

# West Town Elementary School

Pre-Engineering, Math and Technology Center

**Dr. Narkisa Howard, Principal**

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Dear DCSS Families,

Welcome back to the 2025–2026 school year! I hope your summer was filled with rest, growth, and meaningful moments with loved ones. As we begin this new academic year, I want to take a moment to share an exciting update regarding English Language Arts (ELA) instruction across all K–12 classrooms in the Dougherty County School District.

This year, we are implementing Georgia’s newly adopted K–12 ELA Standards, which reflect a statewide commitment to ensuring all students develop strong literacy skills and are well-prepared for college, careers, and citizenship. These new standards are designed to elevate instruction by emphasizing critical thinking, effective communication, and real-world application of reading and writing.

## **What Are the New ELA Standards?**

The updated Georgia K–12 ELA Standards outline what students should know and be able to do in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language at every grade level. They were developed with input from educators across the state and align with the latest research in literacy development and instruction.

The standards place a strong emphasis on student voice and integrated literacy practices empowering students to think deeply, express themselves clearly, and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

**Six Teams, One Focus: Student Achievement!!!**

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## Key Shifts You May Notice This Year

As a result of these updates, here are some of the instructional shifts your child may experience in the classroom:

- **Stronger Emphasis on Student Voice:** Students will engage in writing personal narratives, opinion pieces, and reflections that connect to their experiences and values.
- **Purposeful Reading and Writing:** Students will learn to write and speak with a specific audience in mind, developing clarity, intention, and impact in their communication.
- **Integrated Literacy Instruction:** Reading and writing will be woven together in lessons that promote deep understanding and authentic expression.
- **Real-World Literacy Tasks:** From creating multimedia presentations to participating in structured discussions, students will apply literacy skills in ways that mirror real-life contexts.

## How Families Can Support at Home

- Encourage daily reading at home—books, articles, poetry, and audiobooks all count.
- Discuss with your child what they're learning in their ELA class. Ask what they're reading, writing, and discussing.
- Celebrate your child's efforts to express their ideas through writing, speaking, or creative projects.
- Stay connected with your child's teacher and school. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

I am proud of the work our teachers and instructional leaders have done to prepare for this transition. We are confident these new standards will elevate literacy instruction and open more doors for our students' futures.

Thank you for your continued partnership in making literacy a cornerstone of student success. We look forward to a year of powerful learning in every ELA classroom across DCSS.

With gratitude,

**Dr. Shanekia Williams**

Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Dougherty County School District

