



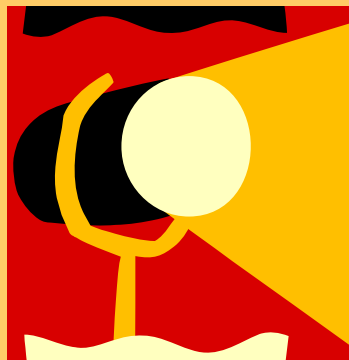
# SPOTLIGHT ON LITERACY

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Written and Edited by Instructional Literacy Facilitators and Specialist

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- 4-27 thru 5-1** Grade 6 Writing Benchmark Tri 2 Testing Window
- 4-28** CE Cadre Meeting, 7am-3pm, Center C-3
- 5-4** COE PLC-Cascade Library 3-5pm
- 5-6 or 5-8** Grade 6 Writing Scoring
- 5-14** Argumentative Paper PLC, 3-5 pm, SHS Library
- 5-15** READ180 4th SRI Window Opens
- 5-19** READ180 PLC Meeting, 3-6pm, EIS Library
- 5-26 thru 29** Reading Tri 3 Benchmark Testing Window

## Instructional Literacy Facilitators

Eric Bush- Jackson HS	x7195
Patricia Burke-Evergreen MS	x5763
Pat Collins-North MS	x4907
Cindy Foster-Eisenhower MS	x7518
Tasha Lewis-Center	x4071
Tessa O'Connor-Everett HS	x4437
Deb Ritchhart-Heatherwood MS	x6483
Monte Scholz-Cascade HS	x6107
Barbara Tibbitts-Gateway MS	x6712

## Curriculum Specialists

Loretta Comfort-Center	x4064
Jeanne Willard-Center	X4053

## Eisenhower Students Read and Read and Read and Read...

*Eisenhower challenges students to read non stop for six straight hours*

### Let the Reading Begin

On Friday March 27<sup>th</sup>, 230 students at Eisenhower Middle School hunkered down in the library for the first ever Read-a-Thon. Students challenged themselves to read non-stop for up to six hours without talking, looking up from their books, or distracting others around them. Judges walked around eagle-eyed with clipboards to record any students who were violating Read-a-Thon protocol. Fortunately, four minute breaks were granted at the end of every period for stretching and chatting, but once four minutes was up, the whistle blew and it was time to read again. The Read-a-Thon coordinators, Johnna Christensen and Cindy Foster, predicted that at the end of the day there would probably



be only a handful of students left reading. To their amazement when the last whistle blew, ending the Read-a-Thon, there were 167 students still reading!

### Highlights of the Read-a-Thon

You would think that middle school students would roll their eyes at the idea of reading for six hours. Instead when the whistle was blown the library was filled with students celebrating because they made it through another hour of the Read-a-Thon. When asked to reflect on the day, comments like, "...loved the challenge and the suspense of making it" and "...thrilled with the opportunity for a quiet and relaxing environment to read" were noted numerous times by participants.

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( Eisenhower Reads... continued from pg. 1)

While it is not easy for any student, let alone a middle school student, to sit still for any length of time the Eisenhower students were determined to flex their reading muscles. Participants who were not expected to even complete an hour of the Read-a-Thon met the



challenge and maintained reading stamina for the entire six hours. In addition, the students' seriousness regarding the Read-a-Thon was accentuated when judges observed students wrapping up one book and replacing it with another making sure their eyes never left the printed page.

### There Is More In Store

Due to the success of the Read-a-Thon, Ms. Christensen and Ms. Foster are looking forward to Eisenhower's next literacy event, the May Madness Poetry Reading Competition with special guest Mike Hickey, the Poet Populist of Seattle. If you are interested in further details about the implementation of a Read-a-Thon at your school, contact teacher librarian Johnna Christensen at [jchristensen@everettsd.org](mailto:jchristensen@everettsd.org) or IFL Cindy Foster at [cfoster@everettsd.org](mailto:cfoster@everettsd.org).

Additionally, if you want to know more about how to build reading stamina in your classroom check out our previous December 2008 newsletter article "Reading in the Zone", or Nancie Atwell's book *The Reading Zone*.

[www.everett.k12.wa.us/literacy/Secondary%20Reading](http://www.everett.k12.wa.us/literacy/Secondary%20Reading)

## Professional Learning Community Updates

### Collection of Evidence

The COE Professional Learning Community will meet two more times before the end of this school year: May 4 and June 1 at Cascade High School Library 3-5pm. The May 4th meeting will focus on the augmentation process and the upcoming sufficiency review for current collections being built. June 1 will focus on next year's fall COE class start-up and a debriefing about how this year went. The idea of a *working potluck dinner* has also been discussed for the June 1 meeting; invitations will be sent confirming meeting agendas and the potluck idea if it is approved. Please contact Eric Bush if you have any questions: [ebush@everettsd.org](mailto:ebush@everettsd.org) or 425-385-7195.

### READ180

The monthly *READ 180* Professional Learning Community (PLC) succeeds in providing *READ 180* teachers the opportunity to share and reflect on instructional practices that improve student learning and strategies for implementing the *READ 180* instructional model. This year, teachers and instructional facilitators of literacy have provided one another with ongoing professional development around preparing students to develop a reading process in order to become independent readers and embedding the explicit instruction model throughout the *READ 180* curriculum.

Guided by the leadership of Tasha Lewis, Instructional Facilitator for *READ180*, teachers focused on implementing the explicit instruction model when planning lessons around the whole-group, small-group, and independent reading rotation. This focus led us to look closely at student data, which included teacher collected data as well as data generated from the *READ 180* instructional software, to reflect on and set goals for student learning. In addition, teachers planned lessons with colleagues and reflected on the instructional practices embedded within the program's curriculum: explicit instruction model, reading for a purpose, building mental models, and building background knowledge.

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# Everett High School and North Middle School Spring Literacy Connection Project

## Why create a book club with high school students and 8<sup>th</sup> graders?

Eighth graders are notorious for losing motivation. For many of them reading for pleasure is the last thing they would be caught dead doing. In spring, their motivation is at an all time low. Deb Payne, teacher librarian at Everett High School, came up with an amazing idea to hook students at Everett HS (in case you didn't know high schoolers aren't so motivated in the spring either) and North MS. The plan was to reel them in by creating an EHS and North MS cross-school book club. Students were enticed to join the club with a book, lunch in the library, blogging and the final celebration with free food. With this combination you could land a shark let alone an 8<sup>th</sup> grader. By doing this the hope was to bring two schools together around

a book and to provide an opportunity for 8<sup>th</sup> graders to interact with high school students in a comfortable and informal way.



North Middle School



Everett High School

## Here's how the book clubs works

Twenty-five North Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> graders are meeting in the library at lunchtime to discuss the book *The Gospel According to Larry* by Janet Tashjian. Students are meeting every Friday with Kenleigh Kelly, the North librarian, and Pat Collins, Instructional Facilitator for Literacy (IFL), to discuss questions and respond on the book club's blog.



Everett High School

North Middle School

Simultaneously, EHS book club students are reading the *Gospel According to Larry*, discussing the questions with Deb Payne and Tessa O'Connor, Everett's IFL, and responding on the book club's blog. Students from EHS and NMS are reading each other's responses, making comments, and posing questions about the book on the blog. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, NMS students will walk to EHS to finally meet face to face, have lunch in the EHS library. The book clubs and the final event target the following grade level expectations:

- 2.3.3 Evaluate the author's use of literary devices to enhance comprehension.
- 2.4.2 Analyze author's purpose and evaluate how an author's style of writing influences different audiences.
- 2.4.4. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the author's use of persuasive devices to influence an audience.
- 2.4.5 Analyze text to generalize, express insight, or respond by connecting the other texts or situations.

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## Family and Community Connections

The book club events are open to the students' families in addition to community guest speakers. Eighth grade students at NMS and their parents were required to make a strong commitment to reading the book by signing a participation contract. Family members are encouraged to read the book as well and discuss it with their child, a good way for parents to model literacy in the home.

Additionally, an internet conference with the author will take place at EHS during the final celebration. Using technology capabilities, the author will be conversing with students live via video conferencing. Students will have the opportunity to ask the author questions and share their reactions to the novel.

It is important to note that **Everett Public Schools Foundation** provided a grant that supported this important project. Because of their generous donation, each student received a free copy of *The Gospel According to Larry* and the funds to purchase food for the May 6<sup>th</sup> celebration lunch.

### (READ180 PLC....continued from pg. 2)

While keeping the explicit instruction model at the core of our professional development each month, the READ 180 learning community has also focused on instruction around test-taking skills, which is a genre within the READ 180 program. In January, teachers began planning for instruction around test-taking skills and shared ideas for using the READ180 Reading WASL practice items as both an instructional and assessment tool.

Since February, our learning community has been learning how to use protocols, specifically the Tuning Protocol, to examine student work in order to deepen our understanding of how to reflect deeply on evidence of student learning to improve instruction.

## Argumentative Paper

### Streamlining the process

The teachers of argumentation have worked diligently this year to streamline the process of completing the Argumentative Paper and have worked with students in a step-by-step fashion to help ensure success. On May 14th the final Argumentative Paper PLC will convene at Sequoia High School from 3:00—5:00; participants will discuss successful approaches they used and make recommendations for next steps for the 2009-2010 school year.

### Revised rubric

At the April 15th Rubric Calibration Training, 25 teachers and IFLs met to analyze student papers with the new rubric. Most felt that the new rubric was a vast improvement as it is instructional in nature as well as providing a summative assessment. Since it is the first year the rubric has been used, revisions were anticipated. This thoughtful group offered possible changes to strengthen the rubric for next year. We are hoping to have the revisions ready for your feedback at the May 14th PLC. Please direct any questions to JoAnne Buiteweg, Monte Scholz or Loretta Comfort.

## High School Literacy Review

**We're almost there!**

**Recommended titles for our core books will be unveiled soon.**

