

Summertime – Keep Reading

The temperatures are rising, the sun is shining (we hope), and we'll all ready for a little time to relax, unwind, and rejuvenate for the next year. Most of us have already pulled together our stack of summer reads. I know my pile is growing more and more all the time as I see what my friends are reading, and I'm already in countdown mode for my week at the beach! It's important that we try to help our students build those summer reading piles and get access to great books to read over the summer, too.

Summer Hours

If you are lucky enough to have an extended contract beyond the school year, consider spreading those days throughout the summer to have the library open every once in a while for students to access for new books. If you don't have extra days, perhaps the PTO or school district might consider a grant to support having the library open a few hours every few weeks for student book exchange.

Long-Term Checkout

If you can't get the library open, then send the library home with the students. I worked at a year-round school, and we always encouraged the students to check out books over break. Especially in places where it is difficult for students to get to the public library, checking out a few books (or more) over the summer could give them options for reading during the months when the books are otherwise just sitting on the shelves.

Twitter/Instagram

Set-up a social media account to help you share with your students what you are reading and to share what they are reading. Readers advisory can happen face to face and online—especially with older students. This could be a fun way to connect with student and teacher readers, too, encouraging everyone to be reading during the summer months. Highlight some of the new titles you'll have available in the fall, or maybe focus on an author or genre. Use the social media as a way to stay connected even when the school doors are shut.

Public Library Collaborations

Public libraries have always been the leader in summer reading programs. Invite the librarians to talk with your students before the end of the summer. Work together to get them excited about participating in the library's program. Offer incentives in the fall for those students who do participate. Consider teaming up with the public librarian to offer a program during the summer so that your students see you at the public library, too.

Local Businesses

A family read-in at a local restaurant or park one night could be a great summer fun activity. Try to set them up so that all you are doing is arranging the space. Keep it simple. Reading and family and fun all together. Perhaps the restaurant might offer a discount for students who are caught reading a book or maybe host a reading fundraiser for the library.

Your Ideas?

There is nothing new and revolutionary in these ideas. These are just some of the things I've thought about for summer options for connecting students and reading. Some may work in your community and some may not. You may even have some ideas that aren't on the list. Hopefully, these idea sparks will open up the door to possibilities for you to consider what might work in your school.

We all need fun time in the sun, but we want to encourage our students to spend some of that time sitting on the porch or under a tree reading a book that they just can't put down.

About the Editor

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Harvey received his master's degree from Indiana University and is the author of six books, most recently *The 21st-Century Elementary School Library Program: Managing For Results, 2nd Edition*. He is a past-president of the American Association of School Librarians, and his school has been the recipient of the National School Library Program of the Year.

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