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### **MPS Recommendation for Teaching Handwriting**

MPS supports the teaching of handwriting in the primary grades. The recommended font style is Zaner-Bloser. The selection and purchase of materials to support the teaching of handwriting is the responsibility of each school.

In K-2, handwriting instruction should take no more than 10 minutes per day including lesson and practice time. In subsequent grades handwriting instruction can be integrated into content throughout the school day. Teachers can take advantage of opportunities during the week to embed handwriting practice into learning new letters, new words, and sentence writing. Students can practice number formation as a part of math instruction.

#### **Research on Teaching Handwriting:**

- While children can begin to write by dictating a composition to a teacher or adult, most are eager to learn to write on their own. They should be supported in the development of their writing skills, including writing the manuscript alphabet. The goal is to help the child become skilled enough to write letters automatically, freeing him or her to focus on the "meaning-making aspects of composition" (Berninger, et al., 1997).
- In his analysis of the most effective techniques for handwriting instruction, Karl Koenke compared the use of manuscript and cursive, concluding, "one primary justification for teaching children to print is that printed letters look more like the typeset letters found in books" (1986).
- The ability to recognize letters automatically is essential to reading development, and learning to write the manuscript alphabet is a natural way to reinforce letter recognition. The ability to reproduce letters automatically offers similar benefits, not only for writing, but for reading, as well. (Adams, M.J. *Beginning to Read*, 1990).
- Writing difficulties can impede learning as poor handwriting interferes with the thought process during composition because the child often is concentrating on mechanical performance (Graham et al., 2000).
- Studies of handwriting remediation suggest that intervention is effective. There is evidence to indicate that handwriting difficulties do not resolve without intervention and affect between 10 and 30% of school-aged children. (Feder KP, Majnemer, A., *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, April, 2007).