

POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

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TO: NSBSD Board of Education Members
FROM: Regina H. Paul
RE: Proposed Language Arts and Mathematics Objectives for Grades 6–8
DATE: March 23, 2018

The notes that follow will help explain the objectives that are being proposed for adoption by the NSBSD Board of Education for language arts and mathematics for grades 6–8. These objectives are a continuation of the K–5 objectives that were adopted by the Board at its February meeting. Much of this document is a recap of what I presented to you at that meeting inasmuch as these objectives build directly on the foundation that was laid in the K–5 objectives you adopted in February.

These proposed objectives for grades 6–8 have benefitted from the careful review and editing of a group of NSBSD language arts and mathematics teachers, who worked with me on March 19 and 20 at Hopson. I have truly never worked with a better group of middle school teachers.

The objectives are rigorous.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, these proposed language arts and mathematics objectives for grades 6–8 represent very high standards for the learning expected of NSBSD students and go well beyond what is required by the State of Alaska in its State Standards for these grades.

Because students who will be grades 6–8 in 2018–2019 will not have had the benefit of the newly adopted K–5 objectives, it is probable that language arts and mathematics teachers in grades 6–8 will need to look back for objectives from earlier grades to fill in some learning gaps. For that reason, full implementation of these proposed objectives for grades 6–8 may take a couple of years. With that said, learning is likely to improve in grades 6–8 even in this first year of implementation.

The objectives include the performance expectations from the Iñupiaq Learning Framework.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, the Iñupiaq Learning Framework (ILF) performance expectations that are most closely matched to language arts and mathematics content are included in these proposed objectives for grades 6–8. While the language arts and mathematics teachers are not responsible for teaching the Iñupiaq language, they will be including Iñupiaq cultural content and using Iñupiaq vocabulary in their classes regularly (e.g., language arts teachers teach one new Iñupiaq word each week; mathematics teachers use numbers through 100 in Iñupiaq, as appropriate).

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, each objective that helps teach one of the ILF's performance expectations is coded to that performance expectation at the end of the

objective. Those codes are in parentheses, and they begin with “ILF.” Following “ILF” is the code for the actual performance expectation, as presented in the ILF itself, so it is easy to look it up and check it out in the context of its level, realm, and strand. If an objective is coded to an ILF performance expectation, it is the first code that follows the objective.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, the inclusion of performance expectations from the ILF has made these proposed language arts and mathematics objectives more intellectually engaging, more academically challenging, and more practically relevant to NSBSD students.

The objectives include the State of Alaska’s Cultural Standards.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, these proposed language arts and mathematics objectives for grades 6–8 include those Alaska Cultural Standards for Students that are most closely matched to language arts and mathematics content.

Each objective that helps teach one of Alaska’s Cultural Standards is coded to that standard at the end of the objective. Those codes are in parentheses, and they begin with “ACS.” Following “ACS” is the code for the actual Alaska Cultural Standard, so it is easy to look it up and check it out in the context of its strand (A, B, C, D, or E).

The objectives include all of the State of Alaska’s English/Language Arts Standards, and Mathematics Standards.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, these proposed language arts and mathematics objectives for grades 6–8 include all of Alaska’s English/Language Arts Standards, which are broken down by grade level; all of Alaska’s Standards for Mathematical Content, which are broken down by grade level; and all of Alaska’s Standards for Mathematical Practice, which are more general standards that run across all grades K–12.

The most important point is that all of the required Alaska standards are covered in these new objectives. The details of how individual objectives are coded to individual Alaska English/language arts and mathematics standards follow.

Each objective that helps teach one of Alaska’s English/Language Arts Standards is coded to that standard at the end of the objective. These codes are in parentheses, and they begin with an abbreviation for the strand (e.g., SL for Speaking and Listening), followed by the grade level and then the code for the actual standard.

Each objective that helps teach one of Alaska’s Standards for Mathematical Content is coded to that standard at the end of the objective. Those codes are in parentheses, and they begin with a grade level, followed by an abbreviation for the strand (e.g., G for Geometry) and then the code for the actual standard.

Each objective that helps teach one of Alaska’s Standards for Mathematical Practice is coded to that standard at the end of the objective. Those codes are in parentheses, and they begin with “SMP,” followed by the code for the actual standard.

The objectives are not listed in a teaching sequence.

Just as with the newly adopted K–5 objectives, these proposed objectives may be taught in any order and may be grouped into any logical units that make sense to the individual

teacher who is teaching them. The presentation of the objectives in these numbered lists does not imply a suggested or mandatory teaching sequence within a grade level.

The objectives for grade 8 mathematics.

The objectives for grade 8 mathematics are titled Algebra. That is because virtually all of the content for the eighth-grade year is algebra or related to algebra (e.g., through the solving of equations, the application of formulas). The grade 8 objectives form a very strong foundation for the more advanced study of algebra and other mathematics disciplines in high school. All eighth graders will complete this entire year of mathematics.

Any advanced students who want to do additional work in eighth grade in order to earn a high school credit for Algebra I will be given the opportunity to complete additional units of algebra objectives during the second semester of eighth grade (i.e., through supervised independent study at Hopson or through an arrangement of the school's choice in the village schools).

Motion: "I move that the NSBSD Board of Education approve the proposed Language Arts and Mathematics objectives for Grades 6–8."

Motion By _____ Seconded By _____

Advisory Vote _____ Vote: _____