

## What is Savvy Readers' Lab?

The Savvy Readers' lab is offered to students who need additional support in order to participate fully in the Student Team Literature component of the Johns Hopkins University Talent Development Middle Grades Program. The Savvy Readers' Lab replaces an elective course for a minimum of ten weeks to provide a substantial "double dose" of intensive instruction.

The goal of the Savvy Readers' Lab is to help students improve their reading abilities, master more challenging reading material, and improve standardized test scores.

The Savvy Readers' Lab provides strategic reading instruction through exposure to various types of reading material, with emphasis on informational text. Students learn to construct meaning through reading and writing and to assume responsibility for their own learning. This enables them to experience success across the curriculum.

## How does Savvy Readers' Lab accomplish these goals?

- Blocks of time during the lab period are used for all students to read from the same "core" book and participate in responsive writing. This ensures a level playing field and enables the teacher to model reading strategies using materials familiar to all students.
- Students receive modeled instruction daily while reading material that is appropriate for their independent and instructional reading levels.
- Students move to learning centers where they continue to practice reading and writing strategies independently and in small groups.

## Target population

The Savvy Readers' Lab target population is students who are significantly behind local and national achievement norms in reading benefit from intensive, focused attention on strategic reading instruction with developmentally appropriate materials and activities. Students are selected based on teacher recommendations and their performance on standardized tests. In some cases, students may request assignment to the Savvy Readers' Lab.

Class size in the SRL should be approximately half as many students as a regular class, not to exceed fifteen students per class, to enable teachers to provide individualized and/or small-group instruction.

## What students can expect

Explicit reading skill instruction, followed by either core or independent reading and related activities, which students may complete working in teams of five, applying strategies that have been modeled, taught, and practiced. They maintain journals to record their progress, respond to reading, and communicate with the teacher. During silent reading, the teacher works individually with students. Students develop a personal dictionary consisting of new or particularly meaningful words. Each lab includes approximately fifty independent reading books spanning a four-year range of reading levels. Learning centers where students continue to develop reading (and writing) skills.

## Major components of Savvy Readers' Lab

**Strategic Reading Instruction:** Students are introduced to strategies that help them to:

- Decode unfamiliar words while reading
- Infer meanings of unfamiliar words
- Make predictions
- Monitor understanding while reading
- Repair comprehension when understanding slows down or stops
- Increase vocabulary

**Practice of Reading Strategies:** Students practice reading strategies using core books (read by the group) and independent books (individually selected and developmentally appropriate). Using strategy stickers, students make note of strategies practiced during reading and then share the experience with the class. Students maintain journals to keep track of progress, respond to reading, and communicate with the teacher.

**Rotation of Learning Centers:** Students continue to develop reading and writing strategies with activities at centers designed to reinforce what is taught. Students rotate among the following centers:

- A listening/tape center where students can listen to books or stories on tape or tape a portion of a book they are reading for the teacher to evaluate their fluency
- A computer center where students use software like WordSmart to improve reading and vocabulary skills
- An information center where students choose selections of interest and practice their strategies from a variety of magazines and books
- A games center equipped with commercial games that develop word recognition, vocabulary, and thinking skills.
- A writing center supplied with several copies of a thesaurus, as well as a dictionary and rhyming dictionary, which supports writing initiatives in the school, English language arts classroom assignments and/or assignments specific to the Savvy Readers' Lab. Each writing center is.

Curriculum coaching and in-class support: The Johns Hopkins curriculum coach makes periodic visits to each school to offer support, assistance, and workshops for professional development.

## Why is a double-dose reading program needed?

- Many students are significantly behind local and national achievement norms in reading when they reach the middle grades.
- Many students are overwhelmed by the challenging learning tasks that they face in a standards-driven curriculum.
- Many students are first- or second-generation immigrants for whom English is a second language. English language acquisition and development may be significantly below grade level.

