How to Engage the Community in SUMMER READING

Create a Launch Event

Reach Out to Your Local Media

Utilize Social Media
#SummerReading

A Free Summer Reading Challenge!
Page 4

Handy Templates!
Pages 6 and 7
**Create a LAUNCH EVENT**

**Benefits of holding a launch event:**

- An event engages families and community members in education.
- An event creates a potential positive local news story.
- An event motivates and engages students around READING...and it’s FUN!

**DETERMINE YOUR EVENT SIZE**

What works best for you? Successful summer reading events have been held at a district level, for a single school, or for just a single grade.

**EVENT PARTICIPANTS**

When planning your event, consider inviting stakeholders who can give remarks, do read-alouds, or even participate in hands-on activities with students:

- School leaders and educators
- Families
- Community members
- Local elected officials
- Other people or organizations in your community that support literacy (YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, United Way, etc.)

**WHAT COULD THE EVENT LOOK LIKE?**

**Welcome remarks** (these generally come from a school leader).

**A local VIP conducts a read-aloud** with students and/or makes additional remarks.

**Take-home books are distributed** to all students in attendance in an exciting and engaging way (which provides wonderful photo and video opportunities for the media).

**Family activities**—Families are partners in learning not only during the school year but also in the summer time. Get them excited about summer reading too!

You can share any or all of the following with families during the events:

1. The importance of reading outside of school to turn the “summer slide” into the “summer leap”
2. How to read aloud as a family for fun and learning
3. How to help their children choose enjoyable books that they will be motivated to read
4. How to keep their children engaged in reading and learning over the summer
5. Details about the summer reading goals at their children’s school
EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT
To increase community involvement and awareness, this guide includes a media alert template on page 6 that you can use to announce the event to your community.

TIMING IS KEY!
To make your event as successful as possible and to encourage media attendance, use this best practices checklist:

- Avoid scheduling events on Fridays, if possible
- Start your event in the morning
- Consider any potential conflicts with other events in your community happening on the same day

SHARING YOUR EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT WITH THE MEDIA
Consider the following newsworthy angles to include in your media announcement:

- Students receiving free, take-home books
- Families engaging in reading activities
- A local celebrity conducting a read-aloud

If applicable, contact your school’s or district’s communications office. (They might have a process already in place!)

If your school or district doesn’t have a communications office, start by researching local news outlets. You know your newsmakers! Think about what you read, watch, or listen to, as these are the members of the media you want covering your event.

- Examples: local newspapers and websites, TV and radio stations

If applicable, find the contact information for a local education reporter. Most towns and cities will have a designated education reporter. They typically cover board meetings and have most likely written about your school already.

If there isn’t a dedicated education reporter, send the media alert to news desks, an assignment editor, or the community news reporter.

---

**Invite Clifford to generate more excitement!**

If you’re interested, ask your Scholastic representative to have “Clifford” appear at your event.

Please note that Clifford is by availability only, isn’t guaranteed for every event, and is subject to a separate costume agreement. You will be responsible for finding the appropriate person to wear the Clifford costume.

---

Reach Out to Your LOCAL MEDIA
UTILIZE A PRESS RELEASE
Share the great work that you’re doing! Think of the press release as a tool for you to share your story beyond just an event. A press release tells the WHOLE story. (Template on page 7.)

Post the press release on your school/organization website to reach a larger audience.

Share your press release on social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

Share the press release at PTA meetings, board meetings, or any other appropriate opportunity.

Send the press release to local media. Even if you have already sent out a media alert to promote a specific event, a press release on the day of or after the event still provides an opportunity for you to reach out and raise awareness of your efforts. Additionally, if hosting an event wasn’t right for you, a press release in lieu of a media alert is a great way to generate awareness with the media.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE YOUR MESSAGE WITH #SUMMERREADING
Try these social media ideas to get the word out:

1. Twitter and Instagram are great places to share photos from summer reading kickoff events while using the #SummerReading hashtag.
   Sample post: We celebrated the joy of #SummerReading in our elementary schools today with every fourth-grader taking home books! [Don’t forget to add a photo!]

2. Offer families weekly summer reading tips on Twitter.
   Sample tweet: #SummerReading Tip of the Week: Summer reading should be fun reading! Read aloud and let your kids choose the books. [Include a photo or picture of a book cover!]

3. You can always offer the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge, a free online reading program dedicated to encourage students to read over the summer months, as a resource to families on your Twitter or Facebook page as another way to encourage reading.
   Sample post: Want to make summer reading more fun for your students? Join the @Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge and access free resources, digital rewards, and more! Learn more: www.scholastic.com/summer

4. Scholastic has two national research reports you can share. Visit scholastic.com/readingreport and scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport.
   Sample tweet: Myth busted! 62% of kids ages 6-17 do really enjoy summer reading.
   www.scholastic.com/readingreport #KFRR #SummerReading

Follow @Scholastic, @ScholasticEd, and @ScholasticTeach for more ideas throughout the summer!
Regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic level, or previous achievement, children who read four or more books over the summer fare better on reading comprehension tests in the fall than their peers who read one or no books over the summer. Learning or reading skill losses during the summer months are cumulative, creating a wider gap each year between more proficient and less proficient students. By the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement.

Teachers typically spend between four to six weeks reteaching material that students have forgotten over the summer. It’s estimated that the summer slide accounts for as much as 85% of the reading achievement gap between lower-income students and their middle- and upper-income peers.

Reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed. Third-graders who can’t read on grade level are four times less likely to graduate by age 18 than a proficient reader. An overwhelming nine in ten kids say they are more likely to finish a book they picked out themselves.

On average, kids read eight books over the summer; however, one in five 12–17-year-olds and one in five kids in lower-income families did not read any books at all last summer.

Nearly half of parents with children ages 6–17 (48%) have heard of the “summer slide,” with lower-income parents far less likely to have heard of this (38%). Providing children from lower-income families with self-selected books for summer reading eliminates the summer slide and creates reading gains comparable to advancements experienced by children from middle-income families.

Educators say the public library is the number one source of access to books for kids over the summer. The Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge is a FREE reading program for students, educators, librarians, and community partners who are dedicated to turning the “summer slide”—the learning loss that takes place during the long break from school—into a “summer leap.” The Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge has unparalleled reach to millions of students, fosters a culture of reading, and offers parents, educators, librarians, and community partners key resources to encourage kids to pick the books they want to read all summer long.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHOLASTIC SUMMER READING CHALLENGE:

• Educators, librarians and community partners can learn more and register students by visiting scholastic.com/summer.

• Students will log their reading minutes all summer long and educators, librarians and community partners can keep track of their progress!

WHY PARTICIPATE?

• The Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report™: 6th Edition found that 80% of children ages 6–17 agree that summer reading will help them during the school year, but one in five kids from lower-income families did not read any books at all last summer. In the same report, six in 10 children ages 6–17 agree “I really enjoy reading books over the summer” (62%).


THE RESEARCH SAYS THAT SUMMER READING IS IMPORTANT!

✓ On average, kids read eight books over the summer; however, one in five 12–17-year-olds and one in five kids in lower-income families did not read any books at all last summer.

✓ Nearly half of parents with children ages 6–17 (48%) have heard of the “summer slide,” with lower-income parents far less likely to have heard of this (38%).

✓ Providing children from lower-income families with self-selected books for summer reading eliminates the summer slide and creates reading gains comparable to advancements experienced by children from middle-income families.

✓ Educators say the public library is the number one source of access to books for kids over the summer.

1. J. Kim 2004
2. R. Allington et al. 2007
4. R. Allington and A. McGill-Franzen 2009
5. S. Krashen 1993
6. D. J. Hernandez 2011
7. Harrison Group and Scholastic 2012
8. YouGov and Scholastic 2017
10. YouGov and Scholastic, 2016

For more facts to share, see the Summer Reading infographic on page 8.
FOR THE LOVE OF READING

“We are pleased to provide enrichment and support for our students beyond the school year. Our summer programs allow our students to continue their efforts to reach higher levels of understanding and achievement in literacy, math, science and the arts,” said Schools Superintendent Dr. Kishore Kuncham.

“I know the importance of reading. Although my son is at grade-level reading, and he loves reading, the more reading he does, the better for him,” said Fiona Foster, the mother of an 8-year-old taking part in LitCamp.

Philadelphia, PA

• The School District of Philadelphia provided 37,000 students in grades PreK–2 with customized backpacks and summer book packs.
• Superintendent William R. Hite and Clifford joined students and staff at a distribution event to kick off this summer reading initiative.
• Philadelphia media coverage:

PHILADELPHIA ELEMENTARY STUDENTS RECEIVE FREE SUMMER READING BOOKS

“We’re providing for all preK through second grade a backpack, and that backpack is going to contain 10 books, and those books are for children to read over the summer,” said Superintendent William R. Hite at Lewis Elkin Elementary School.

Freeport, NY

• Freeport Public Schools kicked off their first-ever Scholastic LitCamp program for 100 students entering grades 1–4.
• To celebrate the launch of the four-week program, author and literacy expert Pam Allyn visited New Visions Elementary School.
• Freeport media coverage:

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

“We are pleased to provide enrichment and support for our students beyond the school year. Our summer programs allow our students to continue their efforts to reach higher levels of understanding and achievement in literacy, math, science and the arts,” said Schools Superintendent Dr. Kishore Kuncham.

“I know the importance of reading. Although my son is at grade-level reading, and he loves reading, the more reading he does, the better for him,” said Fiona Foster, the mother of an 8-year-old taking part in LitCamp.
[Name of School or District] to Distribute Free Summer Book Packs at [Special Literacy Event], Encouraging Reading Year-Round

WHAT:
[Name of school or district] is encouraging reading year-round by ensuring that all students in grade(s) [X–X] have access to high-quality reading materials at home throughout the summer months. At a special literacy event on [date and time], over [#] students will receive their own summer book packs, customized by Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education, and media company, each containing [#] books. [If applicable, insert: Students and faculty will be joined by LIST OF VIPs such as your superintendent, mayor, Clifford the Big Red Dog®, etc. We also recommend highlighting any special activities or themes.]

According to research from the Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report™, while 80% of children ages 6–17 agree that summer reading will help them during the school year, 40% are reading two or fewer books while school is out. Further, one in five kids from lower-income families report not reading any books at all during the summer. By providing students with books to keep and take home, [name of school or district] is helping increase summer reading and alleviate the impact of the summer slide—the common loss of academic skills during the summer months—encouraging them to instead make a “summer leap” in literacy skills.

[IF PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHOLASTIC SUMMER CHALLENGE, USE BELOW SECTION]

This event will also serve as the launch of [name of school or district]’s participation in the 2018 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge™, a free online reading program designed to help students discover the joy and magic of reading. All summer long, students can log their reading minutes while educators, librarians, and community partners can keep track of their progress.

WHERE:
Location
Street Address
[Insert any specific needs, e.g., special entrance]

DATE:
Day and time

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:
List of VIP names available
[If applicable, insert: **Video and still photographers welcome**]

RSVP TO:
Insert contact name, email, and phone number

About [Name of School District]:
[Insert boilerplate here]

###
[Name of School District] Encourages Students to Read Year-Round by Providing Free Take-Home Books

[City, State]—[Date]—[Name of school or district] will be providing [#] students in grade(s) [X–X] with take-home summer book packs customized by Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education, and media company. Each student will receive his or her own set of [#] books to keep and take home, encouraging year-round reading through access to high-quality reading materials while school is out for the summer.

[If applicable, insert special customization details here: All book packs include…]

[Insert quote from principal or superintendent]

Findings from the Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report™ reveal that while 80% of children ages 6–17 agree that summer reading will help them during the school year, 40% are reading two or fewer books while school is out. Further, one in five kids from lower-income families report not reading any books at all during the summer. By providing students with free summer book packs, [name of school or district] is helping to increase summer reading while meeting the need for access to high-interest, engaging reading materials at home. This initiative is part of [name of school or district]’s ongoing effort to counteract the loss of academic skills during the summer months—commonly known as the “summer slide”—and instead, encourage students to use this time as an opportunity to make a “summer leap” in literacy skills.

[IF PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHOLASTIC SUMMER CHALLENGE, USE BELOW SECTION]

[Name of school or district] will also be participating in the 2018 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge™, counteract the loss of academic skills during the summer months—commonly known as the “summer slide”—and instead, encourage students to use this time as an opportunity to make a “summer leap” in literacy skills.

For more information about the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge, please visit scholastic.com/summer.

###

About [Name of School or District]:

[Insert boiler plate here]
**SUMMER READING IS IMPORTANT AND FUN**

Reading books during the summer helps kids during the school year!

- **80% of kids ages 6–17 & 96% of parents agree.**

**TOP REASONS AMONG PARENTS:**
- It keeps my child’s brain active!
- Reading requires constant practice

**TOP REASONS KIDS ENJOY READING IN THE SUMMER**

- **62% of kids agree.**
  - I really enjoy reading books over the summer
  - I just enjoy reading
  - It’s a fun way to pass the time

**KIDS READ AN AVERAGE OF 8 BOOKS OVER THE SUMMER**

- **21% of kids who read no books over the summer:**
  - Low-income families
- **8% of kids who read no books over the summer:**
  - High-income families

**HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE SUMMER SLIDE?**

- **Only 48% of parents have heard about the summer slide.**
  - Among the lowest-income families: 38%
  - Among the highest-income families: 59%

**Summer slide is the loss of skills during the time when students are not in school.**

**HELP KIDS FIND BOOKS THEY LOVE**

**Parents say teachers & schools are the #1 source of information on the summer slide.**

**Top 3 ways parents ensure their child reads over the summer: (Ages 6–11)**
- Take kids to the library: 66%
- Let kids choose books through the school book fair or reading club: 60%
- Take books on trips and vacations: 56%

**Top 3 ways parents ensure their child reads over the summer: (Ages 12–17)**
- Take kids to the library: 48%
- Let kids choose books through the school book fair or reading club: 32%
- Take books on trips and vacations: 35%