

Twinsburg Schools	
Bissell Elementary School	
Cinda Dehner	Leslie Smith
Title: "Aligning School Reading with Life Reading"	

### **ILILE Grant Funds Benefit Bissell Elementary Students**

Our grant focused on boys and literacy and the resulting engagement of them in the reading process for both enjoyment and learning. The project coordinated with the school's Continuous Improvement Plan's goals of encouraging and increasing reading skills and interest – particularly within the school's male and multicultural populations.

The project was planned and conducted by Third grade teacher Leslie Smith and Library Media Specialist Cinda Dehner. Many collaborative meetings and discussions were held to coordinate the project and define roles and duties. A list of duties and a schedule was produced and followed that allowed for flexibility and crossover assistance from both project coordinators. Constant communication allotted for input from faculty members, the school principal, and the ILILE coordinator.

The project was introduced to the students by the use of a guest storyteller, Robin Echols Cooper, and a children's author, Shelly Pearsal. Both speakers were asked to perform programs that encouraged the interest of students in reading for enjoyment of the stories themselves. Before the visit by the speakers, the librarian talked with the students about the type of stories they would hear and were introduced to books that were of a similar nature to the storyteller's program and the author's book. Grant funds were utilized for the speakers' fees.

The two project coordinators conducted the staff development portion. It consisted of a power point program, visuals, handouts, professional materials, book talk, and a participatory activity. Teachers were given a background into the theory and research collected about boys and reading. Ideas that have produced successful results were also shared. The coordinators also explained handouts that may help teachers motivate and sustain student interest in reading – particularly the male population. Coordinating with the CIP goals, the teachers were given a Reading Log to use with students that would also indicate student/boys participation in the reading process. The staff then completed a feedback form to indicate how they plan to use these ideas to encourage boys to read more.

Another goal of the project and a CIP goal was to introduce and encourage positive role models - particularly male role models – in the students' lives. An arrangement was made with a high school speech class to bring high school students to

the school to select, practice and dramatically read to the students. They read picture books to students on Nov. 9, National Young Reader's day. We are also working on programs that bring more male role models into the school such as a father/child reading night.

In addition to speaker fees, grant funds were used to purchase books. We bought several professional resources on the topic of boys and reading. These resources were shared with teachers during the in-service meeting. The remainder of the funds were used to purchase books for the library that were of high interest to boys to encourage reading enjoyment. Prior to our purchases, the library media specialist worked with the students during their library classes to discover areas of interest. Many of the titles were selected as a bridge between nonfiction and fiction topics because the research indicates that boys tend to gravitate towards nonfiction books. While boys tend towards the reading of nonfiction books, we used this interest to encourage them to read fiction books on the same topic. We are currently promoting the new books with many types of book talks focusing on student interests. Teachers have also been encouraged to select some of these books as read aloud choices.

Although the funds from the grant have been spent, our focus on boys and reading will continue throughout the year. We will continue to develop collaborative activities to be used in the computer lab and library that will engage all learners and promote stronger reading skills. We will share these activities with our peers in both second and third grade and encourage them to utilize many of the suggestions gained from the research to enhance their reading instruction.