

DEAR Parents,

This letter was intentionally begun with the word “dear” in capital letters to draw your attention to a new program at SST called Drop Everything And Read. Though the program is new to our school, it’s actually been around a while and has been credited for strengthening the reading skills of tens of thousands of students across the country. It also represents our school’s commitment to literacy.

Drop Everything And Read, also known as SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), is a program in which students are given dedicated time each day to focus only on reading, and is only one component of a larger program called Accelerated Reader. What parents will notice is that both middle school and high school schedules now contain a 30-minute period every day labeled DEAR. During this period, students will devote themselves to reading a book that they’ve selected and has been approved by their English teacher. To show support for the program, all teachers will role model good reading behaviors by dropping everything to read alongside students for the duration of the period.

Here are some advantages of DEAR:

- Students will be motivated to read because they’ve chosen the material they are reading. So often in school students read only what they’ve been told to or has been selected for them. DEAR allows students to read what interests them most.
- Students will see that reading for pleasure can be a valuable experience. If the teacher sets aside time for it and promotes the program by joining in, it must be a valuable way to spend time.
- Students will develop better writing skills. The more students read, the more they are exposed to the written word, and that leads to better reading AND writing skills.

Parents are encouraged to show support for the program by setting aside time each evening for their child to Drop Everything And Read. Just twenty minutes of DEAR time can make a huge impact on your child’s reading skills and may make him or her a reader for life.

If you have any questions about DEAR, or Accelerated Reader, please feel free to ask your child’s English teacher.

Thank you.