

## **DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

### **GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS**

#### **ACE**

The Advanced College Experience (ACE) is a program in partnership with Westchester Community College that allows White Plains High School students to experience college-level study and earn college credit. Students earn high school credit as well, at either the general or Honors level, depending on the course designation. Students who enroll for ACE credit pay one-third of the normal SUNY tuition (approximately \$150 for a three-credit course). They receive a SUNY transcript indicating their grades and the credits granted upon completion of their ACE courses.

#### **AVID**

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program is a structured, college preparatory system that is designed to support students in preparing for post-secondary education, particularly first-generation college attendees. White Plains began implementing the AVID program in 2010-11 with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade cohort at Eastview Middle School. The plan is to extend the program in grades 6-12, and implement the college-focused strategies throughout all secondary classrooms. For more information on AVID, please click [here](#):

#### **Balanced Literacy**

Balanced literacy is a model of literacy instruction designed to help all students learn to read and write effectively. Students receive instruction that is “balanced” between explicit skill-focused teaching in phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling, and opportunities to engage in authentic reading and writing experiences that build meaning and foster a passion for learning. Our K-8 ELA classrooms follow a balanced literacy workshop model, as developed by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In this approach, the teacher models a whole group strategy lesson in either reading or writing and then gives students large blocks of time to practice that strategy independently, in pairs or in small groups. During this time, the teacher is available to the students and sometimes meets with small flexible groups to provide instruction in a particular strategy. Much of the time, the students read independently in books of their choice or write about self-selected topics. Time is allotted at the end of the workshop for students to briefly share their reflections about how they used the strategy taught in the mini-lesson.

#### **CLI**

Since the fall of 2004 when the district established full-day kindergartens in our five elementary schools, the Children’s Literacy Initiative (CLI) has been working with us to build a strong early literacy program in grades K-2. CLI is a non-profit professional development organization devoted to improving early childhood literacy instruction. We consider them an important partner in helping us reach our second grade reading goal, which is that 90% of students will read on or above grade level by the end of second grade. For more information about the Children’s Literacy Initiative, please click [here](#):

## **DIBELS**

DIBELS stands for *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*. DIBELS tests skills that are necessary for learning to read. Children who learn these skills become good readers. The skills that we assess with DIBELS are:

- **Phonemic Awareness:** Hearing and using sounds in spoken words
- **Phonics:** Knowing the sounds of the letters and sounding out written words
- **Accurate and Fluent Reading:** Reading text easily and quickly with few errors

DIBELS is made up of short individual tests, called subtests. Each DIBELS subtest focuses on a different skill and takes about 1 minute to administer. We administer DIBELS in grades K-2 three times per year to measure whether each student is likely to be "on track" for learning to read, or whether a student may need extra support.

## **DRA**

The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is a literacy assessment that we administer in kindergarten through fifth grade two to three times per year. It is used in thousands of classrooms nationwide and establishes each child's independent reading level. After the DRA is administered, a teacher will know specifically where each student's strengths and weaknesses lie. In addition, the information will help the teacher to focus on specific goals for each student and for the class as a whole. Please click [here](#) to see the K-5 grade level benchmarks for White Plains Schools.

## **Differentiated Instruction**

Teachers strive to educate all their students and sometimes need to use multiple assignments, materials, and resources at varied levels to develop students' skills and knowledge. All students do not learn the same way or at the same rate. Differentiated instruction is a framework for planning curriculum and instruction that is challenging yet supportive to all students. In a differentiated classroom, all students have equally engaging learning tasks for the same goals, however, the materials and/or the process is offered on a variety of levels.

## **Great Books**

*Great Books* is a reading enrichment program that utilizes classic high-quality literature and the "shared inquiry" approach to enhance reading comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary, and writing. **Shared Inquiry** is a discussion method, a teaching and learning environment, and a way for participants to achieve a more thorough understanding of a complex text by discussing questions, responses, and insights with fellow readers. The Great Books program was established in 1947, and is used in thousands of K-12 and college classrooms across the country. White Plains uses the *Great Books* program in grades 2-8. For more information on *Great Books*, please click [here](#):

### **I-Block**

In order to meet students' individual needs across a diverse spectrum, elementary schools implement the "Intervention Block" (I-Block) to flexibly re-group students by level and provide targeted instruction. I-Block is conducted 30-40 minutes per day, 5 days per cycle outside of core curricular areas so students who are pulled-out at this time will not miss new content. For students reading below grade level, instruction focuses on specific strategies that accelerate their literacy development. For students reading on and above grade level, instruction focuses on deepening their knowledge and literacy skills. The *Great Books* program is used to provide ELA enrichment in grades 2-5 during I-Block.

### **Read 180**

Read 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development proven to raise reading achievement for struggling secondary readers. The program uses adaptive technology to individualize instruction for students and provide powerful data for teachers to differentiate their instruction. The Read 180 program is currently being used in the District in grades 6 and 9.

### **System 44**

*System 44* is a foundational reading and phonics intervention technology program for our most challenged readers in Grades 3–12. The program includes state-of-the-art adaptive reading technology that delivers explicit, research-based reading and phonics instruction as well as engaging, high-interest print materials for student practice in reading, writing, and spelling.