

## BLAST (Basic Literacy Acquisition Skills Time)



BLAST is a positive, proactive reading program that helps children learn phonics skills at their own reading level. BLAST actively encourages students to learn new skills and transfer these to daily reading. Students also utilize their new knowledge in phonic-based activities. BLAST provides a consistent program of guided reading intervention for all children. Student success is celebrated at the end of each cycle.

### Who is in BLAST?

All grade one and two students are involved in the BLAST program, as determined annually in the school timetable. Students are assessed in September, using the Early Reading Assessment, to assist the BLAST steering team in grouping students for instruction. BLAST may also be a tier 3 intervention for students above grade two.

### How is BLAST Organized?

Students are placed in small groups to work with their assigned instructor. Instructors are determined for each cycle, recognizing that large numbers of staff involved is critical for program success.

For example, students determined to have difficulty with short vowel sounds are in the BLAST group dedicated to achieving the short vowel sounds, while students who need practice with long vowel sounds are in the BLAST group focusing on the long vowel sounds.

The lessons for each of the BLAST groups follow the same format. The thirty minute lesson begins with 5-10 minutes of teacher directed instruction. The students then spend 15 minutes in a guided reading lesson using stories that integrate words based on the new phonics skill. The lesson ends with a 5 minute game in which a heavy emphasis is placed on the new skill. All lesson materials are organized into **skill boxes** to be used by the group's instructor. Learning assessments are done weekly.

### Timeline

September	<i>Early Reading Assessment for all grade 1 and 2 students Share annual cycle timeline</i>
October	<i>Start of the BLAST program At the start of each cycle, staffing and groups are determined BLAST staff aim to meet twice during each cycle to address concerns, collaboratively plan, etc. At the end of each cycle, staff and student surveys administered</i>
January	<i>Reassess all BLAST students using the Early Reading Assessment</i>
June	<i>Determine next year's BLAST cycle schedule</i>

## **BLAST Skills**

Students are assessed on their ability with the following skills:

- Rhyming words
- Letter sequence
- Name upper case letters
- Name lower case letters
- Letter sounds (consonants)
- Letter sounds (vowels)
- Phonemic segmentation
- Short vowel nonsense words
- 'L' common blends
- 'R' common blends
- 'S' common blends
- Long vowel words 'magic e'
- Vowel buddies (ee, ay, oa)
- 'Y' endings (fly, candy)
- Digraphs (wh, -ck, -sh)
- Phonograms (word families)
- Blends with Phonograms (word families)
- 'R', controlled vowels (ir, er)
- Silent letters (kn, wr, gh)
- Hard and soft 'c'
- Hard and soft 'g'
- Vowel diphthongs (oi, ow)
- Advanced blend (str, thr)
- Comprehension

## **Resources for Staff**

Staff resources can be accessed on the Staff Sharepoint in the BLAST – Staff Resources subsite. This site includes:

- Skill lessons
- Communication with parents
- List of reading keys and other reading resources
- Training video
- Instructor Manual resources
- Timeline for BLAST cycles
- Other related BLAST resources (assessments, surveys, etc.)

Other related reading resources can be found in the Literacy Resources and Supports Sharepoint (in the Staff Sharepoint)