

## Londonderry School District

### 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, and special education assistants. 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. 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 is currently investigating a research-based core reading program. The finalists, as of February 2006, include programs from Harcourt, Houghton Mifflin and Scott Foresman. A recommendation for piloting at K-5 will be presented to the Curriculum Coordinating Council and School Board by June 2006. The first phase of a two year implementation is planned for fall 2007, at grades K-2 with phase two at grades 3-5 for fall 2008.

### **Middle School**

Sixth Grade Reading: Current research shows that good reading is strategic reading. The sixth grade reading program is designed to create skilled readers who use many strategies to construct meaning for text. Students in sixth grade reading will learn the process involved in reading and the skills relating to both fiction and nonfiction reading. Reading skills will be further enhanced through direct vocabulary and comprehension strategy instruction. Literary elements and devices will be introduced as students explore various forms of literature through classroom novels, teacher read alouds and literature circles.

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.

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.

### **High School**

As students progress through school, the sophistication and difficulty of reading materials also progresses. Although students may be able to decode words and symbols, the ability to create meaning from them becomes a challenge. Evidence gathered from teachers and students demonstrated a need for increased skill levels in the comprehension of difficult text. In an effort to support the Literacy Initiative set by the Londonderry School District, the following goals have been established at Londonderry High School:

- To redefine reading as a **thinking process** that increases comprehension of various text, pictures, equations, charts, graphs, forms of media, and everyday situations.
- To collaborate with staff by promoting reading as a vital part of **all** subject areas.
- To encourage students to construct meaning in what they read by thinking at a higher level.
- To implement reading strategies in our classrooms to accommodate all learners.

Reading is not easy in high school and comprehension is even more difficult. Our high school students need the expertise of their teachers to assist them in comprehending the “literature” of every discipline—be it science, math, foreign language, technology education, history or the fine arts. This initiative at LHS is supported by personnel, including classroom teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers and special education assistants.

### **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 (it is used as part of regular instruction in our Kindergarten). 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**

All Sixth graders at Londonderry Middle School take reading for a full year. This year the reading program was expanded to include the Corrective Reading Program for students who are reading significantly below grade level and an Enrichment reading opportunity for students who are ready to take on additional challenge in reading. Students in the Seventh grade elect to take a foreign language or developmental reading class. This is a two year commitment as they follow that program through Eighth grade. For students who require more individualized reading support, Londonderry Middle School

offers both the Wilson reading program and LIPS program through the Special Education department.

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**

There are a number of different reading support services that are available to students at Londonderry High School.

Every spring, the Iowa Test of Educational Development (Grade 9) and the New Hampshire EIAP (Grade 10) are administered, which includes a reading comprehension test. Since these tests are given annually, it allows us to measure a student's growth from one year to the next. If a child's score in reading were below the 30<sup>th</sup> national percentile or Novice, they are identified in need of additional instruction in reading. They may receive services in one or more of the following:

#### Literacy Lab (Grades 9, 10 and 11)

This course is designed to assist students with support in their reading assignments for their academic classes. It will offer students additional help in understanding and completing their assignments. In addition to providing academic support, Reading Specialists will reinforce reading strategies and study skills with students in a small group setting.

#### Study Skills I (Grades 9 and 10)

This course is designed for students who need additional instruction, support and guidance in order to achieve success in their academic work. Students who want to strengthen their reading ability and need support with assigned reading in their academic courses are encouraged to take this course. Students will work on vocabulary and on various reading strategies as well as discuss time management, organization, taking notes from texts and lectures, outlining, active listening, and preparing for and taking tests.

#### Study Skills II (Grades 11 and 12)

This course will continue to cover the topics discussed in Study Skills I with an

additional focus on research methods. Students will continue to strengthen their reading and comprehension, thinking and writing skills.

Decoding and Reading Comprehension (Grades 9-12)

This course is appropriate for students whose reading ability is significantly below grade level. The curriculum incorporates the S.R.A Corrective Reading Program. It is designed for students who misidentify, reverse, or omit words, who have little recall and limited attention span and who read without understanding.

Individualized Reading (Grades 9-12)

This course is designed for students with significant reading issues. The curriculum is tailored to develop individual skills in the following areas: word recognition, word structure, vocabulary building, fluency, comprehension, reasoning ability, and study skills. Academic curriculum is based on Project Read, Orton-Gillingham, LIPS, and Wilson methodologies.

**Extended Learning Services**

Entering Grade 1 Summer School: The Londonderry School District will offer a four week program for students who are at academic risk in reading as measured by DIBELS in summer 2006. 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 indoor/outdoor 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, 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.

Middle School Summer School (exiting grade 6 and exiting grade 7): The Londonderry School District will offer an extension of its Elementary Summer School Program in summer 2006, to students exiting grades 6 and 7. The purpose of the program is to boost skill development and improve retention of learned material for students scoring below

the 30% NPR on the IOWA in one or both areas of reading and math and also scoring “novice on NECAP. The expected outcome of the program is that students will improve their skills as measured by IOWA and NECAP during the following year.

Parents of targeted students will 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.

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 would award 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 can not 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 prospective, 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 given for grades 3 through 8 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.

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, or GLEs. The GLEs 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. In grades 5 and 8, 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/).

New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program: May 2005 was the last date of administration of the New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program. Administered at Londonderry High School in spring 2004, the results provide a measure of student performance as indicated by grade ten students who took the assessment. Students are assessed by the state in mathematics and reading content as part of the provisions of No Child Left Behind. The New Hampshire Department of Education is developing a new assessment for high school students to be piloted in the 2006-07 school year.

For further information about NHEIAP tests as well as Londonderry results, 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 done in the fall and spring of each year, and like other assessments, are "snapshots" of student performance at that time. Students are given a choice of writing prompts. They must respond to one using their normal 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 pre and post assessing annually, the district has observed 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/)

### **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, and through book clubs. Professional Development activities are 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.

Elementary Reading in the Content Area Initiative: Reading in the Content Areas has become a topic of great importance over the last several years. As more reading research is done, studies have found that students often do not acquire the unique skills needed to read and process material in a specific subject matter unless it is directly taught. The reason for this is simple though one we may not think about; content material is written in vastly different ways than fiction or narrative material. The books children learn to read have characters, settings, problems, solutions and a sequence of events. Math texts are written mathematically meaning that they contain concepts and ideas needed to learn the whys and hows of arithmetic. Science texts are filled with information and definitions that are often foreign to students, yet students need to read and understand the material in

order to learn the concepts. Social Studies books contain names, dates, explanations and geographical material that can be overwhelming. Students need to be taught how these text books are set up, where information is found and how to interpret what they read. In short they need to learn to think and read like mathematicians, scientists and historians.

The Londonderry Teacher's Academy has dedicated three workshops to equipping teachers at the elementary schools with techniques and strategies that will help students read and comprehend their textbooks. These workshops have been well received and have proved helpful in the planning and implementation of lessons.

Londonderry Middle School Reading in the Content Area Initiative:

Londonderry Middle School is currently completing the first year of its Reading in the Content Area initiative, which has focused on the skills necessary for reading within the Social Studies classroom. A year-long series, these workshops have been designed and implemented by an internal team of professionals, providing staff with the tools and strategies to assist students in "learning to read" text in a variety of content areas. Participants have learned how to incorporate reading strategies and the reading process into their content lessons to help students become more actively involved in their learning. Resources used include *Reading Strategies for the Content Areas* (ASCD, 2003) and *The Reader's Handbook: A Student Guide for Reading and Learning* (Great Source, 2002). The Middle School is planning to continue this initiative in the coming years by training teachers of other content areas to integrate reading strategies into the curriculum.

Londonderry High School Reading in the Content Area Initiative:

Londonderry High School is currently completing the first year of its Reading in the Content Area Initiative. In May of 2005, eight high school teachers representing four departments joined the two curriculum coordinators to form the high school literacy committee. Committee members met at the end of the last school year to study content area reading strategies put forth by a variety of experts, including Rachel Billmeyer, Mary Lee Barton and Chris Tovani. In June of 2005, members of the literacy committee traveled to Denver to participate in Chris Tovani's Rocky Mountain Reading Conference. Committee members returned energized and ready to share insights and strategies learned at the seminar.

In August of 2005, high school teachers were welcomed back by the literacy team with a workshop highlighting ways to incorporate reading strategies into all curricula. In the fall, the literacy committee followed up with presentations during Early Release and at department meetings. Committee members have worked one-on-one with teachers to help develop literacy activities to be used in specific content areas. As a result, a number of teachers have been trying different reading strategies in their classes and reporting positive results. Plans are underway for the committee to conduct a variety of hands-on workshops through the end of the school year.

The literacy committee has just finished their first round of book clubs. Seventy-nine high school staff members read and discussed Tovani's, *I Read It, But I Don't Get It* or her *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading*. The second round of book clubs began in February.

### **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 electronic 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.

The Library Media & Technology Staff recommends that, in addition to the use of school libraries, all members of your family have a public library card. You can also visit the American Library Association website, [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org), for tips and recommendations on raising a reader. The Library of Congress has resources for kids and families at [www.loc.gov/families](http://www.loc.gov/families). Be sure to check out their Center for the Book as well, [www.loc.gov/ctbook](http://www.loc.gov/ctbook), which promotes literacy across America.

### **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. 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.

# **Londonderry School District Special Education Programs and Services**

## **I. Introduction**

The Londonderry School District is required to provide Special Education and related services to students with educational disabilities according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) along with the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities. These Federal and State mandates require school districts to evaluate students suspected as having educational disabilities, provide students with Individual Education Programs (IEP's), and provide students with specialized instruction including reading and math programs, speech and language services, occupational and physical therapy, counseling services, behavioral therapy and intervention, along with other special services. These services are to be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) providing access to non-disabled peers and the general education curriculum. To meet this legal mandate, the Londonderry School District has developed a wide array of programming supports to meet the unique needs of children within our public schools. In addition, some student's specific needs are such that they are educated in out-of-district programs due to the severity of their disabilities.

## **II. Brief Overview of Schools and Programs**

### Moose Hill School: LEEP Program:

The Londonderry Early Education Program (LEEP) is a developmental preschool servicing youngsters age three and four with special needs. The LEEP program also has typically developing children attend on a tuition basis to be role models. The mission at LEEP is to provide high quality developmental programming to children. Many students require education and therapeutic intervention and a specifically controlled environment such as a small student/teacher ratio.

LEEP utilizes an interdisciplinary team approach consisting of early childhood teachers, special education teachers, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school nursing and teaching assistants. In addition, outside child psychologists, vision specialists, orientation and mobility specialists, autism specialists and behavioral specialists consult to the program in a variety of ways. The complexity and severity of the disabilities of the children serviced by LEEP has continued to become more acute. We continue to see a steady increase

in the number of children who are autistic or have low-incidence disabilities.

Friends Program: (Fostering and respecting individuals with intensive educational needs) This program serves a growing need in Londonderry – students with Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder. This is an intensive program located at Moose Hill for preschool as well as kindergarten students. All instruction is specifically designed for the students in the program to meet their unique social skills, communication, sensory, cognitive, and adaptive needs. Students participate with non-disabled peers in the regular classroom as it is deemed appropriate. This program is specifically designed to integrate speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills. The program receives on-going guidance and consultation from outside experts.

Moose Hill School: Kindergarten Program:

Children who are five years of age and entering kindergarten receive their special education services by the kindergarten special education team. Children with special needs are included within the regular classroom to the fullest extent possible. Special education staff work with students on emerging math and reading foundations. Students receive direct instruction in “phonological awareness” and “number sense” to serve as a basis for future instruction. Supports and services listed for the LEEP Program would also be available at the kindergarten level.

Elementary School Programs and Supports:

Modified regular education programs:

Modified regular education programs are designed to provide services to students within the regular classroom. The objective is to assist students so that they will learn the strategies, techniques, and skills to enable them to increase their independence within the general expectations of the curriculum. Strategies may include organization skills, attending skills, behavior management, and verbal comprehension as well as specific instruction in reading, writing and mathematics through our Response To Intervention (RTI) – Three Tier Model.

Resource programs:

Resource programs provide more intensive instruction to remediate difficulties in language, reading, writing, mathematics and social skills. This instruction can be individualized or in small groups. Specialized instruction, specialized programs, and materials are provided by the special education team to meet the goal and objectives identified in the students I.E.P. (Individualized Education Program).

Significant individualized programs:

Significant individualized programs are developed for low incidence population who require a significant portion of their day to be highly individualized. This might include students with autism, mental retardation, significant developmental delays, multiple handicaps, traumatic brain injury or severe emotional disturbances.

Friends II Program: (Fostering and respecting individuals with intensive educational needs) This program is a continuation of Friends I at Moose Hill. This program serves a growing need in Londonderry – students with Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder. This is an intensive district-wide program housed at Matthew Thornton. All instruction is specifically designed for the students in the program to meet their unique social skills, communication, sensory, cognitive, and adaptive needs. Students participate with non-disabled peers in the regular classroom as it is deemed appropriate. This program is specifically designed to integrate speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills. The program receives on-going guidance and consultation from outside experts.

BAS Program (Basic Academic Skills) This is a district wide program housed at Matthew Thornton School. This comprehensive program is designed to meet the unique needs of students with cognitive and developmental disabilities at grades 1 – 5. The program's focus is on academic, communication, social and functional skills. Students are assigned to an age appropriate grade level and participate in grade level curriculum areas with modifications when appropriate. Direct instruction in specific academic, speech/language, fine/gross motor, and social functioning occur within the program and in the natural setting. The BAS program is staffed by a special educator and paraprofessionals, while a Speech/Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist provide both consult and team/individual therapy. Additionally each student's classroom teacher provides consultation with the BAS Team.

Elementary Program For Success (PFS):

This is a district program, housed at South, which provides a continuum of services and supports to emotionally handicapped students. This program provides daily training in behavior management, social skills, academic strategies, instruction, counseling, and an alternative environment which is available to support individualized needs.

Related services:

Related services include speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, guidance, nursing services, psychological, evaluation services and rehabilitative assistants as required to implement the goals and objectives of a student's I.E.P. (individual Education Program). All professional staff members provide consultative service to parents and classroom teachers as

needed.

Londonderry Middle School:

Inclusionary Support Services:

One special education teacher and one special education assistant are on each grade-level team. Provision of special education services is a collaborative effort between regular and special education staff. The objective is to assist students so that they will learn the strategies, techniques, and skills to enable them to learn independently within the expectations of the general education curriculum.

All students are included in the regular classroom setting as much as possible at the middle school. Special education students who require academic assistance receive support through their regular classes from the special educator and assistant on the team.

Special education and regular education teachers on six teams have collaborated and are team teaching content area classes. This collaboration allows special education students able to access the general curriculum, but requiring a slow pace of instruction with more in-class support and modifications to remain in regular education programming.

Students requiring more intensive specialized instruction than viable in the general education classroom can participate in a pull-out model for both language arts and/or math. These classes are grouped by grade level and /or IEP needs and taught by special education teachers. The instruction can be small group and/or individualized based upon student need. Both the language arts and math curriculum focuses on basic skills development in the content area and IEP specific goals and objectives.

Basic Academic Skills (BAS) Program:

This is a program for students with global delays in academic, cognitive, and/or independence areas. Students are assigned to a grade-level team, although some students spend the majority of their day in the BAS program. The BAS program is staffed by special educators and special education assistants. Students in this program receive direct support in pre-academic, functional living and pre-vocational skills as outlined through their IEP. Additionally, speech and language as well as occupational therapy provide services and consultation to the program.

Social Skills Communication (SSC) Program:

This is a program for students who present with disabilities ranging from Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) and Autism to students with unique medical issues impacting their ability to learn. The Social Skills and Communication program is facilitated by one special education teacher

special education assistants to support students through out the general education setting at the middle school. This program supports students in the regular education environment with individual teaching and pre-teaching as needed through individual IEP's. Direct instruction focuses on social skills and communication as well as problem solving and daily organization.

Program For Success (PFS):

This program provides supports to students with emotional disabilities. Students are included in regular academic subjects, but receive a structured program of support for the academic and emotional needs in the Program For Success (PFS). Direct services are provided to this population by teachers, a counselor and special education assistants. Consultation services are also provided by the staff to parents and classroom teachers.

Friends III Program: (Fostering and respecting individuals with intensive educational needs) This program is a continuation of Friends II at Matthew Thornton and of Friends I at Moose Hill. This program is an expansion of the current programming at the elementary level serving students with Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder. This is an intensive self contained program. All instruction is specifically designed for the students in the program to meet their unique social skills, communication, sensory, cognitive, and adaptive needs. Students participate with non-disabled peers in the regular classroom as it is deemed appropriate. This program is specifically designed to integrate speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills. The program receives on-going guidance and consultation from outside experts.

Related Services:

Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) service the speech and language identified students and work on a consultative basis with the grade level teams. Speech and Language Pathologists provide direct services in the classroom working with the grade level team. Group speech and language services are provided through Language Arts Skills class and in social and communication groups as needed. The Speech and Language Pathologists are assisted by a Speech and Language Assistant. One SLP spends approximately fifteen hours a week in the BAS classroom providing therapy, consulting with staff, and teaching a functional life skills class.

One Occupational Therapist (OT) delivers service to students with disabilities ranging from cognitive impairments to students on the PDD and Autism spectrum, students with medical issues and non-verbal learning disabilities as well as students with visual processing disorders affecting their fine motor skills. Therapy is varied according to

individual IEP's, but includes sensory integration, direct instruction of self regulation, fine motor skills and functional living skills.

Both the Speech and Language Pathologists and the Occupations Therapists consult with the other special education teachers and regular education teachers to coordinate and modify instruction and assignments for students.

#### Londonderry High School:

Those who work with adolescents in special education at the high school level, strive to support students in achieving the greatest level of academic and functional independence. This may mean working with students for four years or until age 21. Students are supported through their IEP no matter what type or level of course they take. In all cases, the transitional needs of the student (in high school and post secondary) are emphasized and the services required are determined by the individual student's IEP. Students and parents are advised of the range of options open to them as well as the recommended options to meet their individual needs.

#### Inclusionary Support Services:

Every curriculum area and level is open to all students and identified special education students are included in general education settings as much as possible. Some courses are designated as "college prep" and require a greater level of independence while others are designed to meet the district benchmarks and provide opportunities for students to continue to work on their foundational skills. Paraprofessionals and when appropriate, special education teachers and case managers, are available to provide in-class support including reinforcement of the teacher's instruction or other academic areas as determined by the IEP. Classroom teachers also receive support in implementing IEP accommodations and modifications through consultation with special education teachers and case managers. Additional support to students is available by accessing "Learning and Math Lab", a general education service open to all students at the high school.

Pull out core curriculum classes are offered in Math, English, social studies, science and reading. The content in these courses meet the state and district benchmarks and provide the instruction and supports required as outlined in students' individual education programs and to ensure students have the opportunities to earn credit towards graduation.

#### Study Labs:

Study lab is a support service offered every period of the school day, including a 45-minute period after school. The main purpose of Study Lab is to teach and reinforce study and learning strategies that will help students be successful and independent learners. They are coached on how to advocate for themselves. Strategies in time-management, organization, note taking;

memory and test-taking skills are stressed, using the students' own course materials. Students also receive support in the completion of homework and long-term assignments.

Beginning in school year '05, freshmen and sophomores have been in their own separate study labs, allowing greater emphasis on the needs of each of these classes. The remaining study labs will be a mix of juniors and seniors. The focus in freshman study lab is study skills and organization, at the sophomore level, an on-line study skills assessment is given to determine the specific needs of each student. At the junior and senior level, the focus shifts to continue academic support and individual transition planning for post high school considerations.

In study lab, we strive to provide a 1:3 or 1:4 ratio to ensure that each student receives the needed level of support.

ACT Program: The ACT Program is a program within the high school for students with a variety of developmental disabilities and cognitive impairments. The goal of the program is to prepare students for adult living by helping them become as independent as possible. Students participate in one or several classes within the program as well as Interactive classes with the regular population. Interactive classes allow non-disabled peers to mentor and encourage Act Students in a modified regular education setting, meeting modified curriculum goals. The Act Program classes are self-contained, instruction is individualized, and students develop social, functional, academic, prevocational skills, as well as acquired daily living skills. Students within the ACT Program usually matriculate through their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Transition from high school to adult life (work, training, etc) is an important part of the program.

Transition Program:

Transition is a program to support many of our emotionally disabled students to remain and make academic progress in the public school setting. Students who have been successful in our self contained program often will matriculate into the Transition Program when they require a less restrictive placement. Most students spend one period in the Transition classroom each day where they receive assistance with organization, scaffolding and completion of assignments, weekly counseling, and other support that may be needed in order to navigate their academic day in the mainstream. A few students, because of the specific and/or the acute nature of their disability, complete their class work in the Transitional Classroom until they are able to re-integrate into some or all of their classes. The philosophical foundation of the program is based on Dr. William Gasser's "Choice Theory/Reality Therapy" approach. Students are assisted through this structured program in dealing with choices and decision-making, aimed at making their lives better

now and in the future.

This program is staffed by 1 and 1/2 certified special education teachers, 1 full-time special education paraprofessional and a half-time counselor. Consultation with a student's psychologist, psychiatrist, neurologist general practitioner, probation officer, and especially with parents is frequently pursued, and necessary to ensure that the student receives consistent support and services throughout the day.

Friendships and Learning Experiences (FLEX):

This is a supportive program designed to help students with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) and autism successfully integrate into the school environment. Students are scheduled for one period a day and receive guidance, learning and support in academics, organization, and social skills. Students in this program may have difficulty dealing with change, may exhibit repetitive behaviors, or may have difficulty with self regulation. The staff is available to provide support to the students in the above areas. The program also provides a safe and quiet area where students can go when they become anxious due to sensory overload. The supports of the program are available every period of the day. The program is currently run by 1 teacher/case manager and various paraprofessionals, program and one-on-ones. An OT and S&L Pathologist provide weekly consultation to the staff. A licensed psychologist who is an expert with this disability also consults with the program.

Self Contained Program (EH Program):

This program is housed in the main building of the high school and consists of 4 adjacent rooms. It provides services to students with social-emotional and behavioral challenges who are unable to function in the larger community of the high school building. The program provides the structure that students need to grow academically and emotionally. Four core academic courses, a Personal Development class and after school support are offered through the program. An Outdoor Education class is also provided to fulfill the physical education requirement. The outdoor education class takes place in the community with various activities scheduled throughout the year. The curriculum is overseen by the high school curriculum coordinators. Students are able to matriculate back into LHS for courses as deemed appropriate by the student's team (which includes the parents).

The program maintains strong connections between home and school. Daily communication logs inform parents of students' performance or issues, and parents are encouraged to communicate issues at home that may affect the students' behavior. The Communication must be signed each night and the student is responsible for its return each day. The program uses a Level System to determine privileges and restrictions for individual students. Discipline is handled within the program with school administration support

when needed.

The program presently has 2 full time teachers, a part time counselor and full time paraprofessional.