

THS BEAR TRACKS



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Summer Learning Losses

Does time off during the summer affect student achievement?

In a meta-analysis of research on summer learning loss, University of Missouri and Tennessee State University researchers Cooper, Charlton, Greathouse, Lindsay, and Nye found that, in general, student achievement test scores decline over summer vacation, and that summer loss equaled about one month on a grade-level equivalent scale. The effect of summer break was found to be more detrimental for mathematics than for reading and most detrimental for mathematics computation and spelling. Middle-class students appeared to gain in reading over the summer while lower-class students lost ground (1996).

Similarly, Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson, researchers at The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University, document clear linkages between summer learning loss and achievement gaps between low- and high-SES students (2007).

What are characteristics of effective summer learning programs?

In *Making the Most of Summer*, researchers Fairchild, McLaughlin, and Brady of The Center for Summer Learning found that effective summer learning programs have been linked to positive outcomes for youth. Specifically, effective programs led to higher attendance and achievement during the school year, increased motivation and engagement, and increased skill development. The researchers identified three characteristics of effective summer learning programs:

1. An intentional focus on accelerating learning.
2. Commitment to youth development.
3. A proactive approach to summer learning.

An intentional focus on accelerating learning refers to delivering quality instruction with well-organized learning activities, setting learning objectives and reinforcing academic skills, and holding and communicating high expectations for all students. Effective summer programs attend to youth development by being more holistic, not repeating school year curricula or mirroring school day structure and activities. Instead, they include an intentional focus on learning, through activities that are experiential, hands-on, and fun, blended with supportive relationships, community resources, and life skills. Effective summer programs also are aligned with the school year program and are planned early.

Please inquire early for THS's summer 2011 academic summer camps. they fill up quickly!

Learning



According to a study out of New York's Columbia University, praise students more for their effort than for their intelligence. The study showed that in 5th graders, praising intelligence actually caused them to work less, experience less enjoyment and less persistence in tasks. Praising effort had just the opposite effect. Mueller & Dweck (1998). *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*.



Smaller class size doesn't seem to make a difference in quantity of material taught, but certainly does effect quality. A study out of UC-San Diego, shows that in smaller classes, teachers covered the same amount of material during the year, but the time spent on individual assistance, tutoring, and one-on-one help increased. Betts, J. & Shkolnik, J. 1999. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*



The University of Illinois has been studying children's tendency to ask for help. Children who have lower academic expectations for themselves tend to ask for help less often. The study found that classrooms that emphasize self-improvement rather than relative ability encourage students to ask for help. In other words, let your students focus on how well they personally have improved rather than on comparing themselves to others in the room.

You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives. ~ Clay P. Bedford

OPENING DAY

Welcome to the new year at The Healdsburg School!

The entire staff is eager to begin this exciting journey with parents and children, and has been working throughout the summer preparing materials and programs that are certain to excite, enliven, and engage. integrity, open-mindedness, and compassion, among others, we strive to provide a safe, comfortable environment in which each child feels cared for and supported.

Parents and Student arrived in the morning, eagerly anticipating the opening ceremony of this new school year. After flag salute our Head of School Sandi Passalaqua welcomed everyone and one dove for each of the IB Attitudes was released. The final release of doves brought the crowd to its feet and we all felt this to be a wonderful kick off to the school year.

IB Student Attitudes

Appreciation: appreciating the wonder and beauty of the world and its people.

Commitment: being committed to our learning, persevering and showing self-discipline and responsibility.

Confidence: feeling confident in our abilities as learners, having the courage to take risks, applying what we have learned and making appropriate decisions.

Cooperation: cooperating, collaborating and leading or following as a situation demands.

Creativity: being creative and imaginative in our thinking and in our approach to problems and dilemmas.

Curiosity: being curious about the nature of learning and of the world, its people and cultures.

Empathy: imaginatively projecting oneself into another's situation in order to understand his or her thoughts, reasoning and emotions.

Enthusiasm: enjoying learning with passionate interest & eagerness.

Independence: thinking and acting independently, making our own judgments based on reasoned principles and being able to defend our judgments.

Integrity: having integrity and a firm sense of fairness and honesty.

Respect: politeness, care and honor shown towards someone or something that is considered important or of value.

Tolerance: The quality of allowing or accepting people to do or believe what they choose although we may not agree.



12 Percent of U.S. High Schools Could Be Labeled a Dropout Factory

According to a new study, the nickname fits the 1,700 U.S. high schools that have graduation rates under 60 percent. The highest concentration of poorly performing schools is in Southern states like Florida and South Carolina.

1 in 10 Schools Have Too Many Dropouts

According to John Hopkins University analysis of Education Department Data, the U.S. has too many 'dropout factories'--schools where less than 60 percent of freshmen make it to their senior year.

Approximately 1,700 U.S. high schools (12 percent) fit the description. Most of the schools are located in large cities or poverty stricken rural areas, but they are definitely scattered across the U.S.

At least 20 percent of the schools in eight different states have graduation rates less than 60 percent. South Carolina and Florida have the highest percentages--more than 50 percent of the schools in each one of these states were labeled dropout factories by John Hopkins University. Utah is the only state without a dropout factory.

Nationally, the high school graduation rate is 70 percent, but for black and Hispanic students, the rate is only 50 percent. Of the 70 percent of U.S. who do graduate high school, only 32 percent will be college ready according to the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

How to choose the right High School

As a parent one of the most important things you can do is make the right educational choices for your children. It is necessary to ensure your children are able to go to a good high school with a qualified and motivated staff that will see to all the needs your children have while in school.

Unfortunately, not all schools are filled with excellent teachers and principals. This is why it is up to you to determine where your child needs to become educated, be it in a public or private school.

Key to finding the right high school is to know all the options available to you and to do plenty of looking.

Consider all your options; look at many different schools and ask lots of questions. Don't leave a tour wishing you asked something. Remember - your child has to spend the next four years of their life at this school.

Evaluate the academic record. A school's academic record can be an indication of the quality of

education your child will receive. If the academic record is below state averages, there may be problems with the school that are keeping students from learning. Also find out if advanced placement courses are available for students planning to attend a higher education facility.

Talk to teachers and administrators. The staff at a school is the best source of information in regards to what benefits the school has to offer and what problems your child might face. If the teachers are not happy being at the school, there is a good chance that your child will not be either.

Ultimately, choose the school that is best for your child, not just the one where all his/her friends are going. Today's kids keep in touch via email and texting easily enough and making new friends is a great opportunity at this age.

Take advantage of the fall season and upcoming open houses at all our high schools.



Volunteers as an Invaluable Resource

Volunteers play an important role at THS and many have become an integral part of THS's daily life. Through the use of volunteers, our programs can stretch their limited resources and continue their service to our school community.

Our volunteers help THS in many different ways. At THS families have a mandatory annual service requirement but we found that many families go beyond this need. We also have a strong following of community volunteers and we would like you all to be sure to check frequently in with THS for new and exciting opportunities to help. Bear Tracks will also publish opportunities that you may want to get involved in.

Why does THS demand volunteers hours from our families? It comes down to simple mathematics and research studies. Volunteers assist in:

- direct services to children or families
- support to paid providers
- administrative support
- assisting in school efforts to broaden the funding base

With these volunteered hours we can continue to maintain a tuition that most families can afford. Volunteers help or in some cases even replace paid workers.

Research has found that when parents are involved in their children's education, both children and parents are likely to benefit. Researchers report that parent participation in their children's schooling frequently:

- enhances children's self-esteem
- improves children's academic achievement
- improves parent-child relationships
- helps parents develop positive attitudes towards school
- and a better understanding of the schooling process.



At THS we have many opportunities open to become involved! Your time and effort is appreciated!



AS A PARENT, GRANDPARENT, OR CARING ADULT,

Please give your pledge of commitment to help our community's children achieve a truly independent future. Your declaration of responsibility and commitment to our school is stated in these five self-evident truths as spoken by President Woodrow Wilson:

- As Americans, we are the owners of the school system.
- As owners, we bear a responsibility to participate in the system.
- Accountability for our schools, their safety, and its employees and its funding rests with us and the rest of the system's owners.
- Our children's future depends on the improvement of the schools.
- And this improvement depends on our participation.



August 27th

First Free BBQ at THS.

To welcome our new families and students back to school, the THS Board of Trustee's threw another hit BBQ. Over 180 people attended the bash after school and many still mingled well after 5:00pm. What a great way to catch up, get informed, setting up play dates and getting to know each other.

The kids took great advantage of the ice cream bar and by the end of the day we saw many happy smiles and new friendships. Way to go THS!



Touring THS

A tour of the school is the best way to experience THS's world class learning. Touring the school will give parents an opportunity to see the school's unique learning environment, meet teachers and students, and to experience the inspiring learning taking place in the classrooms.

To our past, current and future supporters, please allow us from time to time to schedule a tour for you to show you the improvements we have made and that we are so proud of. Your generosity allows us to build this campus and improve our learning and teaching goals. We are grateful to you!

Please schedule a tour with the Development or Admissions Office. (707) 433-4847

THS PTO and Dad's Club Picnic

The growing community of THS met for a fun evening at Warm Springs Picnic Area. There were be games for the children. And the school sponsored hamburgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers were grilled to perfection. Thanks to all the families bringing in appetizers, side dishes, and deserts. Thanks to all the more then 140 participants to help get to know each other!

TEACHERS CORNER

Teacher Bio

Kindergarten Teacher MICHELLE GARCIA holds a BS in Early Childhood Education (ECE) from Angwin College and a Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential from Dominican University. She has had several years of elementary education teaching experience, including kindergarten. Michelle started working with children in 1994. She worked as an assistant at Santa Rosa Junior College Children's Center for two years, Swain Center, Healdsburg Junior High, Geyserville Kindergarten and she also taught at Healdsburg Elementary School and Windsor Christian for three years.

Michelle is skilled at identifying and addressing the needs of different children with varying backgrounds. She has been successful at problem solving and integrating curriculum. Michelle is an insightful teacher with a nurturing personality which will make her a natural in her role as THS's kindergarten teacher.

In her spare time, Michelle likes to scrapbook, watch a good movie, hike, swim, zumba dance and watch her three children play soccer. Michelle lives in Windsor with her husband and children.



JEANETTE INNESS holds a BA in Liberal Arts with an Emphasis in Education from Sonoma State University along with a multiple teaching credential. Ms. Inness maintained an orderly, positive learning environment during her years as a substitute teacher for grades K-12. Jeanette also had the meaningful experience of teaching math, language arts, and social studies to multi-cultural students in primary and middle school grades. She helped identify, select and modify instructional resources to meet the needs of students with varying backgrounds, learning styles and special needs. Jeanette has had wonderful opportunities teaching diverse groups of students diagnosed with Auditory Processing Disorder and Autism. Jeanette likes to use technology, art, theater and physical education in the classroom.

Jeanette knew from a very young age that she wanted to be an elementary school teacher and feels she was born to teach. While other girls in her kindergarten class wanted to be ballerinas, Jeanette longed to make bulletin boards and correct papers with red pens. Her goal is to change the world, one student at a time. As a part of the THS team Jeanette will play an important role in giving our students a wonderful, diverse educational experience that will expand beyond the classroom.

In her free time Jeanette likes being adventurous in the kitchen and cooks for friends and family, she enjoys traveling with her husband, and seeing musicals in San Francisco. She also loves the outdoors and enjoys hiking and camping

The Importance of Reading

Getting students to read their textbooks is hard. Getting them to read books just for the sheer pleasure of reading is especially harder since kids just don't seem to be interested in reading these days. Gone are the days when kids curled up with a nice little book when it was too hot to play outside. Today, students spend any free time they have watching TV, going to the mall, tinkering with their mobile phones or playing video games.

Still, the many benefits your students could reap from reading regularly should make the challenge of making them read a small price to pay. Consider the following:

- Reading develops a person's creativity. Unlike movies where everything is determined by the producer, writer and director, books allow students to create in their minds how a particular character looks like or imagine how a scene plays out. Reading a book therefore, allows a student to exercise and cultivate her/his creative thinking skills.
- Developing good reading skills can improve your students' ability to comprehend concepts and ideas.
- Reading develops critical thinking, thus, ensuring that your students will be able to think and make good decisions for themselves.
- One's fluency in a language and, consequently, communication skills are improved by reading.⁴
- Reading introduces your students to new things and has the ability to broaden their interests. A student who reads a biography of Albert Einstein for example, may be inspired to take his high school Physics class more seriously.
- Reading regularly increases the vocabulary.
- Reading can develop positive values in your students. According to a study conducted in the United States for example, students who learn to read by the time they are in third grade are less likely to take drugs, drop out of school or end up in prison.
- One of the main problems of today's students is their inability to concentrate on their lessons (a result of their shortening attention span.) A solution to this problem is to encourage students to read. According to studies, reading increases a student's ability to concentrate.
- Developing your students' reading and comprehension skills early on in their education also means that you are preparing them for the "real world." Being able to read well means that they would have no problem understanding manuals, guides or contracts - vital documents and papers they will surely encounter when they join the work force.
- Spelling improves when words are seen in print.
- Reading also improves your students' writing skills as they are able to "subconsciously acquire good writing style."

The fact that students reap great benefits from reading cannot be doubted or questioned. It is for this reason that teachers must instill in students a real love for reading and groom them into becoming lifelong readers.

THS uses a program from Renaissance Learning called Accelerated Reader. This program involves assessing children precisely as to appropriate independent reading levels and then motivating them to read! The teachers here who have used "AR" in the past have expressed endless praise for a program that somehow creates excited readers who grow in comprehension and ability while loving to read!

THS Alumni News

THS's first graduating class of 2008 are now succeeding in High School. How time flies! We remember them fondly as our 8th graders, but see how they have grown.

Olivia Fleming	The Lawrenceville School, Princeton New Jersey
McKenna Frazer	Sonoma Academy
Lydia Cano	Healdsburg High School
Sebastian Kochinke	Sonoma Academy
Savannah Kochinke	The Lawrenceville School, Princeton New Jersey
Josh Micaleff	Windsor High School
Matilda Schroeter	Ursuline High School
Brittney Wells	Analy High School

We have been asked - why are Alumni's important? The answer is simple - it is for our students. The sense of pride from our graduates strengthen our identification as a school.

All of our Alumni's come back to visit THS whenever they have the chance to. They are examples of success to our students. Our Alumni's are an important part of our past!

We are so proud of them and will follow their path through life closely!

Please watch for a complete listing of our Alumni's in next month's issue!



Please send inquiries in regards to Bear Tracks to bettina@thehealdsburgschool.org. We'd love to hear from you!
