

June 6, 2017

Dear Parents of Rising 5th and 6th Graders:

Reading engages the mind, unleashes creativity, sharpens language skills, increases vocabulary, and develops higher level thinking skills . Children who love to read generally have higher IQs, are more creative, and do better in school.

There are many layers of skills involved in becoming a successful reader. These skills need to be practiced to remain sharp. With this in mind the summer reading program for the 5th and 6th Grades will have two components: one required and one optional.

All students in the rising 5th and 6th grades have had their independent reading level assessed. The independent reading level should be the level that the student can read and understand with 98% accuracy. This will be noted on the rising 6th grade report cards. If it is not noted on the rising 5th grade report cards, please email me and I will let you know what it is. It is important to choose books that are a good fit for the independent reading level of your child. I am happy to help you figure this out. I belong to a special website through Fountas and Pinnell which gives the reading level of many books. Additionally Scholastic provides some levels for some books. If no level is provided the general rule of thumb is to read the second page of the book. If there are five or more words that you do not know, the book is too hard. It is also helpful to have an adult read the page and ask the child to tell them what the page was about.

Required:

A student must read one book from at least three of five different categories or genres on his or her grade level list. The categories are Religion, Social Studies, Science, Classics, and Literature. This allows for a wide variety of interests, but also requires students to explore genres they might not otherwise read. This means each student only needs to read a total of three books. Almost all listed books can be found in our library or on classroom bookshelves. If a student would like to read a book that is not on the list, he should have a parent call or email the homeroom teacher for approval **before** reading the book. Please speak with or email Mrs. Maxwell (kimumaxwell@aol.com) if you have any questions.

A report must be filled out for each book. The report form is attached to this email and extra copies are available on the bulletin board inside the front door of the school. Each report needs to be filled out by the student and signed by a parent. These reports need to be turned in to the homeroom teacher at the beginning of school. Those students who fail to complete their summer reading will be required to attend study hall most afternoons until they have turned in their three reports.

Optional:

Students may read and report on additional books. If your student reads and reports on 5 or more books, they will receive a special award.

Happy reading and enjoy your summer!

Mrs. Maxwell

P. S. I have attached a summer reading letter written by the California Library Association to this that cites important research regarding your child's academic progress that is directly related to the amount of summer reading they do.

For additional research on the importance of summer reading,

please visit the [California Library Association's Summer Reading research page](#).

Summer Learning Loss

- When young people aren't engaged in educational activities during the summer, they experience learning loss.¹
- Reading just 5 books over the summer can prevent summer learning loss.
- In a study of fourth graders, the students who read for fun every day scored the highest on reading assessment tests.³
- Summer reading loss is cumulative. By the end of 6th grade, children who consistently lose reading skills over the summer will be two years behind their classmates.⁴
- Students who participated in a summer reading program had better reading skills at the end of third grade and scored higher on standardized tests than students who did not participate.⁵

The Achievement Gap

Children who have easy access to books read more books. The more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.¹³

Children who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave high school without a diploma than proficient readers. Summer Reading programs encourage young children and families to read regularly and libraries provide access to reading materials year round.⁶

Rich, engaging and free educational activities like summer reading programs are excellent tools to address the achievement gap. More than half of the achievement gap between lower and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.⁸

Ensuring that books are available to any child at any time of the year is a necessary step towards closing the reading achievement gap.¹⁶

Children living in poverty are more likely to lose reading skills over the summer than children whose families are more affluent. Regular access to public libraries can make the difference between their summer setback and summer success.^{6,7}

Students who read widely and frequently are higher achievers than students who read rarely and narrowly.¹⁵

Students who read recreationally out-perform those who do not.^{9,11}

Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view.¹⁴