



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### *Parent Newsletter*

Dear Dragon Family,

It is hard to believe that we are entering into our final quarter of the school year. Every year seems to go by a bit faster than the last. Though we are in our last quarter of the school year, we still have a lot of teaching and learning to do. 😊

Our state testing season is starting. I want to share the importance of these assessments. These assessments include WIDA, M-STEP, PSAT, SAT and WorkKeys. While students do not earn a “grade” for these assessments, the results are very important. The district and teachers use this information to inform their teaching as well as review how each individual student is achieving. This information is also used to determine if a student needs additional support as well as planning a student’s class schedule at the secondary level. There is a common misunderstanding that there is an opt out of these assessments. Per the state of Michigan, there is no opt out. Students are required to take the test aligned with their grade level. Please read the data and assessment article later in the newsletter for additional details.

This year a committee of 19 elementary teachers across all elementary schools piloted several math programs: Bridges, Everyday Math and Math Expressions. In February, the Board of Education approved the adoption of Bridges. The committee created a vision for what a Lake Orion math student should look like, and the Bridges program met that vision. The Bridges math program focuses on problems and investigations, applying concepts, number corner and open-ended tasks for problem solving. The implementation of Bridges will begin in the fall of 2024.

I hope you will take a few minutes to read the Teaching and Learning Newsletter. There is a lot of important information and helpful suggestions to support you and your child(ren) regarding school. Your continued support and partnership in educating our students is recognized, valued, and appreciated!

Sincerely,

Heidi Mercer

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

**#AlwaysLakeOrion**



# FROM THE TEACHING & LEARNING DEPARTMENT

## Update from our Teaching and Learning Department

LOCS is excited to partner with INSPIRIT, an organization that delivers in-person Artificial Intelligence (AI) programming and instruction to middle and high school students taught by instructors from Stanford and MIT. This first of its kind opportunity in Michigan is available to Lake Orion students this June. Please see the [attached brochure](#) for additional information.





# DATA AND ASSESSMENT

Kirk Weber, LOCS Data Specialist/Assessment Coordinator



## Spring 2024 Assessment Overview

As we move closer to spring 2024, LOCS is gearing up for the annual assessment period. These assessments are not just a measure of student learning, but a tool to enhance educational strategies and student success.

Please be aware, as previously stated by State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice, **“there is no ‘opt-out’ of state assessments under state or federal law.”**

Therefore, understanding the Michigan assessment calendar can help parents and students prepare effectively for this crucial time.

### Key Dates and Assessments

#### M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress)

- **Target Group:** 3rd to 8th and 11th Graders
- **Dates:** April - May 2024
- **Focus:** English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics (3rd to 8th Grade), Science (5th, 8th and 11th Grade), and Social Studies (4th, 7th and 11th Grade).
- The M-STEP is a critical component of Michigan's educational assessment program, providing insights into student understanding and mastery of state standards.

#### PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10

- **Target Group:** 8th, 9th, and 10th Graders
- **Dates:** April 2024
- These preliminary SAT tests are stepping stones for college readiness and scholarship eligibility. They gauge skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

#### SAT with Essay and WorkKeys

- **Target Group:** 11th Graders
- **Date:** April 2024
- The SAT is a significant college entrance exam, testing knowledge in reading, writing, and math. The essay component evaluates students' ability to analyze a source text and write a coherent analysis.
- WorkKeys evaluates skills in areas like applied math, graphic literacy, and workplace documents, providing valuable insights into students' readiness for career paths.



### Understand the Assessments

Familiarize yourself with the details of each assessment (M-STEP, PSAT, SAT with Essay, WorkKeys). Knowing the format and content can help you guide your child effectively.

### Encourage Practice Tests

Utilize practice tests for the SAT, PSAT, and WorkKeys. These can help familiarize your child with the format and types of questions they will encounter.

### Preparation and Support

Lake Orion Community Schools is committed to providing the necessary resources and support to ensure students are well-prepared. This includes review sessions, practice materials, and tips for test-taking strategies. Parents can assist by ensuring a consistent study schedule, a good night sleep, healthy breakfast the day of the test, and encouraging their children.

### The Bigger Picture

It's important to remember that these assessments are tools to inform teaching and learning. They help identify areas where students excel and where additional support may be needed. This is important information for your child's teachers. In addition, these testing results are used when creating student schedules and deciding class levels. The goal is not just to score well but to foster a deeper understanding and love for learning.

### Stay Informed

Stay tuned for more detailed information from your child's school regarding specific testing schedules and preparation resources. By working together, we can make this assessment period a positive and productive experience for all students in the Lake Orion Community Schools.



# ELA DEPARTMENT

Beth Bruce, Kelly Day, Kate DiMeo & Andrea Moede, LOCS Instructional Coaches

## 10 Tips for Supporting Your Child's Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the most valuable (and complicated) skills a student can master. It includes two key areas: vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. Students with good vocabulary strategies understand what words mean and have the background knowledge to understand a given text. It also includes strategies for using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Text comprehension is looking at the big-picture -- what exactly a text means. It helps students interact with a text to understand what's being said and what they need to learn from it. When students have good text comprehension skills, they can answer questions about what the author is saying, summarize the passage, and connect information between texts or prior knowledge. Whether you have a high schooler or elementary school student, it's never too late to work on improving reading comprehension. Perhaps one of these 10 tips will help support your reader's journey:

**1. Read Aloud:** Reading aloud encourages children to go slower, which gives them more time to process what they read and improves reading comprehension. Reading problematic passages aloud can often help kids make sense of challenging texts.

**2. Read to Your Child:** Reading with your child has lots of benefits—it helps you bond, it builds their imagination, and it improves reading comprehension! Discuss topics and ask your child guiding questions about what's happening. Model reading with the correct speed and expression, and kids will later be able to do that work on their own. Reading books far above your child's reading level also develops vocabulary.

**3. Provide "Just Right" Books:** Make sure your child also gets lots of practice reading books that aren't too hard. They should recognize at least 90 percent of the words without any help. Stopping more often than that to figure out a word makes it tough for kids to focus on the overall meaning of the story. If the text is required reading for school and your child struggles with more than 10% of the words on a page, read the text aloud to your child or find an audio version of the book.

**4. Stop to Summarize:** As your child reads, stop him/her frequently to rephrase or summarize what they have read. If they can't, have them reread that section. Teaching students how to do this consciously helps train their brains to start summarizing automatically.

**5. Focus on Vocabulary:** Support your child in using context clues to find meaning. They might build vocabulary lists of all the new words they find. Vocabulary can also be built by reading aloud to children, engaging in academic conversations, and even playing word games (i.e., Taboo, Incoherent, Apples to Apples, etc.)

**6. Supplement Class Reading:** One of the biggest barriers to reading comprehension is a lack of background knowledge. If your child's class is studying a particular theme, look for easier-to-read books, books you can read together, or even videos to build their topic knowledge.

**7. Talk About Reading:** Ask your child questions before, during, and after a session to encourage reading comprehension. Before: "What are you interested in about this book? What doesn't interest you?" During: "What's going on in the book? What do you think will happen next?" After: "Can you summarize the book? What other books does it remind you of?"

**8. Make Predictions:** Have your child discuss their predictions before and during reading. It is also helpful if they discuss the reasons for their prediction. This gives them a focus for reading the next section. After reading, they can discuss if their predictions were correct.

**9. Preview the Text:** By having your child look at the pictures, read the headings, and read aloud a bit of text, they will be able to identify if they need to build their background knowledge, if it would be better to listen to the book, how they might set up their notebook to take notes, or even if they need to ask for help.

**10. Talk to the Teacher:** Your child's teacher should be your first stop for any questions about your child's reading comprehension or areas for improvement. By incorporating one or more of these tips into your child's routine, you can help them develop strong reading comprehension skills that will benefit them throughout their academic and personal lives.

## From our bookshelf to yours...



Wallace and Grace  
Take the Case  
By Heather Alexander  
Grades K-2



Wallace and Grace and  
the Cupcake Caper  
By Heather Alexander  
Grades K-2



Sugar Plum Ballerinas  
(series)  
By Whoopi Goldberg  
Grade 3



Me, Frida, and the  
Secret of the Peacock  
Ring  
By Angela Cervantes  
Grades 4-5



The Labors of  
Hercules Beal  
By Gary D. Schmidt  
Grades 6-7



The Blackbird Girls  
By Anne Blankman  
Grades 6-8



Kindling  
By Traci Chee  
Grades 9-12

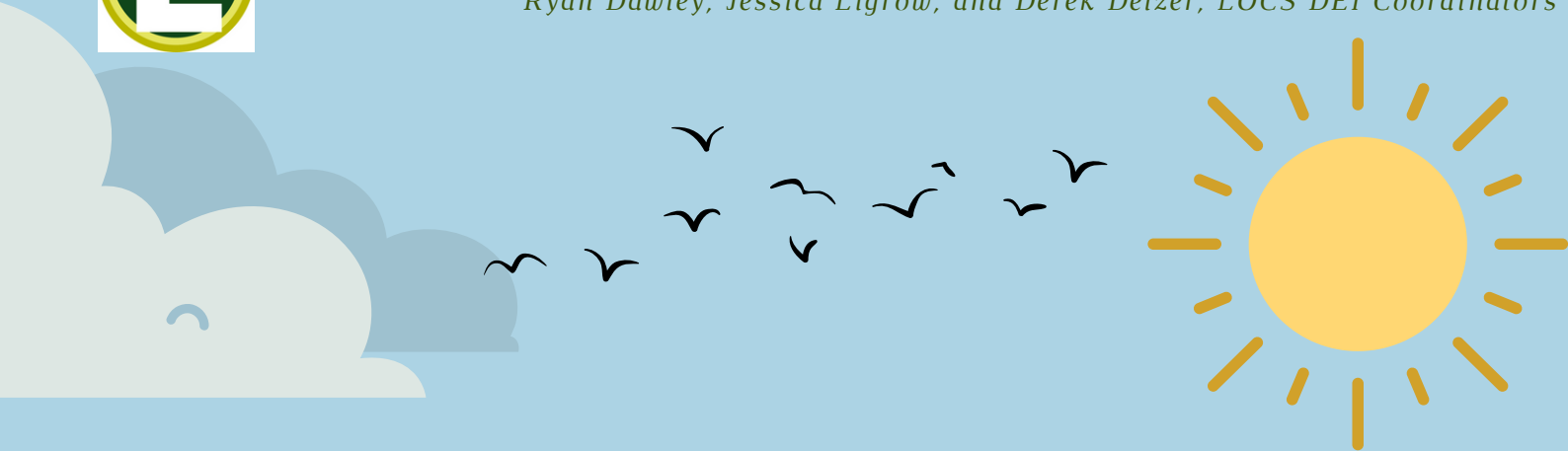


Infinity Son (trilogy)  
By Adam Silvera  
Grades 9-12



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

*Ryan Dawley, Jessica Ligrow, and Derek Delzer, LOCS DEI Coordinators*



## Seal of Global Diversity

Lake Orion is proud to announce an exciting opportunity for students in grades 7–12. The district has worked to develop a **SEAL OF GLOBAL DIVERSITY** that recognizes and honors students for their personal efforts and commitments to global and diversity initiatives. The **SEAL OF GLOBAL DIVERSITY** supports higher education and workplace readiness looking to attract students and employees who value diverse perspectives and cultures, while working collaboratively with others to make a positive impact on the world.

Please view the [INFORMATIONAL VIDEO](#) that outlines the program requirements, along with application timeline and process of recognition. If you have additional questions, please view our [DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION WEB PAGE](#).





# ENGLISH LEARNER DEPARTMENT

*Carol Burke, LOCS EL District Coordinator*

## English Language Learning Conversation Group (ELL)

**Wednesdays | 10:30 am**



The group is open to all who wish to practice their English language skills in a relaxed and informal setting. The topics vary widely, and it is a great learning experience as well as an opportunity to meet people.



**Orion Township Public Library**  
825 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48362

Outreach Services  
(248) 693-3000 x411  
[orionlibrary.org](http://orionlibrary.org)



# MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

Emilie Schiff, Lisa Jones, Stephen Bodiya & Brent Cubitt, LOCS Instructional Coaches

## Passive vs. Active Learning



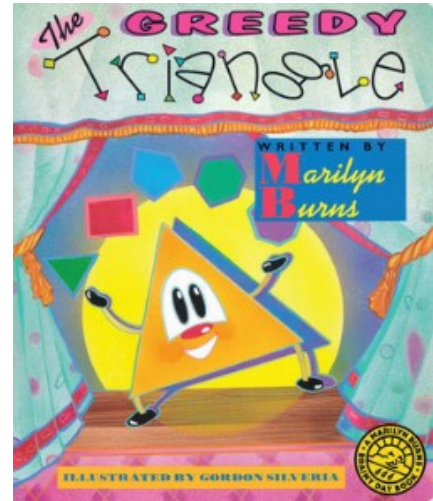
**Study shows students in 'active learning' classrooms learn more than they think.**

For decades, there has been evidence that classroom techniques designed to get students to participate in the learning process produces better educational outcomes at virtually all levels.

This [study](#), published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), shows that, though students felt as if they learned more through traditional lectures, they actually learned more when taking part in classrooms that employed so-called active-learning strategies.

You can read an article summarizing the study [here](#).

## Books that support Mathematical Thinking



The concept of angles and shapes takes on a fun twist when a triangle decides he wants to add more angles to his shape and eventually realizes that his desire to be something else can have unexpected results.

Follow the [link](#) to find a complete list of books that support mathematics ideas.

## Looking for a Laugh?



# MINDFULNESS

*Stephanie Harris, LOCS District Mindfulness Instructor*



## UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Emotional Intelligence, often referred to as EQ, is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions, as well as recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others. It goes beyond traditional measures of intelligence, like IQ, and plays a crucial role in how we form relationships, make decisions, and navigate through various social situations.

One of the key components of Emotional Intelligence is self-awareness. This involves being in tune with our own emotions, knowing our strengths and weaknesses, and how our emotions can impact our actions and decisions. By being self-aware, individuals can better regulate their emotions and responses to different situations.

Another important aspect of Emotional Intelligence is empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. By being empathetic, individuals can connect with others on a deeper level, build stronger relationships, and practice effective communication.

Emotional Intelligence also encompasses emotional regulation. This involves managing and controlling our emotions in healthy and productive ways. It's about being able to respond appropriately to different situations without being overwhelmed by emotions like anger, stress, or sadness.

Furthermore, having good social skills is another key component of Emotional Intelligence. This includes effective communication, conflict resolution, and the ability to work well in teams. Individuals with strong social skills are often more successful in their personal and professional lives.

So, how can Emotional Intelligence be useful? Well, studies have shown that individuals with high EQ are more likely to succeed in various aspects of life. They tend to have better mental health, stronger relationships, and are more effective in leadership roles. Additionally, Emotional Intelligence is linked to improved decision-making skills, problem-solving abilities, and overall well-being.

In conclusion, developing Emotional Intelligence is crucial for personal growth and success. By honing our EQ skills, we can better understand ourselves and others, navigate social complexities, and ultimately lead more fulfilling lives. So, let's continue to cultivate our Emotional Intelligence and reap the many benefits it has to offer.

For more information: [stephanie.harris@lok12.org](mailto:stephanie.harris@lok12.org)  
<https://www.lakeorionschools.org/resources/mindfulness>





# SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Pam Moreman, January Stafford, Allison Webb & Wendy Burns, LOCS Instructional Coaches



# SCIENCE NEWS

APRIL 2024



## What do you need to know about the solar eclipse April 8

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada. A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the Sun. The sky will darken as if it were dawn or dusk. [Nasa](#) has lots of fun information to share with your child.

Except during the brief total phase of a total solar eclipse, when the Moon completely blocks the Sun's bright face, it is not safe to look directly at the Sun without specialized eye protection for solar viewing. See below for viewing options.

Parents, please note that the darkest time of the eclipse will happen between 3:00pm and 3:30pm, with near totality at approximately 3:15pm. Please take this into consideration if your student has a long walk home from the bus. Specifically, if you are an early start elementary such as Paint Creek, Webber or Stadium Drive, or if you have a middle schooler with a longer bus route, you may consider meeting your student at the bus stop.

## What is so special about this solar eclipse?

Apr 8, 2024 at 3:14 pm

95% at maximum!

Max View in Waterford, Michigan

Global Event:	Total Solar Eclipse
Local Type:	Partial Solar Eclipse in Waterford, Michigan
Begins:	Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 1:58 pm
Maximum:	Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 3:14 pm (-978 Magnitude)
Ends:	Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 4:27 pm
Duration:	2 hours, 29 minutes

All times shown on this page are local time.

Afternoon recess?

Dismissal?

Extended Care?

### Safe Direct Viewing: ISO-Compliant Solar Viewers



- **ONLY** purchase from certified distributors in the U.S.
- **BEWARE** of Amazon sellers!
  - For the 2017 eclipse, Amazon recalled large quantities of solar glasses... after the eclipse
- **INSIST** that teachers inspect old solar viewers for ISO-compliance (marked as such).
  - Scratched or damaged glasses *must* be thrown away

### Certified Distributors

Thousand Oaks Optical  
American Paper Optics

Other viewing options:  
Pinhole Camera

Pinhole camera for elementary  
Livestream Video/Viewing



# SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

*Corry Haddad, LOCS Instructional Coach*

1

## Change & Continuity

Students assess similarities and differences between historical periods and between the past and present. They come to understand how a change in one area of life relates to a change in other areas, thus bringing together political, economic, intellectual, social, cultural, and other factors.

2

## Context

Understanding the interrelation of patterns of change requires evaluating the context within which events unfolded in order not to view events in isolation, and to be able to assess the significance of specific individuals, groups, and developments.

3

## Perspectives

Historical understanding requires recognizing multiple points of view in the past, which makes it important to seek out a range of sources on any historical question. Perspectives change over time, so historical understanding requires developing a sense of empathy with people in the past whose perspectives might be very different from those of today.

# HISTORICAL Thinking

4

## Sources & Evidence

Historical inquiry is based on materials left from the past that can be studied and analyzed and can include artifacts, written documents, oral accounts, and even DNA. They become evidence when selected to answer a historical question. Students learn to assess the maker and date of the source, as well as relevance and credibility.

5

## Causation

No historical event or development occurs in a vacuum; each one has prior conditions and causes, and each one has consequences. The outcome of any historical event may not be what those who engaged in it intended or predicted.

6

## Argumentation

Historical thinking involves using evidence and reasoning to draw conclusions about probable causes and effects, and address issues of change over time. It can also lead to claims about the relevance of sources, the perspectives of those involved, and many other topics, but must be based on evidence that is used in a critical, coherent, and logical manner.

Source: The Inquiry Arc of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

# SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

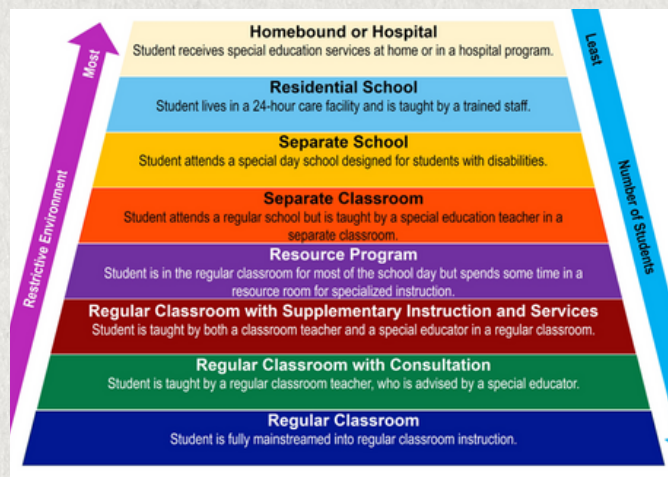
Natalie Kulikowski, LOCS Director of Special Education

Teacher Consultants: Amanda Sawka, Jennifer Porter, Heather Rutledge

## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The Least Restrictive Environment refers to the setting where a child with a disability can receive an appropriate education designed to meet his or her educational needs, alongside peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Placement **must** be discussed with your student's IEP team annually. Placement is determined based on your student's needs as indicated in the IEP, as well as making every effort to keep the student in their neighborhood school. All efforts must be made for a student to stay in the general education setting with the appropriate supplementary aids and services, before considering removal from the general education setting. Michigan offers a continuum of services as indicated in the image below. Read more information about LRE placement from Michigan Alliance for Families at [this link](#).

### MDE LRE Continuum



## Parent Resources

Increasing Inclusion, Engagement, and Independence in General Education

Family Matters: Educational Placement and the LRE



# THINKLINK NEWSLETTER

Spring  
2024

## »»» Orion Fandom Fest

Join us on Saturday, May 4 for a variety of fun Fandom programs.

Fandom Fest Crafts  
Sat, May 4 | 11 am  
Crafts, activities, and  
games for all ages

Free Comic Book Day  
Sat, May 4 | While  
Supplies Last

Fandom Fest Trivia  
Sat, May 4 | 1 pm  
Register your team of 2-  
6 players and try out our  
Fandom Fest Trivia!

## »»» Teen Events

Teen Tuesday  
Tue, Apr 2 & 16, May 7 & 21 | 6:30 -  
8 pm | Grades 6-12

ThinkLink @ OTPL  
Mon, Apr 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6  
Afterschool - 4 pm | Grades 6-8  
Registration Required

### Eclipse Viewing Glasses

Southeast Michigan will experience a near-total eclipse on Monday, April 8. The Orion Township Public Library will have a limited number of eclipse viewing glasses available at the reference desks beginning April 1. Free for all patrons!



## »»» Battle of the Books

More than 70 middle school students competed in Battle of the Books on Friday, February 9. The winning team came from Scripps Middle School!

More than 90 fifth-grade students competed in 5th Grade Battle of the Books on Saturday, March 9. The winning team correctly answered 47 out of 50 questions to win the title of battle champions!

Congratulations to all our battle participants!

## »»» Youth Events

Doggone Readers \*  
Mon, Apr 8, May 13 | 6:30 pm | Grades K-5

Book Buddies \*  
Tue, Apr 9 | 6 pm | Grades K-2

3-D Print Star Lanterns \*  
Sat, Apr 13 | 12, 2, and 3 pm | Grades 3-8

Reverse Book Club  
Wed, April 17 | 6 pm | Grades 3-5

DIY Fairy Garden Craft  
Mon, Apr 22 | 6:30 pm | All Ages

Wrapped Rainbow  
Fri, Apr 26 | 2 pm | Grades K-5

Lego Building: Outer Space  
Mon, May 6 | 6 pm | Grades K-5

Hack that Painting \*  
Fri, May 31 | 2 pm | Grades 3-8

\*Please register for this program at [orionlibrary.org](http://orionlibrary.org)

## »»» GENTLY USED BOOK SALE

Tue, May 14 | 10 am - 8:30 pm | Friends of the Library, Member Day, & Teacher Day

Tue, May 14 | 4:30 - 8:30 pm | Open to Public

Wed, May 15 and Thu, May 16 | 10 am - 8:30 pm | Open to Public

Fri, May 17 | 10 am - 4:30 pm | Open to Public, Half Off Books Day

Sat, May 18 | 9:30 am - 1:30 pm | Open to Public, \$5 Bag Day