

What does differentiated instruction mean for student learning?



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Left: Wilkes Elementary students explore Good Habits, Great Readers. Below: 2nd grade Wilkes teacher Rebecca Grue provides differentiated instruction to small group.



When students walk into their first grade class, they arrive with a “huge variety of skill levels,” notes Blakely 1st grade teacher Erin Sheehan. “Some students come knowing their letter names and sounds, while others are reading chapter books.”

How can you effectively instruct students with a wide range of skills, so that each student can be successful and challenged in their learning? “Differentiation allows me to meet the needs of all my students,” Sheehan explained.

What is differentiation? Differentiated instruction provides students with different avenues to acquiring content; to processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and to developing teaching materials so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability. It also may include finding how a student shows they have mastery of a concept, and how they display their learning.

The newly adopted Language Arts curriculum gives teachers materials that support differentiated instruction:

- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)
- Good Habits, Great Readers
- Daily 5
- Words Their Way

“We assess our readers using the Developmental Reading Assessment, which guides my instruction for each student by identifying their individual reading level,” shared Odyssey Multiage teacher Peggy Koivu. “It also identifies the comprehension skills needed for each level.” With this, she can choose strategies that will be most effective for a particular student, always with the goal of improving instruction to support student learning.

“Good Habits, Great Readers focuses on seven over-arching strategies of effective readers that are taught to the whole group,” noted Sheehan. Students

read books at many different levels while keeping those seven strategies in mind, learning how good habits support great readers.

Blakely teacher Jill Phillips adds, “The structure and practices of the Daily 5 allow students to build both reading and writing stamina, as well as independent work skills. With these independent skills in place, teachers are able to engage in differentiated instruction with small groups and individuals, while independent workers practice reading, writing and word study.”

Phillips also commented on the Words Their Way program. “I can create a routine with my students, allowing them to work at their individual levels in phonics study. It provides both exploration and practice, enabling students to recognize and use common word patterns for both reading and writing.”

Knowing that children have their strengths and weaknesses, 1st grade parent Michelle Hobbs commented, “These programs allow our teachers to structure the curriculum around a child’s strengths. Working in smaller groups also enables teachers to adjust more quickly to the constantly changing abilities of each individual and to alter their instruction accordingly.”

Hobbs noted the best part: “From my son’s perspective, he isn’t “bored” and finds the work fun and challenging.”

Differentiated instruction engages students and strengthens their learning. Hobbs concluded, “It’s not just more work, it’s better, more suitable work.”

IN THE KNOW

Budget Corner

For the first time since 2008, the State Legislature reached consensus that there will be no further reductions to K-12 basic education funding, due in part to the successful outcome of the McCleary vs. State decision. While this is good news, BISD continues to work on bridging the gap in the upcoming budget as it faces increased costs and lower enrollment.

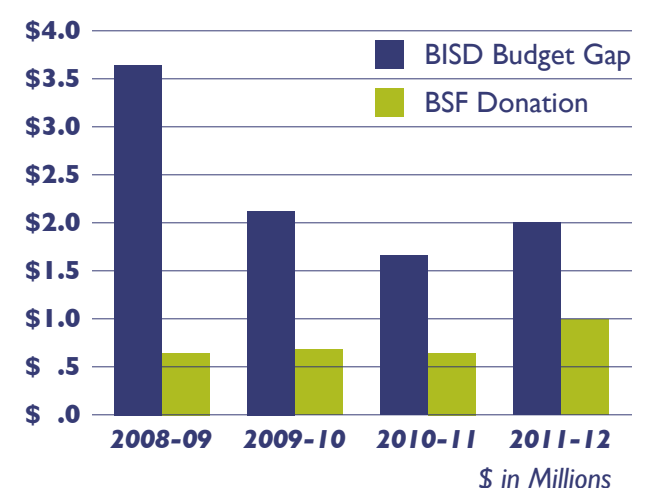
Therefore, the district is grateful and aware of our community’s absolutely unique and remarkable support in bridging budget gaps, from the funding of our levies and bonds, to PTO and private donations. And a leader in that support is the Bainbridge Schools Foundation.

Since the 2008-09 school year, Bainbridge Schools Foundation has helped our schools bridge the gaps with almost \$3M in donations. BSF funds have:

- Kept teachers in classrooms—this year the donation of \$650,000 for staff salaries kept over 8 full-time teachers in the classroom.
- Provided classroom grants for innovative learning programs—awarded directly to teachers for unique and innovative classroom projects, 39 teachers or teacher teams received grants in 2009-10.
- Provided specialized training for educators, and more—Wings Autism Program, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Our schools are great because the community cares.

Bainbridge Schools Foundation Donations



Stars in Our Schools

It would be hard for students to have great achievements without great schools. You may consider schools as stars in their own right.

America's Best High Schools & Best High Schools in Math & Science

Recent rankings by US News & World Report placed Bainbridge High School and Eagle Harbor High School among the Best High Schools in the country. Based on six components, BHS also was ranked by Newsweek as one of America's Best High Schools.

Additionally, US News & World Report placed BHS in the top 100 (#68) of America's Best High Schools in Math & Science.

School of Distinction

Because of their sustained improvement in reading and math over a 5-year period on the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), Eagle Harbor High School was again designated in 2011 as a School of Distinction by the Center for Educational Effectiveness.



America's Best High Schools

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Open and Read About Your Schools

- Differentiated Instruction & Student Learning
- Remarkable Community Support Helping to Relieve Budget Gaps
- Wilkes Replacement Project Update



New Wilkes Elementary Construction Progress

OpenBook is a publication by the Bainbridge Island School District to connect with and bring timely information to our community.

BUILDING OUR SCHOOLS

Wilkes Project Update



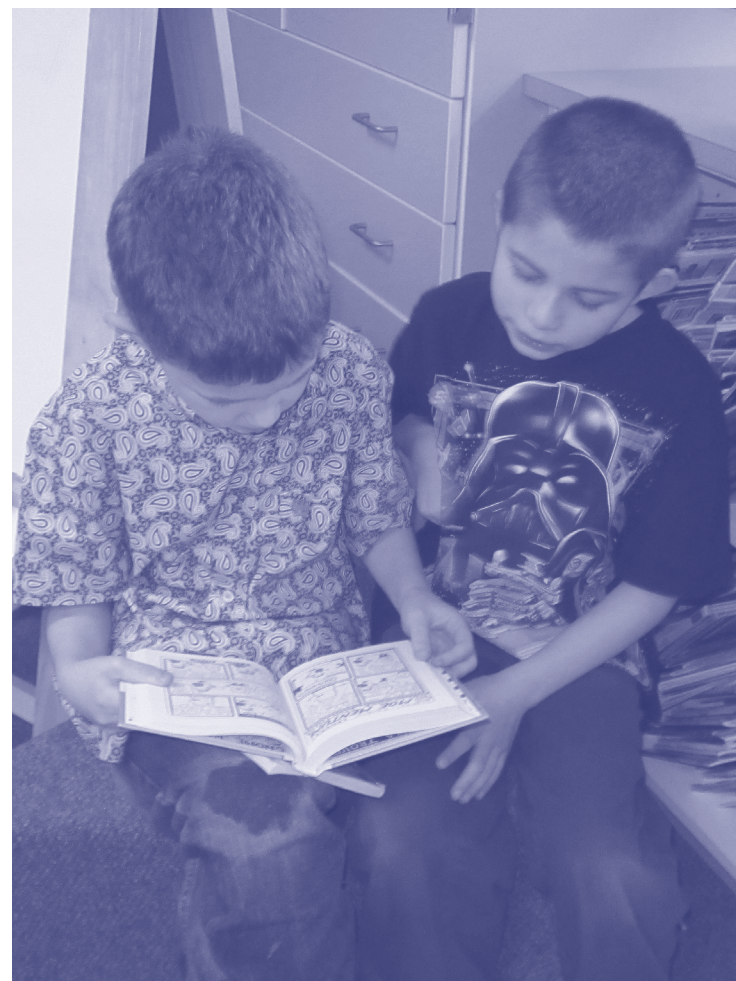
Wilkes instruction wing, looking to the music room.

Activity in the Wilkes neighborhood increases as the new school takes shape. BISD appreciates the neighborhood's patience as the last few months of construction of this extraordinary educational investment begin.

The view from the street shows the foundations for the education wings complete. Drilling of the ground-source (geo-thermal) bores will be complete in April. This type of heating system will significantly reduce heating costs in the new school. You may also see the administration offices being framed.

Over the first few weeks of spring, the entire school will be enclosed as the detailed interior work will be in full swing.

The last day of school, now scheduled for June 15, will begin the busiest time for this project, as the construction site will expand to encompass the entire Wilkes campus. Working toward completion, the site will be exciting to watch as many notable changes occur on a daily basis.



curriculum that supports independent skill development

- Differentiated Instruction & Student Learning
- Remarkable Community Support Helping to Relieve Budget Gaps
- Our Schools are Our Stars

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