



## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS

HIGHLY STRUCTURED PROGRAMS WITH A SUCCESS-BASED PHILOSOPHY FOR LA SALLE

### STUDENT GRADE LEVELS TAKE LEAP AS A RESULT OF EDUCATION MODELS



#### WILSON READING PROGRAM

The students at La Salle School come in at all times of the year, and have struggled in school. We have them often for a short time - less than a full school year - and need programs that work quickly, and that they will engage in. The Wilson Reading Program and Differentiated Instruction are proven, evidence-based program models that we are replicating at La Salle.

In the past year, La Salle School has enhanced its education program with the addition of these two learning methods. Performance proves that students are catching on and becoming engaged learners. After measuring youth's pre-Wilson test scores against their post-test scores, results showed the increase in reading levels was significant. "In Wilson Reading, we hope

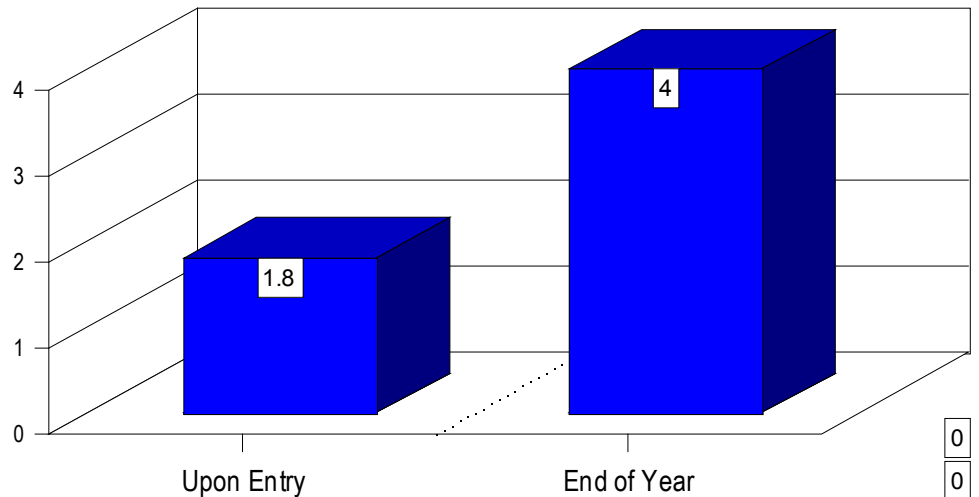
La Salle Reading Teacher Irene Cronin works with a student.

students will transfer their reading and comprehension skills to other classes," remarked La Salle Reading Teacher Brooke Degener. If they can do that it gives them more confidence to do better, and that is the ultimate goal."

#### DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Math Department Chairman John Schoonbeck has a philosophical view of Differentiated Instruction.

Change in Avg. Grade Level of Wilson Reading Students - 2007-08 School Year



“Teaching Differentiated Instruction is the same as carrying out good parenting skills,” he said. You give your students the latitude to make choices, ask them for their input and beliefs, and respect them for who they are and what they know.”

Schoonbeck suggests that Differentiated Instruction outcomes become apparent when home school instructors sense positive changes in their students who were at La Salle School.

How did these extraordinary changes happen? Well, the answer lies in a staff that just won't quit when it comes to finding new and innovative ways to teach youngsters who find learning difficult.

Instructors in other disciplines are joining Degener and Schoonbeck in their enthusiasm of the students' performance. One example came when two differentiated instruction youths researched, created, and submitted display boards demonstrating the conflicts between Israel and Palestine, and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X for the 2008 national History competition.

“The most rewarding part of the day was during the public viewing, when without any prodding, both students animatedly explained their projects to total strangers without hesitation,” said Social Studies Teacher Jerald Hensler.



This was a major accomplishment for both for them, and probably would not have occurred six months earlier.”

Wilson Reading students have applied what they are learning to their studies in the Culinary Training Institute (CTI), an alternative education program focusing on culinary trade skills. After CTI Head Chef Dixon Armistead asked La Salle to give his students remedial help in reading and math, he noticed a marked improvement in the accuracy of their ingredient measurements and ability to follow a recipe's step by step instructions.

“Students may lack motivation in class due to past failures, and often dislike participating,” said H. Frank Dembo, assistant director for instruction at La Salle. Unlike other programs, both

## CSR PROFESSOR PARTNERS WITH LSS

*“La Salle students at-risk for learning and literacy present me with special challenges that I enjoy,” said Richard M. Medved, Ed.D., professor in the Department of Literacy and Special Education at the College of Saint Rose in Albany.*

*Dr. Medved has consulted for 35 years, guiding educators to successfully implement various learning models including Alphabet Phonics, Foundations and Wilson Reading, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and AIMS-WEB. The Berlin, Broadalbin, and Chatham school districts as well as the Capital Region BOCES have benefitted from his expertise.*

*“Rich has been a great asset to us” said La Salle Educator Frank Dembo. “His work with Wilson and Differentiated Instruction (DI) teachers has helped our students advance, and increase their proficiency at reading and comprehension.”*

*Assisting State agencies in the development of training manuals and materials, Medved presents at local, state and national conferences on topics, issues and themes related to RTI, Assessment, DI, and IEP development. His skills have also taken him abroad to China and South America.*

Wilson Reading and Differentiated Instruction are presented in an organized and manageable way, and neither are approached from standardized curriculums. Teachers move outside their comfort zones to establish trust with their students and come to the conclusion that failure will no longer be an option.

La Salle has enlisted College of Saint Rose Professor Richard Medved to coach instructors in both Wilson Reading and Differentiated Instruction. “Rich has a non-threatening approach and easy-going disposition which allows instructors to monitor their teaching styles while adjusting their methods,” Dembo said. After an initial classroom visit to observe and make suggestions, Dr. Medved revisits periodically to assist students and model lessons for the teachers.”

It is expected that Wilson Reading and Differentiated Instruction will reach a greater number of students in the next academic year. When school begins in September, middle school students will be taught in a ‘team’ setting where teachers will employ these techniques. Both programs are fulfilling state and national expectations to improve scores.