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# HOWELL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROUD OF OUR SCHOOLS - CONCERNED FOR OUR CHILDREN

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

You may be familiar with book leveling systems, which are utilized by teachers as valuable tools in helping match readers to texts that they can read and understand. In previous years, our school district included guided reading levels (ranging from AA-Z) on report cards for students in grades K-4. After analyzing this practice, and in consideration of recent research in the field of literacy development, it has been determined that levels are best employed in the classroom, rather than entered onto a report card.

There are many factors that affect a reader's ability to read and comprehend a text. These variables include prior knowledge, interest, genre, and length. Therefore, one reader is likely to be capable of reading texts at a range of levels, depending on the circumstances. Our desire is for students to not associate themselves with any label, but rather, to understand how to choose books that they will understand and enjoy.

In keeping with past practice, teachers will continue to administer the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, an informal reading inventory that equips teachers with critical insights used for guiding students to choose appropriate texts for independent reading. The accompanying gradient of text levels helps teachers record progress in reading over time. The results of this assessment also aid teachers in selecting books for targeted small group reading instruction.

Please remember that you play an important role in your child's reading progress! There is an easy way for each child to progress in reading development and it is this: the child must read lots and lots and lots of books. Talk with your child about ways to support more reading at home, such as limiting screen time, visiting the public library, making sure high-interest texts are readily available, and talking about books together. These small actions make an incredible difference.

As always, if you have questions about your child's progress in reading, please contact the classroom teacher. The teacher can provide you with deeper insight into the reading behaviors that your child is exhibiting, ways in which your child is growing as a reader, and the characteristics of books that your child can understand and enjoy. If you have questions or seek more information, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Best,

Jane Losinger  
Supervisor of Language Arts Literacy