visual texts in the content areas. For example, they teach students to read graphs and charts and equations in mathematical texts. Accomplished literacy teachers integrate writing across the curriculum. They know that informal writing, including journals, learning logs, and summaries, can help reinforce content-area learning. They provide students with multiple, meaningful opportunities to compose descriptive, narrative, informational, expository, and persuasive texts across the curriculum and teach students the conventions of various writing genres found in the content areas. For example, a teacher might create an opportunity for students to draft, revise, and mail a letter to the editor about a science topic.

Accomplished teachers help students acquire content-area vocabulary in all the subject areas. They employ instructional strategies that best support vocabulary learning and purposefully plan for explicit instruction in this area. Whenever possible, they teach vocabulary through connected texts such as primary documents, content-area texts, or various print and non-print media. They provide frequent opportunities for students to hear, read, and discuss high-quality children's literature in order to build conceptual understanding and deepen understanding of content-area vocabulary. They intentionally use new vocabulary during instruction and conversations to provide multiple exposures to words and to solidify understanding of terminology related to complex concepts, systems, or historical events and eras. They help students employ knowledge of morphemes in order to infer meaning of new words they encounter in con-

tent-area reading. Accomplished literacy teachers intentionally offer opportunities for students to encounter and use content-area vocabulary in their reading, writing, and speaking as well as to build conceptual knowledge by using visuals such as photographs or by exploring the many facets of a word by using a graphic organizer.

Accomplished teachers help students understand the various genres, purposes, audiences, and conventions of content-area texts. Teachers help students learn to distinguish among facts, opinions, and reasoned judgments and to evaluate the author's position or point of view in social studies texts. Literacy teachers often coordinate thematic, interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and project-based instruction that allows students to shape and express their ideas across the curriculum. For example, older students might be asked to read stories about the ocean in reading-language arts at the same time that they learn about marine life in science and study the ocean maps and island geography in social studies.

As they integrate literacy instruction with content-area instruction, accomplished teachers teach students to use the specialized literacy skills necessary for reading and writing across each content area. In the social studies, they teach students to read and examine the bias of both primary and secondary sources. They also teach students to write various documents, such as petitions or letters to the editor, necessary for civic life. Accomplished literacy teachers help students learn how to comprehend the dense vocabulary and the visual features, such as diagrams and charts, common in science texts. They also teach students to compose genres of writing common in science, such as observation logs and lab reports.

Accomplished teachers help students become critical readers in mathematics—readers who are able to interpret mathematical texts that may

include specialized symbols. They teach students to write using numerical expressions, pictures, and words to solve mathematical problems. Teachers also integrate literacy in other content areas. For example, accomplished literacy teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in visual and performing arts and to respond to print and visual texts, such as drawing a picture after a read-aloud. They also teach students to use the language arts to respond to and analyze works of art, such as writing a response to a painting.

Accomplished teachers understand the role that language arts instruction has in the health and physical education curriculum. Literacy teachers are familiar with and use a variety of texts related to health and physical education to assist students in making personal, academic, and global connections to these subjects. These texts deliver messages of how individual health choices have short- and long-term influence, both positive and negative, on one's quality of life. Furthermore, teachers recognize the influ-

ence that athletics and athletes have in students' lives and provide opportunities for them to read and write about favorite sports and sports figures. Literacy teachers create research and publishing opportunities for students to express ways to promote good hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. For instance, young students might read about the latest food pyramid and record their dinners for a week in a log. Afterward, they might discuss the class findings and make connections to their reading by writing about ways they can improve their diets. Older students could analyze statistics from a graph on the current state of children's health, write their opinions of current trends, and discuss ways in which they could improve their well-being.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers purposefully connect all the language arts and effectively integrate literacy across the content areas to help students increase their ability to construct meaning from texts, take ownership of new learning, and develop a dynamic literate life.

Reflections

Standard XI

Teacher as Learner and Reflective Practitioner

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers seek to improve their knowledge and practice through a recursive process of learning and reflecting.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers recognize that literacy is an evolving field, one in which teachers must employ their professional judgment to reflect on and discern what constitutes sound practice, even when facing challenges that do not lend themselves to simple solutions. They make daily reflection a priority because of its importance as a learning tool. Accomplished literacy teachers know that learning and reflection are recursive and that they have a positive impact on instructional practice, which ultimately improves student literacy.

Accomplished teachers are positive role models of lifelong learning for their students as well as for their professional communities. Accomplished literacy teachers are risk takers, willing to learn about and try new teaching strategies that may improve the effectiveness of their instruction. They make their processes of learning and reflecting visible to their students and their

professional learning communities in order to encourage enthusiasm for inquiry. Their students view them as passionate partners in learning. Accomplished literacy teachers are avid readers and effective, confident writers who reflect on and share knowledge in local and global communities. They continue to grow as readers and writers to improve their instruction.

Accomplished teachers reflect on and learn from both their strengths and their weaknesses. They examine the ways in which their particular cultural backgrounds, values, biases, and experiences affect their beliefs, behaviors, and relationships. They reflect on how all these elements may influence what they teach, how they teach, and how they interact with students. Accomplished teachers have learned to be reflective before, during, and after they teach. They seek to broaden their perspectives in order to improve their effectiveness within a global and increasingly diverse environment.

Accomplished teachers stay abreast of significant research findings in their field and related areas. They are critical consumers of intellectual content. They are able to evaluate research according to criteria such as validity, reliability, potential biases, and relevance to their practice, and they reflect on the implications of research for their practice. They are able to apply the same criteria to evaluate data and use the information to inform instruction as appropriate. In addition, they reflect on—and incorporate into their daily instruction—curriculum guides; local, state, and national standards; and professional publications.

Accomplished teachers seize opportunities to learn from their students and their colleagues—teachers, specialists, and administrators—and view others as rich sources of information, perspective, and insight. Accomplished literacy teachers learn and reflect on their teaching as they engage in communities of practice. They intentionally seek to learn from and reflect on culturally diverse resources in their local communities while also maintaining a global perspective. For example, teachers may partner with local colleges and universities on literacy projects as well as with international organizations involved in literacy instruction. Accomplished literacy teachers consistently learn from long- and short-term professional development opportunities beyond those mandated by the district or state, including but not limited to courses, conferences, classroom observations, webinars, book studies, and strategy-sharing sessions with colleagues.

Accomplished teachers view each moment, each day, and each year as another opportunity to reflect on teaching, learning, and assessment; therefore, they set both short- and long-term goals. These goals improve the quality of their instructional practice and enhance their profes-

sion. Accomplished literacy teachers take the time and make the effort to carefully preview and reflect on instructional materials before employing them with their students. Teachers' professional reflections are vigorous and significant. Literacy teachers are perceptive observers and deliberate communicators who intuitively consider the individual needs and the multiple perspectives of student populations.

For accomplished teachers, learning and reflecting are continuous. They engage in reflection both individually and in groups. They dialogue with other professionals to mutually reflect on their practices. They blend intuitive, spontaneous reflection with more rigorous, structured analysis. Accomplished literacy teachers search their own experiences, regularly pondering the events of the day. They understand that reflection can be more than a tool to be used after teaching has occurred; it can also occur in the moment. When possible, literacy teachers engage in formal and informal action research to inform their practice and the field of literacy. Through continual reflection and inquiry, teachers weave together their classroom experiences with their knowledge of established theory and current research in order to constantly reinvigorate their practice. Accomplished teachers see reflection as a professional resource, and they know that the results may sometimes be read and reviewed by themselves alone and at other times may be shared with other educators and stakeholders.

Accomplished teachers reflect on their assessment practices, questioning whether they are using the most appropriate tools and methods for their purposes and, when necessary, finding assessments that are better aligned with their needs. Accomplished literacy teachers reflect on the implications of assessment data and use them to inform their instructional practice. When they are part of a cross-curricular team, accomplished

teachers share their assessment findings to learn about and improve classroom practice.

As a result of ongoing learning and rigorous reflection, accomplished teachers have well developed positions on major issues in the field of literacy. Accomplished teachers know why they make deliberate instructional decisions, and they reflect on the results to inform further instruction. Teachers embrace the lifelong study of the art and science of teaching in order to ensure continued professional growth. Literacy teachers exemplify the highest ideals of scholarship and ethics. Literacy teachers take responsibility for their own educational advancement, employ professional standards to assess their practice, and reflect to ensure that they teach with effectiveness and dignity.

Accomplished teachers realize that they must adapt to societal changes. Teachers recognize that the demands of their craft will change over time; indeed, they may change with each class

and each student. Accomplished literacy teachers reflect on how issues within and outside their immediate classrooms influence their students. They seek to learn more about the evolving processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, and they reflect on their approaches to the teaching of all literacy skills. They focus on the specific needs of individual learners and ask themselves how they can best meet those needs.

Accomplished teachers draw on many partners when learning and reflecting. They critically analyze the choices they make and justify the underlying principles of their teaching to gain insight into their knowledge and skills. They seek, construct, and apply new knowledge that is relevant to the classroom and profession and that advances student learning. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers understand that they must to engage in learning and reflection in order to continually guide and improve their practice.

Reflections

Standard XII

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 all students.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers realize that families are the first and foremost educators of their children and that families can be teachers' strongest allies. Teachers draw on family members' observations of their children to inform their teaching. Teachers also capitalize on the fact that families have a powerful influence on their children's development and on their attitudes toward learning and school. Accomplished teachers recognize that the larger community can have a pervasive influence on students' educational experiences, and teachers collaborate with a range of stakeholders to enhance education and support families. Literacy teachers take initiative to form alliances with parents, families, and community members on behalf of the literacy development of all their students.

Forming Meaningful Partnerships with Families

Accomplished teachers know that effective communication can help them form meaningful partnerships with families and that teacher-family partnerships improve student learning. Teachers establish open, two-way communication with families early in the school year, seeking relevant information concerning each student's language history, background, culture, reading interests, learning goals, and home life. Teachers are aware of the increasingly complex and diverse nature of families, and they respect all types of families in their communications. Literacy teachers may collaborate with students' other teachers prior to reaching out to parents concerning important topics such as students' learning assignments, aca-

ademic growth, literacy development, behaviors, and class accomplishments.

Accomplished teachers establish flexible communication with families. For example, they offer to meet outside the school day with parents whose work schedules conflict with the regular school schedule. If parents are unable to meet face-to-face, teachers make arrangements to converse in the most convenient way, such as via phone, letter, student planner, e-mail, texting, or through other digital devices. Teachers determine the most effective ways to communicate with all parents. Teachers have communications translated into the home language when this is both appropriate and possible. Accomplished teachers keep parents abreast of what is happening in the classroom and its impact on student learning. For instance, teachers may develop a newsletter or may keep a Web page or a blog. Teachers ensure that parents and children know how to access such communications.

Accomplished teachers invite parents' comments, questions, and suggestions on their children's education, and they collaborate with parents to ensure mutual understanding of expectations. When teachers communicate important notices, they follow up to make certain that parents have received and understood the information. Teachers provide families with a comprehensive overview of students' literacy development, using work samples, portfolios, report cards, and test scores as evidence. Accomplished literacy teachers encourage questions and offer explanations when necessary.

Accomplished teachers enlist the support of parents and encourage their expertise to promote children's success. When needs arise, teachers work with parents to plan and implement interventions and enrichments. Accomplished literacy teachers take a positive perspective when

they communicate with families, and they find occasions to inform parents when a student has made a breakthrough as well as when problems occur.

Assisting Families in Supporting Their Children's Learning Development

Accomplished teachers share their professional expertise with family members and discuss ways in which parents can support their children's literacy development. For example, teachers may hold informal workshops for parents (with interpreters when needed) in which they explain standards, assessments, and aspects of the curriculum such as the writing process. Accomplished teachers provide parents with strategies that they can use to help their children develop effective learning habits and study skills. Teachers suggest ways that parents can help their children set goals for improving their literacy performance. Literacy teachers encourage families to read with their children at home and provide specific strategies for doing so. For example, if a child is having difficulty comprehending grade-level material, the teacher might provide parents a list of texts written at the student's actual reading level and strategies for sharing these texts at home. Additionally, if a student is reading above grade level, the teacher might offer parents materials and strategies that will challenge and accelerate the student's literacy development.

Accomplished teachers recognize that the school climate powerfully affects parent participation. Teachers invite parents and other community members to support the school literacy program by observing or participating in classroom or school functions including, but not limited to, celebrations of student learning, book

fairs, student performances, luncheons, and fundraising events. Teachers encourage parents to become active partners in their children's education by regularly volunteering. Literacy teachers might invite parents to support individual instruction, read to groups of students, or speak with the class about ways in which they use literacy in their work and daily lives. As a result, teachers create a warm, welcoming environment where parents feel valued and connected to the learning community.

Accomplished teachers recognize that to foster a positive home-school relationship, they must take into account parents' own school histories and convictions about education. For example, adults who had mainly negative educational experiences may be reluctant to become involved with their children's school. Conversely, some concerned parents may insist that their children receive the same type of reading-language arts instruction which they remember receiving. Accomplished teachers know how to open and maintain lines of communication with all parents. 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 conversation on what parents care about—the welfare of their child—as they keep students' best interests in the forefront of their minds and actions. Accomplished teachers are able to articulate and clarify solutions to parents based on sound research and pedagogy.

Accomplished teachers serve as advocates for students and families. They help parents access and navigate the school system and community resources. For example, they introduce parents to specialists such as the school counselor, reading specialist, or other support staff. Additionally, when students have medical needs that may interfere with their literacy

development, accomplished teachers make parents aware of relevant healthcare resources. For instance, an accomplished teacher might refer a student for visual, hearing, or speech evaluation or therapy.

Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities

Accomplished teachers know that no school or classroom exists in isolation. Therefore, teachers seek positive ways to involve themselves and their students with local and global communities. Teachers' awareness of the importance of community relations leads them to inform the community at large about school goals, classroom projects, and student successes. They also inform administrators about learning activities that are worthy of media attention. Teachers aim to establish the kind of informed understanding that can occur when school and community work together.

Accomplished teachers know that gaining an understanding of students' lives in the community outside school is essential to becoming a successful educator. Teachers engage with the local community outside the school day. They may shop at the local grocery store; visit cultural centers; or attend sporting events, recitals, or plays. Accomplished literacy teachers recognize that informal interactions with families and the community improve their understanding of their students and ultimately benefit students' learning.

Accomplished teachers seek opportunities within the community to expand their students' advocacy and decision-making skills while simultaneously advancing students' literacy skills. For example, teachers might help students respond to local issues through letters to the editor, or they might organize students in

Standard XIII

Professional Responsibility

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy: reading–language arts teachers actively contribute to the improvement of literacy teaching and learning and to the advancement of literacy knowledge and practice for the profession.

Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers believe that, as responsible professionals, they are committed to the continuing growth and development of their students, themselves, their colleagues, their schools, and the field of literacy education. Accomplished teachers routinely collaborate with other members of the school community to provide literacy instruction to all students. To this systematic, collaborative process teachers bring a comprehensive knowledge of both the field of literacy education and the learner in a context that is professional, purposeful, relevant, probing, and productive. Accomplished literacy teachers also act as members of a learning community that extends beyond their schools, collaborating to enhance the profession as a whole.

Improving Instruction in Their Own Classrooms

As professional educators, accomplished teachers are aware of and knowledgeable about current research and are able to draw on research findings to make educational decisions. They routinely engage in reflection on and critiques of what they read in research in order to improve their classroom practice, evaluating the impact of their instruction on student learning and the classroom environment. They seek out professional learning opportunities.

In addition to engaging in individual reflection, accomplished teachers value collaboration with colleagues as a means of strengthening their instructional practice. They invite school professionals such as administrators, counselors, and

other teachers into the classroom to seek input into how they can improve instruction. For example, a literacy teacher might bring in a specialist to observe interactions with a particular student. The literacy teacher would then ask for the specialist's feedback. Accomplished literacy teachers observe and collaborate with effective teachers to refine their own instructional practices. They welcome new ideas that preservice teachers bring during field experiences, realizing that gaining multiple perspectives can assist in improving instruction in their own classrooms.

Accomplished teachers professionally seek knowledge about a wide variety of learners, such as English language learners, students with exceptionalities, and students from diverse cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds—including populations not currently being served in their classroom or school. These teachers know numerous ways to differentiate instruction to meet all students' needs. By continuing to learn from research, reflection, and collaboration with parents and colleagues, accomplished teachers become change agents for improving their own approaches to instruction.

Contributing to the School's Intellectual Life and Quality of Instruction

In addition to being exemplary readers, writers, and lifelong learners, accomplished teachers take many leadership roles within the school community when possible. They may provide mentoring to experienced colleagues who need additional professional development in a specific area of literacy instruction. They support the learning of their colleagues in many ways, from opening their classrooms for observation to encouraging a colleague to take the risk of trying a new teaching strategy or serving as a leader

of a professional learning community. Accomplished teachers work with colleagues to design, improve, or evaluate professional development plans and practices. They lead professional development sessions for their colleagues on topics in which they have expertise. For example, a literacy teacher might lead a session on authentic writing assessment and subsequently provide support as new procedures are implemented.

Accomplished teachers share their expertise with teachers in other content areas. They design and implement multiple literacy resources for interdisciplinary learning, such as using children's literature to teach content. They contribute to the creation, review, or revision of curricula, always accounting for their students' current performance and expected academic growth. They initiate formal and informal discussions about professional issues with colleagues and other stakeholders within the greater community. For example, they may engage with peers in discussions of scholarly articles they have read, or they may lead a book club discussion on an issue of relevance to literacy instruction.

Accomplished teachers collaborate with colleagues and administrators to improve school-wide instruction. For example, they join with their colleagues in collecting data and examining trends in student achievement and use the results to evaluate the literacy curriculum. They carefully coordinate their work with other teachers and educational support providers to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment for students' academic success. Literacy teachers provide well-integrated curricula that meet students' learning requirements and contribute to interdisciplinary understanding.

Accomplished teachers are agents for positive change in their schools. They recognize the factors that influence the school culture and affect morale. They use this awareness to create an

environment that is both supportive and nurturing, but which also reflects high expectations for teacher performance and student learning. Teachers use effective communication skills to build positive relationships. They identify and celebrate strengths of their colleagues that support student literacy learning.

Contributing to the Advancement of the Profession

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to the continuing growth and development of their profession. Whenever possible, these teachers extend their professional commitment beyond the confines of their classrooms and their schools. Through their interactions with colleagues and engagement in the profession, accomplished literacy teachers pursue educational excellence.

Accomplished teachers are advocates for policies, interdisciplinary initiatives, and resources that will benefit their students, their school, and their profession. These teachers may lobby legislators or address school boards about issues that affect student learning. They work to preserve students' rights to read, write, and discuss a variety of topics. Literacy teachers seek opportunities to collaborate in local, state, national, and international ventures with other educators to improve school policies, organizations, or procedures. They exercise effective leadership by fostering an attitude of innovation, open-mindedness, and collaboration among all stakeholders in order to advance the teaching profession. For example, they may assume a leadership role in

a professional organization, make presentations at professional conferences and conventions, or conduct action research. They may contribute letters or articles to professional journals or serve on education policy committees.

Accomplished teachers take actions toward informing policies relating to education. They realize that they are the voice for the students they serve and for the profession as a whole. Teachers articulate concerns about ideas, requirements, curricular assumptions, and other factors that may limit teaching effectiveness, school quality, or student learning, such as curriculum changes that limit opportunities to read and write or budget cuts that limit purchasing of books and other media for classrooms. They may pursue grants to purchase literacy materials. Literacy teachers address their concerns in ways that have a positive impact on the learning community. They may utilize the news media as a tool for advocacy, acting as a champion of practices that promote equitable, fair, and multiple perspectives (See Standard II—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity*.) They may also collaborate with educators from colleges, universities, or other institutions and agencies to pilot new curricular resources, teach post-secondary 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. Accomplished early and middle childhood literacy teachers take responsibility for contributing to, advancing, and advocating for the profession in ways that enhance student literacy learning.

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Acknowledgments

Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards, Second Edition, derives its power to describe accomplished teaching from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus among educators from the field. Through the expertise and input of two standards committees; numerous reviews by the board of directors; and two periods of public comment by educators, policymakers, parents, and the like, as well as through the intense study of candidates for National Board Certification who have immersed themselves in the first edition, these second-edition standards emerge as a living testament to what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. *Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards, Second Edition*, represents the best thinking by teachers and for teachers about advanced teaching practice in the field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is deeply grateful to all those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to *Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards, Second Edition*. Any field grows, shifts, and evolves over time. Standards, too, must remain dynamic and therefore are subject to revision. In 2010, NBPTS convened a second Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards Committee. This committee was charged with achieving both continuity and change, using the first edition of the standards as the foundation for its work but modifying the standards to reflect best practices of the early 21st century. The Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. Special thanks go to committee co chairs, Jonathan Gillentine, NBCT and Jennifer Strachan, NBCT for their invaluable leadership in making the second edition a reality.

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