



## RE[ad]SEARCH, Vol. 2

*November 27, 2013*

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### **1. [New Schools A-coming!](#)**

Provincially, nearly \$1.4 billion over three years will be provided for school capital projects. This includes \$441 million to support completion of 22 new schools expected to open in the fall of 2014 across high-growth areas of the province, as well as the modernization of 13 existing schools.

This plan also includes more than \$500 million toward the construction of a further 50 new schools and the modernization of another 70 existing facilities as committed by the Premier, with an estimated total investment of over \$2 billion. Projects will be selected through a comprehensive assessment of various factors including school boards' priorities, health and safety of students and staff, enrolment projections, current utilization, facility conditions and capacity for program delivery. The government will also continue to work closely with local school boards and stakeholders to explore potential community partnerships and innovative ways of maximizing use of existing and new school space.

### **Things We Already Know...**

#### **2. [Chew That Book: Why Babies Belong in Libraries.](#) *School Library Journal (US), Nov. 21, 2013***

If you already feature programs starting at a set age, say, 12 months, then gradually lower that age until you are at zero.

Yes, zero. The benefits of attracting caregivers with sleepy four week olds, who will most likely snooze through your entire Mother Goose program, are priceless. By imparting our expertise, we're giving new parents the instant gratification of thinking, "I just did something good for my baby"—while also providing an inviting place for them to meet and swap parenting stories.

Some argue that a four week old won't gain anything from this. Yet research shows that when babies hear nursery rhymes, they also hear the sounds our language makes—a necessary experience to later assemble those sounds into myriad possible structures to make words.

#### **3. [Bring Back Story Time.](#) *National Literacy Trust (UK)***

Michael Morpurgo, author of *Warhorse*, has called for the reinstatement of "story time" in schools, with half an hour at the end of the day given over to telling tales. Morpurgo said that time to hear stories without "questions,

comprehension exercises or tests” was the best way to teach children to love reading. He said that many pupils are introduced to books merely as a tool to learn spelling and punctuation.

#### **4. When Teachers Help One Struggling Reader, the Whole Class Succeeds. *BC Education Press Release, Oct. 4, 2013***

Launched under the BC Education Plan, Changing Results for Young Readers is a province-wide approach that focuses on teacher collaboration, in-class support and current research on how to foster reading success for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students. Provincial facilitators supported district Early Reading Teams to share current research and collaborate with teachers on how to improve reading for all children. As their repertoire of strategies grew, teachers reported they felt more confident and competent in their abilities to engage students in reading.

A key strategy was to focus on the student’s strengths to increase confidence. Special attention was given to what sparked the child's interest and increase student choice in selecting books. In addition, effort was made to avoid isolating the readers who struggle with reading from their peers and role models. Instead, resource teachers were encouraged to work with classroom teachers and students directly in the classroom.

Participating teachers also reported widespread benefits across their classrooms. Fully 86 per cent of the 9,000 students were reading at grade level by the end of the school year. School districts are so impressed by the success of CR4YR, some have adapted the approach for their middle and secondary schools.

#### **5. Book Walks Help Get the Most Out of Nonfiction Reading Time. *Reading Rockets, 2012***

By looking closely together at the front and back cover, the index, table of contents, the glossary, and the photographs or other images, readers can start to get a sense about the topic. This scanning and skimming helps set the expectation for the reading. Take the time to walk through the book before starting to read.

#### **6. The Most Important Lesson Schools Can Teach Kids About Reading: It's Fun. *The Atlantic, Nov. 11, 2013***

*Covers Play Pleasure, Inner Work Pleasure, Intellectual Pleasure and Social Pleasure.*

Reading is indeed crucial to success in school and in careers. But we worry that discussions of reading, especially public policy discussions, focus almost exclusively on its utilitarian value. What’s missing is the pleasure readers derive from the reading they do.

#### **7. 10 Reasons Why Play Is Important. *National Literacy Trust (UK), July 2010***

- 1. Play lays the foundation for literacy.** Through play children learn to make and practise new sounds. They try out new vocabulary, on their own or with friends, and exercise their imagination through storytelling.
- 2. Play is learning.** Play nurtures development and fulfils a baby’s inborn need to learn. Play takes many forms, from shaking a rattle to peek-a-boo to hide-and-seek. Play can be done by a child alone, with another child, in a group or with an adult.
- 3. Play encourages adults to communicate with the children in their lives.** Adults support play by giving children the opportunity to engage in play, by knowing when not to intervene, and by knowing when to intervene.
- 4. Play gives children the chance to be spontaneous.** You may think your child should be rolling the truck on the ground but that doesn’t mean that truck is not equally useful as a stacking toy.

**5. Play gives children choice.** Having enough toys or activities to choose from will allow children to express themselves.

**6. Play gives children space.** To practise physical movement, balance and to test their own limits.

**7. Play gives adults the chance to learn how to play again.** One of the most challenging parts of play is incorporating yourself in it.

**8. Play allows adults to learn their child's body language.** Knowing when you should incorporate yourself in your child's play is key.

**9. Play teaches adults patience and understanding.** If you do choose to join in your child's play make sure that you do not try to take it over and force incorporation of your ultimate learning objectives into their play. Structured adult-led activities have their time and place but remember to allow for time for children to control and decide their own play.

**10. Play is fun.** Learning to play well, both by themselves and with others, sets children up to be contented and sociable.

## Things We May Not Yet Know...

### 1. **Early Risers Devour Breakfast and Books at [Edmonton] Elementary School.** *Edmonton Journal, Nov. 11, 2013*

This year, about 60 kids attend the reading club that meets at 8 a.m. three days each week. Teachers and parent volunteers serve up whole grain toast, fresh fruit, cereal and smoothies, then students head to the library to relax with some good books.

The early risers reading club started after Grade 1 French immersion teacher Marla Korcek, who previously ran a recess reading club at Dunluce, found time was too short. So she asked the principal if she could start an after-school club.

"He said, 'Well, why not in the morning and then we can also give them something to eat?' because I was seeing kids who don't eat breakfast, for whatever reason. By lunchtime, if they haven't eaten, their heads are on their desks and there's no learning going on."

The club emphasizes reading for pleasure and builds the school's sense of community, Korcek said. Students see teachers working together with each other and with parents, and older students help distribute breakfast and act as reading mentors to younger students.

### 2. **DROP EVERYTHING and READ BC**

*DEAR BC is what you get when you combine Reading Rallies and Reading Spots/Random Acts of Reading province-wide. 72,000 students participated in 2013. Click the link for pictures and videos.*

### 3. **Classroom Strategies: Story Maps.** *Reading Rockets*

A story map is a strategy that uses a graphic organizer to help students learn the elements of a book or story. By identifying story characters, plot, setting, problem and solution, students read carefully to learn the details. There are many different types of story map graphic organizers. The most basic focus on the beginning, middle, and end of the story. More advanced organizers focus more on plot or character traits.

### 4. **The Reading Wars: Why Natural Learning Fails in Classrooms.** *Psychology Today, Nov. 19, 2013*

*Argues that the best practices for teaching reading in school do not mimic natural learning.*

I was taught reading by the “look and say” whole-word method (with Dick and Jane books), and I couldn’t read fluently until about fourth grade. My somewhat younger brother was taught from first grade on by a method strongly focused on phonics, and he could read fluently by second grade. My youngest brother taught himself to read at home, with no explicit instruction, and could read fluently by the age of four.

#### **5. How to Teach Expository Text Structure to Facilitate Reading Comprehension. *Academic Journal, 2011***

*At the upper end of our 0-8 window but still good to be aware of the terminology.*

Students first learn to read narrative text structures, which are story-like structures that facilitate their learning to read. Consequently, students enter school having a sense of narrative structures as they appear in texts. Across the years of school, their awareness of text structures must increase as they progressively shift from reading a story line or casual text to reading for information. By the third grade, and obviously by the fourth, there is a noticeable shift to reading texts for information, information that is often dense and written in long passages.

Readers of all ages must be aware of text structures if they are to be most successful. The structure or organization of the text is the arrangement of ideas and the relationships among the ideas. Readers who are unaware of the text structures are at a disadvantage because they do not approach reading with any type of reading plan. However, readers who are familiar with text structures expect the information to unfold in certain ways.

#### **6. Do Baby Buggies Affect Development? *National Literacy Trust, 2008***

The report concluded that parents are twice as likely to talk to children in face-to-face buggies, which could impact language development. Parents with such models should utilise the face-to-face option as standard, so that young children and their carers can talk and listen to each other as they are out and about.

#### **7. Parents’ Toolkit. *National Reading Campaign (Canada) Website***

*The NRC webpage has a toolkit for parents with a dozen articles. I’ve listed them below; in case any draw your interest.*

[Reading Research Infographic](#) Our friends at CBC Books helped us turn our research into this handy, shareable infographic. Click on it to see the full-sized image.

[10 Sneaky Ways to Practice Reading at Home](#) Tips from mommy bloggers for fun ideas to get your child excited about reading.

[How to Create a Successful Reading Experience for Your Child](#) Dr. Gail Gross, Huffington Post, July 11

[Children and Reading – The Facts](#) Interested in what the research says about children and reading?

[How to Raise a Reader](#) Readers are more likely to volunteer, donate to charities, get better grades, receive post-secondary education, own their home, experience better physical health, have higher incomes, report a ‘strong satisfaction’ with life...even do a favour for a neighbour. Readers are less likely to experience divorce, depression, and dementia.

**Pleasure Reading and Academic Success** Researchers found a direct correlation between reading for pleasure and better progress in “math, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16.

**Reading Books to Kids can Help them Deal with Social Struggles** Bibliotherapy can improve communication, attitude and reduce aggression for children with social disabilities.

**Too Few Dads Read with Their Children** Studies indicate a positive relationship between fathers’ own literacy use and children’s reading test scores

**How to Teach Your Child to Love Reading** The most useful thing parents can do to encourage children and teenagers to read is to be seen reading a lot themselves.

**The Crisis in School Libraries** Teacher-librarians help reluctant readers find just the right book, and they shape their library’s collection to reflect their students’ needs and interests.

**Children’s Choice Awards** Children’s Choice Awards (CCA) are one of the most effective ways of instilling a love of reading in school-aged children.

**PIRLS – 2011 Executive Summary** Enjoyment of reading is a significant factor in reading test scores.

## **8. 10 Unconventional Board Books for Hip Tots. *Scholastic***

Introduce your littlest ones to fine art, literature, music, and food with these fun board books.

## **9. Best Illustrated Books**

The New York Times Best Illustrated Children’s Books of 2013, with sample artwork from each.

## **Related News**

### **1. Alberta Keeps Its Youthful Glow. *ATB Financial, Nov. 25., 2013***

- Alberta is still the youngest among all the provinces.
- The median age in Alberta in 2013 is 36.0 years. Nationally, the median age is 40.2 years.
- The strong economy encourages steady interprovincial in-migration to Alberta. These migrants tend to be people in their 20s and often at the age of starting young families.
- A young population also brings challenges—particularly for the provincial government which is responsible for education and building schools. As former Premier Ralph Klein once said, “When people move to Alberta, they don’t bring their roads and schools with them.”

### **2. Should Alberta—or Any Other Province—Provide Funding for Private Schools? *Alberta Views, Sept. 2013***

By Dave King, former Alberta education minister: “Government funding for private schools is clear evidence that support for public education is compromised. The compromise is not nearly so meaningful for public education as it is for the community itself.”