

## ***Balanced Literacy Program***

*Balanced Literacy* is a framework designed to help all students learn to read, write, listen, speak and view effectively. The program is based on the premise that all students can achieve literacy.

The Morris School District *Balanced Literacy Program* uses an integrated approach that incorporates extensive reading and writing, the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, and provides authentic opportunities for reading and writing which are scaffolded so that students gain increasing independence. The *Balanced Literacy Program* combines immersion in high-quality children's literature, (fiction and nonfiction,); a concentration on student writing with specific attention, as needed, to letters, words, and how they work (phonics and word study); listening, viewing and speaking through a variety of modalities. The teacher explicitly demonstrates skills and strategies in activities such as think-alouds. With the strategic support of teachers, students take an increasing control of processes, and assume primary responsibility through independent reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.

The Morris School District *Balanced Literacy Program* provides a structured beginning point for instruction. The instructional strategies to address the Curriculum Map Proficiency Standards are selected by teachers in response to students' needs, and the teacher's understanding of how children develop as language learners. More than being separate components of a curriculum, the literacy activities become a repertoire of

practices that teachers weave together based on their educational knowledge and their observations of children.

The Morris School District uses a balanced literacy approach that takes place during an uninterrupted block of time, which can be extended through a thematic approach, with cross-curricular integration throughout the day to include reading, writing, spelling, listening, viewing and speaking using fiction and nonfiction literature. A book room stocked and leveled with multiple copies of quality children's literature in each school supports the *Balanced Literacy Program*.

The *Balanced Literacy Program* represents a complex understanding of both the teaching and learning processes. Rather than a program that can be scripted and delivered, teachers must engage directly in the development of their practice in the classroom. The program honors the creativity of each teacher in the implementation of the curriculum.