

Stoughton High School

232 Pearl Street
Stoughton, MA 02072
Brett Dickens, Principal

Stoughton is a suburban high school serving grades 9–12, with an average of 300 students per grade level. Classes range from a ninth grade Foundations course serving students who typically are reading two or more levels below their grade, to advanced placement English courses for high-achieving students in grades 11 and 12. The ninth-grade Foundations teachers work as a team, and team teaching is also used in the American Studies classes offered to eleventh-grade students. The special education teacher works with the tenth- and eleventh-grade English teachers.

- ◆ High school (grades 9–12)
- ◆ 79% White
- ◆ 14% Black
- ◆ 3% Hispanic
- ◆ 4% Asian
- ◆ 19% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- ◆ 2% English Language Learners
- ◆ 12% Special Education

Stoughton teachers understand the importance of comprehension and vocabulary skill development and use explicit teaching techniques to help students learn reading strategies that they can use independently. They are committed to providing students with practice in multiple contexts and improving literacy instruction across the content areas. The English department provides a variety of resources to support teacher learning and sharing of reading strategies.

A number of teachers have received professional development in specific reading strategies and have mentored the other teachers in these methods. In addition to using modeling and explicit instruction, teachers have successfully incorporated graphic organizers and visualization methods to support reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Classroom teachers encourage students to reflect on, make connections, and respond to text readings through Socratic seminars, literature circles, and other text discussion activities. They also have used hands-on projects such as creating biographies to demonstrate text understanding. Students read biographies, identify the types of information included in the text, and then write each other's biographies through developing interview questions and summarizing the results.

Vocabulary instruction is one area where the high school has been successful in implementing reading across the content areas, especially in social studies, science, and American Studies classrooms. In addition, Stoughton has established a reading class specifically for ELL students

to receive intensive instruction in vocabulary development and comprehension skills. The class is led by the school's reading teacher and supported by an ELL teacher.

One key to the school's success has been their comprehensive assessment program. Assessment is closely linked to state and district benchmarks. Screening begins in the eighth grade middle school year, and the district's reading assessment is used as a basis for recommending placements for incoming ninth-grade students. High school teachers also recommend struggling students in their classrooms for evaluation. At that point, the reading teacher tests students to determine whether there is a need for referral to the school's building base support team or special education for further testing. In some cases, the reading teacher may share specific reading strategies for content teachers to use with these students in their regular classrooms.

Over the next few years, Stoughton's professional development will continue to focus on using data to inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Another key focus area will be on establishing reading and writing across all curriculum areas. Professional development at Stoughton is designed to address the diverse learning needs of the students, and is planned collaboratively through a professional development team.

Stoughton's success is evident through improved outcomes in teacher testing and district benchmark testing across the grade levels. In addition, the intensive vocabulary instruction used with the ELL students has enabled an increased number of students to pass Stoughton's state assessment test.