

Let's Do Something About Summer Reading Loss

by Michelle Wolf

Considering what we have learned about the effects of summer learning loss, especially on students from low socioeconomic families, it is imperative that we take some time before the school year ends to encourage and support good reading behaviors throughout the summer months.

Studies have shown that having students read four or five books over the summer months can prevent reading achievement losses. As teachers, librarians, principals, and coaches we can make this happen. Here are some great ideas.

1) By any means necessary, get books into students' hands!

- a.** Take students on a trip to your local public library and make sure they all meet the librarian and get a library card. If the library has a summer reading program, have all your students enroll.
- b.** Weed out your classroom library and give students books to take home for summer reading. Be sure to get permission from your principal if books were purchased with school funds.
- c.** Host a book drive. Send a letter home to your school community asking for new and used book donations. Help students select four or five books for summer reading.

2) Create book buzz! Students are more likely to read books they have heard about or are familiar with. Devote 15 minutes a day for the last few weeks of school to introduce students to new titles, authors, and series. Introduce books from a variety of genres and generate hype and excitement for potential summer reading books.

3) Distribute simple reading/writing activities to support and encourage summer reading. Have students bring the activity Sheet back to school in the fall for validation and for congratulations on their achievements.

4) Devise an incentive program that rewards summer reading. Recognition and feedback can be the simplest yet most rewarding incentive for students, most especially our struggling students. Consider using your school web site to create a summer reading blog where students can post, or a wall where they can get feedback and recognition for their summer reading.

5) Discuss book clubs and encourage students to start one of their own. (See our link for great book club books.)