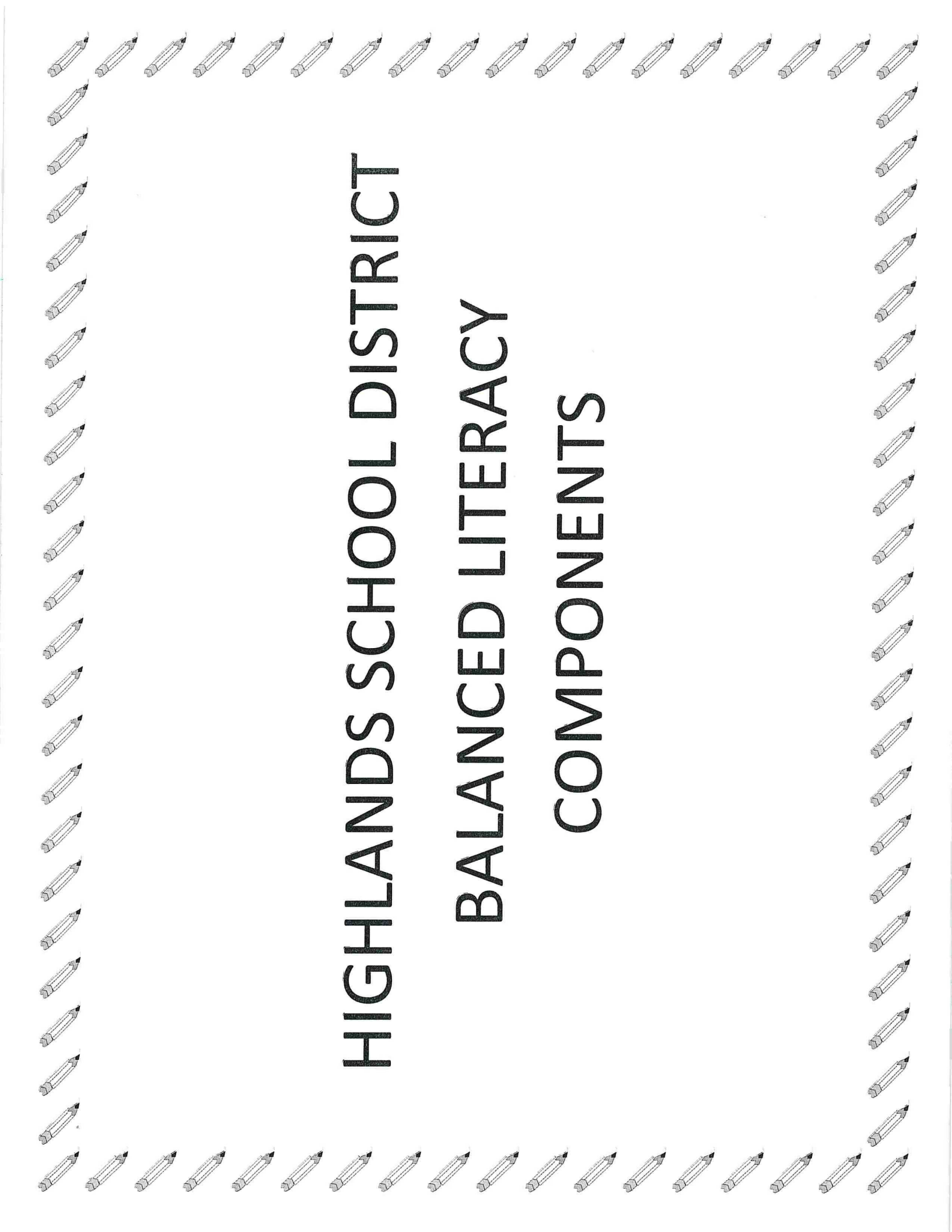


A decorative border of pencils surrounds the text. The pencils are arranged in a rectangular frame, with some pencils pointing inwards and others pointing outwards, creating a sense of depth and focus on the central text.

HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT BALANCED LITERACY COMPONENTS

READ ALOUD

Why use read/think aloud?

- Inspires students to read for enjoyment and motivates students to read.
- Creates community of readers through enjoyment and shared knowledge.
- Builds prior knowledge.
- Develops knowledge of written language syntax.
- Increases vocabulary.
- Develops a sense of story structure.
- Develops knowledge of how texts are structured.
- Supports text comprehension.
- Makes complex ideas available to students.
- Sets expectations for student learning and practice during independent reading.

How do teachers select books for read/think aloud?

- Select texts from a variety of genres (fiction) and content areas (nonfiction).
- Select favorite texts for special features (i.e. writer's craft).
- Select texts that will inspire students.

What does read/think aloud look like?

Teacher's Role:

- Model fluency strategies (using expression, phrasing)
- Make thinking explicit through think alouds

Students' Role:

- Be active listeners & participants during the read aloud
- Be aware of their thinking processes (may track their thinking in reading journals, on post-its, or during discussions)
- Identify modeled strategies
- Share their thinking

Some processes/strategies to create and sustain meaning:

- Making connections
- Making and confirming predictions
- Questioning
- Monitoring understanding
- Rereading to regain meaning
- Setting a purpose for reading
- Visualizing
- Negotiating unknown words
- Inferring
- Highlighting how surface features signal text structure and meaning
- Highlighting how meaning is embedded in fiction and nonfiction text structures
- Summarizing to sustain meaning
- Synthesizing information

How do teachers support students through read/think aloud?

- Read/think aloud provides an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate how they make meaning of text.
- Read/think aloud introduces students to concepts and vocabulary across the curriculum.
- As teachers model their thinking aloud, they demonstrate how to use reading strategies (i.e. questioning, making connections, inferring, summarizing, synthesizing).
- Through demonstration, teachers show explicit ways in which readers engage in text and share their pleasure in reading.
- Read/think aloud develops awareness of a variety of text structures.
- Read/think aloud opens new doors to students and provides them with new ways of thinking about life and the world around them.

SHARED READING

Why use shared reading?

- Benefits students by reading with a fluent reader.
- Allows for a public demonstration of reading skills.
- Provides the teacher with immediate access to student thinking.
- Provides opportunity to participate and behave as a reader.
- Supports the wide range of reading abilities in the classroom.
- Provides collaborative support from the group.
- Supports students in other curricular areas and in test preparation.
- Creates body of known texts that students can use for independent reading and as resources for writing and word study.
- Provides additional time for formative assessment.
- Grows out of needs of students
- Shows how to consistently integrate strategies in order to understand a variety of texts in a variety of genres.

What does shared reading look like?

- Teacher selects text to use that is in response to the identified needs of the students.
- An enlarged text or individual copies for all students are needed
- Teachers are modeling habits and behaviors of fluent readers, encouraging students to practice the strategy with her/him, assessing on the run, listening in on partnership conversations.
- Teachers read with students while at the same time making their own thinking processes visible for students.
- Students are looking at text, listening as teacher reads text out loud and models specific strategies, practicing using reading strategies with the text, turning to talk to their reading partners, reading along.

Materials needed for shared reading:

- Enlarged texts in a variety of genres
- Student copies of text
- Shared reading folder

Some strategies for expanding meaning:

- Character analysis
- Author's purpose/bias
- Theme
- Symbolism
- Reading with a writer's eye
- Recognizing & understanding author's use of literacy techniques
- Interpreting figurative language
- Recognize fact/opinion
- Determining importance
- Synthesizing

How do teachers support students in shared reading?

- Build fluency through repeated readings (i.e. Readers' theater)
- Highlight essential comprehension strategies:
 - Previewing the text and having expectations – text features, genre, purpose for reading
 - Locating oneself in text – activating prior knowledge, questioning, locating important and interesting information
 - Envisioning – creating a movie in your mind, graphic organizers, sketching
 - Inferring – thinking about big ideas in text, author's tone, perspective
 - Synthesizing – reading and thinking, "What do I know now about this topic?"
- Where is the evidence to support my thinking?
 - Highlight essential reading skills:
 - Rereading for meaning
 - Using context clues to figure out unknown words
 - Word attack skills for decoding

GUIDED READING

What is guided reading?

A teacher assists and conferences with individuals and/or small groups of students at their instructional reading level in strategic behaviors with both familiar and new texts in accordance to grade level, content area, and the Standards.

Why guided reading?

- Guided reading creates a social context in which students are expected to engage with other readers as they process text.
- Social support allows readers to successfully create meaning with a variety of increasingly complex texts.
- The social setting deepens relationships in a community of learners by building on the ideas of others, as students think, talk, and question their way to deeper meaning.
- In the gradual release of responsibility, guided practice allows students coaching and guidance in their attempts to apply skills and strategies.

What are some possibilities for resources?

Internet articles, periodicals, short story collections, excerpts from longer texts, leveled readers, poetry, essays, speeches... commentaries

What is the teacher's role during guided reading?

- The teacher meets with students individually or with small needs-based groups to discuss and apply reading skills and strategies.
- The focus during guided practice is based on students' needs reflected through both formal and informal assessments.
- The text selected is compelling, provides adequate challenge, and engages students in authentic reading experiences.
- The teacher monitors student learning along the way through informal assessments (e.g. *running records*, *reading journals*, *reading conferences*, etc).
- Teachers provide the context and support for readers in making basic meaning by providing guided practice and coaching students in their application of skills and strategies previously taught.
- Teachers may segment the text in order to focus students' thinking on making meaning, and then guide students to a deeper understanding of the text through thinking, talking, and questioning as a group.
- Teachers provide specific feedback about process and content that supports students in making meaning and moving along the continuum.

What is the student's role during guided reading?

- Students are working with the teacher to apply the skills and strategies introduced during the read-aloud, shared reading, or mini-lesson and transferring these to other contexts.
- Students learn how various types of texts work.
- Each student has a copy of the text.

How do teachers support students in guided reading?

A sample guided reading lesson may include:

1. Re-reading of previous material
2. Introduction of skill focus
3. Reading a new selection
4. Retelling
5. Mini-lesson

What are some guided reading principles?

- Guided reading is not choral reading, round robin reading, or popcorn reading
- Guided reading is a form of individual/small group instruction where students read a new text at their own pace following a well-planned, supportive introduction
- Students at the lowest level meet daily for guided reading

Guided reading can take the following formats:

- Literature circles
- Book clubs
- Reading conferences as done in a reading workshop approach

WORD STUDY

How does word study differ from the traditional teaching of spelling and language?

Traditional spelling and language lessons are based on whole group instruction of a single list of spelling words or a single language skill determined by conceptual theme, spelling feature, grade level, or spelling/grammar rule without consideration of a student's preexisting knowledge base. Students work to memorize words/rules through rote activities or exercises that are isolated and divorced from their individual reading and writing.

Word study acknowledges the predictable continuum of development and is student-centered. The lessons involve hands-on learning activities as students actively engage in a variety of tasks to learn about the English language. Students work with spelling and language in conjunction with their daily reading and writing.

What is word study?

Word Study in our balanced literacy framework is defined to include the study vocabulary, spelling, and word analysis. Instruction should include direct vocabulary instruction, spelling embedded into reading and writing, and the intentional teaching of word analysis skills in decoding words.

What does a word study lesson look like?

- **Teacher Modeling:** The teacher introduces the concept explicitly modeling his/her thinking by sharing a model from literature, a student, or his/her own writing.
- **Shared Practice:** The teacher and students work together to apply the concept taught.
- **Guided Practice:** Students practice and apply independently or in small groups while the teacher offers feedback and support as needed.
- **Independent Application:** Students apply the concept in their daily reading and writing, as the teacher watches for continued evidence of understanding.

What are the guiding principles of word study?

- Word study is not rote memorization of lists of spelling words only to take a test on Friday.
- Word study is not meaningless word searches, word puzzles, or just writing words multiple times.
- Word study is taught daily for 15-30 minutes, depending on grade level and student need.
- Word study must include teacher assessment in order to determine each student's progress.
- Word study includes the study of grade level high frequency, irregular, difficult, and content vocabulary words.

MODELING OF WRITING

What is modeling of writing?

During writing modeling, teachers model their own writing as they explicitly share their thinking while they write. Writing demonstrations occur in front of students as teachers engage in their own authentic writing. Teachers-as-writers demonstrate all phases of their thinking: modeling their approaches to meeting the purpose of the piece, addressing the audience, organizing and supporting ideas, attending to style, and/or using writing as a tool for thinking. Over time, students may also demonstrate their thinking in order to provide multiple perspectives of the writing process.

Why do model writing?

- Modeling reveals the otherwise invisible ways of thinking about and creating a piece of writing.
- Writing demonstrations model the processes proficient writers use when creating a formal or informal piece of writing.
- As teachers model, they set expectations for student learning and practice during independent writing.

What does modeling look like?

- Teachers establish an instructional focus based on the writing process and patterns of writing behaviors students are demonstrating along the writing continuum.
- Teachers model their own writing and explicitly share their thinking.
- The modeling usually takes the form of a 10 minute mini-lesson, typically for whole group although sometimes for small group instruction.
- Students practice the modeled thinking or process in the context of their own writing.
- A modeling might occur prior to beginning a piece of writing or at any other point during the writing process.
- Modeling is an integral part of literacy instruction and become part of regular practice.
- Teachers set expectations for student learning during a writing modeling and subsequent independent practice.
- Teachers use mentor text to demonstrate elements of writers' craft and the process of writing.

How do teachers determine an instructional focus?

- Analyze student writing for strengths and approximations (looking for application of the writing process, application of grammar usage, evidence of spelling strategies, etc).
- Monitor student understandings of processes through independent writing.
- Monitor student thinking through informal writing.
- Reference the state standards for grade-level expectations.

What are some processes / strategies that might be modeled?

The items listed are merely possibilities for demonstration. These lists are not exhaustive nor are they to be used as a checklist. Demonstrations should be based on student needs as identified from the writing continuum.

Writing to learn:

Informal writing that promotes student understanding and thinking.

- Directed free writes
- Reaction / position statements
- Annotation
- Reflective writing
- Summary / Interviews
- Response writing, including: making connections, making predictions, and questioning

Learning to Write:

Formal writing that demonstrates student understanding and learning

- All phases of writing process, including:
 - Forming intentions
 - Planning
 - Composing
 - Revising
- Editing (role of conventions in meaning)
- Publishing
- Organization and patterns of extending writing
- Short responses (approaches and characteristics)
- Specialized/ technical writing characteristics
- Working with the demands of various genres

GUIDED WRITING

What is guided writing?

Guided writing is an interim step between teacher directed and independent writing. It is a highly focused writing experience designed to teach a specific skill or strategy to the whole group, a small group, or an individual student, and to allow students to explore aspects of the writing process that have been previously demonstrated. The teacher provides support for students as needed. It is intended to promote critical thinking about the writing process.

Why do guided writing?

- Guided writing provides students with the opportunity to be creative and to learn to be the author of a variety of texts.
- Students will be encouraged to write for a variety of purposes.
- The differentiated approach allows students to move through the writing process and develop skills and strategies at their own pace, thus gaining more knowledge as their individual needs are addressed.

What does guided writing look like?

- Guided writing may be done as a small group activity.
- Groups are small, flexible, and short term. They are determined by students' needs.
- Teachers may provide guidance and instruction to individuals through individual writing conferences.
- The students do the writing, but are supported as needed by a teacher in a writing conference or mini-lesson.

How do teachers support students in guided writing?

- The teacher presents a mini-lesson. This is a brief lecture, demonstration, or writing tip that emerges from what the teacher notices the students need to learn from observing their writing, conferring with them, and reviewing their writing folders.
- As the students write, the teacher walks around providing links to previously taught mini-lessons giving them an opportunity to engage with the mini-lesson concepts while the teacher is close by to guide and support.
- This time might be an opportunity to stretch and expand the writing skills of gifted students, to re-teach key writing skills for struggling students, or to demonstrate an informational text feature a group of students would find helpful in their content writing.

What does a writing conference look like?

The teacher meets with students, either individually or in small needs-based groups, engaging them in conversations that enable the writer to move forward with the writing process.

What does a skill introduction look like?

A skill introduction is a brief lecture, demonstration, or writing tip that highlights a particular aspect of writing (i.e. elements of various text types, grammar, punctuation, spelling, the writing process, etc.). It is often linked to reading, and various text types may be used during a mini-lesson as a model of writing.

INDEPENDENT WRITING

What is independent writing?

Independent writing happens at all stages of instruction and is used to support thinking. Students apply their understandings of the writing process and the writer's craft as they demonstrate their ability to write in a variety of contexts. Writing practice is ongoing and occurs daily in a variety of forms.

Why use independent writing?

- Writing is a craft to be taught and it requires practice.
- Independent writing is a tool that allows students to practice what they already know, refine what they are learning and attempt what they are just discovering.
- Through writing, students will develop deeper understandings around content.
- Writing is thinking on paper. "If I can write about it, I know I've got it."
- When students have a purpose for writing and an authentic audience, they will write.

How do writers' notebooks support student learning?

- They are a primary means of developing a writer's process.
- They provide an opportunity to monitor growth over time.

What does independent writing look like?

- Teachers provide adequate time for students to think about and practice independent writing.
- The primary focus is on writing as a means for thinking, reflection and supporting new learning.
- Teachers monitor student progress along the writing continuum.
- Students engage in multiple writing experiences and contexts that are both teacher and student selected.
- Teachers provide rubrics and models of proficient writing to support students' self-evaluation of writing.
- Teachers develop a culture that supports many opportunities for student conversation to promote thinking in writing.
- Student progress is guided through conversations with other writers at every stage of the process.
- Students have opportunities to set and self-evaluate writing goals.
- The Writer's Notebook is an important tool to support students in their writing process.

How do teachers support independent writing?

- Writing conferences occur daily during all phases of the writing process and might include finding ideas for writing, focusing a topic, expanding an idea, seeking feedback from other writers, etc.
- Independent writing is used for investigations and the expansion of ideas.
- Teachers meet with small, flexible groups to provide instruction around a specific focus on the writing continuum.
- Teachers create contexts that provide many opportunities for students to write in a variety of genres and allow students to revisit genres of their choice throughout the year.
- Student writing can take different forms as students choose the direction for their writing based on purpose, interest and genre.
- Teachers create agency by promoting student independence and decision-making throughout the writing process.
- Teachers provide an avenue for students to collect their writing over time and opportunities to reflect on their growth as writers.
- Teachers provide numerous opportunities for students to share and celebrate writing.