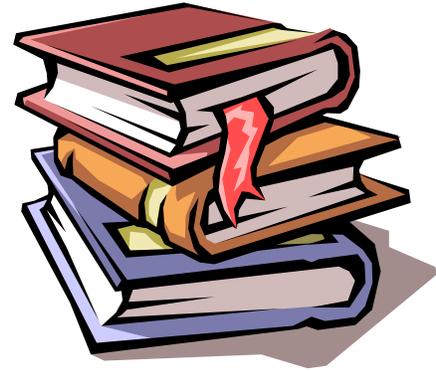


June 9, 2017



Dear Parents,

For us summer is synonymous with long lazy days of reading. It is a time that we can choose to read anything and everything we can get our hands on—titles off our “someday” list, beloved authors, re-reads, books that grab our attention on visits to the library or trips to the bookstore, books our own kids are reading, even titles we are considering for the next school year. It is our hope as middle school English teachers to inspire this same love of reading in our students: to share with them the joy of reading, and to instill reading habits that will ensure their success in school. It is a wonderful thing that reading for pleasure is so beneficial to student success. Middle school students at SJS set individual summer reading goals and work to complete them over the summer months. This is a requirement.

As a parent, it is important to support your child’s summer reading. Summer reading is critical for maintaining a student’s reading fluency and reading level. There is a very real, researched and highly documented phenomena known in lay terms as the “summer slide.” Research shows that students in the United States on average lose 2.6 months on reading achievement over summer break. Because reading loss is cumulative, this can have a profoundly negative impact on an already low reader. Research also shows that reading level is highly correlated with school success. As students move through middle school and high school, reading skills are no longer explicitly taught while the reading material becomes much more complex. Students need to be able to read difficult text for sustainable periods of time and think critically about the material. In order to develop these skills and maintain one’s reading level, one must read—just right books, easy books and challenge books. The documented number of books students should read to prevent “slide” hovers around six; it seems to be the magic number.

Research shows that 43% of American parents just want their kids to have fun over the summer. As parents we understand this sentiment, but we also believe reading is fun. You just have to get the right book in the right kid’s hands to hook that student. Please ask your student to share his/her summer reading goals with you and support your child’s reading development. Below we’ve listed some ideas for encouraging summer reading:

1. Let your son/daughter choose what he/she wants to read. Choice is really important for adolescents.
2. Read and discuss a book with your son/daughter.
3. Create a literary rich environment:
 - a. model your own reading
 - b. create a regular reading time or ritual
 - c. share books you loved as an adolescent
 - d. discuss books/news articles
4. Read “Everyday”

5. Read aloud. Even pre-teens benefit from reading out loud because it builds comprehension with books above one's reading level.
6. Play word games together: Scrabble, Bananagrams, Scatagories, crossword puzzles, etc...
7. Visit the library and bookstore.

It is difficult to find time to read in a season packed with distractions. Make it a priority by building reading into your family culture so your son/daughter returns to school in the fall ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Middle School English Team