

## **Londonderry School District Reading is Our Top Priority**

### **The Importance of Literacy**

At all levels grades preK-12, the Londonderry School District has placed *reading* as its top priority. Why reading? Reading is the foundation for success in science, social studies, math, language arts, and other content areas during a child's school experience. It is crucial not only for success in school, but in being an informed citizen, being productive in one's chosen career, and in personal fulfillment. In today's technology driven society, the need to comprehend and understand text in a variety of forms whether on the internet or in print is more important than ever.

During the students' primary years, our focus is on *learning to read* while the focus of the intermediate and middle school years shifts to *reading to learn*. By high school, reading becomes much more complex as a student is exposed to a variety of content areas with specific vocabulary and processes for understanding the material.

### **The Joy of Reading – Tips for Parents**

The Londonderry School District reading teachers recommend that reading be a part of your child's day, everyday, no matter the age. Below are some tips they have compiled for parents to encourage reading at home:

- Read aloud to your child and with your child every day.
- Read reflectively – discuss what you read together and explore meanings of new words.
- Encourage your child to reread the same books. This builds fluency, sight word vocabulary, comprehension and confidence.
- Let your child see you read in a variety of settings and for a variety of purposes. Talk about what you read and point out some of the ways that you read during the course of a day (books, dictionary, recipes, maps, directions, email, T.V. Guide).
- Make reading for pleasure a part of your daily routine
- Find out your child's reading interests and choose books that reflect these interests.
- Rotate the books that are available to your child.
- Listen to books-on-tapes on long trips.
- Read articles in newspapers and magazines together. Discuss current events.
- Read a book that is coming out as a movie and then go see it together. Compare the book and the movie.
- If something on television or in a conversation interests your child, help them research it on the internet or at the library.
- Sing songs and read rhyming books

- Play word games (“I’m thinking of something that is in this room that starts with the sound/b/.’ “How many of the words can you think of that rhyme with bat?” “If you put these sounds together /p/ and ickle, what do you get? How about /t/ and ickle?”).
- Talk about favorite books from your childhood.
- Give books as gifts
- Read the same novel that your older child is reading in school and discuss it with him/her.
- Praise your child’s efforts.

Additional information on suggestions for encouraging reading can be found at the following websites:

Reading Is Fundamental – [www.rif.org/parents/tips](http://www.rif.org/parents/tips)

Reading Rockets – Strategies to Help Kids Who Struggle – [www.readingrockets.org/helping/questions](http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/questions).

National Education Association – Parent Resources – [www.nea.org/parents/nearesources-parents.html](http://www.nea.org/parents/nearesources-parents.html)

## **Elementary Schools**

Three Tier Reading Model: In the fall of 2006, the Londonderry School District enhanced its reading program with the adoption of the Three Tier Reading Model at its elementary schools. This model, developed at the University of Oregon, is designed to meet the instructional needs of all young readers, including those in the district’s kindergarten program. The model consists of three levels of instruction: Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. Tier I reading instruction is designed to address the needs of the majority of elementary students. Tier II is designed to meet the individual needs of students by providing an additional thirty minutes of intensive small-group instruction daily. The aim is to support and reinforce skills being taught by the classroom teacher. Tier III provides intensive small-group instruction daily for up to an additional sixty minutes. Students in these groups require instruction that is more explicit, direct, and intensive.

To support the Three Tier Model on a daily basis, all elementary classrooms have a scheduled ninety-minute reading block each day (kindergarten students have a forty minute block) that is supported by personnel including: classroom teacher, classroom assistant, reading teachers, special education teachers, special education assistants and library media specialists. The intermediate grades have a ninety minute block that includes a Language Arts component (grammar, writing, spelling) on a daily basis.

Assessment plays a central role in the Three Tier Model, as it is used for two major purposes: benchmark assessment to determine the need for supplemental instruction, and progress monitoring assessment – both to track student progress and inform instruction. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is used for benchmark

assessment and progress monitoring. This assessment is given to all students three times per year (fall, winter, and spring). Once benchmark assessments have been given, they are used as criteria to determine whether the student would benefit from the next tier of instruction. In addition to DIBELS benchmark assessments, the district also uses the baseline, unit assessments, and end of year assessment of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Program to both track student process and inform instruction during the course of the year. The professionals of the district's elementary schools are working to ensure that *no child will be left behind*.

For additional information and details about the Three Tier Reading Model, please go to [www.texasreading.org](http://www.texasreading.org).

**Core Reading:** The Londonderry School District implemented in its entirety the Pearson/Scott Foresman reading program in the 2007-2008 school year at grades K-5. Scott Foresman *Reading Street* (c. 2008) is a comprehensive K-5 reading program that provides a research-based approach to reading instruction, guided by frequent assessment, which enables teachers to plan and to individualize for student reading levels. The program complements the district's Three Tier Reading Model, its DIBELS Assessments, its Six Traits of Writing, its alignment to the New England Grade Level Expectations, and priority skills embedded in our benchmarks of phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

### **Middle School**

**Sixth Grade Reading:** The Londonderry School District implemented in its entirety at grade 6 the Pearson/Prentice Hall reading program in the 2008-2009 school year. The Pearson/Prentice Hall *The Reader's Journey* aligns with the goals, benchmarks, and philosophy of the LMS Reading Department. *The Reader's Journey* is a novels-based, comprehensive, standards-aligned, language arts program. Consumable Student Work Texts, an important feature of the program permits middle school students the opportunity to learn and practice a variety of literacy strategies and reading skills. Additionally, the Student Work Text supports a library of 36 high-interest, appropriately leveled novels. Multiple references to the Anchor Book appear throughout the work text.

Six book choices for every unit allows students to select a text that will be level-appropriate and engaging. Students will move from the work text, which will build reading and literary analysis skills, to novels specifically chosen to practice and apply these skills.

**Seventh Grade Reading:** The focus of the seventh grade reading program is to expand upon the skills previously introduced in the sixth grade. Attention will be given to strategic reading instruction to build essential comprehension skills to help actively engage students with text and increase fluency and vocabulary knowledge for understanding different types of reading material and genres of literature.

It is expected that the Londonderry School District will implement in its entirety at grade 7 the Pearson *AMP Reading System* in the 2009-2010 school year.

Eighth Grade Reading: Reading skills developed in seventh grade reading are reinforced as students develop an in-depth understanding of the reading process. Eighth grade students will learn and apply key reading strategies and tools needed to become successful, fluent, readers as they further their understanding of print material.

It is expected that the Londonderry School District will implement in its entirety at grade 8 the Pearson *AMP Reading System* in the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Reading Support Services at the Elementary Schools**

Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading: These programs provide *direct instruction* for remedial readers kindergarten through grade twelve. Using Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, decoding skills and strategies are explicitly taught, applied and reviewed through scripted lessons. Students are exposed to stories composed entirely of words they have decoded in isolation, enabling them to build fluency and focus on the meaning. These programs are research-based and have been proven to lead to academic success for struggling readers.

The Lindamood® Phonemic Sequencing (LiPS) Program: The LiPS© program successfully develops phonemic awareness skills for students who have not developed these skills through traditional instruction. Phonemic awareness, the ability to discriminate, sequence and manipulate sounds within words, underlies rapid decoding and encoding. With this program, students acquire the skills to categorize and articulate speech sounds based on the oral-kinesthetic approach to feeling subtle tongue and lip movements in conjunction with each phoneme's sound and symbol. This knowledge is then used to identify sequence and manipulate sounds from single phonemes through multi-syllabic words. This program has been found to be effective across the full age range, from elementary to high school level.

### **Reading Support Services at LMS**

WILSON READING PROGRAM: The Wilson Reading Program is a research based remedial reading and writing program. The phonetic based program is presented in a systematic and cumulative manner. It provides an organized and sequential system for students that are reading below grade level.

S.R.A. CORRECTIVE READING PROGRAM: Corrective Reading provides intensive intervention for students who are reading one or more years below grade level. This program delivers tightly sequenced, carefully planned lessons that give struggling students the structure and practice necessary to become skilled, fluent readers and better learners. Four levels for decoding plus four for comprehension address the varied reading skill levels found among older students.

## **Reading Support Services at LHS**

Reading support services at Londonderry High School are offered through the following courses:

Literacy Lab I: Literacy Laboratory is a research-based one-semester, .5 credit course designed to help students improve their reading, writing, and speaking abilities by developing cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Various informal assessments will measure literacy placement and success at the beginning and end of the semester. This class will train students in phonemic awareness, word parts/vocabulary, how to read out loud fluently, to learn and apply strategies to various print and non print texts, to improve writing, and encourage students to read for pleasure. The lessons may be applied to core classes to help students find overall academic success through the application of this reading program. (Course may be taken more than once for credit).

Literacy Lab II: Literacy Laboratory II (also one-semester, .5 credit course) takes the skills and applications learned through Literacy Lab I and brings reading, writing, and speaking to the next level. In this class, students are taught and encouraged to read more complicated and longer text (print and non-print), begin to publish and edit writing at a more advanced level, and prepare for more challenging speaking endeavors. In this class, students will continue to build upon the strategies learned through Literacy Lab and elaborate on the more advanced facets of metacognition. (Course may be taken more than once for credit).

Young Adult Literature: This course is designed for students who wish to hone their skills in reading comprehension and critical thinking through reading, writing, and discussion. The stories in this course reflect the troubled times in which young readers are growing up, as well as the need to laugh at themselves and at their world to escape that world and thereby gain a better hold of it. A focus on learning and practicing the reading process will be a driving force in this curriculum.

## **Extended Learning Services**

Entering Grade 1 Summer School: Each summer, the Londonderry School District offers a four week program for students who are at academic risk in reading as measured by DIBELS and Scottt Foresman *Reading Street* Unit Assessments. The purpose of the program is to improve skill development and retention of learned material in reading. Unlike the elementary program, the entering Grade 1 Summer School will utilize literacy activities and themes in addition to direct instruction and small group instruction methods. Enrollment is limited to one session.

Parents of targeted students receive additional information and registration materials for the program in the spring. There is a fee of \$60 for each session of the program. Scholarships and reduced rates are available to families who qualify.

Elementary Summer School (exiting grade 1 to exiting grade 5): The Londonderry School District offers a four week summer school for students who are at academic risk in reading and/or mathematics. The purpose of the program is to boost skill development and improve retention of learned material for students scoring below the 30<sup>th</sup> NPR on the IOWA in one or both areas of reading and math, a score of “at risk” on the DIBELS, “novice” on NECAP, "below level" on Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Unit Assessments and teacher recommendation. The expected outcome of the program is that students will improve their literacy skills as measured by DIBELS, IOWA, and NECAP assessments during the following year.

Parents of targeted students receive additional information and registration materials for the program in the spring. There is a fee of \$60 for each session of the program. Scholarships and reduced rates are available to families who qualify.

Londonderry Middle School Summer School (exiting grade 6 to exiting grade 7): The Londonderry School District offers a four week summer school for students who did not earn credit in math, reading, or language arts. The purpose of the program is to regain credit as well as to improve skill development and retention of learned material as measured by report card grades and by the IOWA and NECAP Assessments during the following year.

Parents of targeted students receive additional information and registration materials for the program in the spring. There is a fee of \$125 for each session of the program. Scholarships and reduced rates are available to families who qualify.

Londonderry Middle School Academy: The Londonderry Middle School offers an after-school Academy program for students identified at risk for reading and/or math. The purpose of the program is to boost skill development and improve retention of learned material for students scoring below the 30<sup>th</sup> NPR on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, below proficient on New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), as well as failing report card grades in reading. The expected outcome of the Academy is that students will improve their skills as measured by Iowa, NECAP, and report card grades during the course of the year. Parents are not assessed a fee and transportation is provided.

LIFT: LIFT is a transition program at LHS that is designed to meet the needs of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders as an alternative to traditional summer school offerings. The program awards participants to earn a 1/2 credit in Reading and a 1/2 credit in Study Skills. The goal of this program is to increase student skills to better prepare them for entering the high school, increase student investment and connection to the school, educate students about the services offered through the high school, and create an understanding of the essential nature of the skills high school provides for students entering the workforce and/or post-secondary education. This program runs on a regular summer school time frame from 8:00-12:30 serving 20-24 students, and staffed by two classroom teachers.

High School Alternative Education: Londonderry High School offers a variety of opportunities for students to gain a high school diploma or GED. For additional information, please go to [www.schools.londonderry.org/lhs/altedu/](http://www.schools.londonderry.org/lhs/altedu/).

## **Assessment**

Critical to the success of the district's curriculum and the delivery of instruction and services in reading-language arts, and other core content areas such as math, science and social studies is the use of a variety of valid and reliable standardized measures and assessments. The Londonderry School District uses the following: Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), The Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), The New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program (NHEIAP), and the Six Traits of Writing Prompts.

Iowa Test Series: Approved in 2003 by the School Board for use in the Londonderry School District, the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)* and the *Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED)*, developed at The University of Iowa, provide comprehensive information both about the development of students' skills and about their ability to think critically. Grades 1-8 students in spring 2005 were assessed on the *ITBS* in word analysis (1-3), reading/reading comprehension, vocabulary, language arts, math concepts, estimation, problem solving, data interpretation, computation, science (4) and sources of information (5). At grade 9, students were assessed on the *ITED* in reading comprehension, language arts, mathematics concepts & problem solving, mathematics computation and analysis of science materials. *ITBS/ITED* has begun to provide the Londonderry School District and its staff longitudinal data of student achievement from early elementary to high school. The district has begun and will continue to track individual student progress over time, evaluating whether a student has made at least a year's worth of growth. Classroom teachers, reading teachers, supplemental math teachers, special curriculum teachers, content area teachers, and special educators are using the results to assist in identifying students who may need additional services in order to improve reading, language arts, and math skills.

It is important to understand that *ITBS/ITED* are nationally recognized norm-reference assessments given to millions of students across the United States. The assessment provides us with a snapshot of how our students compare nationally. The results also provide the district additional information about our academic programs as the bar continues to move upward through adequate yearly progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). While NECAP will continue to provide Londonderry and schools around the state information about what a student understands, knows or can accomplish in relation to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks and Grade Level Expectations, it cannot determine how an individual student's performance compares to that of an appropriate peer group like *ITBS/ITED*. This kind of longitudinal data provides our classroom teachers and administrators the information necessary to improve their delivery of instruction to all students.

For additional information about the Iowa Tests, please go to [www.education.uiowa.edu/itp/itbs/](http://www.education.uiowa.edu/itp/itbs/). For Londonderry assessment results, please go to the link at the district website – *Accent on Achievement*.

DIBELS: The Londonderry School Board approved in spring 2004 the use of the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* to measure early literacy development for grades K-3. These sets of standardized, individually administered measures are designed to be short, one to three minute measures that regularly monitor pre-reading and early reading skills development of our primary students.

DIBELS, developed at The University of Oregon, provides information about the development of students' phonological awareness, letter naming fluency, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency. Exiting grade K students were the first to receive the measures in the spring of 2004. The measures are used as designed to track progress in the fall, winter, and spring to students K-3.

Each of the measures, now used in 49 states, has been thoroughly researched and demonstrated to be reliable indicators of early literacy development as well as predictors of later reading proficiency. For Londonderry's elementary schools, it provides our classroom teachers and reading specialists with useful information to identify students who are not progressing as expected. In other words, the results from DIBELS can be used to evaluate individual student development as well as timely information to provide necessary interventions during the year. From a district-wide perspective, DIBELS provides feedback on our curriculum and instructional objectives and demonstrates student growth over time.

For additional information about DIBELS, please go to <http://dibels.uoregon.edu>. For Londonderry assessment results, please go to the link at the district website – *Accent on Achievement*.

New England Common Assessment Program: The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) is the replacement for the New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program (NHEIAP). The new series of tests are "common" because the tests were developed in collaboration with Vermont, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. The assessments are given for grades 3-8 and 11 are designed to meet the federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Londonderry North School South School, Matthew Thornton, and Londonderry Middle School administered the first year of NECAP in October 2005. Londonderry High School administered the first year of NECAP in October 2007.

The NECAP tests are designed to measure what our students understand, know, or can accomplish in relation to New Hampshire's new Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) or Grade Span Expectations (GSEs). The GLEs or GSEs define the knowledge and skills a student should have mastered by the end of each school year. The grade 4 test, for

example, measures what a student should know and be able to do after completing third grade, and so on. Skills measured include both reading and mathematics for all grades 3-8, and 11. In grades 5, 8 and 11, writing skills are also measured.

The new standardized criterion-referenced NECAP will provide parents, teachers, administrators, and schools additional information from year to year about what students know and are able to do based on grade level expectations. Our school district, as well as many others around the state, continues to spend time and effort in aligning our district curriculum and high state expectations outlined in the NH Curriculum Frameworks and Grade Level Expectations.

For further information about NECAP tests, please go to the New Hampshire Department of Education website at [www.ed.state.nh.us/education/](http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/).

Six Traits Writing Assessments: The Londonderry School District provides instruction at its elementary schools and at Londonderry Middle School using the *Six Trait Analytical Writing Model* developed at the Northwest Regional Laboratory in Portland, OR. The State of Oregon uses the model as a basis for its state's writing assessment program. It has now been adopted in a variety of states across the country.

The Six Traits include *Ideas (content), Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency,* and *Conventions (grammar, spelling, mechanics, and syntax)*. The Six Traits are available to both students and parents so they clearly know what teachers look for in good writing. Students are instructed to evaluate their own writing using rubrics (scoring guides) so they can improve their work with each successive draft. Students learn to use the language of the Six Traits Model to create a common dialect of good writing.

Formal writing assessments are embedded in the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* baseline assessment, unit benchmark assessments, and end of year assessment. At Londonderry Middle School, students are assessed in writing in the fall as well as in the spring. Students are provided a writing prompt. They must respond using the six traits writing process with the exception that they may not confer or seek peer or teacher edits during the formal assessment. At the intermediate and middle school levels, a grade is given for this writing.

By consistently instructing students using the Six Traits Model, and by continuous practice and reinforcement in unit benchmark assessment (elementary) and pre and post assessment annually (LMS), the district expects to see further academic growth in writing skills throughout the elementary and middle school grades.

For more information about the Six Traits Writing Model, please go to [www.nwrel.org/assessment/](http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/)

Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Baseline, Unit and End of Year Assessments: At Grades K-5, the Londonderry School District uses the baseline, unit assessments, and end of year assessments of the Scott Foresman *Reading Street* Program to both track student process

and inform instruction during the course of the year. During the primary grades (K-3), these tests emphasize the early literacy skills of initial sounds, high frequency words, and phonics while the intermediate grades (4-5) place more of an emphasis on comprehension and vocabulary. These assessments along with others assist teachers in making appropriate educational decisions in driving instruction and services.

### **Professional Development in Literacy**

Teachers at all levels continuously receive ongoing training in phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, Six Traits of Writing, reading across the content area strategies, DIBELS Assessment Training, Iowa Assessment Training, Guided Inquiry/Research Training, as well as a variety of consultant training from various experts on literacy, guided inquiry, and essential questions. Professional Development activities are coordinated by Curriculum and Library Media & Technology. Various presentations have been facilitated by reading teachers, content area teachers, library, media & technology specialists, technology integrationist, special education teachers, curriculum coordinators, and outside consultants. Trainings are conducted after-school, before-school, during some early release days, and teacher workshop days.

In addition, both Londonderry Middle School and Londonderry High School have active literacy teams of teachers who coordinate and facilitate on-site book clubs and trainings for teachers. Content specific literacy works, as well as works by Cris Tovani, Jamie McKenzie, and others have been read and applied grades 6-12.

### **Library, Media & Technology Services Role in Literacy**

There is extensive and proven research to support the fact that children who have access to print-rich collections of materials, and the services of professional staff trained to help them learn how to access and use those materials, have improved vocabulary, reading comprehension and perform at a higher rate on standardized tests. Research is now emerging that shows a high correlation between regular access to information technologies, linked with effective instructional effort, and improved student achievement. Reading is the essential skill that links traditional and modern forms of expressions of ideas and information – whether from a printed page, a computer screen or some other means of conveyance.

Our school library media specialists and technology trainer/integrationist, supported by library and computer assistants, work in collaboration with all teachers to help every student develop a love of reading, become a skilled user of ideas and information and explore the world through print and digital media. They also teach 21<sup>st</sup> century research and technology skills and strategies that students need to become information literate. This means that students learn how to find, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources. In today's complex information environment, it is also critical that our students use ideas, information and technology in an ethical manner, and our school library media and technology program is at the forefront in this endeavor.

## **Benchmarks**

The Londonderry School District has developed and uses local curriculum benchmarks that have been aligned with the New England Tri-State Grade Level Expectations (Grades 3-8)/Grade Span Expectations for High Schools. In addition, the schools use trimester guidelines and pacing documents to promote consistency in curriculum and instruction between and across the grade levels. Benchmarks are monitored each trimester and quarter through unit assessments at the elementary schools to common assessments at middle and high school levels. For additional information on the district benchmarks as well as specific grade level documents in reading, please go to the curriculum section on the Londonderry School District website.