



River Forest Public Schools

ELA Implementation Update

Being a Reader; Being a Writer (*K-4*)

Arts and Letters (*5th*)

Wit and Wisdom (*6th-8th*)

January 20 , 2026

Scarborough's Reading Rope

- Being a Reader
- Arts and Letters
- Wit and Wisdom

● Foundations

Language Comprehension **LC**

Background Knowledge
facts, concepts, etc.

Vocabulary
breadth, precision, links, etc.

Language Structures
syntax, semantics, etc.

Verbal Reasoning
inference, metaphor, etc.

Literacy Knowledge
print concepts, genres, etc.

Word Recognition **D**

Phonological Awareness
syllables, phonemes, etc.

Decoding
alphabetic principle,
letter-sound correspondences

Sight Recognition
of familiar words

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

Skilled Reading **RC**

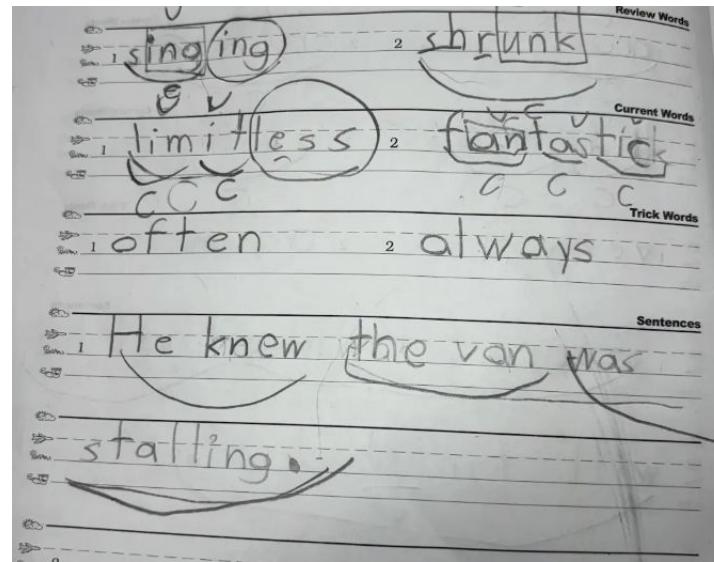
INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC



Fundations

Student Impact:

- Improved handwriting
- Consistent use of conventions (capital letters and ending punctuation)
- Daily practice of decoding and encoding skills with multiple tools
- Use of academic language when discussing and identifying phonics rules
- Ability to mark words to identify phonics, sounds, word parts, and syllable structure



Early Literacy Assessments

| | Aimsweb+ Universal Screening | Fundations Curriculum-Based, Summative | Winter Benchmark (new) Formative |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| K | Letter name, letter sound, nonsense word fluency | Unit Goal: 80% of students achieving a score of 80% or higher on unit assessments serves as a benchmark for classroom-level mastery; helps guide instructional planning and related decisions. | Phoneme segmentation |
| 1st Grade | Oral reading fluency, word reading fluency | | Word identification, nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency with comp check |
| 2nd Grade | Reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, vocabulary | | Nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency with comp check |



Aimsweb+ Early Literacy Data Fall 2025

| National Comparison | 90-99%ile | 75-89%ile | 26-74%ile | 11-25%ile | 1-10%ile |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Kinder 110 students | 18.2% 20 | 29% 32 | 44.5% 49 | 7.3% 8 | 0.9% 1 |
| 1st Grade 112 Students | 28.6% 32 | 24% 27 | 42.9% 48 | 0.9% 1 | 3.6% 4 |
| 2nd Grade 124 Students | 31.5% 39 | 19.4% 24 | 42.7% 53 | 4.8% 6 | 1.6% 2 |



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D90 ELA Curriculum Implementation

Classroom instruction fosters reading and writing skills while also building knowledge through explicit instruction with high quality materials.

All students are:

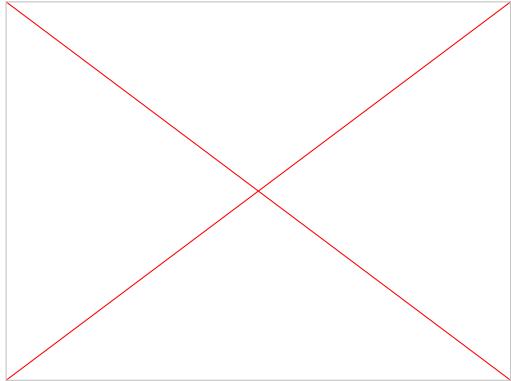
1. Reading high interest, grade level texts
2. Engaging in daily opportunities to discuss text
3. Writing in multiple genres, including in response to text



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Being a Reader

What did you picture in your mind as you listened to "Cats"?



Cats

by Eleanor Farjeon

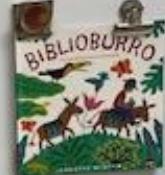
- 1 Cats sleep
- 2 Anywhere,
- 3 Any table,
- 4 Any chair,
- 5 Top of piano,
- 6 Window-ledge,
- 7 In the middle,
- 8 On the edge,
- 9 Open drawer,
- 10 Empty shoe,
- 11 Anybody's
- 12 Lap will do,
- 13 Fitted in a
- 14 Cardboard box,
- 15 In the cupboard
- 16 With your frocks
- 17 Anywhere!
- 18 They don't care!
- 19 Cats sleep
- 20 Anywhere.



Emmanuel's Dream
• born with one strong leg
• dad left his family
• Emmanuel told people he could do anything
• Biked A LOT of miles

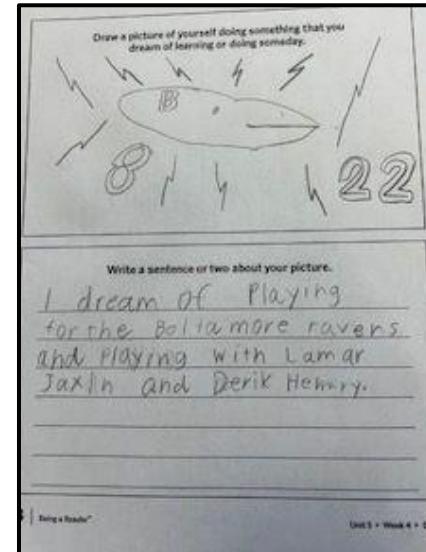


Frog Who Wanted To See The Sea
• lived in a little pond
• to see how big the world



Biblioburro

• created a library on a donkey
• giving books to kids who didn't access to the library



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1st Grade

1. Reflect on texts
2. Discuss question and share ideas
3. Write response, draw picture
4. Share

Being a Reader

Read the passage from the story. Then write an inference you made about Samuel using clues from the passages.

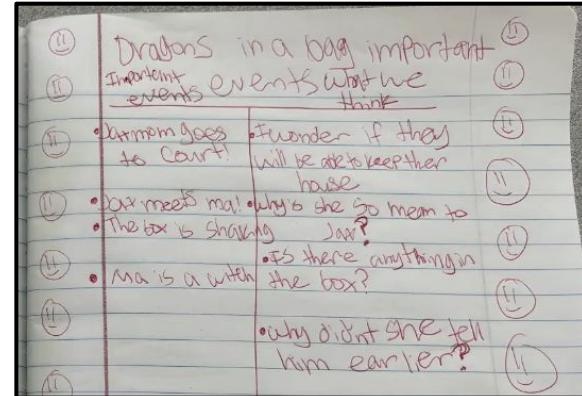
Benji's block city is spread all around. "Watch your step!" Mama says. "Benji's been working hard on that."

"I know. I helped!" I start to say—but Mama's phone rings, and she turns away.

I stick my tongue out at the box. I do my best karate kick high in the air, above Benji's block city.

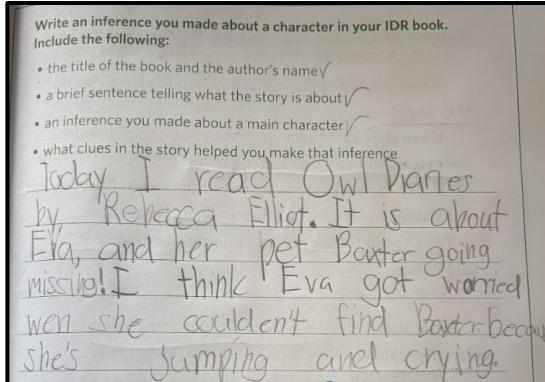
"Ka-CHA!"

My inference about Samuel: I think he feels unnoticed because he is know one is paying attention to him.



2nd Grade

- Practice inferencing with mentor text
- Share and discuss with peers
- Apply independently



4th Grade

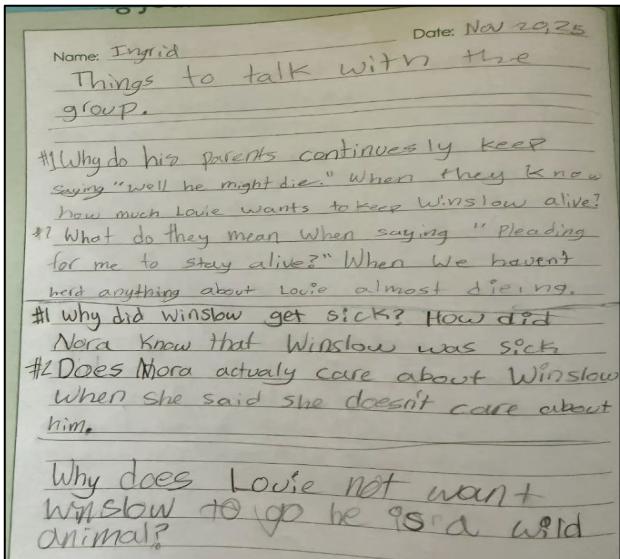
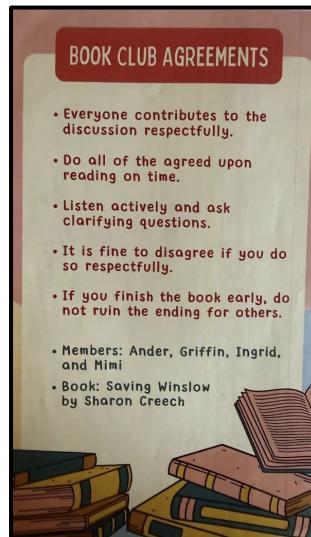
- Whole class discussion of important events
- Collaborate with partner; double entry journal
- Reflect as class



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Book Clubs

- Student-led
- Apply independent and critical thinking
- Share opinions and practice social skills; ask follow-up questions, share “airtime,” set goals
- Practice reading strategies and comprehension



Being a Writer



1st Grade Narrative

One sunny beautiful morning in Breckenridge Colorado I woke up feeling excited I could her my big sister ,Winnie and my parents. I went to the kitchen "good morning Anna "said my mom "good morning I said. "Annie what do you want for breakfast "asked my dad cereal and a bagel please ! Me and my sister Winnie were eating breakfast. Until my mom said here comes the bear! Duh duh duh!!!! Good morning Clara said my mom morning groaned Clara . Clara was my sister but she's very grumpy when she wakes up so we call her the bear. What do you want for breakfast? Clara cereal . Ok! Time to get dressed, said my mom. We got all ready. We were going white water rafting . We hopped in the car. It was a long drive. When we got there got our gear on. Then went on a bus that took us to the water. Are tour guide grabbed the tube and we followed behind. I felt an ack in my stomach. I felt nervous and scared . Because on the bus there were a lot of instructions and I thought that I would fall off the tube and would not know what to do because there were so many instructions. We got on the tube . My sisters Pateded in the front and my parents pateded in the back and I sat in the middle so I could feel more safe . When we got on the water whoosh!!! There was a huge splash of water. It was so big we all got so wet! My sisters were pateling with my parents. I was scared but then it became fun then are guide said there are rapids . Rapids are like fun bumps on the water with rocks I wasn't scared any more !! It was so much fun !!! And you got a great view of the mountains. Water would splash on you it was so fun! I wanted to do it again !! Then we went out of the water we went on a bus then got to the place where are car was got dressed in to dry clothes then drove home . I couldn't wait to go there again.

The End

3rd Grade Narrative



Wit and Wisdom



6th Grade

- *Ramayana: Divine Loophole*
- Applied *Ramayana* characters to create and write original narrative scenes in the monomyth genre

"What's wrong? You seem worried," said the man.

"Oh nothing," said the guest. "I think I'm going to go use the toilet." The guest does not use the toilet, for he is checking with the queen if there was supposed to be a new guest. The king stands up.

"Listen up everyone! It is time for the special announcement that you all have been waiting for," said Basil. Everyone becomes silent. People are whispering wondering what it is going to be or about. "In another kingdom, far away from here.. They are plotting to assassinate me and the royal family." The crowd gasps, asking why they would want to do this. "I'll tell you why! They want less enemy kingdoms to rival their power. But we shall prevail! For we have our great army.. Our great leadership.."

The guest and the queen are discussing. "There are no new guests this year. What are you talking about?" said the queen, confused.

"Wait.. THEN WHO THE HELL IS HE!?" yells the guest, pointing at the mysterious man.

Basil continues with his speech for he does not hear them over the crowd. "And most of all.. Our strongest knight of all, Vitani! The Crimson Knight!" Then, the king collapsed. A dagger had flown right into his chest. The crowd starts screaming. But the mysterious man appears to be smiling. This is because it was him who did it. It was the enemy's king! He runs.

7th Grade

- Unit of narrative text set in Medieval Era
- Wrote their own historical fiction narration
- Shared in a class "symposium"

Wit and Wisdom

Directions: Step 2: Identify five incidents from the novel that show your chosen effect. Choose examples from different points in the narrative so they represent beginning, middle, and end points of the narrative arc. Explain how these incidents affect Paul and how they develop your understanding of that effect overall.

Applied *Literal*

| Incident | How does this incident affect Paul? What is his response? | What does this incident reveal about your chosen effect? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. "Once he says he will shoot himself the first time he can get hold of his revolver again" (6.261). | Albert just got his leg amputated and he says he will kill himself if he gets hold of a revolver again. | This incident reveals that Albert is so done with the fighting and going through war that he would rather just die. |
| 2. "Who knows how long this mess will go on yet? Now you are saved" (2.87). | Kat is dying and Paul tells him that now he is saved since he doesn't have to keep fighting/stay in war. | This incident reveals that the soldiers feel like there is no end in sight and dying is better than having to keep fighting. |
| 3. "We have given up hope that some day an end may come" (2.81). | The soldiers don't believe that a war is coming soon anymore. | This incident reveals that the soldiers have lost all hope in an end to the war and they know they will just have to keep fighting. |
| 4. "Day after day passes... We wake up in the middle of the night. The earth booms. Heavy fire is falling on us" (105). | The soldiers go from waiting days to being fired on in little time. | This incident reveals that in the war anything can happen at any moment and the soldiers never know. |
| 5. "We trudge onward in single file... The next minute under a second explosion... Take cover!" (66). | The soldiers are just walking back and all of a sudden explosions are being set off at them. | This incident reveals that the soldiers can be doing one thing and then the next minute they could be fighting. |

Death would be easier *Anything can happen at any moment*



8th Grade

- Student-led discussions
- Use of textual evidence
- Literal and applied reasoning

Text: *All Quiet on the Western Front*



Arts and Letters

How *The Birchbark House* shows Cultural Values

Today people don't really follow their elders' rules but in the 1800's people had to basically do anything their elders told them to do. In *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich, a young girl named Omakayas is continuing to show respect to elders and endurance throughout the book. Omakayas isn't the only one who shows those cultural values. Her family also shows values. Omakayas and her family live on an island in Minnesota. During the summer they live in a birchbark house and in the winter they live in a winter cabin. In *The Birchbark House*, Louise Erdrich shares Ojibwe cultural values through respecting elders and endurance.

In *The Birchbark House*, Omakayas's family shows respecting elders throughout the book. For example, in the text Omakayas was disappointed when Deydey was giving everyone in her family great gifts and he gave her a hide scraper. The reason this matters is because she wanted to say, "I won't take it, I want a ribbon like Angilene." But, she didn't because she respects him and she didn't want him to feel bad. In addition to that, Deydey is also someone who respects a person. In the book, it was showing how Deydey respected Omakayas when she knocked him out. To add on, Omakayas saved Deyedy's life because he was about to go into the freezing cold and kill himself. But, just in time, Omakayas came and knocked him out with a big stick.

Moving on from respecting elders, the book also shows endurance. For instance, in the middle of the book the family was preparing themselves for the cold and deadly winter ahead. In other words, that means that they have to prepare enough food for the whole family to survive five deadly months. They also have to hunt a lot so that they can get fur to use for their clothing and moccasins. Continuing on, Nookamis had to work super hard when she was trying to save

everyone from smallpox. This proves that she had to work so hard especially because she had to care for five people. Nookamis was working so hard that Omakayas offered to help. Both of them had to care for their family by giving them healthy food, water, and company.

Louise Erdrich shares Ojibwe cultural values in *The Birchbark House* through respecting elders and endurance. Cultural values matter because they are showing things you have to do to have a good life. When they tell them to respect elders they are saying it so you will not get a consequence. They tell them to work hard because if you don't that leads to a cruel death. Bad things will happen if you don't follow cultural values.

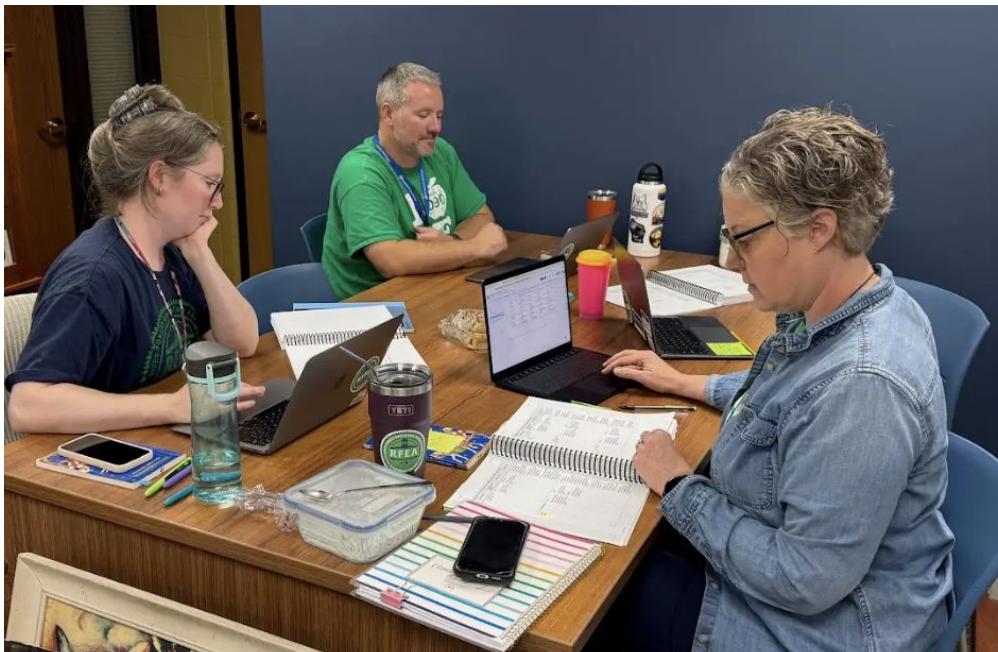
5th Grade

- How does Louise Erdrich share Ojibwe culture through *The Birchbark House*?
- Students used knowledge of the text and Ojibwe culture
- Writing expectations: hook, context for reader, thesis, points with proof paragraphs, topic sentences, transition words



Teacher Collaboration

- **Release time for planning with instructional specialist**
- **Thursday after school meetings; team/department meetings**
- **Institute Days**
 - Review assessments
 - Unit goals
 - Backwards map and pacing
 - Collaborate on instructional strategies and supports
 - Additional training with publishers and instructional specialists
 - Vertical alignment



“Next Steps” for Ongoing Implementation

- Personalized Professional Learning - by team and grade level
- Instructional specialists - Coaching with Collaborative Classroom and Great Minds
- District and building leader learning sessions
- Weekly instructional specialist collaboration meetings with Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Continued release time for extended unit planning and assessment reflection
- Peer observations with instructional specialists
- Classroom visits with principals/assistant principals to support teams
- Continue partnerships with Collaborative Classroom and Great Minds



Thank you!

Questions?



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