



Chinook School Division

## Chinook Leveled Literacy Intervention Program

Nominated by: **Chinook School Division**  
For the 2013 Premier's Board of Education Award  
For Innovation and Excellence in Education

September 2013

Board Chair: Randy Beler  
Director of Education: Liam Choo-Foo



## About the Project

The Chinook School Division Board is nominating the Chinook Leveled Literacy Intervention program for the 2013 Premier's Board of Education Award For Innovation and Excellence in Education. We feel this program exemplifies the innovative nature of the award, as it is a systematic model that improves learning at the classroom and individual student level, utilizing research-based reading improvement strategies and achieving amazing results.

### ***What is The Chinook Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) Program?***

- The Chinook Board of Education implemented the Literacy Leveled Intervention program as a key component of the division's Balanced Literacy Initiative in the fall of 2009.
- The goal of this program is to "help struggling readers to reach their maximum potential".
- What resulted was a **very intense pullout program that lasted from 12 to 18 weeks for 30 minutes each day.**

### ***Who Does It Affect?***

- This program targets struggling readers that previously may have fallen through the cracks or been assigned to Student Services for Educational Assistance support. This program has made a world of difference for these students, not only with reading but also with their overall confidence as learners.
- Thirty teachers have been trained to deliver the intervention at grades one and two. This is approximately 50% of the teachers in the division at those levels. This has created a great capacity in Chinook's primary teachers.

### ***How was it Implemented?***

- A Literacy Intervention Coach was hired to provide the intervention to struggling readers that were identified through the use of leveled reading assessments.
- Six schools were selected to implement the intervention model for the initial year based on student need.
  - The Intervention Coach was tasked with training the new teachers from the six schools with ongoing professional development throughout the year.
  - LLI Dashboards were developed to chart individual student progress as well as system results.
  - **The results for year one were incredible with an 88% success rate!**
- Plans were put into place to extend the Chinook LLI Model to seven more schools in 2011. Again the same selection and training process was put into place, ensuring the schools with the most need received the most support.
  - **The results in year two were even more impressive with a 91% success rate!**
- Eight more schools were added in 2012 following the same plan.
  - **By 2013, teachers in all elementary schools were trained in the Chinook LLI Model at the grade 1 and 2 level.**

88% success in year one.  
91% success in year two.

### ***What Does the Future Look Like?***

- The fantastic success of the program has led to plans to extend it to higher grade levels. Prototype schools are now implementing the LLI for grades 3-5 with plans to have this expanded to all Chinook elementary schools by 2015.

## **Evidence of Direct Board Influence and Participation**

The Chinook Board of Education was very involved in the creation and ongoing support of the LLI program. This can be highlighted in the areas of leadership, resource allocation, and monitoring.

### **Leadership**

- The Board provided great leadership and direction for the creation of the Chinook LLI program.
- They recognized the need to have the intervention in place in all schools across the division to ensure equitable access to all students.
- They wanted to be certain the program was sustainable and cost-effective to ensure it would be beneficial to students for the foreseeable future.

### **Resource Allocation**

- Once the potential of the initiative was realized, the Board provided staffing and resources to support it and help ensure success.
- This staffing was in the form of a Literacy Intervention Coach to provide training and teacher support for the prototype schools.
  - The Board funded the coach to travel to Toronto to receive training from experts: Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.
  - This training prepared the coach to deliver the intervention as well as train grade 1 and 2 Chinook teachers.
- The Board also provided the funding to purchase the resources required to deliver the intervention and provide the necessary release time for professional development.

### **Monitoring**

- The Board tracked the progress of the intervention by receiving Literacy Monitoring and Status Reports three times a year. The data collected and shared in these Board reports was specific to the LLI program and the larger Balanced Literacy model as well. This included Fountas and Pinnell and Reading Assessment District scores for grades 3, 6 and 9.
- The program was monitored frequently through the use of Chinook's Data Dashboard system. These dashboards allow teachers to input the data for a student (or group of students) and have it immediately charted into dashboards that show student achievement and growth.
- These dashboards have become very popular with teachers as they provide an in-depth look at individual and classroom performance and make it easy to target areas for improvement. An example of a classroom dashboard is provided on the following page.



Director of Education Liam Choo-Foo reads with young students at Cabri School

## Fountas and Pinnell

Student Name	Genre	Comprehension						Fluency	Instructional level
		Test level	Accuracy	Within	Beyond	About	Additional		
1, Student Grade 4	F	Q	97	3	2	3	1	1	Q
2, Student Grade 4	N	N	92	2	1	1	1	1	N
3, Student Grade 4	F	P	96	3	2	2	1	0	P
4, Student Grade 4	F	L	88	1	0	1	0	0	L
5, Student Grade 4	N	M	93	2	1	1	1	0	M
6, Student Grade 4	N	O	97	3	2	2	1	0	O
7, Student Grade 4	F	R	98	2	3	3	1	2	R
8, Student Grade 4	F	L	90	0	1	2	0	0	L

*"The dashboard and the 'So What' Workshop are invaluable to planning school literacy goals. They lay everything out in black and white. They even lay out classroom and individual goals on a strategy-based level."*

-Michelle Dewar, Literacy Coach

## Innovative Nature of the Program

The Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is unique and innovative within Chinook School Division due to the following factors: the consistent implementation of the program across the Division, the ongoing professional development, and solid instructional practice that follows proven intervention principles.

### 1) Consistent Implementation

- Consistent selection criteria and guidelines for implementing the program were developed and are unique to Chinook School Division.
- To ensure that students would be successful within the intervention, as a division we were tight in our expectation that schools follow the implementation guidelines.

### 2) Professional Development Model

- The professional development model implemented within Chinook is unique to our division. We knew that investing in teacher professional growth was crucial to improving student learning. We could have just given teachers the program and told them to use it. Instead our Board supported giving teachers the time to learn about best practice. They supported continual support of our teachers by allowing them to come together and learn from our intervention coach and from one another.
- Teachers receive four training days during the year. These sessions are focused on the components of the program along with solid instructional practices in reading.
- The days are spread out so teachers can learn in manageable chunks, apply their learning and then return to learn more.
  - **Breaking the learning down and revisiting the instructional practices has proven to be a much more effective way for teachers to retain and apply their learning.**

*"...a good first step in developing more effective instructional programs for struggling readers is developing a plan for continually upgrading each teacher's expertise"(Duffy and Hoffman, 1999, in Allington 2012, p.159)*



### 3) Coaching

- A full time intervention coach was hired and is responsible for planning the in-service sessions, and providing follow up coaching with all of the LLI teachers in the division.
  - She also teaches her own LLI group and is able to demo lessons for the teachers she is training.
- The professional development, networking and follow up coaching allow our teachers to focus on improvement.

### 4) Student Selection

- A school team consisting of the principal, classroom teachers and possibly the Student Services teacher (SST) would examine their reading data to determine if they had a need for LLI. F & P target levels were identified for grade two students in September and for grade one students in January/February to consider if they were candidates for LLI.
- Students were not taken from their Balanced Literacy instruction within the classroom
- Attendance is crucial and is an important factor to discuss with parents. In order for a student to be successful, they must attend consistently

### 5) Intervention Principles

- **Leveled Literacy Intervention is based on innovative and cutting edge intervention principles and solid instructional practice that is grounded in research.**
- The following principles are embedded in the LLI program and have been central to the training sessions provided to teachers by the intervention coach within Chinook School Division.
  - *Use of High Quality Texts*
  - *Develop Comprehension Strategies and Vocabulary*
  - *Word Work*
  - *Fast Paced, Highly Structured and Systematic Lessons*
  - *Fluency in Reading and Writing*
  - *Combine Reading and Writing*
  - *Assess and Monitor Progress*
  - *Connection to the Classroom*
  - *Home Component*
- LLI is successful because it is grounded in research. It has the power to change a student's future and provides a successful environment.
- The implementation of Balanced Literacy in Chinook has been instrumental in the success of LLI.

*"To alter school failure, the teacher must provide and maintain consistent expectations, support and encouragement."*  
(Lyons, 2003, p. 145)

**LLI is an extension of the classroom program. The structure of the LLI lesson reflects all of the components of the Balanced Literacy in the classroom.**

## Sustainability of the Innovation

### Systematic Framework

The implementation plan of the Leveled Literacy Intervention within Chinook School Division was designed and purposefully planned so it would be a sustainable and consistent intervention within our division for many years. Several factors contributed to that sustainability including: the systematic implementation, the professional development and training of our teachers and the data collection and monitoring.

## Implementation

- The Chinook School Board's systematic implementation of Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) has contributed to its sustainability.
- We learned many important lessons in our pilot year; particularly that LLI was not for every struggling student. It was very important to establish our student selection criteria and to be sure that we were targeting the students that could benefit the most from a short term, intense intervention.
- We wanted to target students that needed a "boost" and who were not receiving any other support within the school. It was important to remain consistent in the way LLI was administered as well and **we were tight in our expectations around delivering the intervention following the criteria of a successful intervention so we could be sure that it would make the most difference.**
- Following a consistent implementation plan has allowed LLI to become "the way we do business" in our division. Engraining LLI and the components of successful intervention into everyday practice supports the sustainability and longevity of LLI in Chinook School Division.

*"When we can embed something to the point that it becomes part of a teacher's everyday practice we know that it will be around for a long time. That is the way it is with LLI. If we tried to take LLI away from schools there would be a lot of resistance. Teachers believe that this is an intervention that makes a huge difference with students."*

- Kathy Robson, Curriculum Coordinator

## Teacher Training

- The professional development model implemented around LLI also contributed greatly to the sustainability of the intervention.
- We specifically chose classroom teachers preferably at grade one and two to do the intervention. This has proven to be an excellent way for our division to increase the capacity of our primary reading teachers.
- The strategies the teachers have learned not only help the students in the intervention but the students within their classrooms as well.
- It was up to schools to find coverage for the teacher doing the LLI within their current staffing allotments. Staffing did not increase based on the implementation of LLI within the school. This has added significantly to the financial sustainability of LLI within Chinook School Division.
- The Leveled Literacy Coach and the Curriculum Coordinator met with schools and provided support with scheduling LLI.

## Data Collection/Monitoring

- Monitoring the LLI program and the success of our students adds to the sustainability of the initiative. Teachers feel incredible satisfaction when they can see the growth of their students. This proof of success lends a great deal of credibility to LLI and makes teachers want to continue to deliver the lessons.
- As a division, collecting the data has given the Board the evidence they need to continue to provide support for LLI knowing that it is improving student learning.

## Cost Related to Benefits

### Cost of Resources

- The largest cost to the Board in terms of resources was the initial purchase of LLI kits for each school. These kits cost approximately \$5000 per school. This however was a one-time cost.
- Over time, as the schools re-use these resources with their students, the costs will diminish significantly.

### Cost of Training

- Every year, teachers within the Chinook LLI program are offered training workshops on how to effectively deliver the intervention.
- These workshops are key in keeping the integrity and ideals of the program intact.
  - First time LLI teachers are trained in four sessions while experienced teachers have two sessions per year. The total for each year would add up to approximately 30 days.

### Cost of Staffing

- A full-time Literacy Intervention Coach is the most significant on-going cost of the LLI program.
- Principals work with the coach to find time within their existing schedules to put teachers in place to deliver LLI.
- The coach position is vital for the ongoing development and success of the program and is a small price to pay to make such a difference for such a large number of students.

### Breakdown of Costs

Start Up Costs	
Resources	\$107,000
Training/PD	\$20,000
Total	\$127,000
Ongoing Costs	
Coach Salary (.75 FTE)	\$64,000
Yearly Training/PD	\$9,000
Total	\$73,000

### Chinook LLI Cost Analysis

While initially the overall cost of the LLI program may seem high, **the average ongoing cost per student is only \$895**. This is an incredibly small amount to pay considering the success of the program and the alternatives that would have to be put in place to support those students. This would often mean student services support in the form of an Educational Assistant at a much higher cost.



A teacher uses leveled reading assessments with her students at Ashley Park School

## Client Support for the Innovation

Within Chinook School Division there has been an overwhelming support for Leveled Literacy Intervention. Teachers have felt supported in their endeavours to implement the program in their schools and are happy to see the growth of their students and the positive impact it has on their teaching and student learning in the classroom. Parents are thrilled with the progress they see their students making and are encouraged when the battles to read at home disappear! Parents are asking, "Will my child get LLI?" Most importantly, is the growth that students recognize in themselves and their confidence they have as readers and writers.

*"My son was an LLI student for two and a half months. I was truly amazed by how much his reading improved during this short time. Before LLI, it was a fight to get him to read. If he came to an unfamiliar word, he would give up and say, with defeat in his voice, 'I don't know that word.' Now, thanks to LLI, he has the confidence to tackle words he doesn't know and no longer dreads reading time."*

-Parent, Gull Lake School

*"Her first week into the LLI program was remarkable! I couldn't believe the difference in her excitement to read again and ability to use decoding strategies. She loved working in a small group... and quickly regained her confidence. She loved bringing home her own special bag each day filled with a colorful book (not photocopied) and activities to do.*

*She began writing again and her awareness of print and ability to read was contagious! She made up books and couldn't wait to share them...! By the end of her allotted time in the LLI program, she was sad to leave!*

*...Our daughter needed a bit of a boost in her reading level and was given a huge jump-start. She is currently in Grade 3 and is reading well past her targeted reading level. In addition, she enjoys reading to her two younger brothers and anyone else that will listen. What more could a parent ask for?"*

-Parent, Ashley Park School

*"I see that LLI affects the 'whole' child instilling more confidence emotionally, cognitively, and intellectually. Their entire demeanor is more confident...the way they walk down the hallway, the way they interact with the other students. One of the most rewarding aspects for me is when the child realizes that 'they can do this' and that they are 'good at reading'."*

-Teacher, Burstall School

*"The LLI program allows students to feel safe to take risks with their reading because they are in a small group setting with a reading coach close by. The program alternates an independent book with an instructional book, with this approach; the student slowly begins to feel confident with their ability to read.*

*The success of the program makes it a very rewarding part of my job. It may be that a student has finally met level, exceeded level, or has simply started to like reading. The success may come in the parent and child reading together and enjoying it or an increase in confidence which allows the student to participate in the classroom more....*

*regardless of where the successes are found, the bottom line is that more kids are reading and liking reading in Chinook School Division because of this program and the effort made by the division to make it a priority!"*

-Teacher, Gull Lake School

*Students have many opportunities to practice with familiar texts so that they are able to develop their fluency, practice self-monitoring, and most importantly acquire the belief in themselves that they have all the tools necessary to be successful readers. Their school experience across all subject areas is greatly enhanced by the skills they learn in LLI.*

-Teacher, Shaunavon Public School

*"I now have the ability to learn how to read more things, harder things."*

- Student, Burstall

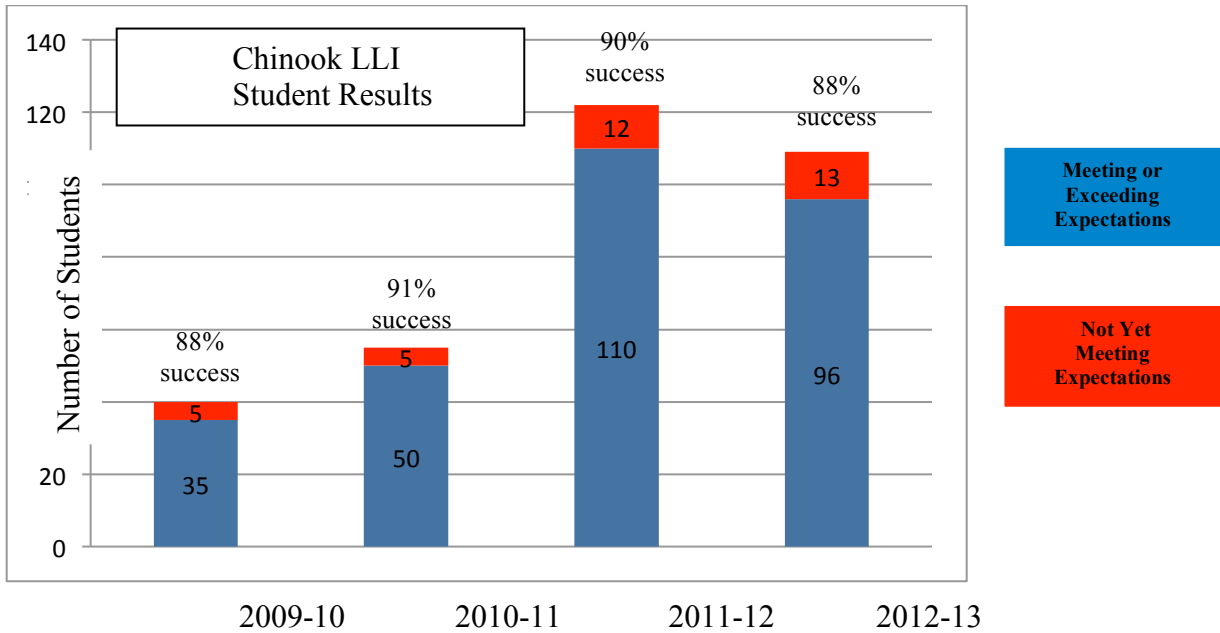
Parent Video in Support of LLI [http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video\\_id=303271](http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=303271)



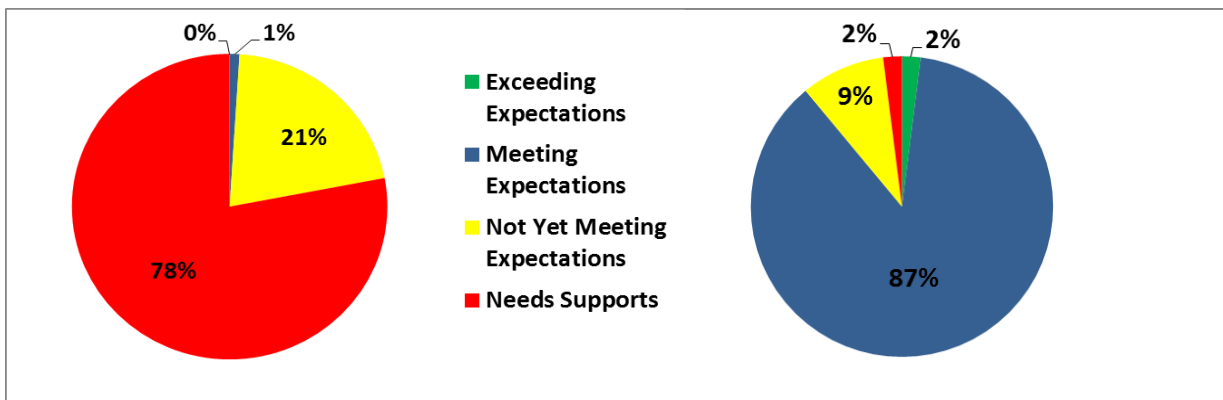
## Evidence of Improved Student Learning

### Yearly Results

System data collected yearly clearly shows the success of the Chinook Leveled Literacy Intervention program.



The pie charts below show the starting levels and completion levels of students in the Chinook LLI program since the start of 2009. The overall results are amazing.



Over the four years of the program 326 students have been placed in the intervention. Of this 291 were at or above grade level expectations at the completion of the program. **This is an overall success rate of 89%.**

### Long-Term Results since for Students

Since 2010-2011 the Chinook Board has tracked the ongoing reading results of students that have participated in the LLI program. **To date 82% of the students that were part of the intervention are still at grade level expectations.** This is an incredible accomplishment as research studies on similar interventions have shown that expectations for long-term rates would be in the range of 50-65% (Reading Recovery Council of North America).

**Improvements for Boys**

Chinook's LLI program has made an incredible difference in the results of boys. The current grade three cohort of boys was scoring at 66% in grade one. **With additional supports and the implementation of the LLI program these scores were raised to 87% in just two years.** The boys even outperformed the girls, who scored 84% in the grade 3 assessment.

**Chinook 2011 Boys  
Fountas and Pinnell Cohort**

2011 Cohort		% of Students Meeting and Exceeding	Boys	Girls
Grade 1	2011	66%	66%	67%
Grade 2	2012	80%	77%	80%
Grade 3	2013	86%	87%	84%
Overall Improvement		20%	21%	17%

**Conclusion**

The Chinook LLI program has been a fantastic success for many reasons.

- The results have been incredible. Over the four years of the program 291 of 326 students have been successful. This is an 89% success rate. **Long-term tracking shows that 82% of students are still at grade level with their reading!**
- It has changed teaching practice. Teachers are now digging deeper into the reading needs of all students and connecting with the appropriate teaching strategies.
- It has reduced the need for long-term specialized programming for students in reading.
- It has created a strong partnership with parents in the learning process for their children.