

Lit Bits



SIRI AL

Nineteen Cleveland Heights pioneers became certified instructors of a new course initiated by the Ohio Department of Education entitled SIRI for Adolescent Learners, or SIRI AL. SIRI stands for State Institute for Reading Instruction. The training included volunteer teachers and special education coordinators representing the high school, middle schools, Bellefaire, and district literacy team. The full day of training occurred on November 30th at Taylor.

The goal is to increase the capacity of literacy leaders district-wide to teach SIRI AL at a building level. Middle school and high school teachers across the content areas will be invited to participate in a 25 hour workshop with the possibility of earning an additional 20 hours of seat time through an independent study option. Two hours of graduate credit can be earned.

The course provides rich resources related to adolescent literacy and a framework for teaching reading, writing and vocabulary across content areas.

Red Folders and Reflecting Folders

<p>! X IZ UX P! X SJDH! GPME FST Q!</p>	<p>The red folder houses writing products assessed with rubrics.</p>	 <p>This folder travels to next year's teacher.</p>
 <p>The reflecting folder contains a log to record conferences.</p>	 <p>Students use this folder during the writing process.</p>	 <p>The folders walk hand in hand to help grow excellent writers.</p>



Working Together to Benefit Children



One of the highlights of Professional Development Day on November 14th was the morning keynote speaker, Dr. Willard Daggett, founder and President of the International Center for Leadership in Education. Dr. Daggett spoke passionately and purposefully of the urgent need to reform schools in America as a response to the challenges we are facing as a country.

- Globalization – How are we preparing our students for competing in an increasingly global economy?
- Demographics – What do we know about teaching the population of students with increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and needs?
- Values and Beliefs – How are we assisting the “millennial” generation in balancing expectations with reality?
- Technology – What experiences are we providing for students so that they can remain current with advances in technology and earn degrees in fields related to technology, science, math, and engineering?

By citing specific examples, Daggett built a compelling case for reforming what educators can do today, tomorrow, and in the future. For more information about school reform initiatives, visit www.daggett.com.

Four CH-UH Teachers Earn National Board Certification



Marian Kopp,
Early Adolescence
English Language Arts,

Congratulations! With varied areas of certification and varied teaching experiences, four women achieved a goal they had set for themselves that distinguishes them within their profession.

When asked about the application process, they all expressed that this professional development opportunity had a profound impact on their lives creating an intensified view of the art of reflection. Lorene remarked that the book *The Little Engine That Could* was an analogy

she related to during this experience. When things felt overwhelming she said to herself, "I think I can, I think I can!"

The need for perseverance through the process was echoed by Sandy when she said, "I was astounded that my drive and commitment to follow through on challenges I set for myself was so powerful." One of the after effects of going through the process of National Board Certification is the increased level of reflective practice that is put forth in the daily act of teaching. Stephanie relayed that this opportunity deepened her ability to analyze students' approaches to learning.

When asked what advice they had for others, the responses were unanimous—Go for it. They were bolstered by the support of others, including each other, family members, colleagues down the hall, and colleagues at an off-site group. Although each acknowledged the arduous nature of the task, the need for discipline to pursue and the time commitment needed, all said this was a very valuable experience that enhanced their professional lives and the learning of their students.



Sandy Axner- Middle Childhood Generalist
Lorene Varley- Early Childhood Generalist
Stephanie Myers- Middle Childhood, Generalist



The Spirit of Giving

The Oxford Literacy Team, recognizing the need to build the home libraries of their students, partnered with our friends at the Mayfield Public Library to gift each student in the school with a book. In the spirit of giving, the Literacy Team wrapped each book in holiday paper so that each student will have a gift to unwrap this holiday season. Teachers stayed after school on several occasions to be a part of this special project!

Partnerships at Noble

Buddy Tutoring

Sixteen of Noble Elementary School's responsible 5th grade students have volunteered to be positive role models for first graders. These pupils meet twice a week at lunch recess with their eager young readers for "Buddy Tutoring" under the supervision of Ms. Burkey, the school counselor. These 5th graders use high frequency flash cards, as well as phonemic awareness games to increase their young teammates understanding of rhyming and segmenting. Each session ends with a paired reading activity from a Reading A-Z book that the first grader will then get to take home to reread to a parent.

Lunch Bunch Reading

Becky Jordan, Noble's psychology intern, has been meeting with first grade Lunch Bunch Reading groups on a weekly basis during the second grade lunch time. Seven students from the second grade participated and were divided into two smaller groups. They played games like *Sight Word Bingo* and *Chicken Stacker* that focused on sight word skills and short vowel sounds. The groups also worked on creating and manipulating words with short vowels using magnetic letters. The groups each met six times. For the first three weeks they focused on sight words and the last three weeks the focus was on short vowel sounds.



4th Annual Book Character Celebration

On October 28th Oxford Elementary hosted its fourth annual Book Character Celebration. Students and teachers dressed as their favorite book characters, and they were able to share their favorite stories with one another. During an all school assembly, the words on the page came alive as teachers read aloud during

a multimedia presentation. Mrs. Betty Miller and Mrs. Monica Rogers read aloud from Mary Ann Hoberman's, *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You*, telling the story of *The Princess and the Pea*. Following this presentation, teachers Karen Rego and Jackie Taylor read *The Empty Pot* while a power point slide show projected the illustrations on a screen behind them. During the readings, instrumental music played in the background so that students were able to truly become a part of the experience. This celebration encouraged children's love for reading and was a motivating experience for all.

Communication Corner

Making inferences is a difficult reading task for many students. Inferential understanding and questioning extends throughout a reader's life. To help make inferencing exciting and meaningful for your students, try using the comic section from *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Put a comic strip on the overhead and see if students are able to understand the meaning. Comic strips are filled with opportunities for inferencing and the process of connecting text to understandings outside of the text is a lot of fun!

READING



CANTERBURY'S SECOND GRADE TEAM

Serena Edwards tipped off the Lit Bits editorial staff about a fantastic Parent Information Packet designed and distributed by Darrell Lausche, Sue Neff and Marie Woods. This spiral-bound handbook provides families with a wide array of information across the content areas. You can find in this booklet anything from the school's mission statement to the location of the classroom web-site. The district's writing rubrics in kid-friendly language is included along with a reminder of the six traits and steps of the writing process. A reading log is provided with a daily reading expectation and a link to the Heights Public Library. It is clear why Serena is so proud of her second grade team!



Volunteer mom Ms. Caulkin is preparing the children in Ms. Shramo's class to listen to one of the stories obtained through the Reaching Heights Grant "Listen to Learn".

Listen to Learn

Noble's *Listen to Learn* Reaching Heights Grant enabled the school to purchase multiple sets of 6 books and listening tapes to add to the bookroom. Six wonderful parent volunteers worked with a group of children from each of the kindergarten, first grade and Ms. Savarda's classrooms once a week. These fiction and nonfiction books help the children develop oral communication skills in retelling stories, and they support understanding of story elements and science concepts. An extra reading group a week can help these children increase their vocabulary and understand text features. Tapes are an engaging feature of this activity. The tapes are also used by the regular classroom teachers as a listening lab center. There is a take home component so the children can retell the story to their family.

TOP TEN TESTING TIPS

BASED ON DATA FROM GRADES 3 AND 4

This fall, all third graders took the Cleveland Municipal School District Reading Benchmark Test and the Ohio Reading Achievement Test. Fourth graders also took the CMSD Reading Benchmark Test. The results of these assessments were analyzed in order to provide teachers with data that would assist in crafting instruction based on student needs. Although the data is directly related to third and fourth grade performance, the tips below are also applicable to other grade levels.

Please consider the following suggestions: Provide multiple opportunities for students to:

10. Use the words *synonym* and *antonym* when identifying words with similar or opposite meanings.
9. Use *all* surrounding text to determine word meaning in context.
8. Write the specific details from the selection that support a main idea.
7. Determine the important details of the selection and put them in order.
6. Complete graphic organizers as a post-reading activity using information in the text.
5. Determine author's purpose.
4. Draw conclusions and make inferences based on the information in the text.
3. Read and comprehend fairy tales, folktales, and informational text.
2. Practice writing complete answers (short and extended) to open-ended questions and use rubrics to assess answers.
1. Instruct students *to answer every question!*

FAME

Fairfax Achievement Mentors Everyday!

Fairfax School has implemented a tutoring/mentoring program for third and fourth grade students. The program is geared toward students who may need extra help in specific skills or students who may just need that "extra encouragement" in order to reach their fullest potential. Teachers and staff from around the building serve as FAME volunteers. We are hoping that this positive program builds the confidence in our students that they need to achieve!

Bellefaire Reading Classes

By Sue Cherchiglia

Students at Bellefaire are experiencing a balanced literacy program. This month students are actively engaged in the study of summarizing and inferential comprehension strategies. We are reading several novels: *I Am The Cheese* by Robert Cormier, *Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs* by Sharon Draper and *The Greatest* by Walter Dean Myers. In spelling the focus is on words that contain silent consonants. Students are enjoying articles from the *Reading Advantage* series. Additional comprehension skill development is taught using *Source Books*. Students are writing in their journals to express their thoughts and opinions. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Reading 180 system in the near future. So far it has been a busy and engaging year for everyone.



Suzanne Mrazek working with a student during a guided reading lesson.

Read All About It!!!

by Kim Whalen

In September 2005, I started a journalism club at Fairfax Elementary. The club was offered to all fourth and fifth grade students. I had 12 fourth graders interested in producing a student newspaper. The students had to apply to be on the newspaper and had to get recommendations from their classroom teacher to participate. We meet every Monday and Tuesday at lunch/recess time. The students give up much of their free time to interview, write, edit, and publish this newspaper. We were proud that our first edition of *The Falcon Press* came out November 15th. The paper will be a monthly publication. Although the staff positions are filled for the paper, we have invited everyone at Fairfax to be reporters. A mailbox is outside my classroom where articles can be submitted. We look forward to future publications.