

## **Building and Maintaining a Strong Reading Culture**

Establishing a strong reading culture is part of creating an excellent school. Investing in reading culture promotes strong scholar outcomes, develops a love of learning, and gives children access and the capability to be their own teachers. Below are 10 easy steps to build and maintain an excellent reading culture at your school.

### **1. Reading is a Priority**

Everyone understands that passion for reading, and reading voluminously and with understanding of the big ideas, is the most important mission of schooling. It is a priority for Senior Leaders and entire educational community. Everything the leader does reflects this activity as the highest priority after the safety and well-being of students. Every member of the team - from parent, to teacher, to leaders, to scholars is obsessed with the importance of reading.

### **2. Shared Ownership**

All teachers no matter the grade or subject consider themselves reading teachers. Everyone is responsible for creating a strong reading culture and transforming student outcomes in reading. The goal is for 100% of our kids to be at or above grade level as readers. This means different things for kindergarteners, than for seventh graders or for High School Juniors. Everyone from an elementary school science teacher to the HS physics teacher is responsible for our scholars' and parents' investment in reading and reading outcomes.

### **3. Reading Voluminously**

Reading voluminously is one of the most effective strategies for improved capacity to read. In school, at home, on the weekend, over holidays, during the week – we must ensure that all students and families are deeply invested and held responsible for reading outcomes. This means in all places, scholars are reading for the full amount of time or beyond, and are engaged in the material they read.

### **4. Diagnosing Scholar Issues**

Adults cannot help scholars achieve great outcomes if the adults don't know the root causes holding children back. Everyone must be prepared to read with scholars, to effectively diagnose and to study the data, looking for trends. Every teacher and every advisor must own all reading deliverables for all kids. All adults need to set specific goals for children and work backwards from those goals to achieve great outcomes.

### **5. Using Every Opportunity**

Guided Reading, Shared Text, Mastery Texts, Read Alouds, connected texts and conferring with scholars about their reading, are some of the most powerful strategies for increasing scholars' reading abilities. There are no short cuts; you must read to, read with and drive against growth areas relentlessly. You must partner with parents to support the improvement of scholars' reading capacity.

## 6. Investment

Parents must help! Hold parents accountable to reading logs and for extra reading for struggling scholars. Book selection and interest is key to engaging scholars who struggle. Book shopping must happen regularly, and teachers must be the librarians of their classroom libraries. Utilize audio books as well.

## 7. Drive Against Assessments

Prepare scholars for all reading assessments. This does not mean teaching to the test, but rather understanding what the goals and benchmarks are, and driving against them. Mastery is key, and teaching kids to masterfully read is our job.

## 8. Joy and Reading

Believe kids can achieve, and make reading pleasurable! Get kids and parents obsessed with reading and with books. Find books kids will love, talk about books, share books, hold a D.E.A.R. Engage all constituencies and make reading fun!

## 9. Self Reflection & Ownership

Reflect and confront the brutal truth about the state of reading culture at your school and in your classroom. Diagnose the root cause, be the change agent and take active steps to improve the reading culture and reading outcomes in your room. Assess monthly and make giant leaps forward in improvement.

## 10. Celebrate Success

Celebrate success at every turn. This means celebrating reading, books, growth and achievement. Additionally, celebrate yourselves for creating a strong reading culture and parents for being invested in their scholar's reading capabilities. Double the joy around reading and success!