

Branching Out for Parents

June 9, 2014



Welcome to the first edition of the weekly summer newsletter for students and parents. The purpose of *Branching Out* is to keep our elementary students reading throughout the summer. Because this is the first time we've published this newsletter, it will be mailed to 400 students. It will be available online to any student in Spring Branch who is interested in reading it. There will be additional reading materials in the online version along with links to additional reading materials from public web sites. Some recommendations will connect to topics in the publication; others will connect to interesting things to read.

Through the study of reading improvement, we know that there is a significant loss in reading skills for any student who does not read over the summer. By the time a kindergarten student gets to middle school, that student may be as much as 2 years behind because little or no reading was done for 3 months. It is very difficult to be a successful middle school student if a child is not reading at the appropriate level. Therefore, all of our children should continue to read throughout the summer.

We invite you, the parents, the guardians, the babysitters, to be a part of that reading. Each edition of *Branching Out* will also have a copy of *Branching Out for Parents*. This page will offer suggestions for things you can do with your children to help them grow as readers and writers. If you ever have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact me: diane.fanning@springbranchisd.com.

Suggestions:

1. Encourage your children to read, read, read, read, read. Don't make it a chore or a punishment. Try to make it a part of your daily rituals:
 - a. Maybe there could be a time where everyone sits down to read—no television or video games.
 - b. There could be a time when you read to your children; even older children like to be read to.
 - c. There could also be a time when your child reads to you or to a younger brother or sister.
2. Let your child do most of the choosing of what she reads. It is best when the reader is interested in what she is reading. Contrary to popular belief, comic books are good alternatives if your child says she doesn't like to read.
3. Encourage your child to tell you about what she is reading.
4. It is also wonderful to have the kids write and illustrate their own stories or articles or skits. I would love to read what they are writing. Feel free to send them.
5. If you don't have a library card from either the Harris County Library System or the Houston Public library, make sure to sign up for one. You can download audio books that are equally good for your child. You can get more information from your nearest public library.

As we go through the summer, I will try to give a variety of ideas for helping your child to become an even stronger reader. I look forward to spending the summer reading with you.