

April 26, 2004



SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY TEAMS

KEY DATES

- **K-5 Summer Reading**
4/29-Taylor-3:30-5:00
- **Balanced Literacy**
5/05-Taylor-8:00-11:00
- **Grade 1 and 2 and Reading Specialists**
A.M. Grade 2 -8:15-11:10
P.M. Grade 1 -12:45-3:30
Reading specialist attend one session determined by building needs
May 10-Taylor
- **Story Hour-Title Video Presentation**
CH-UH Main Library
7:00-8:00 P.M.

Schools have succeeded in completing the “getting started” phase of establishing literacy teams. Literacy teams are representative of the entire staff and include the principal, a literacy liaison, regular and special education teachers, a reading specialist, the media specialist, and the literacy specialist assigned to the building.

Literacy Teams will engage in collaborative conversation related to “balanced literacy” research and best practice. From the team’s initial conversation, goals were developed to move the group forward for the remainder of the year.

The establishment of these goals will help solidify the team and support the team bonding that will help move the team forward next year. The following characteristics that are key in supporting the development of literacy teams were identified at our meeting on February 23rd. These key components were taken from *Systems for Change in Literacy Education* (2001) by Lyons, C. & Pinnell, Gay Su. Heinemann, 7-8)

- An atmosphere of trust
- Diverse leadership
- Partnerships with parents
- Shared responsibility and

credit for success

- Time to engage in the collaborative process
- A language for communication
- Respect for diversity
- Focus on student data
- Problem-solving skills
- A vision of what is possible

The next District-wide Balanced Literacy Task Force Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5 from 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. at Taylor Staff Development Center.

2004-2005 Testing Implementation Schedule

Students learn to read about 3,000 to 4,000 new words per school year!



The 2004-2005 school year will reflect new changes in the Statewide testing schedule. Next year will be a “training” year for the Kindergarten Readiness Test that is now scheduled for full implementation in 2005–2006. Grades 1–2 will be participating in State Diagnostic Assessments in reading, writing, and math. Grade 3 will have a writing diagnostic test as well as achievement tests in reading and math. Third graders will take their *Reading Achievement Test* during the week of October 4th. All other achievement tests are scheduled for March 2005.

The 2004-2005 school year will be the last year for proficiency testing in grades 4 and 6. Fourth grade students will take only three proficiency tests – math, science, and social studies, but will take the new Achievement Tests in reading and math. The Achievement Tests are scheduled from March 7–11 with proficiency tests from March 14 – 25.

For the first time grades 5, 7 and 8 will participate in State Achievement Testing. Grade 5 will take Reading Achievement, grade 7 will take Math Achievement, and grade 8 will take a Reading and a Math Achievement Test. All of these Achievement Tests will be administered during the week of March 7 – 11.

For the *last* time, 6th graders will take *all* 5 parts of the Proficiency Tests. These tests will be administered in March 2005.

Tenth grade students will be taking *all* parts of the OGT in March 2005. This class will be the first group needing to pass all five parts in order to graduate.

READING TO WRITE

by Connie Preisel



“Better writers tend to be better readers!” And “better writers tend to read more!” These understandings were put into effect at Oxford Elementary.

Teachers across the grade levels are celebrating April as Poetry Month. Many teachers took time during the day to discuss and read various types and forms of poetry. Teachers encouraged students to write their own poetry. Miss Keller’s 4th grade classroom displayed a beautiful array of their original Japanese Haikus. Miss Byer’s 4th grade classroom let the school know “what’s in a name” by designing an acrostic for their name. Mrs. Curry’s 3rd grade classroom celebrated each Friday by having an “open mike” inviting students to

recite poetry. Mrs. Bellini, the enrichment specialist, encouraged students to create sonnets and provided them with Shakespearean style, feathered-pens.

The teachers at Oxford also explored ways to incorporate more writing across the general curriculum. Teachers at Oxford (and Boulevard), who are involved in the CLLIP Literacy Grant, were able to attend an in-service training on April 22, 2004.

Teachers received an overview of some of the current research in writing instruction. Emphasis of this discussion was placed on the importance of balanced writing instruction, amount of suggested time for writing in the classroom, and research-supported, writing processes in the classroom.

Teachers were provided with ways to informally assess writing in the classroom, to better understand what students are “using but confusing.” After the discussion on assessment, teachers were guided through a model lesson that not only incorporated writing, but also strategies for comprehension and vocabulary development.

Teachers were provided with time to develop their own lesson and were able to access the group facilitator for ideas and recommendations. Teachers who attended this training were encouraged to share this information with their team members!



“This is where we begin-with the belief that all children can write.”

Spandel, *Creating Writers* (2001, p. 266)



Getting Ready for 1st Grade with Summer “Champ” Camp

CHAMP CAMP, similarly to *Camp Jumpstart*, will be a literacy opportunity for kindergarten graduates who will be entering first grades next fall. This three week program, funded by Title I, will serve children who demonstrate a need for reading intervention based on spring assessments.

CHAMP CAMP will be held each morning from 9:00 until noon beginning Monday, August 2nd until Friday, August 20, 2004 at Coventry Elementary School. Bus transportation will be provided. The program will have a partnership with the Coventry Neighborhood Library, and child librarian, Glynis Welte. Each week every class visits the library to listen to books and participate in various activities that align with the camp’s theme. Each child is able to take out books from the library.

The teachers selected to teach have graduated or are participating in the class, CORE: Teaching Reading and Writing. A parent orientation will be held on Thursday, July 29 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at Coventry School Media Center.

Fairfax Reading

Like to read? Just learning? Want to make reading even more fun? Stop in at Fairfax Elementary School and take a peek at the Reading Room. Located in the Fairfax Library this wonderfully homey room is filled with comfortable chairs, cushions, shelves of books, animal puppets and classical music. It's a room totally devoted to reading.

The Fairfax Reading Room was created by Fairfax Librarian Bonnie Mills and former Fairfax Enrichment teacher Pat Dowd. Teachers can sign up to bring their class to the Reading Room any time during the day. Classes enjoy silent reading or having a story read to them. Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Dudzinsky, the library ancillary, often take their classes into the Reading Room after the library lesson or story for some good old fashioned silent reading. Fairfax students love to get a chance to read in the Reading Room, one more thing which makes the library a special place to visit.



Mrs. Schmidt's second graders are enjoying the Fairfax Reading Room.

Ms. Salamone's third graders are working on nonfiction conventions. The students divided a pile of books into two groups: one for non-fiction and one for fiction. Then they made observations on conventions of the non-fiction books as compared to the fiction books (charts, captions, index, glossary, etc.) Next the students made Venn diagrams comparing and contrasting the conventions of non-fiction and fiction texts. The next day the students completed a non-fiction conventions notebook where they used a non-fiction book and identified conventions (index, glos-

sary, table of contents, captions, labels, charts, graphs, maps, etc.). They drew a picture of each convention from their book and made it into a *Non-fiction Conventions Notebook*.

This past month **Mrs. Hertz's second grade class** has been focusing on the study of non-fiction narratives, especially the biography. The children were immersed in various biographies through shared, guided and independent reading. They discovered all the important ingredients of a good biography. The children as a whole class became reporters, interviewing Mrs.

Hertz and collaborating to write her biography. Lastly, the children worked in pairs to collect information about the person they had chosen to research. After the research was completed, each child wrote and published a biography about their person.



WRITING

PROMPTS, RUBRICS and PACING CHARTS

Teachers have been meeting in grade level focus groups to assist a District project that seeks as its goal to organize writing rubrics for each writing application by grade level. The headers for these rubrics mimic the four headers that are in the OGT rubric. Additionally, prompts are being requested from grade level teachers so that recommended prompts and pacing charts can be included with the published rubrics.

In order to support this project, and elevate conversations about the teaching of writing, presentations have been made to sub-groups of teachers about Six-Traits. The six-trait model described by Vicki Spandel in her 1990 book entitled *Creating Writers* focuses on characteristics of excellent writing: ideas, organization, voice word choice, sentence fluency and conventions.

Vicki Spandel's newest book entitled *Creating Young Writers: Using the Six Traits to Enrich Writing Process in Primary Classrooms*, was purchased for special ed teachers and first and second grade teachers

Congratulations to Marge Dunlevy, Enrichment Specialist at Boulevard School. She has received a \$1000 award from the *Robert L. Stolz Special Project Fund*. Marge's project, "Key to Achievement and Proficiency" involves the entire school as well as parents.

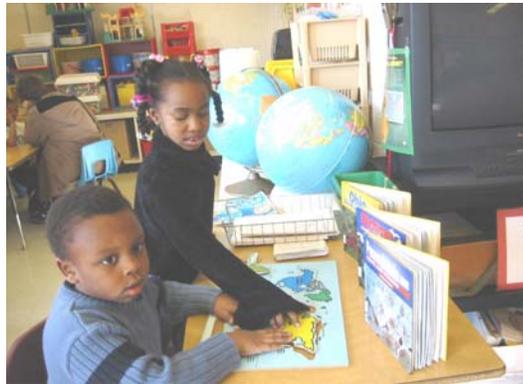
On May 24, Ohio illustrator, Christopher Canyon

Boulevard's Banner

will be spending the day at Boulevard School. The day will begin with a Christopher Canyon Breakfast with the Boulevard staff, followed by a whole-school assembly where Mr. Canyon will tell how he became an illustrator, where he gets his ideas, and how he writes. There will also be small group assemblies where Mr. Can-

yon will share his latest book, sing, and play the guitar. One student from each classroom will be having lunch with the illustrator.

Mrs. Dunlevy has asked teachers to select one student in their class who has good artistic abilities but struggles with school work. How nice to give these children recognition for



Lisa Katz, kindergarten teacher at Noble School has been busy making and utilizing learning centers in her classroom. Mrs. Katz's centers support literacy, math, science, and social studies.



MULTIDIMENSIONAL FLUENCY SCALE

Adapted from Zutell & Rasinski, 1991	4	3	2	1
Expression and Volume	Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Varies expression and volume to match his or her interpretation of the passage.	Makes text sound like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.	Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text but not in others. Focus remains largely on pronouncing the words—still reads in a quiet voice.	Reads words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.
Phrasing	Generally reads with good phrasing, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.	Reads with a mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and some chopiness; reasonable stress and intonation.	Frequently reads in two- and three-word phrases, giving the impression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation fails to mark ends of sentences and clauses.	Reads in monotone with little sense of phrase boundaries; frequently reads word-by-word.
Smoothness	Generally reads smoothly with some breaks, but resolves word and structure difficulties quickly, usually through self-correction.	Occasionally breaks smooth rhythm because of difficulties with specific words and/or structures.	Experiences several “rough spots” in text where extended pauses or hesitations are more frequent and disruptive.	Makes frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.
Pace	Consistently reads at conversational pace; appropriate rate throughout reading.	Reads with an uneven mixture of fast and slow pace.	Reads moderately slowly.	Reads slowly and laboriously.

**READING TIPS
HIGHLIGHTED IN OUR
VIDEO:
FAMILY READING
FOR A
BETTER LIFE**

Taylor Teacher Gets Creative with Buddy Reading

Donna Feldman, English teacher at Taylor Academy has implemented a *Teens Tutoring Program*. Last fall, Donna wrote and received a grant from Cleveland Reads. The grant focuses on weekly tutoring sessions for primary students. The tutoring is provided by Mrs. Feldman’s journalism class from Taylor Academy. The tutoring takes place at Fairfax school and *Cleveland Reads* provides materials which consist of packets containing two books with pre-reading and post-reading activities. The activities are all aligned with Ohio State Standards for English Language Arts.

The format for reading each of the books is a three week lesson plan which the Taylor students develop.

The first week, Taylor students introduce the pre-reading activity and read the entire book to the specific Fairfax student that they are working with. The Fairfax student follows along with the second copy of the book. Once the book is finished the Taylor student facilitates an activity which involves phonics, vocabulary and comprehension exercises and writing activities.

The second week, the Taylor students and the Fairfax students split the reading of

the book and then complete another skill activity.

The third week the Fairfax student reads the entire book to the Taylor student.

Taylor students then write about their tutoring experiences in their journals. This reflective journaling covers topics such as how to motivate a student who does not want to read, an evaluation of the books read, an evaluation of the book activities that come in the packets, what the tutor has learned about the learning process, and what the tutor has learned about himself.

Mrs. Feldman is forging an outstanding alternative pathway to literacy!

- 1.) Make time to read every day.
- 2.) Read the world around you.
- 3.) Surround yourself with a variety of reading materials.
- 4.) Visit the library regularly.
- 5.) Build a personal library.
- 6.) Select “just right” books.
- 7.) Make predictions before you read.
- 8.) Ask yourself questions while you read.
- 9.) Make connections to your life, to other texts that you have read, and to the world around you.
- 10.) Reread to make sure you understand.

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The Family Reading Video is almost completed. A preview of the draft was presented at the Title Advisory Board Meeting on April 21st. Literacy Lending Bags are almost ready to go. Videographer Mark McCue is anticipating completion of the video by the end of May. Special thanks to all of the staff members who have assisted with this project. The list of "credits" is getting longer every day. Performers will be invited to "The Premier" before the end of the school year.

**DON'T FORGET RIGHT TO READ
WEEK:
MAY 3-MAY 7**

**"Hard work spotlights the character
of people: some turn up their
sleeves, some turn up their noses,
and some don't turn up at all."**

- Sam Ewing

**LIT BITS is a monthly publication
produced by staff members
committed to promoting literacy.**



Oxford Plans to Celebrate Right to Read Week

The Literacy Team at Oxford is preparing for *Right to Read Week*, May 3rd-7th. "Take Flight and Read" is the theme chosen by the team to encourage and promote reading and writing during this special week. Students will be provided with a "flight plan," as a way to track their time spent reading during the week. Students will also be able to "fly around" to various teachers and staff, and recite a piece of literature that they have practiced. To end the week, Oxford will hold its annual literacy night on May 6th. Literacy night is an evening for Oxford families to learn about the importance of reading and writing. Parents will be able to attend literacy-related sessions facilitated by Helen Hirsch, Kay Milkie, Amy Bloomberg and Connie Preisel.. It is our hope that every child at Oxford will soar to new heights in reading!

