

Dear Parent,

As I've mentioned before, each of our students is tested each fall, winter, and spring using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). Students fall into one of three categories: intensive, strategic, or benchmark. Students scoring in the benchmark range are at or above grade level with their reading fluency and/or accuracy. Those students scoring at the strategic level are just below grade level, and students at the intensive range are significantly below their grade level peers.

DIBELS is a reading fluency test (how quickly a child reads words and/or passages) that also assesses a student's accuracy with words he/she is reading. Both fluency and accuracy have been directly linked to comprehension in many research studies. In general, students who are fluent/accurate readers comprehend much more of what they read than students who are less fluent/accurate.

With early readers (kindergarten and first grade) parents can help their child with reading fluency in many ways. Reading to your child is extremely important. It is also important to allow your child to read to you. If they are not yet a reader, you can ask them about letters and letter sounds as you are reading to them. It is extremely important to offer them praise for their efforts in their attempts at reading.

The above mentioned activities are also important for our second through fifth grade students as well. However, it is also important for these students to begin practicing their reading on their own at their independent reading level. We have the PERFECT program to help make this happen: Accelerated Reader (AR). Students, with the help of their teacher, can pick out books at their independent reading level and bring these books home to practice. They can practice by reading silently to themselves, reading aloud to themselves, or reading aloud to an adult.

Due to the many curriculum items that our teachers are accountable for, AR time here at school is limited, especially in our upper grades. Our students **MUST** practice their reading at home. It is even more important for our students who score in the strategic or intensive range to practice reading at home. They will not catch up with their grade level peers if this does not happen.

I also understand that there are nights that the homework is quite heavy, so it is tough to add reading in on top of this. I would encourage you then to also make use of Saturday and Sunday for reading. Reading practice should not be considered homework (on the weekends). It is a free time choice, and hopefully your children can find books that they like so much that they will want to make reading a free time choice. However, in the age of video games, computers, and the TV, it is often not what children choose to do with their free time. **This is why I need your help.** I need parents to make reading a priority in the household. It has to be an expectation, especially if your son or daughter is below grade level at this point.

Please help me out by setting an expectation for reading in your household. Model by reading yourself as well. **Turn the TV off** (I do make the exception for parents when the Tigers are in the playoffs or the Lions are on Monday Night Football) and have all family members read during the week. Set some time aside on the weekends for reading as well. If your child is behind in reading, they will not catch up without practicing. Please encourage and reinforce this practice at home.

Now that we have the Home Connect, and you are notified about your child's AR, you can help monitor your child's reading practice. You can set goals about how many AR points you would like to see your child achieve. You will also be able to check up on this progress anytime you would like.

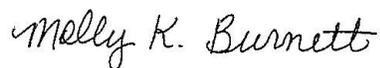
In the table below, I have listed some suggested AR point goal ranges for our students. I have not included kindergarten and first grade in this table, as many of these students are not yet capable of reading independently using AR books. (If you do have a kindergarten or first grade reader, they will be starting to take AR tests. They will get a certificate for every 5 points that they earn. This will continue throughout the school year.) Please look at these ranges with your child, and set AR goals with him or her. There is no doubt in my mind that every one of our second through fifth graders can achieve the goals listed below; some will go well beyond these ranges. I do realize that there are some exceptions to what I have mentioned above. We have some students who truly struggle with reading, and may not be able to reach the goals I have set. I encourage parents to set reasonable goals for these students.

As you can see, I am very passionate about the need to get our students reading. Students who read better, do better in school, and will have a higher likelihood of going to college and securing a job in a career field that they will enjoy. Please help me by helping your child. Sit down with them this weekend and set some reading goals for the school year. I know these goals, and the pursuit of these goals will lead to success for all of our students!

Grade Level	Points by Dec. 1	Points by March 1	Points by June 1
2	10-25	25-50	50-75
3	15-30	35-60	60-85
4	20-35	45-70	70-95
5	25-40	55-80	80-100

If you have questions or concerns about the information I have shared, please do not hesitate to call me.

Regards,



Molly Burnett