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Each and Every Child

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An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education

3 R's of summer: Rest, recreation and reading

Iowa's teachers reveal their must-read lists



As summer break approaches, thoughts turn to summer activities. Among them, reading – whether for pleasure or professional or both – is a favorite among educators. So what are you going to read this summer? We asked a few of you – and you responded!

We're betting that there are several books listed here for, ahem, Each and Every Teacher.

Have a wondrous summer!

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I try to read at least ten books over the summer. This year it's split evenly between professional and personal reading. For professional enrichment, I'm going to be reading "For White Folks Who Teach In the Hood" by Christopher Emdin, "The Innovator's Mindset" by George Couros, "Culturize" by Jimmy Casas, "Teach Like A Pirate" by Dave Burgess, and "Better Than Sticks and Carrots" by Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey. These are books that I keep coming across in education circles, so I thought I better read them for myself. For fun, I am going to be reading "I Can't Make This Up" by Kevin Hart, "The Last Black Unicorn" by Tiffany Haddish, "Born A Crime" by Trevor Noah, "It Came From Beyond Zen" by Brad Warner, and "Hanson's Marathon Method" by Luke Humphrey and Kevin Hanson. Since I read mostly non-fiction, I thought I better add some comedies into the mix for fun. The other two books are about Buddhism and running, which are personal interests of mine. That's the list so far. I think it's going to be a good summer!

– Brian Brandsmeier, Iowa City Community School District

I plan on reading books authored by Brian Mendler and Ross Greene. I also will be spending time on Wilson materials and a variety of children's literature. I will be reading this material to further my understanding of ways to support my students, help them set goals and achieve success.

– Vickie Bahr, Ames Community School District

I plan to reread "Lost and Found Helping Behaviorally Challenging Students" by Ross Greene.

– Angie Miller, Ames Community School District

These are a few of the books I am hoping to read this summer, besides my book club books: "Lucky Child and Lulu in the Sky" (the sequel to "First They Killed My Father," which 10th graders are reading), "Kissed From Katie," "A Long Way Gone," "A Long Walk to Water," and "White Teachers Who Teach in the Hood."

– Shauna Soderstrum, Des Moines Public Schools

One book I plan to read for pleasure is "Restart" by Gordon Korman. My fifth grade son is reading it. This book is about a boy who falls off a roof and doesn't remember anything, including who he is. In figuring out who he was he has a chance to decide who he is going to be. It addresses bullying and how some will go to any means to be popular. By reading this it will allow me to have some important conversations with my son.

Next on my list is a combination of a professional and pleasure book, "The Autistic Brain," by Temple Grandin. I am looking forward to learning more about how those with autism think and how I can provide better support and planning for our students on the autism spectrum.

I am also planning to reread "Fierce Conversations" by Susan Scott. I was able to take the "Fierce Conversations" class a few years ago but would like to refresh my mind and skills. It was a very beneficial class and I want to better utilize the principals to improve conversations/communication with my co-workers.

– Ann Gigstad, Red Oak Community School District

The book I plan to read over the summer include "Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom." I will read this book because teaching cannot be affective if the classroom is out of control. As a teacher, it is my responsibility and desire to create a safe learning environment where all students are able to learn as well as apply themselves with their best effort. I also will be reading through the Wilson Reading Materials, so I can continue to gain a deeper understanding of how to teach the Wilson Reading Program.

– Jennifer Boer, Ames Community School District

"To Be Where You Are" by Jan Karon

– Deb Michalski, Iowa City
Community School District

I plan to read "Teaching Your Child to Love Learning" this summer. I am taking the year off for an extended maternity leave and this is the "home" version of the Project Approach book, which is how we teach at Northwood Preschool Center. Therefore, I'd like to learn how to implement some of the concepts at home as well with my own kids.

– Krista Hewitt, Ames Community
School District

"Addictive Organization" by Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel. I'm reading the book for insight and personal development. I am interested to see what others are reading!

– Kelly Urton, Sidney Community School District

I have a list of things that I would like to read. I always start with the same one (I read it to re-center myself): "God Never Blinks" by Regina Brett. I will then start with one of the following:

"Strangers Among Us" by Roberto Suro, "Families in the new Millennium" by Anne-Marie Ambert, "One More Day" by Kelly Simmons, "Assignments Matter," by Eleanor Dougherty, and "I Will Always Write Back," by Martin Ganda, Liz Welch, Caitlin Alfrenka.

– Kelli Jurey-Reetz, Des Moines
Public Schools

I am not planning on taking any professional development courses, however, I do plan on reading one professional book. It is called, "Zones of Regulation." It was suggested to me by a colleague. It is a social skills book that uses colored zones to teach self-regulation.

Other than that, I am an avid Kindle reader of romance novels. I read an average of 3-4 hours a day in the summer, either sitting by the pool or in my living room.

– Amy Arhart, Mason City Community School District

I would like to read B. Mendler's books ("Taming the Crew," "That One Kid," "Turning Tough Parents into Strong Parents," "Power Struggles"). I like how simple, bold and right on topic this author is. In my classroom I am always looking for simple, practical and sometimes unexpected strategies to change behaviors. Also, I plan to learn more this summer from the Autism classroom website where there are blogs, workshops and courses online.

– Karinna Voinea, Ames
Community School District

The books I am going to read this summer are for entertainment only. I am going to read "The Seaside Saga" series by Joanne Demaio. These novel are filled with beach friends and love.

– Tricia Gargano, Fort
Dodge Community School
District

"Teaching Human Dignity," by Wasserman, Hutchinson 1978. Still good stuff...

– Thomas Borer, Ames
Community School
District

I plan to read a pair of Jon Gordon books over the summer. Those books are "Energy Bus" and "Hard Hat." I feel it is my responsibility as a teacher to bring appropriate energy to not only the classroom, but our entire school.

–Eric Bappe, Ames Community School District

As of right now I plan on reading the "Red Queen" series by Victoria Aveyard. I have heard of this series and suggested it to my son. He has read a couple in the series and liked it, and my daughter right now is reading it for literacy class. Both are in eighth grade.

I'm also going to be reading, "Setting Up Classroom Spaces That Support Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders" by Susan Cabot and Christine Reeve.

– Sherrie LaFleur, Ames Community School District

I will be reading "Drive" by Daniel Pink. I am reading this book because during a teacher leader conference, one of the speakers that I was drawn to mentioned it by name and said that this particular person is a great resource when considering motivation and how to inspire others to act. I have a personal improvement goal of increasing the strategies and resources used to motivate students in my classroom. I am in a high-need special education classroom and we use positive behavior supports at the core of our instruction. I have identified motivation as a high impact area for student improvement in my classroom; so "Drive" it is!

– John Crall, Ames Community School District

I take a break from educational books and do a lot of pleasure reading in the summer. I will catch up on my Country Living magazines and read some books from a favorite author, Wanda Brunseter.

– Mona Bichel, Ames Community School District

I have a very long list of fun books for the summer so I will send just a few. These two are juvenile fiction and I like to get a sense of what the kids are reading:

"Counting by 7s" by Sloan (about loss and family)

"Anything but Typical" by Baskin (about a 12-year-old with autism)

Adult fiction:

"Before We Were Yours" by Wingate (sketchy adoption organization based on a true story)

"Behind Closed Doors" by Paris (psychological thriller)

"Gilead Trilogy" by Robinson (historical fiction set in Iowa)

– Kim Zupancic, Pleasant Valley Community School District

I always reread "The Energy Bus" by Jon Gordon every summer. Helps center my focus for the coming school year.

– Matt Campbell, Keokuk Community School District



I have a few titles I am excited to read over the summer:

"Thinking Differently: An Inspiring Guide for Children with Learning Disabilities" by David Flink

"Fish in a Tree" by Linda Mullaly Hunt

"Natural Disaster" by Ginger Zee

– Angela Lange, Boone Community School District

Four books that I am planning to read this summer are "The Flat World and Education" by Darling-Hammond, "The Hate U Give" by Thomas, "From Disability to Possibility" by Schwarz, and "Social Linguistics and Literacies" by Gee. These books have been on my "reading wish list" shelf for months, but I haven't found the time to read them yet.

– Deani Thomas, Ames Community School District

"Norwegian Wood": This was given to me by a friend several years ago and has been sitting on my bookshelf ever since. I feel it's time I demonstrated my gratitude for the gift by reading it.

"An American Marriage": This is a book I learned about while eavesdropping on a discussion between the author and her colleague from the writer's workshop when I was eating out one night in Iowa City. I later saw an interview with her on PBS.

"A Colony in a Nation": I learned about this book on Stephen Colbert, and it seems like it would give an interesting commentary on the how and why of our current society.

"Calvin and Hobbes": These are constant and sweet reminders of the more important things in life.

– Rachel Munn, Iowa City Community School District

Non-professionally, I am in the middle of a really long book that I hope to finish this summer when I have more time – “1Q84” by Haruki Murakami. I visited The Haunted Bookshop in Iowa City months ago, perused the shelves, and the book just caught my attention. I started reading it in the comfy chairs in the store, and was quickly sucked into the twisted and interesting things happening in it. I’ve been slowly working my way through its 984 pages ever since! I enjoy Murakami’s writing style, characters, and descriptions and hope I can find time to finish it.

Professionally, I hope to read Adam Grant’s “Give and Take” because it is a book that my coach recommended to me this year. I also hope to read “The Dreamkeepers” by Gloria Ladson-Billings because it fits well with our building goal of increasing teachers’ cultural competency, and is about a student ethnic population near and dear to my heart. Lastly, I’m hoping to read Elena Aguilar’s “The Art of Coaching Teams” because in my first year as an Instructional Design Strategist I’ve been working with new co-teaching pairs and PLCs pretty often. I found her book “The Art of Coaching” really thought-provoking, useful and helpful, and I am hoping this new one is the same.

– Jen Marshall, Iowa City Community School District



Here’s what is on my list right now:

“Implementing Change through Learning”: Change is everywhere -- being able to help systems work through change requires a skill set I continue to want to improve in myself.

“Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions”: The person doing the talking is doing the thinking. Learning how I could potentially be more intentional about using questions to spur reflection and action is a huge reason I want to read this book.

“Focus”: Mike Schmoker does a fantastic job of sharing very practical and “can-do” opportunities to help keep the focus on student learning doable.

“Daring Greatly”: I love Brene’ Brown’s story-telling ability and keeping it real.

– Jo Prusha, Benton Community School District

I am looking forward to reading “Turnabout Children: Overcoming Dyslexia and Other Disabilities” by Mary MacCracken. I remember being introduced to it in college, and I am looking forward to rereading it again.

– Lori Swanson, Ames Community School District

Professional: “Better Conversations: Coaching Ourselves and Each Other to Be More Credible, Caring, and Connected” by Jim Knight. I want to continue to grow in my coaching conversations and have heard great things about Jim Knight.

Personal: I love to read and generally end up reading books recommended or sent to me by my dad, a retired librarian. I trust his recommendations and am pushed to read books I wouldn’t typically pick up on my own. Summer will bring a pile of books and adventures; I just don’t know which yet.

– Hannah Saland, Iowa City Community School District

I was also hoping to read “Turnabout Children: Overcoming Dyslexia and Other Disabilities” by Mary MacCracken again!

– Lori McCasland, Ames Community School District



“Lonesome Dove” by Larry McMurtry. I love Western books and I have never read it.

– Ben Jass, Iowa Falls-Alden Community School District