DEVELOPMENTAL LITERACY CONTINUUM PHILOSOPHY

In keeping with our progressive education philosophy of honoring children’s individual development, and in the spirit of our strong commitment to differentiated instruction, the District has adopted a K–8 Language Arts Continuum model. It is based on the work of Bonnie Campbell Hill and supported by current research on literacy development. The Continuum provides the opportunity to observe and document children’s growth in reading and writing over the span of their attendance in the District, and will be used as an internal articulation tool within and across grade levels.

Winnetka Public Schools District 36 Curriculum Summary ● Kindergarten ● Page 3

What is a continuum of learning? Simply speaking, it is a list of descriptors detailing student academic behaviors that increase in difficulty through several different stages. As a student is able to do the things described in the list, those specific skills mastered are noted.

The learning continuums have 10 different stages of proficiency, ranging from pre-conventional (for example, holds book and turns pages correctly, scribble–writes) to independent level, which includes skills that most adults have yet to master (for example, evaluates, interprets and analyzes reading content critically and begins to develop personal voice and style in writing). Most students fall mainly in one stage of the continuum for a subject, although there may be some skills at a higher level which they are able to do, or some at a lower level which they are still working on. A continuum illustrates which specific skills have been accomplished, and which still need mastery. Some of the benefits of using continuums include:

• creating common language for teachers, parents and students
• reflecting progress and growth over time ● providing typical ranges of development and associated benchmarks per grade level ● providing specific information about each student ● creating a roadmap for differentiation and individualized goal setting

On the reverse, you will find the range of development typical for your student’s grade level in reading and writing (referred to as Umbrella Stages). On each continuum, the stage that is the benchmark for your child’s grade level is indicated. The descriptors at each grade level mirror the Illinois State standards in both content and performance expectations. The entire K–8 reading and writing continuums can be found on the district website under Curriculum Summaries.