

## Family Literacy Class Takes Root at Dakota High School

### ***What is the Family Literacy Class?***

Family Literacy is a Language Arts elective course at Dakota High School that was created to teach young parents and/or high school students *why* literacy should start as early as possible - during the critical years of brain development in children. The class expounds on the benefits of early literacy, and then teaches students *how* to implement literacy practices, such as reading, talking, and writing within and among families. - Loretta Wellentin

### ***Why is this class important?***

Reading is a critical life skill. It fosters connection between parent and infant, and helps brain development. Our students are the next generation of parents. Teaching them how to be intentional in developing their child's literacy will have generational impact. It will also develop their parent-child bond and their child's ability to focus, imagine and to feel valued within the quality time of reading/literacy. The impact will extend to the other young children within our current students' circles. - David Burkman & Jim Keal

### ***What does the class require?***

Students in the class learn about brain development as well as early literacy and language development. This lays the foundation for why early literacy is so important. Students then learn how to apply their learning with young children in their lives. For some students, they apply these lessons with their own child. These young parents of infants in our Family Classroom read to their child each day with the goal of reading becoming a habit in their lives at home and at school. In addition, they choose appropriate books for many age levels. They also improve their own reading skills and confidence in reading out loud. - Ann Wilson and Susan Peterson

### ***What do students think about the class?***

A student, Blessing Glay, was so excited when she came across a book that was read to her in grade school that she brought the book home to read to her 6 year old nephew to share the joy with him. "I actually crave doing my school work!" she said.

"I really liked this course ... as time goes on, the lessons progress in a way that makes them more difficult but not in a way that's hard to understand," Pura Larson said.



## *Family Literacy, cont.*

“Family Literacy explains the importance of reading to kids,” Maari Graber said. “It goes beyond just reading. It teaches about brain function and the lasting effects of reading. Everyone needs to read to their children!”

*By the Family Literacy Team: Loretta Wellentin, Stacy Warzecha, Ann Wilson, and Susan Peterson with support from David Burkman and Jim Keal*

