

Read, Read, Read:

Research shows that children of poverty know about 800 words while middle class children have 3500 words. The research also shows that publishers of books and writers of achievement tests are based on those 3500 words. When we read of the socio-economic variable in test scores, we learn that poverty is not about intelligence, it is about a lack of words.

We also know that the single, most important ingredient to academic success and future employment opportunities is your level of reading. So what can we do right now to help the academic achievement and future of all of our students? READ, READ, READ.

The School District of Durand recognizes this importance, and works tirelessly with reading in the daily curriculum. But children need to read more. Recently the Arkansaw Elementary School held a "Read-In, Rock-In, Lock-In" for grades 4, 5, and 6. Students brought their favorite books to the IMC to read, have snacks, and share their stories. It was a wonderful opportunity to emphasize the love of reading. AES also is celebrating students who have reached the 100 book plateau. These students recognize the love of reading, and will also be the beneficiaries of life-long skills they are acquiring from improving their reading.

Next week is Dr. Seuss Day, and our Early Learning Center and Elementary Schools will use this day to study the wit and wisdom of Dr. Seuss's writing. Another opportunity to demonstrate that reading is fun.

The School District believes passionately about early reading and the benefits of reading at a young age that we participate in the Imagination Library program, sponsored by Dolly Parton and the Dollywood Foundation. All district children from birth to 5 years old can register with the district office and receive a free, hard-covered book, delivered to the child in the mail each month. This is a great way to generate the excitement of reading with your child, and expose your youngster to some of those 3500 words.

Our earliest learners benefit from parents, grandparents, and older siblings reading aloud to these youngsters. Reading aloud to children help them acquire the information and skills they need in life, such as knowledge of the printed letter and words, the relationship between sound and print, the meaning of many words, the difference between written language and everyday conversation, and of course, the pleasure of reading.

As children and toddlers begin to read on their own, encourage them to read orally to you as well as silently for pleasure. Both types of reading bring different skills to the table. Provide a text rich environment for your children, with plenty of options of reading materials. Our Community Library is an excellent source of age appropriate books, and a resource for your questions. Use the book fairs our schools provide, shop those summer thrift sales, and spend time in the library to help give your student all the advantages they deserve.

