



Literacy and recognizing learning needs!

Happy November! It is hard to believe how fast time is going this year. I hope many of you were able to attend the Colin Kartchner event about social media – it was amazing. If not, you can see the parent version on our website.

It is worth the watch!

Many of you already know how very lucky you are to have an amazing school council. They support the school and your students at every turn. One way they support us is through a literacy program. They understand the importance of literate students and work hard to provide and organize volunteers that assist with extra reading time for students in the school. There is no way to properly thank them for their volunteered time.

While in discussion with the school council about this program some very good questions were asked. This newsletter will try to address these questions or refer you to a source where you can read for yourself what the research says about the importance of reading and learning needs.

How much reading is enough?

This is a very good question! Many parents wonder how much reading should their children be doing at home? The education research varies a little on the exact number but here is a close averaged summary of what the experts are telling us. To **maintain at grade level reading** there should be at least **60 minutes of purposeful reading** a day! In addition, if you have **a struggling reader** there should be an **additional 40-90 minutes** to help bring them up to grade level. **More importantly** the reading they do should be something that the **students have chosen, are interested in and, is at an appropriate reading level**. An appropriate reading level is a level where they can access the text quickly and fluently. Often times this means they are reading books below their actual reading level so it becomes a source of **enjoyment instead of work**. (Jerry Salmon has a great article on about this I will link below. I would encourage all of you to read it!)

Many of you might be thinking WOW! That's a lot of reading minutes and how am I supposed to know which texts are at their level? Before you think this is an overwhelming task that is impossible to reach, especially with sports, piano, youth activities and every other busy aspect of life let me tell you what we are doing in the school. Each of your students are **reading at least 25-30 minutes a day** through independent free reading time. During this time teachers, who are aware of their reading level and needs, are connecting them with reading options designed to promote a love of reading! In addition, they are in reading in other classes as a group and individually.

On some days they will be getting their sixty minutes in school. **Most days** they will be a little short, but they should have at least half of the needed 60 minutes in school.

Unfortunately, we do not have the time or the resources to do all we would like to do with all the subject matter in all the subject areas in a 6-hour day, **a lot of the responsibility is expected of the students** themselves and of course the responsibility really falls on the **guardians of those students**. At least until they are independent enough to do it on their own.

Understandably life is busy, and the reading ***may not take place every night*** but the **more consistent the reading is the better. Please try and carve out whatever time you can.**

Here is an interesting bit of information on reading time that you should consider!

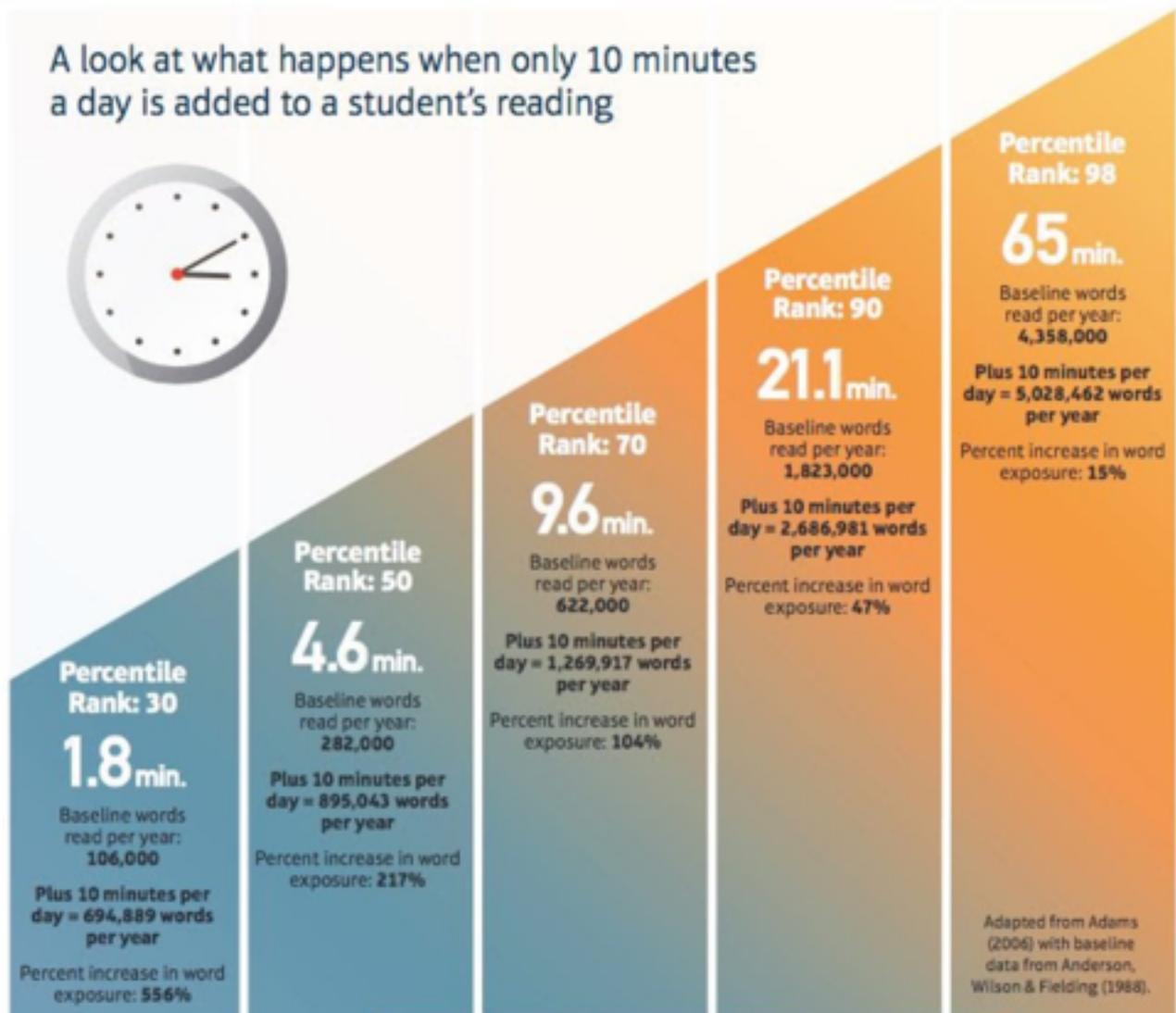


CHART I

From Disrupting Thinking by Beers & Probst, p. 137

Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A"
reads **20 minutes**
each day

3600 minutes in
a school year

Student "B"
reads **5 minutes**
each day

900 minutes in
a school year

Student "C"
reads **1 minute**
each day

180 minutes in
a school year

1,800,000 words



90th percentile

282,000 words



50th percentile

8,000 words



10th percentile

By the end of 6th grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

Our observation is when students are helped to find books that interest them and they enjoy, reading becomes something they want to do and coming up with the minutes necessary for growth is a lot easier.

As far as accessing text at their level we have teachers that are aware of their level and what books are available. They do their best to start them on books that they may find interesting and genuinely enjoy. Another highly encouraged option is to take them to the public library, and when you find the books they enjoy, read with your students! **It will not take long for you to tell how they are doing.** Look to see if they are enjoying the book, or if they are comprehending the story after they read. If they aren't understanding the literature they may be in a book that is too complex for their level.

Contact us anytime you have questions, we can connect you with a reading expert!

Jerry Salmon Article.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15dbG8hH8nRvrIh8Nnz0zTSUmX10fV6dIaIN9bGXMEqY/edit>

Question 2. – How do I know if my student struggles in reading or school in general?

This is also a very good question? All adults are concerned about their child. They wonder how they are doing in school and sometimes they wonder where they fit in with the rest of the group. I truly understand this concern but, would like to suggest that worrying about if they are moving forward **with the group** is a less important question than worrying about if they are **moving forward!**

As teachers we have the advantage. We work with large groups of students every day and have many years of experience for comparison. My number one suggestion to determining if your child is making progress or if they are at grade level is **ASK THE TEACHER!** Too often parents wonder, but do nothing. If you are concerned, **do not leave it up to the school entirely** – take the initiative to check in with the teachers and have a genuine conversation about the abilities or concerns of your child.

Teachers are committed to communicating any **serious concerns** they may have and, often **even the little concerns** but, to be sure, you should talk to the teacher just in case your expectations are different than the teachers. For instance, often a teacher will **not report home** a problem if the **student is at grade level**, even if it is at a lower grade level. Even though they work with the students to encourage increased effort or achievement the report may not come home. Parents may have a higher expectation for their students and in truth, may have a greater ability to hold them accountable about taking ownership for their learning.

You need to know that the schools' teachers love talking to parents who want to work with their child, and are looking for ways that will help them to get it done! **It is not a burden if you contact the school and want to talk about your child.** This type of verbal correspondence is **more effective than any report card!**

Teachers are a great resource, I am also attaching a great article that may give you some information to determine if you child may be struggling or, may have learning needs. **It is a short article and very informative.** Please read the article provided by our learning support teacher – Kathy Thomas.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/autism-learning-disabilities/learning-disabilities-and-disorders.htm?pdf=12930>

The safety and learning of your children is our first priority. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Mr. Leishman



Kindness Week, outdoor activities, nutrition break and Remembrance day—whew—it's been a busy month. End of volleyball and beginning basketball. Dates and times for games are on the Athletic calendar on the website - Keep an eye on our website for other dates and upcoming activities.



