

# LIT BITS

## LITERACY INITIATIVES: 04-05

by Helen Hirsch, Coordinator of Literacy

Welcome to the 04-05 school year! I am thrilled to work with such committed professionals throughout the district to support increasing student achievement through developing each student's reading and writing. Lit Bits is a publication designed to support increased understanding of our literacy initiatives in the district, and showcase examples of promising practices related to these initiatives.

Two major initiatives drive our work this year: matching text to reader and writing to achieve. These robust goals will require efforts from multiple stakeholders:

- Literacy specialists are working in collaboration with Libby Larrabee to lead professional development sessions for teachers in grades K-12, regular ed, special ed and intervention specialists.
- Literacy teams are developing plans to support implementation of district goals.
- Staff development offerings related to literacy goals are being planned.
- The literacy web-site is being expanded to include resources related to these goals. <http://www.chuh.org/Literacy/main.lasso>
- An adolescent task force is organized to lead adolescent literacy efforts.
- A writing resource manual has been assembled and will be distributed to every teacher of writing. This manual includes writing prompts for selected writing applications described in the standards K-10. Collecting these writing applications that reflect a journey through the writing process will provide opportunities for shared conversation about writing, assure equal access to varied writing experiences, provide opportunities to collect evidence of growth longitudinally and communicate consistent district expectations related to the English Language Arts.



Cleveland  
Heights-  
University  
Heights

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YOU ARE INVITED!  
ROBERT MARZANO  
Tuesday, October 5  
7:00 PM  
Wiley Middle School

Robert Marzano Research-  
Based Strategies that Work

- \* Identifying similarities and differences.
- \* Summarizing and note taking.
- \* Reinforcing effort and providing recognition.
- \* Homework and practice.
- \* Nonlinguistic representations.
- \* Cooperative learning.
- \* Setting objectives and providing feedback.
- \* Generating and testing hypotheses.
- \* Questions, cues, and advance organizers.



TITLE I FALL DINNER  
Wiley Middle School  
6:30-8:30 P.M.

## Chats from Champ Camp

Eighty-one kindergarten students registered to attend Champ Camp this summer. Camp was held at Coventry School from Aug. 2 to Aug. 20. Students were actively engaged in various educational activities that helped them to develop their reading skills and be ready for first grade. Each week they walked to the Coventry Neighborhood Library and listened to stories, sang songs, danced to music, all under the direction of Glynis Welte, the children's librarian. They became new library card carriers and were excited to check out books each week. Many sincere thanks to Ms. Welte who gave each student a book to add to their personal library.

Each week student activities were centered around a theme. The first week, All About Me, they drew pictures of themselves and wrote sentences to describe their drawing. During week two which coincided with the Olympics, students learned about heroes, sports, and the Olympic games. During the last week, Getting Ready for School, they set goals for first grade, practiced rhyming words, performed in Reader's Theaters. The children also attended the computer lab each week where they listened to stories on were engaged in phonemic awareness games and practice. At the conclusion of the program each student received a certificate of participation, a bookmark and another book for their own library. Thank you to all who made this program a successful educational experience for our children.



Students enjoy a Reader's Theater script.



The students listen to Ms. Welte read a story at the Coventry Library.

## “Reading Together” at Boulevard

Community support and family involvement are two components that can contribute to improvements in reading achievement. Recognizing this as an opportunity, Mrs. Myers, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at Boulevard, has started a community reading program called, Reading Together. Reading Together encourages various members of the community to be an active participant in the school environment. Members of the community are invited to volunteer to read with a student or small group of students, from the class. Community members include: Cleveland Heights City Council Members, police officers, parent & grandparents, retired citizens, and various members of the school community. Guest readers are asked to sign the classroom guest book. The

student and guest are then able to read and interact with a piece of literature. The guest reader is provided with questions to guide their interactions with the students. Some of the guiding comprehension questions are:

- Who are the main characters?
- Where does the story take place?
- What is the main problem in the story?
- How is the problem solved?
- How does the story end?
- What message is the author trying to tell you through the story?

Reading Together not only allows students to have a special reading experience with an adult but it builds their confidence that they can and will achieve success in reading!



Susie Kaiser from Reaching Heights reads with a small group of third grade students.

## K-5 Professional Development In-Services

We are off and running with district-wide professional development for classroom and special education teachers of students in kindergarten through grade 5! All teachers attended half-day in-services that focused on two major goals of CH-UH related to increased student achievement: 1. Matching Text to Reader, and 2. Writing to Achieve.

Helen Hirsch, Coordinator of Literacy, began with an overview of professional development that occurred during the '03-'04 school year. The breadth of topics included components of the assess-revise-teach cycle.

Caroline Kaczala, Coordinator of Testing and Accountability, and Karen Frantz, Program Specialist - Achievement, provided information related to the CH-UH '04-'05 assessment schedule that includes State mandated tests, State diagnostics, as well as District standardized tests. This school year, teachers of K-3 students will administer the Short Screening Measure of the Ohio Reading Diagnostic, expected to arrive on Sept. 15, and the Writing Diagnostic Measure.

Libby Larrabee, District Literacy consultant, overviewed the District selected informal reading inventory, *Houghton Mifflin Leveled Reading Passages Assessment Kit*. There was discussion about components, administration, and scoring. By using word lists, short stories, and comprehension questions in the kit, a teacher can analyze results and determine appropriate text at each student's instructional level so that instructional planning and time can be maximized.

Additionally, the CH-UH *K-12 ELA Writing Resource Manual* was introduced. This binder contains resources for teachers such as benchmark prompts, products, rubrics, and checklists aligned with the Ohio Academic Content Standards for the purpose of shared conversations among teachers and increased student writing achievement. The manual also includes resources to aid in implementation of the Long-Range Pacing Chart. For example, lists of high frequency words, templates, MLA Citation Style, and descriptions of *6+1 Writing Traits* are provided.

Professional development in-services are scheduled periodically throughout the school year as the District continues to focus on data-driven, standards-based instruction.

### Oxford Book Club

Teachers at Oxford Elementary have joined together to form a book club. Organized and coordinated by Kelly Stukus, Principal & Amy Bloomberg, Media Specialist, the Oxford Book Club met four times during the summer. Interested teachers played an active role in planning, hosting, and facilitating each meeting. The selection of books to read was balanced between leisure and professional books. The summer

professional read was Reutzel and Cooter's, *Strategies for Reading Assessment and Instruction*. Discussions about this book generated many great ideas that are being put into practice this school year. The leisure books, *Finding Fish*, by Antwone Fisher & *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte, elicited conversations around the importance that teachers have in the lives of young children. Many teachers enjoyed being together, outside the school

environment, to further their professional development with colleagues.

Oxford's "next book" is, *The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Nighttime*, by Mark Haddon. As a young adult, Haddon worked with children with autism, and this book is a "must read" for teachers who have taught a special needs.



## Oxford Teachers are Adopting 4<sup>th</sup> graders

Sarah Lambert, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, has started a volunteer program at Oxford. "Adopt a 4<sup>th</sup> grader" pairs a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student with a teacher from Oxford who is willing to volunteer time, to support and encourage academic success. The amount of time, and type of support is, determined by each individual teacher.

Teachers are choosing to meet with students either before or after school, to support in various ways. Some examples are:

- Checking homework
- Praising the student for an excellent assignment
- Helping the student improve a "work in progress"
- Talking with the student

This project enhances building support towards success on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency test. Teachers recognize that it is a challenge for one grade level alone to prepare students for the proficiency test. Rather, it takes the responsibility

of the entire learning community to help each child succeed. Following the Oxford motto, "Together as one, we get the job done!"



## Cleveland Heights- University Heights

### Content Standards are Popping Up in Displays at Boulevard

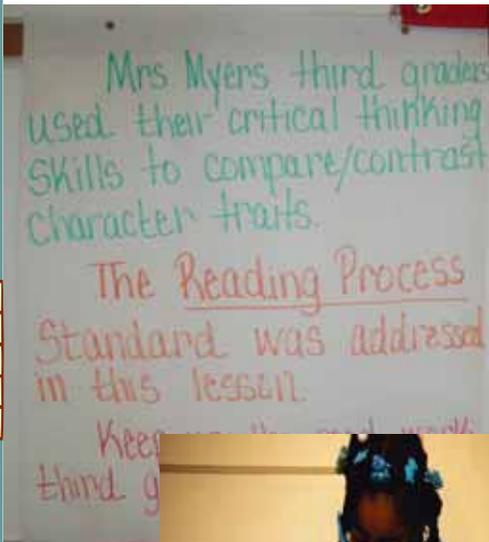
The Academic Content Areas are the driving force of education in Ohio. Teacher lesson plans and assignments should reflect the benchmark standards and indicators in the areas of reading, math, science and social studies. But teachers at Boulevard are going one step further to put the content indicators in their hallways. Yes, hallways! Right next to examples of student's work, are the content indicators that guided the lesson. This allows students, parents, and educators to not only appreciate the examples of exemplary work, but to appreciate the implementation of content standards!



### READ 180 IS LAUNCHED: WILEY AND CLEVELAND HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL

Read 180 is a promising research-based balanced literacy intervention program for the upper grades. Mary Windham, Enid Krause, Jeff Glass and Mary Watson are currently implementing this Scholastic program. This data-driven approach integrates technology, independent reading and writing and guided reading and writing using engaging and age-appropriate content. An in-depth overview of Read 180 implementation is being planned for a future LitBit issue. A professional development companion piece called Scholastic Red is also part of this program.

- Come hear Robert Marzano
- \* Identifying similarities and differences.
  - \* Summarizing and note taking.
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### The

Reading  
can be  
text

By  
with a



### Language-Literacy Connection

and oral language have much in common. "If the printed words efficiently recognized {decoding}, comprehension of connected depends heavily on the reader's oral language abilities."

*Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, 1998.*

creating a language-rich classroom, teachers can provide students strong foundation for oral language skills. One way to encourage language is through the use of language-eliciting activities. Used

as a learning center activity or a weekly homework assignment to encourage family participation, language activities can promote an expansion of skills. Remember to make time each day for structured conversations!

### October Activities

*A Parent Partner's Activity Calendar (Toth, 1986)*

- If green is a summer color, what are the colors of fall? Divide a sheet of paper into squares. Color the squares with different fall colors. *Older students* word for fall. What happens to trees in autumn? Make a collection of autumn leaves *may choose to use words or sentences to express themselves.*