

## **ISC General Meeting -- Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 9:30 a.m. – District Administration Offices**

### **Presentation: Literacy for Kids, the Ultimate Superpower**

Ms. Barbara Giorgio, LMSD Supervisor of English, Social Studies, Art and Music, and Ms. Gwen Nartowicz, Coordinator of Professional Learning and Gifted Education, presented a program to update district parents and guardians about the district's focus on Content Area Literacy.

A copy of the presentation is included in these minutes. As you read through the presentation, please note the following:

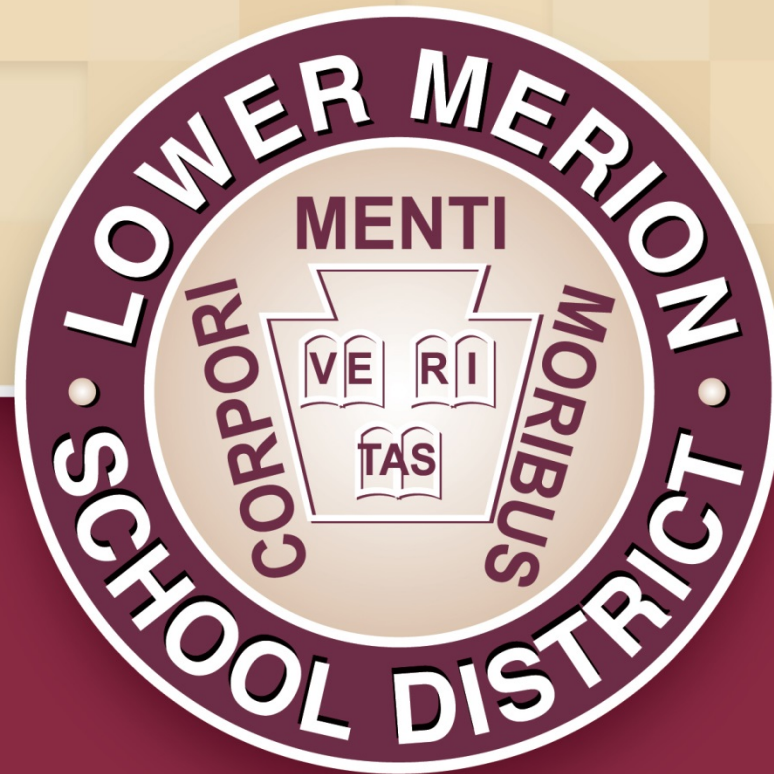
Ms. Giorgio and Nartowicz began their program by modeling and leading the attendees through an exercise in Written Conversation, one of the strategies district educators are learning and using in secondary classrooms. Article about texting in the classroom was used as the basis for this exercise.

More information about Dr. Harvey Daniels, a national consultant and author of Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading, can be found on the LMSD website and in the PowerPoint presentation. Daniels' book was given to every secondary educator in the district as part of the "enduring, multi-year literacy professional learning focus".

"PLC" (Professional Learning Communities) are regular opportunities (typically, once every 4 – 6 school days) for content area teachers to meet with each other to continue discussing strategies to encourage literacy in all classrooms.

"How's it going?" – Feedback from the teachers and students has been positive. Anecdotal remarks include middle school student asking: "When can we do the writing thing again?" and a high school Chemistry teacher reporting that "students are showing themselves" as a result of the new strategies to incorporate literacy.

**2014-15 Secondary Professional Learning Focus  
Literacy Across the Curriculum**



**LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# Focusing Activity

## Could Texting Be Good for Students?

Some teachers say the cellphone habit can have positive applications in the classroom.

By [Zach Miners](#)

Oct. 29, 2009 | 4:46 p.m. EDT



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Let's face it: Texting is here to stay. The average 13- to 17-year-old sends 2,900 texts a month, according to the market research firm Nielsen. And while it might be a punishable offense in most schools, some teachers say that texting has educational tie-ins and that it can teach positive language skills, the *Charlotte Observer* in North Carolina [reports](#).

The general thinking is that the more teenagers text, the more likely it is that abbreviations such as OMG (for "Oh my God") or mangled or simplistic syntax will seep into their schoolwork. But educators say those concerns are without merit and are not based on research.



# Written Conversations

- Directions
  - Identify a partner with whom you will be sharing your writing and make introductions
  - Write for 2-3 minutes on the following topic: What do you think about texting in school?
  - Address your writing to your partner as though you were writing a note
  - Exchange notes when directed and respond to your partner's thoughts
- Ground rule
  - Please remain silent while writing



# Reflections

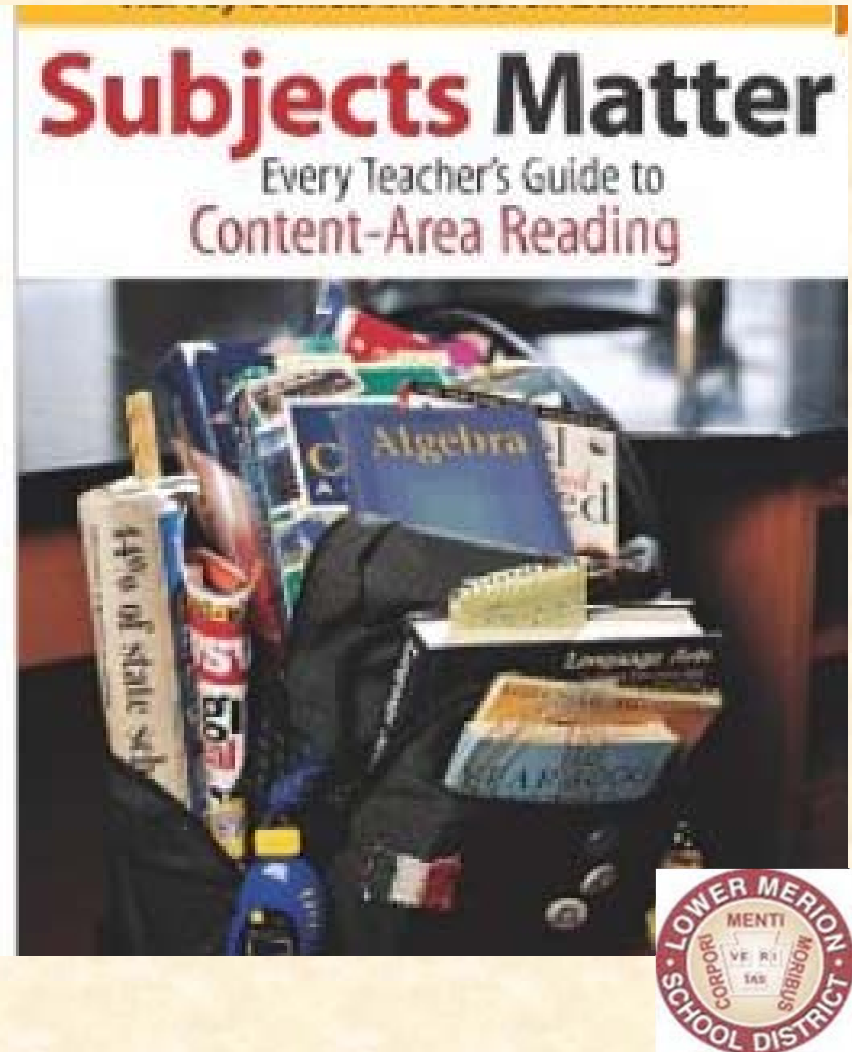
- What do we think about texting in school?
- Written Conversation
  - Everyone is engaged
  - Everyone has given thought before speaking
  - Writing is informal, similar to text and email
  - Can be used formatively by the teacher
  - One of many strategies Daniels offers



# Literacy Across the Curriculum

- What are we doing?

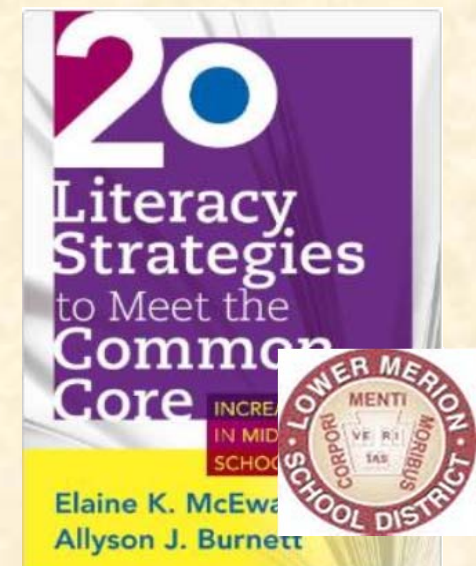
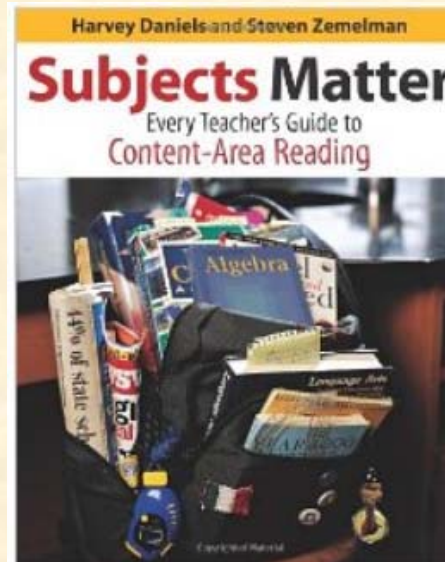
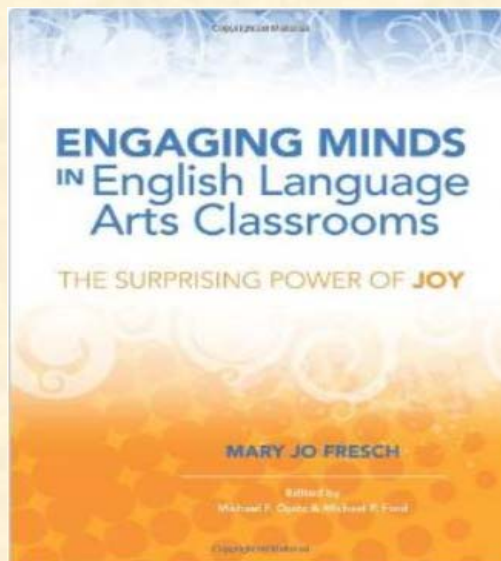
## [Content Area Literacy](#)



# Literacy Across the Curriculum

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“In an increasingly demanding world of literacy, the importance of our students leaving our schools as effective readers and writers has magnified. The ability to read well and write well has become a necessity . Today reading and writing are foundational to success.” Kelly Gallagher



# Literacy Across the Curriculum

- Why are we doing this?
  - Writing and reading to learn
    - Engages and invests students in learning
    - Supports students ability to think and question like experts
  - Shared literacy language across disciplines
  - [National Writing Project](#) (video between 2:47 and 5:13)
  - Varied and authentic purposes and audiences





# Literacy Across the Curriculum

- How are we doing this?
  - An enduring, multi-year literacy professional learning focus
  - Book study for every secondary teacher
  - Harvey Daniels' follow up visit in March 2015
  - Professional learning embedded through PLC discussions
  - Spirit and intent of the secondary writing program



# Literacy Across the Curriculum

- How's it going?
  - MS
  - HS
- What can parents do to partner with us?
  - Continue to read with and talk to your students about interesting topics focusing on what makes the reading/writing powerful




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## Could Texting Be Good for Students?

Some teachers say the cellphone habit can have positive applications in the classroom.

By Zach Miners

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The general thinking is that the more teenagers text, the more likely it is that abbreviations such as OMG (for "Oh my God") or mangled or simplistic syntax will seep into their schoolwork. But educators say those concerns are without merit and are not based on research.

Forward-thinking teachers say the informal writing style that defines text messages can be incorporated into class lessons. And a new study from California State University researchers has found that texting can improve teens' writing in informal essays and many other writing assignments.

Teachers such as Cindi Rigsbee of Orange County, N.C., have asked students to translate passages from classic literature to texting-speak to demonstrate language comprehension in different contexts. A finding from the CSU study supports that concept: "Texting-speak is not a mangled form of English that is degrading proper language but instead a kind of 'pidgin' language all its own that actually stretches teens' language skills." The research does concede that too much texting can hurt students' performance on most formal types of essay writing.

And then there are health concerns associated with texting. News reports have cited physicians' and psychiatrists' fears that the practice could take a toll on children's sleep patterns and their ability to think for themselves. Researchers also are speaking out against texting while driving; they say it can be more dangerous than drunk driving.

But civics teacher Annie McCanless says that texting has become an established part of teens' lives. "It can be used as a real tool as opposed to a hindrance," she told the *Observer*. Students interviewed by the North Carolina paper said that they routinely text their friends at night when they have questions about homework assignments or about when projects are due.

What do you think about texting in school? Are there ways to leverage the technology to boost student learning?

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TAGS: education, academics, teens, technology, high school

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