

Read Kansas Read Aims to Stop Summer Slide



Last month, I had the privilege of joining Gov. Sam Brownback and other Kansas dignitaries to kickoff the *Read Kansas Read* summer reading program. The statewide program encourages children to read over the summer months in an effort to maintain literacy skills gained during the school year.

Summer tends to be a time when students get less exposure to books, magazines and other text materials, resulting in a loss of literacy skills, or what has been termed the "summer slide." This is especially true for children from low-income households. Research indicates that as much as two-thirds of the achievement gap seen between students from affluent homes and those from low-income homes can be attributed to summer slide experienced by low-income students.

Summer slide can be combatted by providing students with books that match their interests and reading abilities. In fact, the impact of making that reading material available over the summer months is about the same as going to summer school. Through the *Read Kansas Read* program, students can use the "find a book" application on the program's [website](#) to get a list of books targeted to their interests and reading abilities. Students can take their lists to their local libraries to find the books and keep reading all summer long.

The program also provides the encouragement for Kansas students to continue reading over the summer, with public service announcements from notable Kansans such as KU basketball coach Bill Self, K-State football coach Bill Snyder, Gov. Brownback and the First Lady, to name a few,

who challenge students to out read them over the summer. By going to the [*Read Kansas Read* website](#), or to their local library, students can get a summer reading log to keep track of all the books they read this summer. When they send in their reading logs by Aug. 1, they're eligible to be part of a special picnic celebration with the Governor and First Lady at the Governor's Mansion in Topeka. The picnic will be catered by Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers and will include mascots from Kansas universities and colleges and other special guests. The top two summer readers from each of the 10 State Board of Education districts will be invited to join the celebration.

I am proud of the various agencies and organizations in our state that are making this reading program possible. By coming together in the spirit of collaboration, we're able to do something that has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of Kansas children. I hope you'll join me in promoting the *Read Kansas Read* program with the students in your life.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane".

Dr. Diane DeBacker
Kansas Commissioner of Education