Ways to Promote Summer Reading and Prevent Summer Slide
Ideas Gathered from FCPS Elementary School Teams
April 2015

Discuss the need for promoting summer reading with all teachers.

Provide Access to Books

- Work with the PTA or business partners to fund books for students who may not have access to books over the summer. Give students book choices. Obtain books from used book stores, donations, or “Books for America.” Use book fair funds to purchase books to give to students.
- Give students a bag of books for over the summer with a reading log or journal.
- Participate in Project LIFT when possible. Have a pre- and post-LIFT reading party for students and parents. Fund something similar if your school is not part of Project LIFT.
- Keep the school library open during designated times over the summer, so students can check out and return books. Provide some structured activities. Enlist the help of volunteers, such as retired teachers.
- Open the school library once a week in the early evening when parents might be able to attend with their children. Provide a bus so parents and students are able to come to the school.
- Open the library for students during SELT (even for the students not attending SELT).
- Allow students to check out books from the school library over the summer.
- Call the homes of targeted students and invite them to library “open house” events.
- Create a “book cart” of donated books that students can check out over the summer, if the school library is not available. Have books in the school office available for check-out.
- Create a “school library” in an alternate location in the school neighborhood. Get books into the neighborhood. Volunteer teachers (or retired teachers) could provide read alouds during this time as well.
- Consider developing a mobile library or summer reading van.
- Create a Little Free Library in front of the school where students can exchange one book for another.
- Send home “Keep” books.
- Encourage participation in summer reading programs in public libraries.
- Sponsor a school reading night at a nearby public library several times over the summer. (Coordinate with the public library.) Teachers and school administrators attend and assist students to obtain library cards, find appropriate books, and engage students and their parents in reading activities.
- Take a field trip to a public library and obtain library cards.
- Invite librarians from the local public library to visit the school and talk to students about the Fairfax County Public Library summer reading program.
- Sponsor a school book exchange in June so that students can obtain books.
- Encourage a high school or middle school to collect books for an elementary school as a service project.
- Ensure that students who need assistance are enrolled and attend FCPS summer learning opportunities (SELT, Young Scholars, Bridge to K).
**Develop Summer Reading Goals with Students**

- Work with students to create goals for summer reading (specific number of books, titles, or topics) and plans that will help them meet their goals. Follow up with a book celebration when school begins.
- Help students create a list of books (Books I Want to Read over the Summer) in their reader’s notebook.
- Provide individual assistance in making a summer reading plan with targeted students. Meet with their parents and show parents how to read with their students. Create book lists with these students and discuss the lists with the parents and students. Provide books for these students.

**Provide Pleasurable Reading Experiences**

- Create summer book clubs that meet throughout the summer to read and discuss books. The book clubs could meet at school, public library, or in a community room in an apartment complex. Along with reading and discussing books, the students might enjoy learning to play thinking and problem-solving games, such as checkers, chess, or Battle Ships.
- Create a summer book club during SELT.
- Provide shared reading experiences in the neighborhood. Students listen to a story and read along with the volunteer teacher. They could also participate in activities related to the storybook experience.
- Host a summer story hour in the school library or other location during the summer. Ask volunteer teachers to read aloud to students and their parents.
- Hold summer literacy events, such as a literacy picnic, Reading in the Park (use a neighborhood park), Books and Popsicles, or Beach Towel Reading.
- Create a summer fitness program that includes reading, writing, and physical activities.
- Encourage the development of parent-student book clubs or neighborhood book clubs where parents and students read and discuss books. Encourage them to invite the principal, assistant principal, or a teacher to visit a meeting.

**Support Reading of Electronic Materials**

- Share online resources with parents at an end-of-the-year school reading night. Provide information about how to log on to the library online databases (Tumble Books, Pebble Go, National Geographic Kids, myON, World Book Kids, etc.) Promote the use of the library online databases over the summer.
- Ensure that students know their log-ons and pass words for the library online databases. Consider creating a refrigerator card.
- Encourage students to read myON over the summer. Create summer reading lists in myON for each grade level or for specific students.
- Host online reading challenges.
- Create a bookmark that lists appropriate websites for elementary students.
- Find donors who will provide Kindles or iPads for students. Then provide electronic books.
- Allow students to check out Kindles or iPads to use for summer reading.
- Allow students to use school computers or iPads under supervision during designated times during the summer.
Create Interest in Reading

- Create an end-of-the-year reading celebration as a kick-off to summer reading, such as a “Reading Field Day” or a Pep Rally for Reading.
- Provide lists of suggested books for all grades and provide specific suggestions for students who have reading needs.
- Teach students how to write book recommendations and provide ways for students to share these recommendations. Video some book recommendations and share on the school news show.
- Create a bulletin board in June (with a follow-up bulletin board in September) featuring quotes from students, post cards, and book covers.
- During the last month or last weeks of schools, classroom teachers read aloud excerpts from a variety of books to create interest and encourage students to read these books over the summer.
- Create a student-generated list of book recommendations for each grade.
- Create lists of “Top Picks” or book recommendations (Top Picks from Teachers and Students)
- Encourage participation in the myON summer reading contest.
- Create a reading BINGO card.
- Provide a variety of authentic reading experiences to get students excited about reading.
- Provide some summer enrichment sessions.
- Partner with high school athletic teams to develop reading buddies.
- Ask parents to send in pictures of students reading and post on 24-7 sites.

Enlist Parents as Partners

- Develop a newsletter for parents about summer reading with tips about reading with their children. Consider developing multiple articles about this topic. Post some on 24-7 and provide translations.
- Create a page on the school website as a parent resource with ideas about books, reading, writing, summer activities, websites, etc.
- Provide a presentation for parents about summer reading before the end of the school year.
- Create videos for parents about how to read with your child and post them on the school’s web page or 24-7 sites. (I read, you read, and we read together!)
- Give parents questions or sentence frames to help them discuss reading with their children.
- Call parents to remind them about summer reading.
- Send home a packet for each grade level with ideas for summer reading.
- Develop a summer calendar of ideas for student learning over the summer including resources, apps, websites, literacy activities, etc.
- Host a parent night for the parents of targeted students to show how to support their children’s learning over the summer. Create a brochure and have it translated.
- Make parents aware of available resources.
- Reach out to FECEP parents.
- Implement Partners in Print program during the summer.
Communicate about Reading

- Send email messages or reading post cards to students or parents over the summer.
- Give post cards or envelopes (stamped and addressed) to students or create a school email account. Encourage students to send post cards or emails to the school email account about their summer reading. Volunteers respond as a fictional character, the school mascot, or as themselves.
- Call students over the summer to discuss reading (use teacher volunteers).
- Use a google doc form to communicate about reading among students and teachers.
- Use Google apps to communicate with students over the summer.
- Encourage students to keep summer reading logs and return them to their teachers at the beginning of the school year.
- Blog about books with students.
- Provide video book talks and post them on school’s 24-7 sites.
- Create videos about reading for parents and post them on school’s 24-7 sites.
- Communicate with students about reading using FCPS 24-7. Develop online book clubs.
- Send out reminders about summer reading using email, 24-7 site, school signs, etc.
- Assign specific students a teacher partner to ensure two-way communication over the summer.
- Create a school discussion board about summer reading.
- Post a summer reading “Tip of the Week” on the school’s website.
- Create book clubs on FCPS 24-7.
- Give students a summer literacy checklist or Good Reader bookmark or magnet.

Encourage Writing

- Create teacher-student pen pals.
- Give students writing journals to use over the summer.
- Sponsor Summer Writing Nights at a nearby library.