

Challenge 2010 at Bruce Randolph School

Cultivating individual expertise in a collaborative school!

Special Education Reform Project

This special project reports directly to the superintendent; the school is designated as a Superintendent's School. The intention is to create a demonstration school where college students or DPS staff come to see high quality education executed effectively and skillfully.

School Configuration

By 2009/2010 the school will serve grades six through twelve. The class of 2010 is the first to graduate.

Project Graduation

The school attracts and serve bodies of students who enter in the sixth grade and who go on to graduate from the twelfth grade. The first class to graduate will do so in the spring of 2010 and are commemorated in advance with the name of this special reform project. Each class of students will be cultivated to identify themselves collectively as people who will graduate together, six years after they are assembled. The goal is a 100% graduation rate.

Staff

The principal leads the instructional team, which includes the assistant principal, facilitators, a student advisor and a rotating teacher representative. This team is responsible for all professional learning decisions, including but not limited to professional development.

Facilitators may teach one or more classes. Facilitators coach teachers one on one, lead small group team development, facilitate curriculum delivery study and lead whole faculty development. Facilitators consult with each other, staff members and the principals to determine the master schedule of all formal professional development, and to determine the options for informal additional work with teachers.

Teachers and staff agree to commit to a sincere, good faith effort to participate actively in all ongoing, job-embedded staff development and to provide thoughtful, constructive feedback in revising and refining staff development options over time.

Staff Development

The principles of learning will be applied to adult development, as well as to student instruction.

The overarching focus of adult learning is on clear academic and behavior expectations, grade level performance standards, academic rigor, interventions and supports for all learners, and celebration of growth and success. Ongoing study of the strategic use of convergent and divergent questioning in curriculum development, diagnosis and assessment is an integral part of the work. Future development may include developing knowledge and understanding of the unique features of the student population that result from their cultural, linguistic and socio-economic experiences.

Whole staff learning focuses on broad, abstract education philosophy and pedagogy, specifically: creating a socialized learning community in a thinking curriculum; acting on the knowledge that all students can reach proficiency; studying data and using it to inform instructional decisions; and remaining flexible and responsive to diverse learning needs.

Curriculum team learning focuses on content knowledge and expertise, as well as on teaching and learning processes and student assessment practices specific to their content areas. The results of diagnostic instruments and standardized test score data leads to strategic interventions and supports for all learners.

Small group learning extends topics to conversations across grade levels and content areas, including anecdotal reports and collective strategizing.

All teachers have a facilitator partner to teach with in order to study and develop their own individual classroom skills, targeted by the teacher. This coaching includes both regular consultation on curriculum planning and pacing, and formal coaching cycles. First year teachers also have a classroom management coach.

These multiple configurations of staff learning constitute the Bruce Randolph School-wide Professional Development Unit (PDU) each school year. Teachers who are in the ProComp pay system earn additional pay under the system. Teachers who are not may bank the PDU for the future or earn CDE recertification credit and/or credit towards movement on the salary schedule.

Data Driven Instruction

School opens with an intensive student orientation, including a battery of diagnostic instruments. These form the baseline data for instruction each year. Each content area team works together to revise pretests, quarterly exams and posttests which are used for teacher objective setting. Teachers closely track student achievement as demonstrated on both formal and informal assessments throughout the year, including but not limited to the nine-week assessments. Part of the ongoing professional development analyzes this data and identifies teaching strategies that are responsive and supportive to the individual learners. Teachers confer with students regularly to inform and explain to each what their data suggests about them as learners. Based on their data, middle grades students set individual academic growth goals in all subject areas for each grading period. High school grades identify strategies and practices necessary for them to earn all required credit and to remain on track to graduation on time.

Intensive student orientation: The first day of student orientation is for students new to Randolph, mainly sixth grade and new seventh grade students. The second day is for all middle grade students, but still separated based on new or returning to Randolph. Students read their planner, study all procedures, expectations and requirements using leveled study questions, and orient their families. The third day is for all students. Middle grades conclude the study, and take a quiz to demonstrate mastery. High school grades review material that is now familiar, and take a quiz to show mastery. This quiz grade is the first grade in all classes. Parents are welcome.

Diagnostic instruments: Students write a Short Constructed Response (single paragraph essay) and an Extended Constructed Response (multiple paragraph essay). These will be assessed with the state rubrics.

Students take a Reading Comprehension Assessment as a pretest.

Students take a math pretest to measure content and skills that should be mastered by the end of that grade level.

Students take pretests in science and social studies to measure a representative sampling of their current knowledge of the content and skills to be acquired at that grade level; these tests use systematic convergent and divergent questioning.

Elective teachers administer pretests to determine baseline for student growth, and/or to assess content and skills to be acquired at that grade level.

All diagnostics are used to set goals for students and for teachers. Quarterly exams and final exams duplicate the pretest formats.

Quarterly academic progress conferences: Using the baseline data generated by the diagnostic instruments at the beginning of the year, and the CSAP data for each learner, middle grade students and teachers confer together to set reasonable, achievable goals for each learner in each course of study. High school students reflect on past experience with goal setting, and identify short term goals, strategies or practices necessary for success in earning graduation credits.

After assessing quarterly or final exams, teachers again confer with students about their progress and achievement as measured thus far, both collectively and individually. They then set new goals and agree to continue successful strategies or to create new strategies to achieve the new goals. This pattern continues throughout the school year.

Student Data Spreadsheets: All teachers maintain student data spreadsheets that include diagnostics, quarterly and final exams, CSAP data, and other classroom achievement data. These spreadsheets are used to identify whole group teaching strategies and individual intervention strategies. Both students and teachers use the data in their goal setting.

Minor Changes to School Calendar

The school calendar is modified to include five days with no student contact, for the purpose of grading student diagnostics, quarterly assessments or final exams, updating related documentation and conducting conversations around observations, trends and instructional decisions. The school day is extended by ten minutes to meet state requirements.

Celebrating Success

Each quarter culminates in celebration events to recognize students who met their individual academic growth goals. These are social events with entertainment and refreshments. Special recognition may be given in the event of whole classes or whole grade levels who all meet their academic goals. Recognition of attendance achievement may be included in these celebrations.

During these events, students who failed to meet their academic goals consult with support staff to analyze why they failed and to strategize new plans to meet their next goals.

Other success celebration events involve showcasing student work, student achievements and/or student performances.

The community is invited to all celebration events, but is especially encouraged to attend evening events that showcase student products or performances.

Building-Wide Consistency

Bruce Randolph School has certain consistent expectations for all students in all classes at all grade levels. These include opening routines for all classes, workshop procedures, dismissal procedures, formatting of student papers, student supplies, grading systems, timely feedback to students, grade reports to students and parents, conference documentation format, detention procedures, discipline interventions, and student data spreadsheets.

Opening routines: All classes begin with opening routines which remain consistent throughout the school year, and over all grade levels. English begins with notebook writing or silent, independent reading. Math begins with math warm ups to practice skills needed for the current math concepts study. Social studies and science begin with various but predictable routines that recall recent learning or prepare for upcoming learning. Elective teachers have various but clear opening routines.

All opening routines products are assessed; students will receive credit for completing opening routines according to directions, and for demonstrating thought.

Workshop procedures: Clear expectations around student productivity during workshop time applies to all classes. These will include location of materials and student mobility expectations. Staff has developed common language and expectations around roles in group work and standards for grading group productivity.

Dismissal procedures: Students are dismissed by the teacher, not the bell. Students are to be completely packed up, sitting correctly, facing forward, for dismissal when the bell rings. Teachers plan for closing procedures which include time to clean up and pack up.

Formatting of student papers: All students write their entire name, first and last, together on one line on the upper right hand corner of the paper or product. The date is written immediately underneath. The subject and period are written under that. Then they skip a line and center an assignment title at the top of the page. All assignments have titles that are used in the teacher grade book. All titles will be underlined.

Student supplies: A standard set of supplies required of all students includes a three inch binder, loose leaf paper, folders, multiple pens and pencils, colored pencils and highlighters. Parents are informed of the required supplies prior to school opening, and then again as part of orientation. Students who need assistance getting supplies will receive it. Students are expected to have all of their supplies in all of their classes, every day, every year.

Grading systems: Grades are earned on a total points system, not a weighted system. All assignments are marked with a grade that includes the number of points earned over the number of points possible, the percentage and a letter grade. Quarterly grades include between 500-800 total points. Students receive credit for both process and product in all classes. Each content area has a points guideline document to clarify specifics for those courses.

Timely feedback to students: Teachers provide feedback to students both formally and informally as quickly as is reasonably possible. Formal feedback is grades. Informal feedback is spoken either individually to a student, or collectively to a class in the form of a teaching point or focus lesson. Teachers provide feedback about assignments before students replicate or repeat that type of assignment. For example, in English, students receive a graded essay before they begin their next essay. Students receive constant, timely feedback about all of their work.

Grade reports: Teachers update and enter all grades each Wednesday. Students receive all recent graded papers each Thursday. The school generates a weekly progress report which includes all subjects (like a report card), which is distributed by period 1 teachers and collected by the English language arts teachers. Parents expect the most recent papers and the updated grades regularly each week. Parents sign the grades so teachers know that parents saw the grades; this is a homework assignment.

Conference documentation: Three basic types of conferences occur. An academic conference takes place when a student is struggling, and includes grade analysis, goal setting, and planning for student progress. These may be documented.

A discipline conference is when a teacher or team of adults meets with a student to correct behavior. Conferences are documented on the conference module of the IC. This record includes a brief summary of what happened, and what the student agrees to do differently in the future.

Discipline Plan

All students at all grade levels are taught the same school and classroom rules: Be prompt, prepared, polite, productive and positive. These rules are taught and reinforced consistently throughout the building. Lunch detention punishes minor infractions. The DPS referral ladder is strictly adhered to, using every possible intervention at every stage of discipline in order to keep the students in the classrooms, learning. In-house suspension always precedes out of building suspension, except in extreme cases. All academic expectations are maintained in in-house suspension. Restorative Justice and other group interventions are used to reduce repeat offenses.

School/classroom rules: identical rules are posted and taught in every classroom. Student orientation and ongoing instruction include repeated clarification of conduct and participation expectations for students.

Lunch detention: if a student breaks a rule, the teacher warns the child by writing their name on the board or on an overhead. The name must be visible to the student. If additional rules are broken, checks are written next to the name. One check = five minutes lunch detention, two checks = ten minutes lunch detention, and three checks = full lunch detention. The teacher gives the student a lunch detention slip to fill out, with the reasons the student earned lunch detention.

The student reports to the lunch detention and lines up, then submits the detention slip to the detention teacher, who assigns the student a seat. The student sits correctly, facing forward, with hands folded or head down, still and silent. The student speaks only to the detention teacher. The teacher asks the student what she did wrong, and what she will do correctly in the future. The student must show understanding of his mistake, and make a verbal commitment not to repeat the mistake. When the student has successfully served the detention, the teacher signs the bottom of the slip and returns it to the student.

The student must return the signed detention slip to the teacher who assigned detention. If the student fails to return the slip, for any reason, the detention time is doubled.

If the student cannot or will not serve detention successfully, he is assigned a repeat detention the next day. Two successive failures to serve detention result in movement on the referral ladder.

A student could receive multiple detentions from multiple teachers. Any un-served detention doubles, even if the student served for another teacher.

If a student's detentions double to five or more, the student is referred to the student advisor, and in-school suspension is assigned. After serving in-school suspension, all detentions for all teachers are served.

Teachers must maintain records of when students earn detentions. Teachers keep all detention slips, which are a record of the behavior infractions, dates, and time served. These slips may be used in team and/or parent conferences.

The DPS Referral Ladder

Informal student-teacher conference: This may take place during class, when a teacher corrects a behavior or re-teaches a rule. This is not documented.

Student-teacher conference: If a student earns four checks, the teacher confers with that student at the next available opportunity. Sometimes that will be after class. Sometimes that will be later in the day, or even the next day. The teacher listens to the student's perception of the events or behaviors that need correction. The teacher re-teaches the rules and expectations, clarifies the current consequences (full lunch detention) and states the next consequences that will be put in place if the student's misbehavior continues. This conference is documented on the conference module of IC.

Student-team conference: If the student goes on to misbehave, the teacher arranges a conference with the student and another staff member. The adult team could include another teacher who teaches the student, a facilitator, a counselor, a student advisor or the assistant principal. The two staff members meet with the student, and listen to the student's side of the story. They then re-teach the rules and expectations, clarify the current consequences (full lunch detention) and state the next consequences if the problem continues. This team conference is documented in the conference module of IC.

Parent phone conference: Should the child's misbehavior continue, the teacher calls home for a parent conference over the phone. Ideally, the student will be present while the teacher talks to the parent, but this is not always possible. The teacher informs the parent of the dates and the nature of the previous two conferences, the current misbehavior, the detentions (including the new full lunch detention), and the next consequences if the misbehavior continues. The teacher listens to the parent's advice or views of the student's conduct. Ideally, the parent speaks to the child over the phone, but this is not always possible. This parent conference is documented on the conference module of IC.

If a teacher calls home when no one answers, but leaves a message, that is documented, along with the nature of the most recent misbehavior. If a teacher makes a second attempt with no answer, or there is no message machine, or there is no phone, the teacher refers the contact necessity to the student advisor and/or assistant principal, who will determine the best way to make contact with the family, including a home visit. The contact person informs the teacher of the outcome of the contact, and the teacher documents the contact.

Referral to counselor: If a student continues to misbehave after all of the previous interventions, the teacher assigns full lunch detention and writes a formal referral to the counselor or social worker. The referral will be documented on the conference module of IC.

Counselor or social worker conference: The counselor or social worker confers with the student to listen to her problems, provide emotional support and coping strategies, and help the child make a plan to succeed in class. The counselor or social worker calls home to inform the parent of the conference, and the resulting plan. The counselor documents the conference in the conference module in IC.

Referral to other support services: In some cases, students are next referred to other support services, if there is reason to believe that they could be helpful. These other areas include, but are not limited to: nurse, psychologist, social worker, CSAT team and/or outside agencies who help students with anger, violence, drugs, alcohol, gang affiliation or homelessness. The school makes every effort to provide the support the child needs in order to be successful at school.

Student-parent-team conference: Should misbehavior continue to occur, a conference of the student, parent, teachers, the student advisor and possibly an administrator takes place to review the documented case history and interventions. This team then may write a formal, written behavior and participation plan for the student. The group listens to the student's input about his problems and the solutions. Next consequences are made clear. All parties sign the plan. The conference and behavior plan are documented on the conference module in IC.

Referral to student advisor: If the student misbehaves again, he is referred to the student advisor for the consequences outlined in the plan. This will usually be in-school suspension, although other interventions may be used. Multiple in-school suspensions may occur before out of building suspension is used. Three out-of-building suspensions will result in moving towards expulsion.

Whenever a student is reinstated from a suspension, either in-house or out of building, the teacher who wrote the referral will be invited to participate in the reinstatement conference. Facilitators or teammates may cover classes so the teacher can be available at the convenience of the student advisor and the parent.

Attendance Intervention Plan

The student is viewed as primarily responsible for attendance. In addition to all standard DPS procedures and expectations around attendance, the truancy officer, a full-time attendance clerk and the social worker constitute the attendance intervention team. They track daily attendance, by period, make phone calls, conduct home visits, and go out into the community to find students and bring them back to school. They compile monthly reports based on meticulous records that include reasons for truancy. They work closely with the health clinic, and refer families to various community resources. They help with the process of referring students to alternative settings, when necessary.

Perfect attendance is recognized and celebrated monthly.

Core Content Curriculum

All current DPS and state curriculum requirements are adhered to, with a systematic focus on articulation among grade levels.

English Language Acquisition

All ELA-S and ELA-E students are taught in mainstream classes. Trained teachers provide essential supports and structures to continue their English language acquisition in the rigorous curriculum. Students read, write, speak, and listen in English.

English language arts is taught in reading and writing workshops, scheduled to provide a block of time for students to develop their literacy skills. Middle grades genre studies are supplemented with formal writing instruction and regular reading comprehension instruction and

assessment. Ninth and tenth grade multi-genre thematic studies also include formal essay writing and formal reading comprehension instruction. Eleventh grade AP Language and Composition and twelfth grade AP Literature and Composition build on the foundations laid by all previous grades to prepare students for AP exams and college credit.

Writer's notebooks: Middle grades students begin writing workshops by writing in their notebooks. These are graded on fluency and quantity only, as students develop stamina sustaining writing for a short, set period of time. When fluency standards are mastered, students may then be graded on variety of topic and writing strategies, as well as quantity. Notebooks are graded every ten to twelve entries. Students self assess prior to teacher assessment.

Formal Essay Writing: Students begin the year studying and practicing short constructed response (SCR) essays, written to prompts and assessed with the state rubric. Students then study and practice extended constructed response (ECR) essays. In the younger grades, most of the drafting, revising and rewriting are done in class as part of the writing workshop. As students mature, they are released to draft and rewrite at home, with planning and revision done in class. Students self-assess their essays according to the rubrics. Students earn process points for drafting and revising, product points for the quality of the final essay, and self-assessment points for showing knowledge and understanding of the quality of their own writing according to state writing standards. Some essay prompts may be related to the content of the genre or thematic study.

Workshop Writing: All genre studies include multiple writing opportunities which culminate in writing products which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the genre and/or content under study. These writing opportunities range from short Stop & Jot notes or thoughts, to SCR Quizzes, to long, developed essays. All writing is assessed.

Writing Conferences: All teachers conduct writing conferences. Some conferences focus on the content of the essay, and revision. Others focus on the form of the essay, and editing. All conferences release students to rewrite a better essay.

Home Reading Program- the Reading Calendar: In addition to silent, independent reading in school every day, students are required to read after school as a permanent, ongoing homework. The home reading program is introduced during orientation, and begins almost immediately. Middle grade students read at home, then record the number of minutes read and the pages read during those minutes on their reading calendars. Their adult initials the calendar to verify the time spent reading those pages. The book they read is logged on the back of their reading calendar.

Each day in class, the teacher verifies that the calendar documentation is complete, that the child is reading the book logged on the back, and that the child is reading the pages indicated according to their records.

Some days the calendar is collected and graded for homework points. Other days the student receives a sticker, stamp or star to celebrate the reading on that date. Some days some other surprise token might be awarded. The calendar is checked every day, but with various and changing positive reinforcements.

Failure to have either the book or the calendar results in lunch detention, and/or movement on the referral ladder, as necessary.

Upper grades change from reading a certain number of minutes to reading a required number of pages. Ninth grade still must read outside of school every day, and read 10 or more pages each day. Tenth grade introduces a class book that all must read to a certain page by a certain date, but students can manage and record that time according to their reading habits. In other words, they no longer are required to read outside of school every day, but they are required to reach page goals on time. Tenth grade alters between collective class book and individually selected book for home reading. Eleventh and twelfth grades are assigned class books with page number due dates.

At the end of the month the complete calendar is collected and graded. Perfect calendars are celebrated at the building level by awarding them special tokens. Middle grades perfect calendars show accurate records for reading every day. Upper grades perfect calendars show accurate records of meeting or exceeding all page deadlines for the month.

Counting Words: Whether students check books out from the classroom library or find books through other channels, each time they complete a book, they submit the book to the teacher with a sticky note including their name, the date they completed the book, and the title of the next book they are reading. The teacher counts the words either manually or using Renlearn. The teacher maintains word count records separately from the students' records. The teacher posts graphs indicating how many words students have read. Students set word goals for themselves monthly, then assess why they did or did not achieve those goals.

When students reach milestones, such as 250,000, then 500,000, then 750,000 and finally one million words, they are recognized and celebrated as soon as the teacher submits their word count to the instructional team.

Independent Reading Comprehension Quizzes: Students regularly take quizzes about the books they are reading independently and at home. All teachers select from a master set of reading comprehension questions, written by the literacy team, using both convergent and divergent levels.

Quizzes are scoring using the Guide to Assessing Responses to Convergent and Divergent Questions; this is the same guide used for Reading Comprehension Assessments and content area Pretests, Quarterly Exams and Final Exams

Reading Comprehension Assessment and Instruction: Reading comprehension is assessed at the start of the school year and quarterly thereafter using nonfiction grade-level text from a wide range of sources and using systematic, comprehensive questions based on the eight level convergent and divergent taxonomy. In between formal assessments, teachers teach text comprehension using the systematic questioning and a broad range of other comprehension strategies. Some text is non-fiction, similar to exams. Other texts include shared reading literature and genre study or thematic fiction, poetry and essays, and teachers decide which levels of questioning and which strategies to instruct, based on the needs of their students.

Talking is a normal, routine, required component of every classroom. Students are trained, and recognized, for developing accountability to the learning community, to accurate knowledge and to rigorous thinking in their classroom talk.

Mathematics is taught using the Denver Public Schools math curriculum. Students work with partners and in groups: teachers act as facilitators developing students' skills and knowledge around solving mathematics problems.

Math Warm Up: Students begin class with an opening math activity. This could include, but is not limited to: review, preview, vocabulary, math skills practice, solving math problems, writing about how to solve math problems, writing in the math journal, or any combination thereof.

Launch: The teacher introduces or reviews the concept under study for the upcoming lesson. The teacher models decoding the math tasks being studied, and directs students to the problems to be solved. Over time, students model decoding the math tasks.

Exploration: During this work time, students collaborate to solve the problems using the skills and concepts under study. The teacher moves around from group to group, facilitating or teaching as necessary to support the problem solving process. The teacher calls for students to explain their thinking, and asks questions to help redirect their thinking in a different direction, if or when necessary.

Summary: Students report out to the class the findings and ideas discovered during work time. They describe multiple and varying strategies to solve problems, with emphasis on the fact that there are often many ways to find the right answers. Students may also describe problems they had with the process, and how they solved those problems.

Math Notebook: Students collect all returned and graded assignments in chronological order, for the purpose of review and study prior to quizzes and exams. Current class work and homework are maintained in the notebook, while waiting to be graded. Furthermore, a math journal is included; students occasionally write about what they find easy or difficult about the concepts under study and/or the problem solving process; they also may sometimes respond to certain questions posed by the teacher. These responses can be used as the basis for discussion. The math notebook will be used for ongoing, informal assessment of students' math learning.

Math Conferences: These conferences are both formal and informal. Informal conferences occur frequently, when the teacher re-teaches or clarifies math concepts or procedures, as needed, to individuals or small groups. Formal conferences are always one on one; the teacher observes a student attempting to solve a problem. The student explains her thinking while solving the problem. If stuck, the teacher leads conversation about the problem and asks questions to prompt student thinking. The teacher clarifies as needed. If the student successfully solves the problem, the teacher elicits the strategies and thinking used to succeed. The teacher may document the conference, including the skill or skill sets being studied, and the teaching points included. Initially, the math facilitator will run the class during formal conferences, allowing the teacher time to confer. Over time, the goal is for the teacher to be able to conduct formal conferences while the math workshop conducts itself.

Math Homework: Students have math homework every school night. Homework is math work students can succeed at independently. In the event that a student cannot complete this assignment successfully, the student writes a statement explaining what they did understand, and identifying the point where they no longer understood what to do next. This is known as a Stumped Statement. Parents support the home math program by signing this Stumped Statement, if/when necessary.

Upon returning to school, a student with a Stumped Statement is expected to seek appropriate assistance to solve the problem and go on to complete the homework correctly. The signed Stumped Statement does not excuse the child from the assignment; it excuses them from consequences for being unprepared to class.

Grade Graphs: Math teachers teach students how to graph their weekly grades according to the percentage of points earned in each of their classes. Students first create bar graphs, then go on to create line graphs, multiple line graphs, and finally pie graphs, over the course of the year. Initial graph creation is a class activity. Over time, students will be released to create and update grade graphs as homework. The best and most beautiful grade graphs are posted in classrooms and displayed in hallways as celebration of grade achievement as well as celebration of quality graphing, skills.

Grading and Assessment: Students earn points for their math grade in the following areas: warm ups, class work, group participation, homework, math notebook, journals, grade graphs, quizzes and unit tests.

Talking is a normal, routine, required component of every classroom. Students are trained, and recognized, for developing accountability to the learning community, to accurate knowledge and to rigorous thinking in their classroom talk.

Science curriculum is based on district selection. A socialized learning community is created with fixed rituals and routines in place around an inquiry based workshop model, which uses the scientific method to explore science and draw conclusions.

Opening activity: Science teachers provide a science vocabulary item, a science fun fact, a science dilemma, or a recent scientific discovery for students to copy down and react to in writing during the opening minutes of class. Students copy accurately and write responses, reactions or questions about the science item. The teacher reads and explain the science item, answers questions, and connect to the upcoming lesson, when possible. A master set of daily science items will be maintained and available to students who were absent. Science items are collected and assessed every ten to twelve entries. This opening activity takes less than ten minutes of class time.

Content studies: Units of study are organized with multiple sources of content information, including text, auditory and visual sources, graphs and charts, laboratory experiments and field study. Text includes summary text (e.g. textbook, encyclopedia articles, magazine articles, research results), and commentary text (e.g. scientific criticism, analysis, controversial issues). Auditory and visual sources include tapes, videos, pictures, and

demonstrations. Graphs and charts are studied and created in a variety of formats and contexts, for a variety of purposes. Laboratory experiments are conducted on a regular basis as part of the scientific inquiry nature of the courses. Labs vary in duration from as brief as one class period to as long as several months. Field experiences are generated by the content being studied, and generate significant student products which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content being studied.

Reading and writing in science: English language arts teachers bear the primary responsibility for developing reading and writing skills in the students. Science teachers apply those skills to acquire content knowledge and demonstrate understanding. Science teachers also use the eight level convergent and divergent questioning taxonomy to diagnose and instruct students according to their needs. The focus is on science content acquisition.

Text is taught to students in a variety of ways: some as shared read alouds, some as small group reading, some as partner reading and some as independent reading. Facilitators work with the science teachers to develop instructional strategies and assessment methods.

Students have a wide range of writing opportunities in science. Some are brief, simple notes about their thinking or observations. Others are informal paragraphs summarizing observations or formulating theories or explanations. Students are taught how to write formal laboratory reports, including all stages of the scientific method. Special emphasis is placed on drawing conclusions and marshalling evidence to defend those conclusions.

Projects in science: Eventually, the school year will culminate in individual science projects presented in a science fair. Initially, students will be guided and supported through the science project production process. Over time, students will be released to create their projects independently.

Talking is a normal, routine, required component of every classroom. Students are trained, and recognized, for developing accountability to the learning community, to accurate knowledge and to rigorous thinking in their classroom talk.

Social studies curriculum is being developed and refined according district expectations. A socialized learning community is created with a workshop model.

Opening activity: Students accurately copy new information, facts or notes directly related to the content under study, then write their reactions, thoughts or questions about the content. The teacher may take time to clarify or connect to the previous or upcoming content under study. This activity takes less than ten minutes.

Content studies: Units of study are organized with multiple sources of content information, including text, maps, auditory and visual supports and field study. Text study includes summary text (e.g. encyclopedia articles or textbooks), commentary text (e.g. historical criticism or analysis), primary text (original documents from history), secondary text (essays about original documents), literary text (historical fiction or poetry), and/or biography/autobiography. Map study includes both study and creation of current maps, historical maps, and special purpose maps. Auditory and visual supports could include, but are not limited to, listening to tapes, viewing videos or slide presentations, listening to student

presentations, viewing student projects, listening to music and/or viewing art. Field experiences are driven by the content under study and generate significant student products which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content under study.

Reading and writing in social studies: English language arts teachers bear the primary responsibility for developing reading and writing skills. Social studies teachers apply those skills to acquiring content knowledge and demonstrating understanding. Social studies teachers use the eight level convergent and divergent questioning taxonomy to diagnose and instruct students according to their needs. But their focus is on history and geography.

Sets of texts are taught to students in a variety of ways: some as shared read alouds, some as small group reading, some as partner reading and some as independent reading. Facilitators work with social studies teachers to develop instructional strategies and assessment methods.

Students have a broad range of writing opportunities, from brief notes about their thinking, to stop and jots, to informal reaction paragraphs, to formal SCR essays which compare and contrast, analyze, induce or criticize in response to a divergent study questions.

Projects in social studies: Like the research process, project production will be demonstrated in the classroom, over time, creating both small scale and large scale projects. These may include maps, posters, dioramas, mobiles, timelines, children's storybooks, models, miniatures or power point presentations. Students may eventually be released to create their own projects; these will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the content under study and, in turn, teach that content to the viewer of the project.

Elective Curriculum

Elective classes include physical education, art, computers and Spanish. These elective courses are offered with academic rigor equivalent to the core subject areas.

Study Tours

As part of the standard curriculum, each grade level will have study tours to provide opportunities for students to learn off campus. These will include exposure to and instruction in viewing to learn at art museums, science and nature museums, history museums, historical buildings, Denver landmarks, college and university campuses, geographical formations in Colorado and outdoor education institutions. Grade level trips are to be vertically articulated to provide students a rich and varied experience over the years. All trips include assignments to demonstrate learning.

Sports

Middle level grades participate in the Denver Prep League. High school students participate in boy's and girl's soccer, boy's and girl's basketball, boy's baseball, and girl's volleyball.

Community Involvement

Routine parental engagement in all aspects of students' academic development includes written notifications of content under study, supplies and participation expectations and other academic information. Weekly progress reports keep parents informed of academic progress.

Parents are asked to read and sign the following orientation documents:

- Curriculum overview descriptions
- Required supply list
- Home reading program agreement
- Book responsibility agreement
- Home writing support agreement
- Home math program agreement
- Student conduct expectations
- CBLA Individual Learning Plans (when applicable)

Once orientation is complete, parents are asked to read and sign:

- Daily reading calendar
- Weekly progress reports
- Quarterly supply lists

Parents are welcome onto the open campus at any time. The Bruce Randolph School community involvement plan includes: outreach to feeder schools, parent information nights, open houses, student shadowing, mailings, newsletters, student publications, press releases, partnerships with community organizations and the universities. Some partnerships cultivate relationships around social work interventions, mental and physical health support systems and future planning.

Ongoing Evaluation

Teachers and staff evaluate their learning experiences and effectiveness on the job each semester, in order to revise and refine the ongoing staff development over time. This includes annual student and parent evaluations of student learning and achievement, as well as consideration of the annual school climate surveys. Year-end formal evaluations written by teachers are used to inform decisions about the next school year's ongoing, embedded professional development.

Friends of Randolph Foundation

The Friends of Bruce Randolph Foundation will be a non-profit, private source of funding that will provide resources to ensure equal opportunities for excellence among all students. The Foundation will seek local and national contributions, from individuals and organizations. This source of money will supplement and support the learning experiences of students. A small board, including the principal, some school staff, and some community members will manage the Foundation Fund.

K. Waters & C. LaHue 2006