



KILDEER COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 96

Spring, 2019

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

As summer approaches, we thought we'd take a few moments to discuss the importance of maintaining solid reading habits over the summer. Much of the research around summer reading suggests that students can lose more than two months of academic progress if they do not continue to read during summer months. Taking trips with your student to the library, listening to audiobooks in the car, and discussing the books you are reading together are some of the ways you can continue to help your student develop life-long reading habits.

In the past, we have required our middle school students in District 96 to read a specific book selected by teachers as their summer reading assignment. This year, instead, we are offering a list of titles with varied genres and interests from which students can choose to read. We hope that by giving students more ownership over the choice of books that they are reading, their enthusiasm for reading will continue to grow. Recent research by the Pediatric Academic Societies has found that students "who were allowed to select books to take home at the end of the spring term had better reading scores when they returned to school in the fall, compared to kids who received books they had not chosen" (2015). If our goal for summer reading is to ensure that students continue to read for pleasure, we feel it only makes sense to give students options so that they have an enjoyable experience.

Incoming 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students should read at least one title from the list of suggested books.

Because the books offered are from various genres, topics, and levels of difficulty, we are confident all children should be able to select a good-fit book that interests them from the available options. We've included with the list a few websites that will enable parents to gather more information about the books' subject matter to help guide book selection.

As you may know, when a teacher considers a text for instructional purposes, he or she usually examines a book's quantitative level (Lexile number) and qualitative level (vocabulary, sentence structure of, themes, etc.), as well as the skills of the reader versus the skills of the task. Since the Lexile score is only a small part of the method used to determine a book's complexity level, please do not ask students to make their book choices based on Lexile or other measures. The purpose of summer reading is to help foster a love of reading; therefore, we strongly feel that students should be able to read a book that is a little more or less difficult than those they read in school if it is of high interest to them. If you are concerned that a book might be much too difficult for your child, a good test might be to have him or her read aloud a page of the book. If your child struggles with knowing more than five words on a single page, you might wish to explore another option.

We are asking parents to complete the attached parent acknowledgment form indicating that you've discussed the book choices with your child. In addition to selecting one book from the assigned list, we are challenging all students to read as much over the summer as possible. Students can track their reading progress via the attached chart. Near the summer's end, students should craft a written response to their new LA teacher describing their reading experiences over the summer. These responses will help teachers get to know their new students' reading preferences and interests. On the first day of school in August, students will bring the book they read off the assigned list, their reading chart, parental acknowledgment form, and their written letter.

Happy reading!