

April 9, 2008

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

Summer is coming and our thoughts turn to....Reading! As in years past, we have a great selection of titles for all to read while sitting on the beach, resting in a hammock or lounging around the pool.

Like last year, each student will be expected to select one of two grade level books and choose another book from the recommended reading list.

Entering 6th grade *Hoot*, by Carl Hiaasen, or *The Wanderer*, by Sharon Creech

Entering 7th grade *Pictures of Hollis Woods*, by Patricia Reilly Giff, or *Freak the Mighty*, by Rodman Philbrick

Entering 8th grade *Star Girl*, by Jerry Spinelli, or *The Big Nothing*, by Adrian Fogelin

Entering 9th grade *Whale Talk*, by Chris Crutcher, or *Monster*, by Walter Dean Myers

Each grade-level text was selected based on its reading level, interest level and tie to the Upper Arlington Schools' Pillars of Ethics. These texts will be used at the beginning of next school year to discuss such issues as responsibility to self and others, compassion, trustworthiness and respect.

In addition to providing an opportunity to discuss our Pillars of Ethics, this summer reading program allows us to send a message to students about the importance of developing literacy skills and the power of books. While numerous studies cite the benefits of summer reading programs, we are also advocating summer reading because each of us has been transported to another place and time by a book. We hope the recommended reading list of high interest fiction and non-fiction texts will provide a nudge for reluctant readers, information for parents who would like to put compelling books into their children's hands, and an opportunity for everyone to share in the joys of reading. We encourage parents to read along side their kids and discuss whatever thoughts and reactions are elicited by the stories.

To make it as easy as possible for you to find the books on the recommended reading list, the public library has agreed to stock multiple copies of the titles on our list. You will receive additional information about book sales, reading logs and the recommended reading list from your child's school. We will also post these details on each school's web site.

If you have specific questions about this program, please contact me by sending an email to smartin@uaschools.org.

Sincerely,
Sean C. Martin
Teacher Leader for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Upper Arlington Schools