

05-03-2019

To: The Board Members of Georgetown Township

From: The Faculty of the Jenison High School Language Arts Department

Board Members-

We are thrilled to learn about the new youth library card! Throughout Jenison Public Schools this year, we have emphasized and encouraged reading. We've seen unbelievable growth and renewed interest in reading, and we're excited. Our desire is to continue to make books accessible for our students throughout the summer months. The youth library card is an exciting step in the right direction.

We do, however, have an additional request. We urge you to consider extending the youth library card to access the digital collection. We know our students are almost constantly digitally connected, so this digital access would allow them to explore and read thousands of titles through the ebooks the library has catalogued. Please understand that a majority of our students are not able to drive themselves to the library. If parents and guardians are unable—or even unwilling—to take our students to the library, our kids will not have access to the library's material this summer. After all the progress we've seen in our students this year, we hope they continue their passion for reading throughout the summer. Having access to the library's digital collection would meet a critical need for our students.

Students say it best. Please consider the following quotes from some of our 10th grade students who recently wrote about how they have changed as readers this year:

- “I feel like I have grown as a reader...because reading [classics] has immersed me in new cultures...I also think that I have grown as a reader in my ability to choose books that will actually interest me. In August, I hated reading since I could not seem to find books that really interested me. Now I am able to quickly find a book that interests me because I have gotten many suggestions of books throughout the year...This development in my reading choices has allowed me to enjoy reading more than I ever have before which makes me very excited to read this summer.” -Megan
- “Last August, I literally just did not read any books. I never thought they would interest me, but I clearly think different now.” -Victoria
- “My reading habits have improved greatly this year. I want to improve them further...I am so proud of my improvements!” -Alex

- “I did not like reading at all and had no interest in it. Throughout this year, I have found good books that I have been interested in, and if I find interesting books, it makes me want to read more. I definitely want to read more in my free time now compared to last August because reading has become more interesting for me as long as I have the right book.”
-Peyton
- “I used to think of reading as boring and I would never think that I would now be reading 1000+ pages this quarter. I never caught on to reading for fun, but now I can kinda understand why people read for fun. It’s a lot about book choice for me because if I don’t like a book, I really don’t want to read it.” -John
- “I used to fake all my reading and never actually read because I never had an interest with it. I would rather go do something outside with my friends. But this year, I actually read some books which was a really good feeling, and I made a huge improvement. A few years ago, this would have never happened, so I am proud of myself for it. I do wish to get in a habit to read a little bit more to improve my vocabulary. I know it will definitely be hard in the summer, but it’s something deep down I want to do.” -Jaden

Obviously, these students are proud of themselves, and we are proud of them. An overwhelming theme through these responses was a desire to continue reading over the summer. We know that if students have access to books, they will read. We are asking you to partner with us in this continued journey to create readers in our community by allowing youth card holders access to the library’s digital collection.

Sincerely,

The Language Arts teachers of Jenison Public High School

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