

Collaborate from Birth to Eight for Early Grade Reading

Information and resources available in Beaufort County.

Compiled by the Education Committee of the Greater Island Council.

With Foreword by Bruce Marlowe, Ph.D. Chair, Department of Education University of South Carolina Beaufort

Beaufort County Early Grade Reading Programs

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Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.

Frederick Douglas

eading is the gateway to magic. It provides a passport to the worlds of goblins and elves, giants and far-off lands, to fairy-tale heroes, kings and queens, to outer space and local history, to science and sports figures, popstars and presidents, kings and queens, and to regular, ordinary people with wonderful tales to tell. Reading gives young children the opportunity to explore worlds beyond their own; it provides a ticket to all that is real, and all that can be imagined. Reading also gives children an enormous sense of control and agency, because children who read, quickly discover that they have unlimited possibilities.

One of my fondest memories to this day, now almost 55 years ago, is learning the magical power of the word. Although I had two working parents, my mother was usually home to greet me when I got off the school bus. But on one cold and windy autumn day, she wasn't there. I was locked out. What to do? I knew I could visit a nearby friend with a stay-at-home mom, but I was fearful that if I went down the street, my mother would worry, or worse be angry with me if she arrived home and I was not there. I needed a plan. In a flash, it occurred to me. I possess the power of the word! I found a small stone and in my shaky 6-year-old scrawl, I etched into our concrete stoop, "At Joes". I was jubilant, and more than a little proud. When I arrived home later that afternoon, my mother hugged me and told me how happy she was to find and read my message to her. I spent much of that fall and early winter writing short notes to my mother on our stoop. And I still remember how all this made me feel, even today, so many years later: I have a superpower.

How do children learn the magical power of the word? Ideally, it starts very early, in the most natural of ways, in the language of the cradle, in soothing words from mother to child, and then later with rich conversation, with rhyming games, and language play, stories, and songs. Perhaps most importantly, as Buchwald so keenly observed, "Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." After more than a century of research, we now know that the two most important keys to giving children the power of the word are early and plentiful conversation, and lap reading.

It is never too early to speak to one's children. In fact, babies begin learning the sounds and rhythms of language while in the womb! Talking to babies, toddlers, and young children is an essential component of their later literacy development and it matters a lot that parents talk often to their children and that they engage them in conversation at every opportunity. Before children receive even a single day of formal instruction in school, they soak up the language around them, and their growing vocabularies and increasing familiarity with the cadence and syntax of language becomes the keystone for all of their subsequent learning. In fact, early language exposure is so critical to later literacy development, that even profoundly deaf children introduced to a sign language early are significantly more likely to become skilled readers than deaf children who are not. Similarly, hard-of-hearing children, provided with appropriate amplification at very young ages, earn much higher reading scores than their peers who miss out on this early language exposure.

So it is with children who learn to read fluently and well: They begin to take flight into whole new worlds as effortlessly as young birds take to the sky.

William James

Of course, after good access to language and a steady diet of conversation, one of the best ways to help young children create the requisite building blocks for literacy acquisition is to read aloud to them. But few understand that having children read back is just as important. I recently learned about the parents of three home-schooled children, each of whom received full tuition college scholarships because of their stellar academic achievement. When asked how this was possible, their mother described how she and her husband had read to their children every day, and, even before they actually knew how to read, her children also "read" to her and her husband every day. And, they proceeded this way until their children went to college!

Listening to, and telling stories, is a potent learning experience for children, even more so when these experiences occur in the loving arms of a parent or caregiver. In addition to the great power of associating books and reading with the warm, nurturing, and loving embrace of a caring adult, being read to enhances children's understanding of the structure of language and introduces them to how books "work". They learn about how to hold books, about their proper orientation, that we read from left to right, that books tell stories with a beginning, middle, and end, and that stories often have a problem to be solved.

More powerful still, parents who combine conversation and lap reading, who refer back to the books they have read together in their daily discussions with children, lay the strongest possible footing upon which literacy skills can be laid down. This means that parents should talk to their children about the books they read together, about how the things children feel, see and hear and touch are connected to the experiences of the characters in the stories they share together.

This is how it begins.

On top of this essential foundation rests the so called five pillars of literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Reading fluency, and Comprehension. A quick tour of these important pillars can be found in the Appendix, following the program summaries.

For all its grace and power, learning to read, like all things of value, requires deliberate and sustained effort. While nothing could be more natural than laying the foundation for the acquisition of literacy skills—talking with, and reading to, children—the development of independent reading skill needs to be taught. Fortunately, there are wonderful resources all around us where children are provided with opportunities to practice their reading.

In the pages that follow you can find places where literacy is part of what they do.

I hope you will find the abundance of riches in these pages as promising as do I.





BEAUFORT COUNTY

Beaufort County First Steps' mission is to ensure children have the skills needed to reach Kindergarten ready to succeed. First Steps to School

Readiness was signed into law in 1999 to help improve school readiness for the state's youngest learners. First Steps is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach first grade healthy and ready to succeed. First Steps funds are used to improve the quality of child care, expand early education programs, provide access to health services and offer family support.

Every early experience – from birth through age five – helps to build a foundation for school and life success. Children introduced to reading early on tend to read earlier and excel in school compared to children who are not exposed to language and books at a young age.

-American Academy of Pediatrics

Literacy

Our focus on literacy includes purchasing books for those working in our **Quality Enhancement** facilities, as well as for families/children participating in our Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. Under the PAT program, there are two assessment tools we use: 1) Keys to Interactive Parenting Scales (KIPS) is a structured observation tool to assess parent-child interaction during play; and 2) Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI) is an assessment tool that looks at how well adults engage and teach children as they read together.



Children are given a book during home visits to encourage families to read together and to help build children's home libraries.

Our community outreach includes providing books for Read Across America and Read for the Record. We also take part in SC Reads (sponsored by the South Carolina State Library and South Carolina Association of School Librarians), which shows why kids who read succeed. Participants are encouraged to bring their favorite book to read on the State House grounds after the event and even dress as their favorite literary character. We also donate books to The Technical College of

Lowcountry Early Education department to be used for community lending library on the Spanish Moss Trail.

Stay Connected:

beaufortfirststeps.com



The Hilton Head Branch Library is a part of the Beaufort County Library System and our mission is to serve and support the community for learning, for leisure, for life.

All locations are free and accessible centers of ideas, information, and resources that foster learning, community, and literacy.

The Hilton Head Youth Services Department serves children from birth to age 17 and their families. We have a knowledgeable and approachable staff who are eager to help visitors find the book that is "just right" for them and that will spark a love of reading and learning.

We offer access to a wide variety of educational databases and games, public Internet computers and printing as well as wi-fi throughout the building. We also have a play area for families to enjoy to encourage self directed play and interaction with others who are visiting the library.

We offer a full slate of programming each month designed to appeal to a wide range of abilities and interests. Early literacy programming includes twice weekly storytimes for 0-3 year olds and their caregivers as well as a monthly play time. School age kids can enjoy a weekly storytime with many hands-on activities, monthly art programs, movie events, LEGO Robotics programming, read-to-a-dog sessions, book discussions and more. STEAM components are included in every program that we offer, and we encourage participants to explore, create, and learn in a safe, non-judgmental setting.

The library is a vital part of the Hilton Head community! Families meet each week at the library to select items to check out and to attend library sponsored events. Play dates are made and friendships are formed among library visitors and program participants. So give us a call or stop by and explore your library's Children's Department!

For learning.

For leisure.

For life.





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Born To Read began as a part of Literacy Volunteers of the Lowcountry and became an independent 501© 3 program in 2008. The mission of Born To Read is "to promote early childhood literacy and language development, while helping new parents understand their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher". Born to Read's Executive Director Janie Ephland schedules Volunteers 6 days a week to go to birthing centers at Hilton Head Hospital and Beaufort Memorial Hospital and Coastal Carolina Hospital, and present a resource bag to all the new moms. The resource bag has information on the importance of reading and talking to a new baby to help develop their vocabulary and language skills so they will be prepared to enter school. A quarterly newsletter is then sent to each family to give additional suggestions and age appropriate activities for their children through the first 15 months of life.

Each resource bag has a board book for the baby, a rhyming book with reading tips/strategies, a list of community pediatricians, a 4 page reference for community resources for children and families, a Born To Read bib to remind families to talk to their children while feeding them, a Born To Read tee shirt to remind families to talk to their children while dressing them and doing daily activities. Volunteers also gather information from families that may be interested in adult education (GED or English) to assist in making a referral to the appropriate agencies that can help them. They also have applications for a Beaufort Public Library card and encourage families to take advantage of the library services. Books are also provided for siblings of the new baby to help build the at-home family library.

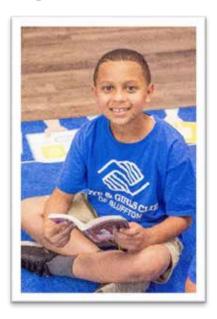
We strive to serve our at-risk population before babies are born through our partnership with Stork's Nest, an incentive program designed to encourage prenatal care. At the expectant mothers' prenatal visits in the Port Royal and Okatie clinics, Born To Read gives a board book and information on the importance of early language development for their children through daily reading and oral stimulation. We also provide sibling books at the time of these visits.

Born to Read is a free service to parents and all materials are in both English and Spanish. It is a United Way funded agency and is also funded through grants and donations. Sponsoring partners are the Beaufort County School District, Beaufort County Library, and the Hilton Head, Beaufort Memorial and Coastal Carolina hospitals.



Boys & Girls Club of Bluffton Literacy Program

The Boys & Girls Club of Bluffton was founded in 1998 to provide programs and relational support to help youth develop the attitudes, skills, values and behaviors that enable them to succeed in life. Our mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Boys & Girls Clubs aim to create a strong sense of belonging for members. providing stability, consistency and a sense of physical and emotional safety. We provide a fun, safe and affordable place for young people, ages 6-18, when they are not at home or in school. Twelve Bluffton-area schools transport 350 students to our Club every day. The demand for services is growing with the local population. We have a waitlist of over 300 children ready to enroll in our programs when space is available. We offer programs and services designed to build character and strengthen life skills.



Children who aren't reading on grade level by third grade are more likely to never graduate high school. The Boys & Girls Club of Bluffton wants to ensure that children in our community are prepared for graduation and beyond with a strong foundation in reading and literacy. To meet the needs of our members we launched a comprehensive reading intervention program, led by a certified literacy instructor in January 2014, and it has continued to grow and mature since then. For the past six years, our Literacy Program experience has convinced us that afterschool reading intervention, as a supplement to the school District's dedicated focus on literacy education, is a must for our Bluffton members who are reading below grade level.



Volunteering with the Boys & Girls Club of Bluffton's Literacy Program is a great way to help teach young people valuable life lessons and learn something about yourself in return. The Boys & Girls Club of Bluffton truly could not operate without volunteers. Our Club is successful because we have lots of help from community members that provide a wealth of skill, talent and energy.

For more information please call (843) 757-2845 or visit **bgcbluffton.org/LiteracyProgram**.

Reading Enrichment

For more than ten years, our Club has offered reading enrichment for 6-10 year old children who have fallen behind in their appropriate age reading levels and who desperately need additional support to overcome their deficiencies. Our reading programs take place in a dedicated space with literacy and library resources, on-line reading comprehension and assessments, and fluency reading practice with volunteers—all under the direction of a certified reading teacher. We recently added a paid teacher's assistant, giving us the ability to serve twice the number of members as when the program started. The space has multiple rooms for classroom style work, computer practice in the Lexia system, buddy-reading concentration and a writing station. The popularity of this combination has been unmatched in our experience, and 90 percent of our member participants who consistently attend the program have raised their reading skills at least one level per session. Many of our younger participants come from non-**English speaking families. Our program** has shown great success in bringing these young children to English proficiency, which not only helps their educational success, but also assists their families in assimilating in the community.















Lexia Reading Program and Literacy Center

Students work independently to develop critical reading and language skills through individualized, motivating learning paths.

The Lexia program is personalized for each member, led by an experienced certified teacher, and designed to lift students who test in the bottom 25th percentile of the required school reading assessments. Our literacy center continues to grow as students are inspired to work beyond grade level standards and develop a joy of reading.

Power Hour

During this after school program, Club members have access to volunteer tutors to help with reading and math homework. The Club also has a library for extracurricular reading. Power Hour is one of our most popular educational activities with the kids.

Summer Reading Program

We recognizing the value of keeping kids reading to prevent "summer slide". This is why we offer reading programs all year long. Our programs are fun, interactive and engage kids of all ages. In summer 2019, we launched a special program for rising first graders with low reading test scores.

If you think reading practice doesn't matter for older students, think again. Research by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that students who read more frequently have higher scores, and the score gap between frequent readers and infrequent readers gets bigger as students get older.





FOCUS ON LITERACY





The Children's Center, Inc. is a unique not-for-profit organization that provides working families early childhood education and childcare services. Our mission is to provide affordable, high-quality early education and childcare services for working families to ensure every child is ready to achieve success upon entering kindergarten. We have continued this work since 1967 with the help and support of a dedicated staff, board and community of donors. The Children's Center serves about 170 children daily, beginning at six weeks until they graduate to kindergarten. We offer after school and summer camp programs for school-age children through age eight.

During brain development, a child's language synapse formation peaks at ten months of age. It is well known that 3rd grade reading scores can predict future life success, but many do not know that **18-month vocabulary can predict**3rd grade reading scores. At The Children's Center, we begin our literacy program in our infant room and develop lesson plans in conjunction with South Carolina Early learning Standards. Each classroom incorporates literacy in their daily activities and each child's progress is individually tracked using those standards. This allows teachers to provide individualized attention to ensure each child is ready to achieve success upon entering kindergarten.

At The Children's Center, we appreciate the adult volunteers who spend time in the classrooms, offering one-on-one enrichment to our students. We welcome and appreciate people willing to volunteer their time, expertise or contributions to improve the educational environment for our students. To get involved, visit the website at www.thechildrenscentersc.org or call (843) 681-2739.



EDUCATION IMPACT

Together, we are making an impact on Education through United Way of the Lowcountry's Early Grade Reading Initiative, Read Indeed!





Read Indeed offers one on one, in-school tutoring for Pre-K through 3rd grade students.

United Way of the Lowcountry partners with both Beaufort and Jasper County School Districts to ensure students are reading on grade level when they enter the 4th grade. Elementary school reading is a critical predictor for high school success: children learn to read until 4th grade; after that, they read to learn. Children who are not reading well by the end of the 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to drop out of school.

Since 2012, our 275 plus volunteer reading tutors provide one on one, in-school tutoring for pre-k through 3rd grade students. This interaction not only provides the additional boost they need to increase their reading skills but also boosts confidence and positive attitudes towards learning. Students are selected based on their fall MAP scores (Measurement of Academic Progress). The literacy coaches and teachers identify those students who are below grade level and those who would benefit from the program.

Our reading tutors are trained and required to have a background check before working with students. We also ask that tutors have a love of reading and commit to at least one session per week during the school year. With the support of our reading tutors and AmeriCorps members, we are able to positively impact hundreds of children each school year.

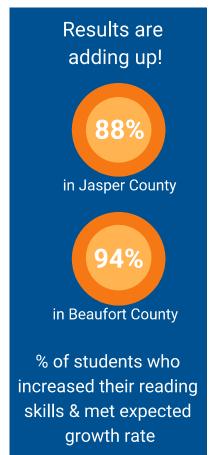












Appendix I

The Five Pillars of Literacy

By Bruce Marlowe

Phonemic Awareness: Learning the Sounds of One's Language

Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that help us distinguish one word from another. For example, when we compare the words "cat" and "bat" it is only the initial sounds—the /k/ and the /b/ sounds—that differ. The awareness of the different sounds in a language, and the ability to sequence these sounds, and to blend them together, or to determine when words sound alike (i.e., rhyme) is a natural, developmental process. Even if they've never seen letters on the page, by the age of 5, 80% of children can tell when two words begin with the same sound, and they can perform an impressive number of other "phonemic awareness" tasks too, like sequencing, blending and segmenting sounds. This developing ability is an essential prerequisite for learning to read. We now know, from a great deal of research, that the 20% of children who do not develop good phonemic awareness skills by the age of 5 are the very same 20% of the school-aged population who struggle with reading for much of their lives. We also know, that with a lot of good teaching, we can help children learn this important developmental ability so that they too can become skillful readers.

Phonetic Decoding: Connecting Letters and Sounds

Although we've all been taught to "sound out" words, as if the letters on the page make sounds, in truth, it is more accurate to say that those squiggly lines on the page we call letters actually represent phonemes, sometimes in a variety of combinations. For example, when we think of the sound /f/ we usually think of words like "fan", "four" and "fun". But the phoneme /f/ is also represented by other combinations, like gh at the end of words such as "laugh" or ph in the beginning of words like "phone". In short, Phonetic Decoding refers to nothing more than helping children understand that reading is like a secret code with special symbols; the trick to reading then is to learn how these symbols, the letters, are used to stand for sounds so that they can be blended together to make words. Unlike Phonemic Awareness though, this is not a natural, developmental skill, one that children automatically develop as they get older. Instead, learning "the code" requires explicit teaching—and a lot of practice—before children can effortlessly make connections between the sounds and the letters that represent them.

Vocabulary: Building Children's Word Power

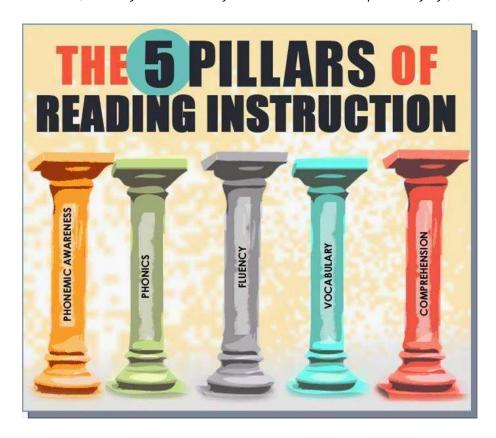
Words are the building blocks of ideas, of thinking itself. The larger one's vocabulary, the more sophisticated and versatile is their thinking. Knowing, for example, that "scalding" is hotter than just "hot" allows us to make finer and finer distinctions in our thinking and understanding. And, there is no better way to build vocabulary than to read. Children who read have more supple thinking, in large part because reading expands their vocabulary and gives them the ability to make connections, understand subtlety, and express themselves more clearly. There are, of course, other ways to help children increase their vocabulary, but learning new words in the context of a shared story simply cannot be beat. Is improving one's vocabulary an important pillar for learning to read? Indeed, it is. But reading and vocabulary growth should be thought of as inseparable, as each greatly enhances the other.

Reading Fluency: Learning to Read Naturally

Without the ability to read fluently, with expression and varying intonation, children cannot make sense of the words on the page, which to their (and our!) ears sound dull, flat, and lifeless. For children to learn to read in ways that engage them deeply in text, and grab the attention of the listener, they must hear how it's done from skillful models. This means that caregivers and teachers should demonstrate how a story should be read, with feeling and appropriate emphasis. Children also improve their fluency when they echo a good model's phrasing until they get the sound just right to convey the meaning they want. And caregivers and teachers should also engage children in conversation about why the same phrase can take on very different meanings depending on, say, whether it is asked as a question or stated as a declaration. Think, for example, how different is the intonation in the statement "You have candy!", compared to the very same words in a question, "You have candy??" Having children pay attention to these differences is a sure-fire way to improve their fluency. Fluency can also be greatly improved by having children re-read familiar books aloud, in order to more quickly recognize high-frequency words. Finally, caregivers and teachers can employ so-called "reader's theater" approaches, whereby children act out scripts--one of the most powerful ways to enhance children's ability to read with appropriate pacing and expression.

Comprehension: Helping Children Build Meaning

In the end, reading is a purposeful activity. We read for entertainment and enjoyment, to learn new information, to get directions, or to further our understanding. Promoting comprehension is best accomplished when parents and teachers deliberately use the strategies above—like talking about texts, re-reading familiar books, and reading with feeling—to help children make sense of what they read. It is also extremely important for children to be reading books at just the right level; not too hard, and not too easy. As a rule of thumb, if children can read about 90% of the words they encounter in a text without help, you've got the right level. If children have to continuously stop the flow of their reading to figure out a word, focusing on the meaning of the text becomes very challenging (and unenjoyable).



Afterward

he importance of early grade reading is unarguable. It has proven to be the cornerstone of educational outcomes and is in direct correlation with high school graduation rates, the future social and emotional wellbeing of children as well as a country's economic welfare. Research over many years repeatedly proves the value of reading and literacy education prior to formal education.

Below are a few examples of why we have created this booklet and why we are promoting early grade reading:

- 3rd grade reading scores are a predictor of life success, but 18 month vocabulary is a predictor of 3rd grade reading scores!
- By age 2, a child's brain is as active as an adult's and by age 3 the brain is more than twice as active as an adult's - and stays that way for the first 10 years of life.
- Cognitive processes develop rapidly in the first few years of life. In fact, by age 3, roughly 85% of the brain is developed. However, traditional education takes places in grades K-12, which begin at age five.
- According to the Department of Education, the more students read or are read to for fun on their own time and at home, the higher their reading scores, generally.
- Children's academic successes at ages 9 and 10 can be attributed to the amount of talk they hear from birth through age 3. Young children who are exposed to certain early language and literacy experiences also prove to be good readers later on in life.
- The number of books in the home correlates significantly with higher reading scores for children.
- Children who are read to at least three times a week by a family member are almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who are read to less than 3 times a week.

There's no question that literacy is an essential element to a child's development and opens the door to a brighter future.

The McGuffey Reader

e would like to pay tribute to fellow Miamian William Holmes McGuffey and his Eclectic Readers.

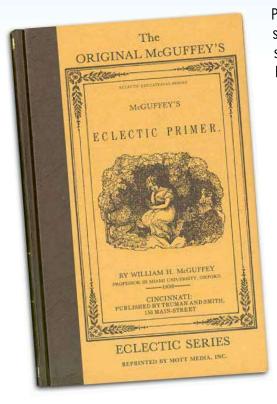
No one in history has had a greater impact on literacy education and teaching children to read than William Holms McGuffey. McGuffey was born in 1800 near Claysville, PA and moved with his parents to Youngstown, OH when he was two. McGuffey first became a teacher at the age of 14 traveling

in Ohio and Kentucky as a roving teacher in schools on the frontier. Between teaching jobs, he received an excellent education at the Old Stone Academy in Darlington, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Washington College in 1826. That same year he was appointed to a position as Professor of Language at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The ten years McGuffey spent at Miami were his formative and most productive years. The William Holmes McGuffey Museum, located on The Miami University campus in Oxford, Ohio was the home of William McGuffey and where he penned the "readers."

at Miami University, for the job. First published in 1836, *McGuffey's Reader*, as it became known, eventually consisted of a multi-volume work with six levels of difficulty. This series of books included stories, poems, essays and speeches. The *McGuffey Readers* became cornerstones in establishing America's moral values. Practically every American who attended public schools during the second half of the nineteenth century learned from *McGuffey's Reader*.

Post Civil War, the Readers were the basic schoolbooks in 37 states and by 1920 sold an estimated 122 million copies. The books reshaped American public school curriculum and became one of the nation's most influential publications. Since the first publication in 1836, the McGuffey Readers have continued to be in print and to sell tens of thousands of copies each year, placing its sales in a category with the Bible and Webster's Dictionary. The McGuffey Readers went on to become the best-known school books in the history of American education. No other textbook bearing a single person's name has come close to hitting that mark.

The *McGuffey Readers* taught more Americans to read than any other textbook.



From 1834 to 1836 McGuffey wrote

the books that were destined to shape American history. The story goes that in 1835 publisher Winthrop B. Smith, one of the founders of the Truman and Smith Publishing Company, saw the need for a graded series of readers to be marketed to the burgeoning west. He initially sought out Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was a school teacher at the time, to pen the series. She declined the offer but recommended her friend McGuffey, Presbyterian Minister and member of the facility

Tom Henz, Miami University Class of 1979 Jody (Bowman) Levitt, Miami University Class of 1984 Jennifer (Harrison) Winzeler, Miami University Class of 1992 Chuck Lobaugh, Miami University Class of 1988

References

Information about William H. McGuffey and his Eclectic Readers can be found at the McGuffey House and Museum, Miami University, Oxford, OH and on their website at: www.MiamiOH.edu/cca/McGuffey-Museum

Additional References:

www.nps.gov/jeff/learn/historyculture/upload/mcguffey.pdf www.britannica.com/topic/McGuffey-Readers www.literacyprojectfoundation.org/30-key-child-literacy-stats-parents-need-to-be-aware-of/

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This booklet was printed locally, to serve our community.

