April 22, 2014

Dear Michigan Teacher or Librarian,

There are many ways to incorporate the Common Core State Standards in the classroom and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) offers free resources to help with understanding classroom impact of the standards, as well as implementation strategies to incorporate into day-to-day activities.

One resource that makes a huge impact on every school is the collaborative relationship between its teachers and school librarians. School librarians are information technology specialists and can provide assistance with lesson planning and integration of information resources that are available in individual school districts and outside venues, such as the public library. These resources can be leveraged to help with lesson planning, text set creation, and blending the use of fiction and nonfiction for classroom and project assignments.

Please find attached to this document some examples of text sets created through a collaboration of MDE, public, and school librarians. Using The Hunger Games as the focal text, the group of educators produced three examples of how sets of books can be intentionally chosen to build background knowledge and provide supporting reading materials at a variety of levels. More text sets and supportive resources can be found at the website: http://www.ccsso.org/Navigating_Text_Complexity.html

There are resources available, for no cost, to assist educators in creating their own text sets. Lexile leveling tools, Novelist K-8 Plus, and the M.O.R.E. Portal are available for determining book levels and searching lesson plans and curriculum aides. The Michigan eLibrary is useful for gathering additional reading materials through the interlibrary loan of physical materials, via MeLCat, as well as the Kids Gateway for searching e-reading materials. Of course your public library is a great resource for connecting to supports and programs. These tools provide numerous suggestions on the levels of particular texts, how to find and pair texts and topics, and ways to bring in more source materials by downloading or borrowing them from other locations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of ways to support implementation of the Common Core State Standards. For more information on the standards visit www.corestandards.org. If there is any way we can be of assistance to your work please contact Brandy Archer at archerb2@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Brandy Archer, MDE, Content Area Literacy Consultant
Lisa Brakel, District School Librarian, Airport Community Schools
Michelle Neuwirth Gray, Information Services Librarian, Canton Public Schools
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