

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Saskatoon Public Schools – Literacy for Life

Begun in 2004, Literacy for Life is one of two priorities for Saskatoon Public Schools. Literacy for Life is designed to help students develop strong literacy skills with the overall goal of all students reading at or above grade level. Literacy for Life has three major components:

- **Early Literacy** – involves teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 3 and capitalizes on children’s capacities to learn language at a very early age. Teachers are using a new way to teach reading. Independent reading tests show the following student gains in the past two years:
 - 76 per cent of Kindergarten students know all lower case alphabet letters and 36 per cent are reading at or above the beginning reading level.
 - Grade 1 students achieved, on average, a reading level of 2.3 Grade Level Equivalency (GLE). This means these students scored as if they were in school for an additional three months.
 - Grade 2 students achieved, on average, a reading level of 3.2 Grade Level Equivalency. This means these students scored as if they were in school for an additional five months!
- **Read to Succeed** – helps students in Grades 4 to 12, who have struggled to read in the past, develop their reading skills and, experience success as readers – many for the first time. Each public school has at least one Read to Succeed classroom of approximately 15 students who receive literacy instruction for 90 minutes per day beyond the typical English Language Arts classes.
 - Students in **Read to Succeed** classes showed an average gain of 1.3 Grade Level Equivalency. The typical growth for these students in the past has been about 0.6 (six months) GLE. In other words, many of these students have more than doubled their reading gains in one year!
- **Just Read** – involves students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Just Read encourages a partnership between public schools and the wider community for the purpose of increasing students’ out-of-school reading. Just Read builds the lifelong habit of reading and instills the love of reading in all students. Just Read encourages parents, staff, and community members to spend time reading with children and youth, to model the behaviours of good readers, and to motivate students to increase their reading. Students establish individual reading goals and contribute to school and division-wide goals relative to the number of books read outside of school.
 - All students have increased their amount of out-of-school reading by 42 per cent over last year. Public School students have read over two and a half million books outside of school since **Literacy for Life** began two years ago!
 - Circulation rates in elementary school libraries have increased by 15 per cent.

Literacy for Life received the Premier’s Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education in November of last year.

For information regarding organizations receiving provincial government funding for family literacy programs and services visit www.sasksmart.sk.ca