

From the Superintendent's Desk

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As the days get longer and the temperatures get warmer, the last place that students want to be is in the classroom. Maybe that's true of educators, too. But, with 25 school days to go before summer vacation, it is important for students to really buckle down and finish strong headed toward the finish line.

In this week's article, I wanted to share a few tips with moms and dads to be able to help their children keep their noses to the grindstone this last month of school to get through the school year...

Stick to Routines

As tempting as it is now to start relaxing, I would encourage parents to stick to the routines and structures that you have in place at home. Instead of staying up later or taking students shopping late on a school night, kids still need enough sleep so that they can focus and be alert in the classroom the next day. Be sure that your kids are getting a good breakfast in the morning and eating a healthy lunch. These things will help them when they take those field trips and have those other end-of-school treats and activities.

Spend More Time Outside

There's research that says spending more time outdoors improves children's concentration in school, lessens aggression, and improves their ability to cooperate. With that said, having your child move their homework to outside whenever possible is a plus. If you have a porch, a deck, a sunroom, a driveway, etc., your student will enjoy the novelty and be less likely to complain. Who said they can't do math problems on the driveway, act out a history lesson in the yard, or sit on the porch to read a book. Taking advantage of after school and early evening time to do these things before it's time to go to bed allows them to get that fresh air and to let off some of that pent-up energy. They'll be less likely to stare out the window during the school day wishing they were outside and it will make bed-time much easier.

Plan Ahead

It isn't too soon to begin having your student think about the transition of moving from one grade level to the next or moving from in-school learning to summer learning. There are a number of enriching summer activities to start thinking about that will help your student improve his/her skills. If the family is planning on taking a trip somewhere this summer, encourage your child to pick up a few books about the places you'll be going or things they'll be doing. They will enjoy reading about these things when traveling. High school students who will be taking Advanced Placement classes next year or upper level classes may be able to get a jump start in reading the books they'll be discussing in class next year.

Acknowledge Progress

Finally, before your student throws out all of his/her papers, projects, and materials from this year, encourage him/her to reflect back on the past school year, what he/she learned, what was hard, how he/she dealt with things, what he's/she's most proud of, etc. They might want to keep a few of those papers/projects as mementos in a scrapbook they can reflect back on in the future. Your student may be surprised by what was accomplished and marvel just how far they have come in such a short time. It's not all about academic progress either. Kids need to celebrate the friendships and relationships they made during the school year and look forward to resuming those in the fall.

So, before you start thinking about the barbecues, the visits to the pool, the ballgames, the trips to Madison/La Crosse (or wherever), just remember to end the year on an upbeat note. Do your best work now before the final report cards/grades are figured. And, don't sweat it/or get uptight about anything. Work hard, have fun, and look forward to what lies ahead after May 26th!