K – 12 Reading/Language Arts Program Learning Principles

1. The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.
Therefore, we will help students activate prior knowledge, connect old and new information, learn new material, and use what they have learned in authentic situations.

2. Learning takes place when new information is linked with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.
Therefore, it is a priority that we ensure that students understand why we are learning the content. We will begin instruction with an anticipatory set that demonstrates relevancy to students, scaffold instruction to build on existing knowledge, and close lessons with activities that reinforce the connection and relevance of the material.

3. Learning involves connecting to the present, to the past, and to the possibilities of the future.
Therefore, we will make relevant connections to the real world and will provide opportunities for students to understand that the present connects to the past and affects the future.

4. Process and product are equally important in language and instruction.
Therefore, we will explicitly model self-reflection and self-assessment and will provide opportunities for self-evaluation and prompt, candid feedback. Our students will receive regular and specific feedback related to progress against standards and timely opportunities to use the feedback to re-do and improve.

5. Research shows active learning is essential.
Therefore, we will provide tasks that require meaningful use of knowledge: analyzing perspectives, supporting opinions, investigating, solving problems, making decisions, and inventing products.

6. Learning is a social activity. Our learning is intimately associated with our connection with other human beings.
Therefore, we will build relationships with and among our students by facilitating discussions, building empathy, and structuring a climate of intrinsic motivation.

7. Relevance is essential to learning; hence it is essential to teaching and assessing.
Therefore, learning will include real world exposure, cross-curricular connections, and high interest materials.

8. Learning is most effective when differences in learners' prior knowledge, interests, and strengths are accommodated.
Therefore, we will differentiate instruction and assessment to accommodate different learning styles and educational needs.

9. To maximize learning, learners need multiple opportunities to practice in a risk-free environment.
Therefore, we will provide a supportive environment based on self-discovery and the respectful exchange of ideas.

10. Motivation influences learning.
Therefore, we will work to stimulate students with tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty that are relevant to personal interests and provide personal choice and control.

11. Assessment is vital for learning.
Therefore, we will create a variety of differentiated assessments that measure knowledge, application, process and product, self-evaluation, and growth.

12. Technology should be an integral part of the student's experience, enhancing learning and the ability to express ideas.
Therefore, we will model and encourage the use of technology as a tool for instruction, research, application, and communication.