

KEY EVENTS IN THE SELECTION OF HARCOURT'S STORYTOWN

In September 2005, the Beaverton School District began a two-year process for adopting a new K-12 Literacy/Language Arts program. The School Board approved and charged the Project Team to coordinate the work.

Two groups, the Language Arts/ Literacy Project Team and the Language Arts Cadre, began by reviewing the current curriculum, materials and practices. The Project Team and the Language Arts Cadre then created several documents that provide the foundation of the new Literacy/Language Arts adoption. Both of these groups are comprised of K-12 teachers and administrators, as well as Talented and Gifted Specialists, Literacy Coaches, English Language Learner Specialists, Special Education Specialists, and Information Technology Specialists. The Project Team also includes a School Board representative and community members.

The documents completed and awaiting Board approval include: the Literacy Position Paper, Language Arts and Literacy Common Core Outcomes, Literacy Best Practices, Literacy Best Practices in Action, Literacy Best Practices Glossary, Literacy Best Practices Bibliography, K-12 Literacy Learning Targets and the 6-12 Language Arts/Literature Learning Targets. These documents help guide the Language Arts materials selection process.

In April, the Project Team will be recommending Harcourt's StoryTown to the Beaverton School Board to support literacy and language arts in K-5 classrooms. Below are the key events in this process.

Key Events:

Phase One: November 20 and 21 - Fifty classroom teachers, selected via volunteering through BEA or nominations by administrators, attended presentations given by all five publishers that were approved by the ODE. The teachers in this process evaluated publisher materials based on the Beaverton School District Literacy Learning Targets. The teachers then provided input to the Project Team via, questions, comments and preferences. These teachers also submitted their preferences to the Project Team to remove two publishers.

Phase One Response: November 27 - Based on the information gathered by teachers in Phase One, the Project Team removed two publishers from the selection process and moved three publishers forward. More detailed information can be found in the Project Team minutes for November 27.

Phase Two: January 8- Elementary principals, literacy coaches, English Language Learners specialists, Special Education specialists, and parent representatives, attended three publisher presentations. Using the same criteria as teachers in Phase One, and an additional scoring guide designed by LA Cadre members, attendees submitted questions, comments and preferences to Project Team.

Phase Two: January 9 - LA Cadre, Executive Committee and Project Team members attended three publisher presentations. Using the same criteria as teacher in Phase One, and an additional scoring guide designed by LA Cadre members, attendees submitted questions, comments and preferences to Project Team.

Phase Three: January 26, 27, 28, 29 and February 1- Open House opportunities were provided for staff and community to review materials and provide input regarding the remaining three publishers. Approximately 200 people volunteered to provided input via questions, comments and preferences to the Project Team.

Phase Two and Three Response: February 5- The Project Team met and considered the feedback from Phase One, Two and Three representatives. After reviewing all the data provided via the various sessions, the Project Team elected to narrow the publishers from three to two. More detailed information can be found in the Project Team minutes from February 5.

Phase Three, part 2: February 8- A "Final Look" Open House opportunity was provided for staff and community members. The final two publishers made materials available for viewing at district office from noon to 8 pm. Forty attendees provided input via questions, comments and preferences to the Project Team.

Phase Three, part 2 Response: February 22 -The Project Team considered the input collected from all participants in Phase One, Two and Three. A list of all questions and comments were faxed ahead of time to the final two publishers for response at the special Project Team meeting.

Both publishers were provided ninety minutes to address in detail the questions brought forth from staff and community members. Publishers were also asked to provide details about grades K, 3 and 5 programs, and explain implementation possibilities for classroom teachers.

Following the publisher presentations, the Project Team discussed how each of

the publisher materials supported our Literacy Learning Targets. The Project Team voted and strongly supported recommending Harcourt's StoryTown to the School Board in April for adoption in the 2007-2008 school year. StoryTown's materials best met our selection process to support the needs of students in classrooms K-5. More detailed information can be found in the Project Team minutes for February 22.

March 20 - Harcourt presented an overview of StoryTown to Beaverton teachers and the community at Fir Grove Elementary from 7-9 pm. This opportunity was provided for those who wished to ask further questions of the publisher and to view the proposed Language Arts adoption materials.

April 11 - School Board Meeting - Harcourt's StoryTown to be presented to the Board for a First Reading.

Harcourt's StoryTown

FAQs

Who is on the Project Team?

The Project Team is comprised of a School Board member, community members, Regional Administrators, K-12 principals, K-12 teachers, Special Education Specialists, English Language Learner Specialists, Talented and Gifted Specialists, Literacy Coaches, IT Specialists, Language Arts and Literacy Specialists and an Assessment specialist. You can find the individual names and school assignments on the district web page.

Why was StoryTown selected?

After considerable input and review StoryTown was selected for recommendation to the School Board for adoption in 2007-2008. Below are just a few of the components:

- Both fiction and non fiction text
- Spelling, grammar, and handwriting components
- Six Traits + 1 instruction in writing
- Online technology to support teachers with planning
- Online assessments for students
- Connection to Oregon Standards and Literary Learning Targets
- All teacher and student materials are available online
- Podcast training opportunities
- Plus much, much more.....

The district is confident that this publisher meets Oregon Standards and the Literacy Learning Targets. You are invited to read the minutes from the February 22 meeting to view other specific comments.

What has been the process for notifying teachers about the decision?

After the Project Team meeting on February 22, an e-mail was sent out to all K-5 principals and regional administrators. The following morning, an e-mail was sent out to all Phase One, Two and Three participants. These are the groups that participated in publisher presentations and those who signed in at the Open House opportunities. In addition, the information was posted on the district web site under the QCC for English/Language Arts.

What was the vote among teachers and community members for each program?

The School Board has charged the Project Team with making the final decision regarding all recommendations regarding materials. The Project Team is the only group that votes.

All other individuals who participated provided input via questions, concerns and comments. No voting process was established or implemented in this process, but the feedback and comments provided direction to the Project Team. Finally, it is important to note that although all elementary staff members were invited to provide input, not all elementary staff members participated in this process. Some staff felt that this preference served as a "vote"; however, since that was not the intent nor was a "vote" communicated to all staff as part of the process, the Project Team could not consider preferences as votes. As we move into the 6-12 adoption we will clarify how preferences will be utilized in the final decision.

How was the input given by teachers factored into the final decision?

The strengths, weaknesses, and questions provided by staff were critical to the final decision and to the discussions had by Project Team and the publisher representatives. This input helped focus the agenda of the final meeting on February 22. The concerns brought up by teachers and the answers provided by Harcourt can be found on the district web site under the K-5 adoption. MacMillan-McGraw did not provide such a document.

Was some input given more weight or consideration?

The Project Team took into consideration that those who attended the Open House events did not have publisher presentations or all the materials available for viewing. Therefore, those participants may not have all of their questions answered. However, all of these comments were still read and considered in the process. Some of the concerns were answered by Project Team members themselves.

One example of this type of comment came from one reviewer who wrote that *she did not support publisher "X" because they did not have guided readers for third grade students, (it seems that at the Open House these guided readers were removed from the table and left elsewhere in the room)*. This is just one example where a comment we received was a result of misinformation. We apologize for not having full materials on site. This feedback will help guide our 6-8 Open House process.

When we went to preview StoryTown, the materials were incomplete. If this was a favored program why wasn't all the information available for teachers to preview?

Phase One and Two participants (about 150 individuals) were able to see more of the StoryTown program than was available at the Open House. These groups were also fortunate enough to be able to ask questions and review the online components. All of the StoryTown materials are available online. This includes teacher edition and student edition as well as guided reading books, all blackline masters and much, much more. StoryTown also has staff development opportunities available on the web. Again, we apologize for not having everything at the Open House event. If the School Board votes to adopt StoryTown, the online information will be available to all teachers.

What happened between the time teachers looked at the materials of the final two publishers on February 8, and the announcement of a party to celebrate Harcourt?

You are encouraged to read the above timeline and the Project Team minutes for February 22. The intent of the word "celebrate" was to announce the fact that Project Team had completed its work in selecting a publisher to recommend to the School Board in April.

What was the vote?

The vote by Project Team was overwhelmingly in support of Harcourt's StoryTown. The details of the vote is in the February 22 minutes.

What is the teacher expectation of using Harcourt?

StoryTown's materials provide a balanced comprehensive literacy and language arts program that is researched based and supports the Beaverton Literacy Learning Targets and the Oregon Department of Education standards

Teachers will be expected to use StoryTown as their predominate source of materials. They will utilize their own professional judgment based on individual student needs as to the rate, pace and item selection to provide their students with the best opportunity to increase their achievement. Materials currently available to teachers will be utilized when appropriate based on assessment of student need.

StoryTown includes both fiction and non fiction text, spelling, grammar, handwriting and the Six Traits + 1 instruction in writing. In addition, online technology is available to support teachers with planning to help students meet the grade level targets. Online support is also available for teachers with regards to staff development. Teachers can download training videos to their computers or their iPods for training at school or at home.

Teachers who use StoryTown can feel confident that they are meeting Beaverton's Literacy Learning Targets.