How to Engage the Community In Summer Reading

Create a Launch Event

Reach Out to Your Local Media

Utilize Social Media

#SummerReading

Handy Templates!

Pages 6 and 7

FACE
SCHOLASTIC
Family and Community Engagement™

Create a Launch Event

Benefits of holding a launch event:

An event engages parents 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 can be:

- School leaders and educators
- Students
- Parents and guardians
- Community members
- Local elected officials (mayor/governor)
- Other people or organizations in your community that support literacy (summer programs)

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).

Parent activities—Parents acting as partners in learning shouldn't stop at the school year's end. Get them excited about summer reading too!

You can share any or all of the following with parents 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

Reach Out to Your Local Media

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.

When inviting the media

- Keep in mind any potential photo or video opportunities at the event and the appropriate permissions you might need. (Many schools will have these permissions forms on file.) Great examples of newsworthy angles include:
  - Students receiving take-home books
  - Parents engaging in reading activities
  - A local celebrity conducting a read-aloud

Sharing your event announcement with the media

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

Get the News Out!

Send out 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 the news** with parents and other community members.
- **Share your press release** on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc.).
- **Share the press release** at PTA meetings, board meetings, or any other appropriate opportunity.
- If hosting an event isn't right for you, a press release still provides an opportunity for you to reach out to the media and raise awareness.

Share your message with #SummerReading

Try these three 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 link to a photo!]

2. Offer parents 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** as a resource to parents on your Twitter or Facebook page as another way to encourage reading.

   Sample post:
   Want to make **#SummerReading** more fun for your kids? Try signing them up for the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge: **www.scholastic.com/summer**

Follow **@Scholastic** and **@ScholasticTeach** for more ideas throughout the summer!

Additional Resources to Engage the Community

The Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge

To help kids take a "summer leap" into books this summer, Scholastic has created the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge, a **FREE** online summer reading program where kids can log their reading minutes and earn virtual prizes! Go to **scholastic.com/summer** to sign up.

WHY participate in the Scholastic Summer Challenge 2016?

- **It's Motivating!** The program helps kids stay "reading ready" for back-to-school by encouraging them to choose their own books when reading for fun—it's all about INDEPENDENT READING.
- **It's Engaging!** This year's theme, "Be a Reading Superhero," encourages kids to exercise their "reading muscles" and log their minutes to earn virtual rewards. Participating kids can enter sweepstakes to win fabulous prizes and unlock fun stories from 18 children's authors when they complete weekly reading challenges.
- **It's Supportive!** Parents and educators can track children's reading progress and access free reading resources, expert reading tips, activity sheets, and book lists (Pre-K through young adult).
- **Your School Can Win "Best in State!"** The schools that read the most minutes in each U.S. state and territory and the District of Columbia will be featured in the 2017 Scholastic Book of World Records, earn a commemorative plaque, and win a special school party kit.

Facts to Share

The research says that summer reading is important!

- ✓ 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.[1]
- ✓ 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.[2]
- ✓ Teachers typically spend between four to six weeks reteaching material that students have forgotten over the summer.[3]
- ✓ 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.[4]
- ✓ During the school year, lower-income children's skills improve at close to the same rate as those of their more advantaged peers, but over the summer, middle- and upper-income children's skills continue to improve while lower-income children's skills do not.[3]
- ✓ Reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed.[5]
- ✓ Third-graders who can't read on grade level are four times less likely to graduate by age 18 than a proficient reader.[6]
- ✓ Having parents who role-model reading or own a large book collection has a greater impact on kids' reading frequency than household income.[7]
- ✓ An overwhelming nine in ten kids say they are more likely to finish a book they picked out themselves.[7]

1. Kim, J. Summer reading and the ethnic achievement gap. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 2004.
2. Allington, R., et al. Ameliorating summer reading setback among economically disadvantaged elementary students. 2007.
3. Alexander, K. L., D. R. Entwisle, and L. S. Olson. Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. 2007.
4. Allington, R., and A. McGill-Franzen. Why summer matters in the rich/poor achievement gap. 2009.
5. Krashen, S. *The Power of Reading*. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 1993.
6. Hernandez, D. J. Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2011.
7. The Kids and Family Reading Report 4th edition conducted by Harrison Group and Scholastic. 2012

How Your Peers Succeeded with Their Summer Initiatives

Baltimore County, Maryland

- Baltimore County is the **26th-largest school system** in the U.S. and the third-largest in Maryland.
- Baltimore County **sent 23,000 students home with prepackaged book packs**.
- Baltimore media coverage:

Baltimore Sun, **Summer reading program aims to close achievement gap**

"Kids like to have things that are their own, and when you go to the library, you get to check out a book, but you have to bring it back," said Laura Bissonette, a facilitator of the program at Lansdowne Elementary.

"I just think it's a really great program, especially for our population of students that don't have access to books readily like other students would have and the students really get excited for receiving their own books they can have to take home and not have to return," said Kristin Weston, a reading specialist and co-facilitator of the program at Edmondson Heights Elementary.

Irving County, Texas

- Irving County hosts an annual **Irving Reads** program.
- The district **sent 20,000 students (all from PreK through 7th grader) home with book packs** and hosted end-of-year **book fairs at 23 elementary and middle schools** along with **parent workshops**
- Irving media coverage:

NBC 5, ***Irving Reads* Initiative Provides Books for 20,000 Students**

Event Announcement Template:

[Name of School or District] Kicks off Summer Reading [with Name of Event]

[#] Students Receive Free, Customized Scholastic Book Packs to Encourage Reading at Home and Help Students Make a "Summer Leap" in Literacy Skills

WHAT:

[Name of school district] has announced that [XX] students in grade(s) [XX] will go home this summer with book packs customized by **Scholastic**, the global children's publishing, education, and media company. To kick off summer reading, a book distribution event will be held at [event location] on [date and time]. [If applicable, insert: Students and faculty will be joined by: LIST OF VIPs such as your superintendent, mayor, Clifford, etc. We also recommend highlighting any special activities or themes.]

This initiative is part of an ongoing effort to counteract learning and reading skill loss during the summer months—known as the "summer slide"—and instead encourage students to use this time as an opportunity to make a "summer leap" in literacy skills. According to research, it is 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.

Each student will receive his or her own set of [#] books, ensuring access to quality reading materials at home and encouraging reading as a leisure activity. [If applicable, insert special customization details here: The book packs also include...]

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

This event also launches [Name of School or District's] participation in the 2016 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge—a free online summer reading program that encourages kids to build their "reading muscles" by reading more and logging their reading minutes. Participating kids earn virtual rewards and help [their/our] school become "Best in State" by reading the most minutes this summer.

WHERE:

Location
Street Address
[Insert any specific needs, i.e. 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.

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

Press Release Template:

Contact:

[Insert primary contact info here]

[Name of School District] Kicks Off Summer Reading with Free Scholastic Books for [X Grade] Students

Customized Book Packs from Scholastic Encourage Reading at Home and Help Students Make a "Summer Leap" in Literacy Skills

[City, State] — [Date] — [Name of School or District] has announced that [XX] students in grade(s) [XX] will go home this summer with books 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 ensure access to quality reading materials and encourage reading as a leisure activity during the summer. [If applicable, insert special customization details here: All book packs include...]

[If applicable, insert quote from district.]

By providing summer books packs, [Name of School or District] is helping students maintain and even improve reading proficiency while school is out of session. This initiative is part of an ongoing effort to counteract learning or reading skill loss during the summer months—known as the "summer slide"—and instead encourage students to use this time as an opportunity to make a "summer leap" in literacy skills. According to research, it is 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.

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

Also this summer, [Name of School or District] will be participating in the **2016 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge**—a free online summer reading program that encourages kids to build their "reading muscles" by reading more and logging their reading minutes. Participating kids earn virtual rewards and help [their/our] school become "Best in State" by reading the most minutes this summer.

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

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About [Name of School or District]:
[Insert boiler plate here]