



Halifax County Schools

Message from The Assistant Superintendent



Dr. Tyrana B. Battle

Dear PreK-12 Teachers,

We're excited about the journey to "*Excellence in Literacy*" in Halifax County Schools! Our shared belief is that every Halifax County public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, and prepared for life in the 21st Century. Thus, for every student in Halifax County schools, a knowledgeable, skilled compassionate teacher ... **a five-star educator in every classroom!**

What a pleasure it is for us to introduce the *Halifax County Schools' K-12 Literacy Digital Library* --where every teacher is aided in the teaching of reading! The content of this digital library of **best practices, instructional resources, and professional development tools** were endorsed by our very own Halifax Schools' Literacy Professional Learning Team. As fellow Halifax County educators, we hold the expectation that every student is a unique individual who can and will learn when provided with *adequate time, effective teaching, and a positive learning environment*. As you explore the K-12 Digital Literacy Library's **Flash Drive Notebook, Literacy Livebinder and Online Literacy Professional Development Modules**, you will find a surplus of various support resources, literacy strategies, and research-based literacy content as well as standards-based English Language Arts curriculum guidance to structure time, teaching and the learning environment.

In our 2016 literacy quest to raise student achievement and decrease academic gaps, the district took a good look at "What literacy looks like in Halifax County Schools". We comprised the feedback from principals, coaches, teachers, parents and accreditation teams to ensure that: beginning teachers, lateral entry teachers, departmentalized teachers, and veteran teachers and other partners have equal access to quality literacy resources, best practices and basic literacy professional development tools at the touch of a button. These data are all housed in a central location on the Halifax County School District's website. What a *brilliant* way to "Chart A New Course"!

We wish you much success in the classroom for years to come in Halifax County Schools!



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Philosophy

All students in Halifax County Schools will graduate from high school with the reading and writing skills necessary to interact successfully with a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes. They will understand the characteristics of various genres of text [technical, fiction, poetry, drama and informational text (such as history, geography, science, experiments, discoveries)]. Students need to be transliterate: able to read, write and communicate using a range of different media, including printed, electronic and online media as well as understand when and how to move across an ever-expanding realm of linguistic domains. They will read and communicate analytically and thoughtfully.

Purpose

Halifax County Schools is committed to providing appropriate educational programs that will allow all students to achieve at a high level of success. We hold expectation that every student is a unique individual who can and will learn when provided with adequate time, effective teaching, and a positive learning environment.

The purpose of *Halifax County Schools Plan for Literacy* is to provide a framework for action by defining the expectations that support literacy development for learners from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. This document provides a consistent voice with which to address literacy challenges in the district and provide a plan for focused support from all stakeholders. Literacy development is the shared responsibility of all literacy stakeholders. Literacy stakeholders include parents, family members, caregivers, agencies, representatives from business and community organizations, and educators. All literacy stakeholders are encouraged to use this plan for literacy to ensure that every student has the literacy skills necessary to graduate college- and/or career-ready.

The plan supports the guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE): that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century. For this mission to be successful, all school personnel and students must have access to a rigorous curriculum and appropriate technology.

Halifax County Schools supports consistent, high quality, long-term and in-depth professional learning in best practices that support literacy. The district will allocate resources to ensure equitable access to effective literacy education for all students. All employees are committed to and responsible for implementation of this literacy plan. This plan will be continually evaluated, reviewed, and revised to ensure literacy achievement.

The *Halifax County Schools Plan for Literacy* establishes goals and sets action steps that ensure the district supports:

- The use of assessment data to drive instruction;
- The use of data to evaluate student learning and instructional best practices;
- The participation of all content area teachers in literacy instruction;
- Consistent instruction and assessment practices across grade levels and schools;
- A core curriculum accessible by new and veteran teachers, as well as parents;
- Communication with parents and the community about literacy practices;
- The development of a common language around literacy for use across the district.



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Implementing the Vision: K-12 Literacy Framework

“Academic rigor, relevance and supportive relationships must be provided to all children in North Carolina public schools if they are to receive quality literacy instruction.” (NC State Literacy Plan; page 20; 1st paragraph)

Definition of Academic Rigor and Relevance in the Classroom

Academic rigor and relevance are qualities of meaningful instruction and student engagement that requires *teachers to intentionally plan and implement core standards to enable all students: 1) to construct meaning for themselves, 2) to express the understanding of their learning utilizing various graphic organizers that models their analyzing and making sense of new & old information, 3) to build upon diverse factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge when thinking critically about viable outcomes, 4) to work within but at the outer edge of their abilities, and 5) to apply what they learn in more than one context and unpredictable situations.*

Explanation of Meaningful Instructional Qualities and Student Engagement:

- ***Students construct meaning for themselves: (Conceptualize)***
Students are required to go beyond memorized facts, acquired understanding of concepts, and the developing of basic skill proficiency. They are *explicitly instructed* in “how to”: unpack the concepts; think critically about the content; ask questions of interest; compare and construct meaning to develop their own opinions and determine value of the information.
- ***Students Structure Content to Express information: (Graphic Organizers)***
Students are required to learn “how to” receive and structure information to make sense of concepts and algorithms to establish appropriate use of new and old information. They are *systematically instructed* in the use of mental graphics to organize concepts, make connections among and between explicit and implicit concepts, and deal with uncertainty and complexity. Doing so helps them to think accurately, consider multiple meanings and interpretations, and engage in disciplined inquiry and thought.
- ***Students integrate skills and content into processes for thinking globally: (Metacognition)***
Students are required to know the content; become immersed in sorting and evaluating best practices to *link* acquired content, skills and strategies with other subject areas to extend their thinking globally.
- ***Students work within but at the edge of their current abilities: (Healthy Challenges)***
Rigorous instruction *brings learning within the reach* of students’ ability levels and peak their interest. Students work independently and cooperatively to stretch just beyond their present abilities. In doing so, they develop new ways of understanding and problem solving. Rigor is “not” about making the work longer and harder, but about it being prescriptive and relevant to the learner.
- ***Students apply what they learn in more than one context and in unpredictable situations: (application/creation)***
Students are required to use and adapt skills and content learned --and their acquired thinking strategies --to research, adjust and/or solve real-world problems in multiple contexts with the use of “rubrics”.