

## **A guideline for middle and high school students approved by the LPSS Summer Reading Committee and found to be consistent with research on adolescent literacy development:**

*The goal of summer reading in Lafayette Parish School System will be to promote and inspire an enjoyment of reading.*

In order to increase opportunities for all students to engage in effective summer reading and become lifelong readers, a committee was formed to address inequities among summer reading programs throughout the parish. All stakeholders – students, teachers, parents, school and public librarians, school and district administrators – had representation on the committee. After studying best practices in literacy instruction and examining the recommendations from leading professional organizations involved in summer reading programs, the committee reached consensus about the desired nature of summer reading in Lafayette Parish.

Research indicates that frequent and sustained reading throughout the summer maintains and promotes literacy skills. The Heyns Study (1978), a seminal examination of summer reading at the secondary level, found that children in every income group who read six or more books during the summer months gained more in reading achievement than children who did not. Encouraging and allowing students to read for pleasure promote the type of self-directed and on-going reading necessary for students to reach this goal, thereby preventing summer reading loss. **For this reason, the goal of summer reading in Lafayette Parish School System will be to promote and inspire an enjoyment of reading.** In order to fully reach this goal, all aspects of school-based summer reading programs, from the construction of reading lists to the assessment component in the fall, should align with this stated goal.

This summer reading guideline is intended to provide support for schools as they implement their respective summer reading programs. After much study into summer reading practices and research on literature instruction, the Lafayette Parish School System supports two approaches to summer reading in secondary schools: 1) Students' Free Choice and 2) Guided Support for Independent Study of Novels. These two options are outlined in the remainder of this document.

### **The following sources articulate the importance of summer reading programs:**

Allington, Richard L. and Anne McGill-Franzen. "The Impact of Summer Set Back on the Reading Achievement Gap." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85.1 (2004): 68 – 75.

Bracey, Gerald. "What Students Do in the Summer." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83.7 (2002): 497-498.

Heyns, Barbara. *Summer Learning and the Effects of Schooling*. New York, NY: Academic Press, 1978.

Kim, Jimmy. "Summer Reading and the Ethnic Achievement Gap." *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9.2 (2004): 169-188.

McGill-Franzen, Anne and Richard Allington. "Lost Summers: For Some Children, Few Books and Few Opportunities to Read." *Classroom Leadership*, 4.9 (2001).

Murray, Renee and Ione Phillips. "Getting Students to Read More: How Do You Do It." *Literacy Across the Curriculum: Setting and Implementing Goals for Grades Six Through Twelve*. Ed. Southern Regional Education Board. Atlanta, GA: SREB, 2005.

## **Summer Reading Program Option One: Students' Free Choice**

Readers, whether they are adolescents or adults, engage in wide reading of independently selected literature. For this reason, a summer reading program that promotes student choice and encourages wide reading for enjoyment – such as the program promoted by the Students' Free Choice summer reading option – is the most authentic approach. Research indicates that this approach to summer reading, where students are encouraged to explore their own reading interests and to read materials on their emotional and intellectual level, is most likely to inspire a love of reading, to build lifelong readers, and to create a culture of reading within a student body. For schools seeking to implement the Students' Free Choice option, the following practices are supported by the research and should be included in the summer reading program:

- Clear articulation of rationale, expectations, and guidelines to both parents and students in an introductory letter
- Suggested choices of novels without limitations or restrictions on students, regardless of their academic track in school
- Inclusion of titles, authors' first and last names, annotations, and identification of any titles that may contain mature or controversial content on the suggested book lists
- Wide variety of genres and formats, such as mystery, science fiction, historical fiction, biography, classics, nonfiction, magazines, and graphic novels
- Attractive, “kid-friendly” visual layout, such as a newsletter or brochure
- Planned opportunities to discuss and share summer readings with peers (*i.e.*, book club meetings with teacher or parent facilitators, student-led discussion groups, book talks, classroom discussion strategies such as the book bistro or tea party)
- Use of a reading log to document titles, authors, and brief responses to texts read throughout the summer
- In lieu of formal assessments (*i.e.*, projects, tests), offer a choice of school-wide incentives for participation in the summer reading program, such as bonus points, passes for skipping homework one night or other school privileges, a party or celebration that involves food and/or prizes of relevance to students, or any other incentive that will serve to inspire an individual school's student body

### **The following sources examine best practices in student-choice summer reading programs:**

Krashen, Stephen D. *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Books, 2004.

Williams, Linda. “How I Spent My Summer Vacation.” *Voya*, x.x (2002): 416 – 421.

Williams, Linda. “Summer Belongs in the Hands of the Students: Celebrating Choice in School Reading Lists.” *Voya*, x.x (2003): 368 – 371.

“VOYA's Best High School Summer Reading List.” *Voice of Youth Advocates*. Feb. 2006. 10 Mar. 2007  
<<http://pdfs.voya.com/VO/YA2/VOYA200602BestHighSchool.pdf>>.

## **Summer Reading Program Option Two: Guided Support for Independent Study of Novels**

Some schools or specific academic programs within schools (*i.e.*, honors English, AP, Gifted and Talented) may prefer to include required titles and/or formal graded assessments in the summer reading program. This approach allows students to begin exploring key concepts, works of literature, or themes essential to a course of study awaiting them when they return to school. However, research into the teaching of literature demonstrates that scaffolding – or guided support – is valuable for all students as they engage in challenging reading, and is more likely to promote an aesthetic, enjoyable experience with the literature. During the school year, highly effective literature instruction includes pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading support for students throughout the study of literature. In the summer, when students do not have access to the same level of instructional support they receive in the classroom, it is essential that students still receive guidance for their reading. The Guided Support for Independent Study of Novels option in summer reading seeks to provide this support. When students are provided with the appropriate instructional frontloading (Wilhelm, Baker, and Dube, 2001) and support during and after reading, they are better prepared for summer programs with required titles and/or graded assessments. For schools seeking to implement the Guided Support for Independent Study of Novels option, the following practices are supported by the research and should be included in the summer reading program:

- A clearly articulated rationale for the inclusion of any required title, focusing on the connection the novel and its themes will have to course content, as well as the thematic relevance of the work to students' lives
- Instructional frontloading for each required title, such as handouts or packets on pertinent background information or other strategies to prepare students for the reading
- Guiding questions to direct students in their reading, with an emphasis on the types of topics the teacher plans to address once school resumes
- An assessment rubric for any project, paper, or journaling activities to be completed during the summer
- If applicable, a clear description of the assessment instrument awaiting the student when school resumes, with particular attention to the major components of this assessment
- Attractive, “kid-friendly” visual layout, such as a newsletter or brochure
- Assessments that comprise no more than 10% of the grade in any grading period
- Contact information (phone number, e-mail, and/or Web site) where a student or parent can obtain assistance with questions during the summer

### **The following sources examine best practices in the teaching of literature:**

Bloland, Dagny, D. *Ready, Willing, and Able: Teaching English to Gifted, Talented, and Exceptionally Conscientious Adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Books, 2006.

Jago, Carol. *Classics in the Classroom: Designing Accessible Literature Lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Books, 2004.

Tchudi, Stephen J. and Susan Tchudi. *The English Language Arts Handbook: Classroom Strategies for Teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Wilhelm, Jeffrey D., Tanya Baker, and Julie Dube. *Strategic Reading: Guiding Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Books, 2001.