



## **The Total Learning Institute™ K-4 Introductory Information Participating Schools and Teachers**

Welcome! You are deciding to participate in Total Learning for the 2007-2008 school year. What should you expect?

Total Learning is an approach to education that provides multiple supports to teachers, families, and schools. Synthesizing current research and best practices, the approach is designed to provide students the learning tools they need to succeed in school and life. Embedded professional development introduces a multi-modal, multi-sensory, hands-on, brains-on approach to delivery of the curriculum that patterns the brain for learning. Family services provide extra support to reduce family stresses that inhibit learning. An extended year and Lighthouse program provide the additional time children require building the capacity to learn. Every element of Total Learning is accomplished in partnership with the Bridgeport Board of Education.

During this year there will be **two levels of involvement**:

- Full Total Learning includes professional development, family services, an additional paraprofessional, Lighthouse after school, and an 11-month school year.
- In-School Total Learning includes professional development only.

These levels will be randomly assigned to participating classrooms.

Fidelity to the Board of Education curriculum and contract will be maintained.

### **Descriptions of Total Learning components**

#### **Professional Development**

Based on the Total Literacy approach, professional development will be comprised of:

- An orientation workshop
  - 3 days in the summer
- Embedded year-long training in the classroom with a highly qualified Total Literacy trainer, delivering Total Literacy strategies

- Brief organizational meeting
- Model lessons taught by trainers
- Adaptations of model lessons team planned and team taught by trainer, teacher and paraprofessional
- Coaching
- Development of follow-up activities for centers and after-school programs
- Post-training support at a choice of three levels depending on teacher needs and requests.

The training module has been developed to deliver the district's grade level curriculum, with materials ready for the August training. The approach is designed to be sensitive to each teacher's skills, interests, and style. Teachers can expect to learn and practice 20 open-ended Total Literacy strategies that they will use to deliver the curriculum, and are designed to spark teacher and student imagination.

### **Family Services**

Some classrooms will be provided with a family worker who will deliver a range of services based on family needs, including attendance monitoring, crisis intervention, a range of family support, and organization of parent involvement in the school and classroom.

### **Extended Year**

Some classrooms will attend an additional month, extending the learning and helping children retain their growth seamlessly into the next grade level.

### **Lighthouse**

Some classrooms will have a Lighthouse after-school program that extends the academic learning. The lighthouse provider will be trained in Total Literacy strategies and participate in the embedded professional development. Total Learning staff will help to develop centers, thereby assuring that the strategies and curriculum content continue to be explored by students during after-school hours. Total Learning staff will also collaborate to organize parent volunteers for the after-school centers.

### **Evaluation**

The effectiveness of the Total Learning approach will be determined through a research study conducted by an independent research team. As we know, student test outcomes are very important, but only begin to tell us what has been learned and what strengths our student bring. The evaluation component is designed to broaden the discussion about what is important and should be considered evidence of progress. Teachers, parents and administrators will be involved in surveys and interviews through which the evaluation team can determine Total Learning's impact. The evaluation team is sensitive to busy schedules, and will be respectful of everyone's time.

## Brief Timelines

The following section provides a brief timeline for each participant group.

### Administrators

- An orientation will be held to introduce our staff, describe the approach, establish communication channels, identify specific procedures for your school, and collectively make decisions for the upcoming year's implementation.
- The Total Literacy staff will work with you to establish a schedule and reporting system, and for the TL team to become part of the school communication process for schedule, emergency closing, and other information purposes.
- Training will occur in your classrooms, and we will be available for parent meetings. If your classrooms are receiving the full approach, family workers and Lighthouse support will also be introduced.
- Updates will be provided on a regular basis throughout training, and communication will be provided as you have arranged, through brief update meetings, e-mail, or other.
- You will work with the evaluation team.
- Throughout the year, Total Learning information will be reviewed and distributed through the school and district, so there is a consistent voice and common mission between district, school, and Total Learning personnel.

### Teachers

- An orientation workshop will be held August 14, 15, and 16 to introduce the staff, strategies, and establish communication channels. Together we will determine a timeline for implementation, and identify concerns and needs of the group.
- Each participating teacher will receive in-classroom support and training in multi-sensory strategies to deliver the grade level Bridgeport curriculum. Training will occur consistently through the year, with two 45-minute classes and one half hour conference per week. TL training will begin after the teacher has established classroom procedures and expectations.
- After the initial Level I training year, additional support will be available based on teacher need and desire.
- Some classrooms will be supported with a family worker to help with a myriad of family needs that impact student attendance and ability to learn.
- Some classrooms will be supported with a paraprofessional who will also participate in training, and will deliver the Lighthouse after-school program that is directly related to Total Learning and your curriculum.
- Some classrooms will run an extra month, with appropriate compensation for those involved.
- All of the above has been field tested, but is subject to refinement as the year progresses. There will be every effort to integrate the Total Learning approach and staff into the school family and culture, and to be sensitive to the daily changes and needs of the school and classroom.
- Teachers will have clearly identified paths of communication throughout Total Learning implementation.

**Parents**

- Monthly parent meetings will be held at convenient times, with incentives to attend. These will be coordinated with the school's parent organization and family worker.
- Parents will be invited to volunteer in the classroom after a workshop on volunteering.
- Parents in some classrooms will work with the TL family worker to reduce risk factors and stress that affect the child's ability to learn. The family worker will be available to help with finding necessary resources, attending meetings and conferences, and general support.

**School**

- Total Learning will work in collaboration with the existing school staff, programs, schedules and regulations.
- Total Learning will function as a support to involved teachers, paraprofessionals and after school providers; and provide teachers with research-based and best-practice, multi-modal strategies to deliver the curriculum.

Additional background and rationale is available upon request. Once operating details are in place, we will work together to enrich and enhance teaching and learning. In the end, Total Learning provides opportunities to put the child at the center - with total support for and from the teacher, classroom, school, family and community.

<sup>TM</sup> *The Total Learning Institute* is a trademarked name. To use the name or logo, or represent The Total Learning Institute in print, contact [sue@aeideas.com](mailto:sue@aeideas.com) for further information and guidelines.