



# Jump Start A Culture of Reading: Turning Students Into Readers

OWC Collegiate High School  
Niceville, Florida

Presented by  
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# Okaloosa-Walton College Collegiate High School



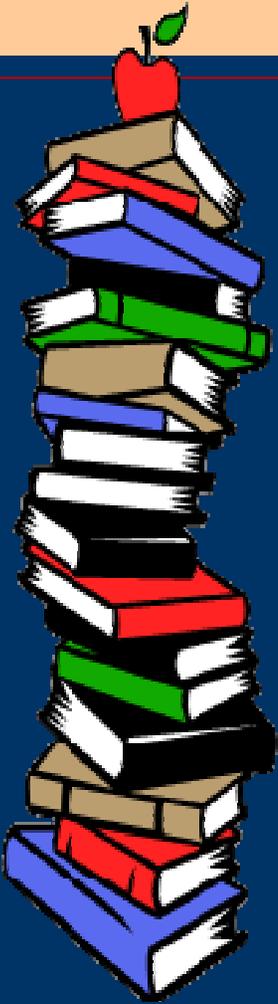
- Charter Secondary School with Accelerated Curriculum
- 250 Students—10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades
- Rural--Niceville, Florida, Community College Campus
- All staff-masters or doctorates in teaching field
- FCAT, SAT, ACT, FCPT, Nelson Denny
- SACS Accredited



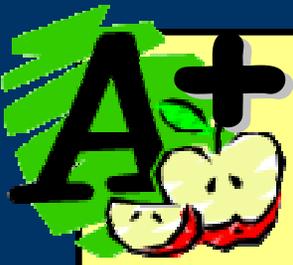
# Research Base

- **“Reading Next”-15 Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs**
  - Adolescent students can “read,” but often don’t read
  - Motivation combined with content study skills is focus
- **CRISS (CReating Independence through Student owned Strategies)**
  - Reading in content areas-“Study skills,” comprehension

# CHS: Built Around the Joy and Value of Reading



- Apply research and experience
- Affirm that good readers make good writers & good thinkers
- *Aim* to change students' attitudes so that reading skills can bloom
- Aim not to institute a new "reading program"
- Produce acceptance, if not love, of reading.



## A Culture of Reading Pays Off!

- Top 5 highest scoring Florida A schools
- FCAT Reading pass rates above 95%
- 77% lowest performing students improve
- SAT 90-100 points above state & national
- 86% high school grads get associate of arts 87% qualify for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
- **All** HS grads college ready--reading

# How Do You Create a Culture of Reading?

- ☑ Set the Stage
- ☑ Foster Peer Modeling
- ☑ Infuse the Curriculum
- ☑ Embrace the Value of Reading
- ☑ Celebrate the Joy of Reading



# Set the Stage



## Create a “reading environment”

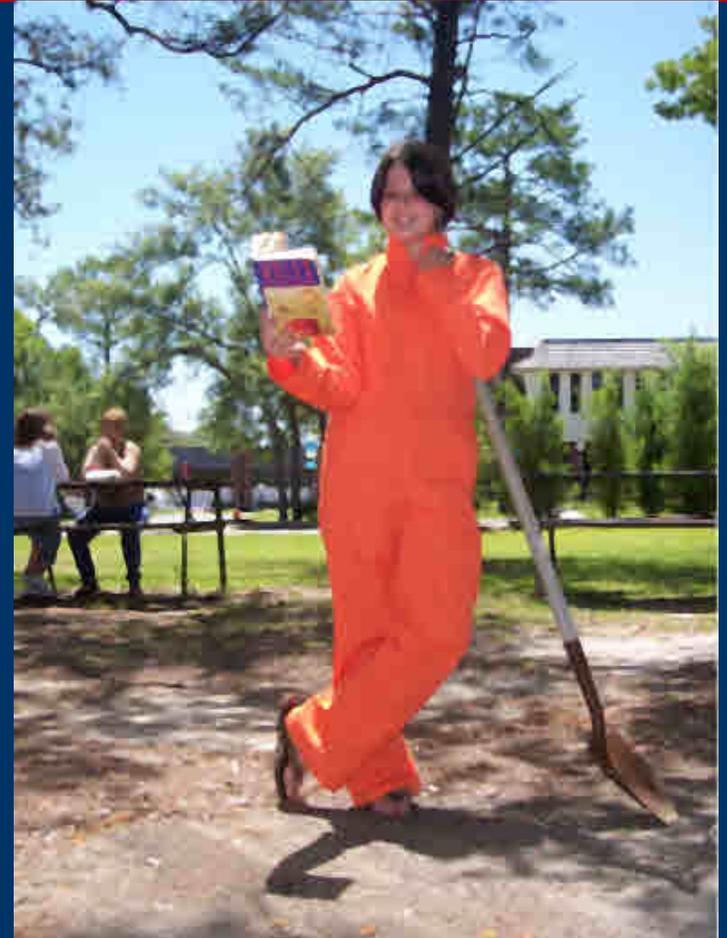
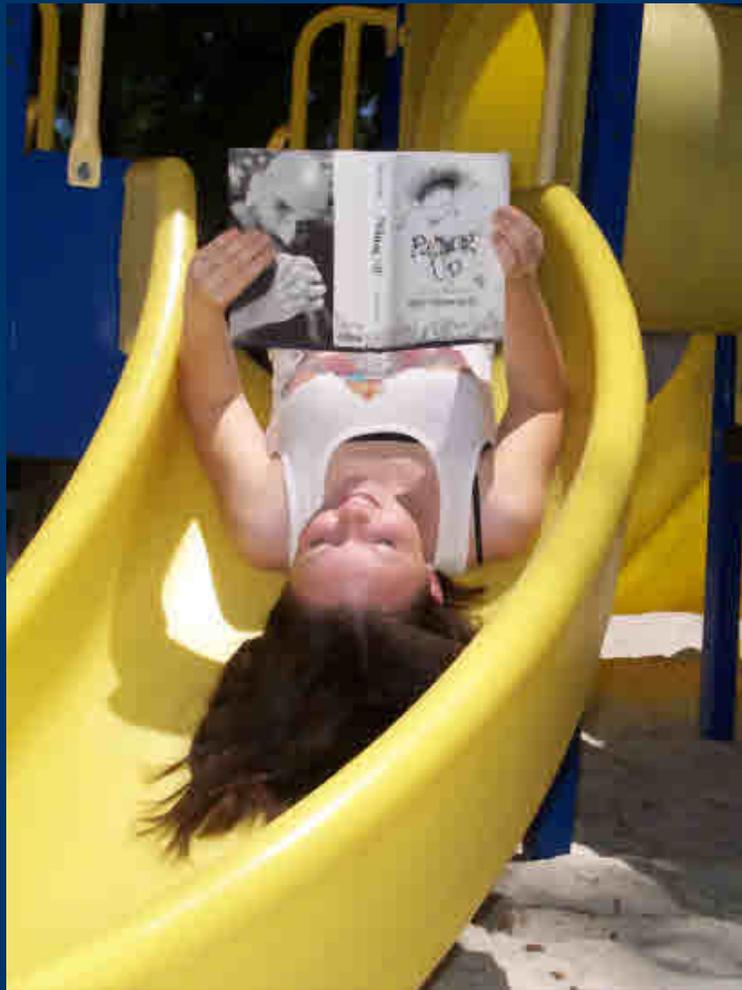
- Fill open shelving with books for the taking in every room
- Place baskets/containers of books on study tables and window ledges
- Use “wall art” and bulletin boards in creative ways
- Provide places to sit and read

# Foster Peer Modeling

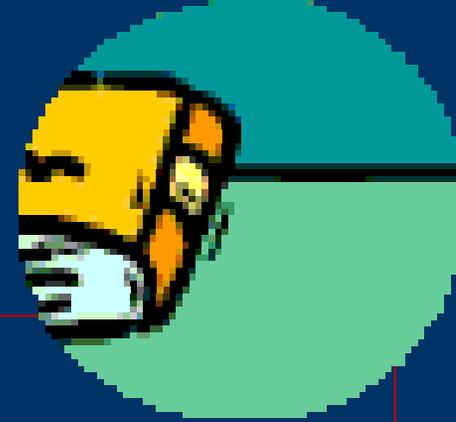


- Start "Guest Reader" program
- Track which books kids read; buy more
- Encourage kids with similar reading tastes to connect
- Display student-staged, poster-sized photos of students reading books
- Use the web to support reading activities
- Post student book reviews

# Student Produced Posters from "So Many Books, So Little Time" Workshop



# Infuse the Curriculum



- ✓ Give course titles some "Bling" 
- ✓ Allow students choices of books
- ✓ Provide time for free reading & sustained reading in every class - even math
- ✓ Include variety of books-levels, topics, styles, genres, etc.
- ✓ Affirm that popular genres are valid classroom choices
- ✓ Disguise assignments with new twists

# Embrace the Value of Reading

- Make reading itself a reward
- Give books or book certificates for *non-reading* achievements
- Dedicate page in the yearbook to reading
- Ask each senior to “will a book” to the school
- Talk about books you like and give them to students
- Allow reading anytime, anywhere (well, almost)



# Celebrate the Joy of Reading



- Engage students in reading "events"
- Start a Reader's Puzzler Contest
- Start a reader's tradition such as "Writes of Passage," "Pass the Word"
- Give new students a paperback book with a note from respected adult who has already read the book.

# KEY LEARNINGS & CHALLENGES



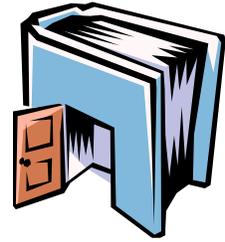
▪ Strategies will work in any school setting

Focus on loving books and changing attitudes; not reading “programs”

- Change the attitude and the skills will follow!
- Be patient; it takes time to undo expectations
- Make sustained effort; intention & creativity change culture
- Use strategies complement any reading program
- *Believe that students who are better readers ARE better writers and thinkers!*

# THE OWC COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL OFFERS A CULTURE OF READING

[www.owcollegiatehigh.org](http://www.owcollegiatehigh.org)



At the Collegiate High School (CHS), we believe reading is an enormously important part of life. We know that good readers make good thinkers and good writers. We know that a good attitude toward reading helps students become stronger readers and better students. Therefore, since its beginning, the Collegiate High School has been dedicated to the joy and value of reading. The strategies employed in the Culture of Reading align with the 15 Elements identified in the *Reading Next* initiative.

- ✚ From baskets of books in the labs and giant photo posters of CHS students reading, to the yards of shelves for our open access lending library, books dominate the CHS environment.
- ✚ From the Summer Reading Program to reading-specific courses and seminars, reading is a central part of our curriculum.
- ✚ From the Guest Reader Program and READ THIS! selection guide to the student book club and online reviews, CHS activities are crowded with opportunities to celebrate reading.



## Reading Curriculum and Courses

10<sup>th</sup> grade students enroll in a required three-credit college course entitled "Reading Across the Genres." The course is structured to include sustained reading time, a common novel read by all students, class activities involving periodicals and short stories, comprehension skill-building, and reading for pleasure. Students help to select the common novel and make their pleasure reading selections from the READ THIS! listing.

All students are eligible for voluntary enrollment in the spring mini-mester course entitled "So Many Books, So Little Time." In this seminar-style course students read a common book and participate in various discussions and projects, all conducted through the creative and non-traditional "Book Club Approach" to reading.

10<sup>th</sup> grade American History and English Honors (with American literature focus) classes are offered in collaborative manner, with the instructors coordinating literature assignments and coverage of historical periods and events.

Each of the classroom segments of the CHS reading program include elements from the nationally recognized Project CRISS (**C**reating **I**ndependence through **S**tudent-owned **S**trategies) curriculum.



## Summer Reading Program

All 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in the Summer Reading Program. Each student is required to read at least one new book from the READ THIS! listing and be prepared to discuss and write about the book in focus groups held throughout the fall opening week/mini-mester. The focus groups are facilitated by CHS faculty members, but the commentary and discussion is all student-based.



## Guest Reader Program

The Guest Readers Program is designed to celebrate and encourage reading. Throughout the year, high school and college staff members, community leaders, authors and students share readings from their favorite books, give tips on how to select a good book or present mini-reviews of books or an author's body of work. Among the most recent "celebrity" guest readers is Homer Hickam, author of Rocket Boys.

Adult presenters serve as traditional role models, while student presenters supply powerful peer modeling of the joy and value of reading.



## Open-Access Lending Library

Immediate, free and easy access to a variety of books is the key element of the CHS Lending Library. Prominently stowed and displayed in various manners from open shelving to table-top baskets throughout the CHS facility, donated and purchased books can be borrowed by students at any time for use at home or at school.

Over 600 volumes of fiction and non-fiction, increased and replenished throughout the year, are readily available for pleasure reading. Titles are chosen through a variety of methods, including student and staff recommendations, selections from various book award lists and suggestions of local book dealers. Checkout is easy - we ask only that students inform us of their choices so that we can ensure replacement.

To encourage discussion, we try, as well, to ensure that at least one staff member has read each of the books we have available to students.



### Read This! Puzzlers

During the spring of each year, the Collegiate High School conducts a term-long puzzler contest to inspire interest in reading and capitalize on the natural love of competition common to most high school students. Students submit responses to weekly puzzlers which are written by CHS staff and are related to books, writers and reading. Cumulative scores are tabulated for all participating students and book store gift certificates are awarded to the top contestants at year end.



### "Book Talk" on the CHS Website

With a click of a button on the OWC Collegiate High website, students are directed to the full slate of information on CHS reading activities, from the most current version of READ THIS! to student reviews and comments about the books they are reading.

The "Book Talk" section includes mini-book reviews and comments from CHS students concerning the books they are reading. Many "Book Talk" entries are accompanied by photos of the student reviewer. Website--[www.owcollegiatehigh.org](http://www.owcollegiatehigh.org)



### Year Book and Senior Class "Book Will"

The Collegiate High School yearbook includes two pages devoted entirely to "Read This!" activities, including photos of individual readers and CHS reading events.

Accompanying the photos is a list of the books CHS seniors would like to "will" the high school. The pending graduates are each invited to recommend a current favorite book for other CHS students to read.



### "Writes of Passage"

As part of the admission process, CHS surveys new students about their reading preferences. The information is used to select a book for each student that is presented as part of a "welcome ceremony" at the beginning of school each fall. Each book comes with a unique, signed, handwritten message about the importance and pleasures of reading authored by various College administrators, local community leaders, writers, and college faculty members.



Books are the carriers of civilization...They are companions, teachers, magicians, bankers of the treasures of the mind. Books are humanity in print. --Barbara Tuchman (1912- 1989)