



# Escambia County Public Schools Elementary ELA Updates

Need ELA help? Complete this form <https://bit.ly/ELAAssist>

December  
2024-25

## ELA Team

K-12 Specialist:  
Melissa (Lisa) Marsh

Teachers on Special  
Assignment:  
Alison Brantley  
Jodie Landry-Hoke  
Kim Gunn

Literacy Coach:  
Tonya DeLorm

Educational Support:  
Phyllis McDurmont

Office Phone:  
429-2950

## Important Dates

Literacy Rep.  
Meetings  
In person at Spencer  
Bibbs Room 147

January 13  
February 10

**Spelling Bee**  
Jan. 16 at 6 p.m.

**Celebrate Literacy  
Week** Jan 27-31

ECPS Writing  
Progress Monitoring  
Jan 27-31

ELA Canvas Hub  
<https://escambia.instructure.com/enroll/4PLH4D>

**Escambia Literacy  
Association Survey  
Please!**

<https://bit.ly/3ZoYw4Z>



# FAST TIPS

For PM 2, remember that students should not skip questions, even if they intend to go back and answer. This includes previewing questions. If a student skips or guesses a lot (or the test thinks they are skipping), they are going to get lower ability questions, which can mean a lower score. Tell students:

- ◆ Take your time!
- ◆ Read the passage completely before reading the questions.
- ◆ Try to answer every question the first time; don't skip.
- ◆ Don't leave anything blank.

## AMIRA



### Benchmark 2

is set for January 13-February 14. This means that beginning January 13th, when students log on, they will be directed to take a benchmark assessment. It is a good idea to prepare students in advance and have the environment set for best performance.

### Minutes

Celebrate stories read—not minutes on the computer. 5 or 6 stories per week is the goal—which will be about 30 minutes per week. If students are reading above grade level passages, they may read fewer passages.

## P.D. Opportunities

### Need Reading Endorsement?

Need 40 hrs for recertification?

Go to the [Reading Endorsement Page](#) for information.

## Sandy Sansing Spelling Bee

Online school [registration forms](#) must be completed and submitted by December 13, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.

The event will be

January 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.  
at Washington High School



## Attention 2nd Grade Teachers

Second graders should be reading the passages and questions independently. (Follow IEP accommodations, of course)

Administering 2nd grade ELA assessments in Canvas is optional. Beginning with Module 6, assessments will be added to the curriculum maps so that teachers can sync them for use in Canvas, but they are not required.

Schools should decide how the grade level will administer the test. If schools want the data entered in Canvas, we highly recommend that students read the passages on paper before answering on the computer.

## Celebrate Literacy Week 2025

January 27-31

**Building Literacy  
Constructing the Foundation  
for Success!**

**Please submit your school's plan on the  
template to Kim Gunn by Dec. 19th**

# Like Bread and Butter

If students aren't writing every day, then they aren't learning to read to their fullest potential. Reading and writing are two sides of the literacy "coin". In the primary grades we teach decoding AND encoding. Writing is the "hands-on" part of the literacy process. If you can write it, then you can read it.

This is true of phonics, sentence structure, and even composition such as poetry and argumentative essays. When students use figurative language, or develop their thoughts through text structure and elaboration, they more easily recognize these craft moves that writers make.

In addition, reflecting on reading by writing about it (summarizing, paraphrasing, responding) helps the reader connect the dots of the author's message. When students are held accountable for this kind of writing, it makes their thinking visible for themselves, and also for the teacher. Summarization is a higher order thinking skill. If students can do this well independently, teachers can better gauge their ability to comprehend.

Writing tasks (shared, interactive, and independent writing) should be authentic whenever the opportunity arises. Writing instruction shouldn't be relegated to test prep writing. The state writing test rubric is based on qualities of effective writing. If students can demonstrate the qualities of good writing in their work, it will transfer to state and standardized test writing.

So don't worry that the fun, creative writing that you and students enjoy is wasting instructional time. As long as quality work is expected, the task meets a benchmark or learning target, and positive corrective feedback is provided, then students will benefit from the experience.



## Writing Progress Monitoring

January 27, 2025

1. [Grades 4 and 5 can administer](#) via: Canvas assignment, Paper and Pencil, or Paper and Google Doc shared with the teacher.
2. We will borrow grades 4 and 5 passages from the 2024 FAST Released tests.
3. K-3 Writing prompts will be added to the addendums.

## Holiday Writing Ideas

December is busy with celebrations and many opportunities for authentic writing activities. Families celebrate in a variety of ways and their traditions will differ, so writing prompts should be open-ended. Student writing that has been revised and "published" make great gifts for family.

- Acrostic poem (PEACE, JOY, CELEBRATE, etc.)
- Holiday limerick "There once was a singer named Carol. . ."
- Thank you note
- Ideal weather report for your holiday (science connection)
- Free verse greeting card
- Read a holiday classic and rewrite one event from a different character's perspective.
- How-to instructions/recipe for your perfect holiday treat (hot cocoa, gingerbread man, latkes, etc.)
- How-to instructions for a family holiday tradition
- Argumentative essay "Is it better to give or receive?"
- Expository essay "Why candles are a part of holiday traditions" [Check out National Geographic Kids to read about winter celebrations around the world.](#) (social studies connection)
- RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic) "Pretend you are Cindy Lou and write a letter to the Grinch about ways that he can increase the size of his heart."

