

1/08/09

## Principal's Corner

As we begin the New Year, many of us are focused on the positive changes we want to make in our lives. As parents, you may be thinking about ways to help your children be the very best students they can be this year.

One way parents can help their children succeed in school is by helping them develop as readers. As a parent, you can support your children's reading development by providing time each day for quiet reading at home. While many families are very busy, it is a good idea to carve out a time when all members of the family read. Parents may enjoy the newspaper while their children enjoy their own books and magazines! In this way, parents serve as role models and support the development of lifelong reading habits.

Another way parents can support their children's growth as readers is to allow their children to choose books that may seem a little easier than what they think they are capable of reading. Research suggests that the more "high success" reading children do, the stronger they will be as readers. Parents should encourage reading that is "comfortable" for their children and avoid pushing their children to read "harder" books. Children may choose to challenge themselves, but this is usually most effective when the topic is of interest to them.

Next week, all students in grades 3-5 will take the NYS English Language Arts assessments. (Grade 6 students take the assessment the following week.) The best preparation for taking these assessments is, of course, a lot of reading! At school, the children are prepared by reading, writing, thinking, and talking ---about how readers make sense of texts, and how writers write them. Of course, the teachers have also prepared their students by teaching them test-taking strategies and making sure that they are familiar with the test's format.

In my next Principal's Corner, I will review the purpose of the assessments and how we, as educators, use the results to improve teaching and learning in our schools. For now, I ask that you help your children feel comfortable and confident about taking the assessments. Let them know that the assessments are simply a chance for them to show how much they've grown as readers, writers, and thinkers. There are no consequences for wrong answers, but we want them to do their very best, so we can learn about their skills and teach them what they need to know.

What matters most is helping our children continue to grow and develop as lifelong readers, writers, and thinkers.

Enjoy reading with your children...

Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Mrs. Herschlein

