

HEAD  WATERS ACADEMY

**Welcome and
Welcome Back**

2025-2026



Ronald Reagan once said the most terrifying words in the English Language are:

“I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.”

I am NOT here from the government, BUT I am here to HELP.

Pastor Chris has directed me to help. HELP WHO?

- **The students**
 - Language Development
 - Reading fluency
 - Reading comprehension
 - Vocabulary
 - Morphology
 - Written Expression
 - Study Skills / Academic Success
- **The Teachers**
 - As needed
- **The Tutors**
 - Intentional training

Background

- Grew up on Long Island, New York.
- Went to Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.
 - Major: Anthropology
 - Minor: Religion
- Penn State-The Dickinson School of Law
- Within a 2 week period I passed the NC Bar exam, got a job, and met my husband, Dave.
- I practiced law (still maintain an active law license though I no longer practice law)
- I became a mom to Daniel (25) and James (22)

I discovered teaching!

At Forsyth Country Day School I was a:

- Substitute teacher
- Shadow
- Assistant Kindergarten teacher
- Assistant First Grade teacher
- Academic Coach
- Language Development Specialist
- Track and Field Coach (high jump)

**Orton-Gillingham
trained through
the OGA at
Certified Level.**

**I am now a
Fellow-in-Training
with the OGA.**

- **What is Orton-Gillingham?**
 - More than just phonics
 - Addresses reading, writing, vocabulary, morphology, and written expression
- **It is:**
 - Structured Literacy
 - Applying the Science of Reading
- **What it is Not:**
 - Balanced Literacy
 - Whole Word
- **For whom?**
 - Essential for students with a learning difference like dyslexia.
 - Excellent for ALL STUDENTS

Orton-Gillingham Principles

- Diagnostic and Prescriptive
- Individualized
- Language Based and Alphabetic/Phonetic
- Simultaneous Multisensory
- Direct and Explicit
- Structured, Sequential, and Cumulative
- Flexible
- Synthetic and Analytic
- Cognitive
- Emotionally Sound

First things

I will test each
Kindergarten through
Second-Grade student in
phonological awareness,
phoneme awareness, and
reading (depending on
grade)



Tutor Training

- Intentional
- Some just readers to the class/ Some may assist
- Must have a baseline understanding of classroom terms, methodology, and expectations.
- I will conduct this training for volunteers
- What would you like to see?
- What helps you the most?

If you notice a student is struggling...

Protocols for Intervention/Remediation/Evaluation

- Pull them 1:1 and see what they understand/don't understand
- Reteach
- Do they understand it better 1:1?
- Continued struggles?
- Document
 - What have you done? How much? What works? What doesn't?
 - NEXT STEPS
 - Nancy Snyder conducts informal evaluation
 - Determine areas of strength and areas for growth
 - Support needed
- Remediation
 - If not working/ determine next steps/ If Psychological Educational Evaluation is needed. Pastor Chris will communicate this to the family.

Communication with Parents

- North Carolina is a one-party consent state to recording conversations.
- That means, if one party knows the recording is taking place, it's legal.

- Are you kidding me?
 - NO!
 - It happens
- We cannot diagnose or suggest a diagnosis
 - Can't say:
 - "I think Mary is dyslexic"
 - ...Has ADHD
 - ...Has anxiety or depression
- Why?
 - Because we are not trained psychologists or medical doctors
- What can we do?
 - Describe the behavior

Conversations Continued...

USE BUZZ WORDS



- Struggling to attend in class (paying attention)
- Seems to lose focus when...
- Needs a lot of redirection
- Drifts during class time/circle time
- Has difficulty with keeping cubby clean

Dropping hints and laying the groundwork:

- Usually hits in Kindergarten and first grade
- 1st time hearing this information
- If oldest child
- If first time in structured school

What have we tried?

- Re-direction
- Reminders
- Personal space
- Quiet space
- Extra time
- Still struggling?

Best language:

“I recommend discussing these concerns with your pediatrician.”

Prepared for:

Are other teachers seeing the same behavior?

Just in one class?

Be prepared for the spicy meatball response of:

“You just want my kid on drugs so your job is easier.”

KEY POINT

It all
depends on
relationship.

- When you have established a positive relationship with the parents:
 - Trust you
 - Respect you
 - They know their child is in good hands
 - They know you love their child
- You can then have the most difficult of conversations

Progress Reports

Keep this in mind as the new year begins:

- Document the strengths
- Document the areas for growth

- They are paying \$\$\$\$ for you to be paying attention to their child.
- It's ok to be honest
- It's ok to document the struggles
- It's **NECESSARY** to document the
 - Deficits
 - Weaknesses
 - Poor behavior
 - Challenges with peers

NEW SCHOOL
YEAR SO...

**LET'S
GO!**

