



# Lit Bits



## THIRD GRADE SCORES: FULL SPEED AHEAD

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Students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade took the *Reading Achievement Test* in October and March. After the March administration, 77.9% of our students were *at or above proficiency*. This percent includes the best performance of all students who completed the October or March test and who were enrolled in the district at the time of March testing. This performance is higher than the 72.5% third grade results from 2004. Almost 70% of our students moved up one or more levels on the spring test this year. The biggest movement was for students who performed at the Basic level in fall. More than 80% of these students moved up to Proficient, Accelerated, or Advanced.

Another district goal was met since the gap between African American students decreased from 28.5 percentage points in March of 2004 to 22.7 percentage points in March 2005. District-wide the strongest performance in March 2005 was in the standard of Reading Applications: Literary with a score of 82.09%, which is an increase from 71.59% in 2004. In addition, growth from 2004 was made in the standards of Reading Process and Reading Applications: Informational Text. Scores increased in Reading Process from 63.98% to 74.10% and in Reading Applications: Informational Text from 73.83% to 78.24% in 2005.

This success reflects a dedicated effort by staff and students and inspires all of us to continue making progress.

## BALANCED LITERACY TASK FORCE



On Wednesday, May 18th, the Balanced Literacy Task Force met at Taylor and celebrated the quality and abundance of literacy initiatives that occurred this school year at each building. Literacy coaches described district level accomplishments, and provided a supportive resource for literacy team leaders, Teaching All the Children, edited by Diane Lapp, Eric J. Cooper and others. The two district priorities for the 2005-2006 year were unveiled: reading strategies to support strategic processing, and writing strategies to support writing across the content areas. Each school is identifying literacy goals for the 2005-2006 school year, and the critical role of literacy teams to achieve these goals was emphasized.

## Celebrity Read-In has a Second Showing

On Thursday, May 5, 2005, Monticello hosted a rerun of their fall Celebrity Read-in. Due to the overwhelming response received in the fall, teachers Yolanda Harris, Stacey Robinson, and Angela Kirkland orchestrated another opportunity for community members to join the school in their celebration of reading. Throughout the day, twenty-seven readers came and went carrying their favorite book. Among those who shared were Deborah Delisle, superintendent of schools; Ron Register, president of the school board; Walter Stinson, representative from the University Heights Mayor's office; Katherine Dolan, Cleveland Heights detective; James Draper, the brother of author Sharon Draper; and Dee Hall, a WZAK, 93.1 FM personality who does voice-overs. Others who shared included parents, grandparents, and older siblings of students. Yolanda Harris commented that the turnout was wonderful and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Children responded with comments like "I got three autographs today!" Through the inspirational sharing by adults, students were led to rediscover old favorites and investigate new titles. The hope is that this annual event will grow each year.



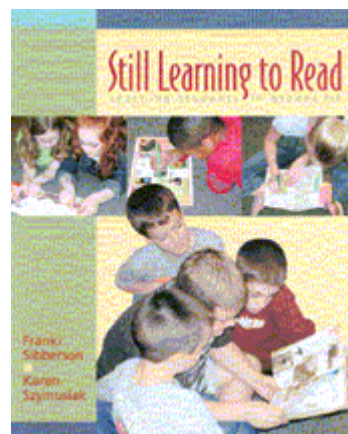
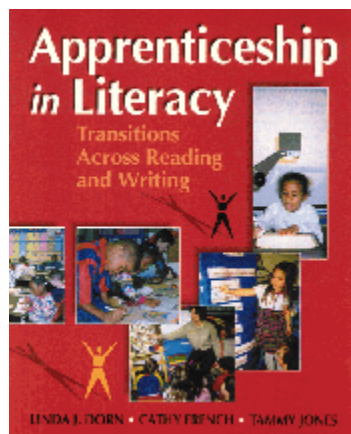
### GRADE FOUR AND GRADE SIX CELEBRATE TEST RESULTS!

Thirteen is no longer an unlucky number. Just take a look at 4<sup>th</sup> Grade 2005 Proficiency Test scores in mathematics, citizenship, and science. Students scored 13 percentage points higher in each of these subtests as compared to last year. Fourth grade math counted for AYP again this year, and the goal was 46.6%. The district will make AYP in 4<sup>th</sup> grade math since the district's preliminary score was 60% at or above proficiency. Many schools made great progress with several schools showing double-digit improvement in math, citizenship, and science. The district citizenship score was 66% and fourth graders scored 62% at or above proficiency in science.

Sixth graders also performed very well this year. District scores for four of the five subtests increased with double-digit improvements in reading, math, citizenship, and science. Math and reading scores count for AYP with the AYP goals being 47% for reading and 46.3% in math. Preliminary district scores indicate that the district met AYP in reading and math since our reading scores are 66%, an increase from 45% in 2004, and our math scores are 51%, an increase from 34% last year. Citizenship scores rose to 70%, an increase from 51%; science scores rose from 42% to 60%. Monticello and Wiley made dramatic gains in all of the five subtests, and Roxboro Middle School improved in four of the five test areas.

### NOBLE NEWS

Julie Beers and teachers are collaborating during book club conversations using two books related to literacy. Titles include Apprenticeship in Literacy by Linda Dorn, Cathy French and Tammy Jones, and Still Learning to Read by Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak. These books will support teacher understanding of the power of intentional teaching and the role of professional learning teams. These books also support a comprehensive balanced approach to literacy instruction moving from high levels of teacher support to independent learning.



## CANTERBURY TALES

On Thursday April 28, Canterbury hosted their Annual Family Literacy Night. Over seventy people enjoyed reading, writing, sharing, and buying books. The literacy night was funded by Canterbury's Ohio Reads Grant.

During the evening, children were entertained by Alice Paulda, a librarian from the Heights Main Public Library branch. Evelyn Fierer, a kindergarten teacher, led a book exploration for parents. She modeled reading to children and the questions to ask to engage children while sharing books together.

Children had been donating used books for weeks prior to the event so they could earn a ticket to the *book swap*. Children were able to choose "new" titles that appealed to them from the hundreds that lined the gymnasium walls. The Scholastic Book Fair provided an abundance of new books which were available for purchase.

The dinner hour held a special surprise. Geranimo Stilton, a.k.a. Benjamin Vegel, made a guest appearance that delighted the children.

Teachers Sharon Post, Darrell Lausche, April Wesley, Julie Meese, and Karen Heinsbergen conducted breakout sessions for the parents and children. One session focused on reading comic strips to reinforce the skills of sequencing and inferring. The other session generated excitement about journal writing as a way of sharing thoughts and feelings.

This literacy outreach event was successful through the efforts of Principal Serena Edwards and teachers, including Judy Davis, Michelle Dawson, Evelyn Fierer, Amanda Geil, Darrell Lausche, Julie Meese, Sharon Post, Cyndi Oviatt, Lynne Slater, and April Wesley.

## IMPROVING, ACHIEVING, SUCCEEDING

*Right to Read Week* was celebrated at Fairfax the week of May 16<sup>th</sup>. The theme this year was *Reading Road Trip*. Students filled out a car-shaped form for their favorite book and then the carts were displayed on the walls of the halls. Each student also kept track of the number of books they read, and classes competed with each other at each grade level to see which class read the most books. The winners at each grade level earned a popsicle party. Every student had an opportunity to create a bookmark using road signs such as: *Caution Readers at Work*; *Reader Crossing*; *Stop and Read*; *Read Limit 55 Books per Week*; *Library Route USA 66*; *30 Minutes Reading Required Daily Monday-Friday 9:00 am-6:00 pm*.

May 18<sup>th</sup> was "Read a Tee Shirt Day." Participation from staff and students was great. The culminating activity on Friday was a pizza lunch for "published Fairfax authors."

Our second graders in Ellen Liss's class have spent the last month writing poetry with Rochelle Snyder's special needs class. They wrote cinquains, diamond poems, Haikus and name poems. The illustrations were very supportive. This activity addressed several of the Ohio Standards including: producing informal writings, following multi-step directions, composing writings that convey a clear message and include well-chosen details. The hallway display was a popular one for children and adults to read as they walked through the halls.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, our literacy coach, Karen Heinsbergen, came to Fairfax to present a very educational, entertaining and enjoyable in-service on the DSA. We all came away with materials we could use in the classroom the next day, and some of us were lucky enough to win a coveted prize! We look forward to Karen's return visit to expand on the subject and give us more time to view the video she brought along.

*North, South, East and West  
Building Literacy is Our Quest!*



## In Pursuit of a Research-Based Program

On May 25, 2005, the ELA Task Force met at Taylor. Dialogue focused on scientifically based reading research and what that means for our district as we look forward to the adoption of a new English Language Arts core program. The consensus was to keep the same program grades K-5 and make the switch beginning at grade 6 so that grades 6-8 would have the same publisher. The piloting process for the fall was also examined. Specifically the following points were addressed:

- the process of pilot teacher selection,
- the number of pilots per grade level, per building,
- the number of publishers per teacher, and
- the number of teachers per publisher.

Each committee member received a copy of Teaching All the Children, the same book distributed to members of the Balanced Literacy Taskforce. There was lively discussion as members read and responded to quotes excerpted from chapter 8, 'Proven Programs' and Other Unscientific Ideas by Richard Allington and Rhonda Nowak. Take a look at chapter 2, "The Pursuit of Equity and Excellence in Educational Opportunity" to analyze best practices.



### KINDERGARTEN "CAMPERS"

CHAMP CAMP will be held again this summer for selected kindergarten students entering first grade in the fall. Children are invited to camp based on their spring reading assessments. Students from all eight elementary schools will attend the Title I funded three-week camp from August 1st through August 19th at Coventry Elementary. There is no charge to parents for this program. CHAMP CAMP is a reading intervention service that helps children get ready for their first grade experience. Teachers for the program are all district teachers who have completed additional literacy training.

Children are bused to and from camp each day, and they will participate in varied literacy activities from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. They will visit the Coventry Neighborhood Library each week where the weekly theme is connected through stories, poems, songs, and dance. Campers will borrow books using their very own library card so they can read at home with their families. They will also have an opportunity to practice reading skills using software in the computer lab.

At the conclusion of camp, each student receives a certificate of completion, a bookmark to encourage continued reading, and a new book to add to his/her personal library.

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

### The Wizard of Oxford

The fourth grade students are Oxford, under the direction of Miss Tara Keller, will be performing the play, The Wiz, an urbanized version of The Wizard of Oz. After viewing the movie, students were given the task of writing the script for the play. Organization, word choice, and voice were important elements of writing that the students used to bring the story and characters to life.

Once the play was written, interested students had the opportunity to read the play and audition for their desired role. The auditions went well, and every student was assigned either a speaking role or stage crew position.

As students practiced during their lunch hour, they were able to re-read their scripts fluently and discuss the feelings and actions that each character brings to the production.

Performances will be held the week of May 31<sup>st</sup>. Good luck to all students, and as they say in show biz, "Break a leg!"



## Who Let The Dogs Out?

If you were lucky enough to visit Oxford on May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, you would have found yourself greeted by three springer spaniels named Max, Annie & Tak. These dogs are owned by author Sandra Philipson who was invited to speak to classes in honor of Right to Read Week. Sandra Philipson was not alone; she came with her illustrator, Jenny Campbell.

The duo met with small groups of classes in the media center. Sandra Philipson told students of the adventures of Max, Annie and Tak and how they are her inspiration to write. Jenny Campbell showed students how to draw a picture of the dogs using basic shapes. The author and illustrator demonstrated how they work together to create these wonderful books.

Students prepared for weeks before the visit. The Oxford Literacy Team crafted grade level lesson plans around reading and writing to familiarize students with the content of the stories. Students not only read the various books written by Sandra Philipson, but they were able to solve and write riddles and compose a thank you letter to Sandra Philipson for her visit.

This was truly an amazing celebration honoring our right to read!



### "ASK REEVES"

#### 101 Questions & Answers about STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT, and ACCOUNTABILITY

by Douglas B. Reeves, Ph.D. (2001)

As we begin to plan for next year's CHUH literacy initiative that focuses on the teaching of writing alongside reading strategies to support strategic processing, *Lit Bits* continues with "Ask Reeves" by exploring chapter four, "Writing to Achieve." Try your hand at the true/false test below. The statements are based on Reeves' responses to very important questions about the teaching of writing.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ If you want students to write better, you have to give them feedback even when writing in journals. (p. 61)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Frequent writing assessment is associated with higher test scores. (p. 62)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The act of writing with pencil in hand is a necessary skill in our technological age. (p. 63)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Collaboration with a colleague is an important part of teaching writing. (p. 67 & p. 72)

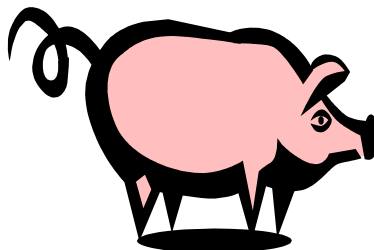
According to Reeves, every statement is true!

### Pig Out on Books

Gearity students were allowed to pig out—on books, that is! During Right to Read week, students were encouraged to read books of their own choosing. Upon completion of reading a book, students were given a cut-out, pink pig to hang in the hallway.

As classrooms met their goal, they were treated to a popcorn party! What a tasty way to encourage reading.

This activity was very popular with students, and even though the celebration is over, students are still requesting their pink pigs when they finish reading a book. They have learned that the real reward is the joy of reading, and the feasting can continue as long as there is a great book in their hands!



### Destination Japan

In February, Boulevard students were encouraged to "Read Around the World" by using a genre passport. Throughout the spring, students completed their passports and anticipated a trip. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, students were able to take their trip around the world to visit the country of Japan.

Teachers and staff transformed Boulevard into Japan. The gymnasium housed six different learning stations for every student to enjoy. Students were able to read and follow directions at the origami and the sushi-making station. Culture awareness was attained as students were able to try on authentic Japanese kimonos. Penmanship was practiced as students learned to write Japanese script at the writing center. Students discovered that many familiar products used in their homes are produced by Japanese based companies at the logo station.

In addition to the learning stations, members of the community, knowledgeable in Japanese culture, talked with students about Japanese traditions: the history of the bonsai tree, Japanese folklore and art, and the history of the Suzuki violin.

This was a wonderful experience for students which provided an opportunity to learn about another country while reinforcing the importance of literacy!

## Oxford's Read-In



To conclude *Right to Read Week*, Oxford sponsored a Read-In. The Read-In was held during the evening in the gymnasium. Families were encouraged to relax and have fun by wearing their pajamas, bringing sleeping bags or blankets, and reading books with their children. Alice Paulda, librarian and storyteller, made an appearance at the event and shared with families two fabulous stories of heroic dogs.

At the conclusion of the night, first grade students who participated in Cub's Club were recognized. Also, fifty autographed books featuring Max, Annie, and Tak were raffled off to students who participated in the Right to Read activities.

This activity brought together families in a celebration of reading.

## Summer Programs

June 20-July 15	Elementary Summer School (Boulevard School)
June 20-July 21	English as a Second Language K-12 (Monticello)
June 20-July 22	Middle School Summer School (Monticello)
June 20-July 22	High School Summer School (Monticello)
June 20-July 22	High School Special Education Summer School (Monticello)
July 18-July 22	Camp Invention Grades 2-6 (Coventry)
August 1-August 19	Champ Camp Incoming first graders (Coventry)

## OGT Test Scores Roll-in



Great news abounds about the OGT reading and math scores. In comparison to last year, scores in both areas rose over seventeen percentage points. The reading scores rose from 67.2% in 2004 to 85.9% in 2005, and math scores are at 68.4% compared to 50.7% in 2004. Our participation rate of 95% was exceeded since 98% of the students took these tests. Special education students also performed well with the majority of alternative assessment results scoring at the proficient level or above.



## Title I Parent Advisory Board

On April 26, 2005 the Title 1 Parent Advisory Board convened for a spring luncheon meeting at Taylor Staff Development Center. Also in attendance were Title 1 teachers, elementary principals, and members of the district's literacy team. Helen Hirsch elaborated on each of the four critical roles parents play: teacher, supporter, advocator, and decision-maker. Groups analyzed the parent involvement policy and made recommendations for improvements to the form. Ohio Department of Education's family website was showcased. A question and answer session related to Title 1 service concluded the meeting.



***Encourage summer reading!  
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found on the web!***

[www.chuh.org/summerreading](http://www.chuh.org/summerreading)