



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 1, 2013

## Creativity Shows in Graphic Design Program

Dave Bohannon's Wall of Fame is a sight to behold. Not only for its visual appeal, but for what it represents.

"The walls here are filled with great art and it inspires students to do great things," said Bohannon, who is the Graphic Design instructor at North Technical High School. "When others come in here, they're blown away by this program and can't wait to get in it."

One student that has a presence on the wall is Chelsea Buckley, a junior at North Tech. "Chelsea's awesome," Bohannon said. "She's a class leader and always willing to help anyone with questions. She's quite a standout on my Wall of Fame."

Although it wasn't specifically the Wall of Fame that attracted Chelsea to North Tech, she did take note of what the school had to offer her as an aspiring artist.

"What interested me about this school was definitely the graphic design program," Chelsea said. "I've been drawing for 14 years — since I could pick up a pencil."

Well beyond working with a pencil now, Chelsea is progressing through the curriculum that teaches students how to use Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and InDesign. However, the class does start at the most basic level.

"We start with just pencil and paper before you work your way to the computers," Chelsea said. "At first we work on learning how to draw the human body."

"I begin with the basics because some students come in with little or no drawing experience," said Bohannon, who tries to tailor his class to the needs of his students. "We do a lot of anatomical studies because many of our students want to be video game designers and animators. They need to know the human body and the movement of muscles. We work a lot with shading and light sources — that's something you'll use your whole career."

Chelsea is no exception. Her initial plan was to go into video game design. But currently, she has her sights set on the Art Institute of Chicago.

"I want to go to Chicago," she said. "Eventually I want to design clothes and T-shirts, and start my own business as well."

Chelsea and her Graphic Design program classmates receive a unique hands-on education that equips them better for the next level of education.

"They're miles ahead," Bohannon said. "Because they've already learned all the basics."

Although only a junior, Chelsea is already laying the groundwork for post-secondary success. When she isn't competing at SkillsUSA or with the North Tech soccer team, she is active in the Saturday Bridge Program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, an academic skills workshop program. ■



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—CHELSEA BUCKLEY

# LITERACY ACTIVITIES & TIPS FOR FAMILIES

**R**EADING AND WRITING are skills used throughout life, and, as with any skill, practice is key. Below are some suggestions for activities you can do with your child as well as tips to help your child actively engage with print.

## Be sure that you know what the problem area(s) is/are.

Usually this is very clear. That is, you notice that your child cannot sound out the words (decoding), or they seem to read slowly or laboriously (fluency), or they might read the words fine, but they do not understand what they read (comprehension). Often, it is a combination of these factors and that makes it difficult to know how to help your child. Rather than guessing what you think the problem(s) might be, it is important to have a conversation with your child's teacher so that you know exactly what reading skills he or she is targeting. This will help you better support your child at home.

## Are you and the teacher on the same page?

The best way to find out if you are supporting your child in a way that won't be confusing to how he or she is being instructed at school is to simply ask. Ask his or her teacher, HOW are they teaching your child to decode? Ask the teacher how they are building your child's fluency skills, comprehension skills, etc. By supporting the same instructional strategies at home, your child will get extra doses of intervention that are targeted to specific areas of need.

## Think: Before, During, and After Reading

What this means is that strong readers use strategies before they begin reading, while they are reading and after they read to engage with and understand the text. Below are some helpful tips to support your child before, during and after reading.

## Before Reading

- Ask your child to look at the book title or the picture on the cover of the book

and predict what he or she thinks the story will be about. If you are helping your older student with informational text, such as science or social studies, you can do the same thing. If the chapter is called "The Prehistoric Era: Our Changing World," ask your child what he or she thinks the chapter might be about. Predicting helps give your child a purpose for reading a passage or story.

- Sometimes our children have difficulty making the above types of predictions because they are not familiar enough with the vocabulary. Another great pre-reading strategy is letting your child tell you some words he or she might have difficulty understanding. Going over these before reading the story will give your child a "leg up" in understanding the words within the text that would otherwise be confusing. Another way to support your child with predicting is to choose a few words (four to six) from a story or chapter and based on reading those words, let your child predict what he or she thinks the story will be about. For example, in "Little Red Riding Hood," you might write the words WOODS, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, BASKET, WOLF, and GRANDMOTHER, and present these to your child in order to help support him or her as he or she predicts.
- Identify Structural Organizers (also known as text features). This helps with informational text that your child may be asked to read. Before reading an assignment, basic frameworks that are included in the text should be pointed out such as cause-effect or problem-solution. It can be helpful to call attention to specific plans of paragraph or text organization such as signal words, main idea sentences, highlighted phrases, headings and subtitles.

## During Reading

Many of these strategies help support vocabulary and comprehension.

- Ask your child to generate a mental picture of what he or she just read. This is known as visualizing. A good way to ask this is, "Tell me what you see in your mind about this story right now." You may need to model what this would sound like: "As I read this, I see in my mind..."
- Ask your child to summarize what he or she just read. Sometimes this is known as Paragraph Shrinking. It basically involves asking your child to tell you who the text is about and the most important thing that has happened (what the character did or what happened to the character). Again, you may need to model this for your child a few times before it becomes natural to him or her.
- Have your child tell you what is confusing as they read. Sometimes our children "miss" when they have misunderstood the text. They keep reading and really never figure out the meaning. Stopping at various points to check for understanding is helpful. Caution: You don't want to stop too often because it is also important not to interrupt the "flow" of reading. A good rule of thumb is to stop after a couple of pages if the book is a picture book or an easier reader. Stop at the end of a few paragraphs or sections if the text is harder.

## After Reading

- If you use predictions before reading, ALWAYS address those predictions before you stop. You don't want to leave your child hanging about a guess he or she made. A great way to frame this, especially if your child is not a risk-taker, is to say, "Sometimes our predictions come true and sometimes they don't and that's okay." It also helps

to model a prediction that doesn't come true so your child sees how you react.

- Conclude the reading by reserving time for reactions and comments. Ask questions about the story and relate the story to any similar experiences your child might have had. Ask your child to retell the story in his or her own words. This strategy is sometimes called "Pause-Think-Retell." Be sure to give your child time to pause and think before retelling!
- REREAD! Sometimes our children think that only struggling readers "have" to re-read. This is simply not so. As new standards come into play, ALL children will be required to engage in what Kelly Gallagher (2004) calls deep reading. Deep reading is about discovery. The purposes of deep reading (involving re-reading the text perhaps more than a couple of times) are many:
  - Understand hard words.
  - Ask questions about confusing parts of the text.
  - Find things your child did not find before.
  - Help the text make sense.
  - Make it more interesting.
  - Help your child make connections to their life, other texts, or their world.
  - Make your child a better reader.
  - Find words and sentences your child may have skipped the first time.
  - Keep reading a part over and your child gets it.
  - Make reading more fun because you can go over the best parts with your child.

Written By **Mitzi Brammer, Ph.D.**  
SSD Area Coordinator,  
Planning and Development

# Leadership Training Available for Parents

THE FRED SAIGH PARENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (PLI) is now accepting applications for its next training program to be held in three sessions on Sept. 7, Oct. 5 and Nov. 2. Applications are due April 16.

Participants will develop a vision for their child's future, learn to be effective partners with the school in planning for their child's education and develop leadership skills that will benefit their child's school and community. The program features nationally known speakers and visionaries on developing self-determination in children with disabilities.

At least one parent from each school district in St. Louis County and each SSD school will be chosen through an application process. All parents are welcome to apply. Parents of children receiving First Steps and early childhood special education services and those with children in kindergarten through third grade are especially encouraged to apply.

The Fred Saigh Parent Leadership Institute is presented by the SSD Parent Education and Diversity Awareness Program with funding from the Special Education Foundation.

For more information and an application, visit [bit.ly/parentleadership](http://bit.ly/parentleadership) or contact Joann Noll at [jnoll@ssdmo.org](mailto:jnoll@ssdmo.org) or 314.989.8108. ■

## spotlight on STUDENT SUCCESS



Hunter is a social, successful first-grader who enjoys playing soccer and interacting with his peers. His family credits his progress to the early intervention and autism support services provided by SSD.

FOR MORE STORIES LIKE THESE, VISIT SSD ON FACEBOOK AT [FACEBOOK.COM/SSDSTLCO](https://www.facebook.com/SSDSTLCO)

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**MISSION:** In collaboration with partner districts we provide technical education and a wide variety of individualized educational and support services designed for each student's successful contribution to our community.

**VISION:** Partners for every student's success

**VALUES:** student success • collaboration  
• integrity • stewardship • continuous improvement • equity

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## NEWS FROM SSD



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## COMING UP @ SSD

### "What to Do This Summer" Recreation Fair

Feb. 20, 7-8:30 p.m.

SSD Central Office, Room 60-61

At this event, parents will be able to visit with providers of summer programs and camps that include all children. Recreation voucher and funding information will be presented from 7-7:20 p.m. Opportunities for students of all ages will be available.

### Comprehension Strategies for Elementary Readers

April 4, 7-9 p.m.

Presenter: Mitzi Brammer, Ph.D.

SSD Central Office, Room 60

This workshop will provide strategies that help children understand new vocabulary, connect new learning to prior knowledge, create images, determine main idea, summarize and more.

### SSD Technical High Schools: Is This a Good Fit for Your Son or Daughter?

April 8, 6:30-8 p.m.

SSD Central Office, Room 60

Presenters: Rosina Palmer  
& Elizabeth Hinn

Hear from staff members at North and South Technical high schools about prerequisite skills for various programs, admission requirements and situational assessments to help determine a student's interests and aptitude.

For more information about these events or to register, visit [www.ssdmo.org/cool\\_tools/workshops.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html) or call 314.989.7807 or 711 (Deaf/HOH).