The Governor's Summer Reading Challenge

A Message to Parents and Students

Why does the State of Connecticut sponsor the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge? Because reading is the most important skill there is. Research shows that reading is crucial to a child's brain development and intellectual stimulation. And that's just the beginning:

- **Reading is a gateway skill.** It opens the door to all other learning.

- **Reading is the processing of information.** It requires the student to develop a capacity for conceptual thinking — an ability to think about the nature and significance of things.

- **Reading builds language skills.** By becoming more familiar with language through reading, students build a rich vocabulary and an ability to express themselves clearly and creatively.

- **Reading builds better thinking strategies.** Deciphering words, sentences, themes and meaning; concentrating, conceptualizing and visualizing — all these elements of reading are strategies to expand a student's ability to think.

- **Reading is active and disciplined.** Students learn to choose what they read and when they read, and they learn to discipline themselves to concentrate on the written word.

What YOU Can Do to Encourage Reading

Use the library.

Make sure everyone in your family has a library card. Help children learn how to use the library's resources: card catalogs, computer systems, best-seller sections, etc. Visit regularly — as often as you go to the grocery store.

Read every day.

Make it a habit to set aside time each day for everyone to read — books, magazines, newspapers, letters. You can even begin by reading television listings, then discussing what you will watch together and why.

Talk about what you're reading.

Children need to see adults reading frequently. They also need to know the benefits of reading. Talk to your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, even young neighbors about what you're reading. Tell them how much you have enjoyed it, what you have learned, and how you have been inspired.

Ask about summer reading materials.

Schools and libraries often provide summer reading lists that highlight excellent books which are readily available, popular and consistent with grade-level reading skills. Call your school or library for information.

Make reading materials part of your home.

Buy books at bookstores and tag sales. Borrow books from the library and from friends. Subscribe to newspapers and magazines. ***Then read, read, read!***

To learn more about the Summer Reading Challenge, ask your teacher, principal, or school or public librarian, or contact the Connecticut State Department of Education: 860-713-6762 or www.ct.gov/sde.