



**SOMERS POINT**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
*the learning starts here!™*

**Curriculum**

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**English Language Arts**

**Grade One**

**July 2017**

*Board Approved: August 2017*

# **Table of Contents**

**Somers Point Schools Administration and Board of Education Members**  
**Page 3**

**Acknowledgments**  
**Page 4**

**District Vision, Mission, and Goals**  
**Page 5**

**Introduction/Philosophy/Educational Goals**  
**Page 7**

**National and State Standards**  
**Page 8**

**Scope and Sequence**  
**Page 10**

**Goals/Essential Questions/Objectives/Instructional Tools/Activities**  
**Page 27**

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## **Acknowledgments**

**The following individuals are acknowledged for their assistance in the preparation of this Curriculum Management System:**

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# Somers Point Schools

This document reflects the collaboration of teachers, staff, students, parents, and the Board of Education to define our mission, vision and beliefs to guide our work.

## **Our Mission**

Empower each student to make responsible choices, meet challenges, achieve personal success, and contribute to a global society as they apply the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards to become autonomous, lifelong learners who are literate problem solvers across all disciplines. This is accomplished through:

- *Offering diverse, challenging, effective and progressive programs in a safe, nurturing environment*
- *Providing optimal facilities and resources*
- *Mastering the skills and tools needed for success*
- *Facilitating an educational partnership with home, school and community*

## **Our Beliefs**

Beliefs: We believe that our empowered learners:

- Participate in educational programs that are designed to meet the needs of learners while providing challenging activities in the context of real life situations
- Are aware of community issues and take part in activities to better their community
- Acquire basic skills in obtaining information, thinking critically, solving problems and communicating effectively
- Develop intellectual curiosity and the ability to access information as needed
- Become reflective learners who have an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Develop the aptitudes and skills to adjust to a changing world and an unpredictable future
- Are lifetime learners who value and accept learning as a continuing and dynamic process affecting all aspects of life
- Value the integrity of all individuals and recognize their own ability to progress academically, socially, and emotionally

## Our Vision

The students of the Somers Point School District will demonstrate personal growth over time in relation to individualized goals aligned to the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards. Achievement is evident when students:

- Take academic risks
- Transfer or extend content area knowledge
- Are intrinsically motivated life-long learners
- Are global learners who collaborate beyond the confines of the classroom or school
- Demonstrate social growth
- Are meta-cognitive thinkers
- Solve real-world problems

To foster student achievement Somers Point Educators:

- Promote student-centered learning
- Explicitly communicate the purpose of the lesson and how it fits into students' broader learning
- Provide hands-on learning activities
- Encourage collaboration
- Cultivate a safe environment and a strong classroom community
- Differentiate instruction
- Know the content area, curriculum, and their students
- Integrate technology
- Uncover and capitalize on student interests
- Use assessment data to make instructional decisions
- Commit to life-long learning to improve their practice

## INTRODUCTION, PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS

### Philosophy

Somers Point's balanced literacy program provides students with literacy instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Beginning in pre-school, students gain skills that are the foundation for later reading and writing. Using the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA2) data, the needs of individual students are met at their reading level in guided reading, strategy groups, and through conferring with students. Teachers in the upper grades provide students the opportunity to use their literacy skills through project-based learning activities that enable students to work collaboratively on real world issues using technology. The district uses Writer's Workshop, an interdisciplinary writing program, to build students fluency in writing through continuous repeated exposure to the process of writing.

### Educational Goals & Beliefs

***Students are unique and reflect a wide range of diversity.***

- Therefore, a variety of instructional strategies and resources will be used to reflect and respect a wide range of diversity.

***All students will become empowered by developing their literacy abilities to their fullest potential.***

- Therefore, the skills of literacy will be taught in meaningful ways, using research-based instructional strategies that aligned to the learning needs of the individual student.

***Students learn best through a variety of language experiences that actively engage them in the acquisition of both basic and higher level thinking skills.***

- Therefore, curriculum needs to be presented in an integrated format, which utilizes a balanced literacy approach.

***Learning is best enhanced when assessment informs and drives instruction.***

- Therefore, assessment will be systematic and closely linked to instruction in order to facilitate sound instructional decisions for each student.

***Becoming literate is dependent upon strong links among home, school, and the community.***

- Therefore, the various roles of home, school, and community will be highlighted through effective communication and reinforcement of partnerships.

# Core Curriculum Content Standards

## A note about Language Arts Literacy Common Core Standards:

### *Reading*

- The standards establish a “staircase” of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. The standards also require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from whatever they read.
- Through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective. Because the standards are building blocks for successful classrooms, but recognize that teachers, school districts and states need to decide on appropriate curriculum, they intentionally do not offer a reading list. Instead, they offer numerous sample texts to help teachers prepare for the school year and allow parents and students to know what to expect at the beginning of the year.
- The standards mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, seminal works of American literature, and the writings of Shakespeare. The standards appropriately defer the many remaining decisions about what and how to teach to states, districts, and schools.

### *Writing*

- The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is a cornerstone of the writing standards, with opinion writing—a basic form of argument—extending down into the earliest grades.
- Research—both short, focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term in depth research—is emphasized throughout the standards but most prominently in the writing strand since a written analysis and presentation of findings is so often critical.
- Annotated samples of student writing accompany the standards and help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades.

### *Speaking and Listening*

- The standards require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through media.
- An important focus of the speaking and listening standards is academic discussion in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class settings. Formal presentations are one important way such talk occurs, but so is the more informal discussion that takes place as students collaborate to answer questions, build understanding, and solve problems.

### *Language*

- The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The standards will help students determine word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their repertoire of words and phrases.

- The standards help prepare students for real life experience at college and in 21st century careers. The standards recognize that students must be able to use formal English in their writing and speaking but that they must also be able to make informed, skillful choices among the many ways to express themselves through language.
- Vocabulary and conventions are treated in their own strand not because skills in these areas should be handled in isolation but because their use extends across reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

### *Media and Technology*

- Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the twenty-first century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media) are integrated throughout the standards.

**For more information:** <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela/>