

The Ridgewood Public Schools  
Curriculum and Program Review  
*Five-Year Cycle 2018-2023*

Department Study  
Findings & Recommendations May 2019

# Curriculum Study Time-Line

- **Year One: 2018-2019: Program Review, Research, and Recommendation.**
  - *A committee of teachers and administrators research best practices in the content area, and review current program, students achievement, and perceptions of staff, parents, and students. A recommendation is made to reaffirm or revise curricula and/or program.*
- **Summer of Year One: 2019: Curriculum Writing, Revising, and/or Reaffirmation.**
  - *A committee of teachers and administrators develop new or revised curricula, research and recommend professional development and instructional materials to support implementation.*
- **Year Two: 2019-2020: Implementation of New or Revised Curriculum and Materials, with consistent professional development as needed.**
- **Year Three and Four 2020-2022: Monitoring and Revising as needed**
  - *Implementation continues. Achievement and feedback are monitored. Modifications are made if needed.*
- **Year Five 2022-2023: Begin to prepare for next study of department**

# Year-One Research Study Process

- Compared current ELA Curriculum with those in comparable districts
- Deep analysis of current units of study
- Gathered detailed feedback from all stakeholders who provided actionable next steps
- Formal and informal data gathered during:
  - Correlation to NJSLs and best practice
  - Focus Groups
  - Surveys of parents, teachers, and administrators
  - Teacher meetings, observations
  - Analysis of scores
  - Extensive research of best practice
  - Interviews with experts in the field

# Committee Members

## FOCUS GROUP TEAM MEMBERS

### DISTRICT LEAD STAFF

- Elementary Principals
- District Staff Developer
- District Multisensory Staff Developer
- Supervisor of Elementary Education

### Kindergarten

- Kristen Bodart
- Danielle Jasinski
- Wendy Carroll
- Kate Droske
- Allison Mahler
- Rebecca Dodd

### First Grade

- GeorgeAnn Starace
- Ellen Scott
- Nanci Catalano
- Liz Janowski
- Barbara Stipanov
- Christa Valentine

### Second Grade

- Susan Enright
- Amy Schaffer
- Lucia Galeazza
- Nancy Kaplan
- Carolyn Treible
- Juliet Carafello

### Third Grade

- Jill Rota
- Jill Bonfanti
- Ashley Barba
- Lauren Carr
- Lauren Nevins
- Rosh Lyle

### Fourth Grade

- Ellen Raupp
- Ellen Wolff
- Jill Marmo
- Meredith Kiernan
- Chris O'Herlihy
- Sara Wyka

### Fifth Grade

- Andy Raupp
- Megan Price/Leigh Porod
- Andrea Petrone/Lindsay Mitchell
- Lauren Menzies
- Dawn Fleming/ Peggy Vrachimis
- Danielle Connor

# Committee Members

## ELA WRITING TEAM MEMBERS

### Kindergarten

- Wendy Carroll
- Rebecca Dodd

### Second Grade

- Susan Enright
- Amy Schaffer

### Fourth Grade

- Ellen Raupp
- Jill Marmo

### First Grade

- Nanci Catalano
- Christa Valentine

### Third Grade

- Tracee Kimbell
- Lauren Carr

### Fifth Grade

- Andy Raupp
- Leigh Porod
- Andrea Petrone
- Kate O'Rourke
- Dawn Fleming
- Danielle Connor

# Standards Guiding Study

## District Department Vision/Mission

*"I believe the heart of balanced literacy in coming years is truly the balance between teacher and student voices."*

- Chris Lehman Educator Collaborative

## Key Leaders in the Field - Anchors of Our Work

*Chris Lehman's work espouses the philosophy that reading and writing can be "rigorous, meaningful, and joyous."*

*Jennifer Serravallo has shared "I am convinced that helping kids articulate clear goals, makes a huge difference."*

# Standards Guiding Study

## State Standards and or Content/Practice Professional Standards

Ridgewood's Elementary Language Arts Program is bound and aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. For each grade level, there are anchor standards and progress indicators in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.

### Anchor Standards: Reading

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

### Anchor Standards: Writing

- Text Types and Purpose
- Production and Distribution
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

### Anchor Standards: Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

### Anchor Standards: Language

- Conventions of Standard English
- Knowledge of Language
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

# Best Practices

Effective and successful English Language Arts instruction is responsive, comprehensive and progressive. A potent curriculum is one that meets the needs of individual learners, provides rigor, depth of knowledge and stands upon a foundation of strong research.

## Research Review...

There is no single method or approach to teaching Language Arts that is universally effective with all young children. Educators must possess a **strong pallet of skills**, materials, methods and instructional strategies to provide learners with literacy experiences that promote critical thinking and help children comprehend and enjoy stories.

*“The wonder and the difficulty of workshop teaching is the ability to differentiate within any day. It is amazing. It is daunting. Workshop teaching is a structure, not a curriculum. Workshop teaching outlines your time, not your teaching. ”*

*Kristi Mraz, Educational Consultant and Author*

# Benchmark Districts and Their Practices

For the purposes of this survey, several comparable districts were interviewed, visited and polled. The findings are that each district...

- Provided language arts learning experiences within the workshop model of instruction
- Curriculums were “home-grown,” created upon a foundation of research and excellence
- Fountas and Pinnell was the common leveling and testing instrument for reading
- Teachers were provided time to work together and plan instruction
- Literacy Coaches were present to regularly support unit creation, learning and instruction
- Sustained professional development occurred throughout

Thank you to the following district for their contributions:

Wyckoff Public Schools, Montvale Public Schools, Tenafly Public Schools, Ramsey Public Schools, Mahwah Public Schools and Rivervale Public Schools

# Our Practices

Balanced Literacy  
Workshop Instruction  
Individualized Learning

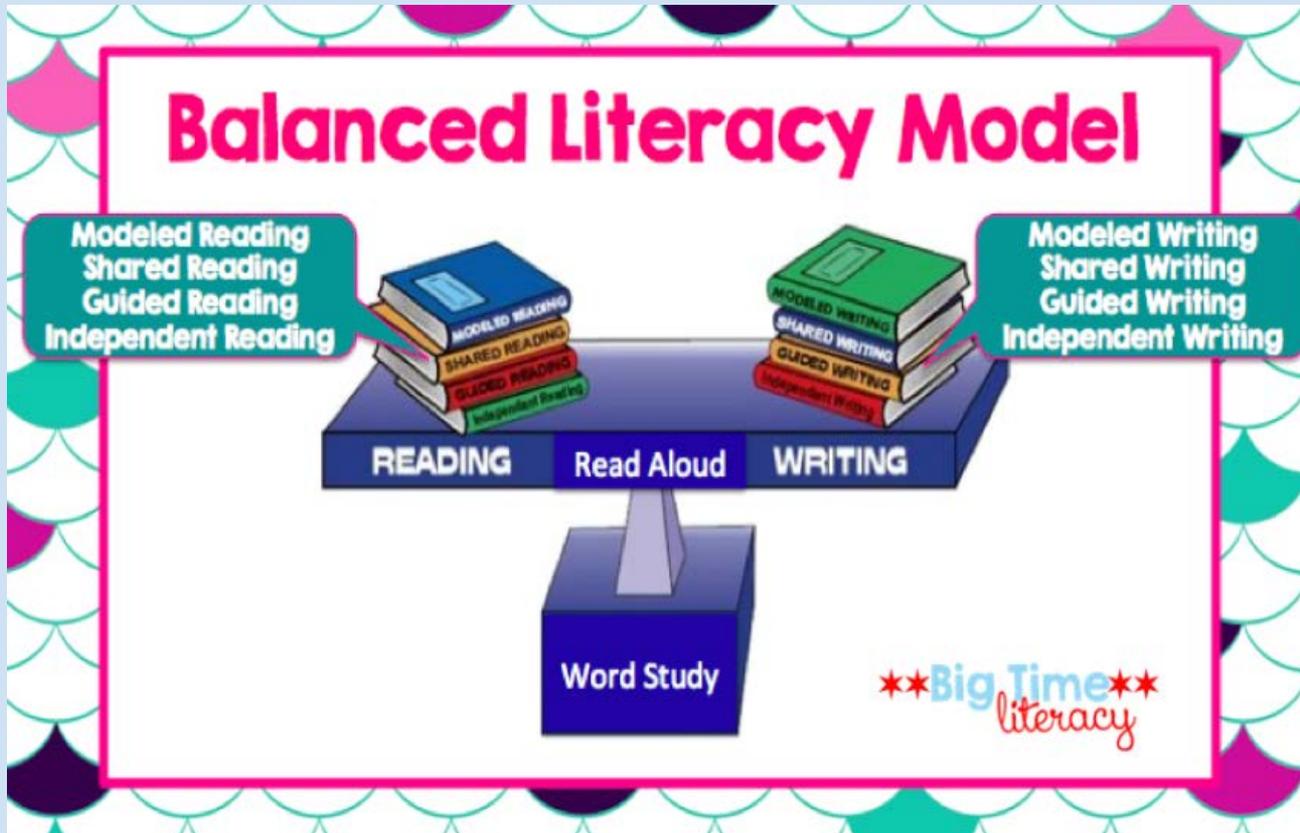
Ridgewood Public Schools take a *balanced literacy* approach to reading and writing instruction. The workshop model is called upon as a differentiated pedagogy that empowers students to make choices and set goals through practice and application of skills-based lessons.

## Components of Balanced Literacy are:

- Reading Workshop
- Writing Workshop
- Word Study
- Read Aloud
- Shared Writing
- Shared Reading

# Our Practices

Balanced Literacy  
Workshop Instruction  
Individualized Learning





# Our Program Delivery

## Reading & Writing Workshop Framework

- Minilesson: Elements
  - Connection
  - Direct Instruction
  - Active Engagement
  - Link
- Independent Practice
- Small Group Instruction
  - Guided Writing/Guided Reading
  - Strategy Groups
- Mid-workshop Teaching
- Share Session

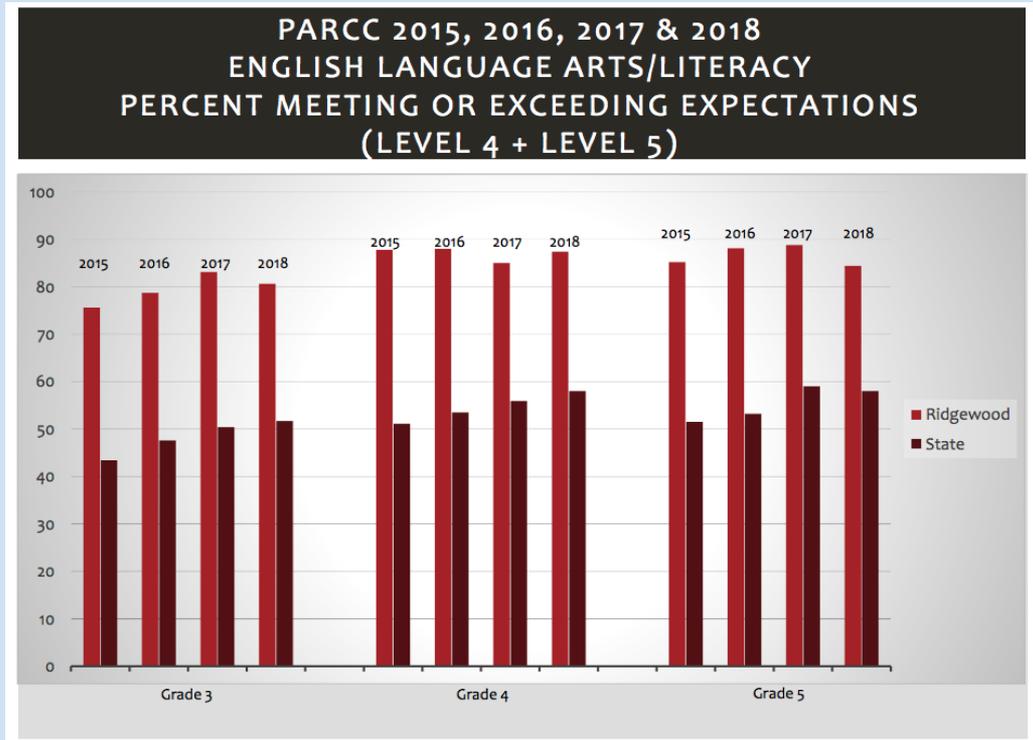
## Screening & Assessments

- Fountas & Pinnell Assessments
- Dyslexia Screening
- Unit Pre and Post Assessment
  - rubrics
- Informal Inventories
- Anecdotal Observations
- Differentiated assessments based upon student performance

# How are we doing? - Student Data

For the purposes of this study, a plethora of strong data points were examined.

- PARCC - Ridgewood students continue to demonstrate proficiency on the PARCC in grades 3-5 as they go on to achieve well beyond the state average. The number of students passing is roughly 30% higher than the state average.



# How are we doing? - Student Data

## High Performing Teachers and Students

- SGP - It is noteworthy to share that elementary students have shown consistent growth. Teachers are performing at high levels in all six schools, no teacher received below a 3.0 Student Growth Percentile.
- F&P Reading Levels - Indicate there is a progressive increase of children reading “At Grade Level” this indicates that the tiered levels of support that are in place have been effective in assisting our students reaching grade level benchmarks as they move through the elementary levels. Meaningful growth over time.

Based on research from teachers and parents we look to improve our in district assessment practices in the area of writing in an effort to fully align with our writing practice.

# How are we doing? - Student Data

## FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

In September 2017, Ridgewood Public Schools incorporated Full Day Kindergarten. End of year data shows this initiative has had a positive impact on the reading abilities of our kindergarten students.

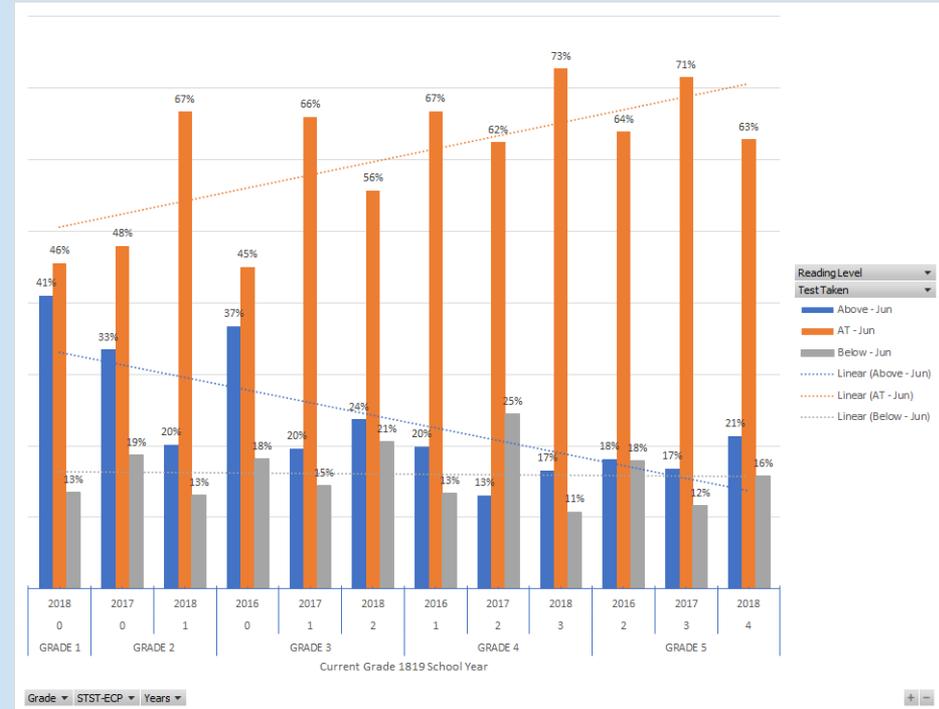
- F&P Reading Levels - Kindergarten end of year test scores for June show a *dramatic increase* in the amount of kindergartners reading "Above Grade Level" and a *decrease* in kindergartners reading "Below Grade Level."

Year	Reading Above Grade Level	Year	Reading Below Grade Level
2016	18%	2016	7.8%
2017	16%	2017	7.4%
2018	21%	2018	5.7%

# How are we doing? - Student Data

## F&P Reading Levels

- As our students move through grades K-5, there is a trend, a progressive increase in children reading **"At Grade Level"** this indicates that the tiered levels of support that are in place have been effective in assisting our students in reaching grade level benchmarks as they move through the elementary levels. Meaningful growth over time.
- We are going to pay close attention to an increase in the number of students reading **"Below Grade Level"** in Grade Two.



# How are we doing? Community Perceptions

## Survey methodology...

- For the purposes of this study, both parents and teachers were surveyed. Data was also gathered from teachers during focus group sessions.
- Excellent Participation: 415 Ridgewood Parents took part in our K-5 ELA Survey
- 78% of parents survey shared they are satisfied with ELA Program overall

### Overall - Reading Program Very Positive Responses

- 83% - their child is interested in Reading... fostering a love of reading, strong foundations
- 84% - their child is successful in Reading
- 78% - their child enjoys Reading
- 75% - their child is appropriately challenged in Reading

### Overall - Writing Program fared well...

- 73% - their child is interested in Writing
- 72% - their child is successful in Writing
- 73% - their child enjoys Writing
- 73% - their child is appropriately challenged in Writing

# Program Perceptions

## Comments from Parent and Teacher Surveys

- **Ridgewood Elementary Schools cultivate a love of reading and writing.**
  - “His teachers have been very focused and encouraging.”
  - “My girls love to read and enjoy it.”
  - “He loves to read, and read to me.”
  - “She loves to learn and is so receptive to her teacher.”
  
- **Survey parents’ expressed interest in increased communication regarding writing instruction, writing assessment, and benchmarks.**
  - “I feel less informed about the writing work, compared to the reading.”
  
- **Some parents requested additional focus be placed upon language and mechanics.**
  - “... a focus on grammar/syntax, fluency.”
  
- **Overall, teachers were happy with revising current units and shared interest in having additional resources, professional development, and rubric refinement.**
  - “It’s challenging, yet students are able to find success because there is time to master these important skills.”
  - “It would be helpful to have access to more current resources.”

# Summary of Our Findings

## Comprehensive Findings

- Research supports that Ridgewood provides a sound model of instruction, aligned with other top Bergen County Districts
- Strong reading and writing instruction occurs throughout district elementary classrooms
- Overall teacher performance is extremely strong
- Students performing well across six buildings
- Teacher feedback is valued and incorporated
- Look to provide additional communication in the area of student writing
- Parents are satisfied, areas of improvement are noted regarding language and mechanics instruction
- Increased communication regarding word study

# Recommendations for 2019-2020

## Historical information, last study...

- ◆ CCSS were new, Rubicon was new, PARCC was new
    - A big transition and learning curve for educators and administrators
  - ◆ Having lived within the units for a few years, we are now poised to provide curriculum documents that are more efficient, plentiful, current and powerful.
- ELA curriculum will be revised this summer to become more streamlined, and rich to include recommendations by experts such as Educational Consultants Jennifer Serravallo, Chris Lehman, and Pam Koutrakos.
- Specific Goals:
- ◆ Reading and writing units will contain deeper language and mechanics instruction
  - ◆ Digital Literacy - identify appropriate balance of elementary time online
  - ◆ Continue to strengthen full day kindergarten and word study instruction
  - ◆ Continue word study teacher training: 30 hrs of training for remaining grade levels
  - ◆ PD on differentiation, and student goal setting
  - ◆ PD on small group instruction & refine the specifics of workshop model for reading and writing
  - ◆ Provide additional information to families regarding student writing

# Work Planned for Summer 2019

This summer a curriculum team will gather to *revise all reading and writing* language arts units in Grades K-5.

As a direct result of *expert recommendation* from hired consultants and teachers, the revised units of study will go deeper into content by containing fewer goals, more streamlined teaching points and additional resources that foster student goal setting and accountable talk.

*Materials will be purchased to support* and enhance the updated curriculum, specifically...

- Book Bundles purchased for every classroom aligned to Language & Mechanics Standards
- Targeted literature for all classroom libraries (ie. more inclusive literature)
- Professional literature for educators in the areas of reading and writing instructional strategies

*Professional Development* is planned and outlined to address the rollout of the Units of Study and teacher invocation.

*District Staff Developer* to provide targeted workshops and training throughout the year, additional materials, and resources in the area of **language and mechanics instruction**.