



## **District 200 launches ‘Everyone Reads’ instruction program for below grade level second-graders**

A child’s education is a complex matter, but its success relies on the simple premise that the child can read at the appropriate grade level.

While some students make up ground in later years, substantial educational research indicates that one grade in particular can be crucial to future outcomes. Researchers agree that third-grade reading proficiency is critical to a student’s educational progress. One national study determined that one in six third-graders who could not read proficiently did not graduate from high school on time at a rate four times higher than proficient readers.

Students spend their earlier years learning to read, but in third grade they begin the lifelong process of reading to learn. If they lack that solid reading foundation, they can begin to fall behind in many subjects and find it difficult to recover.

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 educators used that premise last year to identify first-graders who weren’t reading at grade level and design a plan to address those students’ needs.

During the first full week of the 2019-2020 school year, the District implemented the Everyone Reads program. Through Everyone Reads, second-graders who were not reading at grade level during first grade were invited for an additional hour of after-school reading instruction to strengthen their skills.

District 200 Superintendent Mike Moan said administrators began developing Everyone Reads last fall and said he is optimistic that improved reading skills will be the outcome.

“Once you teach students to read, you can teach them anything. As educators, we need to do everything we possibly can to make sure that groundwork has been laid so that every student can learn and reach his or her potential,” Moan said.

Everyone Reads, which contains about 160 second-graders, runs four days a week at all six of District 200’s elementary schools. The teachers have received specific reading intervention training. Buses are provided for students who use District transportation. Before the after-school program begins, children are given snack and movement breaks.

Administrators restructured work days for interventionists who teach the class and used additional evidence-based funding provided by the Illinois State Board of Education to operate Everyone Reads.

Keely Krueger, assistant superintendent for early childhood and elementary education, said candidates for the program were identified last year by multiple measures including a combination of teacher referrals and testing results.

Parent meetings were held last spring to explain the research and to present the District's proposed solutions through Everyone Reads.

"We've really had a positive response from parents to the program. Parents want their children to succeed in school as much as we do," she said.

Moan said that while socioeconomic factors can affect a child's educational development when they enter school, he's not interested in excuses as to why students can't make progress.

"When we say 'Everyone Reads,' we mean everyone. Every child deserves a chance for success and reading will open that door for anyone who wants it. The opportunities become endless," he said.

Over the past few years, Krueger said the District has tried some after-school reading programs on a smaller scale with fewer hours that proved to be successful with those students who participated.

"Obviously with more time, we're expecting even better results," she said.



Reading intervention specialist Valerie Sass works with second-graders Aug. 20 at Olson Elementary School during the after-school Everyone Reads program implemented this year in Woodstock Community Unit School District 200. The program is designed to bring students up to grade level reading proficiency standards.