

Lit Bits

Cleveland Heights–University Heights
School District

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March 2006

Title I Family Gathering

Title I is sponsoring an evening tailored to engage adults and children at Roxboro Elementary School on the evening of March 14th. Children will have fun with Miss Donna, the Storyteller, while parents hear an engaging message by Dr. Ray Guarendi.

Children will interact with Donna Willingham, who is a children's librarian at the Hough Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. She specializes in African and African-American folktales. She is a member of the Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers, and the National Association of Black Storytellers. She has appeared at Playhouse Square and is a featured storyteller at multiple sites in our area.



Donna Willingham

Dr. Ray Guarendi is a clinical psychologist, public speaker, author and media personality. Additionally, he has ten children, providing first-hand experience related to his parenting advice. Dr. Guarendi has been a regular guest on national radio and television, including *Oprah*, *Joan Rivers*, *Scott Ross Prime Time*, *700 Club*, *Gordon Elliot*, and *CBS This Morning*. He has appeared on regional radio and television shows in over 40 states and Canada. He has been the program psychologist for *Cleveland's Morning Exchange*, *Pittsburgh 2-Day*, and *AM Indiana*. He has written several books, including *You're a Better Parent Than You Think!* (now in its twenty-first printing), *Back to the Family* and his newest book: *Discipline that Lasts a Lifetime*.

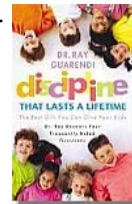


Dr. Ray Guarendi

GUARENDI PROVIDES TIPS FOR PARENTS

Dr. Guarendi has culled more than 100 of the most common parenting questions and provided the solutions in an entertaining manner in his book entitled *Discipline that Lasts a Lifetime*.

He addresses challenges related to parenting with a large dose of humor, honesty, and common sense. His advice is based on his experience as a clinical psychologist and his own personal experiences as a father of 10; his children range in age from 6 to 18. Learn, laugh, and savor your role as a parent as you read this book.



Middle School and High School Teachers Participate in the 2nd Generation of Adolescent SIRI

Six Adolescent SIRI offerings have impacted over one hundred middle school and high school teachers in CHUH. Uniquely, the instructors are trained middle school and high school teachers within the district who have committed to participating in ongoing professional training related to literacy instruction. This embedded professional development session consists of 25 total contact hours with the potential to earn two graduate hours. An additional component provides an opportunity for an additional 20 hours satisfying the HQT requirement.

This course provides a scientifically based research foundation for understanding issues related to adolescent literacy and reading and learning across the academic curriculum. The four sessions provide opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Strategies are explored for use within the before-during-after framework of instructional design. All participants receive excellent resources, including Janet Allen's *Tools for Teaching Literacy*, Laura Robb's *Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science and Math*, and *Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades 7-12* by Gayle H. Gregory and Lin Kuzmich. Additionally, each participant receives a themed issue from ASCD's *Educational Leadership*, entitled *The Adolescent Learner*.

Kudos to Noble's Principal of Many Hats

In spite of her very demanding schedule, Noble Elementary Principal, Ms. Julie Beers, has set a personal goal to help all of her students meet Noble's challenge to make sure every child is reading at or above grade level. She starts early every morning at 8:15. Fourth and fifth graders meet in the media center for an extra half hour of independent reading. For the past two months, Mrs. Beers has been taking her own fifth grade reading group twice a week to help create smaller groups. A group of fourth graders get her attention twice a week for an accelerated math intervention. And to top her week off, she takes a third grade group called "Reading Rules!" to review Ohio Achievement Test-taking strategies. "When does she find time to eat lunch?" This is the question we are all asking.

REDO, REDO, REDO!!

Anyone walking down the halls of Noble School in February would find REDO boxes outside of all third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms containing math and reading sample problems to provide students with extra help. It was heartwarming to see all teachers, no matter what grade level or subject, giving up their lunch and planning time to help these students better understand needed concepts by providing a one-to-one tutoring partnership. Teachers might pop into any one of these classrooms and remove sample packets from the REDO box and quietly call the child into the hallway. We are sure that our Noble teachers have made it possible for our students to improve their proficiency on the Ohio Achievement Test.

Noble's Literacy Lobby has a New Look

Thanks to kindergarten teacher Ms. Bruns, our Literacy Lobby has come back to life with a *Curious George* theme. Monkeys and bananas hanging from vines invite our students to "Come Hang Around and Read a Good Book". This is topped off with a great three-dimensional poster model of Curious George himself, spying out into the lobby. This cozy spot has become a very popular place for all our young Noble readers to "hang around in". You will often find paired reading happening here, as well as whole classes taking advantage of D.E.A.R. moment.



Valentine's Day Inspires Letter Writing

The entire Noble school participated in our Student Council-sponsored Valentine Day writing project. Bulletin boards and mailboxes were scattered throughout the building to invite children to "mail" their individual letters. Daily, the letters were then picked up and delivered to the correct classroom addresses by Student Council representatives. Many children participated in this real world application of writing skills without worrying if they had a stamp or not!



Valentine bulletin board

Digging Deeper Series

A group of K-5 teachers attended an in-service after school on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 from 2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Questioning and inferring strategies were explored using the QAR – *question answer relationship* and the QtA – *question the author* protocols.

By comparing the two techniques, teachers were able to identify questions by categories and types. The questions: "In what ways do you agree with what the author said?" and "What did you learn from the author?" are examples of questions generated by QAR. The four categories of questions in this protocol include *right there*, *in your head*, *on your own*, and *you and the author*. Asking about the background and qualifications of an author is an example of a QtA or "question the author" question.

On April 11th, the third in-service in this series will be facilitated after school by Kay Milkie and Karen Heinsbergen. Teachers will *dig deeper* on two protocols related to *determining importance* and *synthesizing*. A special prize will be rewarded to the first fifteen early registrants. Watch your mailboxes for further information, and win a prize that will expand your professional library related to comprehension instruction.

Literature Circle Tap Rap at Noble

On Wednesday, January 25th, ten teachers joined Karen Heinsbergen for a conversation about *Literature Circles*. They viewed the video “*Literature Circles*” by Harvey Daniels, and observed the social and thinking skills students need to use this strategy. After watching the 3rd grade bi-lingual class from Chicago, teachers discussed adaptations for primary grade students.

Two suggestions included presenting the book as a read aloud to the whole class and assigning the same role to every student to jumpstart use of the protocol. Both of these suggestions were implemented by Becca Larson on March 8th when she introduced the strategy to her first graders using the picture book, *When Sophie Gets Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang. Each student assumed the role of “connector” and shared ideas with a partner in a knee-to-knee conversation. This supported comprehension of the story and helped with listening skills!



The Many Villages of Cleveland Heights

One village has expanded into many. *Many Villages* is a project based on *The Village* at Roxboro Elementary School. *The Village* is a tutoring program that uses volunteers from the community to provide assistance to classroom teachers during the school day. This two year old program is welcomed by teachers and provides a large number of volunteers to raise the academic success of students. With the support of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, US Bank, and Reaching Heights, the *Many Villages* project is going to launch a volunteer program in four elementary schools during the 2006-2007 school years. The schools joining the village are Noble, Fairfax, Oxford, and Canterbury.

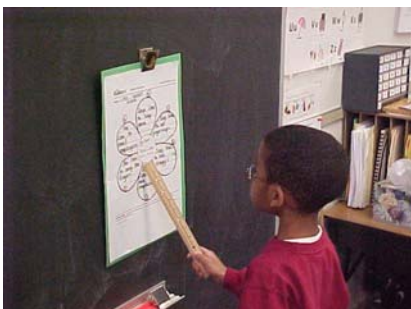
Many Villages has several goals. One goal is to train volunteers to support student academic achievement. Another goal is that *Many Villages* will become an integral part of the school community and a powerful strategy for supporting our students. In order to meet these goals, an oversight committee has been established. The oversight committee members are varied: Patricia Ramsey, Community Relations of US Bank; Carlton Monroe, Outreach pastor of Grace Lutheran Church; Stewart Pharis, parent and PTA representative; Dennis Osgood, *The Village* coordinator, parent, and Reaching Heights trustee; Deborah Delisle, Superintendent; Kelli Cogan, Principal at Roxboro Elementary School; Susie Kaeser, Executive Director of Reaching Heights; Stephanie Myers, teacher and math specialist; and Jennifer Bennett, Title I teacher and Teacher Leader.

Volunteers are the heart of this project. *Many Villages* will conduct training sessions for the volunteer tutors in the areas of literacy and math. The literacy modular that will be available for the four schools will focus on fluency, word study based on the Developmental Spelling Analysis, and questions. Questions will be used to assess comprehension, to investigate what strategies the learners use, and to encourage responses to literature. The math modular will concentrate on number sense and measurement.

Over the next three to five years, *Many Villages* anticipates creating a program in all of our schools. Imagine what a reliable and trained volunteer could do for one of your students. *Many Villages* is working on making that vision a reality.

SNAP! Spurs Retelling Efforts of First Graders

The students in Ms. Roberts' grade one reading classes are practicing retelling a story using a web. First, the children read a book called *Snap!* by Margaret Ballinger. It was about a crocodile that liked to do all sorts of things that involved the word “snap”. Then the students used a web to write the main idea of the story and



then list details. They decided to use complete sentences so that it would be easy to retell the story. Next they numbered their sentences to help them sequence the events. Each student then retold the story using the web. They were very excited about how easy this was to do. They plan to do more ... and are aiming to try one soon without any teacher help!



Title I Sponsored Family Phonemic Awareness Night

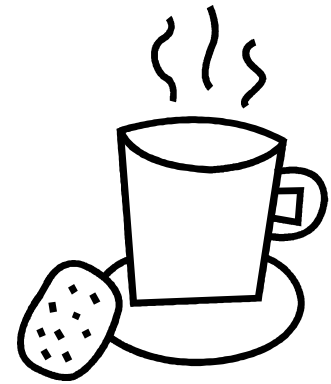
Twenty-five kindergarten, first and second grade Noble families participated in a fun January evening, learning more about phonemic awareness.

Each family rotated through four stations to learn some activities they can do at home to help their young ones with reading readiness skills. Ms. Shramo and Ms. Zinamon assisted parents at the alphabet station demonstrating games to help with beginning sounds. Ms. Katz, Ms. Arnett and Ms. Mihevic manned the other

three stations with multiple ways to work with rhyming, tongue twisters, jump rope jingles, and nonsense words.

The evening culminated with a hot chocolate and cookie snack while listening to Ms. Shramo present a dramatic interactive story telling.

Everyone was a winner with reading door prizes and take home *Reading A-Z* books. A good time was had by all, and the cocoa treat was enjoyed!



Promoting Conversation in the Classroom

Think, Pair, Share

1. The teacher asks a questions and may provide examples or ideas.

2. First students independently **think** about their ideas.

3. Then the students **pair** up with a partner and discuss their ideas.

4. Finally the students **share** their ideas with the larger group.

Benefits: This strategy allows think time for students who need extra time to process language.

Tip: Model this strategy and establish routines and procedures so that student dialogue is focused and on-task.

Round Table

1. The teacher asks a questions or poses a topic for discussion.

2. Each student gets a turn in sharing his/her ideas.

Benefits: Everyone has a voice! Students are able to express their opinions, as well as actively listen to other classmates. This can be used for brainstorming, rehearsing, or providing feedback.

Inside-Outside Circle

1. Two circles are formed-one on the inside and one on the outside with an equal number of students in each.

2. Student face each other

(inside circle faces outward and outside circle faces inward).

3. Students are given a topic or activity and the students in the inside circle share their responses with their partner in the outside circle; then the role reverses.

4. Students on the inside can then rotate clockwise to the next person which allows for multiple conversations with different partners.

Benefits: You can use for accessing prior knowledge about a topic, responses to a particular question, or peer review of a piece of writing!

ELA PILOT UPDATE

K-5 teachers are currently piloting the Macmillan McGraw-Hill program. It is a balanced literacy approach that incorporates an impressive amount on informational text.

Compelling features also include its alignment with district literacy initiatives. For example, the program incorporates 6 Traits and translation of DIBELS data in grades 1 and 2, leveled books and spelling instruction aligned to DSA. Donald

Bear, author of *Words Their Way*, is on the editorial board of the series. Our “six pack” of comprehension strategies is also included.

Pilot teachers have been providing excellent feedback related to the series to inform our implementation next year. For example, K-5 writing prompts will be revised to reflect the sequence and topics embedded in the new program.

The middle school/high school

continues to explore options. Teachers are currently piloting Holt and McDougal-Littel. A potential exploration of the new Glencoe program may also occur. A professional development conversation is being scheduled for late April to review the feedback and begin conversations related to required supplementary texts in grades 6 through 12. A representative fifth grade teacher will be included in the conversation to assist with vertical articula-

Roxboro Elementary Literacy Highlights ...

“Literacy, Literacy, Literacy” was the title and focus of the January 10th building-level activities planned by Principal Kelli Cogan. The day consisted of four sessions designed to facilitate conversations related to literacy instruction. Substitute teachers traveled to K-5 classrooms while teachers were able to participate in various combinations of sessions.

The morning began with Libby Larrabee helping grade 3, 4, and 5 teachers analyze Roxboro students’ records of oral reading with the goal of targeting instruction. Appropriate comprehension and fluency interventions based on observed data were discussed. A follow-up session has been planned.

During the second session of the morning, Kay Milkie borrowed four students from Melissa Garcar’s second grade class and modeled a *book introduction*, one of the strategies in the red comprehension binder. After the modeled lesson, teachers discussed observations and shared ideas for tailoring the lesson to fit the needs of specific grade levels and students.

One of the afternoon sessions was led by Jen Bennett. Jen provided an overview of the red comprehension binder with a focus on strategies that teach visualizing and inferring. She modeled a lesson for visualizing and provided a list of books that can be utilized with the different comprehension strategies.

Kim Cahn, Speech/Language Pathologist, completed the afternoon with a session that gave teachers the opportunity to revisit DIBELS data and examine targeted interventions to implement on a daily basis. Kim designed a binder containing phonemic awareness activities to distribute to teachers to support and facilitate instructional planning.

Kelli Cogan commented, “This was an opportunity for us to meet the varying needs of our staff. It is just as important to differentiate professional development for the staff as it is to differentiate our lessons for our students.”



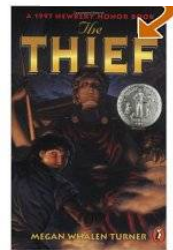
Monticello Students Enjoy Fantasy with Megan Whalen Turner

On February 13, 2006 the Read 180 classes at Monticello Middle School braved the cold winds and traveled to Borders Book Store at Severance Center. Guest author Megan Whalen Turner was present, and the students had the opportunity to meet and talk with her.

Megan Whalen Turner is the author of a series of fantasy books for young adults. The series includes the titles: *The Thief* (1997), *The Queen Attolia* (2000), and *The King of Attolia* (2006).



Author Megan Whalen Turner chats with a Monticello student



Newberry Honor book

In 1997, *The Thief* received the Newberry Honor Award distinction.

During her presentation, Mrs. Turner encouraged the students to actively pursue careers as writers. She explained how an author gets a book published and how an author gets paid from the sale of each book. With some quick math calculations, the students learned that perhaps a career as a writer could be lucrative.

Also discussed were the various awards that a book could

receive. Mrs. Turner explained the process of how a book gets selected and who does the selecting. Students were intrigued by the process and were made more aware of what an honor it is to receive the Newberry award.

After the visit, students had time to look around the bookstore. This was a wonderful experience for the students as they learned how fascinating the world of book publishing can be and how fun it is to be an author.



Barbara Kates and Yolanda Harris pose with Megan Whalen Turner (center).

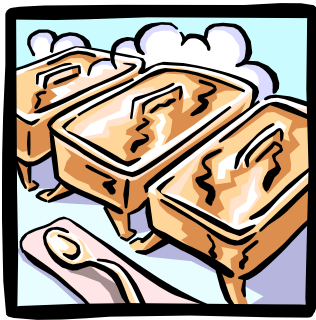
And the bite goes on . . .

A Bite Out of Black History 21st Annual First Grade Soul Food Buffet Celebrated at Oxford School

Betty Miller had an idea 21 years ago of introducing and sharing another part of Black History with her first grade students. Thus was the beginning of the famous, celebrated “soul food buffet” that has been talked about for years by former first graders and looked forward to by hundreds of new first graders each and every year.

That first soul food buffet was “trial but **no** error”. A letter was sent home to parents asking them to make a specific dish- chicken wings, rib tips, potato salad, greens, corn bread, and sweet potato pie, etc., and to also volunteer with setting up, serving up, and cleaning up. The response was great!

Mrs. Miller supplied all the luncheon paper goods, utensils and red, black and green balloons. Each student had a balloon for their desk and later took one home. The parent volunteers set up a buffet table in the classroom and the children loved tasting the different food dishes. After this first “tasty” success, the idea was extended to the other first grade classes and . . . the rest is history.



Fast forward to 2006. A letter was sent out the first week in February requesting that parents prepare soul food dishes and volunteer to help with the soul food buffet. The menu was pre-selected by classrooms. Mrs. Miller’s class brought meat and breads, Ms. Lambert’s class was responsible for vegetables and salads, and Ms. Litten’s class was in charge of the desserts. The soul food buffet is now held in the school lunchroom and the parents are able to enjoy the food with members of the Oxford staff after school.

Throughout the years we have added music to incorporate dance. Our D.J. this year was Mr. Sean Sullivan, current fourth grade teacher.

Many thanks to the Oxford PTA for purchasing the balloons for the children to enjoy at the luncheon and to take home afterwards. You have supported us for ten years. Bravo!

This year’s 21st Soul Food Buffet was again a tremendous success. “Hats Off” to the parents and volunteers who put “Pots On” and many thanks to our first grade team, Mrs. Miller, Ms. Lambert and Ms. Litten worked hard to support the “sweet success” of our students.

Family Achievement Nights

During January and February, Boulevard, Coventry, Fairfax, Gearity, and Oxford Elementary Schools hosted their Family Achievement Nights. Families gathered not only to learn more about achievement testing in the elementary grades, but also to actively engage in educational and fun literacy and math activities. After a brief information session, families attended grade level breakout sessions where they solved problems, played games, thought critically, and read strategically. Teachers provided families with many suggestions on how to help their child at home in reading and math. The following are some of these terrific tips!



5th grade family night:
Fairfax Elementary

Reading:

1. Read every night with your child.
2. After reading fiction with them, ask them to name four events from the story in the order they happened.
3. While reading, ask them to predict what will happen next.
4. While reading, ask them the main idea of the story. Then ask them to recall three details from the story related to the main idea.
5. After reading any book or article, ask them who, what, where, and why questions about what they read.



5th grade family night at
Oxford Elementary

Math:

1. Practice math facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
2. Create story problems for them to solve using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
3. Give them practice with money: recognizing coin denominations, counting coins, and determining change after buying multiple items.
4. Have them measure household items to the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and in centimeters.
5. Create time problems such as, “What time will it be in 2 hours and 30 minutes?”