



**Building a Culture of Reading: How
A School's Philosophy, Curriculum
and Instruction Help Promote
Reading in Middle School**

**St. Pius X Catholic School
Indianapolis, Indiana**

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School Facts



- Catholic School serving students in grades K-8
- 430 Students (150 middle school students)
- Northeast side of Indianapolis—part of Archdiocese of Indianapolis
- 26 credentialed staff and 11 supporting staff
- Emphasis on research-based teaching strategies and utilizing technology effectively as a teaching tool.
- ISTEP+ (Indiana state test); Indiana Reading Diagnostic Assessment; locally-constructed math and writing assessments

Creating a Context for Student Engagement: A Research Base

- NAEP data reveals that highly engaged readers evidence higher achievement than less engaged readers (Campbell, Voelkl & Donahue, 1997)
- Students benefit when provided opportunities to select from a wide variety of texts (Morrow, 1996).
- Students' achievement and motivation to learn increase when presented opportunities to explore texts in conjunction with outside resources (Morrow & Young, 1997; Guthrie, Schafer, Von Secker, & Alban, 2000).
- Social collaboration and discourse among students fosters interest and active learning over time (Zahorik, 1996; Nolen & Nicholls, 1994).

A School's Philosophy About Reading

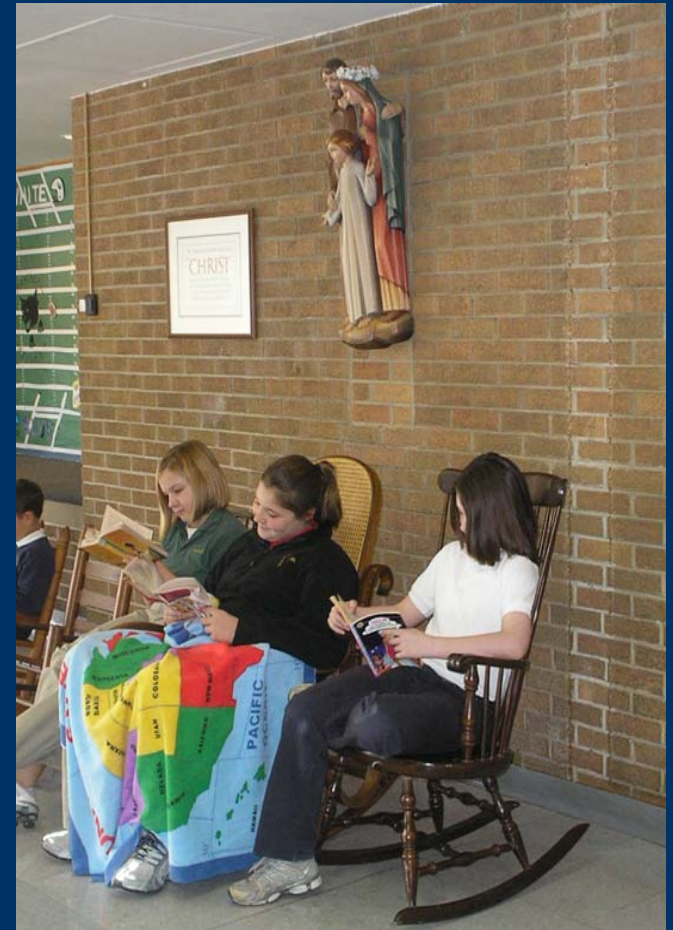
An effective teacher...

- values reading and helps students to value reading
- helps students to select relevant and interesting literature from a classroom library
- provides time for self-selected reading
- models good attitudes and behaviors related to reading



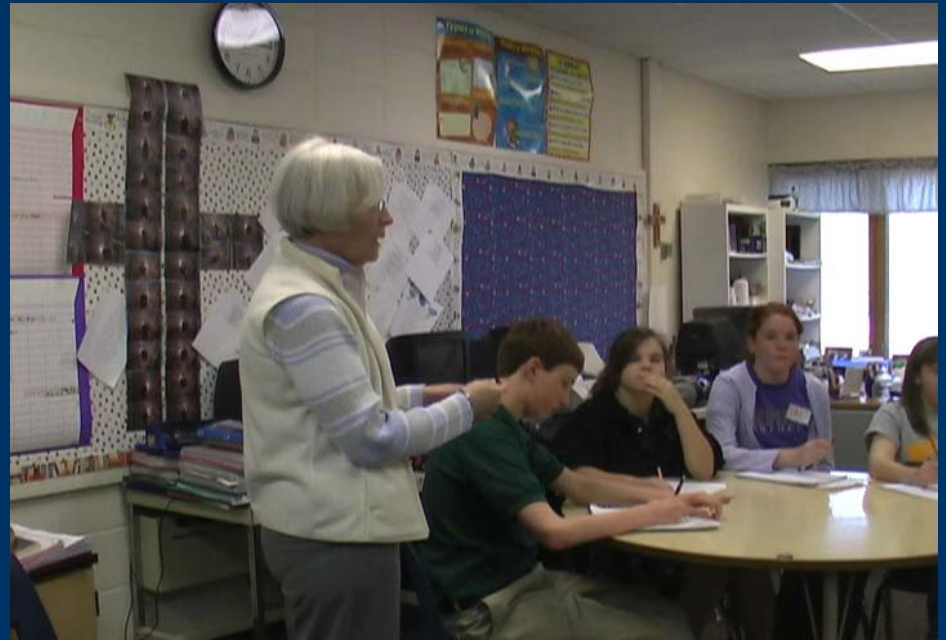
Micro-Curricular Reading Strategies

- Varying novels
- Teacher read-alouds
- Partner reads with reflective writing
- Participating member of Young Hoosier Book Award Program (Association for Indiana Media Educators)
- Reading to younger students
- Collaborative projects
- “Rocking Chair Reads”



An Authentic Approach to Literature Instruction

- Interviews
- RAFT Writing
- Newspaper Editorials
- Character Poems
- Postcards
- Interview Responses
- Using Webquests (Handout 1)
- Panel Discussions (Handout 2)



Holocaust Panel Discussion (Video)

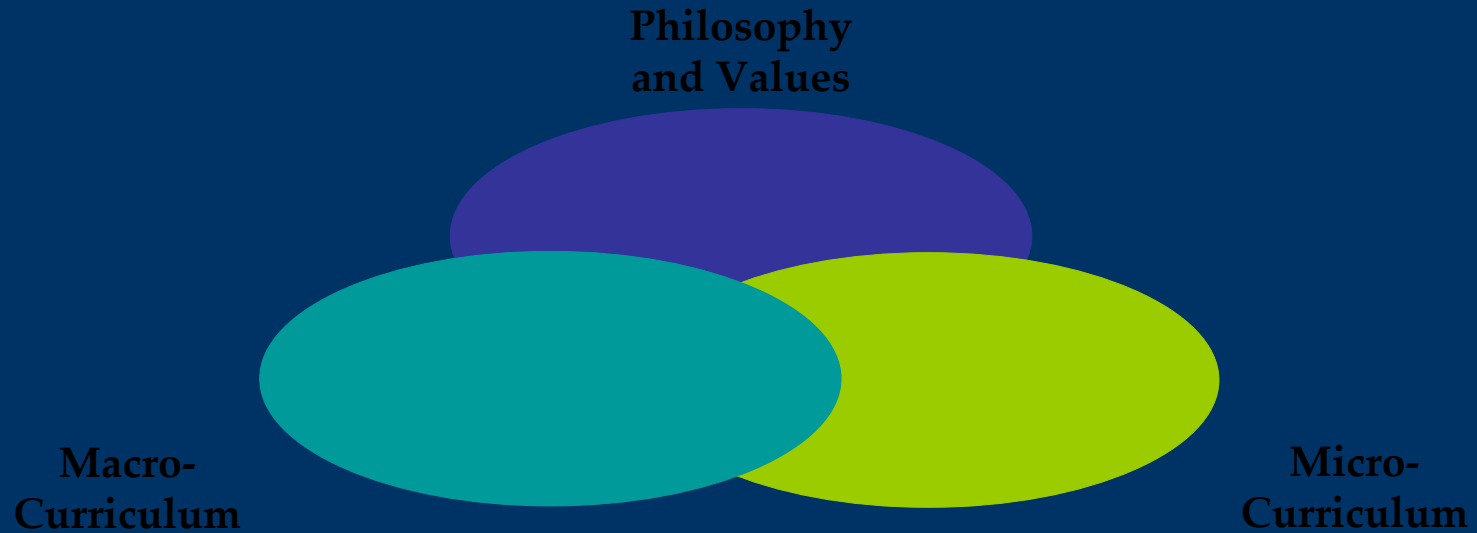
Macro-Curricular Reading Initiatives

- Valuing reading in a school's curriculum planning
 - DEAR time
 - Great Books Seminar
 - Summer Reading Books
 - Using novels and small group experiences in earlier grades
- Ipod Initiative
- Book Clubs
- Reading Incentive Program (younger grades)

Results

- Since 1999-2000: Average of 96.5% proficiency rate among 8th graders on Eng/LA portion of state assessment
- Overwhelming majority of middle school students rank in the 95th percentile of students on statewide assessment
- Attendance at after-school book club sessions
- Qualitative data suggests positive support from parents and students

Key Learnings



Challenges

1) How do we continue to integrate technology to further promote a culture of reading (e.g. blogs, Wikis, podcasts)?

2) Foundational Reading Skills



Love of Reading