

# Fairfield's C&I Update

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## Engaging our Students to the End

As we enter into the final weeks of school, with testing nearly complete, it's time to make some fun plans for how you will spend your last few weeks with students. If you want new, creative ideas to end the year, Susan Curtis has created a list just for you. Enjoy!

**Cossondra George**, a veteran teacher at Newberry Middle School in Michigan, suggested in an Education Week Teacher post that teachers **'finish the school year not with a slow glide, but with a strong climb.'** Her ideas for having students evaluate the year of learning through an anonymous online survey offers levels of complexity fitting different ages. George also shares planning for having students write letters to next year's class, hosting

an in-class awards presentation, working with students to create a memory book, online or on paper, and more.

See suggestions for continuing learning and **Engaging our Students to the End** by Principal **Carol Hunter** at *SmartBrief on Education*.

Of course teachers need to tend to their own stress as the year ends, too. Nearly 200 teachers commented on **Elena Aguilar's** Edutopia post, **How to Stay Charged during the Final Weeks of School**. A teacher for 14 years, Aguilar is now a transformational leadership coach. In the post she offers specific tips, for example, introducing an engaging project while maintaining a familiar schedule, providing time for reflection for yourself as

well as for your students, and more.

Writing about **Six Engaging End-of-Year Projects** for Edutopia, UCLA Graduate School of Education instructor **Rebecca Alber** remembers her former high school students' post-test malaise and suggests remedies that can work for them and younger students. She points out, "They have to feel as if they aren't actually doing work. And whatever you do plan, three elements are essential: choices, creativity, and constructing." She recommends involving students in "Show What You Know," "On-Campus Field Trips," "Craft a New Ending" and more, all with cognitive demands attached.

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Click the green areas to read additional information on other sites and [here](#) to read the complete article by Susan Curtis.

## Educating English Learners

One of the very best things we can do to help our English Learners (ELs) grow steadily is to ensure that they READ, WRITE and SPEAK each and every day. Here are some tips for making sure this happens:

- Give students sentence frames for responding so that they are thinking just about the content rather than how to say or write the answer in English.
- Provide an EL student with a multiple choice response format where he/she simply reads or bubbles in the correct response.
- Be specific. When expecting an EL student to elaborate and give reasons in a response, explicitly tell him the number of reasons or examples you expect. For example, if you want students to explain why Elsa does not get along with Anna, state the question quantitatively: "Give two reasons why Elsa and Anna do not get along." Furthermore you can guide student responses by holding up fingers for each correct response.

- Provide a word bank of terms that you are looking for to show understanding of the content. Be sure to read over the words with the student prior to asking him to use the words in a response.
- Allow upper grade students to "use their notes" so they can craft better responses.

The great thing about the strategies listed above is not only are they good for our EL students, they are good strategies for ALL students. What a bonus!

*Dawn Warren Hildreth  
ESL Instructional Specialist*

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*"EL strategies are good for ALL students!"*



## What? No Netflix? Amazon Prime? Hulu?

Unfortunately the streaming sites (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, etc.) are now being blocked by our filtering provider (not FCSD). The redistribution of content in a classroom is a violation of the terms of service.

The services of a personal account are intended for home/personal use and

not for public redistribution. They started blocking streaming within the last month or so. It is not anticipated that this will change anytime soon.

The good news is we can often find alternative sources for many of the video clips we want to use for the classroom.

YouTube does have a large number of clips, and Discovery Education is also a great resource.

As always, please reach out to me, Lori, or Katie if you need help finding resources.

*Take care,*

*Dan*

*#TogetherWeCan*

## Literacy Corner

Welcome to spring! Below is some information about disciplinary literacy, a topic we are focusing on at the middle and high school level. However, it may also be helpful to elementary folks to see where your students are headed.

### What is Disciplinary Literacy?

Disciplinary literacy means using specialized strategies for comprehending and responding to texts that reflect the demands of a specific discipline. Students in middle school and high school encounter more challenging, complex texts and are expected to use their knowledge of literacy (reading, writing, and oral communication) practices to make sense of the content. The literacy demands in each discipline require continued instruction in how to approach a text, determine key ideas, critically evaluate the content, and communicate knowledge. Even students who enter these grades with a strong foundation of literacy skills and strategies benefit from explicit instruction in the disciplinary-specific practices for effective reading, writing, and thinking about what they are learning within a discipline. This does not mean that disciplinary teachers should be reading teachers in the traditional sense. But it does mean they need to teach students how to be discipline-specific readers and writers of increasingly complex texts. To do this, disciplinary-expert teachers can identify and integrate relevant literacy practices that promote effective understanding, analysis, and evaluation of texts within their disciplines, practices reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards.

Credit: "Reading and Writing in the Disciplines" - a production of WGBH Educational Foundation for Annenberg Learner. <https://www.learner.org/courses/readwrite/index.html>

Lauren Sweeney, Literacy Coach

## Engaging our Students to the End

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Find a how-to for planning and implementing a three-week service learning project for upper elementary students in **Alycia Zimmerman's 'Tis the Season to Do Community Service.** Writing in Scholastic's Top Teaching blog in 2011, Zimmerman outlines a December project with logistics that could fit just as well in May or June. Along with a step-by-step guide, she provides links to [Generationon.org](http://Generationon.org) and [LearningtoGive.org](http://LearningtoGive.org).

Looking for high-interest science lessons that are quick and hands-on? Check out this NGSS-aligned set at [ScienceBuddies.org](http://ScienceBuddies.org) – engineering, biology, physics, and chemistry (including kitchen science)!

You can prepare for the grand finale by referring to Larry Ferlazzo's helpful **suggestions for closing out the year**, gleaned from his own classroom

and from his readers. Also at EdWeek from Larry Ferlazzo and Katie Hull Sypnieski: **Helping English-Learners End the School Year Strong**, an adapted excerpt from their book, *The ELL Teacher's Toolbox: Hundreds Of Practical Ideas To Support Your Students*, which came out Spring, 2018.

More ideas for **Ending the School Year with English Learners** comes

from Valentina Gonzalez, who writes that that end of year is an optimal time for educators to step out of our comfort zones and try innovative techniques with our students. Rather than falling into "countdown mode," she suggests thinking of this time as a gift, without the pressure of state testing.

*Lani*

Around the District...

