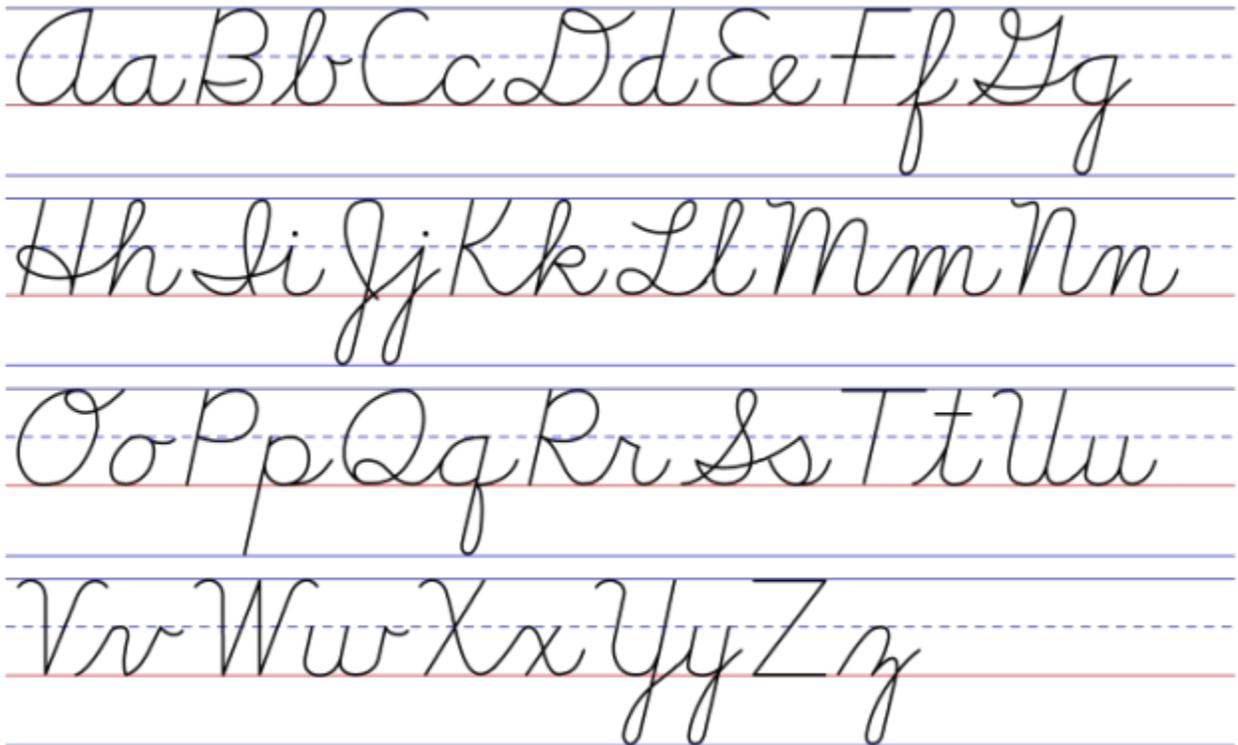




EDUCATION

Time to bring back cursive writing to schools?

Posted on March 28, 2017 by [M Lapham](#)



To many, writing in cursive seems quaint, if not antiquated, in the age of technology when computers, which depend on typing skills, seem to rule.

Most Michigan schools no longer teach cursive, but some people are thinking that may be a mistake. One of the biggest pushes for cursive has been the [Detroit Waldorf School](#) (DWS), which never removed it from the curriculum, and policy makers have taken notice.

The first two grades at DWS are spent on block letters, also known as print. They start learning cursive in the third grade (sound familiar?). This grade is chosen because that is when children’s fine motor skills have developed enough to learn the flowing style of writing properly.

“Our third grade curriculum is designed to give children a broader view of the world around them. In language arts, students dissect parts of speech in grammar, as well as spelling and cursive writing to facilitate independent writing skills,” the school says.

DWS, and its continued commitment to cursive, has inspired a movement to get every school in Michigan teaching it again.

Legislators in five other states, including Tennessee and New Jersey, are trying to mandate cursive instruction in public schools. Part of the reason is to ensure when children leave school they have a proper signature and are able to read important older documents like the Declaration of Independence or their parents and grandparents letters.



There may be other advantages as well.

“A number of studies point to the importance of learning cursive writing for improving brain development and activating areas of the brain responsible for working memory, language, and thinking,” says Diane Reed, fourth grade class teacher and DWS faculty chair. “Learning cursive improves fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.”

Other studies have shown cursive writers have better reading and writing skills as a whole. This may help with certain learning disabilities.

“One could make the case that learning cursive is actually easier than learning to print, as there are no opportunities for confusing one letter for another, as some children do with printed letters like b and d,” says Reed. “This is especially important for children who are dyslexic.”

“It is also quicker to write in cursive than it is to print, which is important for taking notes. Taking notes by hand has the benefit of engaging students in active thinking and discerning important points, since it is impossible to write down everything. They are actually processing what they are hearing, and this leads to better understanding and retention,” she says.

Daniel Coupland, associate professor of education who is featured in Hillsdale College’s online course called “A Proper Understanding of K-12 Education: Theory and Practice,” agrees learning to write in cursive is a great learning tool.

“If you have to form the letters with your hands ... because there’s some kind of connection with using your hands to form those letters,” he says. “It cements it in your mind a lot better. I understand that we’re moving in a particular direction in terms of technology, but I mourn the loss of those things if we move completely away from it.”

Cursive has been so engrained into us that many people didn’t even know it vanished from schools. It has been taught for as long as anyone alive can remember, and it seems many people think that the loss of it is a mistake.

The future maybe typed, but you can’t decipher the past unless you can write.