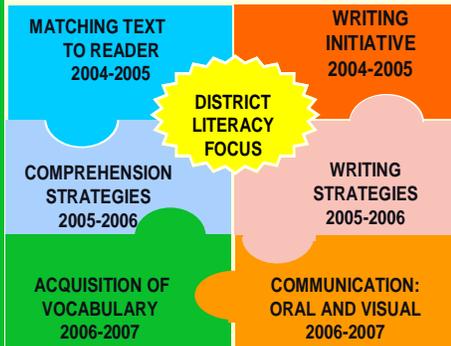


Balanced Literacy Spring Meeting



The Balanced Literacy Task Force Committee met on the afternoon of Thursday, May 11th at Taylor. Helen Hirsch, Coordinator of Literacy, reviewed the responsibilities associated with literacy teams and cast a vision for literacy priorities for the 2006-2007 school year. Two key literacy areas for next year's school year include Acquisition of Vocabulary and Communication: Oral and Visual. To remember specific headers of focus, the

literacy team suggested the mnemonic device of the five letter word: **WORDS**.

- **W**=Word Choice in writing
- **O**=Oral Presentations
- **R**=Research-based strategies for vocabulary instruction
- **D**=DSA, translation and interpretation of Developmental Spelling Analysis results
- **S**=Subject specific vocabulary lists across content areas

Literacy team representatives from each building across the district presented the "gist" of a literacy initiative in their school this year that yielded excellent results. Key ideas of the celebration were recorded on a puzzle piece that ultimately constructed a giant "W" to remind us of our WORDS focus for

next year.

Karen Heinsbergen presented an ELA Standards Strategy Alignment tool to support teacher reflection related to strategy instruction by grade level. Kay Milkie presented a book talk on the book each school received: *Literacy Development of Students in Urban Schools: Research and Policy* by James Flood and Patricia L. Anders.

Superintendent Deb Delisle greeted the committee and challenged us to sustain literacy efforts of past years as we move ahead. Referring to the visual aid puzzle, constructed by Karen Frantz and her husband, she described how varied literacy initiatives fit into the Balanced Literacy Framework. This pre-K-12 literacy plan was jumpstarted with the support of a Jennings grant during the 2000-2001 school year.

K-5 Core Program Approved by CHUH Board of Education

On May 8, 2006, the school board approved the recommendation to adopt Macmillan McGraw-Hill as our new K-5 ELA program. This recommendation generated from the work of the English Language Arts Task Force which included 48 teachers and administrators, and elementary pilot teachers K-5 in each of the eight elementary schools. This group was committed to finding a program that matched our students' needs based on data that included high stakes assessment results, teacher input related to content standards, teacher observation related to our balanced literacy initiatives, and even documented

kid appeal.

This program is the first program to be built from scratch subsequent to the *Leave No Child Behind Legislation of 2001*, and it dovetails perfectly with our district's balanced literacy initiative. Here are examples of features incorporated:

- 6 Traits: *Ideas, Organization, Sentence Fluency, Word Choice, Conventions, Voice*
- Translation of DSA and DIBELS data into instructional planning
- Comprehension Strategies
- Interactive Read-Alouds including opportunity for Reader's Theater.
- Increased non-fiction

- "Flip chart" learning centers across content areas
- Guided reading books at varied levels

In-services occurred for each grade level in late May. Additional in-services are being planned for June 15th (K-2), June 22nd (3-5) and repeated August 24th (K-2) and August 23rd (3-5).



FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT—CANTERBURY ELEMENTARY

Family Literacy Night was held at Canterbury Elementary School on April 20, 2006. Total attendance surpassed the 250 mark.

A special literacy program entitled “RAISING REAL READERS” was presented by *Cleveland Reads* to 102 parents and guardians. Each adult received informational packets and children’s books to take home. Over 160 students participated in the Family Literacy Night. They experienced creative storytelling by Glynis Welte, the children’s librarian from the Coventry Neighborhood Library. The children also participated in Bingo Games using sight words, vocabulary, rhyming words, and

synonyms/antonyms.

The Canterbury staff came out in full force to participate and help the Literacy Committee with the evening’s activities. All families enjoyed a pizza dinner. Monica Smith, PTA liaison for the event, procured all the pizzas. Fabulous door prizes were given to families at the end of the program. All student participants were given gift bags with items such as literacy pencils, bookmarks, and erasers. The following morning the raffle for student door prizes was held. All the happy winners received books to enjoy. Pam Berkson, our parent Literacy Committee member, selected books for the door



prizes. Thanks to Canterbury PTA for pizza, beverages, paper goods, and several door prize donations. A special thanks to Ditte Wolin for her role in securing door prizes. A successful Family Literacy Night was enjoyed by all.

Champ Camp 2006



Champ Camp will be held at Coventry School from Monday, July 31 to Friday, August 18. Participants for Camp are kindergarten students who will be first graders

in the fall. Students are invited to attend camp based on their spring ELA assessments and kindergarten teacher recommendation. Students will be assigned to six classes staffed by district elementary teachers. Camp begins at 9:00 and ends at 12 noon. Busing will be provided to and from each elementary school and there is no cost to families since it is Title I funded. This three week intervention program will provide students with many experiences with phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language,

comprehension, fluency, comprehension and writing. Each week the classes enhance and extend the week’s theme by enjoying a visit to the Coventry Neighborhood Library where they sing songs, listen to stories and take out books. In addition, each class has a weekly experience in the computer lab. A parent orientation will be held at Coventry School on Thursday, July 27, 2006 from 7 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. We look forward to another positive camping experience for our students, families, and teachers.

Ohio Achievement Tests Scores on the Rise

The preliminary results of this year’s Achievement Tests in Grades 3-8 show improvement in reading, math, and writing. The largest gain was in 7th grade math where the District’s score improved from 40% proficient in 2005 to 52% proficient in 2006. Performance on this year’s new 4th grade math achievement test was 72% proficient. Eighth grade math scores made growth from 47% proficient to 52% proficient in 2006. The Math OAT was new in 5th and 6th grades, and 50% of 5th grade and 57% of 6th grade students were proficient or

above.

Students in the District performed at 86% proficient on the Fourth Grade Writing Achievement Tests. This performance should result in meeting the state’s 4th Grade Writing Indicator on the State Report Card since it is above 75% proficient. The District should also meet the State Report Card Indicators in 4th and 6th grade reading with a 76% and 78% proficient respectively.

These preliminary results may look different on the State Report Card. Percentages will be adjusted

with the addition of the results of alternative assessments and exclusion of results of those students who

have been in the district less than the required amount of days. The State Report Card for the 2005-2006 school year will be released in August. At that time, we believe that the gains from our focused instructional efforts will be officially verified.



Reading Builds Character



Students at Gearity Elementary celebrated *Right to Read Week* by infusing the love for reading with character development. Spawned from Gearity's year long immersion in learning about positive character traits, the literacy team thought it would be fitting to blend the two initiatives together. With some creative brainstorming the theme, *Reading Builds Character* emerged.

During the week, activities centered on reading and identifying positive characteristics that book characters exhibit. To start the

week, the entire school building formed a *reading chain* in the hallways and participated in sustained silent reading. The week continued on with classrooms visiting the *reading chair*. Families were invited in for a morning continental breakfast which included donuts, juice, and a free book for every student!

To help students better understand the importance of being a good citizen, the University Heights Fire Department volunteered two guest readers. Firefighter Dave and Firefighter Jim read-aloud to the students in the primary grades. After the read-aloud, the firefighters talked with students about the importance of being a good reader and how firefighters use reading on the job. Each student then received a yellow, fireman's helmet to keep

in remembrance of this extraordinary day.

The week came to end with an assembly featuring Alice Paulda, story-teller from the Cleveland Heights Library. In addition, the students were permitted to dress as their favorite book character who exhibits a positive character trait. At the conclusion of the day, a Character Masquerade Parade allowed students to admire one another's costume and grow in their understanding that *reading builds character*.



John Carroll University Partners with CH-UH School District

The visible signs of our pre-K-16 Partnership were evident at the beginning of this school year. John Carroll students in preparation for student teaching spent one day per week at Gearity or Wiley. This experience provided the student teacher and cooperating teacher an opportunity to begin building a solid working relationship. The student teachers began full time in January, 2006. In their full time status, they participated in faculty, district, grade level and subject specific meetings affording them a taste of what teaching involves both inside and outside the classroom. Student teachers at Wiley stood on the stage at the Ohio Middle School Association Conference with Wiley Principal, Denine Goolsby and Wiley teachers, to receive the Schools to Watch Award. Amy Hoffman and Carol Paul, members

of the John Carroll faculty spent one day per week at Wiley and Gearity providing support to the student teachers and the cooperating teachers.

For the first time, undergraduate reading courses were held at both Wiley and Gearity. Amy Hoffman and Carol Paul taught the courses. This shift in site, allowed John Carroll students the opportunity to observe in classrooms and immediately apply coursework in actual classroom settings giving them a flavor for teaching well before their senior year.

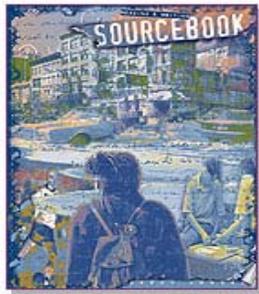
A graduate offering, *Integrated Language Arts*, allowed CHUH teachers the opportunity to begin coursework leading to a State Reading Endorsement. The class was co-taught by Dr. Cathy Rosemary and Karen Heinsbergen. The coursework was rigorous and directly applicable to daily teaching. Participants developed standard-

based lessons, analyzed their implementation of each lesson, and explored technology as an instructional tool. One highlight included a live video conference with Dr. Ronald Gallimore, the author of one of the textbooks used in the course.

A twelve month Math and Science Fellowship is another component of the partnership between JCU and CHUH. The year-long fellowship consisting of 12-15 semester hours will include content instruction and teaching strategies focusing on helping students develop higher order conceptual understanding. Funding is still being sought for this endeavor.



Reading/Writing Connection



The *Reading and Writing Sourcebook*, pictured above, is a key resource in the new Reading/Writing Connections course introduced in grades 7 through 12. It was selected because of its strong

integration of reading comprehension and writing process skills. Vocabulary acquisition and explicit instruction related to grammar and usage are also incorporated in the course. This interactive support provides students with an opportunity to record questions, reactions and summaries during the process of reading. Students will use writing as a tool for thinking, communicating, and expressing ideas.

Social and collaborative activities will be incorporated to support learning. Over a two week period, students will read and write

pieces based on a consistent theme. In addition to the *Reading and Writing Sourcebook*, students will use *Vocabulary for Achievement*, an interactive workbook that includes SAT preparation, affix exploration, and literacy contextualized word knowledge.

A classroom library will support student choice of fiction and non-fiction texts for independent reading. The library contains a variety of books at various lexiles.

Naming the World: A Year of Poems, by Nancie Atwell, can be used to support reading aloud, and analysis of short text.

Cornell Note-taking

CHUH has adopted Cornell Note-taking as the system for taking notes in grades 6-12. Cornell Note-taking, a research-based protocol, can be found in the red Comprehension Binder under the strategy of *Determining Importance*. This process provides a consistent framework to support student learning. Cornell notes will provide a consistent organizational framework to support students from class to class, and year to year.

The system supports learning as students record a heading, key notes, questions, and finally a sum-

mary that captures information learned, new ideas, and connections. Students are able to learn concepts at a deeper level as they interact with the information several times. In addition, study

skills, test-taking skills, reflection and critical thinking are reinforced using this method.

As Cornell Note-taking becomes the CHUH way, middle school and high school teachers will provide opportunities for students to experience modeling, guided practice, discussion, sharing, and, ultimately, independent application of Cornell notes. The goal of supporting student learning is paramount. Keeping our eye on the prize—deeper content understanding—will help to sustain our collective efforts as we adopt this system.



“Fish Philosophy” at Fairfax



The faculty at Fairfax Elementary School participated in staff development sessions based on the “Fish Philosophy”. These two sessions were facilitated by music teacher, Tamar Gray, and Rochelle Snyder, Special Education Interventionist. Teachers met voluntarily for this “lunch bunch” group to learn the four elements that comprise the philosophy detailed in the book, *Fish!* by Stephen C. Lundin, Ph.D., Harry Paul, and

John Christensen. *Fish!* is a book about life and how to interact with all people in any circumstances, but especially in the work place. The basic principles of the fish philosophy are as follows: 1. Play: Have a little fun at work. 2. Make Their Day: Engage others and make them part of the fun. 3. Be There: Pay attention to make sure you take care of the person in front of you right now! 4. Choose your attitude: Before you go to work in the morning, pick out an attitude. Teachers engaged in many hands-on activi-

ties and discussed how the principles could be applied into their teaching to further enhance the positive learning environment for students and staff at Fairfax. What attitude did you choose today?



READ 180 Migrates to the Enterprise Edition



READ 180 labs across the district are anticipating a facelift for the 2006-2007 school year. Scholastic has enhanced the instructional support for teachers and students, improved

technology, and provided more powerful professional development opportunities in the Enterprise Edition of READ 180.

The program still maintains the 90 minute instructional model. Experiences in whole group, small group and individual settings occur in 20 minute rotations. Enterprise offers the *rBook* Teacher's Edition that supports research-based practices for the instruction of reading, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. Lessons are organized with before, during and after reading activities to increase student understanding and engage learners.

Before reading, students view 1-2 minute DVD clips to build background knowledge. Review lessons occur frequently to provide practice in specific skills. Tests are provided to assess prior knowledge and/or to monitor progress.

Students receive an interactive text that they are invited to write in and capture their thoughts on a daily basis. The students are prompted to record questions, inferences, and connections during their reading. Summarization is encouraged after reading.

Independent reading libraries will receive a face-lift with added titles. Instead of audio tapes, CDs will accompany some titles to serve as listening library selections. Students at Bellefaire have displayed their excitement about the titles through their engrossment in many of the books. Each of them look forward to their time for silent reading.

The technology component which

is web-based is smarter and faster than the old CD-driven format. Students enjoy the reliability of the web-based lessons. Reports in this new system allow

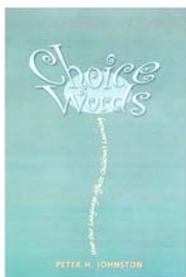
for the aggregation of data. A variety of reports allow teachers to focus instruction based on students' needs.

A new on-line course supports teachers as they use this program with students. The course moves beyond implementation to provide an understanding of the research behind the system.

Teachers have already experienced their first in-service. On May 9, a Scholastic representative provided an overview of the new program. Everyone was very excited about the changes that are on the way.



Summer Reading Suggestions for the Over 21 Crowd



Here are some top picks for adult summer reading. You'll enjoy *Choice Words: How our language affects children's learning* by Dr. Peter Johnston.

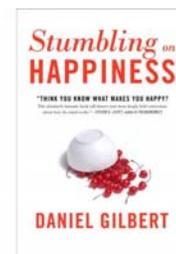
Choice Words is a book containing practical advice for building safe and healthy learning communities that support the pursuit of intellectual growth. Throughout the book, specific examples of how ordinary language and communication can either build up or tear down lines of communication are in-

cluded. What we *don't say* is given as much attention as what we *do say* as Dr. Johnston presents scenarios and interpretations of messages. Behind this book is the larger belief that words, both written and verbal, provide humans with a means of strategically thinking. Explore ways that your choice of words influence children's view of the world, their peers, and themselves.

A second recommendation gets you thinking more deeply about your quest for happiness.

What would have happened if, at the end of *Casablanca*, Ingrid Bergman had stayed with Humphrey Bogart in Morocco, rather than boarding the plane to Lisbon with her husband? Would she have regretted it? Or did she end up lamenting the decision she did make?

According to Daniel Gilbert, odds are that either decision would have made her equally happy in the long run.



Stumbling on Happiness by Daniel Gilbert helps you get to know what makes *you* happy? Harvard professor Gilbert reveals his take on how our minds work, and how the limitations of our imaginations may be getting in the way of our ability to know what happiness is.

Sound quirky and interesting?
It is!

Connecting Children to the Other Side of the Globe

by Sandy Axner



When my third graders received responses from Kristof Kovac's students in Hungary, I wish you could have seen their eyes...it was an educator's dream. They could barely wait for me to open the large envelope and distribute the letters so they could read their pen pals' letters...and then they could barely wait to grab a pencil and piece of paper to write a response. All of a sudden, my students had a reason for learning...and we all know in education that children are motivated to do their best when there is a purpose to which they relate.

As my class practiced the state content standards which involve geography, technology, math, reading and the writing process, they began to comprehend and realize yet another deeper meaning and purpose of this program: to appreciate, understand and be sensitive to other cultures that are different than their own. My students were so surprised to discover the many ways their Hungarian pen-pals and they were alike and they were intrigued by their differences. Listen to Sarah's letter to her pen-pal Nora:

Dear Nora,

It was a kick to get your letter. You should of seen my face. Your English is just fa-a-a-

abulous! Does the sixth class mean the sixth grade? If it does I am in the third grade. It was interesting that your favorite animal is an eagle. Guess what? Our country's bird is an eagle. In America there is a show that you can become a singer. It is called American Idol. Do you have American Idol in Hungary? Do you have a specific summer holiday you like? When is your birthday? Mine is July 23.

Do you remember a time when something happy, sad or exciting happened to you? Well, here's what happened to me... You won't believe my most memorable experience. It was when I was 5 years old. My dad had to go an important party. My family had to go too. I got dressed up and got in the car. When I got to the party I went to get some food. When I was done with my food I went to get some more. I thought the screen door was open but it wasn't. I walked right in to the screen door. Everybody was looking. I was so embarrassed. I will never forget that day. Will you tell me your most memorable experience when you write back?

We heard some spectacular news that your teacher is coming to Boulevard. We can't wait to meet him. Va`rom Leveledet.

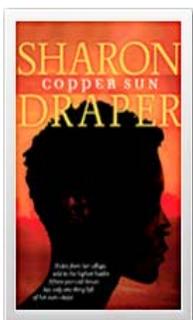
*Barati szeretettel,
Sarah*

As my class practiced the state content standards which involve



geography, technology, math, reading and the writing process, they began to comprehend and realize yet another deeper meaning and purpose of this program: to appreciate, understand and be sensitive to other cultures that are different than their own. My students were so surprised to discover the many ways their Hungarian pen-pals and they were alike and they were intrigued by their differences. But the fun was just beginning! Can you imagine our delight when we learned that Kristof was coming to the USA to visit our class? This authentic, real life experience developed even further the day Kristof arrived. After an endless stream of questions, hugs, giggles and photographs, my students expressed to Kristof that their hope for the future is a world where people communicate their ideas to each other without violence and their dream for the future is to live in a peaceful world. These young students believe that their pen-pal cultural exchange will help promote that hope and dream. Kristof's and my hope for the future is that cultural exchange programs, such as this one, will assist our students in achieving their dream.

Meet Sharon Draper



Sharon Draper, author of newly published *Copper Sun*, and many other popular titles for teens, will visit Cleveland Heights High School and the Main Library on Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2006.

This visit is possible as a result of a collaboration with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Main Library. The library is hosting Sharon Draper as an extension to their Re-opening celebration in September. She will present at the renovated Main Library on Lee Road at 7:00 p.m. on October 24th. Mark your calendars for this exciting event.



Maps courtesy of www.theodora.com/maps used with permission.