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## BOOK CHECK

### Ladysmith Elementary School Ladysmith, Wisconsin

Since 1999, Ladysmith Elementary has used volunteers in a program called Book Check to help students with the Accelerated Reader Program. Students in grades one through three read to volunteers and retell the story by discussing the characters, setting, and plot. After working with the volunteers, students complete the appropriate Accelerated Reader comprehension test.

Ladysmith's Reading Specialist learned about Book Check at a reading/language arts seminar in Superior, Wisconsin and adapted it for the school. The first year, Book Check was implemented in one classroom as a pilot program. In the spring of 2000, the Reading Specialist added grade one gifted and talented students to the program. Since then, all students in 12 classrooms have participated fully in Book Check. Ladysmith expanded the program each year through additional reading books and assessment tools. In 2002, they also added after-school hours for the program.

The Reading Specialist researched reading pedagogy and trained the teachers to use the methodologies in Book Check. Classroom teachers and the guidance department recruited parents, retired teachers, and high school students in need of service hours or interested in careers in education to volunteer. Volunteers were recognized for their contributions to students at a banquet sched-

uled during National Volunteer Week in April. The banquet was paid for by Citizenship Grant funding.

Students benefited from the one-to-one attention and conferencing with the volunteers. They also gained a sense of accountability for their reading. Teachers benefited from the volunteers' assistance and the positive partnerships established around reading. One parent volunteer stated, "The program gives me an opportunity to share in my child's learning experience. The involvement with him and his classmates is very rewarding to both the children and myself. It is exciting to see how they all progress and the excitement in their faces." Students said: "Can't we do another Read-a-thon?" "Can't we have Book Check now?" "It's cool. I like reading."

In the future, additional Accelerated Reader books and assessments will be added to give students greater opportunities. New teachers will be in-serviced as needed.

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