



Illinois State Board of Education

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www.isbe.net

James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

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Dear Parents:

As the school year winds down, we encourage you to incorporate summer reading and learning into your children's activities in the months ahead. Children who keep their brains active and engaged during summer vacation are more likely to return in the fall prepared and confident for the new school year.

Research has shown the powerful impact of continued reading. One review of the impact of summer reading found that children can lose up to 60 percent of their skills during summer vacation. Children who read during the summer months, however, can sustain their reading gains. Let's all work to prevent the loss of those critical learning gains, also called the "summer slide," this year.

As you prepare for summer, we invite you to check out the free "Find a Book" search tool, <http://www.lexile.com/findabook>. It allows you to quickly and easily search for books that will match your child's reading level and interests, as well as to locate your selection at the local public library. Information is also available on our summer reading website at <http://www.isbe.net/find-a-book/default.htm>.

"Find a Book" uses a student's Lexile® measure, a measure of reading ability and text complexity. Students can find their Lexile scores from a variety of benchmark measures, including many standardized tests. The search tool also features a search option to access appropriate book choices based on grade level and comfort with typical reading materials at that grade level. Attached is a flier about "Find a Book" that will explain how to use Lexile measures.

Additionally, the [Summer Math Challenge](#) is a free math skills maintenance program targeted to students who have just completed grades 2 through 6. It is designed to help children retain math skills learned during the previous school year. Parents who enroll their children in the program will receive daily emails from now through July 31 with fun activities and links to resources.

We encourage you to talk with your children about the fun and importance of summer learning and take them to your local public library and museums. Librarians have information about Lexile measures and other programs such as [iRead](#), a summer reading program offered through the Illinois Library Association. The program's audience is kindergarten through grade 8, but may provide supplemental materials for pre-schoolers, teens and adults. This year's theme is "[Read to the Rhythm!](#)"

Thank you for your efforts to encourage lifelong learners and readers. Have a fun and safe summer!

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner
Governor

Jesse White
Secretary of State
State Librarian

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education