

Noble NEWS

A Publication of Reaching Heights

EXercise

For The Brain

by Lindy Burt, Noble parent

Noble students are getting a big boost to their reading skills with the Fast ForWord software program that strengthens and develops the skills needed to



Ginny Bruns

learn to read. It also hones reading skills for older readers. The program builds and improves fine motor skills and visual attention, auditory processing and sequencing, auditory attention and discrimination, working memory, and letter-sound association. The activities include animation with animals, colors, shapes, and music.

The three kindergarten classes and selected older students have been identified for participation.

Kindergarten teacher Ginny Bruns has opted to use the programs with her entire class. Every day, her students spend approximately 40 minutes in the computer lab.

Teachers track student and class progress with printed reports generated by the software. These reports help identify specific areas that need additional strengthening in each student. Several parent volunteers have been trained in the programs and assist students who need help getting through an exercise.

Boulevard and Fairfax Elementary Schools are also using Fast ForWord and teachers from all three schools are working together to assess the impact on students' reading abilities.

Fast ForWord was developed by four professors from the University of California and Rutgers University who explored neuroscience and the cognitive and linguistic attributes that enable a student to learn reading and language. ♻️



Students working on literacy skills with Fast ForWord computer program.

Principal's Letter



by Julie Beers, Noble Principal

The attitude that failure is not an option at Noble has earned us an Effective rating from the State of Ohio for three years running, and will push us until we reach an Excellent rating.

Every child at Noble can learn. Gone are the days when some children's poor achievement was accepted as part of the classic bell-shaped curve. We combine our district's strong academic curriculum and focus on student achievement with a emphasis on community building. Our teachers exist within a professional learning community, supported with resources, meaningful data, and a culture where they can try new strategies as they diversify curriculum and meet student needs. Our families are welcomed and supported by teachers, administrators, and programs ranging from the PTA to the Heights Parent Center. Our students receive clear expectations and the support they need to do their best—academically and socially.

The best educational practices are in place at Noble. Teachers collaborate across grade levels and with literacy and math coaches. Prime Time—a block of time set aside each morning—provides the flexibility for a teacher to meet an individual need, to cluster children
{Principal's letter continued on page 2}

Noble News is published by Reaching Heights, a citizen organization that mobilizes community resources to support the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools.

Newsletters featuring news about each elementary school are written and distributed by Reaching Heights and a team of parent and community volunteers, under the direction of Reaching Heights Assistant Director Joy Henderson. Florence D'Emilia is the lead writer.

We welcome your ideas and help. Contact us at 216-932-5110 or joy@reachingheights.org. Learn all about Reaching Heights and see how you'd like to become involved, by visiting us online at www.reachingheights.org.

Noble School is located at 1293 Ardoon Street. To contact the school, call 371-7480.

[Principal's Letter continued from page 1] across the grade for short term help, or to draw together a team of specialists to plan and execute interventions. Recent progress in neuroscience allows us to offer students a program that improves reading and focus. We use data from short term assessments to recognize when students haven't grasped a concept, allowing teachers to change instruction, and plot strategies for success.

Building on past success with our bully-free program, we instituted a program of common expectations and common language to support our children's social development. Inclusive games and cooperative play on the playground provide the structure and opportunity to develop social skills. Our neighbors visit and support our school through tutoring programs, a Reader's Theater, and our recent campus beautification initiative. Our community is thriving as we recognize that social connectedness and social responsibility support academic learning. 🌱

The Big Dig Beautifies Noble Campus



"Our goal is to create flower beds that will look great throughout the growing season."

– John Cassady, Noble parent

By Mazie Adams, Noble parent



Noble Elementary is a wonderful school that provides a nurturing environment for our children. However, Noble parents felt the outside of school didn't reflect the growing environment inside the school. In response, Noble PTA launched the "Big Dig"—a landscaping project to beautify the school grounds. The project relies on the gardening expertise of a knowledgeable parent, the generosity of neighbors, and the willingness of families to dig.

Using low-maintenance plants donated from Noble families and neighbors, a crew of parents and students designed and installed new garden beds along the base of the school building. "Our goal is to create flower beds that will look great throughout the growing season," says experienced gardener and Noble parent John Cassady.

Neighbors and parents provided hostas, peonies, native plants, Siberian iris, day lilies, grasses and much more dug from their own gardens. "Noble is our neighborhood school so I was delighted to contribute plants to the Big Dig," said retired Noble neighbor Diana Woodbridge "I look forward to watching the garden grow."

A second Big Dig is planned for the spring and will include more flowering plants. Neighbors are welcome to donate plants throughout the year. Contact PTA president Mazie Adams through the Noble office, 371-6535. 🌱

Here's How You Can Help!

Noble School needs help from parents, guardians, relatives and community members. If you can help with any of the areas below, please call school counselor Melanie Howard at 371-6535.

- Collect Box Tops for Education
- Volunteer in the Library
- Donate Plants for Spring Big Dig
- Village Volunteers - Tutoring students in the classroom

By Mazie Adams, Noble parent

An all-school assembly at the beginning of the school year launched a program at Noble that clearly identified common expectations and introduced a new common language for the lunchroom, playground, buses and bathrooms. For each common area, staff created a list of Outstanding, Acceptable and Unacceptable behaviors. As staff and students learn the new system, it is easier to encourage and recognize acceptable behavior. "I see students not only standing quietly in line, but reading books at the same time, too. They are trying so hard to be outstanding," enthused principal Julie Beers.

Common Language, Common Expectations Yield Social Growth



The most dramatic changes are on the playground. Over the summer, Noble staff members — including Ms. Beers, counselor Wendy Burkey, gym teachers Rich Wright and Rick Williams, lunch aides and their supervisor — read two books on creating a successful recess environment and decided that structured games are the key to a safe and fun recess period.

"The main idea is to have games that are inclusive," says Mr. Wright, who worked with staff and students to create a list of nine inclusive recess games and built some of the necessary equipment. Games include Around the World, Frozen Bridge Tag, Guard the Cookie Jar, Hoop Guard and Corn Hole. Staff members and students learned the games and they've been a big hit. Now, instead of pick-up basketball games where just a few kids played, organized groups shoot hoops with many chances for each child to participate.

Because all students and staff know the rules of these games and the games are designed to promote team work, the playground atmosphere has significantly improved. Given this success, Mr. Wright is planning to teach a new set of five games at the beginning of the next trimester. Thanks to the thoughtful response of the staff, the students love playing the games and are enjoying the more harmonious tone on the playground. 🌟

IT TAKES A *Village*

By Mazie Adams, Noble parent

Noble Elementary has started another successful year of The Village, a community tutoring program coordinated by Reaching Heights and mobilized by parents, community volunteers and teachers. The Village delivers success where it matters most by providing one-on-one tutoring for Noble students. This year at Noble, more than thirty volunteers from the community give 1-2 hours a week, working with teachers to help students in specific areas of need.

Community volunteers at Noble include students from John Carroll University, Case Western Reserve University Law School, CHIMES, neighbors and parents. "The teachers find it very beneficial and enjoy working with our tutors," says Child Services Specialist Wendy Burkey. "The students adore having the volunteer tutors."

Village tutors at Noble are in high demand and more volunteers are

needed. The school provides orientation, training and resources. Volunteers must be willing to make a commitment of as little as a half-hour every week or as much as four hours per week.

"Consistency is important," according to Ms. Burkey. "The students and teachers appreciate the commitment of time and knowledge from our volunteers." If you're interested in volunteering, please call Wendy Burkey at 320-4908. 🌟