

Parents and Guardians,

This year, all elementary schools have implemented two new literacy programs, *Being a Reader* and *Being a Writer*, in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms. These programs provide a cohesive literacy instructional program that supports instruction of the grade-level language arts standards. In addition to helping each student become a skilled reader and writer, the programs integrate social-emotional learning with academic content and support building a community of learners where everyone feels welcomed and safe.

Whole group instruction, a key component of the *Being A Reader* reading program, provides all students direct instruction of the grade-level standards through shared reading, interactive read aloud, and handwriting instruction. Teachers model fluency, thinking skills, and decoding strategies through shared reading and interactive read-aloud experiences. Direct instruction of handwriting provides opportunities to learn correct letter formation of upper- and lower-case letters.

*Being a Reader* also includes daily differentiated small group reading instruction. In small groups, teachers provide direct instruction of foundational skills (print concepts, phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency) by providing systematic, multi-sensory, explicit instruction with direct application of skills in authentic decodable texts. During small group instruction, students are taught to read and spell words correctly. Explicit comprehension instruction also occurs in small group instruction so students develop comprehension skills while actively engaging in discussions about books. Students are placed in small group instruction based on data from assessments which provide a snapshot of the student's knowledge of phonics skills and the expectations of the grade-level standards.

The writing program, *Being a Writer*, has modeling and direct instruction of narrative, informational, and opinion writing and provides time for students to practice and celebrate their writing.

The two programs were designed to work interdependently and allow reading and writing connections to occur authentically. Teachers will frequently monitor and assess student progress to ensure student needs are met throughout the year. Due to a strong focus on social-emotional

learning in both programs, students will develop confidence in their reading and writing ability with the support and encouragement of their teacher and classmates.

Additional information about the programs and how to support your child at home can be found on the [Kindergarten](#) and [Grade One](#) Family and Community Resources webpages.